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

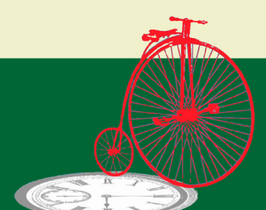
The houses were designed in an open circle with a central playground. Brice Warthen remembered a neighborhood without fences, " We all had the same yard."

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 . . .*"



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