

FROM THE BEGINNING FORD INNOVATION EXCELS!

The Ford Meter Box Company will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 1998. Research into the company's history is uncovering many interesting stories. This month, we will look into the development of indoor meter setting devices.

During the first nine years of the company's history, all sales efforts were focused on meter boxes or on components for outside meter pit sittings. In 1917, founder Edwin Ford was approached by a water works employee from South Bend, Ed Dish, who had invented a device for basement meter installations. It consisted of two iron castings with cored water passages which could be attached to vertical basement pipes.

Dish admitted he had first offered the device to the H.W. Clark Company, our principal competitor at that time, but without success. Edwin saw the utility in the crude sample Dish had made, and offered to produce and sell such a product under a royalty license of 5 cents, with 4 cents going to Dish and the one cent to the patent lawyer.

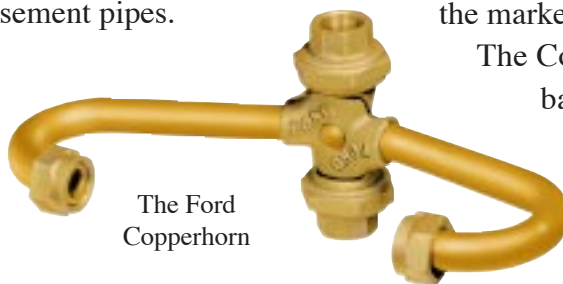
Edwin redesigned the device, made new patterns and core boxes, and Ford Meter Box began to produce basement meter settings. Because of its appearance, this setter was called the Ramshorn, and it proved to be a popular item for about ten years. However, the cast iron water passages tended to fill up with rust or lime in harder waters and Edwin could see the negative effect this would have on Ramshorn sales.

In the early 1920's, copper tubing for water services was introduced and soon became accepted as superior to iron and lead pipe. Knowing the inherent weakness of the Iron Ramshorn, the idea of making a similar device of curved copper tubing, which would provide enough flexibility to permit connecting the water meter into position without a hinge, was very attractive. However, the Company had no experience in fabricating copper and had to learn the hard way how to bend and spin the tubing. The design and the equipment were eventually worked out and the Ford Copperhorn was put on the market in 1930.

The Copperhorn was intended for basement meter settings and was an almost instant success because it placed the meter in the proper position in vertical piping, physically

connected basement plumbing and saved the cost of ordinary meter couplings as well as pipe fittings and unnecessary labor.

An important adaptation of the Copperhorn was introduced when the need became obvious for a setting device that could be installed without threading or soldering basement piping. The Kornerhorn, with interchangeable Pack Joints for various sizes and types of pipes, was designed for a universal metering project in Philadelphia, where well over 120,000 were successfully installed at a great savings to the utility.



The Ford
Copperhorn

