

## The Hercules Engine News

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Every now and then I talk to someone who expresses an interest in collecting a certain line or brand of engines. They often ask about the opportunities. Engines manufactured by the Hercules Gas Engine Company offer many opportunities. Right now the discussion will be about only the Economy brand engines that they made.

From 1914 to 1933 there were nine different models, including D, E, F, FW, G, H, S, N, XK, and JK. During this same time, there were many different horsepower ratings used, including, 1½, 1¾, 2, 2¼, 2½, 3, 3½, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 14. As you can already see, that will add up to many different engine combinations. To further complicate things, in the early years there was a choice of low tension magneto or battery and coil ignition. Also in the early years there were full base and half base engines, in the three larger size engines depending on whether the engine was on a cart or not. Up until 1915 there was also a kerosene hit and miss version available on most sizes. To further complicate things, up until 1919 there was also a natural gas, artificial gas and gasoline combination fuel system available. And finally, again in the early years, there were tank cooled engines offered. Likely there are other variables not mentioned here.

All in all, there were likely well over 200 different combinations and configurations. So what is an aspiring beginning collector to do? How much money you have to play with may be a deciding factor for a lot of us. There are several choices. The first would be anything Economy brand with no specific other goal in mind. The two most plentiful models are the E and the S, with the E models being the easiest to collect a set of. That would include the 1½, 2½, 5, 7, 9, and 12 horse power sizes.

You can select a certain size to collect. You could go for the unusual ones including the 1½ HP model N (there are two variations), natural gas engines, hit and miss kerosene engines, half base engines, log saw engines, Elkhart magneto equipped engines, or even a tank cooled. Most of these will be difficult to find, but if you like a real challenge, you have got it. Another challenge is to acquire cheap engines (weathered, broken or parts missing) and join the hunt for the parts to make an engine from a rather hopeless case. Fair warning—this kind can get awful expensive at times before you get done.

When you go Economy engines beyond those built by Hercules, the choice gets even larger. In 1908 there were four sizes of Waterloo Economy engines offered by Sears, in addition, there were 29 different model and horse power combinations in the Sparta Economy engines from 1909 to 1913. To top it all off, Sears offered three sizes of Stover

Economy engines during the 1935 to 1938 period.

For most people, gas engine collections are ever changing. First you get all excited about certain things, then some of the novelty wears off and another challenge comes along. It sort of goes like this. First your effort is to collect. The next step is that of restoration and exhibiting your work. The first thing you know, trading becomes fascinating because someone else wants what you have or you see something you like better.

What matters most is really what kind of goal you want to set for yourself and what you will be satisfied with. Money, space available, mechanical ability, and attitude of other family members also come into play. Does that sound familiar?

Do you want to see a lot of these different Economy engines? If you do, you'd better head to Evansville, Indiana, June 11, 12, and 13. ○

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