

# Readers Write

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## Remembering the pavilion

By WILLIE DUNN SPRINGS

I have lived in Mount Holly for a long time. I was not born here but my father, John Samuel Dunn, brought his family to the town in 1914, when I was two years old.

He worked for his cousin, Frank Dunn, who owned a grocery store where the present Massey Hardware store is today. My father later built his own grocery store at the top of the hill southeast of the underpass.

He sent a young man out to take orders for groceries and then later delivered them. Many groceries were put on a charge slip and paid for later.

Yes, I have seen Mount Holly with no paved roads, no city water or sewage facilities, a theater that showed silent movies, and doctors who came out to the homes.

One thing that is outstanding in my memory is the flood of 1916. Living near the underpass — across from the old ice plant and looking toward uptown — I could see the whole hollow covered with water.

It came up to the second step at my home. If you were uptown and wanted to go to the depot you had to go around by Summit Avenue.

Much has been written about the flood, but I want to tell you about something else I remember. I wonder if you know that Mount Holly once had a beautiful big park down on the Catawba River, just below the Piedmont and Northern

bridge. This land is now owned by Sou Tex.

This park had swings and picnic tables. Many teachers back then would treat their class about once a year to a march down to the park. They would eat their lunches on the tables. A young man could take his girlfriend on a boat ride on the river.

On the bank above the river stood a large pavilion. It had a roof and big dance floor, but was open on all sides. Seats were all around. You could dance and then sit down and look out at the gently flowing Catawba River.

Adjoining the dance floor was a stage where one could stand and call figures for dancing or a band could play. Sometimes little plays were staged. Stairs led to the lower level which overlooked a magnificent view of the river. Refreshments were sold at a nearby table.

Childhood memories are still strong. One thing that impressed me was the huge fireplace where big logs chased the season of chill.

As a child, another thing that impressed me was a round cement container about a yard high, placed just in front of the pavilion. It had two alligators in it and I always wondered where they landed when the flood came and washed them away.

I remember a circus coming there since this was a rather large tract of land involved.

The pavilion was not completely destroyed by the flood of 1916. It was cleaned up, repaired and used for several years.

Since I haven't seen a record of this early part of Mount Holly history I wanted to record it while the details are fresh in my mind.

Willie Springs