

A Chinquapin House

Built in 1941 for World War II workers at the Torpedo Factory on the Potomac River in Alexandria, the Chinquapin Village War Housing Project was designed with a series of courts radiating from the circular road present today. Four to six duplexes were arranged around each court for a total of 150 duplexes. The small, frame buildings became known as Chinquapin Houses. Each family had a semi-detached house with living room, kitchen, bath and one, two or three bedrooms. Brice Warthen grew up in the village where “*You had very good neighbors because everybody, everybody, worked in the same place. . . It was a very friendly place to live.*”



Brice Warthen and his mother, Hester, on the steps of the family home in Chinquapin Village. The houses were built on stilts; steps were used to enter the homes.

Courtesy of Brice Warthen



The houses were designed in an open circle with a central playground. Brice Warthen remembered a neighborhood without fences, “We all had the same yard.”

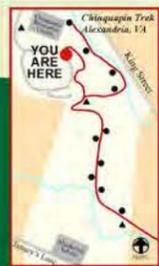
Sanborn Map Company, New York, 1941



This original Chinquapin House was purchased for \$1 and moved to Culpepper, Virginia, before the village was dismantled in the 1960s.

*Photograph by Dave Chisman;
Friends of Alexandria Archaeology*

The remains of steps and sidewalks in Chinquapin Village can still be seen near here. Mildred Massa, a World War II resident, described the houses as “*very plain, just temporary; they were built, but not sturdy.*” A central feature of the interiors was a heater. Jerry Sare remembered, “*The heaters of the houses were right in the middle of the floor between the bathroom, bedroom, and living room. There was a register in the floor, and you could see the fire. They were always breaking down. The houses were very cool, very drafty. . .*”



Alexandria Heritage Trail



This sign is sponsored by the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Conservation and Recreation in cooperation with the City of Alexandria, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and the Alexandria Archaeology Museum, Office of Historic Alexandria.