
Guide to the World War II Rationing Collection, 1942-1945

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Overview of the Collection

Collection Title: World War II Rationing Collection

Dates: 1942-1945

Identification: SC/WWR

Physical Description: 0.05 linear feet

Language of Materials: English

Repository: Special Collections

Abstract: In 1942, the U.S. government's Office of Price Administration (OPA) established a system of rationing intended to control supply and demand by regulating the amount of consumer goods available to Americans. Each American citizen was issued a series of ration books which contained removable stamps specific to particular items or types of items, with a designated quantity and time limit for purchase. This assembled collection consists of War Ration Books 1, 2, and 4 issued in the states of Maine and Massachusetts, an application for War Ration Book 3, a gasoline purchase permit, a Maine state driver's license, a War Ration Book holder, OPA coins, and newspaper clippings regarding ration information.

Access Terms

This Collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Genre/Form of Material:

Paper records

Acquisition Information:

Purchased

Processing Information:

Special Collections and Archives Staff, 2015

Conditions Governing Use:

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Conditions Governing Access:

The collection is open for research use.

Preferred Citation:

For information about citing items in this collection consult the appropriate style manual, or see the [Citing Archival Materials](#) guide.

Scope and Contents

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor and subsequent entrance of the United States into World War II, many factories began the process of converting to military production. With the fear of food shortages and potential for civilian unrest looming, the U.S. government's Office of Price Administration (OPA) established a system of rationing intended to control supply and demand by regulating the amount of consumer goods available to Americans. Each American citizen was issued a series of ration books which contained removable stamps specific to particular items or types of items, with a designated quantity and time limit for purchase.

As early as January 1942, the government had imposed restrictions on the sale of cars and tires. The first War Ration Book was the "Sugar Book," issued in May 1942. By the close of the War, ration books had been issued for bicycles, gasoline, fuel oil and kerosene, solid fuels, stoves, rubber footwear, shoes, sugar, coffee, processed foods, meats, canned fish, cheese, canned milk, fats, and typewriters. In addition to ration books, OPA coins were issued to retailers in order to give change back for food bought with ration stamps. Blue tokens were used for processed foods and red tokens for meats and fats.

This assembled collection consists of War Ration Books 1, 2, and 4 issued in the states of Maine and Massachusetts, an application for War Ration Book 3, a gasoline purchase permit, a Maine state driver's license, a War Ration Book holder, OPA coins, and newspaper clippings regarding ration information.

Box 1, Folder 1

[De Mass] Family Ration Books, ca. 1944

Box 1, Folder 2

Newspaper Clippings and Mailers Regarding Rationing, ca. 1942-1945

Box 1, Folder 3

Stafford Family Ration Book and Gasoline Purchase Permit, 1945 June 1

Box 1, Folder 4
Box 1, Folder 5

Taylor Family Ration Books and Driver's License, 1942-1943

Win gate Family Ration Books, Documentation for Auto-Related Rationing, Ration Book Holder, and Office of Price Administration Tokens, 1943-1945