



Evansport residents took to rowboats during the great 1913 flood. This photograph was taken on First Street, looking west toward Main Street.

About 1847, the *Experiment*, a boat with a 600-bushel capacity, plied the Tiffin River between Evansport and Brunersburg but proved to be an unprofitable venture. In 1892, the passenger steamer *Laurina* made three trips between Defiance and Evansport, transporting 178 barrels of Evansport flour and two tons of chop feed. It took the *Laurina* four hours to make her upstream trek, with the return trip taking only an hour and 45 minutes.

In 1921, the Evansport Light & Power Company, composed of local investors, brought electric power to the village. The company constructed a power line to Stryker and purchased current from the Toledo & Indiana Railway Company's Stryker power plant. Evansport Light & Power was purchased by Toledo Edison in 1927. In 1979-1980, a wastewater collection system was installed in Evansport, followed by a water distribution system in 1998-1999.

Evansport's location next to the scenic Tiffin River has not always been a blessing. Newspaper accounts report the village experienced significant flooding in 1876, 1887, 1904, 1908, 1913, 1982, 1995, 1998 and 2009.

For many years, Evansport's fire protection consisted of hastily-organized bucket brigades. Fires in 1893, 1921 and 1925 destroyed many downtown business buildings. In 1940, Evansport residents organized a fire department and purchased a used fire truck. Today, the Tiffin Township Fire Department boasts well trained and equipped firefighters. In 2007, its small downtown firehouse was replaced with a 7,000-square-foot, \$700,000 modern fire station at Main and Church streets.

Lack of rail facilities or a major highway further hampered Evansport's growth. With the advent of good roads and improved vehicles in the early 1900s, local residents easily traveled to larger neighboring communities to work and conduct business.

In the early 1980s, two Northwest State Community College researchers designated Evansport a ghost town, causing indignation amongst village residents who were caught completely unaware of their own demise.

Today, Evansport is home to several businesses, a post office, fire department, active United Methodist Church, Fox Hunters' Club, and about 300 residents who share a deep sense of pride in their community's rich heritage.

Brochure by Kevin M. Maynard 2009

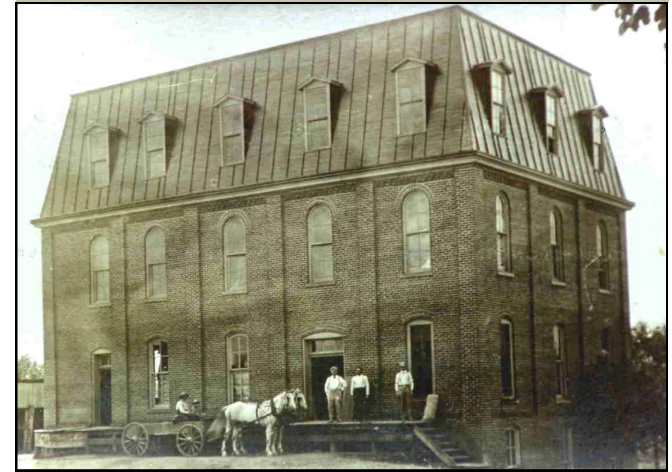
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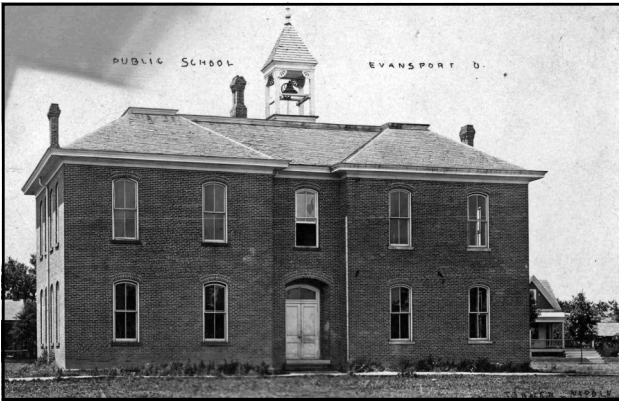
Evansport

River Town with A Rich Heritage



This steam-powered gristmill was erected on Evansport's Main Street after an 1894 fire destroyed the community's water-powered gristmill

Evansport River Town with a Rich Heritage



This school was constructed in Evansport circa 1890. Classes were discontinued in the late 1940s, and the building was razed in 2004.

Although it was declared a “ghost town” in the 1980s, Evansport, an unincorporated village on the Williams-Defiance county border, is a community with a rich heritage that is very much alive and well today.

Evansport was surveyed on December 14, 1835, next to the Tiffin River/Bean Creek in Section 3 of Tiffin Township for Amos Evans, who served as Williams County Prosecuting Attorney from 1831-1835 and again from 1837-1839; his brother, Albert G. Evans, a Defiance storekeeper; and local pioneer Jacob Coy. The town plat contained 122 lots.

Much of Evansport’s early growth was due to its mills. Sawmills and gristmills provided area settlers with sawed lumber to construct homes, barns and other structures as well as flour and cornmeal to supplement their diets.

As early as 1835, Jacob Coy, John Coy and John Snider built a sawmill and gristmill east of Evansport’s main intersection powered by a dam across the Tiffin River. After fire destroyed Evansport’s water-powered mill in 1894, a steam-powered gristmill was

constructed. This mill was later powered by a diesel engine and operated into the 1930s. The large brick gristmill building on Main Street is one of Evansport’s historic landmarks.

The Tiffin River provided a source of water, food, and also served as a transportation thoroughfare for Evansport residents before local roads were developed. In addition, speculation existed that Bean Creek might become part of Ohio’s canal system, hence the “port” suffix in the village’s name.

In 1835, Williams County included most of what is today Defiance County, and its county seat was located at Defiance. Evansport was platted in hopes of becoming the new county seat; however, the county capital was instead moved to Bryan in 1840 and in 1845, Defiance County was created, leaving Evansport on the border of Defiance and Williams counties.

The Evansport post office was established May 1, 1837, with Reuben B. James as its first postmaster. It is Defiance County’s second oldest operating post office—only Defiance’s post office predates it.

The date Evansport’s first school was established is unknown. Directors of School District Number 1 Tiffin Township purchased Lot 104 on the east side of West Street, north of Fourth (Mill) Street, for \$30 on March 13, 1843. A schoolhouse was probably erected about that time. A two-story brick school was built about 1890 east of the United Methodist church. The building’s second floor was removed circa 1920. It was used for classes until the late 1940s and was razed in 2004.

The Evansport United Methodist Church was organized as early as 1839. By 1847, the

congregation constructed a house of worship near the Tiffin River two blocks east of the current church. In 1874 the existing brick church on West Street was constructed. A fellowship hall was added to the building’s south side in 1991.

Nearly every 19th century town had a brass band that played on Saturday nights and during community events, and Evansport was no exception. A town band was organized as early as 1875, and a bandstand once occupied the northeast corner of the town’s main intersection.

In 1881, Evansport boasted five cooper shops or barrel makers that manufactured about 7,000 barrels annually—primarily pork barrels used in Chicago. Other 1800s industries included a tile and brick mill, and a stave factory.

In 1881, Evansport was home to five physicians—Doctors Houston H. Russell, John Stenger Cameron, Robert B. Cameron, Orlando Bennett and M. C. Coy.



The Evansport town band poses in uniform in front of the Evansport school circa 1910.