

The History of Irving Water Utilities

Historical content and images, courtesy of Irving Library Archives.

Irving's Early Water System

Irving was founded by two railroad surveyors who decided to establish a town along the 10-mile stretch of land they were surveying between Dallas and Fort Worth. Their survey section began at Record Crossing near downtown Dallas and ended at the location of what today is the Valley View Municipal Complex. The railroad theme of Irving's early history located at the western terminus of the survey, is still reflected in the design of the Valley View Municipal Complex that houses Irving's Water Utility Department.

The accessibility and abundance of good ground water, as well as the fertile sandy loam soil, drew settlers to the Irving area. Farmers and other residents dug shallow wells on their land to supply water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning, as well as for irrigation. The city's first public water supply was established shortly after the founding of the city of Irving, when a public well was dug in the middle of the intersection of Main Street and First Street (today Irving Boulevard).

The city commission contracted with local men to keep the tank filled during daylight hours. Pipes were added to carry water to nearby businesses and houses. This simple system and private water wells made up the area's water system until 1924.

That year the citizens of Irving, in a vote of 104 to 3, created the Dallas County Irving Fresh Water Supply District #5. The district had the authority to levy and collect taxes in order to build and operate a water distribution system in Irving. Over the next year, the district built a water plant at the northwest corner of Second and Jefferson streets. The facilities included an elevated tank, ground storage tanks, a derrick, a pump house, and deep wells.

In 1932, the City of Irving and the Water District joined together to build the city's first municipal building adjacent to the water plant. That building, the first city hall, also housed the offices of the Water District. The building still stands today.

In 1939, the city bought the Water District's assets and took over the water system. This marked the beginning of the City of Irving's Water Department.



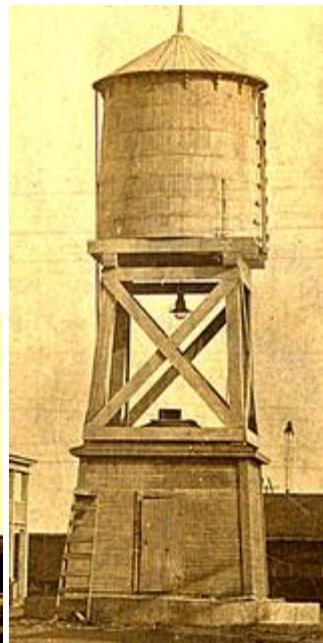
Before the water tower was constructed, the well in the middle of the intersection was operated by a hand-pump. The right side of this photo (1908) shows the well surrounded by a small fence. The pump handle is also visible.



This photo from 1930 shows a house that has a well and water storage tank in the back yard. The house was at the southwest corner of Pioneer Drive and Hawthorne Street.



In 1932, the City of Irving joined with the Dallas County Irving Fresh Water Supply District #5 in building the city's first city hall and water district office.



The City of Irving was founded in December 1903. Shortly after its founding, the first public water well was dug in the middle of the intersection of Main Street and First Street (today's Irving Boulevard.). Later a tower and holding tank were added.



In 1939, the city purchased the assets of the Dallas County Irving Fresh Water Supply District #5 and established a municipal water system. The work of the Water District is recognized in this City of Irving centennial historical marker. The marker is located next to the first city hall and water office building in old downtown Irving.

PLEASE PRESENT THIS CARD WITH PAYMENT DO NOT DETACH

To DALLAS COUNTY IRVING WATER SUPPLY DIST. No. 5, Dr.
IRVING, TEXAS
(MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO ABOVE)

METER READING THIS	427 ⁰⁰	Amount due	SEP 8 1936
METER READING LAST	417 ⁰⁰		
GALLONS USED (or minimum)	20 ⁰⁰		
A penalty of \$1.00 will be added to this Bill if not paid before 6 P. M. of date shown below.	Transferred or Balanced Items		

We will, in accordance with the DISTRICT ORDINANCE, be compelled to discontinue service if not paid on or before Sept 8 1936.

Prompt payment will avoid unnecessary inconvenience to you and to us the disagreeable duty of turning off.

Failure to receive bill does not extend delinquency date.

Displayed is a 1936 Dallas County Irving Fresh Water Supply District #5 water bill. The water bill is for the use of 20 gallons and the amount due is \$1.00.

RECORD OF MINUTES DALLAS COUNTY IRVING FRESH WATER DIST. NO. 5
 First called meeting April 23, 1924

NEXT MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF
 DALLAS COUNTY IRVING FRESH WATER SUPPLY DISTRICT NO. 5

The Board of Supervisors of Dallas County Irving Fresh Water Supply District No. 5, met for the first time at the office of the Irving Lumber Company, in said District, April 23, 1924, at 7:45 P.M. There were present:

C. T. Schulte
 E. Beauford
 Tom Lamberton
 H. Moulard
 W. J. Wright, President
 Monte K. Ferguson, Attorney.

H. Moulard presided as temporary chairman and announced that all of the supervisors had given bond as required by law and taken the oath of office, which bonds had been duly approved by the Commissioners' Court and filed for record, and that the Board could lawfully proceed to organize and transact business; and that the first order of business was the selecting of a President, who took the chair and presided throughout the meeting, Wright having been unanimously elected by said Board.

The president announced that the next order of business was the selection of the Secretary. Lewis Hancock was elected Secretary. M. K. Ferguson acted as temporary Secretary.

The Board then considered the tender of the office of the Irving Lumber Company yard, as its office, by C. T. Schulte, without charge, and accepted this offer, thanking Mr. Schulte.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was proposed that the Supervisors act as such, with compensation, and after a full discussion the motion was unanimously carried.

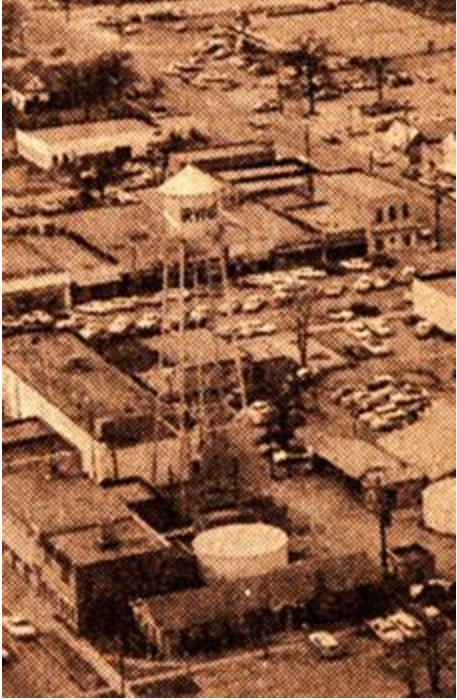
Monte K. Ferguson was employed as counsel for the Board, as he had volunteered his services some years previously to the citizenship of Irving, having owned property in the town of Irving, stated to the Board that he would make no charge for services rendered and to be rendered until the water system shall have been installed.

Motion was duly made and carried to the effect that the President and one other appointed by him, constitute a committee to investigate plans and specifications of the proposed water

Shown here is a copy of the first page of minutes from the first meeting of the board of the Dallas County Irving Fresh Water District No. 5 on April 23, 1924.



In 1914, the students of the Irving school system gathered around the water tower on Main St. to celebrate the school system's growth to 500 students. During these years there was no water system at the school building. Everyday a number of students would walk from the school to the tower to fill containers for use at the school.



This 1957 aerial of downtown Irving shows the water tower behind the city hall building near the corner of Second and Jefferson streets. Main Street can be seen behind the tower.



Irving's first modern water tower stood behind the city hall building at 137 E. Second St. It was dismantled in 1967.

An Independent Water Supply

During Irving's early decades, when the town was a small farming community, deep wells provided the municipal water supply. Beginning in the 1950s, explosive population growth created such demand for water that the local wells could no longer meet residents' needs.

To meet the increasing demand, the City of Irving began buying water from the City of Dallas. By the 1970s, Irving was purchasing all its water from Dallas.

Anticipating Irving's water needs, city leaders from the 1950s onward have worked to secure Irving its own water supply. To that end, the city became a co-sponsor of the Lake Chapman Water Supply Project.

After almost 50 years of planning, litigation, and construction, Lake Chapman, located on the Sulphur River about 85 miles northeast of Irving, was dedicated in 2003.

The final phase of the project was the construction of a 33-mile pipeline and booster pumping station. This project began in the summer of 2003. This series of photos shows city staff and elected officials attending the groundbreaking for the Lake Chapman Pipeline, 2001.



City council and city staff dig-in for the groundbreaking of the Lake Chapman pipeline, 2001.



Lake Chapman Pipeline before being placed underground.



How many Aggies does it take to bury a pipeline? Jaime Beard, Todd Abbott, Bob Wallace, David Ryburn, Todd Reck, Lewis Patrick, and Cliff Miller all city staff members, and in Mr. Patrick's case a retired city staff member and current city council member, are all graduates of Texas A&M University. Gig 'Em!

Irving's Water Today

Today, Irving's Valley View Municipal Complex has been open for four years. As Irving grows, new challenges arise as we continue to provide safe and reliable drinking water to a growing population of over 200,000. Irving continues towards becoming a progressive city in protecting and managing our water resources.



Valley View Municipal Complex
333 Valley View Lane

The Valley View Municipal Complex is home to the City of Irving IGS/Water Utilities, Traffic and Streets. The Complex was dedicated on September 23, 2005.

The railroad theme of Irving's early history and the complex's location as the western terminus of the survey is reflected in some of the public art on the complex's property.



Various pieces of public art are incorporated into the complex's design. Pictured is some of the public art that is located on the grounds of the new civic complex.



This monumental railroad spike sundial also reflects Irving's early history as a railroad town and the complex's location at the western end of the survey.



These figures of children characterize Irving's rural roots and how early settlers supplied their own water.



These concrete and metal pedestals represent the railroad track along which Irving was founded. They run from the entry sign at the front of the property, through the building, and out to the back of the property.