

# The Riverbend Village

By Doris Connell

Riverbend is an area that is very familiar to nearly everyone in Mount Holly. Most people know about the Duke Power Steam Plant in the heart of Riverbend, the boat landing where many spend their leisurely time fishing and swimming, and enjoy exploring the overgrown woods. But what people don't know about Riverbend is what used to be here.

A town within itself once lived where the woods now exists. The community was the Riverbend Village and it was my childhood home since I was two. Mountain Island Lake was created in the early 1920's with the hydro-electric dam beginning to produce and sell electricity in 1923. Duke Power then built the Riverbend Steam Plant, which opened to commercial operation in 1929. Because most people did not have cars at that time, Duke Power built the neighborhood so that the people who worked at the steam plant could walk to work. My father accepted a job at the Steam Plant, so in 1929 when I was two, we became a part of this community.

The Riverbend Village was a tight-knit community that felt like a giant family. Everyone knew each other and whenever our family needed something, the neighbors would help. It was a very wholesome environment. I used to play outside for hours with all of the other children in the neighborhood.

Our Community Center also kept the Village close together. In the summertime, the Community Center planned recreation activities, games, and plays. Church was held on Sundays in the Community Center. We didn't have a pastor and it wasn't organized; a few of the men who had knowledge of the teachings of the Bible would stand up in

front of the congregation and just talk about the word of God. Everyone could walk to church at the Community Center, and it was wonderful to worship with each other every week.

A mile away from the Village was a grocery store that offered weekly home delivery. At the beginning of the week, the store owner would stop by each house and take orders. The food was delivered by the end of the week. Also, many farmers would stop and sell fresh produce from their trucks. The farmers loved coming into the Village because all the mothers would give them steady business.

All the local school children rode the bus to school. We attended first through seventh grade at Lucia Elementary School. We had eleven people graduate from the elementary school in 1941. I met my husband, Bob, my freshman year at Mount Holly High School. Forty-two people graduated from Mount Holly High School in 1945. One thing is for sure: I would not want to live anywhere else in the world, except in Mount Holly.