

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

circa 1920. The structure was used for classes until the late 1940s and was razed in 2004. The site is now occupied by the Tiffin Township Fire Station.

8. Tiling and drainage allowed local pioneers to convert heavily forested, swampy acreage into productive farms. Abundant local clay provided raw material for numerous brick and tile factories established in the 1800s. Clay was formed into brick or tile, dried, and baked or "fired" in kilns to create finished products. Evansport had a brick and tile factory by the 1870s. Key and Son produced brick and tile in Evansport until at least 1903.

9. On May 2, 1885, Nicholas King purchased Lots 37-40, 121 and 122 at the southeast edge of Evansport. King ran a sawmill and cider mill (where apples were squeezed into cider) at this location next to the Tiffin River for many years, selling the property to Lingle & Ruffer in 1909.



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

10. The Tiffin River or Bean Creek has its origin in the Devil's Lake/Addison, Mich., area and flows south through Fulton, Williams and Defiance counties, joining the Maumee River at Defiance. French explorers reportedly named the waterway Bean Creek because of the natural growth of beans along its banks. It was christened the Tiffin River in honor of Edward Tiffin, Ohio's first governor. During pioneer times, the river served as a means to transport people and goods, and also powered sawmills and gristmills. However, Evansport's location next to Bean Creek 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.

11. Downtown Evansport was once a thriving rural economic center that featured numerous diverse businesses including a bank, grocery stores, drugstores, hardware stores, barbershops, blacksmith shops, boot and shoe shops, harness shops, printing shop, a gunsmith, violin maker, auction

house, realtor, furniture store, funeral home, hotel, coopers (barrel makers), meat market, millinery (clothing and hats) store, photographer, restaurant, service stations, automobile dealer, roller skating rink, and taverns. Evansport's town band played from a wooden bandstand located at the northeast corner of Main and First streets.

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 modern 7,000-square-foot, \$700,000 fire station at Main and Church streets.

Lack of rail facilities or a major highway hampered Evansport's growth. Improved roads and vehicles in the early 1900s allowed local residents to easily travel to larger neighboring communities to work and conduct business.

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

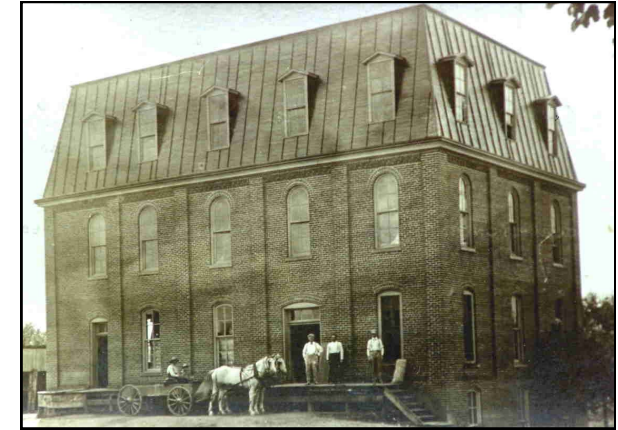
*Brochure by Kevin M. Maynard 2010*

### STRYKER AREA HERITAGE COUNCIL

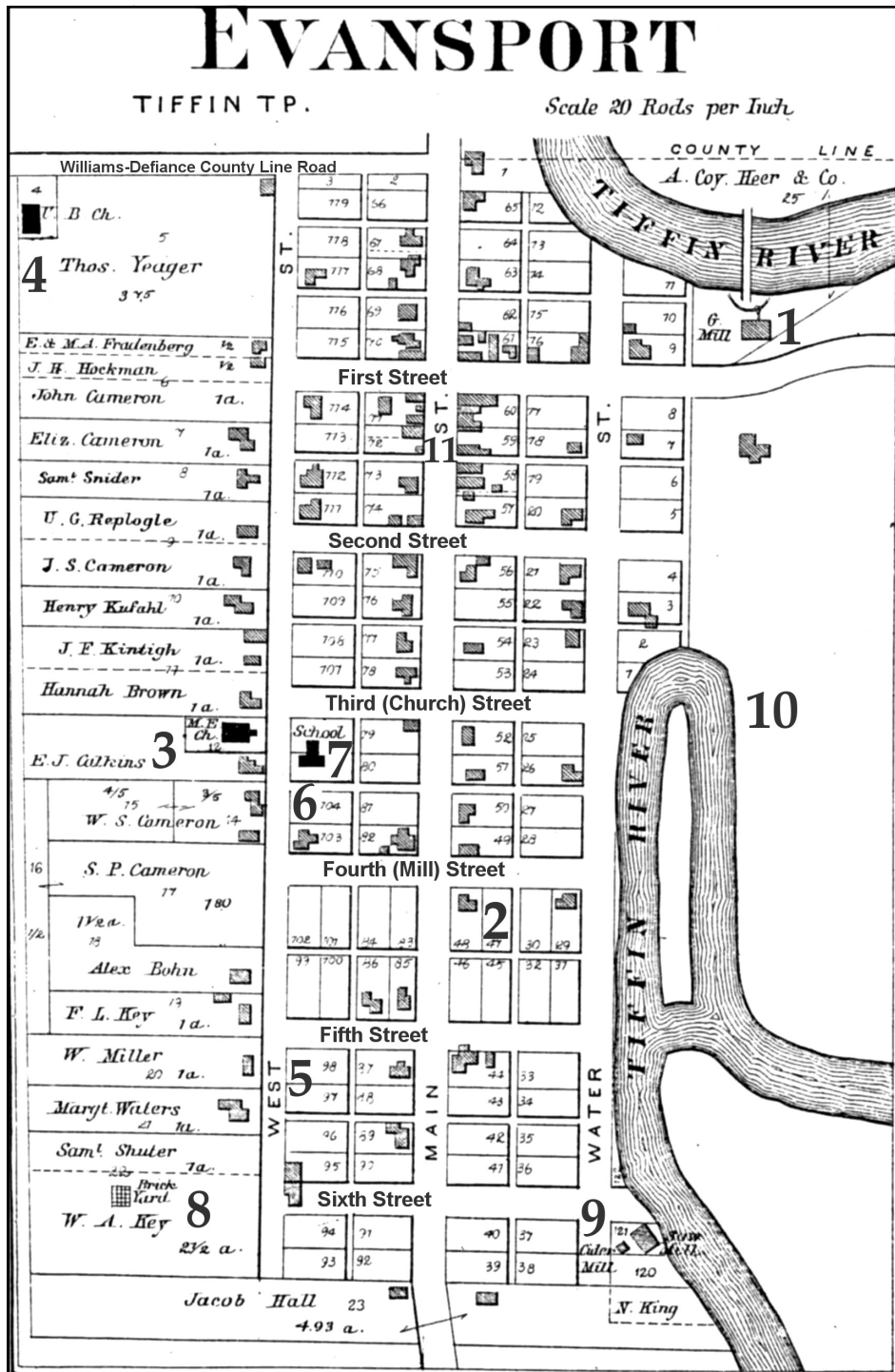
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## THE STRYKER AREA HERITAGE COUNCIL

# An Historic Tour of Evansport



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



**E**vansport was surveyed on December 14, 1835, next to the Tiffin River/Bean Creek in Section 3, 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 merchant; and local farmer/miller Jacob Coy. The town plat contained 122 lots. The map on the left shows Evansport in 1890.

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

1. In the mid- to late 1830s, 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. The mills were destroyed by a fire of suspicious origin in 1885. In 1888, brothers Abram and Isaac Coy constructed a new mill on the site powered by water and steam. This mill, too, was destroyed by fire in 1894.

2. In 1895, the Evansport Milling Company, composed of local investors, constructed a large brick gristmill at the southeast corner of Main and Mill (Fourth) streets. This mill was initially powered by steam and later by a diesel engine. The Evansport mill operated into the 1930s. The mill is one of the town's most recognized landmarks.

3. The Evansport Methodist Episcopal (now known as United Methodist) Church was organized as early as 1832. 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 constructed on the south side of the church in 1991.

4. It is unknown when the Evansport United Brethren in Christ Church was established. On October 25, 1874, the congregation dedicated a wooden frame church described as "entirely unpretentious in its style and furnishing" on the County Line Road west of West Street. The congregation appears to have disbanded around 1900.

5. In 1889, the United Brethren denomination split nationally over the issue of membership in "secret societies" such as the Masons. This division impacted the Evansport congregation. In 1898, the so-called "Radical" faction of the Evansport United Brethren con-



The "Radical" Evansport United Brethren congregation built this church in 1898 at the corner of West and Fifth streets. It was dismantled in the 1930s.

gregation built a wooden frame church with a square bell tower and stained glass windows at the southeast corner of West and Fifth streets. In 1938, the property was sold. The church was dismantled and the material was used to build an addition to the Defiance Pilgrim Holiness Church.

6. The date Evansport's first school was established is uncertain. On March 13, 1843, the 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. A schoolhouse was erected on the site by 1847.

7. In 1876, the Tiffin Township Board of Education purchased Lots 105 and 106, north of Lot 104, and moved or constructed a school building or buildings on these lots. A two-story brick school was built on the site about 1890. The building's second floor was removed