

The Meter Setter

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February, 2018

Uncovered

Sometimes an excavation project uncovers unexpected treasures. Such was the case for the City of Santa Fe when they began to replace the old water mains, water meters and “meter cans,” now known as meter pits, in a neighborhood that was developed prior to 1940.

The Office of Archaeological Studies of the Museum of New Mexico worked with the Santa Fe Water Division to preserve any artifacts uncovered during the water system updates. During the project, Ford lids were discovered along with several other items of interest.

Karen Wening, Staff Archaeologist, shared a few of the items found in the oldest meter cans - “a miniature porcelain caterpillar figurine, an old nailed leather shoe heel (1862 - 1926), a pair of Art Deco style eyeglasses (1920s - 1930s), and an amber glass medicine bottle with an Owens-Illinois maker’s mark (1929 - 1954).” In addition to these items, a Ford Meter Box lid was also discovered in one of the meter cans.



Two of the items discovered in old meter pits in Santa Fe.

In an effort to date the meter cans and lid, archaeologists located an announcement in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* newspaper dated September 29, 1928. This announcement detailed the first stage of water main updates for the area. Another update would follow in 1944.

Since water metering did not occur in Santa Fe until 1930, it is likely the Ford Meter Box lids were installed shortly after the 1928 water mains were buried.

The Ford Meter Box lid discovered inside one of the meter cans will be on display in a small museum recently set up by the Santa Fe Water Division.

SPECIAL NOTICE!

To Property Owners on Streets to be Paved

In order to avoid the tearing up of pavement it is urgently suggested that provision be made for tapping water mains and running services to property lines. This not only protects pavements against damage in the future, but minimizes cost of service installation.

New Mexico Power Company is to lay new water mains immediately on the following streets:

**HILLSIDE AVENUE, Castillo Street to Washington Ave
VIRGINIA STREET, Don Gaspar Avenue to Galisteo St.
SANTA FE AVENUE, Don Gaspar Avenue to Galisteo St.
SENA STREET, Galisteo Street to Don Cubero St.
GILDERSLEEVE STREET, Buena Vista Street to Berger St.**

Please make prompt application for tap connections, so that water main installations may be completed expeditiously and with the least amount of inconvenience to yourself and other consumers.

New Mexico Power Co

PHONE 444

"AT YOUR SERVICE"

W. H. NIELSEN, MGR.

This 1928 notice in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* by New Mexico Power is asking property owners to “make prompt application for tap connections.” Water mains were being installed on a number of streets in Santa Fe and the utility was concerned about completing the taps prior to street paving.



This lid, installed nearly eight decades ago, is typical of the meter lids you can find in Santa Fe today.



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