

# The Meter Setter



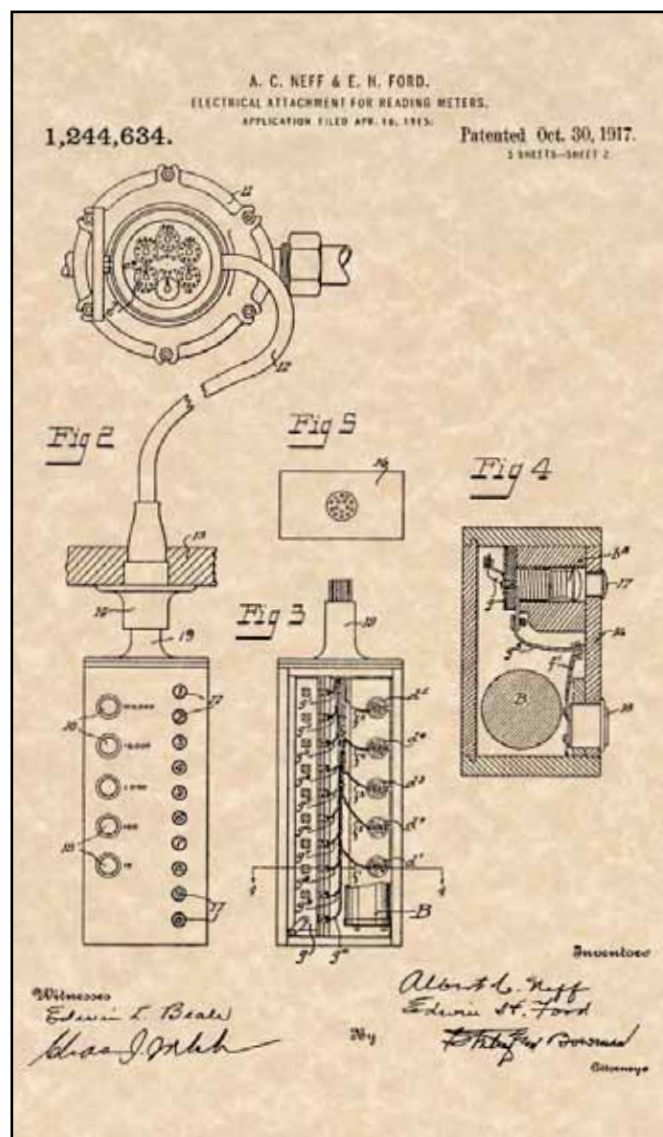
## MAKE METER READING EASY - 1917

In chapter one of AWWA's latest edition of the Meter Manual, M6, Edwin Ford is credited as the first person to invent a remote water meter reading device.

A pioneer in the water industry, Edwin Ford was granted 29 patents during his lifetime for a wide variety of products. Not all of them were commercial successes, but his passion for creating and improving products established a model for product development and customer satisfaction that lives on today at The Ford Meter Box Company.

The Edwin Ford and Albert Neff patent for "Electrical Attachment For Reading Meters" was far ahead of its time. As noted in U.S. Patent 1,244,634 dated October 30, 1917, "The object of the invention is to provide a portable device which may be electrically connected with the meter at some convenient point remote from the meter, preferably a point on the outside of a building ..." Although this first electrical device for reading meters was not accepted by the market in the 1920s, today the phrase Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) is common among water utilities.

AMR is the ability to remotely collect data from a customer's meter using a variety of technologies. Unforeseen by Edwin Ford, phone lines, radio frequency, and satellite communications are among the methods used to gather information today. Using AMR allows a utility to collect important billing information efficiently and accurately.



*The illustration above is one of the patent drawings of the remote water meter reading device invented by Edwin H. Ford and Albert C. Neff.*

Mr. Ford's innovation was remarkable for its day, and he would be impressed with the AMR technology used by water utilities today.



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