



Dear Boys: World War II Letters from a Woman Back Home

Mrs. Keith Frazier Somerville

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Throughout the war years of the 1940s there were enormous outpourings of correspondence from all parts of the United States to men and women in the service. Among these were local news columns written in the form of letters to soldiers. With a mission of sustaining morale as well as insuring that young Americans stationed far away were informed of local events, the "Dear Boys" column from the Mississippi Delta is a shining example of this genre.

Dear Boys collects memorable columns written by Mrs. Keith Frazier Somerville (1888-1978) for the newspaper of Bolivar County, Mississippi. Filled with illuminating insights and anecdotes, these poignant letters provide a fascinating look at life in the Mississippi Delta during wartime and at what happened to local citizens scattered over the "four corners of the world." Keith Frazier Somerville, a remarkable writer, gave breadth and depth to many significant, wide-reaching topics in addition to reporting entertaining tidbits of local news. She describes the important role played by women in the winning of the war. She offers commentary upon race relations, an uncommon subject in wartime America, especially in the Deep South. She apprises her readers of the fact of Nazi atrocities against Jews, though many governmental figures shied from this subject in their public pronouncements. With her clear view and her fair mind she expressed pride in the multi-ethnic and multi-faith composition of her local county, and she hoped that a positive influence of the war would be greater personal and social equality at home.

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