

# History Hidden in the Paper World of EPHEMERA

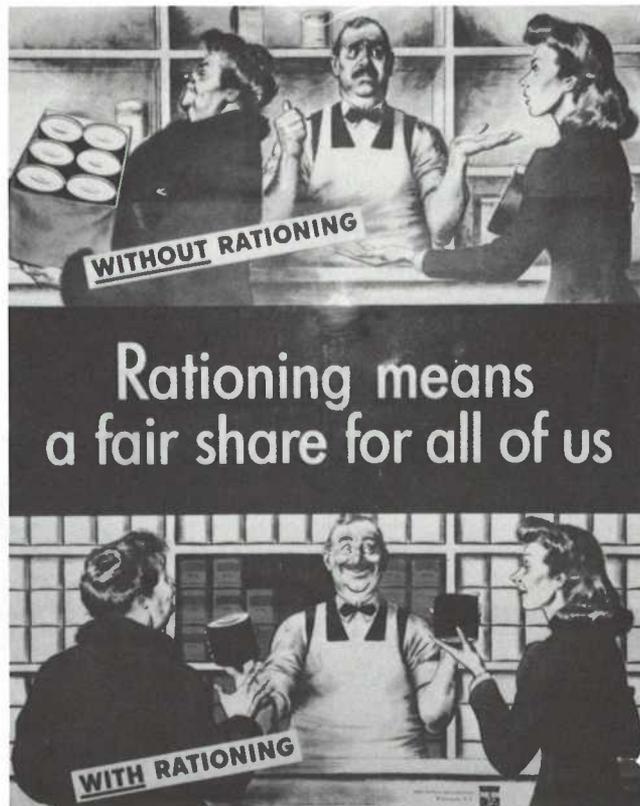
When there is a shortage of something people want or need, it becomes precious and the cost goes up. Those with more money can buy it, but those with less may not be able to. In addition, people who have money might buy a lot of something and hoard it. This is just what might have happened in America during World War II if it were not for rationing.

Shortages struck all the nations caught up in the war. In fact, Americans suffered much less than most other people. Still, the American government had to take action. Rubber and sugar, for example, came from Malaya, the East Indies, and the Philippines. These areas were conquered by the Japanese, so the supply was cut off. Also, many products that we produced at home were needed by the military.

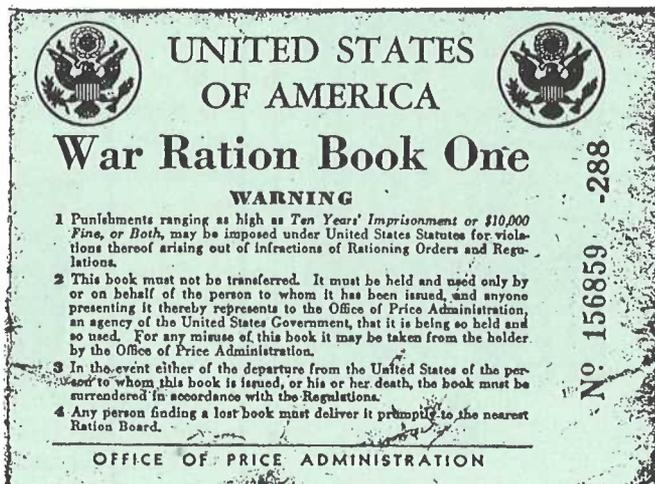
The Office of Price Administration, a federal agency, fixed prices and introduced the rationing programs. In Vermont, schools were closed for a few days to allow teachers to register households and give them ration books of stamps.

When meat and tires were rationed, some people began to steal and sell them. But patriotic Vermonters supported rationing.

The ration books and stamps you see here were valuable during World War II, because people could get rationed goods with them. Today, they are valuable because they show us what life was like on the Vermont home front during the war. These booklets and stamps are ephemera, printed materials meant to be used only for a short time.



Rationing means  
a fair share for all of us



Fuel oil ration stamps.