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## Campus

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# Campus

## THE EVANS LAND AND WVU ARE FOREVER INTERTWINED

The remaining Evansdale land, larger parcels to the northwest of the neighborhood, passed to a bank, which sold them to George Cochran and Benjamin G. Reeder in 1942, along with 26 unsold neighborhood lots. These undeveloped parcels were attractive to a growing West Virginia University; the historic Downtown WVU campus was surrounded by residential neighborhoods and business districts, so space for expansion was limited. In 1948 the University acquired parcels of Evansdale land through eminent domain, as well as the neighboring Krepps farm that same year.

The property was initially purchased for athletic fields with the goal of creating a second campus. WVU owned the land for four years before University President Irvin Stewart suggested that it be officially named "Evansdale" as it was already locally known. The first buildings constructed on the land were designated for Engineering and Agricultural Sciences along with the Agricultural Sciences Annex. Slowly and in small parcels over the years, the University acquired even more of the original Evans farmland from various owners. One significant purchase included the home site of Colonel John Evans. Years earlier, his great-granddaughter Gillie bequeathed the home site to the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) because the family said George Washington slept there during his visit to Monongalia County; records indicate he did not. St. Francis school was situated at this site, but since 2014, it is the location of WVU's student health clinic. Some Evansdale neighborhood homes were demolished to make way for WVU's Evansdale Towers Residential Complex, which opened in 1965. Benjamin G. Reeder built the first all-electric house in the Morgantown area. This home, known today as Blaney House, is the official residence for sitting WVU presidents.



Construction of the new Mountaineer Field, circa 1980. Credit: West Virginia University and Regional History Center, WVU Libraries

In 1960 the WVU hospital opened on land that once belonged to Thomas Evans. WVU acquired more of Thomas's former land by 1969. What was the back nine of the former Morgantown Golf and Country Club is now included in the WVU College of Law campus, built in 1974. In 1980, the rest of the land became the new Mountaineer Field at present-day Milan Puskar Stadium. Thus, WVU's Health Sciences Campus, College of Law, and football facilities, are all intertwined with the history of the Evans land.

Patteson Drive is named for Okie L. Patteson, West Virginia governor from 1949 to 1953. The street was established along the northerly boundary of the original Evans farm. A commercial strip along the Evans side of Patteson Drive (the south side) includes a Kroger store.



View of Evansdale campus after construction of the PRT. Credit: West Virginia University and Regional History Center, WVU Libraries



Evansdale campus, 1965, including Engineering building and early construction of Towers Residential Complex with Evansdale neighborhood in the background. Credit: West Virginia University and Regional History Center, WVU Libraries

Background Image: View of the WVU Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system and PRT cars. Credit: West Virginia and Regional History Center, WVU Libraries



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