

*“Cookbooks and recipe pamphlets do not simply provide instructions on how to prepare meals. During World War II, they also provided instructions on how to live healthily and how to be a good citizen.”*

**WORLD WAR II COOKBOOKS:**  
*Rationing, Nutrition, Patriotism, and the Citizen Consumer  
in the United States and Great Britain*

JESSICA J. FLINN

COOKBOOKS HAVE BEEN USED TO IMPART DOMESTIC ADVICE AND NATIONALISM TO THEIR READERS FOR CENTURIES. AMERICAN AND BRITISH COOKBOOKS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR SERVED NOT ONLY AS A MEANS OF DISTRIBUTING RECIPES THAT TOOK INTO ACCOUNT RATIONING AND FOOD SHORTAGES, BUT ALSO AS A WAY OF EDUCATING WOMEN ABOUT NUTRITION AND HEALTHY DIETS, AS WELL AS TO PROMOTE THE CITIZEN CONSUMER. DESPITE THE SHORTAGES OF FOOD, THE NUTRITION AND HEALTH OF BOTH NATIONS IMPROVED DURING THE WAR YEARS. THIS ARTICLE COMPARES THE USE OF AND MOTIVES BEHIND RATION RECIPES DURING WORLD WAR II IN THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN BY EXAMINING PRIMARY SOURCES, INCLUDING PAMPHLETS, COOKBOOKS, MAGAZINE ARTICLES, AND ADVERTISEMENTS. OVERTLY PATRIOTIC CARTOONS, POEMS, SONGS, AND CATCHY SAYINGS WERE ALL USED AS MEANS OF EDUCATING THE CITIZEN CONSUMER. COOKBOOKS AND RATION RECIPES PLAYED AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN WINNING WORLD WAR II ON THE KITCHEN FRONT.



## INTRODUCTION

During World War II, cookbooks and recipe pamphlets did not simply provide instructions on how to prepare meals. In both the United States and Great Britain, they also provided instructions on how to live healthily and how to be a good citizen. In addition to distributing recipes that took into account rationing and food shortages, they also educated women about nutrition and healthy diets and promoted the citizen consumer. Lizabeth Cohen coined the term “citizen consumer” in her book, *A Consumer’s Republic*. Cohen describes how the United States government “put the market power to work politically” and the ways in which “loyal female citizens were defined in consumerist ways,” creating the idea of the citizen consumer.<sup>i</sup> The cookbooks also show the cooperation of the government and food companies in creating the citizen consumer.

Authors had used cookbooks to impart domestic advice and nationalism to their readers long before World War II. In the 19th century, American domestic advisors used cookbooks to communicate their guidance, because middle-class American women were familiar with cookbooks.<sup>ii</sup> The first cookbook printed in the United States, *Amelia Simmon’s American Cookery of 1796*, displayed nationalism through recipes with names such as “Indian Pudding” and “Johnny Cake.”<sup>iii</sup> During World War II, the nationalism displayed in cookbooks went from the names of recipes to construing cookery as vital wartime defense work. Sherrie A. Inness identified the essential aspects of cookery defense as: “maintaining the health of the family and keeping the family’s spirits high with plentiful, well-cooked, and palate-pleasing meals.”<sup>iv</sup>

## GOVERNMENT AND FOOD COMPANIES

The extent of the rationing and food shortages in Great Britain was much more severe than in the United States. Great Britain felt the effects of the German blockade and of constant air attacks on their food supply. The United States was not only an ocean away from the fighting, but it was a country large enough to be self-sufficient. The difference in rationing in the two countries can be illustrated with the

example of milk: in the United States, rationing allowed an adult to have one pint of milk daily compared to the three pints of milk each adult in Great Britain was allotted weekly.<sup>v</sup> Another striking difference in rations is found with meat; Americans were allowed approximately 6 ounces of meat per day (42 ounces a week) compared with the 16 ounces of meat that the English were allotted per week.<sup>vi</sup> Despite these differences, the governments of both nations worked to distribute information about food rationing and recipes to citizens. The British government was much more active than the United States government was in the distribution of food information to the public. Looking at the *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping* reveals that private food companies also sought to educate consumers on war-time rationing.

The first federal ration book in the United States was *War Ration Book No. 1*, which was distributed in 1942.<sup>vii</sup> The rationing began with sugar and went on to include coffee, butter and other fats, canned and frozen goods, and red meat.<sup>viii</sup> Meat rationing went into effect in 1943 with the *War Ration Book Two*, which contained red ration stamps. The red stamps were required to purchase fresh, frozen, cured, and canned beef, veal, pork and lamb, all variety meats (i.e. liver and heart), ready-to-serve meats like sausage and hot dogs, and canned meat, fish, and poultry. The stamps were also needed for butter, lard, margarine, shortening, salad and cooking oils, and cheese (with the exception of cottage cheese).<sup>ix</sup> The saying “watch your P’s (points) and Q’s (quantities)” comes from this period in American history.<sup>x</sup> The point values of different foodstuffs were changed monthly depending on the supplies available for the consumer market and were posted in grocery stores.<sup>xi</sup> Extra ration points could sometimes be earned by selling fat back to the butcher.<sup>xii</sup> An advertisement for tuna in the *Ladies’ Home Journal* used the fact that tuna was low in red points as a selling point.<sup>xiii</sup> Recipe pamphlets gave tips regarding rationing, such as, “spend blue ration points on legumes for protein, to help stretch red ration points.”<sup>xiv</sup> In contrast to the voluntary food restrictions of World War I, the ration-stamp system was established by law.<sup>xv</sup>



Rationing in Great Britain began earlier in the war than rationing in the United States, and persisted longer after the war was over. In 1939, the British government began a system of food rationing which was not completely abandoned until 1954.<sup>xvi</sup> The rations in Great Britain varied slightly from month to month, as foods became more or less scarce. According to Noëlle Walsh, one of the compilers of *The Home Front: The Best of Good Housekeeping 1939-1945*, the average weekly food supplies in Great Britain included 4 ounces of bacon, 3 ounces of cheese, 2 ounces of butter, and 6 ounces of cooking fat and margarine.<sup>xvii</sup> Marguerite Patten provides an excellent list of the rations for an adult per week in her introduction to *We'll Eat Again: A Collection of Recipes from the Wartime Years*.<sup>xviii</sup> In addition to the weekly rations, there was a monthly points system. "As an example of how these could be spent, the 16 points allowed you to buy one can of fish or meat or 2 pounds of dried fruit or 8 pounds of split peas."<sup>xix</sup> Early in the war, *Good Housekeeping* published articles such as "Feeding Five on £3.10 a Week" (April 1940). The five people the article sought to feed were a wife, husband, maid and two children (ages 10 and 12). It laid out menus consisting of a dinner and a supper for each day of the week, practical tips, and a weekly shopping list to accompany the menus.<sup>xx</sup>

The ration recipes of World War II were primarily distributed through pamphlets, cookbooks, magazine articles, and advertisements. Food companies created many pamphlets. For example, the September 1943 issue of *Ladies' Home Journal*, an American magazine, included numerous advertisements for pamphlets and booklets produced by food companies. Swan Down cake flour advertised a wartime recipe booklet for 6 cents.<sup>xxi</sup> Another advertisement offered "120 Wartime Meat recipes," using less familiar cuts of meat for 10 cents; an advertisement for Knox Gelatin offered recipe booklets with "all protein, no points" that were free if one sent away for them.<sup>xxii</sup> A Jell-O advertisement in the same issue promised: "You can still say 'Welcome' in wartime." It included four recipes made with Jell-O, including a savory Jell-O vegetable salad mold.<sup>xxiii</sup> Timely pamphlets from the Federal Government on cook-

ing were available free of charge to those who requested them.<sup>xxiv</sup> The food companies advertised the availability of their pamphlets much more than the government did, and some commercial cookbooks also alerted consumers to the availability of the government pamphlets. The Committee on Food Habits (CFN) distributed its reports on ways to change America's food habits during the war, by mass mailing and conferences held every few months. Then, other organizations, such as the War Food Administration and the Office of Price Administration (OPA), passed this information on to the American public.<sup>xxv</sup> The government agencies often provided food companies with this information, and many of the pamphlets distributed by the food companies also included information from the government.

In Great Britain, the women's magazine *Good Housekeeping* played a similar role to the American *Ladies' Home Journal*. *Good Housekeeping* worked closely with the Ministry of Food (F.M.) throughout the war; in fact, it was partly due to its relationship with the government that the magazine was able to continue publication during the war years, showing readers how to make delicious and nutritious meals with their rations.<sup>xxvi</sup> Due to the rationing of paper in Britain there were not many advertisements in this magazine. Of the advertisements that were in the publication, a large proportion were propaganda and information from the government ministries, in particular the F.M.<sup>xxvii</sup> A full-page advertisement issued by the F.M. in a 1943 issue of *Good Housekeeping*, for example, promoted the use of dried eggs. It also provided an address to which citizens could send a postcard, in order to receive a free dried-egg leaflet containing "many interesting recipes."<sup>xxviii</sup> The cooperation between the magazine and the F.M. is also evident in an article entitled "Dried Eggs." The article reads like propaganda, promoting dried eggs as one of the best foods that wartime rationing brought to Great Britain. It offered some practical tips and tested recipes. War-time recipes like these typically emphasized that they had been "tested." The recipes in this particular article included: Bacon Omelette, Egg and Potato Fritters,





Parsley Eggs, Potato Surprises, and an egg and rice loaf.<sup>xxxix</sup> *Ladies' Home Journal* did not feature as much government propaganda as *Good Housekeeping* displayed, but it did include advertisements from food companies offering recipes and patriotic messages. A McDougall's Self-Raising Flour advertisement in the April 1940 issue offered readers a recipe for an egg-less family cake and a coupon for a free wartime cookery book if readers sent in the coupon in an unsealed envelope. The cookery book contained "much useful advice and a big variety of excellent tested recipes."<sup>xxx</sup>

Daniel Horowitz summed up the relationship between government and food companies when he wrote that "working closely with business, labor, and consumer groups during World War II, the United States government educated, cajoled, and forced citizens to buy and consume food in ways that minimized the diversion of labor and foodstuffs from the war effort."<sup>xxxi</sup> Many food companies produced recipe pamphlets and cookbooks, specifically for cooking under wartime rationing. The pamphlets and cookbooks were educational, useful, and patriotic, but they were also promotional. The *Better Meals in Less Time for Less Money* pamphlet had recipes that used Pet Milk, and it included an advertisement for the author's radio demonstrations.<sup>xxxii</sup> Similarly, *Your Share* advertised for General Mills products. An advertisement for Fray Bentos and for Oxo, in Britain, notes with a star that "all supplies of corned Beef including

Fray Bentos are now distributed by the F.M."<sup>xxxiii</sup> This advertisement shows that the food company that made Fray Bentos brand was working with the F.M., and they seemed to be using that as a selling point as well.

## NUTRITION AND HEALTHY DIETS

Despite the shortages of food, the nutrition and health of both nations improved during the war years. This is in large part due to the educational campaigns that both governments waged to increase citizens' knowledge of healthy diets and the importance of vitamins and minerals. They often used cartoons and rhymes in their campaigns to help citizens remember the facts.

In 1942, the United States Government introduced "Uncle Sam's Food Rules," of which there were eight. The Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services advertised the food groups, telling citizens to "Every day, eat this way." Food was arranged into the following groups: milk and dairy products; bread and cereal; oranges, tomatoes, grapefruits; meat, poultry, or fish; green or yellow vegetables; other vegetables, fruit; eggs; and butter and other spreads.<sup>xxxiv</sup> In 1943, the Food and Nutrition Board, under the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services, replaced Uncle Sam's rules with the "Seven Basic Food Groups."<sup>xxxv</sup>

Recipe pamphlets in the United States almost universally included a section on nutrition and meal planning, and it was not uncommon for a diagram of the seven basic food groups to be at the end of a pamphlet. In *The Victory Cook Book* there are useful facts about food, including the vitamin content and calories of the different ingredients used in the recommended meals. The Women in National Service's "Ten Rules for Wartime Eating" included keeping a list of the seven basic food groups in the kitchen or in the woman of the house's purse. Consumers were to pay attention to these rules when planning and buying.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

The U.S. government and food companies created and/or modified recipes to help ensure that Americans received a balanced diet. Evaporated milk, cooked soybeans, and soy

flour were added to recipes to increase protein and to wean consumers away from rationed meat and fat. Peanut butter was used as a substitute for rationed fats (shortening) and also for added flavor and protein.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Food companies caught on and began to advertise the nutritional value of their products. An advertisement for Van Camp Sea Food Company tuna had this rhyme:

*Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,  
Pack me a tuna pie, as fast as you can.  
Roll it and pat it and mark it with a V,  
To stand for vitamins "A" and "D."<sup>xxxviii</sup>*

Surprisingly, considering the emphasis on stretching meat and the strict controls put on its distribution, the nation's consumption of meat actually grew during the war years, especially among the poorest third of the population.<sup>xxxix</sup>

Betty Crocker's *Your Share* pamphlet is filled with nutrition-oriented cartoons and rhymes. Here is a rhyme that is included in the egg section:

*Humpty Dumpty's always on call  
Bursting with vitamins for us all  
Proteins and minerals, too, in his shell  
What we all need to keep us well.<sup>xl</sup>*

In the Vegetable section there is the subtitle: "PREVENT MASS EXECUTION of Vitamins...AND KILLING of Flavor." There are tips about how to prepare vegetables without destroying their vitamin and mineral contents. The illustrations that go along with the tips include a carrot trying to swim away from submarine fire, to stress that vegetables should be cooked in the smallest possible amount of water.<sup>xli</sup> The Food in the War-Time section of *Your Share* states that at the end of each day every woman should be able to say "I worked for freedom today. I served at least one food from each of the basic seven food groups. I prepared the food I served with care. I wasted no food this day."<sup>xlii</sup>

## Multiply EGGS

*Humpty Dumpty's always on call  
Bursting with vitamins for us all  
Proteins and minerals, too, in his shell  
What we all need to help keep us well.*



DO YOU KNOW YOUR EGGS? Federal and state regulations for grading eggs vary. Find out your state regulations and their meaning.

### A GOOD EGG

For the breakfast table . . . is strictly fresh (top grade).  
For cooking (in meat loaves, custards, etc.) . . . is a smaller egg (lower grade).  
For baking (especially cakes) . . . is a large egg (2 oz.) or measure eggs to get full amount. The large eggs recipes call for yield the following amounts:

1 egg . . .	1/4 cup	2 whites . . .	1/4 cup	3 yolks . . .	1/4 cup
2 eggs . . .	1/2 cup	4 whites . . .	1/2 cup	6 yolks . . .	1/2 cup
4 eggs . . .	1 cup	8 whites . . .	1 cup	12 yolks . . .	1 cup

### TREAT 'EM RIGHT AND THEY'LL DO RIGHT BY YOU

They like the coldest spot in refrigerator. If you're going to separate them, the earlier the better, as soon as they come out of the refrigerator. . . . yolk is less likely to break . . . whites beat up higher if at room temperature.

Keep LEFT-OVER EGG WHITES in tightly covered jar in refrigerator. Use in making Angel Foods, white cakes, meringues, white icings, etc. They keep a long time.

Keep LEFT-OVER EGG YOLKS (one or two) in custard cup covered with oil silk cover or waxed paper. Use in custards, salad dressings, cream pies, etc. (2 yolks for 1 whole egg). Use in yeast rolls, cookies, etc. (2 yolks plus 1 tbsp. milk or water for 1 whole egg). To use in salads, sandwich fillings, etc., simmer in hot water 10 min.



### THEY GET TOUGH IF YOU MAKE IT TOO HOT FOR THEM

Simmer, don't bubble—fry gently, don't frizzle—bake slowly, don't broil—and the double boiler saves toil and trouble when cooking egg mixtures on top of stove.



### DON'T WISH THE MEN WOULD LAY SOMETHING BESIDES EGGS

Here is variety:

**SOFT-COOKED** . . . Place eggs in boiling water, cover, set in warm place (off heat) for 6 to 8 minutes . . . depending on consistency desired.

**HARD-COOKED** . . . Same as above, but cook 35 to 45 min. Plunge into cold water immediately to prevent dislocation of yolks and to make easier to shell.

**POACHED** . . . Break egg into saucer, carefully slip it into boiling salted water (enough

to cover). Reduce heat, set in warm place (don't let boil) and cook until white is set (about 3 min.).

**SCRAMBLED** . . . For each egg use 2 tbsp. top milk, season with salt and pepper, and beat well. Cook in melted fat in double boiler or in heavy skillet over low heat, stirring frequently.

**SHIRRED** . . . Place eggs in greased, hot custard or muffin cups, sprinkle with salt and pepper, bake 5 min. in slow oven (325° F).

Eggs . . . ?

In December 1943, the United States government announced the National Victory Garden Program to increase the nation's production and consumption of vegetables. By the summer of 1943, Victory gardens produced one-third of the nation's vegetables.<sup>xliiii</sup> General Foods Corp. promoted vegetables in its *Bright Spots for Wartime Meals* pamphlet, which included recipes for jellied vegetables in sour cream, jellied pea salad, savory vegetable salad mold, and vitamin salad.<sup>xliiv</sup>

Even with stricter rationing regulations than the United States, the citizens of Great Britain experienced improved health during the war. Despite the strict regulations, according to Marguerite Patten, who worked for the Ministry of Food in Great Britain during the war, the health of the nation was "surprisingly good," infant mortality decreased, and the average age of death from natural causes in-



creased.<sup>xliv</sup> “For many of the poorer sections of the community, rationing introduced more protein and vitamins, while for others it involved a reduction in the consumption of meat, fats, eggs, and sugar.”<sup>xlvi</sup> According to Violet Plimmer, author of *Food Values in Wartime*, the ordinary pre-war diet contained too many unwholesome foods: sugar, white bread, and fats of low vitamin value.<sup>xlvi</sup> Rationing improved the health of the nation, because it provided an opportunity to redistribute vital foodstuffs, like milk, eggs, and orange juice, to the fighting men, mothers, and babies, who needed them most.<sup>xlvi</sup>

The F.M. started publishing *Food Facts* in 1940, which it had printed in newspapers every week. It also aired a daily five-minute radio program, the “Kitchen Front,” used to educate the public about food rationing and recipes.<sup>xliv</sup> Approximately 18 million people listened everyday to Charles Hill, “The Radio Doctor,” to receive food advice.<sup>l</sup> The Food Advice Division of the F.M. traveled around the country and gave demonstrations to educate people about the importance of keeping their families well fed on the available rations.<sup>li</sup>

Additionally, the F.M. published answers to citizens’ questions in its food facts. One such question concerned healthy skin and the lack of fruit in the wartime diet. Readers were informed that it is the vitamin C in fruit that makes fruit good for one’s skin. The ministry included a table showing the quantity of vitamin C contained in vegetables, and stressed that extra vegetables were needed to make up for the missing fruit.<sup>lii</sup> The ministry stressed the nutritional value of potatoes, oatmeal, and national wheat-meal bread in its campaigns. The national bread and flour, which was made compulsory in the spring of 1942, came just in time to prevent more widespread pellagra, a vitamin deficiency disease, among the people of Great Britain. The national bread and flour contained niacin, the vitamin that prevents pellagra.<sup>liii</sup>

One campaign, run by the F.M., compared a potato to a lump of sugar, because they both are turned by the digestive

system into glucose “fuel which your body ‘burns’ to give you energy and warmth.”<sup>liv</sup> The F.M. distributed massive amounts of recipes that used potatoes as their main ingredient. This was the song of Potato Pete:

*Potatoes new, potatoes old*  
*Potato (in a salad) cold*  
*Potatoes baked or mashed or fried*  
*Potatoes whole, potato pied*  
*Enjoy them all, including chips*  
*Remembering spuds don't come in ships!<sup>lv</sup>*

The song emphasized the various ways in which potatoes could be served. In the last line, it also highlighted the fact that potatoes could be grown domestically. This was important because it meant that Great Britain did not have to rely on ships getting past the blockade of the Bris, which Hitler had declared in August of 1940, Hitler had declared a blockade on the British Isles.<sup>lvi</sup> The availability of potatoes was a major reason why the government stressed their consumption.

The F.M. also used cartoons similar to those in American cookbooks. The three main characters of the F.M. cartoons were Lord Woolton, Potato Pete, and Dr. Carrot.<sup>lvii</sup> One such cartoon has a potato, a carrot, and a head of cabbage holding rifles and wearing helmets, under the heading “Home-guards of Health.” Citizens were told to “enlist these ‘home guards’ in your diet, and keep them regularly on duty!” Underneath the cartoon are tips for including vegetables in a healthy diet.<sup>lviii</sup>

Violet Plimmer’s *Food Values in Wartime*, published in 1942, provides a comprehensive look at nutrition. Plimmer looked at the lessons of the 1914-18 War, such as poor nutrition leading to diseases like scurvy. She explains that a square meal is comprised of the four food groups: bread, butter, flesh, and salad.<sup>lix</sup> Plimmer has sections explaining deficiency diseases, vitamins, in which food each vitamin is found, what each type of vitamin does for the



body, and the four classes of food. The book is very dense, and filled with useful information.

Victory Gardens were also encouraged in England, just as they were in the United States. In Great Britain, however, the gardens were often communal, whereas in the United States they were often private. The F.M. also encouraged Hedgerow Harvests. Hedgerow Harvests included harvesting blackberries, crab apples, elderberries, sloes, rowanberries (mountain ash), hips and haws, nuts, and mushrooms.<sup>lx</sup> Other F.M. campaigns encouraged the use of dried eggs, dried milk, and fish. Plimmer's *Food Values in Wartime* urged people to grow more vegetables, including potatoes, parsnips, artichokes, swedes, carrots, and beetroots for their relatively high energy value.

Advertisers used nutrition and guilt to sell their products to consumers. An advertisement for the SevenSeas brand cod liver oil in *Good Housekeeping* used this strategy. It advertised its cod liver oil as the “richest and most dependable” natural source of vitamins A and D, and that it made up for the shortage of milk, butter, cheese, eggs, and fats. The title of the advertisement, “A well-fed child can be undernourished,” appealed to a mother’s sense of responsibility and guilt. In the scenario, a mother has her sister, Mary, watch her daughter for a few weeks. When the mother returns to take her daughter home, the little girl says that Mary was a better mother to her child than she had been, because Mary gave the young girl cod liver oil. The advertisement ended

“... food companies sought to capitalize on the new focus on nutritional value by using nutrition facts to help market their goods.”

with “You dare not gamble with your children’s health; so much of their future happiness depends on the nourishment you give them now.” It is evident that the importance of nutrition was being stressed to women, and that it was also being used to sell them food products.<sup>lxi</sup>

Nutrition became a priority in both nations as a means to keep citizens healthy. Governments worked to educate the public on how to eat healthily. The information was of greater importance in Great Britain, where an unhealthy diet along with the food shortages could have led to disease and even death. Advertisements for foodstuffs in both countries showed that food companies sought to capitalize on the new focus on nutritional value by using nutrition facts to help market their goods.

#### PATRIOTISM AND THE CITIZEN CONSUMER

United States Government food propaganda was generally more positive and patriotic, emphasizing ways to help the war effort, and less directed to stereotypes of the Germans or the Japanese than had been the case during the propaganda campaigns of the First World War.<sup>lxii</sup> The Office of Price Administration had a campaign during World War II entitled “Food Fights for Freedom.”<sup>lxiii</sup>

Many cookbooks and pamphlets were overtly patriotic. *The Victory Cook Book* (1942) has a solid blue cover with red writing and a picture of a bald eagle holding arrows and surrounded by stars.<sup>lxiv</sup> Betty Crocker’s *Your Share* wartime pamphlet has red and white stripes on its cover, with the title in white and blue with stars. The cover resembles the American flag and the forward stresses women’s role in the war effort. The recipes and tips are in an easy-to-read font and there are many cartoons throughout the pamphlet that remind the reader that cooking is helping the war effort. For example, in the vegetable section entitled “Call Vegetables into Service,” there is a picture of vegetables lining up as though they are reporting for duty in front of a military general.<sup>lxv</sup> Recipes were even given patriotic names, such as “Patriotic Pinwheel Meat Roll” and “All-



American Maple-Nut Angel Food Cake.”<sup>lxvi</sup> The cover of *The Health-For Victory Club Meal Planning Guide* has blue and white writing and a picture of an all-American boy (a boy wearing a white button-down shirt, a tie, and a vest) next to an American flag composed of food (the red lines are tomatoes, the white lines are eggs from American poultry farms, the blue is made with concord grapes, and the stars are cookies made from the grains of American fields). The back cover of the pamphlet said to the women of America, “Your sacred duty is to keep the production army on the home front as physically fit as the fighters’ army on the battle front.”<sup>lxvii</sup> The *How to Eat Well Though Rationed* pamphlet had a white cover with red and blue writing, a side border of red/white/blue stripes. Its back cover had a red and blue border with white stars. It is dedicated to “the American Homemaker Whose Time is so Generously Devoted to the War Effort.”<sup>lxviii</sup> The *Bright Spots for Wartime Meals* pamphlet contains recipes using Jell-O and Jell-O Pudding to help make “food fight for freedom.”<sup>lxix</sup> A cartoon named “Victorianna” is the reader’s guide through the pamphlet. Victorianna is a plump, fairy god-mother like woman; she wears a dress of red and white stripes, and a dark apron with stars.<sup>lxx</sup> The pamphlet produced by the National Livestock and Meat Board even gave their pamphlet a title linking meals to the war effort: *Better Meals Mean Better Health for Home Defense*.<sup>lxxi</sup> Nearly every pamphlet and cookbook offered advice in the forward or introduction about how women could win the war on the “kitchen front.”<sup>lxxii</sup>

The advertisements paid for by food companies were also overtly patriotic. They reinforced the government’s advice, and tried to appeal to consumers through their patriotism. An advertisement seen in America for Certo, which is used in jam and jelly making, had an image that showed a woman making jelly with the caption underneath –“Portrait of a Patriot Summer 1944”–surrounded by stars.<sup>lxxiii</sup> Similarly, Oxo, a product marketed in Great Britain, had advertisements that stressed the importance of saving vegetable water as a way of helping the war effort. In one of their advertisements, a woman holds a pot in her

kitchen and has a poster on her kitchen wall that reads “Kitchen Front Order, Save Your Vegetable Water.”<sup>lxxiv</sup> Saving vegetable water to make soup was recommended by the government, and the advertisers took full advantage of that advice to help market their own products, which could be used with the vegetable water to make soup. An advertisement for Heinz in 1942 noted that there were temporarily diminished supplies of Heinz products on the grocer’s shelves, “But patriots must know that all the time Heinz have been doing a big job of National feeding (supplying the Services, the national food reserves, etc.).”<sup>lxxv</sup> Food companies presented themselves to consumers as helping the nation’s war effort. Heinz was trying to give their brand a good name, and hoping that consumers would then buy more of their product when it became available.

In Great Britain, there were many patriotic cartoons in newspapers and magazines about servicemen risking their lives to guard the food supply. The cartoons made points like “Wasting food helps u-boats” and “They don’t mind danger, but waste gives them the creeps.”<sup>lxxvi</sup> Guilt was also used to make consumers into citizen consumers. One cartoon put out by the F.M. had the caption “We all liked Mrs. Parker, in the City, until we heard she wastes crusts (a pity!)”<sup>lxxvii</sup> Women were not the only ones who were targeted by the F.M.’s campaigns; this was the caption of a cartoon aimed at men:

*Plan your points and obey the rules;  
Just as you did with your football pools;  
You’ll find yourself an up and upper;  
At breakfast, dinner, tea and supper!*<sup>lxxviii</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Cookbooks and recipe pamphlets played an integral role in improving national health and creating the citizen consumer during the Second World War in both Great Britain and the United States. Throughout the war, the national governments of both the United States and of Great Britain created organizations dedicated to regulating and distribut-



ing information about foodstuffs. The advertisers of foodstuffs capitalized on the war, in the marketing of their products by providing consumers with recipes, pamphlets, cooking tips, and information about government regulations. They advertised how their brands were patriotic and promoted the nutritional value of their products. The message of the governments and food companies were not only in the words that were in the cookbooks, pamphlets, advertisements, and articles, but in the cartoons, and the choice of colors used for the fonts. The responsible, “good” consumer, who purchased, prepared, and saved food in accordance with the recommendations of their government created the citizen consumer.

#### ENDNOTES

- i. Cohen (75)
- ii. Leavitt (4-15)
- iii. Leavitt (14)
- iv. Inness (96)
- v. Patten (114-137)
- vi. Lovegren (121)
- vii. Lovegren (114)
- viii. Hayes (4.)
- ix. Hayes (101)
- x. The quote was found in reference to comparing the points it takes to feed a family with different cuts of meat in: Crocker (9)
- xi. Hayes (101)
- xii. Zanger (397-402)
- xiii. *Ladies' Home Journal* September, 1943 (39-114)
- xiv. Home Economics Institute (A description of the materials used to make the flag on the front cover is found on the inside cover)
- xv. Zanger (397)
- xvi. Brears (304)
- xvii. Braithwaite (8)
- xviii. Patten (8) For an approximate list of weekly food allotments in Great Britain during the war, see also Brears (320)
- xix. Patten (8)
- xx. Braithwaite (16-9)
- xxi. *Ladies' Home Journal* September 1943 (39-114)
- xxii. *Ladies' Home Journal* September 1943 (39-114)
- xxiii. *Ladies' Home Journal* September 1943 (39-114)
- xxiv. Taylor (1 of insert)
- xxv. Bentley (25-6)
- xxvi. Braithwaite (8)
- xxvii. Braithwaite (10)
- xxviii. Braithwaite (120)
- xxix. Braithwaite (96-97)
- xxx. Braithwaite (20)
- xxxi. Horowitz (132)
- xxxii. Taylor 1942
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- xxxiv. <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/govpub/collections/wwii-posters/img/ww0870-27.html> (Accessed 4/24/06)
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- xxxvi. Hayes (15)
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- xxxviii. *Ladies' Home Journal* September, 1943 (39-114)
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- xl. Crocker (9)
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- xlvii. Plimmer (11)
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- lxiv. Berolzheimer ed., 1942
- lxv. Crocker (16)
- lxvi. Lovegren (122,137)
- lxvii. Home Economics Institute (A description of the materials used to make the flag on the front cover is found on the inside cover.)
- lxviii. Gibson (3-20)
- lxix. General Foods Corp.
- lxx. General Foods Corp.
- lxxi. National Live Stock and Meat Board
- lxxii. Bowers (26)
- lxxiii. Lovegren (115)
- lxxiv. Braithwaite (15, 32)
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