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Hercules Gas Engine News

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People often ask me how I got involved in this Hercules engine thing and decided to gather information and history about Hercules and the other related engines made at Evansville, Indiana. It had its beginning many years ago. I grew up on a southwestern Indiana farm near Evansville that had a small Hercules engine to power several machines. I could always still hear the sound of that Hercules engine many years after it was gone. As the years went by I did a lot of tinkering on machinery and equipment that I owned, but had no real mechanical hobby.

One day in 1972 a friend of mine gave me a 3 HP Fairbanks-Morse Z engine, but it didn't sound like a hit and miss Hercules did. Soon after that there was a farm sale nearby that had a 1½ HP Hercules engine which I bought. After that I started attending some antique farm equipment shows. I began to notice that not all Hercules engines were exactly alike and that there were some other brands that looked very similar. It was also about that time that, by chance, I went to another farm sale and

got the Hercules engine back that had left our farm some 30 years earlier. Eventually I began taking pictures and notes in hopes of making some rhyme or reason out of all those differences.

Sometime in the mid-80s I chanced to meet George Caddick, who had the Hercules Manufacturing Company at Henderson, Kentucky. He had researched the history of his company beginning with the establishment of the Hercules Buggy Company in 1902. He had gathered information from old newspapers and legal records in addition to information handed down to him.

At some point in 1987 our antique machinery club discovered that in 1989 it would be 75 years since the first Hercules engines were built at Evansville. We decided to promote that event, and to feature Hercules built engines at our 1989 show. It was also decided that it would be nice to have some kind of historical information on the engines available to those attending. Since historical information was available, I began working more seriously in gathering information and material about the engines themselves. After two years time and the cooperation of many others, enough engine info was available to put into some kind of a book. I had never put together a book before, nor even thought about it. With George's help and a few false starts, the thing finally

fell together. After putting the story on the computer and leaving room to insert pictures, we took the whole thing to a local printer to put it all together. We took a wild chance and had 1,000 book printed. That accidental happening is now in its fourth printing.

It doesn't stop there. For me it has turned into a very rewarding hobby and has brought me into contact with people all over the country and some parts of the rest of the world.

Information continues to trickle in. People bring it, mail it and call about it. What started out as a few notes including serial numbers has turned into a list of more than 3,700 engines of the Hercules family. Many pieces of Hercules related literature have turned up, and I want to say thanks to all who have shared it with me. All is well and good, but having so much info at hand doesn't help our hobby unless it can be shared. It has been my intent, and will continue to be, to share what I have learned with all those that I have occasion to visit or correspond with and with the readers of GEM. I hope you have all enjoyed the ride so far and I look forward to keep it going. There is one thing that concerns me. In addition to the written and photographed information that can be preserved, how does a person preserve all that is mentally stored? Is that why some people write their memoirs? ○