

## Hercules Engine News

*including Economy,  
ARCO, Jaeger & Thermoil*

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Engines built by the Hercules Gas Engine Company of Evansville, Indiana are, in general, considered to be among the more simple, more common hit and miss open crank style. When you consider the models, fuel types, sizes, brands, options and miscellaneous changes thrown in, the picture becomes complex. Add to that the fact that the Hercules story overlaps a couple of years with the Economy engines built at Sparta, Michigan. In this article and those to come, it is hoped that an interesting story will unfold.

During 1913, a new factory was being built at Evansville, Indiana for the specific purpose of supplying Economy brand engines for Sears & Roebuck catalog sales. The Hercules Buggy Company had been supplying Sears with buggies for more than 10 years as well as marketing Hercules brand buggies through their own dealer network. It was only natural that Hercules brand engines would be produced and sold through the existing buggy dealer network too.

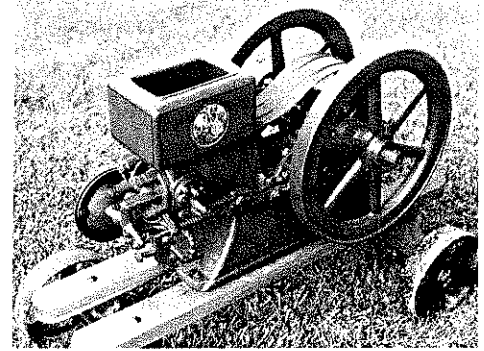
Old newspaper articles indicate that the first engines were produced in the new factory the week of January 19,

1914. These were the first "Evansville" engines. They bore resemblance to the Sparta type Economy engines, but they had some new distinctive characteristics. At another building some ten blocks away, Sparta type Economy engines were being assembled from the remaining parts that had been shipped to Evansville. Apparently additional Sparta type parts were made as needed to go along with the existing parts. The last of the Sparta type engines were completed by 1915.

The first Evansville engines were the model D. Sizes were 1½, 2½, 4, 6, 8, and 10 HP. Bores and strokes were as follows: 3¼ x 5, 4 x 6, 5 x 7½, 5¾ x 9, 6½ x 11 and 7½ x 12. These dimensions, with few exceptions, would remain the same until that general style of engine was discontinued in 1929.

The identical, except for color, Hercules and Economy D models were produced the first part of 1914. They had no tag for the serial number or other information. Some had the model and HP stamped on the end of the crankshaft and other places. Some also had additional numbers.

Three D models are illustrated including a 1½, 2½ and 6 HP. The 1½ HP has no speed control. The other two have a thumbscrew control. The two smaller ones have a small cast fuel mixer with no choke flap. The 6 HP still uses the D models and are few and far be-

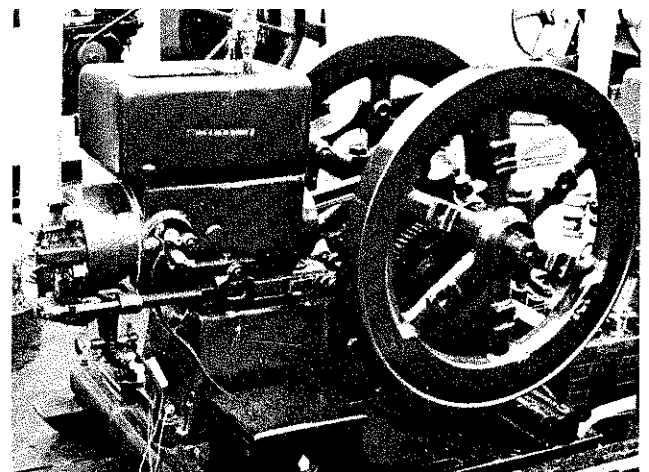
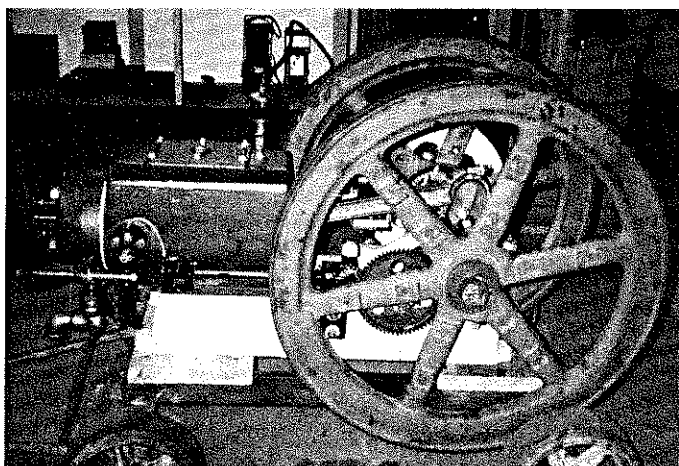


1½ HP model D Hercules.

tween today. Only about a dozen are currently known to exist. There are, no doubt, more around the country. Total production was likely less than 5,000. Ignition was by ignitor, battery and coil on the 1½ through 6 HP with the Elkhart magneto an option. The Elkhart was standard on the 8 and 10. The larger sizes were also available as kerosene hit and miss. They used a small tank on the side of the hopper for starting gasoline and a three way cock to switch fuels.

The 6, 8 and 10 sizes, in addition to the standard base, were available in half base style for mounting on straight framed carts and saw rigs. These sizes were also available as screen cooled models.

The D model should be considered a transition from the Sparta type engine to the popular E models that would follow later in 1914. Both the spring and fall issues of the 1914 Sears catalogs illustrate D model engines. ○



Left, 6 HP tank cooled model D Hercules. Right, 2½ HP model D Economy.