

## EXPLORE ARTESIA

by

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Walled off by a layer of impermeable underground rock in the valley of Rock River and slanting to Lake Michigan is a land that might well be called ARTESIA, meriting its name from the many Artesian wells that burst out in that countryside,

There is much confusion about the meaning of the term artesian well. In this article an artesian well is one on which the water comes to the surface through its own pressure. It may have been helped by boring a deep layer of impermeable rock, but it comes to the surface without pumping.

More than one day's time would be needed to explore Artesia thoroughly since it comprises sections of Palmyra, Whitewater, Fort Atkinson, Janesville and even parts of northern Illinois. For this reason, the writer suggests an abbreviated one day trip limiting adventures to the region around Whitewater and Palmyra.

Taking Hy 12 east through Whitewater, leave that Hy at Bluff Road at the far east side of town. Approximately one mile east on Bluff Road is the residence of Harvey Krohn and the Acre Zoo. From there on to the Gilbert Knutsen Farm (about 5 mi.) all wells are artesian. Preceding the Knutsen farm is the Roy Boldt farm. Here is a flowing well that probably for a century has poured its waters into a roadside tank.

In hunting up the Boldt well, the traveler has passed the side road leading to Rainbow Springs, a truly marvelous region for out-crop of water-bearing sandstone. Rainbow Springs owes its great success to the abundance of cold artesian water that entered that sandstone out-crop miles away and years ago.

If one can tear himself away from Rainbow Springs and continue east to Hy 59, all the farms along this cross road are benefited by artesian wells. The abundance of

water made this region the home of the Holstein cow and started Wisconsin's fame for cheese-making as early as 1851.

Continuing on to Palmyra every farm, to the Stewart Calkins farm has artesian water,.. Just short of the Calkins place on the south side of the road is an inch pipe carrying a steady flow of water, winter and summer, in drouth or in flood.

One must continue to Palmyra for a crossroad to Blue Spring Lake and retrace his route west on Hy H for over a mile. As he lets his eyes range over the waters of this lake and tries to count the more than forty homes built around its shores, he only faintly realizes the millions of gallons of water which the former Blue Spring pours out hourly.

The most spectacular well, however, is found three miles east of Palmyra on the Bert Orchard farm off Hy E. Follow that highway toward Oak Hill until you see the sign Dead End west and drive one mile.

The story of the finding of this well is a thriller. The Willow withe didn't lie this time. After digging for a short time water gushed into the air thirty feet. A reducer has to be placed on the well to keep it from making a lake, but under the confinement of the reducer, a stream three inches in diameter pours out at one side and at the opposite side a finger-sized stream keeps three large sized tanks full of water.

During the fierce storm of Nov. 11, 1940, the reducer blew off, shooting the spray to the tops of the 50 to 60 foot trees nearby. The sudden severe drop in temperature froze the spray making the trees objects of wonder in their sparkling beauty.

If the explorer must limit his time and milage, the wells on 59 could be omitted in favor of the Orchard well. One can cut off the Hy 59 wells by turning south at the corner where the Rainbow Springs road meets the curve of Hy 59. Continue south to the dam (County Trunk H) which holds the waters of Blue Springs Lake.

In exploring Artesia, the tourist will find many picnic spots, restaurant service at the T and O restaurant in Palmyra, several eating places in Whitewater, or by driving east to Eagle, the Diamond Drive In Snack Bar at the foot of Diamond Hill on Hy 59.