

We Fought WWII on the Home Front

Welcome News

IN AUGUST of 1945, when I was 10 years old, my parents decided to make a trip from our home in Jackson, Michigan to Otter Lake to spend a day or so with Mother's sister, Leola Sheldon.

At the time, Dad had a 1940 Ford without a radio, so we were in a world of our own, likely playing the alphabet game or counting horses on each side of the road.

As we crossed the tracks at the Otter Lake village limits, the quiet community came alive. Car horns were blowing, church bells were ringing and shotguns were being fired into the air.

I remember Dad saying, "I didn't think they knew we were coming, but we're certainly getting a warm welcome."

As we turned into Aunt Leola's driveway, someone came out of the house, shouting, "The Japanese have surrendered!" My cousin Royal was at the firehouse ringing the fire bell, so I quickly ran over to the firehouse and got in on my share of pulling the rope.

There was one casualty as a result of the celebration. The fire bell broke, and ever since that day, the village of Otter Lake has used a siren to summon volunteers to the scene of a fire.

—Bruce D., Salisbury, Maryland

Furlough with the Adamses

I LEARNED all I ever wanted to know about chickens during the

war years of 1942 to '45, when our home was close to the naval air station in Jacksonville, Florida.

Since rationing was in full swing and we were meat-and-potatoes people, my mom started raising chickens. When my brother, Ray Adams, joined the U.S. Navy, in the summer of '42, chores like cleaning the chicken coop were left to me.

Ray made a habit of bringing home several of his buddies from the naval station on off-duty weekends. Most of them were from Northern states and just went crazy over Mom's Southern-fried chicken, buttermilk biscuits and huge bowls of scrambled eggs. The milkman would add an extra quart to help feed those sailors.

Even after Ray was transferred, other boys were told to call the Adams house and Miss Ernie Belle, my mom, who would love to have them for the weekend. It was a time when people stepped up to the plate and accepted responsibility to keep things going on the home front.

—Patsy W., Jacksonville, Florida