

Hercules Engine News

By Glenn Karch

Sparta Economy Engines

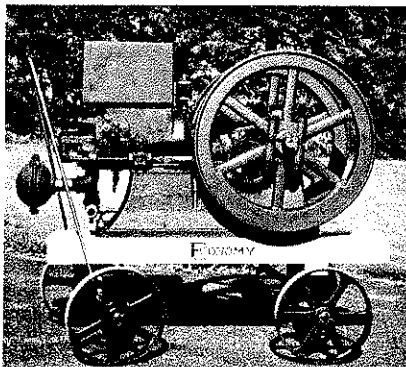


Before we launch into this month's column, I thought it would interest readers to know that Rudy Hufnagle, the last known surviving Hercules employee, passed away on Jan. 23, 2002 at the age of 100. Rudy was featured in *Hercules Engine News* in the October 1994 issue of GEM.

This issue I wanted to take a look at the surviving sizes and models of the Economy engines built by the Holm Machine Manufacturing Co. of Sparta, Mich., what we commonly refer to as "Sparta Economy" engines.

There is always the curiosity among collectors as to how many were built and of what sizes and models. Currently, I know of 528 of these Sparta Economy engines that still exist. There are, no doubt, many more than that out there somewhere. The table presented here is a breakdown of those currently known.

The total shown in the table is 501 engines. There are 27



1912 Sparta Economy, 2 HP Model CA, owned by Bob Naske.

Known Sparta Economy Engines: Listed By Model and Horsepower

Model	1HP	1-1/2 HP	2 HP	4 HP	6 HP	8 HP	10 HP	Total
A			8	9	3			20
B			20	7	14			41
C		1	15	6				22
CA		3	157	31	20	2	1	214
CX	55	35	*	51	45	15	3	204
Total	55	39	200	104	82	17	4	501

*The 2 HP size model CA was never upgraded to the model CX design.

The table above gives a breakdown on the type and size of Sparta Economy engines known to have survived at the present time. Surely there are more, as this represents a scant 1.5 percent of total production.

more where there is insufficient data to properly classify them.

There were approximately 36,000 Sparta Economy engines built. The range of serial numbers currently is from 526 to 40,156, with a 4,000 gap between 6,000 and 10,000. The known Waterloo Economy engine serial numbers all fall within that gap. It is estimated that the last 4,000 or so were likely built after the move to the Hercules Gas Engine Co. in Evansville, Ind., in late 1913. The 528 Sparta Economy engines currently known represent about 1.5 percent of total production.

The question is sometimes asked as to why such a listing of these engines and owners isn't published or otherwise made available. The list has become fairly long, covering some 16

pages, but it is never up-to-date because engine ownership keeps changing. Additionally, some owners are reluctant to have their holdings publicly known.

If you have or know about existing Sparta Economy engines or Waterloo Economy engines, I would be glad to know about them and to add them to the registry. For more details about these engines there is a 72-page book on the history and models of Sparta Economy engines, *Sparta Economy Gasoline Engines: A History Including the Waterloo Economy*, available through GEM and several other suppliers.

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