



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### War Village in Alexandria

*Alexandria Times, January 15, 2009*

*Image: Chinquapin Village. Photo, Library of Congress, HABS/HAER..*



**E**ven before the U.S. entered World War II, there was tremendous growth in the defense industry and federal government, especially in the Washington, D.C. area. Thousands of workers and their families came to this region, including hundreds who worked at the U.S. Naval Torpedo Station at King and Union streets. To accommodate these workers, the federal government built dozens of housing developments, Chinquapin Village among the earliest.

In December 1940, the U.S. Navy announced it had chosen a 32-acre site along King Street in Chinquapin Hollow to build a 300-unit development, and the following month, the property was purchased for \$15,000. Around a circular road, 150 duplexes were constructed, usually with four to six buildings clustered together on a court.

When Chinquapin Village opened in 1941, the average rent was less than \$30 a month and each home had a kitchen with an electric refrigerator, living room, bath and one, two or three bedrooms. A community center opened in early 1944 at the entrance from King Street and had an auditorium, two clinic rooms, kitchen and child care space. Residents were active in the community, with kids taking part in sports and scouting, and religious services were held on Sunday at the center.

During the war, Douglas MacArthur Elementary School opened nearby for the children at Chinquapin Village and at Cameron Valley, another defense housing development. Chinquapin Village was later acquired by the City and used for public housing into the 1960s. During redevelopment, the homes were removed and a park opened, and in the 1980s, the new Chinquapin Park Recreation Center opened.

*“Out of the Attic” is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as “Marking Time” and explored Alexandria’s history through collection items, historical*



**Office of Historic Alexandria  
City of Alexandria, Virginia**

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*images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into “Out of the Attic” and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.*

*These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by Amy Bertsch, former Public Information Officer, and Lance Mallamo, Director, on behalf of the Office of Historic Alexandria.*