

Street Signs:

Evesham

IF Augustus D. Clemens, Jr., had succeeded in the gold rush, there might not be an Evesham avenue today.

Clemens, along with his father and brother William, left Baltimore in 1857 and headed West to California. But they didn't get there. In Leavenworth, Kan., they ran into dozens of other gold seekers—disillusioned gold seekers who were going home.

Impressed with the tales of woe, the Clemenses decided to go home, too. But their funds were low and they opened a small book and stationery store which they operated until William died in 1859.

Father and son returned to Baltimore that year. Eventually Augustus got into the photographic business; later he went into real estate and made a success building houses in Waverly and Govans. In 1895 he bought a 56-acre estate, complete with a large stone mansion, Evesham.

HE bought the estate, located east of the York road just below what is now Northern parkway, from Reverdy Johnson, Jr.—who hadn't lived on the place since 1869 when his wife died there. She had been Caroline Patterson, the daughter of Joseph W. Patterson, a brother of the famed Betsy. He is said to have built Evesham sometime around the War of 1812, naming it after the Vale of Evesham in Worcestershire, England.

Clemens lavished attention upon Evesham and its grounds. Indeed, says a contemporary account, "there are few homes in the city and county of Baltimore more beautiful. . . . To imagine a home more ideal in design and surroundings would be difficult."

But Clemens had more than beauty in mind; he saw a great real estate potential in the land. Around the turn of the century he built some houses on the property along old Gilmor lane, changing the name of the lane to Evesham avenue in honor of the place. Today the street extends from the York road east to Northwood drive.

Augustus D. Clemens, Jr., died in 1909 at the age of 64. But Evesham still stands; its address today is 1001 Dartmouth road. With the seven remaining acres it is owned and occupied by Lennox B. Clemens, who, like his father, is a real estate man.