

# EVANS, NY

## 200 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Extracted from Town of Evans Sesquicentennial Program, by Donald D. Cook, Town Historian

### HISTORY>

## HOW EVANS BECAME A TOWN

**Y**ear by year, following the War of 1812, immigration to our lakeside area increased at such a brisk rate that it wasn't long before the authorities began considering "town-hood" for our general area. Such planning became translated into action in March of 1821 when the Legislature of New York State proposed and passed an Act for the purpose of "erecting" the Town of Evans, to become effective on March 31.

Following is the actual text, in part, of this Act, Chapter CXLVII: "Be it enacted by the people of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, that from and after the thirty-first day of March instant, all that part of the Town of Eden, in the County of Niagara, known and distinguished by Township number eight, in the ninth range of the Holland Land Company, be, and hereby is, erected into a separate Town by the name of Evans, and that the first town meeting be held at the dwelling house of William Wright, in said Town..."

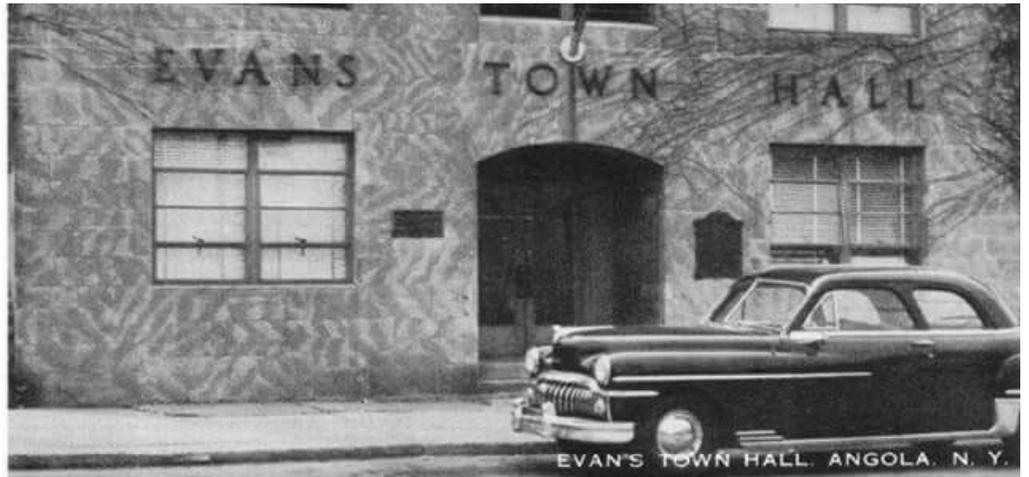
In 1852, the first railroad in Evans was built, and business feverishly moved to a new location, Evans Station, later to be known as Angola. Such moving became contagious, and soon other buildings were moved into the village where only three farms and farmhouses had been before.



### HISTORY>

## THE FIRST SETTLERS

**T**he very first settler in the territory later to be known as the Town of Evans was Joel Harvey. He arrived in 1804 and located on the west side of I 8-Mile Creek near its mouth. Mr. Harvey, with an eye to business in viewing the steady flow of emigrants from the East to the "Western Reserve," decided to enlarge his home for hotel purposes. So in 1806 he opened a tavern, the first in the area, and quite appropriately named it The Frontier House.



### HISTORY>

## HOW OUR TOWN WAS NAMED

**D**avid E. Evans was the nephew of Joseph Ellicott, prominent agent for the Holland Land Company, and served for many years as clerk for that organization. In 1827 Jacob Otto, the resident agent, died; and David Evans was selected to succeed him.

Because of his efficient and humane management of the Holland Agency's affairs in relation to their nearly impoverished settler-clients, he became very popular with both the pioneers and the Company. Under his administration about one half of all the lands ever

owned by the Holland people in Western New York were sold, and the receipts of the Company were said to be larger than all such receipts under the administrations of Joseph Ellicott and Jacob Otto.

The generously worded obituary of Mr. Evans published in the Buffalo Courier stated in part that, "He was a kind, unassuming man, one of unaffected hospitality, and a man of very high order of talent." In such a characterization as this must be the answer of why, when the Legislature formed our Town, it quite wisely named it for David Ellicott Evans.