

Mayor's thirst for water projects angered citizens

Bloomington Mayor John G. Harris launched his campaign for a third term with a long statement about the accomplishments of his first two terms. It can be found in the Sept. 9, 1910, edition of the *Bloomington Evening World*.

NOT THE LEAST of Harris's boasts was the one that dealt with the purchase of land and construction of the Leonard Springs dam and water plant west of town. He

reminded the voters that the relatively new water system had been in part in response to agitation to move Indiana University to another part of the state.

Looking back

By Rose H. McIlveen
Second in a series

Apparently Harris had been criticized for using tax money to pay for the water projects. In rebuttal he wrote, "To be sure the property owners paid for them. Where else did they suppose we would get the money?"

Harris reasoned (for the enlightenment of the voters) that had the university been removed from Bloomington, property values would have depreciated. Besides, the project provided jobs for local workers, who, in turn, spent their money here.

But Harris's leadership in the construction of the Leonard Springs project had proved to be only a band-aid solution to a chronic problem complicated by the geological formations peculiar to a limestone region. The western part of the county was honeycombed with sinkholes and caves. In fact, even with the best of rainfall conditions, the mayor and his advisers had located the water supply in the worst possible part of the county.

THE STEADY GROWTH of the university continued to enhance local property values, but the other