

The Meter Setter



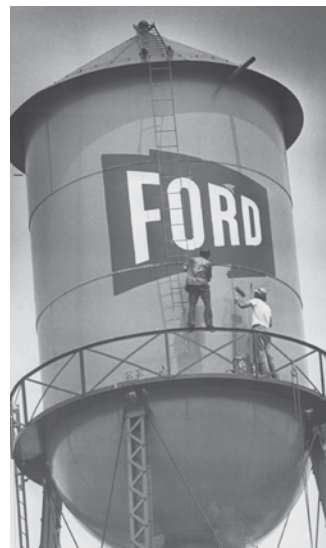
Ford's Water Tower: The End of an Era

This past July marked the 25th anniversary of the Ford water tower's retirement. The tower, built in 1936, represented Ford Meter Box after Ford moved to the plant on Manchester Avenue in 1951. The 100 foot tower held 40,000 gallons and was primarily used as a fire protection system. Shortly after Ford Meter Box moved to the new site, the tower was painted to represent Ford. First the tower was painted gray with "Ford" in red letters. Then, in the late 1970s, the tower was painted with the current logo in a brown color scheme. For forty years the tower was a landmark in Wabash but soon the plant outgrew the capacity of the water tower. In 1980, a new 100,000 gallon underground tank was completed and the water tower stood empty until July 1991.

The water tower was so much a part of the landscape of Ford Meter Box that it was the basis of an April Fool's gag in the April 1991 company newsletter when plans for disassembly were in the works. Poking fun at the tower's proximity to employee parking, the newsletter quipped, "We [have] received a letter from the Society for the Preservation of Large Antique Towers (SPLAT) who is concerned about displacing the pigeon population living atop the structure. In reality, the pigeon population was already managed and the tower came down without incident over the course of two days. The area beneath the tower was paved to provide additional parking space that is still used today.



The above photo shows the Ford Meter Box water tower and factory in the early 1960s.



Above left: A painting crew adds the Ford logo to the Ford Meter Box water tower. Above right: How the water tower appeared in 1991 prior to dismantling.



The two photos above show portions of the water tower after it was dismantled in 1991.



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