

# RATIONING

*Use it up.  
Wear it out.  
Make it do.  
Or do without.*

The image shows the front cover of a 'WAR RATION BOOK TWO' issued by the United States Office of Price Administration. The book number is 269551 BC. The recipient's name is Mary A. Dohie. The issuing officer is also Mary A. Dohie. The local board is Yorkville School, N.Y. The book includes a 'WARNING' section with four points regarding its use and return. A small stamp on the right side of the cover reads 'OFFICE OF PRICE ADM. R-123' with the number 269551 written next to it.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION  
**WAR RATION BOOK TWO**  
IDENTIFICATION  
*Mary A. Dohie*  
(Name of person to whom book is issued)

(Street number or rural route) *269551*

(City or post office) (State) (Age) (Sex)  
ISSUED BY LOCAL BOARD NO. *Yorkville School N.Y.*  
(County) (State)

(Street address of local board) (City)

By (Signature of issuing officer)  
*Mary A. Dohie*

SIGNATURE  
(To be signed by the person to whom this book is issued. If such person is unable to sign because of age or incapacity, another may sign in his behalf)

**WARNING**

- 1 This book is the property of the United States Government. It is unlawful to sell or give it to any other person or to use it or permit anyone else to use it, except to obtain rationed goods for the person to whom it was issued.
- 2 This book must be returned to the War Price and Rationing Board which issued it, if the person to whom it was issued is inducted into the armed services of the United States, or leaves the country for more than 30 days, or dies. The address of the Board appears above.
- 3 A person who finds a lost War Ration Book must return it to the War Price and Rationing Board which issued it.
- 4 PERSONS WHO VIOLATE RATIONING REGULATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO \$10,000 FINE OR IMPRISONMENT, OR BOTH.

OPA Form No. R-121 16-30852-6

*This is the front of a ration book. Inside were pages of ration stamps that each had a different letter and number. Ration books were issued by the Office of Price Administration, and could not be replaced if lost.*

Today, whenever we need food, we go to the local grocery store and buy whatever food we want. What would happen if the government said we were not allowed to do that anymore? Well, that is what happened during World War II in the 1940s.

When America became involved in World War II, the government needed to make sure that there was enough food, gas, tires, and other supplies to send with the soldiers who were fighting the war. So, the government began rationing these things. To ration means to equally divide the supply of something.

Rationing started in 1942, and the first product to be rationed was sugar. Along with sugar, other food items like coffee, meat, butter, cheese and canned foods were rationed. Items like rubber, gasoline, tin, and even shoes and fabric had to be rationed as well.

Ration books were given to every man, woman and child. The ration books contained stamps of different colors. The red stamps were used for goods like meat, cheese and other dairy products. The blue stamps were for canned fruits and vegetables. There were also special stamps for sugar, coffee (although children did not receive coffee rations) and flour. Every week, each person had sixteen points to spend on food.

The stamps were like a permission slip. To buy a rationed item, you had to have the right number of stamps to purchase it, and you had to pay the full price for it. The stamps did not give you a discount, like food stamps today.

Ration books did not come to people through the mail. People had to go to their local elementary school to pick up their ration book. The Office of Price Administration wanted to make sure everyone had their ration book and every family had the correct amount of points. Before getting a ration book, people had to give an entire list of all the food products they had in

their house. Every canned food item meant eight less points for the person or family.

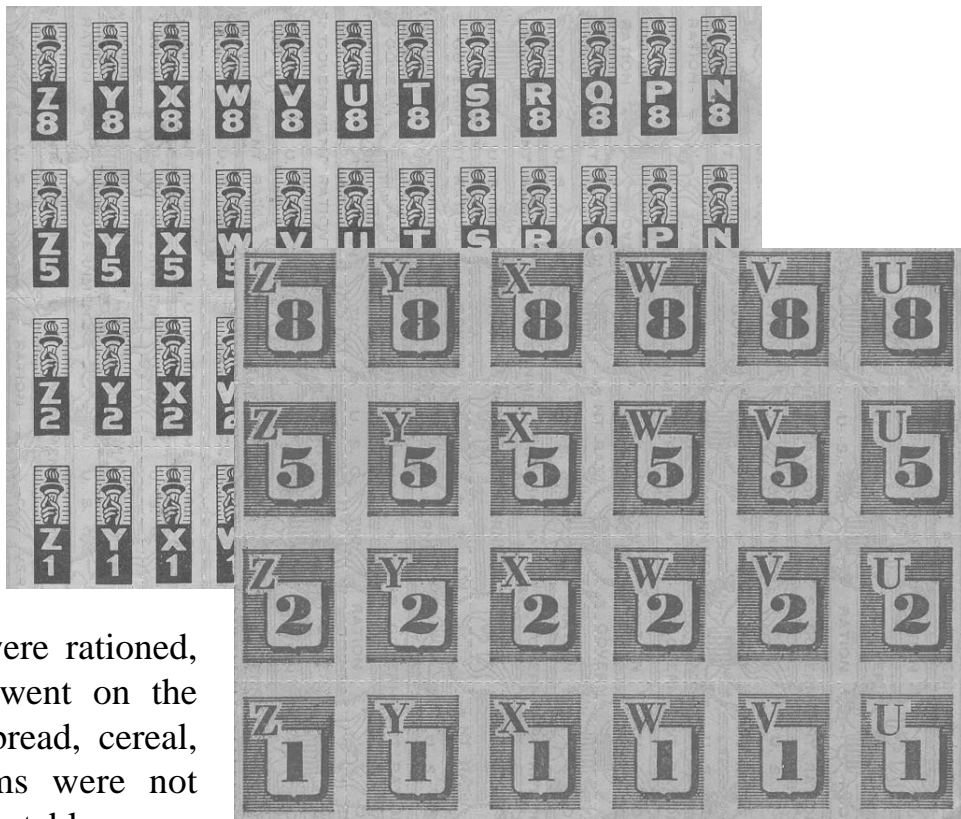
The point value of goods changed almost daily. One day an item could be five points, and the next day it could be ten points based on the demand. The points, however, were set by the government so that point values were the same throughout the country.

Although many items were rationed, there were items that never went on the ration list. Food items like bread, cereal, milk, pasta, poultry, and jams were not rationed. Fresh fruits and vegetables were also items that were not rationed.

Fresh fruits and vegetables often came from victory gardens.

Victory gardens helped to provide people with fresh fruits and especially vegetables. Victory gardens could be found in backyards, front yards, parking lots and even horse racetracks. By 1943 over 20.5 million victory gardens had been planted.

The use of rationing along with the planting of victory gardens helped to provide much needed supplies to the men fighting over seas.



## Let's Review

1. When did rationing in America start? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why did the government want to ration items? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name six things that were rationed? \_\_\_\_\_