

Moss regime dark period for IU

(Continued from page 1)

the organ grinder and his bear packing. Said the *Student*: "The two minstrels wended their way out of the campus, the students scared, yet angry, sneaked off to the recitations...Dr. Moss having broken up the picnic went back to his 'Vatican'."

It can be justly said the Moss never made any serious effort to endear himself to his colleagues or the students. Perhaps it was the press of the University's growing pains that made him regard his position with (as IU historian Thomas D. Clark put it) "pope-like seriousness."

Among some legislators there was some serious sentiment to move the young university to Indianapolis. Monroe County was branded, as unhealthy. Even the *Bedford Star* lamented that Vanzant, the Bloomington undertaker, had buried 1,129 persons in nine years, sure enough proof that the university was a "dreadful place." On the other hand, the editor of the *Greencastle Banner* thought the students were better off in Bloomington, away from the temptations of a big city like Indianapolis.

If the threat of removal from Bloomington wasn't enough to preoccupy Moss's attention, the condition of the physical plant got its share. For openers the enrollment had outgrown the buildings. The chemistry and physics departments needed more laboratory space, and the library was too small. Also the buildings had to have new steam boilers and gas light fixtures and a more adequate water supply. Finally, the students actually had the gall to ask for a gymnasium.

In spite of his pomposity, Moss was considered a good PR man for the University and spoke at such far-away places as Toronto and Lake Chautauqua. According to Clark, before Indiana audiences his topics were "Student Discipline" and "How to Get On."

Suddenly on Nov. 8, 1884, it was announced that Lemuel Moss had resigned as president of the university. The board was presented with six affidavits from students popularly called the "Moss Killers." It seemed that they had enlisted the help of IU janitor "Uncle" Tommy Spicer to bore holes through the ceiling of the office of Miss Katherine Graydon, the Greek professor, to observe her activity.

On one occasion President Moss unlocked her office and left a present, returning later for thanks. Their conduct was supposed to include "kissing and hugging," according to the *Bloomington Saturday Courier*.

Hoosiers of the 1880's were not prepared to be philosophical about the Moss and Graydon behavior, no matter how platonic it may have been. The *Lafayette Leader* said: "Dr. Moss of Bloomington University, must be prepared to run for office, if the recent publications about him are true. When old men set such an example, what can be expected of the boys?"

Moss left Bloomington abruptly, leaving his family to pack up their belongings and return to Chicago. His post-IU career included the jobs of water heater salesman, religious magazine editor, and some-time preacher.

His departure paved the way for the presidency of David Starr Jordan, who became a "star" in IU history.