

1945 December 17-23

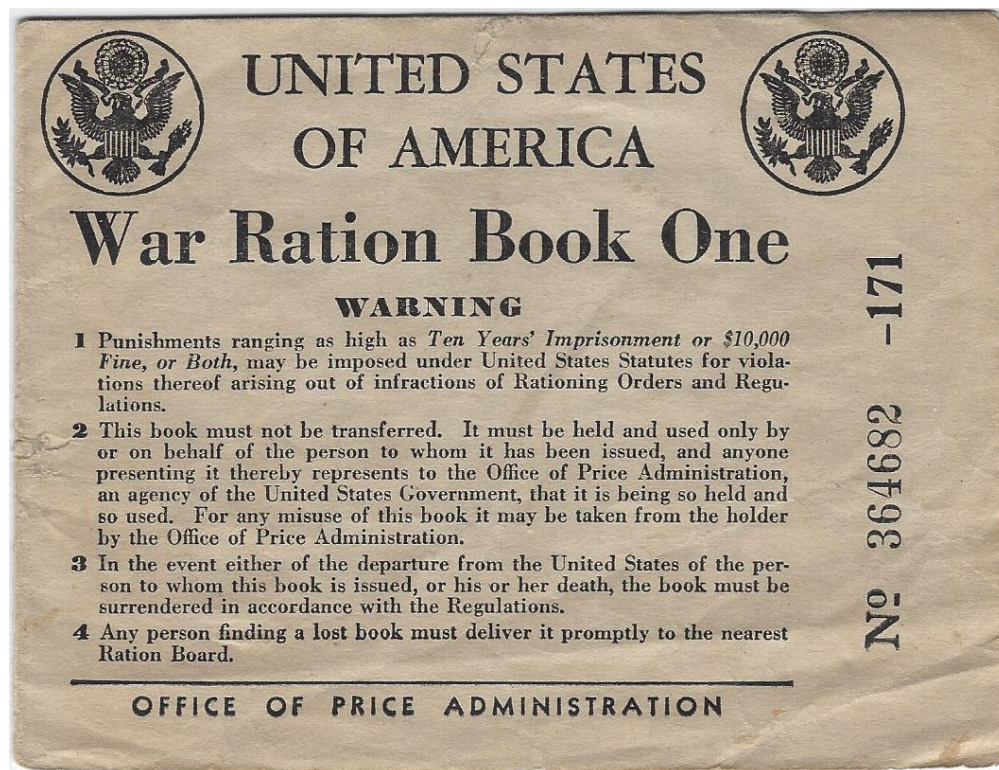
Forced Frugality

Because of the vast quantities of materials needed to feed, clothe, fuel, and equip the armed forces during World War II, civilians on the homefront were required to reduce their consumption of many things. Human nature being what it is, voluntary compliance was not enough. The government instituted a system of rationing designed to reduce civilian consumption of vital commodities, goods, materials, and services.

Administering the rationing system was a complicated affair. In La Crosse County alone, volunteers worked thousands of hours a year on various ration board panels for:

- Tires
- Fuel Oil
- Food
- Automobiles
- Shoes and boots
- Prices¹

All 130 million Americans were registered and issued rationing coupon books.² To prevent hoarding, ration stamps were coded and could only be used within a specified time period.³



(Collection of the author)

FOLD BACK + FOLD BACK

Certificate of Registrar

This is to Certify that pursuant to the Rationing Orders and Regulations administered by the OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION, an agency of the United States Government,

(Name, Address, and Description of person to whom the book is issued:)

Duncan (Last name) *Myrtle* (First name) *Fern* (Middle name)
 117 (Street No. or P. O. Box No.) *Grove* (Street or R. F. D.)
Sparta (City or town) *Tancoe* (County) *Wisconsin* (State)

5 ft. 2 in. (Height) 128 lbs. (Weight) Hazel (Color of eyes) Dark (Color of hair) 70 yrs. (Age) Sex { Male Female }
 has been issued the attached War Ration Stamps this 4 day of May 1942, upon the basis of an application signed by himself , herself , or on his or her behalf by his or her husband , wife , father , mother , exception . (Check one.)
Raymond Remington (Signature)
 Local Board No. 41-1 County Monroe State Wis.

Stamps must not be detached except in the presence of the retailer, his employee, or person authorized by him to make delivery.

WAR RATION STAMP
22

WAR RATION STAMP
20

WAR RATION STAMP
21

WAR RATION STAMP
19

The Stamps contained in this Book are valid only after the lawful holder of this Book has signed the certificate below, and are void if detached contrary to the Regulations. (A father, mother, or guardian may sign the name of a person under 18.) In case of questions, difficulties, or complaints, consult your local Ration Board.

Certificate of Book Holder

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I have observed all the conditions and regulations governing the issuance of this War Ration Book; that the "Description of Book Holder" contained herein is correct; that an application for issuance of this book has been duly made by me or on my behalf; and that the statements contained in said application are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

W. D. Duncan [Book Holder's Own Name]
 (Signature of, or on behalf of, Book Holder)

Any person signing on behalf of Book Holder must sign his or her own name below and indicate relationship to Book Holder _____

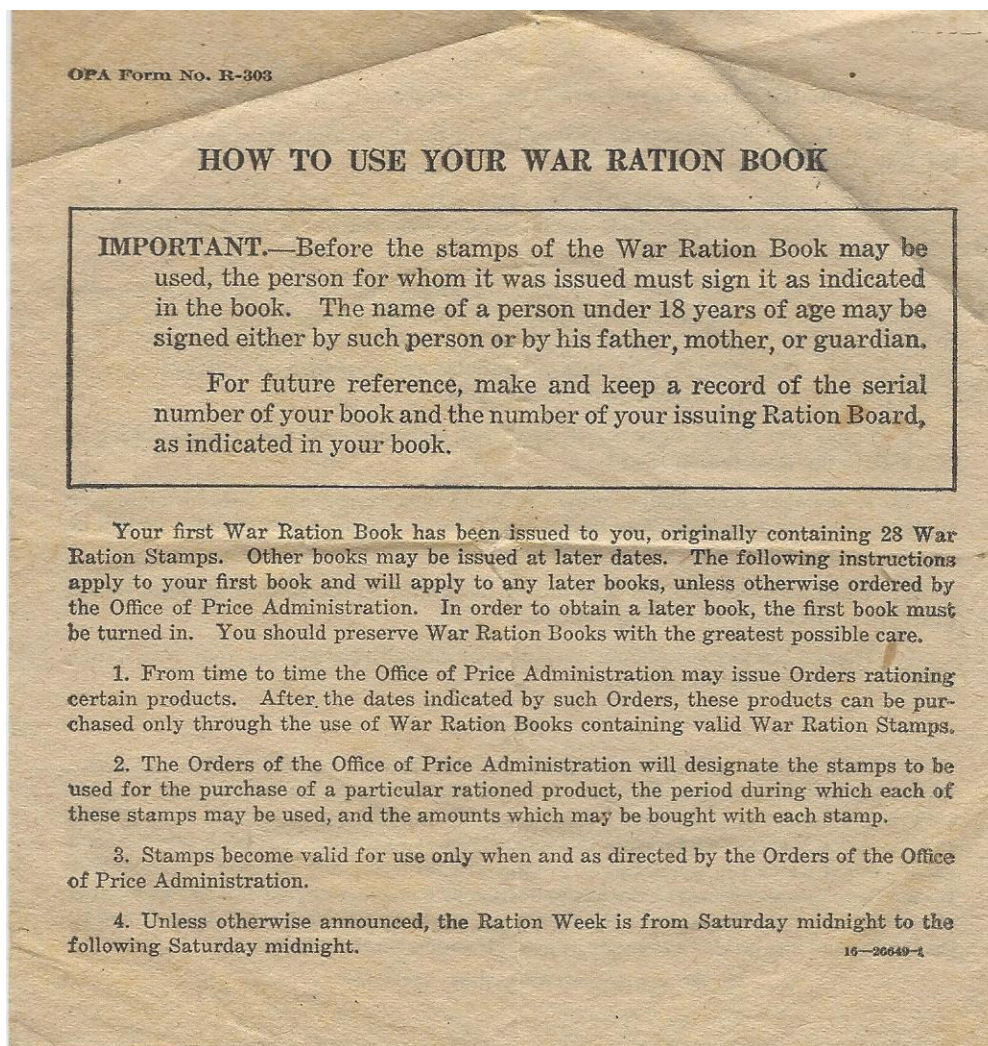
Wife
 (Father, Mother, or Guardian)

★ U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1942 16-26651-1 OPA Form No. R-302

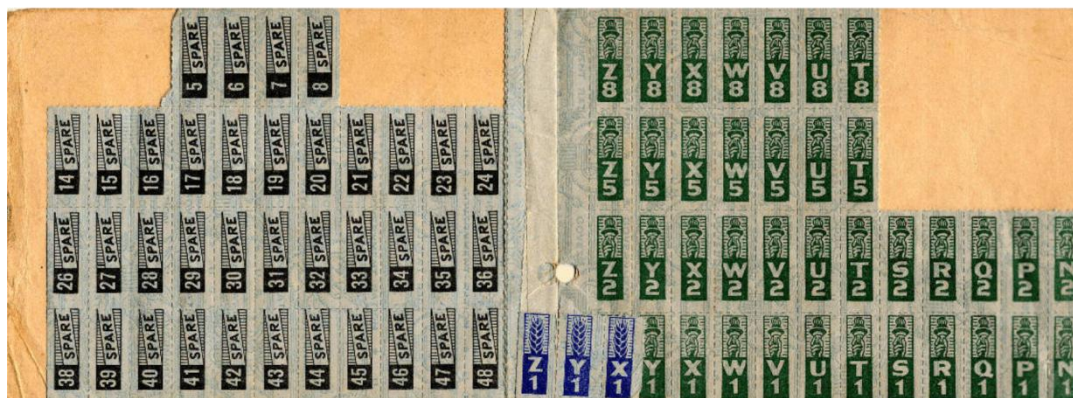
(Collection of the author)



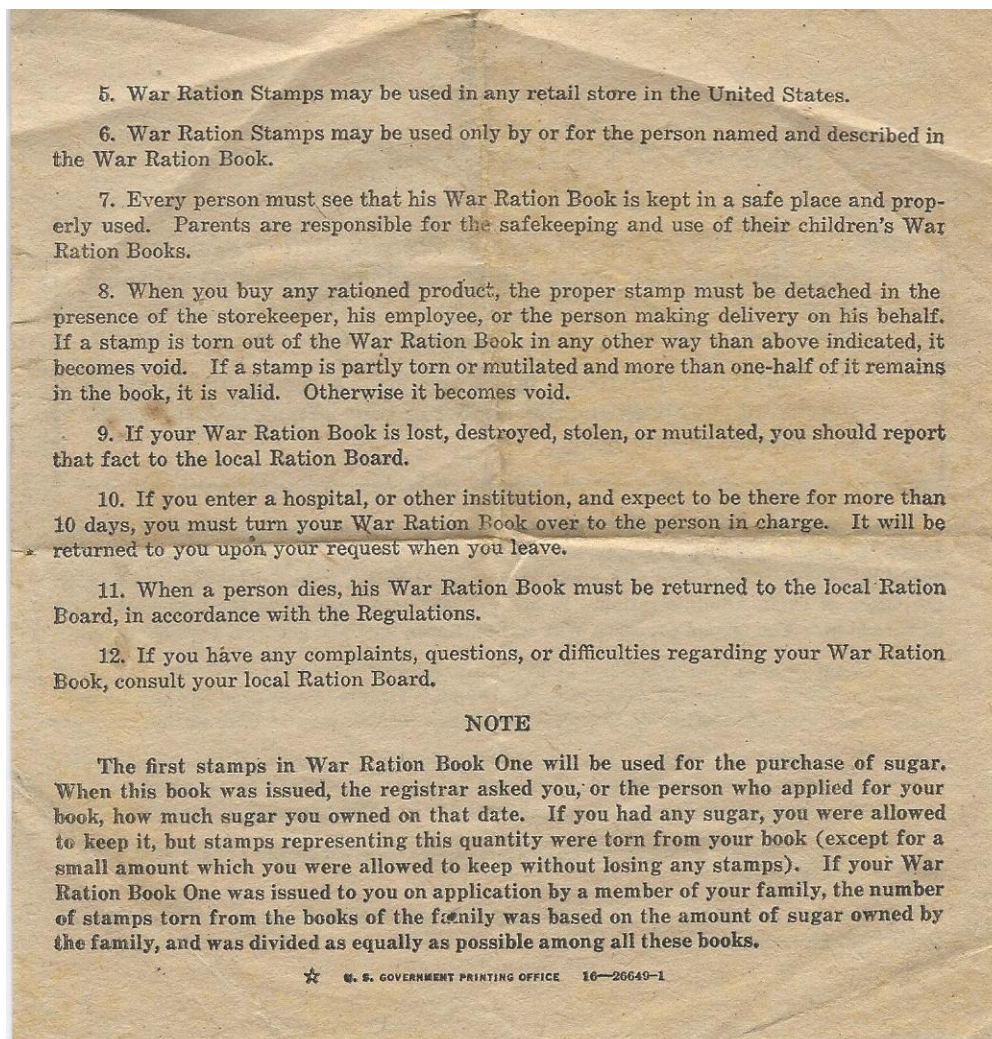
(Coal City, Illinois, Library District)



(Collection of the author)



(Coal City, Illinois, Library District)



(Collection of the author)

Food rationing began in early 1942. Sugar was the first food to be rationed, and coffee, canned foods, cheese, and butter were added to the rationing list later. Food rationing not only directed more food to soldiers and sailors, but it also conserved the vital war materials needed to package it, such as tin, plus there was a shortage of shipping capacity for food importation.⁴

When sugar rationing started in May 1942, people had to go to their local elementary school and declare the amount of sugar they had in their household to rationing volunteers. Then they were given ration books containing coupons for a one-year supply of sugar (minus what they already had on hand).⁵ Saccharin and corn syrup became popular substitutes.⁶ Sugar was so scarce in May 1945 that stamps for five-pounds of sugar had to cover four months instead of the previously-required three months.⁷

O. P. A. Form No. R-306

Serial No C **26188309**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION
SUGAR PURCHASE CERTIFICATE

Not Valid Before Aug 7-41 Date

TRIPPLICATE

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Name: Walter H. Hefner Address: _____

City: Bellevue County: Bellevue State: W.Va.

is authorized to accept delivery of _____ () pounds of sugar pursuant to Rationing Order No. 3 (Sugar Rationing Regulations) of, and at a price not to exceed the maximum price established by, the Office of Price Administration.

Local Rationing Board No. 32-1 Date Aug 7-42

By: Walter H. Hefner Signature of issuing officer

County _____ State _____ Title _____

To Be Retained by Original Holder

(Collection of the author)

Food rationing affected everyone in the country. Every person was issued a ration book containing blue stamps (48 points per month) for canned goods and another ration book containing red stamps (64 points per month) for meat, fish, and dairy products. Everybody got new ration books at the start of each month, and the point values of various foods could change from month to month depending on availability.⁸ A person almost had to be a mathematician just to buy groceries.

Some of the "point-free" foods, such as pork head, pork feet, and ox tails, required a little courage for consumption.

POLAR CHEST FROZEN FOOD LOCKERS	
1920 STATE ROAD.	PHONE 227
• POINT FREE FOODS •	
PORK HEADS	per lb. 12¢
Pork Liver	per lb. 17¢
Pork Feet	per lb. 8¢
OX TAILS	per lb. 14¢
Beef Kidneys	lb. 10¢
Ring Sausage	lb. 25¢
NECK or BACK BONES	per lb. 6¢
Lard	1-lb. Print 17¢
Pork Hocks	per lb. 18¢
Kraut	In Your Container per lb. 6¢
Grapefruit	7 for 25¢
FRESH FROZEN	
★ PICKEREL	per lb. 9¢ ★

(La Crosse Tribune, 1945 January 11, page 18)

A "Ration Guide" was a daily feature in the *La Crosse Tribune* for almost the whole year of 1945.

Ration Guide

(By the Associated Press)

MEATS, FATS, ETC.

Book four red stamps Q5 through S5 good through March 31. Stamps T5 through X5 good through April 28. Stamps Y5, Z5 and A2 through D2 good through June 2.

PROCESSED FOODS

Book four blue stamps X3 through Z5 and A2 and B2 good through March 31. Stamps C2 through G2 good through April 28. Stamps H2 through M2 good through June 2.

SUGAR

Book four stamp 34 good for five pounds through Feb. 28. Stamp 35 valid for five pounds through June 2. Another stamp scheduled to be validated May 1.

SHOES

Book three airplane stamps 1, 2 and 3 valid indefinitely; OPA says no plans to cancel any.

GASOLINE

All 14-A coupons good everywhere for four gallons through March 21. B-5, C-5, B-6 and C-6 coupons good everywhere for five gallons.

FUEL OIL

Last year's period four and five coupons and this year's period one, two, three and four coupons good in all areas. Period five coupons valid in midwest. All coupons valid throughout current heating season.

Fresh fruits and vegetable ceiling prices in the cities of La Crosse and Sparta, Wis., and Winona, Minn., for the week of Feb. 8 to Feb. 14, inclusive:

FRUITS

Apples, Washington, two pounds, 27 cents; apples, Michigan, two pounds, 23 cents; bananas, Central American, one pound, 11 cents; grapefruit, Texas, white meat, one pound, seven cents; grapefruit, Texas, pink meat, one pound, eight cents; lemons, all, one pound, 14 cents; oranges, California Sunkist, one pound, 12 cents.

VEGETABLES

Carrots, California, bunched (minimum weight one pound), bunch, 10 cents; carrots, California, topped, bulk, one pound, seven cents; lettuce, large (four dozen size), one head, 13 cents; lettuce, medium (five dozen size), one head, 11 cents; onions, dry, yellow, 2½ inches, Colorado, three pounds, 19 cents; onions, dry, yellow, 2½ inches, all others, three pounds, 15 cents; potatoes, North Dakota, U. S. No. 1, size A, five pounds, 25 cents; potatoes, Wisconsin, U. S. No. 1, size A, five pounds, 24 cents.

(*La Crosse Tribune*, 1945 February 8, page 14)

New Meat Point Value Schedule

WASHINGTON — (AP) — New March point values announced today by OPA:

Commodity	New Point	Change
BEEF		
STEAKS		
Porterhouse	9 down 3	
T-bone	9 down 3	
Club	9 down 3	
Sirloin	9 down 2	
Sirloin-boneless	11 down 2	
Round (full cut)	10 down 3	
Top Round	10 down 3	
Bottom Round	10 down 3	
Round Tip	10 down 3	
Chuck (blade or arm)	6 up 3	
Flank	10 up 2	
ROASTS		
Round Tip	9 down 2	
Short Loin—boneless, rolled (C and D graded only)	10 down 2	
Sirloin—boneless	10 down 2	
Chuck (blade or arm)—bone in	6 up 3	
Chuck or Shoulder—boneless	7 up 3	
English Cut	6 up 3	
OTHER CUTS		
Short Ribs	3 up 2	
Plate—bone in	3 up 2	
Plate—boneless	4 up 2	
Brisket—bone in	3 up 2	
Brisket—boneless	4 up 2	
Flank Meat	5 up 2	
Neck—bone in	4 up 2	
Neck—boneless	6 up 2	
Shank—bone in	3 up 2	
Shank Meat—boneless	4 up 2	
HAMBURGER		
Ground from boneless D grade beef and from forequarters, blanks, shanks, and trimmings of any other grades of beef and beef fat	6 up 2	
VEAL		
ROUND STEAK (Cullets or Roast)	10 down 3	
PORK		
STEAKS AND CHOPS		
End Chops	6 up 1	
Shoulder or Picnic Steaks	6 up 2	
Bellies, fresh and cured only	5 up 2	
ROASTS		
Loin—whole or half	7 up 1	
Loin—end cuts	5 up 1	
x-Ham—whole or half	7 up 1	
x-Ham—butt end	4 up 1	
x-Ham—shank end	4 up 1	
x-Ham—boneless, whole or half	8 up 1	
Shoulder—whole or shank half (picnic) bone in	5 up 2	
Shoulder—shank half (picnic) boneless (piece or slices)	6 up 2	
Shoulder—butt half (Boston butt) bone in (piece or slices)	6 up 2	
Shoulder—butt half (Boston butt) boneless (piece or slices)	6 up 2	
x-Regular or skinned, but not ready-to-eat.		
OTHER PORK CUTS		
Fat Backs and Clear Plates	3 up 2	
Hocks	2 up 2	
Jowls, Jowl Butts or Squares	3 up 2	
Knuckles	1 up 2	
Plates, regular	3 up 2	
Spareribs	4 up 1	
BACON		
Bacon—slab or piece, rind on	6 up 2	
Bacon—slab or piece, rind off	6 up 2	
Bacon—sliced, rind off	6 up 2	
Bacon—Ends—pieces or slices	1 up 1	
Bacon—plate and jowl	3 up 2	
Jowls, jawbone in, aged, dry-cured	2 up 1	
Sides, aged, dry-cured	7 up 2	
VARIETY MEATS		
BEEF		
Heart	2 up 2	
Sweetbreads	2 up 2	
Tongue (short cut)	2 up 2	
LAMBS		
Heart	2 up 2	
Liver	2 up 2	

Sweetbreads	2 up 2
Tongue	2 up 2
VEAL	
Heart	2 up 2
Sweetbreads	2 up 2
Tongue	2 up 2
PORK	
Heart	2 up 2
Liver	1 up 1
Tongue	2 up 2
LIVER PRODUCTS	
Braunschwiiger	2 up 2
Fresh or Smoked Liver Sausage	2 up 2
Liver Cheese	2 up 2
Liver Loaf	2 up 2
Liver Pudding	2 up 2
Miscellaneous Sausage Products	
Berliner	4 up 2
Capiccoli Butts	7 up 2
Knackwurst (all beef)	5 up 2
Lebanon Bologna	7 up 2
Minced Luncheon	4 up 2
New England	6 up 3
Pepperoni (fresh)	5 up 2
SAUSAGE	
Dry Sausage—Hard: typical items are hard salami, hard cervelat	6 up 2
Semi-dry Sausage: Typical items are cervelat, pork roll, and mortadella	5 up 2
Fresh, smoked, and cooked sausage Group A: 100 per cent rationed material	5 up 2
Group B: Not less than 90 per cent rationed material	4 up 2
Group C: Not less than 50 per cent rationed material; blood sausage included regardless of higher meat content	2 up 2
Group D: Less than 50 per cent but more than 20 per cent rationed material; souse and head cheese included regardless of higher meat content	1 up 1
MEATS (in tin or glass containers) (including brick or other form):	
Pork Sausage (bulk or link)	5 up 3
Chili Con Carne without beans	3 up 3
Chili Con Carne with beans	2 up 2
Chopped Ham	2 new item

Corned beef	8 up 2
Corned Beef Hash	3 up 1
Corned Beef Hash less than 50 per cent but more than 20 per cent meat	
Deviled Ham	4 up 1
Deviled Tongue	4 up 4
Ham (whole or piece)	10 up 1
Luncheon meat	6 up 2
Meat Loaf	3 up 3
Meat Spreads	3 up 2
Posted and Deviled Meats	2 up 2
Roast Beef Hash	3 new item
Sausage in Oil	3 up 1
Spiced Ham	6 new item
Tamales	1 up 1
Tongue, beef	4 up 4
Tongue, pork, veal or lamb	4 up 4
Vienna Sausage	5 up 3
READY-TO-EAT MEATS (Cooked, boiled, baked or barbecued)	
Barbecued Pork—sliced or shredded	10 up 2
Canadian Bacon, smoked (whole, piece or sliced)	12 new item
Corned Beef Brisket (sliced)	7 up 2
x-Ham—bone in, whole or half	9 up 1
x-Ham—butt end	9 up 1
x-Ham—shank end	6 up 1
xx-Ham—boneless, whole or half	10 up 1
Picnic or Shoulder—bone in	7 up 2
Picnic or Shoulder—boneless	8 up 2
Picnic or Shoulder Slices	9 up 2
Spareribs, cooked or barbecued	6 up 1
Tongue, slices	5 up 5
x-Regular or skinned. Includes prosciutti hams.	
xx-Includes prosciutti hams.	
x-Fat, Oils and Dairy Products	
Lard	4 up 2
Shortening	4 up 2
Salad and cooking oils	4 up 2
Margarine	5 up 2
x-Became effective Sunday, Feb. 25, 1945.	

ERNIE FETCHES \$2,000,000

In a recent Dallas, Texas, war bond rally, a pencil and crayon portrait of Ernie Pyle was sold for two million dollars in war bonds.

With less meat available, people had to adapt their eating habits and find substitutes. Meat-containing casseroles were one way to make a family's meat allowance stretch farther.⁹ Alberta Gund of La Crosse recalls her family raising chickens and rabbits because of wartime meat rationing. One of her chores was checking the water supply for the rabbits three times a day.¹⁰ Meat was in such short supply that some butchers sold horsemeat for twenty cents per pound. Some restaurants served buffalo, antelope, and beaver.¹¹

When the war in Europe ended, the food situation got worse. Feeding the starving liberated peoples in Europe caused point values for some foods to increase in the United States. In May 1945, lard, shortening, cooking and salad oils went from six points a pound to ten points a pound.¹² It was estimated that it would take 12 million tons of food "to keep Europe from starvation."¹³

Gasoline rationing started in December 1942. Gasoline rationing not only ensured more fuel for the military but it also conserved vehicle tires. This was important because the Japanese conquests in the Southwest Pacific had cut off shipments of crude rubber to the United States.¹⁴ Drivers received coded windshield stickers for their vehicles that determined how much gasoline they could buy per week.¹⁵ To deliver one ton of bombs, the engines of a bomber aircraft required about three tons of high-octane gasoline.¹⁶ The United States did a lot of bombing during World War II.

VIOLATORS OF THE GASOLINE RATIONING REGULATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO REVOCATION OF RATIONS AND CRIMINAL PROSECUTION UNDER THE LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES

BULK TRANSFER AND NON-OCCUPATIONAL BOAT USE

Bulk transfer authorized? (Yes or No) _____

Non-occupational boat use authorized? (Yes or No) _____

Signed (for Board) _____

War Price & Rationing Board 6841

Board No. _____ County _____ State _____

Supply Division, Building 2502

Camp McCoy, Monroe County, Wisconsin 16-32764-1

RATION HOLDER MUST

Write at once in ink or indelible pencil on face of coupons as follows:

"B," "C," and "T."—License No. and state of registration.

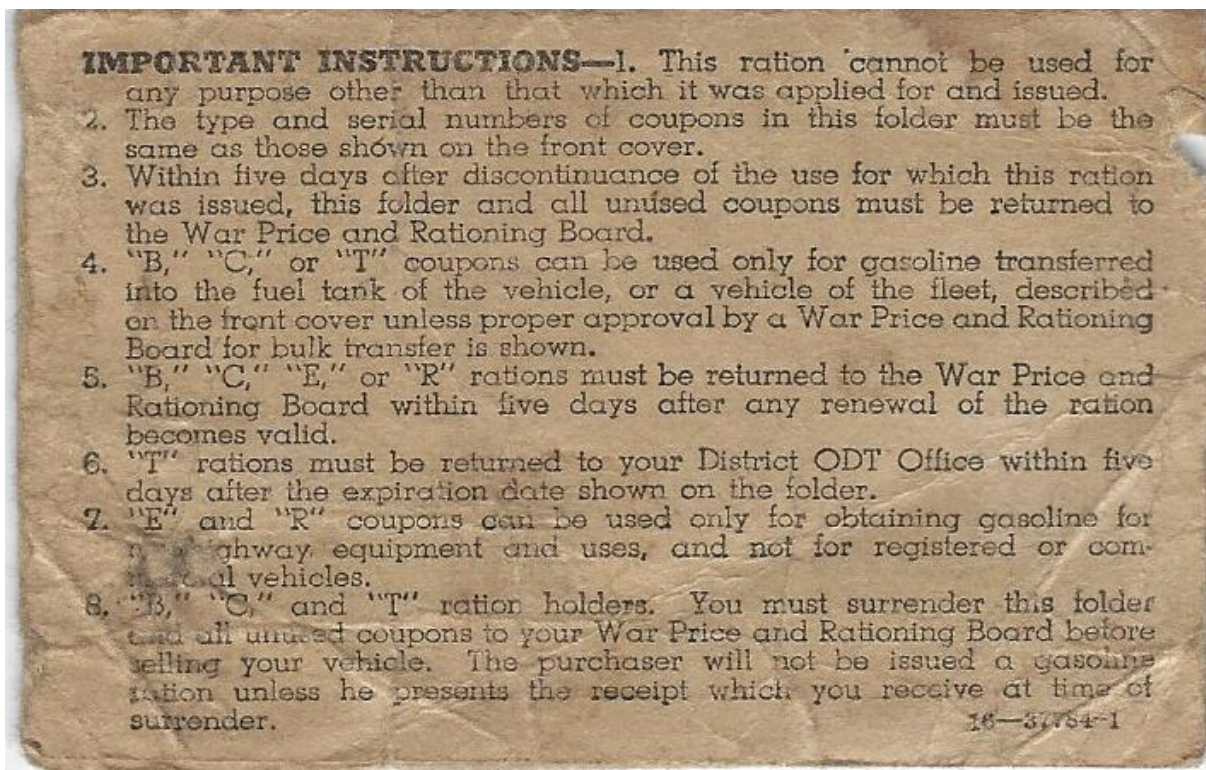
FLEET CARS.—If fleet name or Certificate of War Necessity number is used on folder, write city and State of main office and fleet name or certificate number, instead of license number and State of registration.

"E" and "R."—Name and address of ration holder.

ANY PERSON FINDING LOST COUPONS SHOULD MAIL OR RETURN THEM AT ONCE TO THE NEAREST WAR PRICE AND RATIONING BOARD

16-37784-1

(Collection of the author)



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA * * OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION
MILEAGE RATION IDENTIFICATION FOLDER

B C T E-R

ISSUED TO <i>Wesley C. Huber</i>		VEHICLE LICENSE NO. <i>63-988</i>
COMPLETE ADDRESS <i>Rt 1 Box 100</i>		STATE OF REGISTRATION <i>Wis.</i>
VALID FROM DATE BELOW <i>2-27-44</i>		YEAR MODEL AND MAKE <i>1935 Ford</i>
EARLIEST RENEWAL DATE <i>2-27-46</i>		EXPIRATION DATE
FLEET IDENTIFICATION OR CERTIFICATE OF WAR NECESSITY NUMBER (IF ANY)		
SERIAL NUMBERS OF COUPONS ISSUED		
FROM: <i>0022525</i>		TO: <i>542</i> INCLUSIVE

COUPONS MUST BE KEPT WITH THIS FOLDER AT ALL TIMES

☆ GPO 16-37784-1

(Collection of the author)

Shoes and clothing were in short supply. Nearly all leather went to military uses, so shoe sales were limited. It was the same situation for wool and cotton clothing.¹⁷ Even leather baby shoes required ration stamps after May 1, 1945.¹⁸



(The National WWII Museum)

A bureaucracy had to be created to keep track of the approximately three billion stamps that were used for transactions each month. The consumer gave the required number of stamps to the retailer, who sent them to the wholesaler, who sent them to the manufacturer, and then there was reconciling records with the federal government.¹⁹

Resentment of rationing led to cheating, hoarding, and a thriving black market.²⁰ An investigation in the United States Senate revealed the red ration points were being sold in New York City for \$6.00 per thousand. When asked what could be done about such black market activity, [Senator Burton Wheeler](#) of Montana said there would be a black market "as long as we have a shortage and people have plenty of money."²¹

When the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan and the Japanese sued for peace in August 1945, the Office of Price Administration stopped printing millions of ration books for food, shoes, and gasoline that were to be distributed in December.²² A few days after that announcement, the Office of Price Administration ended "rationing of gasoline, canned fruits and vegetables, fuel oil and oil stoves."²³

SIDE GLANCES

By GALBRAITH



"I had almost forgotten about these canned goods I borrowed from you—but when I read that they were no longer rationed it reminded me!"

(*La Crosse Tribune*, 1945 September 29, page 3)

By the end of 1945, only sugar was still being rationed, and sugar rationing did not end until June 1947. There were still shortages of many goods for some time as manufacturers transitioned from wartime to peacetime production.²⁴

After four years of conserving and going without, Americans were ready to go on a shopping spree.

Jeff Rand
 Adult Services Librarian
 La Crosse Public Library
 jrand@lacrosselibrary.org

Sources & Notes:

- ¹"Group Of Residents Works Thousands Of Hours Annually On Numerous Panels Of Ration Board," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1945 January 3, page 10.
- ² *Summary of the Second World War and Its Consequences: An Alphabetical Reference Book* (Chicago: F.E. Compton & Company, 1946), 59.
- ³ Ronald H. Bailey, *The Home Front: U.S.A.* (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1977), 110.
- ⁴ *Summary of the Second World War and Its Consequences*, 58-59.
- ⁵ Bailey, 110.
- ⁶ Bailey, 156.
- ⁷ "Sugar is so scarce," *Bangor Independent*, Bangor, Wisconsin, 1945 May 10, page 1.
- ⁸ Bailey, 112.
- ⁹ Bailey, 156.
- ¹⁰ Alberta Gund, La Crosse, Wisconsin, telephone conversation with the author, 2020 February 29.
- ¹¹ Bailey, 162.
- ¹² "Food Sharing With Europe Hitting Home," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1945 May 14, page 5.
- ¹³ "In 1935-39," *Bangor Independent*, Bangor, Wisconsin, 1945 May 17, page 3.
- ¹⁴ *Summary of the Second World War and Its Consequences*, 58-59.
- ¹⁵ Bailey, 110.
- ¹⁶ "Three Tons To One," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1945 July 5, page 2.
- ¹⁷ *Summary of the Second World War and Its Consequences*, 59.
- ¹⁸ "Leather Baby Shoes Require Stamps Beginning On May 1," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1945 May 29, page 12.
- ¹⁹ Bailey, 110.
- ²⁰ Bailey, 110-111.
- ²¹ "Report Red Points Sold," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1945 April 5, page 2.
- ²² "Stop Printing Ration Books," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1945 August 13, page 1.
- ²³ "End Rationing Of Gas, Oil, Fruits, Vegetables," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1945 August 15, page 1.
- ²⁴ "Rationing," *The National WWII Museum*, accessed 2020 December 24,
<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/rationing#:~:text=As%20World%20War%20II%20came,years%20of%20pent%20Dup%20demand.>