

# Miller's Co. Two Towns named St. Elizabeth

By Peggy Smith Hake

Did you know there have been two towns named St. Elizabeth in Miller County? St. Elizabeth was established as a community in the late 1860's. It was located about 35 miles by land or 50 miles by river southwest of Osage City, its river shipping point. Land was worth about \$1 to \$10 per acre. Its nearest bank was as Jefferson City. In 1874, there was a mail delivery three times weekly and the postmaster was William Wetlock. Other business places and their owners included Henry Boedecker, a wagon maker; Henry Evers, a blacksmith; Casper Morff, a shoe maker; and Owen R. Pendleton, a clerk. William Wetlock owned a general store and served as the town's postmaster. In 1874, the town's population numbered 60 persons. It had a Catholic church, overlooking the Osage River, the only Catholic church in the county in 1874.

Several years ago, I found the above information in Campbell's Gazetteer of Missouri 1874. I was puzzled at the description of St.

Elizabeth, or the St. Elizabeth I know today, being "by the river." With research I realized it was the first St. Elizabeth that was described in 1874, not the present day St. Elizabeth.

Old St. Elizabeth, on the Osage, was established by an Irishman named Owen Riggs (whose actual name was Awhen Ricces). He came to Miller County from Tyler County, Virginia, with his brother, Calvin Riggs. The Riggs' were early settlers of Jim Henry township; and in 1838, patented many acres of land. By the end of the Civil War, Owen was a large landowner in Miller County. He established the old town of St. Elizabeth in 1869, and the town was laid out on the southeast bank of the Osage River in Section 18, Township 41, Range 12. It had eight blocks with sixteen lots in each block.

The streets named in the old town's plat were: Water, First, Madison, Buckeye, Osage, Washington, and St. Louis. On the south edge of town was a large lot measuring 250' by 278'. This was the site of an old grist mill. To the north was a church lot measuring

172' square. Owen Riggs was instrumental in getting the first Catholic church in the county built on that site, atop a bluff overlooking the Osage. Some who assisted in the construction of the church were named Kemna, Heckemeyer, Buechter, Boedecker, Borgmeyer, Doerhoff, Schell, Whalen, Leibert, and Koester.

Owen Riggs and his wife, Malinda, where the parents of four daughters with the unusual names of Tennessee, Missouri, Virginia, and Elizabeth (that one isn't too unusual). Owen Riggs died in 1875 and it seemed that with his death, Old St. Elizabeth began to die also.

On May 8, 1882, an Order of Publication appeared in the Miller County newspaper listing all the land owned by Owen Riggs and it was being sold through the Miller County Probate Court. Included in the various parcels of land were several lots and blocks in Old St. Elizabeth. Many of those lots were sold to William Wetlock, the town's postmaster and storekeeper. When I added up the acreage for sale in the other tracts of land owned by Riggs,

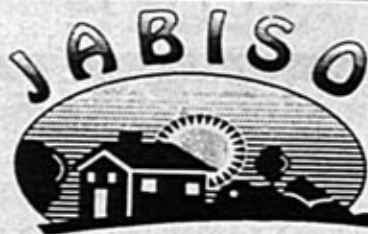
they totaled 1,804 acres. In Judge Jenkins' History of Miller County, he stated that Riggs had once owned over 6,000 acres in the county. It took 9 years to settle his estate.

The site of today's St. Elizabeth is about three miles inland from the original St. Elizabeth on the Osage. The present town was surveyed on August 6, 1880, by H. S. Burlingame, the county surveyor, and was filed for record at the courthouse on December 18, 1880. The town was first filed for record with the name "Charlestown," named for Charles Holschneider, who had bought the land on which the town was platted. Charlestown contained six original blocks platted on the exact spot where they now lay. It was much later, June 5, 1961, that the town's name was official changed to St. Elizabeth.

The old church, built at Old St. Elizabeth on the Osage, was brought from its river site to the new town and was used as a school for many years.

Until I took time to research the facts all those years ago, I had no idea there have been two towns in Miller County named St. Elizabeth, and each with a history of its own.

Lawn Care • Carpet Cleaning  
• Janitorial Service •  
Remodeling • Gutter Cleaning  
20 Years Experience • Insured

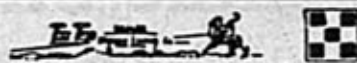


**CARPET CLEANING**

For Free Estimates Call Jim at  
**573-774-2798**

*No Job Too Small*

**Zeigenbein  
FEED & FARM SUPPLY**



Crescent - Purina - Tindle Feeds

Collars, Leashes, HD Chains, Muzzles, Pinch Collars & MORE!

**Kaytee Bird Products**

- Small Pet & Animal Health Supplies •
- Eukanaba - Iams - Science - Diet - PMI - Ivermectin
- Cutter - Rotectin I&II - Houn Dog & Diamond Dog Food
- Animal Health & Grooming Aids •

Hillside Drive Waynesville, MO.

**573-774-6610**



**Ole Peddlers  
Treasures**

**Flea Market ~ Antiques**

**Crafts ~ Collectibles**

**Furniture ~ Gifts**

Hours: 10 am - 5 pm Mon. - Fri.

9 am - 5 pm Saturdays

1 pm - 5 pm Sunday

Main Street - Iberia, MO.

**573-793-2109**

**JoAnns Dog World**

**Small Animal Grooming  
& Boarding Available**

**Joann Parsons  
Teresa Dye**

Historic Rt.66 St. Robert, MO.



**573-336-5038**



**OZARK  
TRANSMISSION**

ON MISSOURI  
AVENUE  
In St. Robert



- Complete Transmission Work
- Most Makes & Models
- Towing (if needed)
- VISA - MASTERCARD - DISCOVER

**336-5923**

Toll Free... 800-456-5418

**St. Robert Auto Supply**  
**NAPA**

296 Missouri Ave., P.O. Box 566

St. Robert, MO. 65584

Terry and Steve Helton, Owners

**(573) 336-3021**

**(573) 336-4722**