

- Old Williamsburg -

By Peggy Smith Hake

Did you know there was once a town platted which laid about one-and-a-half miles southwest of present-day Iberia? It sat on about ten acres and included twenty lots and a public square. The streets named in the old survey were High, Main, Broadway, Mercantile, Locky, and Wawter Streets. It was on an old trail that led from Tusculumbia on southward through the Big Richwoods and on to Pulaski County. The town's square sat on a section line between sections 25 and 26 in township 39, range 13. It was given the name Williamsburg and I will try to relate the story to you the best I can determine.

On May 28, 1840, Squire Williams and his wife Jane received a certificate of entry for this land, which included almost 240 acres in sections 25, 26, and 35 of township 39, range 13. They erected their home there and apparently Squire had great plans to establish his new town on this old trail used by traders and hunters. He drew up the projected plans, had the town site surveyed, and then recorded

his town's plans at the courthouse. I don't know what happened during the years 1840-47. On May, 19, 1847, however, a judgment in the amount of \$1079.05 was rendered against Squire by a man named Michael Allen of neighboring Cole County. His land was seized by the sheriff of Miller County, Samuel Cecil Holiday Witten, who had surveyed the town of Williamsburg over seven years earlier. All of Squire Williams' property was sold to Thomas Winston and Phillip Miller of Cole County. These men were in the trading business and it was their intention to set up a trading post on the old trail. When they bought the land, the town of Williamsburg containing ten acres was not included in the sale. Later, on November 12, 1847, Winston and Miller bought the ten acres from Squire and Jane Williams.

After selling their land, the Williams left Miller County. Their town of Williamsburg never materialized after they sold the property. The traders, Winston and Miller, sold the land to Wilson Lenox on January

4, 1850. Wilson Lenox and his partner, Andrew Corley, established a trading post about one fourth of a mile from the old town site on Rabbithead Creek. It became a popular trading post located beside the old trail in the years prior to the Civil War. Iberia did not have mail service, so a post office was set up at the Lenox/Corley Trading Post to accommodate the residents of the area. During the Civil War, the trading post was destroyed by marauding troops in the area. Wilson Lenox died in 1863 during a devastating era of Miller County's history of those war-torn years. His wife, Susannah,

moved to Phelps County and eventually their plantation, containing about 600 acres, was sold for debts that had been incurred against the partnership of Lenox and Corley.

So, the proposed town of Williamsburg never became a reality and its namesake, Squire Williams, became just another name that disappeared from the county's past, lost somewhere in obscurity. The land in recent years has been owned by the families of Condra and Graves. If you use your imagination, you can almost see Old Williamsburg sitting there in the rolling hills of southern Miller County.

Jane Claiborn, Pulaski County Pioneer Woman

When Jane E. Claiborn died July 8, 1944, at the age of 99, she was the oldest Pulaski County pioneer at the time. Although born December 21, 1844, in Laclede County, she lived the last 80 or so years of her life in Pulaski County, moving here near the end of the Civil War.

Jane was married to D. A. Claiborn, a Civil War veteran who lost one arm at Gettysburg. The couple lived on a farm on Bell's Creek near Crocker. When her husband died, she moved to the home of her daughter, Mrs. W. T. Salveter, near Crocker.

One of Jane's uncles had the distinction of having built the first house in Springfield, Missouri.

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