

## Williamsburg, Iowa – May Flower Edition

**Source: Journal Tribune, May Flower Edition, April 30, 1903** Like a jeweled ring, sparkling on the finger of a bride, is the town of Williamsburg to Iowa County. Situated almost in the geographical center of the county, the town of Williamsburg, a thriving and substantially built little city of 1200 population, sits proudly and serenely upon her seven hills. Surrounding her on every hand are the farms noted for their fertility. The live stock interests have chosen Williamsburg as their center and the well known herds of cattle and hogs; the flocks of sheep and the stables of fine horses are known throughout the length and breadth of Iowa. The shipments of stock from Williamsburg is one of our largest sources of revenue and the two Savings Banks here in which are over \$700,000 on deposit fully attest the standing of Williamsburg as an agricultural center. The town is of easy access, being located on the K.C. Div. of the C.M. & St P Ry. Midway between Kansas City and Chicago.

As a trading point the town has no superior in Iowa County. It is laid out with its business houses surrounding a beautiful park and commands the trade within an average radius of eight miles, the trade of as fine a section of country as Iowa can boast of. Her merchants and business men are men of honor and integrity and so treat their customers that once they come here to trade they naturally repeat such visits.

As a fine residence town Williamsburg has many well known advantages; the town owns one of the finest water systems in Iowa; the supply is furnished by deep wells and the pressure is a combination of gravity and compressed air. In connection with the water system the town owns and operates its own lighting plant, which for cheapness of light to consumer, efficiency of service and utility as fuel for domestic purposes the system has attracted attention from remote places; and many large cities of the country, after having been examined the plant here, have adopted the same system for themselves. No town in Iowa of like size has a greater number of fine residences; they range from the stately mansion to the neat and cozy cottage and around each is a well kept lawn whereon summer weaves a carpet of soft velvety grasses and where shrub and climbing vine, or stately form of sturdy elm or native oak lifting high their tall heads, completes a picture whose beauty only fades with the last sigh of expiring summer.

A town is known by the support it extends to churches; and in this respect Williamsburg has an enviable record. The Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, Catholic and Welsh Presbyterian communions have each a fine place of worship with a resident pastor at each. The churches are all free from debt and are well kept and well attended.

No town of like size in Iowa can boast of a better school. It is at once the pride of every citizen and taxpayer in the town; its course of study admits those completing it to the State University. The school board at present is composed of W.G. Fletcher, E.M. Long, J.G. Lortz, F.C. Rock, and W.D. Jenkins with R.W. Pugh, Secretary, and W.R. Evans, Treasurer. The personnel of teachers is as follows; Sup't B. Francis, and, in the continued order of prominence, Miss Clara Pugh, Miss Eva L. Fitch, Miss Mae

McEachran, Mrs. A.M. Sheetz, Miss Katie Perkins, Miss Minnie Wilson, Miss Jennie Davis and Miss Emily Fletcher.

Away back in the fall of 1844, two brothers, Evan D. and William Evans with their brother-in-law, Richard Pugh, together with their wives, settled on section 15 in Troy township, right near where the residence of J.F. Talbot now stands. They were bold and sturdy people; four years before this they had left their native Wales and with the courage of their race they resolutely faced the trackless West to win from it a home.

This constituted the first settlement in what is now Troy township; the following spring the Hansons arrived locating a few miles further east; these were the beginnings of the distinctively Welsh and Irish settlements which continued to grow through many of the coming years. Of these old settlers Mrs. Sarah Evans alone remains, the last leaf upon the tree of civilization planted here almost 60 years ago. She resides today with her son on the farm on which she has spent over half a century; her daughter Mrs. Mary S. Jones was the first white girl born in Troy township. Our townsmen, David E., John R., and W.R. Evans are sons of one of the first settlers. The first white male child born in Troy township was H. D. Hanson, now a prosperous farmer in the southwest part of the township.

Williamsburg was founded in 1856 by Richard Williams; he was a sturdy Welshman, and nearly all the early settlers were from that rugged little land whose children fondly cherish the glories and tradition of their race. Soon a distinctly Welsh settlement grew strong around Williamsburg; the first comers of Troy township were from Wales and the cymric names of Williams, Evans, Jones, Roberts, Davis, Hughes, Powell, Edwards, and Harris are yet conspicuous in the city. Years went by, but Williamsburg was no more than a country hamlet; the Rock Island Ry. passed to the north of it and until the early 80's the growth of the place was slow and its importance as a trading center was small. In 1884 the C.M. & St. P. Ry. touched the town and the neigh of the iron horse broke the long slumber of the village. The blood of trade and commerce was infused into its veins; outside the capital was attracted by the natural advantages and location of the place and, as though toughed by the enchanter's wand, the one time country village assume the position and proportions of the thriving little city. The old frame buildings gave way to substantial and imposing brick structures; churches were built, the town incorporated, a system of water works was installed, a lighting system was put in and today Williamsburg stands as the queenliest little city in Iowa county, with a future before her fair and promising as the picture that Fancy paints above a maiden's pillow that lightly rests against her wedding morn.