

Crescent box

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It didn't make much sense for Edwin Ford to be in the Crescent City, but that had never stopped anyone before?or since. The year was 1921, and Ford was in town to pay a sales call on George Earl, the superintendent of the Sewerage and Water Board.



Could the design for the New Orleans water meter cover be borrowed from that of the Indiana state flag?

The details of the conversation are unknown but the discussion would result in an unlikely but enduring symbol of the city.

Ford, a native of Indiana, was a manufacturer of waterworks hardware. About 20 years earlier he had invented a water meter box to facilitate the monitoring of water usage. In responding to the severity of the Indiana winter, Ford had designed an enclosed, insulated box that was positioned three feet into the ground to prevent meter freeze-ups.

The design was effective for Indiana, but there was nothing in Ford's fledgling product line that was suitable for either warm climates or the tenuous solidity of south Louisiana soil. For Ford, who apparently was gifted at improvisation, this was

not a deal breaker.

Earl, for his part, was overseeing a massive program to raise his city out of the muck, and was in need of, among other things, a replacement for the current meter settings that typically either choked with mud or protruded from the settling earth in a most unsightly way.

It was a match made in Heaven, or at least at the crossroads of supply and demand.

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