

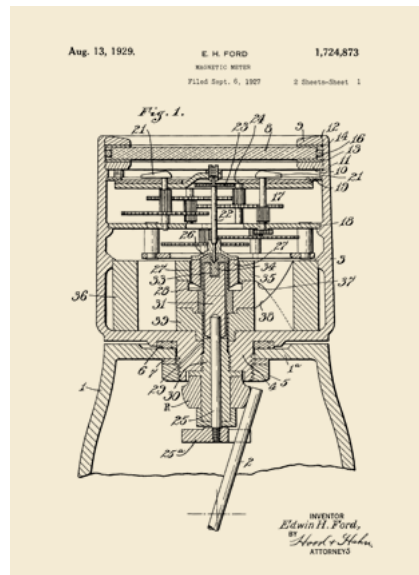
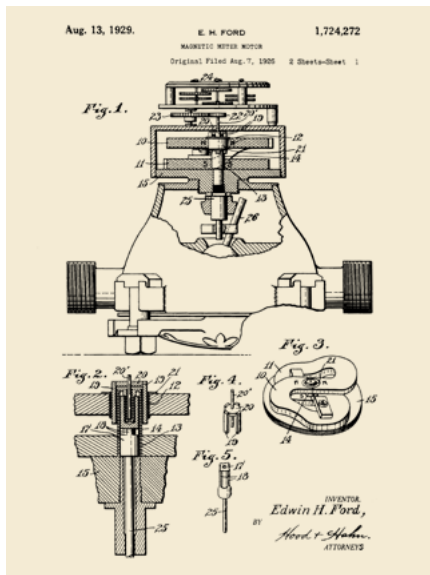
The Meter Setter

5

May 2019

Edwin Ford's Water Meter

Ford Meter Box began from founder Edwin Ford's desire to encourage water conservation through metering. In 1898, water meters were relatively new, but Edwin saw their benefits and designed his meter boxes to fit the meters that were available. Forty years later, he designed and built a new type of meter, the magnetic meter. On August 13, 1929, Edwin received patent 1,724,272 for a magnetic meter motor and patent 1,724,873 for the first magnetic meter.



Patent application drawings made by Edwin Ford in 1926 and 1927

The magnetic water meter was ahead of its time and speaks not only to Edwin's ingenuity but also to his business savvy. Edwin realized his business success was due, in part, to the meter salesmen who promoted his box while making sales calls. Unwilling to jeopardize this relationship and compete with meter manufacturers, Edwin never sold a magnetic meter. He told his sons their future lay with meter setting devices, and he advised them to nurture friendships with the meter manufacturers. Many

years after Edwin received his patent, magnetic meters became a commercial success. But just as he predicted, Ford Meter Box remained successful exclusively manufacturing complementary products from the main to the meter.

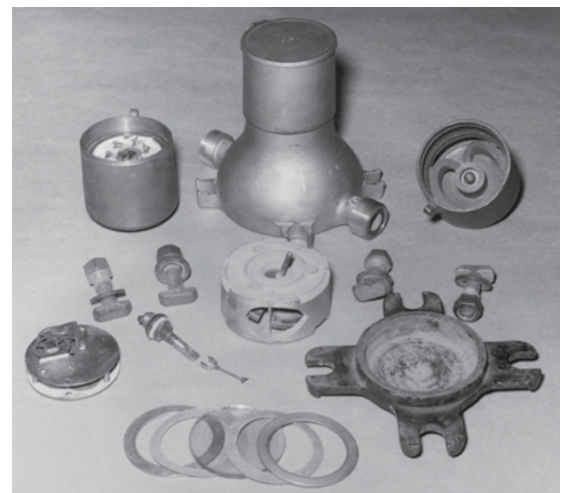
Ninety years ago, Edwin's decision prompted Ford Meter Box's policy to favor all water meters and show partiality toward none.



The Happy Meter

However, when displaying water meter setting devices at tradeshow, Ford Meter Box needed a representative meter for demonstrative purposes. Inspiration soon led to the creation of the "Happy Meter."

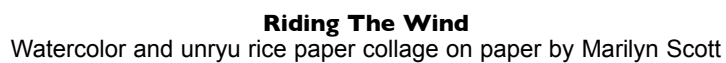
The Happy Meter smile, permanently cast in brass, is difficult to resist. By the way, it has been said that all water meters are happy meters when they're installed in Ford® Meter Setters.



Components of Edwin Ford's magnetic water meter

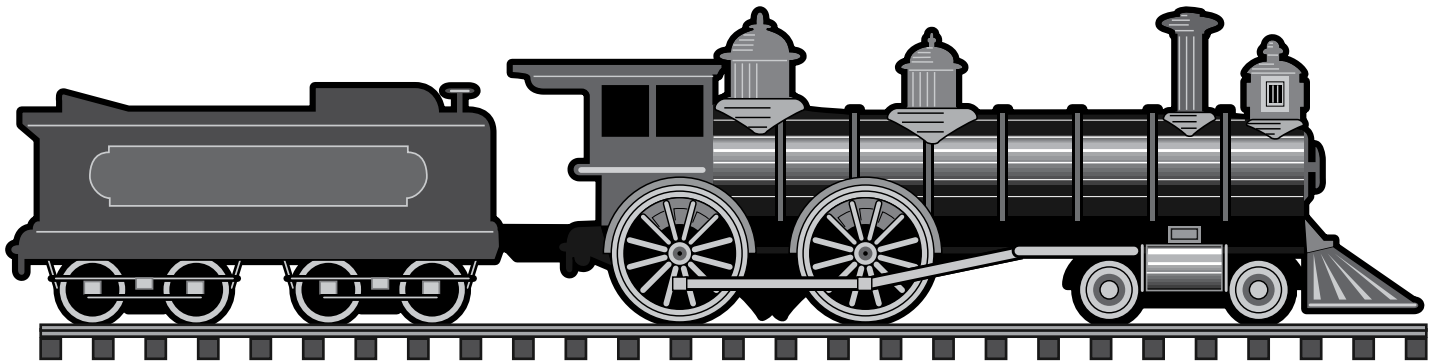


The Ford Meter Box Company, Inc., P.O. Box 443, Wabash, Indiana, USA 46992-0443
Telephone: 260-563-3171 FAX: 800-826-3487 Overseas FAX: 260-563-0167 www.fordmeterbox.com



Coast-to-Coast in Early Luxury

Part Two



(This is the second and last part of the story of the first luxury train to travel coast to coast. The train carried Boston businessmen and family members to San Francisco in 1870. W. R. Steele, a journalist on board, edited and printed a newspaper as the train rolled along. It is from surviving copies of the little newspaper that we learn the details of that trip. Part one told of the portion of the trip from Boston to Chicago.)

After a day of sightseeing and an evening of celebration in Chicago, the travelers headed for Omaha, but a passenger was left behind. Undaunted, the well-to-do businessman chartered a locomotive and car and caught up with the rest of the party in Omaha where the group stopped to tour the rail yards in that city.

When the train was about to leave Omaha, workers brought aboard a barrel of “fine ale,” which was a departing gift from the owners of the Omaha Brewery.

From Omaha, the special pounded across the Great Plains. Passengers looked mostly in vain for immense herds of bison, but particularly the women and children aboard were delighted when the train passed through an extensive prairie dog village. The little creatures were new to the eyes of most of the easterners.

Some on board feared that boredom would set in while the train crossed long stretches of flat prairie, but they were wrong. “Each day brings its own novelty,” Editor Steele wrote. “The unfolding of new scenery...The glow of anticipation, and the genial temper of our party crowd into each hour the delight of a year of ordinary life,” he gushed.

As the train rolled on, the gleaming new Gordon press, on which the editions of *The Trans-Continental* were printed, stopped working. A section of a car had been converted to a machine shop where repairs could be made if the locomotive broke down along a remote part of the route. But now the mechanics were set to work fixing the press, and soon the little newspaper was up and running again. Railroad history is all the richer for this.

Near Sherman, Wyoming, halfway between Cheyenne and Laramie, passengers piled out of the cars and celebrated their arrival at the highest point on the original

transcontinental railroad. There, at an elevation of 8,820 feet, all joined in singing “America” and “The Star-Spangled Banner.” The travelers were soon back onto the cars for the long run toward Salt Lake City.

Then came places such as Creston, Point of Rocks, Bryan, Carter’s Station, Wahsatch, Echo City and more. Some of these were tank towns, locations where locomotives took on fresh water. Others were telegraph stations or simply railroad sidings. Many are gone now.

At Salt Lake City, Brigham Young, the leader of the Mormons, and other officials of the church dined aboard the train before taking the Bostonians on a tour of the Tabernacle.

There is no mention in the little newspaper of a stop at Promontory Point where, just a few months before, officials hammered home the golden spike to unite the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific railroads. It seems odd that this train—of all trains—did not pause at that famous place in railroad history.

Over the next day or two, the train slowly climbed over the Sierras before rolling down to the Pacific and the historic trip’s destination.

Very late on day nine of the journey the train pulled into downtown San Francisco. A day or so later there was yet another ceremony when a bottle of Massachusetts Bay water met the waters of San Francisco Bay. Presumably there was more singing and much cheering, but, if so, Editor Steele neglects to mention it.

The train set out for home on June 25 and after a relatively uneventful trip arrived in Boston on July 2, just in time for the travelers to have an old-fashioned New England celebration of Independence Day.

by Pete Jones

Please send questions or comments to Pete Jones at peteinwabash@comcast.net.