

Recipes for Citizenship:
Women, Cookbooks, and Citizenship in the Kitchen, 1941-1945

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that cookbooks and cooking literature prescribed domesticity, specifically linked to the kitchen, as an obligation for American women in World War II. Building on the work of culinary historians and gender scholars, I argue that the government enlisted women as “kitchen citizens.” In contrast to the obligations of male military service, government propaganda, commercially-published cookbooks, community cookbooks, and agriculture extension pamphlets used understandings of middle-class femininity to prescribe women’s identity and role in the war effort as homemakers. Despite the popular memory of wartime women as Rosie-the-Riveters, this thesis suggests that working outside the home was a temporary and secondary identity. During World War II, cooking literature re-linked women’s work inside the home to political significance and defined women’s domestic responsibilities as an obligation of American female citizenship.

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Introduction

In 1943, the middle of U.S. involvement in World War II, General Mills published its wartime cookbook titled *Your Share: How to Prepare Appetizing, Healthful Meals with Foods Available Today*. Newly released ration guidelines limited the food resources available to American civilians and the authors planned the book to help women, widely recognized as the family cooks, create healthy and satisfying meals, all while promoting General Mills products. Alongside advertisements for Bisquick and advice on how to serve your vegetables appeared a short, but telling mantra:

At the end of the day, let us be sure we can 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.*¹

This verse had little to do with cooking and everything to do with the obligations and duties facing women who juggled increased workloads, ration books, and their families' changing needs during wartime. It reflects the social and cultural significance of food, its preparation, and consumption. Whether through recommending alternate cuts of meats, promoting Victory Gardens, or providing new recipes for baking the perfect layer cake using as little sugar as possible, cookbook authors emphasized the political implications of women's domestic work. This thesis analyzes the way cookbooks and food-related propaganda projected gendered obligations for American women during World War II, using food to link domesticity, particularly food preparation, to female citizenship.

¹ Betty Crocker, *Your Share: How to Prepare Appetizing, Healthful Meals with Foods Available Today* (Minneapolis: General Mills, 1943), 37. Emphasis in original.

As cookbook author Demetria Taylor described, during the war “every American Kitchen [was] on the battlefield.”² Rationing, conserving, and preserving food and gender roles became a priority on the home front. Cookbooks and food literature – government publications, commercial cookbooks, locally produced community cookbooks, and agriculture extension pamphlets – all provided prescriptions regarding women’s role as female citizens. This thesis argues that cookbooks and government-sponsored food literature produced during the war portrayed homemaking as the proper role of the female wartime citizen. Despite women’s growing importance as laborers in war industries and the general workforce, cookbooks and food-related propaganda prescribed domesticity as women’s primary duty during the war. Men fought overseas, women served their country in the kitchen. These messages result in a picture of the ideal woman that I call the “kitchen citizen.”

Culinary history is a burgeoning topic of historical inquiry, with scholars analyzing food, its preparation, and consumption as sources for social, cultural, and gender history.³

Investigating cookbooks is significant in examining the relationship between food and culture because, as culinary scholar Sherrie Inness explains, “The foods we eat or do not eat, who prepares them, and how they are served reveal a tremendous amount of information about how a society is structured; food is one of the most visible and omnipresent symbols of everything from class to race to age, and it provides a powerful symbolic message of who we are and who we

² Demetria M. Taylor, *Square Meals on Short Ration: How to Adapt Your Family's Meals to Wartime Conditions* (New York: Home Guide Publications, 1943), inside front cover.

³ Arlene Avakian, and Barbara Haber, *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies: Critical Perspectives on Women and Food* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005). See also: Sherrie Inness ed., *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Inness, ed., *Cooking Lessons: The Politics of Gender and Food* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, 2001); Inness, *Secret Ingredients: Race, Gender, and Class at the Dinner Table* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994); Tim Miller, “The Birth of the Patio Daddy-O: Outdoor Grilling in Postwar America,” *Journal of American Culture* 33, no. 1 (March 2010): 5-11; Jessamyn Neuhaus, “The Way to a Man's Heart: Gender Roles, Domestic Ideology, and Cookbooks in the 1950s,” *Journal of Social History* 32, no. 3 (Spring 1999): 529- 555; Jennifer Horner, “Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook: A Gendered Ritual Response to Social Crises of the Postwar Era.” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 24, no. 3 (July 2000): 332.

aspire to be.”⁴ A cookbook could simply be a personal scrapbook of recipes or “receipts” copied or clipped from other sources or it can be a text commercially published by corporations or institutions. Whatever form they take, cookbooks are more than the sum of their recipes. We can, as Janet Theophano says, “read women’s lives” in cookbooks, because “[d]espite or perhaps because of their ordinariness... cookbooks have thus served women as meditations, memoirs, diaries, journals, scrapbooks, and guides.”⁵ Historically, cookbooks have served as places for women to express creativity and explore their beliefs on social issues.⁶ However, as Sherrie Inness and Jessamyn Neuhaus demonstrate, scholars can also read cookbooks for an analysis of gender dynamics.⁷ Along with recipes for foods, Inness argues that “cookbooks provide recipes for masculine and feminine behavior.”⁸ In her book *Manly Meals and Mom’s Home Cooking*, Neuhaus argues that American cookbooks, especially twentieth century commercially published texts, “reinforce the notion that women had inherently domestic natures” and she draws a direct link between the recipe and its gendered meaning.⁹ My examination of cookbooks from World War II builds on the works of Inness, Neuhaus, and Theophano to show how food preparation linked the duties of female citizenship to the home, or more specifically the kitchen.

Using this work as a foundation, I argue that food culture and cookbook authors prescribed a specific form of female citizenship. To date, much literature on citizenship focuses on the legal status of citizens, meaning carrying a passport, paying taxes, or voting.¹⁰ Recently,

⁴ Inness, *Cooking Lessons*, xii.

⁵ Janet Theophano, *Eat My Words: Reading Women’s Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 6.

⁶ Inness, *Secret Ingredients*, 4, 15.

⁷ Jessamyn Neuhaus, *Manly Meals and Mom’s Home Cooking: Cookbooks and Gender in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 161.

⁸ Inness, *Secret Ingredients*, 3.

⁹ Neuhaus, *Manly Meals and Mom’s Home Cooking*, 2.

¹⁰ On citizenship, see Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Martha Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen: Women, Immigration, and Citizenship, 1870-1965* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Linda K. Kerber, *No*

scholars have offered hints at different understandings of citizenship that extend beyond a strictly legal definition. Historians Lizabeth Cohen and Charles McGovern, for example, examine the relationship between citizenship and twentieth-century consumerism. In her book *Consumers' Republic*, Cohen argues that in the second half of the twentieth century, widespread consumerism, promoted by corporations and advertisement agencies, changed how individuals related to each other, to their government, and to the items they purchased. Cohen explains, “[By the 1930s] rather than isolated ideal types, citizen and consumer were ever-shifting categories that sometimes overlapped, were often in tension, but always reflected the permeability of the political and economic spheres.”¹¹ While the bulk of Cohen’s analysis focuses on the post-war culture of consumerism, McGovern focuses on the creation of the consumer citizen prior to World War II. He argues, “Decades before the Cold War explicitly linked consumption with aggressive nationalism, Americans learned to associate both their national identity and political order with spending. Such ideas firmly cast American citizenship as consumption.”¹² McGovern traces the relationships between producers and the generic “Mrs. Consumer” through the growth of advertising agencies and consumer agencies in the first half of the twentieth century. These links between citizenship and consumer culture suggest that any examination of propaganda or patriotic literature must be analyzed with an eye to spending and consumerism. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of looking at shopping locations, like grocery stores, or mentions thereof, as places where women fulfilled their duties as citizens.

Constitutional Right to Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); David M. Ricci, *Good Citizenship in America* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Carolyn Vacca, *A Reform against Nature: Woman Suffrage and the Rethinking of American Citizenship, 1840-1920* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004); J. Stanley Lemons, *The Woman Citizen: Social Feminism in the 1920's* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973).

¹¹ Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 8.

¹² Charles McGovern, *Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 5.

I also read World War II-era cookbooks in light of scholarship that examines citizenship in terms of rights and obligations. Linda Kerber argues that, throughout much of American history, women's citizenship was granted and expressed through her father or husband under the system of coverture. Rather than serving the nation directly, women primarily had a citizen-like obligation to their families.¹³ Even after the passage of the women's suffrage amendment in 1920 which finally guaranteed a full array of political, legal, and civic rights, this link between gender and familial obligation continued to shape the nation's political culture. Building on Kerber's argument that women's obligation was to the husband and family first, I argue that women's primary duty as a citizen during World War II was to help the nation through protecting and caring for the home and family.

Additionally, in *Good Citizenship in America*, political scientist David Ricci argues that citizenship operates at three levels, with the first two focusing on citizens' legal ability to carry a passport and the right to vote. However, his third tier of citizenship refers to an individual being a "good person" by following societal norms and obeying laws.¹⁴ While conforming to social norms and laws is always a personal choice, it is important to examine the prescriptive messages given to men and women about their normative roles. As citizens, American women in World War II would have felt obligated to accept – or at least acknowledge – the ways in which female citizenship was prescribed. Synthesizing disparate notions on citizenship from Ricci, Kerber, McGovern and Cohen suggests that American citizenship for women in the middle of the twentieth century involved obeying gendered social and political mores given by the government, corporations, and their fellow citizens in relation to consuming and caring for one's family.

¹³ Linda Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies*.

¹⁴ Ricci, *Good Citizenship in America*. Like McGovern and Cohen, Ricci argues that this level of citizenship took a consumerist turn in the 20th century.

World War II provides an ideal period to study the intersections of gender, citizenship and food culture, as the war tested, stretched, and sometimes redefined women's role in society while maintaining home front messages about female domesticity.¹⁵ While Maureen Honey argues in her book on wartime propaganda that "war work became a vehicle [for women] to shoulder their civic and moral responsibilities as good citizens..." other scholars disagree with this interpretation.¹⁶ D'Ann Campbell, for example, argues that during the war, "The housewife, not the Wac [sic] or the riveter, was the modal [sic] woman. As purchaser and consumer, women had never been more important."¹⁷ Similarly, Karen Anderson concludes, "Despite the changes wrought by the war, conventional attitudes regarding the role of women within the family retained their appeal...Although the gap between the normative expectations and actual behavior had widened considerably during the war years, the war generated no ideological or institutional legacy that could aid in resolving the growing contradictions in women's lives."¹⁸ Though many women continued to or desired to work outside the home, women's participation in World War II did not change how their lives were linked to their identities as wives and mothers. Even Honey admits that after the war, the Rosie-the-Riveter ideology disappeared and

¹⁵ On women in World War II see: Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984); Stephanie Carpenter, *On the Farm Front: The Women's Land Army in World War II* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003); Rachel Goossen, *Women against the Good War: Conscientious Objection and Gender on the American Home Front, 1941-1947* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Marilyn Hegarty, *Victory Girls, Khaki-Wackies, and Patriotutes: The Regulation of Female Sexuality During World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda During World War II* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984); Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 178. Sherna Berger Gluck, *Rosie the Riveter Revisited: Women, the War, and Social Change* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), Tawyna Adkins Covert, *Manipulating Images: World War II Mobilization of Women Through Magazine Advertising* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2011); Leila Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978); Melissa McEuen, *Making War, Making Women: Femininity and Duty on the American Home Front, 1941-1945* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

¹⁶ Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*, 6.

¹⁷ Campbell, *Women at War With America*, 224.

¹⁸ Anderson, *Wartime Women*, 178.

many women returned to full-time labor in their homes. Though my study does not analyze the extent of women's participation in the war effort, it examines the discourse in cookbooks and food literature surrounding the incongruities between images of the working woman and the doting homemaker. Even if women took war jobs, cookbook authors reminded them of their primary responsibilities in the home.

As Karen Anderson suggests, understanding women's role and participation in World War II requires scholars to examine "the family roles that the vast majority of women at the time defined as central to their lives."¹⁹ In my study, I place the creation of World War II-era kitchen citizens into the long history of American female social reform. Beginning in the nineteenth century, middle-class women utilized their identities as wives and mothers to gain, shape, and access the public sphere, working for reforms as varied as poverty relief, temperance, and racial justice.²⁰ Under the umbrella of motherhood and their claims to a distinct female moral authority, women carved out spheres of public influence long before they gained the right to vote. After the success of the suffrage movement with the 19th Amendment, women did not give up their claims to moral authority vis-à-vis their identity as mothers. Even while women strengthened their footing in the public sphere by moving into the workforce in large numbers,

¹⁹ Campbell, *Women at War With America*, 224.

²⁰ See Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002); Lori Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Nancy Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984); Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992); Glenna Matthews, *"Just a Housewife": The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Noralee Frankel and Nancy Schrom Dye, *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1991); and Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* 89 (June 1984) 620-647.

they still held on to the domestic dimensions of their identity and continued to use it for political means.²¹

Even as women expanded their public influence, domestic responsibilities and ideologies threatened to constrain the advances women made in politics, culture, and the workforce, forcing women to adapt to the changing social and economic landscape. In the 1930s, the Great Depression renewed debates about women's role in the workforce and reemphasized the male breadwinning role. At the same time, immigration significantly decreased and more lower class women found employment in industries, leading to a drop in domestic servants in middle and upper-class households. Meanwhile, new technology and developments were supposed to have made food preparation and other household labor easier. As Ruth Schwartz Cowen argues in *More Work for Mother*, workplace labor became less intensive with the increased technology of the factory, but women (working or stay-at-home) were asked to be more productive and do more work with the technology in the home.²² As such, middle and upper class women embraced a domestic ideology in order to reconcile themselves to performing household labor.²³ Ruth Schwartz Cowan argues that while domesticity was “a social ideology to which only the middle classes – perhaps only the upper middle classes – could possibly pretend,” it was created

²¹ Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*; Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Harriet Alonso, *Peace As a Women's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1993); and Linda Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Kathryn Kish Sklar, *U.S. History As Women's History: New Feminist Essays* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

²² Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

²³ Neuhaus, *Manly Meals and Mom's Home Cooking*, 50-52; Ruth Schwartz Cowan “Two Washes in the Morning and a Bridge Party at Night: The American Housewife between the Wars” in *Decades of Discontent*, 179; Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Barbara Melosh, *Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in New Deal Public Art and Theater* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

because it served as “a functional solution to real economic and demographic conditions.”²⁴ In the 1930s and 1940s, upper and middle-class women renewed the link between domesticity and citizenship, again using their roles as wives and mothers for access to the public sphere.

Home economists also played a large role in expanding domesticity in the first half of the twentieth century. The home economics movement developed out of the many social reform movements of the late nineteenth century, and was officially established as a profession in 1899. Female home economists saw proper food and home management as another way to help reform American society.²⁵ During World War I, home economists successfully promoted their profession by helping women manage wartime shortages and nutritional deficits.²⁶ After the war, trained home economists found jobs in cooking schools, extension agencies, and test kitchens, as well as jobs as radio program hosts and cookbook authors. However, like many professional women in the post-World War I period, home economists encountered criticism. Men questioned the need for “professional homemakers,” while home economists also had to prove themselves to women who felt they were already properly running their homes.²⁷ Despite their goals of giving women more access to the public sphere and greater professional opportunities by making housework more efficient, home economists ultimately expressed a conservative vision of women’s identity. As author Anne Shapiro bluntly states, home economics “drew on the most deadening version of femininity available.”²⁸ As home economists

²⁴ Cowan “Two Washes in the Morning and a Bridge Party at Night: The American Housewife between the Wars” in *Decades of Discontent*, 184, 193. See also: Stricker, “Cookbooks and Law Books The Hidden History of Career Women in the Twentieth Century” *Journal of Social History* Vol 10.1 (Autumn 1976), 11.

²⁵ Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986), 35. For more information of home economists, which will be discussed in greater detail later, see: Shapiro, *Perfection Salad*, Megan Elias, *Stir It Up: Home Economics in American Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), and Sarah Stage and Virginia Bramble Vincenti, eds., *Rethinking Home Economics: Women and the History of a Profession* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

²⁶ Elias, *Stir It Up*, 64.

²⁷ Elias, *Stir It Up*, 79.

²⁸ Shapiro, *Perfection Salad*, 220.

and home demonstration agents taught women how to add to the family income, feed their families better with more nutritious foods, and improve their management of the home, they advocated domesticity as women's primary role in the family.

The ongoing conflation of domestic duty with middle-class womanhood, coupled with the role of home economists in industry and government, form the backdrop to the development of kitchen citizenship in cookbooks and government publications during World War II. Steeped in domestic ideals embraced by middle-class women as they worked to reconcile their own life experiences in the 1920s and 30s with competing messages about women's appropriate roles, kitchen citizenship as an ideology presented a positive message to women about the public importance of their work in the home. As Frank Stricker points out, "women's minds were not monopolized by conservative ideologies."²⁹ However, by adopting this vision for themselves, upper and middle-class women projected their version of femininity to all women. Their ideas trickled down and across the socio-economic ladder through government propaganda, cookbooks, and women's magazines. It was not really until the 1960s that women began to see this ideal as oppressive. For middle class women in the 1940s, kitchen citizenship gave their work in the home (and their lives) a positive sense of purpose.

The significance of my study rests in putting the 1940s into the larger history of middle-class prescriptions of femininity. By examining how disparate entities adopted kitchen citizenship to describe women's role in the war effort, I draw on the real and prescriptive images women received during the 1930s and 1940s. Kitchen citizenship, thus, provides a link between the domestic ideology of the 1920s and 30s and the post-war fixation with women in the home. My study highlights the war period as influential to post-war understandings of gender roles. It deepens the link between consumerism and citizenship by emphasizing how new ways of food

²⁹ Stricker, "Cookbooks and Law Books," 13.

shopping and consuming developed as the result of government rationing and price control measures and became a site for women to participate in the political sphere. Messages about food found in cookbooks and government documents from 1941-1945 show how issues of gender and citizenship overlapped with food culture, and also provide a new venue for looking at prescriptions for female behavior in American history.

In focusing on projections of domesticity and femininity, my study has been greatly influenced by the work of gender historians and theorists. As Joan Scott points out in “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” the use of gendered terms and rhetoric has played an important role in the construction of gender identity and power relationships in the modern world.³⁰ As texts largely written by women for women, sometimes in collaboration with corporations or government entities, cookbooks provide a prime location to analyze gender construction. Though Linda Kerber effectively demonstrates that the trope of separate spheres no longer provides an effective way by which to analyze gender, the kitchen, and by extension cooking and cookbooks, was a space that producers and advertisers of the 1940s used to reach female audiences.³¹ Cookbooks published by corporations and government agencies are implicated in the world of gender construction, as the majority of publishers targeted women as their main audience and directed messages to them. These prescriptions are important to analyze because, as Leila Rupp argues, women (and men) generally try to live up to gender expectations and prescriptions. Or, if they reject the prescriptions, they are at least aware that they exist and realize they are acting against the norm.³² I examine these prescriptive messages as they relate to ideas of female citizenship in the 1940s. I also scrutinize how concepts of male and female

³⁰ Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-1075.

³¹ Linda Kerber, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History” *The Journal of American History* 75 no. 1 (June 1988): 9-39.

³² Leila Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War*, 6.

citizenship differed, especially in relation to male service to the state in the military versus female service on the home front. In this way, my study adds to the literature on women's magazines, advertisements, and propaganda as advocates of domesticity as the proper role for American women in the twentieth century.³³

Cookbooks and government-produced cooking literature published from 1941 to 1945 comprise my source material. Collections in the Peacock-Harper Culinary History Collection at Virginia Tech and the Fales Library Food and Cookery Collection at New York University provided most of these materials. To supplement commercially published and community cookbooks, agricultural extension publications and home economics resources are also examined. Government records from the Office of Price Administration (OPA) and the Office of War Information (OWI) at the National Archives allow me to examine women's relationship to the state in the form of rationing and conservation programs. These records include food related propaganda, publishing and media guides on food related subjects, and departmental memoranda regarding approaches and responses to wartime food programs.

Though the questions regarding messages in cookbooks are many, no study can seek to perfectly answer all of them. One limitation involves the prescriptive nature of cookery texts. It is impossible to know through reading the text if women internalized what they read, or if they read the narrative at all. A second limitation is the difficulty in analyzing race and class in these books. Just as Katherine Parkin demonstrates in *Food is Love*, Sherrie Inness examines in *Secret Ingredients*, and Lizabeth Cohen discusses in *A Consumers' Republic*, advertisers and marketers

³³ See Katherine Parkin, *Food is Love: Food Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Covert, *Manipulating Images*; Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945*; McEuen, *Making War, Making Women: Femininity and Duty on the American Home Front, 1941-1945*; and Nancy Walker, *Women's Magazines, 1940-1960: Gender Roles and the Popular Press* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998).

did not seek out lower class or non-white markets with much vigor until the 1960s.³⁴ Prior to this period, most advertisements focused on the white middle or upper class. The same is true for cookbooks – most were aimed at white middle or upper-class women who may not have worked outside the home. Also, though middle or upper-class women authored cookbooks, they sometimes co-opted the recipes of their servants, many times forcibly and without consent.³⁵ It is impossible to know from what household or socio-economic class a recipe came. Thus, my assumptions about authorship and audience focus mainly on upper and middle-class women.

My analysis of kitchen citizenship is organized in three chapters. The first centers on government publications and how the government prescribed women's obligations to the state and to the war effort. I explore the necessity of rationing and price control measures to control the food situation and the origins of the OWI and OPA, the institutions responsible for managing the programs. I then show how the OWI and OPA targeted women as their audience and used middle-class gender expectations as an advertising tool. I argue that the U.S. government sought to create kitchen citizens through appealing to women as soldiers of the home front and as the source of family health and morale.

My second chapter focuses on commercially published cookbooks and the ways they appealed to women through the same notions of middle class femininity. I examine the government guides sent to commercial publishers about how to portray the war in their publications and how these messages were discernible in cookery texts. I show that cookbook authors helped to create kitchen citizens by comparing women at home to soldiers fighting

³⁴ Parkin, *Food is Love*, 12-30; Inness, *Secret Ingredients*, 1-15; Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*, 291-345.

³⁵ Rebecca Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens: Domestic Workers in the South, 1865-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

abroad, demonstrating men's and women's different connections to foods and the kitchen, and appealing to a history of women's sacrifice to determine women's proper role in the nation.

The third and final chapter examines community cookbooks and extension agency publications to see how messages about kitchen citizenship appeared at the local level. I use the historiography on community cookbooks and home economics to demonstrate that these authors had different goals in working with women, but still prescribed the same middle-class notions of domestic femininity and kitchen citizenship to their audiences. While kitchen citizenship is present in these texts, community cookbooks and extension pamphlets also reveal the tensions women felt about their own private definitions of womanhood and the public adoption of kitchen citizenship on the national stage.

Ultimately, this project shows that cookbooks and food literature contributed to prescriptions of domesticity for women in the 1940s. Though women made substantial progress during the first half of the twentieth century in terms of voting rights and even in working outside the home, they had not shaken off domesticity as their primary identity. During World War II, government propaganda, commercial cookery texts, and even local sources of women's authority called women into service as kitchen citizens, adopting domesticity, more specifically cooking, as an obligation to the nation in wartime.

Chapter 1

Making Food and Women Fight for Freedom: Government, Women, and the “Food Situation”

“G-4, in army parlance, is the officer who supplies all the food, equipment, ammunition and medicine to troops in the field...The housewives of America, the G-4’s of our homes, will be working with the G-4’s on the far-flung battlefronts all over the world to conserve food – and to supply the kind of nourishment to make strong healthy bodies.”³⁶

As part of its Food Fights for Freedom campaign in 1943, the War Food Administration in alliance with the Department of War Information published a pamphlet titled “The Conservation of Food in the Home.” An early draft read, “[The Housewife] plans the meals, buys the food, prepares it, and stores it for later use...Most of the conservation measures outlined here are measures which only she can take...”³⁷ As the primary buyers of food in the marketplace and producers of food in the home, women were most clearly affected by World War II rationing and price control programs. Though the Office of War Information removed the second sentence from the final draft, the sentiment was clear: women stood at the heart of home front food programs during World War II and determined the success of rationing and price control programs.

As American men fought abroad in Europe and the Pacific, the United States government assigned women the task of dealing with reduced food supplies at home. Though the U.S. government rationed tin, gasoline, rubber, and numerous other products, its decision to ration food supplies most impacted women, who were largely considered the primary consumers and preparers of food.³⁸ For the most part, government sources were straightforward with all Americans about the realities of the food situation and food shortages. However, government administrators intentionally directed their campaigns at women, using their own understandings

³⁶ “G-4 Needs Your Cooperation,” RG 208, Box 144, File: Point Rationing, NA.

³⁷ “The Conservation of Food in the Home,” RG 208, Box 3, File: Programs: Food Fights, Etc, Bklets, etc., 17.

³⁸ D’Ann Campbell, *Women at War With America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984), 224.

of gender, femininity, and domesticity as a guide. Despite women's real gains in the working world during the first half of the twentieth century, domesticity remained central to popular perceptions of femininity for upper and middle class women. The government reinforced these beliefs by drawing a direct relationship between female domestic duties at home and male military service abroad.

This chapter analyzes documents from the Office of War Information (OWI) and the Office of Price Administration (OPA) regarding the portrayal of food policies to Americans, specifically women. These documents include press releases, posters, film scripts, advertisements, and pamphlets. Government publications from the OWI and the OPA consistently cast women's primary duty as American citizens who served the nation through their work as diligent housewives. Rationing and price control measures provide an important place to understand how discussions about food during World War II played to perceptions and realities of women's lives. In selling rationing and price control to the American public, the government also sold women the concept of kitchen citizenship.

Food Rationing

Before we can understand the role women played in these programs, it is important to recognize the need for rationing and price control during World War II. The motivation for a compulsory food policy stemmed from the failure of voluntary rationing during World War I, when the U.S. government encouraged citizens to sacrifice for one another and voluntarily practice meatless days throughout the week, but did not adopt an official government food policy. This plan resulted in shortages and inflations, disproportionately affecting the lower classes who were unable to pay the inflated prices for foodstuffs. It also failed to reduce food

consumption, its primary goal. For example, even with inflated prices, red meat consumption actually increased from 1916 to 1919.³⁹ Remembering the food situation during World War I, the U.S. government took decisive action on the homefront to prevent wild inflation and increased consumption in the 1940s.

When the U.S. entered World War II in 1941, world food markets were already stretched thin. Three previous years of war in Europe and Asia had closed off traditional supplies of foods from these continents, while U.S. Allies received large imports of American produce and grains through the Lend-Lease program. Furthermore, as employment increased due to the war, individuals and families had greater financial power in a smaller civilian market, setting the stage for rampant inflation. From 1941 to 1942, the price of food increased 32 percent, with the cost of some foods rising 250 percent.⁴⁰ These conditions led government officials to institute mandatory food policies to control inflation and ensure an equal share among economic classes.

Two government agencies took part in building the program to manage the food situation: the OPA and the OWI. Though the OPA only existed as an independent agency from 1941 to 1946, its history can be traced back to New Deal economic programs. Discussion of the war's impact on inflation began at a hearing in December 1939 of the Temporary National Economic Committee, a New Deal Program established in 1938 to prevented inflation and promote industrial growth. In April 1941, President Roosevelt created the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply (OPACS) which had no legal power to control prices but was charged with monitoring consumer markets, including prices for rent and food. Later that year, in August 1941, President Roosevelt re-organized the OPA as part of the larger Office of

³⁹ Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 20-21 and Cecilia Kingsbury, “‘Food Will Win the War:’ Food and Social Control in World War I Propaganda” in *Edible Ideologies: Representing Food and Meaning* eds. Kathleen Lebesco and Peter Naccarato (New York: State University of New York Press, 2008), 36-52.

⁴⁰ Vatter, *US Economy in World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 95-96. Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 20.

Emergency Management with the same limited power as OPACS. When official U.S. involvement began with the bombing at Pearl Harbor in December 1941, President Roosevelt wasted no time setting food and price policies. In January of 1942, the OPA became an independent agency invested with the power of price stabilization and rationing.⁴¹

The OPA drew up a two part program to monitor food distribution and consumption for the duration of the war. The price control program, in place by early 1942, set price limits on certain items, such as bread and canned foods. Grocers were obligated to display ceiling prices in their stores and observe them, and failure to follow price control regulations resulted in penalties from local rationing boards.⁴² Rationing served as the second half of the program. While non-food rationing began almost immediately after the war started, general sugar rationing did not begin until May 1942. Stamp point rationing of meats, coffee, and dairy products emerged in 1943.⁴³ Various versions of stamp rationing were tried, but by mid-1943 the stamp and token rationing system was firmly established as the primary method of food rationing. In this program, the federal government issued five blue and six red stamps to American families – blue for processed foods, red for meats and dairy – worth ten points each. Grocers offered change for surplus points in the form of tokens. Rationed items had a specific, but often re-evaluated, point value that had to be turned in with the purchase of the item. This method was ultimately chosen for its flexibility. Rather than allocating specific foods to individuals, consumers could select items of their choosing, as long as they turned over sufficient points to

⁴¹ Andrew Bartels, “The Office of Price Administration and the Legacy of the New Deal, 1939-1946” *The Public Historian* 5.3 (Summer 1983): 5-29. Interestingly, Bartels views the OPA as a continuation of New Deal Economic fairness initiatives. For more information on the OPA, see Bentley, *Eating for Victory*.

⁴² “Food Fights for Freedom,” 1943, RG 208, Box 3, File: Programs – Food Fights, Etc, Bklets, etc, 26-29.

⁴³ “Point Development and Control,” 1945, RG 188, Box 768, File: History – Point Development and Control, NA.

the grocer.⁴⁴ Consumer demands could also change the way the system functioned. One Christmas, women successfully petitioned to change rules about gifting rationed goods during the holiday season. Where it had initially been prohibited, the policy changed in December 1943 to match citizens' desire to give hams and jellies as traditional holiday gifts.⁴⁵ Ad campaigns reminded consumers that they still had choices at the marketplace, but rationing greatly affected the way consumers shopped for food items.

Though established as a large, nationwide program, most rationing was managed at the local level. Local ration boards, made up of male and female municipal officials, teachers, and sometimes home economists, distributed ration books to families each month and collected the stamps from grocers. Government sources estimated that almost 120,000 volunteers helped at local rationing boards during the war.⁴⁶ Local ration boards were also charged with monitoring the behavior of grocers and consumers to ensure proper conformance to rationing and price control regulations. They helped watch for black markets, the unauthorized selling of rationed goods above ceiling prices without the transfer of ration points, and served as the investigative team for any reported unlawful activities. Ration boards also assisted the OPA by going door to door with messages about food and the war effort, making personal connections with female consumers.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 16. This is a simple explanation of the rationing process. For a more detailed discussion on rationing, the trials of the OPA, and the various factors that weighed in on determining the value of food, see Bentley's chapter "Rationing is Good for Democracy," in *Eating for Victory*, 9-29.

⁴⁵ Press Release, December 9, 1943, RG 188, Box 756, File: Meat Rationing Press Releases Sept-Dec 1943.

⁴⁶ "The Story of Wartime Rationing," RG 208, Box 2, File: Rationing, Advertising, 21.

⁴⁷ A lot more could be read into the policy of self-policing within rationing and price control programs. For an interesting discussion on self-regulation and the formation of the modern state during World War I, see Christopher Cappozola's *Uncle Sam Wants You*.

According to wartime government estimates, U.S. civilians received 75 percent of the total food produced by the United States.⁴⁸ On average, this rationing program allocated each American on the home front with approximately 3,100 calories per day. Of that total, rationed foods made up approximately 40 percent of those calories.⁴⁹ In more concrete terms, the government allocated two and a half pounds of meat per week to each civilian citizen. In comparison, the government allotted soldiers approximately five and half pounds of meat per week.⁵⁰ Additional rations were also available for war workers in particularly strenuous jobs, pregnant or nursing mothers, and children with special dietary needs. Women also had the option of petitioning their local ration board for a larger share of rationed goods.⁵¹ Taking into consideration the calorie allotment and flexibility offered by the U.S. food policy, the rationing program can be considered a much more limited sacrifice when compared to the dire food shortages experienced in Europe and Asia at that time.⁵²

Though the OPA had the power to make and enforce food policies, it needed assistance convincing Americans to participate in the program. Help came from the Office of War Information, established by executive order in June 1942, six months after the U.S. entered the war. The OWI had the responsibility to sell the war to the American people. Initially, OWI

⁴⁸ "A Call to Action" 1943, RG 208, Box 3, File: Programs – Food Fights, Etc, Bklets, etc, 2. According to this booklet, the armed forces received 13% of the food supply, Allies received 10%, and "outlying territories and good neighbors" received 2%.

⁴⁹ "Questions and Answers on Nutritional Aspects of the Food Situation," Aug 1, 1945, RG 208, Box 13, 1945.

⁵⁰ "Rations of the Nations," RG 208, Box 1696, File: (4). Though this may not seem like a lot, this level of meat consumption was actually an improvement for a significant number of Americans. Plentiful well-paying jobs in defense industries provided more Americans with larger incomes than ever before. The real sacrifice would have to be made by wealthier citizens who ate meat on a more regular basis (Memo from Charles Jackson to Maurice Henson, June 23, 1944, RG 208, Box 13).

⁵¹ "Women and Rationing: A preliminary report," January 1944, RG 208 Box 13, File: Victory Gardens. This survey showed that 79% of women interviewed were aware that extra rations could be obtained from their rationing board in order to meet legitimate circumstances.

⁵² See "Rations of the Nations," RG 208, Box 1696, File: (4). For example, Belgium received five ounces of meat and only 55 ounces of bread weekly. French citizens were estimated at 6 ½ ounces of meat per week, and 20 ounces of meat per week in Great Britain. Little information is given about the food situation in areas of occupied Asia. For more details regarding the food situation abroad, see "Rations of the Nations."

administrators wanted to be very grandiose in their message, promoting the war as a moral crusade against fascism. However, President Roosevelt and his administration rejected this vision, knowing that the general populace was overly-sensitive and distrustful of propaganda because of the harm it did in the First World War and the public's growing skepticism of (false) advertising that surfaced with the consumer society during the first half of the twentieth century. Thus, the OWI attempted to convey wartime needs in a pragmatic and non-proselytizing manner. The OWI endorsed providing the facts and realities of shortages to Americans, in hope that it would be the best way to gain trust and support for the war.⁵³ Rather than appealing to anti-fascist sentiments, the OPA and OWI focused on the realistic goal of defeating Germany and Japan. In projects like selling the food programs, the OWI saw the value in helping Americans answer the "personal, private why" question through showing Americans what they could gain from certain programs, rather than emphasizing fear.⁵⁴ The resulting program stressed that sacrifice brought legitimate and realistic positive outcomes.

The U.S. government's stated rationale for implementing the food campaign, through the OPA and OWI, was quite simple: prevent inflation and ensure an equal share of food to all of its citizens. It provided this information to citizens through films, news stories, radio spots, posters, and cartoons like Mr. Warfax. (see IMAGE 1) In discussing price control and rationing, government reports carefully explained how more workers meant greater purchasing power for the average American, and that with more citizens able to buy goods, the risk of inflation or

⁵³ Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978) 2-6. It is interesting to note the debate between realism and inflated rhetoric on democracy defined the agency through much of the war. At one point, the entire writing staff resigned because it was instructed to write about the food policies in realistic terms. See Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, 64.

⁵⁴ Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, 46-47, 62. See also: Sydney Weinburg, "What to Tell America: The Writers' Quarrel in the Office of War Information" *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Jun., 1968): 73-89. Though as Winkler points out, the program was different (and he argues more successful) overseas and with the military, where it did portray America as a country of freedom and positive ideals. See Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, 73-112.

shortages increased. The OPA and OWI even framed their discussions in terms of supply and demand, respecting the intelligence of American consumers and sharing with them the economic realities of the situation. However, they noted that just keeping goods affordable through price control was not enough to ensure all Americans had ample food resources during the war. Rationing had to go hand in hand with price control in order to give workers who could not shop until the evening equal opportunity to purchase supplies as those who could shop early in the day, and to prevent hoarding, which was equally disruptive to the food supply.⁵⁵ These measures were necessary because American food producers were not only providing food for its own citizens, but also for its soldiers, its Allies, and every nation it occupied. Thus, as the war progressed and the Allied powers gained control of more territory, the same amount of food supplies had to be stretched to cover an increasing number of peoples and nations. U.S. government publications emphasized that rationing and price control programs were necessary for successful participation in the war. The success of these programs rested in the hands of home front consumers – women – who had to adjust their shopping and cooking habits to match government goals.

⁵⁵ “OPA’s Top Legal Price Plan,” June 1943, RG 188, Box D-19, File: OWI “The Benefits of Price Control” June 1943.



IMAGE 1: Warfax on Sugar (RG 188-G, Box 1, File: Warfax on Sugar) This image shows Mr. Warfax explaining to a Mrs. Doaks the economic situation that created the sugar shortage. Used in accordance with the fair use policy.

A Job for Homemakers

Though rationing and price control programs affected the entire U.S. population, the OPA and OWI literature specifically targeted women with information about new methods of cooking and consuming. This was not simply because women comprised a majority of the home front population; it has been estimated that only a little over 10 percent of the total population actually served in the armed forces. Rather, government programs intentionally chose to direct food information and advertising toward women because of their role as the primary household consumers.⁵⁶ Advertisers in the first half of the twentieth century already knew that women comprised a significant majority of shoppers and cooks. In fact, most advertisements from this

⁵⁶ Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 9.

period appealed to a generic white, middle-class “Mrs. Consumer.”⁵⁷ As Tawnya Adkins Covert argues in her book *Manipulating Images*, “Government officials drew upon their class and gender based values and experiences to create mobilization campaigns that would entice women to take part in the war effort.”⁵⁸ Since middle class men staffed a majority of government agencies, they used their own understandings of middle class women’s role in the family. Furthermore, the National Research Council’s Committee of Food Habits provided administrators with social scientific research that confirmed women’s role as the ‘gatekeepers’ to the family’s food consumption. Admitting that women played a leading role in food purchasing and preparation, the Committee on Food Habits recommended directing wartime food and nutritional information to women.⁵⁹

Government agents thus identified rationing and price control programs as specific tasks for American housewives to serve their country, based on recommendations from the Committee of Food Habits and their own understandings of women as homemakers. Almost all OPA press releases throughout the war assumed that the “housewives” of America were their intended audience. The messages of the press releases varied, often discussing changes in ration points for specific goods, surpluses or shortages of items, or new ration or price control rules.⁶⁰ However, the subtext was always the same – that it was important for women to know this information because they were the ones who shopped and prepared meals for the family. This pattern also appeared in movie scripts that directly referenced housewives or always used the modifier “she,” and in food propoganda that only depicted women in both text and images.

⁵⁷ See Charles McGovern, *Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) and Katherine Parkin, *Food is Love Food Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

⁵⁸ Tawnya Adkins Covert, *Manipulating Images: World War II Mobilization of Women Through Magazine Advertising* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2011), 62.

⁵⁹ Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 24-26.

⁶⁰ See RG 188, Box 756 “Press Releases 1943-1945,” and RG 188, Box 757 “Press Releases 1943-1945.”

Many times these films featured women characters who proudly admitted to being a housewife.⁶¹ The government even launched an entire “Home Front Pledge” campaign designed to gain support for food programs that featured women prominently in its mobilization and advertisement efforts.⁶² Although the food situation affected all Americans, messages about rationing focused on informing women in particular about the changing policies and availabilities of food.

Officials identified all women, even those who worked outside the home, as homemakers in the rationing campaign. Despite any secondary employment, women’s duties within the home came first. In the “Share the Meat” advertising campaign, for example, government advertisers asked women who did not work to shop early in the day, leaving the afternoon for those who worked in war industries and still had to perform homemaking duties in the evening. It appeared inconceivable to propaganda authors that someone else in the family would do the shopping or the cooking.⁶³ Yet while the campaign acknowledged working women’s “double duty,” government officials did not refer to these women as “workers.” Rather, the OWI identified them as “housewives in war work.”⁶⁴ Thus no matter what work uniform a woman put on in the morning, she was still considered a housewife at her core.

The link between women and food preparation was not limited to propaganda posters, movies, and press releases. Even government propaganda distributed to war workers emphasized roles for women within the home. Pamphlets informed war workers, both male and female, about the value of nutritious breakfasts and lunches when working long hours in the war

⁶¹ See movie scripts in RG 188, Box Film Strips and Productions Files 1942-1946 Box 1 of 21 and RG 208, Box 6, File: Food Fights for Freedom – Master File Industrial Nutrition, especially in the films “Holding the Home Front Line” and “Picture Stories of Wartime Living.”

⁶² See “*The Home Front Pledge* Campaign Book,” RG 208, Box 3, File: Program – Home Front.

⁶³ Letter to Chester Bowles, June 22, 1944, RG 208, Box 12, File: Home Canning.

⁶⁴ “U.S. Government Campaign Share the Meat,” n.d., RG 208, Box 143, File: Meat Rationing, 3.

industries. In addition to the pamphlets and tabletop information booklets presented in the workplace, workers also received pamphlets to take home to their lunch-makers. These advertisements frequently contained images of women packing lunches for husbands and children. These pamphlets directed their attention to wives, mothers or even the female war worker to learn the role of proper nutrition in the workplace. Some even encouraged factory owners to hire homemakers to help out in the industry's cafeteria.⁶⁵ Though distributed at the workplace, messages in workplace nutritional pamphlets did not target the general population of war workers but rather the women who packed the lunches and prepared meals at home. In workplace pamphlets, movies, posters, and comics, the OPA and OWI sold food rationing and price control programs to women.

“Fighters Come First:” Sharing and Sacrifice in Rationing⁶⁶

Understanding that women served as the primary targets of advertising and propaganda campaigns in food related subjects makes the gender stereotypes used in such campaigns more obvious and helps readers identify understandings of gender roles in the mid-twentieth century. It also helps explain why government administrators selected certain campaign messages. By appealing to gendered obligations like sharing, selflessness, self-sacrifice by playing up guilt, the government slanted rationing campaigns toward American women. These messages reinforced women's roles as homemakers and elevated domesticity to the status of service to the nation at war.

Government propaganda sold rationing to American women in two ways: first, as a form of sharing between U.S. civilians, U.S. military, other Allied forces, and liberated nations and,

⁶⁵ See RG 208, Box 225, File: Basic Seven Charts and Cards.

⁶⁶ “Counter Attack” RG 188 FS-2, Box: Film Strips and Productions Files 1942-1946 Box 1 of 21, File: Counter Attack, 2.

second, as sacrifice for those fighting overseas. Entire ad campaigns portrayed rationing as getting a “fair share” during the war.⁶⁷ These campaigns relied on gendered ideas of women as selfless nurturers, willing to sacrifice not only for the war effort, but out of compassion for their fellow citizens and citizens of the world. The campaign furthermore reflected notions of women as protectors of the moral fabric in U.S. society and highlighted how supposedly private acts of femininity on the home front were transformed into public, political expressions of female citizenship.

In an appeal to women’s emotions, the OPA and OWI propaganda campaigns used guilt to persuade women to support rationing regulations, reifying the perceived distinction of women as sensitive and emotional. Propaganda films and advertisements informed women that everyone had to participate or “somebody else may have to go without because you managed to get more than [your share].”⁶⁸ These advertisements personalized the programs and individualized consumers to promote participation. Rationing was pitched as a moral choice between right and wrong. By taking more for themselves or their families, housewives who purchased items on the black market cheated their fellow citizens. Trusting women as the moral center of the home and nation, and the idea that women would willingly sacrifice themselves for their families and communities, government campaigns assumed women would make the right choice. Ultimately, this campaign tried to change the prevailing attitude of rationing as sacrifice to one of “share and share alike.”⁶⁹ One illustration in an OWI rationing guide explains it all: without rationing only a few women benefited, but with rationing all Americans could have their fair share. (See Image 2)

⁶⁷ “Point Rationing for Grocers” 1943, RG 188 FS-2, Box: Film Strips and Productions Files 1942-1946 Box 1 of 21, File: Counter Attack, 9.

⁶⁸ “Holding the Home Front Line” 7/19/1943, RG 188 FS-2, Box Film Strips and Productions Files 1942-1946 Box 1 of 21, File: Holding the Home Front Line, 9. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁹ “Point Rationing – What, Why, and How” 12/2/1942. RG 208, Box 144, File: Point Rationing, 7.

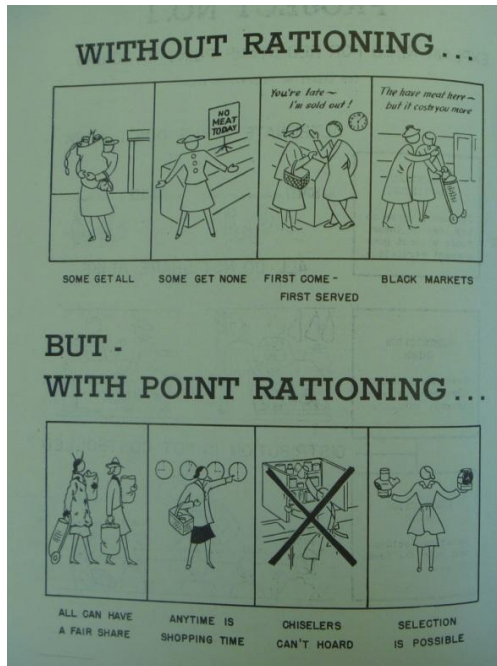


IMAGE 2: “Without rationing...” (“Red Stamp Point Rationing,” Dec 1943, RG 208, Box 144, File: Point Rationing). This image demonstrates the dangers of not participating in rationing, where other women are limited in what they can purchase. With rationing, the image suggests that all women will benefit by getting their fair share. Used in accordance with the fair use policy.

The OWI and OPA also emphasized that sharing meats and other foods was a small sacrifice to keep American soldiers well-fed. Officials hoped to encourage women to accept rationing by appealing to the supposedly natural self-sacrificing, compassionate, and nurturing tendencies in women and concern for husbands, brothers, and sons overseas. The OPA and OWI reminded women that soldiers, too, were helping to mediate the food situation. Soldiers operated on a “take all you want but eat all you take” rule while eating in military cafeterias in U.S. and abroad.⁷⁰ Furthermore, in an internal memo regarding rationing themes, the government suggested using the idea of sacrificing for the common good and openly admitted the benefit of

⁷⁰ “The Conservation of Food in the Home,” October 1943, RG 208, Box 3, File: Programs – Food Fights, Bklets, etc.

linking the female consumers on the home front with the soldier on the front lines.⁷¹ Officials believed that themes of sacrificing and sharing with the armed forces would inspire women to participate wholeheartedly in the rationing and price control programs. This allowed the OWI to remain committed to its goal of realistic depictions of the food situation while simultaneously appealing to gendered emotions to compel women's participation.

Along with the term "sharing," government agencies described rationing with words like "democratic," "patriotic," and "fair" with public connotations in contrast to the supposedly private or personal act of consuming.⁷² The OWI argued that these terms reflected the historical role of American women, and other ads emphasized this duty as something that any *real* American citizen would do for his or her country.⁷³ They bombarded women with messages like: "It is our patriotic duty and responsibility as loyal citizens to cooperate and support rationing. . . [rationing is] more vital to our welfare than our desire to satisfy our own personal gains."⁷⁴ In the end, sharing with each other would make for a stronger and healthier American nation and held a promise for a more prosperous world.⁷⁵ For women, participating in rationing was a public act that helped fellow citizens and country in wartime.

In contrast, men, who were popularly perceived to be more pragmatic and rational rather than emotional, needed extra prodding or logical explanations to participate in the food programs. One pamphlet explained that male farmers "...have sons in service. He will cooperate fully if his responsibilities and opportunities are properly explained to him."⁷⁶ Men would not be convinced by sharing, but could only be convinced through remembering his sons in service and

⁷¹ "Rationing Campaign Theme," February 1942, RG 208, Box 144, File: Rationing, 2.

⁷² "Black Marketing" September 1943, RG 188, Box D-19, File: ESB Articles – Manuscripts, 1-2.

⁷³ "The point behind point rationing," RG 208, Box 144, File: Point Rationing.

⁷⁴ "Why Rationing?" Aug 1943, RG 188, Box 768, File: History Outlines – Miscellaneous, 17. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁵ "Point Rationing – What, Why, and How" 12/2/1942. RG 208, Box 144, File: Point Rationing, 1.

⁷⁶ "Red Stamp Point Rationing" 3/17/1943, RG 208, Box 144, File: Point Rationing, 10.

the economic opportunities available to him. These ads specifically appealed to logical self-interest rather than the notion of rationing as a shared venture. This example highlights how the government specifically appealed to women through notions of sharing, but men needed to be more assured of the personal or economic benefit of rationing to join in. Thus, government rhetoric reminded women of their double duty as women and Americans and relied on the tendencies supposedly inherent to femininity to encourage full participation in the rationing program.

Soldiers on the Home Front

A second way agencies targeted female audiences involved transforming women into soldiers on the home front, making domesticity and femininity elements of the fight for freedom. Traditionally, male service as soldiers was a central principle of U.S. citizenship. In the masculine language of rights and obligations, full U.S. citizens received rights and liberties in return for an obligation to protect the state in wartime. During previous wars, women could not publicly participate in politics at the national level; women were considered citizens through coverture, but with responsibility to the family, not the state.⁷⁷ Suffrage, which occurred just after World War I, changed the way women participated in national politics. Yet, during World War II, women, for the most part, could not serve in the military, creating a tension between the ideas of military service and citizenship. Perhaps in response to this tension, the OPA and OWI directly related the food situation and service in American kitchens with battles overseas. Government officials compared women to soldiers, medics, and generals as they fought for food,

⁷⁷ Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies*, 242. Though at different points in time various parties (Congress, conscientious objectors, women) tried to detach the link between citizenship and military service, it was not until 1946 that the Supreme Court reversed the *Schwimmer* decision, which originally ruled that the U.S. government could deny citizenship to individuals who refused to take up arms in service to the nation. See Kerber, 251-302.

took care to give proper nutrition, and organized and planned the next meal for the family. Food became ammunition, nutrition and health the reason for fighting. In contrast to the act of male conscription, women were drafted as soldiers who served their country by preparing food for their families and willingly participating in rationing and price control programs – a duty couched in the language of gender, national defense, and citizenship.

Reassuring women that it was their job to cook and provide meals on the home front played a significant role in this directive. One home canning guide addressed to “Mrs. America” stressed how important canning was to the war effort. It proposed that with canning, a woman performed “two war jobs at once – helping food fight for freedom and providing your family with healthy, nutritious foods...”⁷⁸ In this instance and many others like it, the dual war job of women was inextricably linked to many of their established duties in the home. The roles of women in the home and family did not necessarily change during wartime. But because of the OPA programs, women could make domesticity contribute to war effort. The new significance of providing healthy, nutritious foods in order to protect and feed the family elevated women’s labor in the home to national prominence.

Making women soldiers on the home front also necessitated defining enemies for women to fight. Women on the home front did not square off against the Axis Powers, but rather fought against the “silent enemies” of black markets, scarcity, and inflation.⁷⁹ Wars against inflation and scarcity were fought through universal rationing and price control programs, but the battle against black markets still needed to be fought. Government messages informed women that

⁷⁸ “Women’s Radio War Program Guide – Home Canning,” July 1944, RG 208, Box 7, File: Food Fights For Freedom Home Canning & Preservation, 8.

⁷⁹ “Holding the Home Front Line” 7/19/1943, RG 188 FS-2, Box Film Strips and Productions Files 1942-1946 Box 1 of 21, File: Holding the Home Front Line, 1.

participating in black markets was equivalent to a “stab in the back of the American fighter.”⁸⁰

Short films intentionally told women that the government would “show no mercy” to those who broke rationing rules or stood idly by watching others partake in the black market.⁸¹ Women who witnessed violations were to report violations by either sellers or consumers to their local rationing board.

The black market was further demonized as an enemy because it was a waste of resources for both the country and individual families. Appealing to women’s supposedly “natural” maternal sense of responsibility, one press release reminded women that the extra money spent on the black market would be better spent purchasing war bonds or saved for their child’s future education.⁸² OPA and OWI officials described black markets as a direct threat to the health of a family because there was no government protection or grading guarantee surrounding the goods sold on the black market.⁸³ According to the government propaganda, only “slickers and slackers,” participated in the black market, and thus food items could be laced with bacteria or other harmful substances.⁸⁴ Agencies framed the black market as the enemy to the home to galvanize women’s support for rationing.

If black markets served as the primary enemy, food became the ammunition that supported the home front war effort. Posters and other propaganda pledged that “In the battle of food we are not going to be too late with too little.”⁸⁵ Grocery stores and markets served as “battle stations” where women made strategic decisions to further the war effort and rejuvenate

⁸⁰ “Red Stamp Rationing- How Advertisers Can Help” 3/11/1943, RG 188 FS-2, Box Film Strips and Productions Files 1942-1946 Box 1 of 21, File: Red Stamp Rationing – How Advertisers Can Help, 9.

⁸¹ “Meats and Fats,” RG 188, Box FS-2, File: Meats and Fats Rationing Program, 8.

⁸² “Text of Radio Text by Chester Bowles,” 3/14/1944, RG 188, Box 757, File: Meat Rationing Press Releases Jan-April 1944, n/a.

⁸³ “Black Marketing” September 1943, RG 188, Box D-19, File: ESB Articles – Manuscripts, 2.

⁸⁴ “Red Stamp Point Rationing” 3/17/1943, RG 208, Box 144, File: Point Rationing, 12.

⁸⁵ “U.S. Department of Agriculture Campaign Food For Freedom” 1943, RG 208, Box 143 File: Nutrition, 2.

health to continue the fight, but also continued to link citizenship and consumption.⁸⁶ A guide on how to best plan for a family under rationing read: “Food is a weapon of war and we have to distribute it as carefully as we do our other weapons...we have made a battle plan for food – we ration in order to use all that we have and use it best.”⁸⁷ Rationing was not just about getting enough food, but also acting strategically to get the right kinds of food. Informational campaigns on American diets played to the threat of hidden hunger lurking in families because they did not get the proper nutrients. To combat it, nutrition booklets gave women the weapon of the basic seven food group plan, a product of the USDA in 1943, which outlined proper nutrition for all members of the family.⁸⁸ Publications like this likened consumer choice and trips to the grocery store as acts of strategic importance in the ongoing war effort.

Identifying women as soldiers of the home front attempted to give women a sense of active purpose in a war in which many of them only had indirect participation. For example, government agencies provided the collection of waste fats in exchange for ration points as an activity to help women contribute directly to the war effort. Though in reality little of the waste fats could actually be transformed into glycerin for war material, collecting them was a way for women to feel like they were making a positive contribution to the war effort. One memo read, “Fat salvage [is] a woman’s job. It’s her job backing up her husband, son and relatives in the armed forces.”⁸⁹ Furthermore, it gave women a chance to be directly involved and “literally

⁸⁶ “Supply Line,” RG 188, Box: Film Strips and Productions Files 1942-1946 Box 1, File: FS 26 Supply Line, 2.

⁸⁷ “How Can We Make Rationing Work for Us?” RG 208, Box 144, File: Point Rationing.

⁸⁸ Spot Announcement, January 3, 1944, RG 208, Box 6, File: Food Fights for Freedom – Master File Industrial Nutrition.

⁸⁹ U.S. Government Campaign on Waste Kitchen Fats,” January 1943, RG 208, Box 146, File: Salvage, 10. In reality, only 10% of waste fats women collected were used to make glycerin for bombs, but more often it was used to make soaps and other items on the home front. That did not stop the government from selling fat salvage as a direct link to the war effort on the fighting front. See: “Fact Sheet No. 396: Fat Salvage,” RG 208, Box 230, File: Fat Salvage.

pour out the substance needed to fight the war.”⁹⁰ Like soldiers, women received honor and rewards for their duty. These “patriotic women” were not given war medals, but rewarded through receiving more red stamps to purchase additional foods for their families.⁹¹

Advertisement campaigns similarly argued that Victory Gardens provided an opportunity for women to actively participate in the war effort. Ad campaigns advocated for Victory Gardens through themes like “food production is war production.”⁹² Government officials also explained that the aches and pains of gardening paled in comparison to soldiers’ experiences in the field. One advertisement from the “Grow More in ‘44” campaign, beneath a picture of marines storming a beach head, wrote “What’s a little sweat, a few blisters, a set of aching muscles? Take a look at the boys in New Guinea swamps if you think a garden is a big order.”⁹³ Victory gardens also provided another place to hunt enemies. Images and text reflected bugs as “saboteurs” that gardeners should “shoot to kill.” In that same manner, fertilizers and gardening tools were weapons to fight enemies.⁹⁴ Though women could not fight overseas, they were able to fight as citizens at home in the gardens, grocery stores, and kitchens.

By linking women’s domestic duties directly to the war effort, government officials hoped to make participation in food programs more urgent and meaningful. Creating enemies and giving women specific locations where they could serve both the nation and protect their families allowed officials to portray rationing and price control as obligatory duties for female citizens. In a reference not to women working in war industries but to housewives participating in rationing and price control programs, they wrote:

⁹⁰ “U.S. Government Campaign on Waste Kitchen Fats,” January 1943, RG 208, Box 146, File: Salvage, 13.

⁹¹ “General Marshall tells women...” RG 208, Box 2, File: Advertising Checking Bureau, Inc.

⁹² “The Victory Gardens Campaign,” RG 208, Box 146, File: Victory Gardens, 3.

⁹³ “Take Your Battle Stations Victory Gardeners...” 1944, RG 188, Box 5, File: Background Material – Food Production, n/a.

⁹⁴ See “Grow More in ‘44” Campaign Advertisements in RG 208, Box 5. File: Background Material – Food Production; “Grow More in ‘44” RG 208, Box 225, File: Grow More in ‘44; and “Your Victory Garden for 1944,” RG 208 Box 229 File: Victory Gardens.

As the weeks pass you find that you're doing a real war job... an important job... We can't all be members of the armed forces... fighting grim, dogged battles in the Pacific... or storming Hitler's Fortress Europe! Nor can you be right behind the lines of battle, tending the wounded. Or doing military service for our men who are winning this war. But you can and are doing something important to back up every man and woman in the battle zone!⁹⁵

Fulfilling the obligations of American citizenship did not require women to sign up for military service, but it did require them to fight the enemies of black markets, waste, and inflation. These battles, fought in the home and at local markets, were portrayed as venues where women could do their part in the fight.

Recipes and Nutrition for Healthy Citizens

Alongside prescriptions for proper behavior from female citizens, the OPA and OWI provided practical hints and suggestions for stretching points and foods to help the average citizen, proclaiming that “No nation achieves total strength unless all of its citizens are well fed.”⁹⁶ Nutritional information and recipes conveyed a wealth of information on everything from the basic seven to the proper way to cook vegetables to maximize nutritional value. These suggestions also provided information on what foods were in surplus and shortage at the time, helping women navigate the changing food scene. The informative and helpful hints contained in OPA and OWI food literature were still intended to reinforce the role women were expected to play in the war.

Nutrition was an important part of the various informational campaigns for rationing, but it was framed in a patriotic and gendered manner. Women should ration for the many reasons previously described, but also to maintain their family's health for the development of healthy

⁹⁵ “Training Slides for Price Panel Assistants” 1944, Box: Film Strips and Productions Files 1942-1946 Box 1 of 21, File: FS 28 Your Job as Price Panel Assistant, 7. Ellipses and emphasis in original.

⁹⁶ “The Need for a National Nutrition Plan,” RG 188, Box D-19, File: Nutrition

citizens. Directly next to the rhetoric about the importance of sharing meats with fellow citizens were lists of substitutes that provided equal amounts of protein and lists of the important vitamins that were necessary to make up with the lack of meat. Publications urged women to substitute foods such as milk, cheese, eggs, various types of beans, and nuts for the meats they served before the war. For sugar, pamphlets recommended using honey, maple syrup, molasses, or corn syrup. Officials who published nutrition pamphlets recommended substituting for both health and patriotic reasons. One pamphlet on sugar suggested to “[s]prinkle it thin. Find substitutes. Your health will improve. So will your conscience.”⁹⁷

The government also gave consumers information on surplus goods that could be obtained for low ration points, showing how utilizing proper nutrition was an intelligent choice for American women. OWI records demonstrated that certain years produced bumper crops of tomatoes, potatoes, cabbage, and peaches that would be wasted if not purchased and preserved en masse. These publications included information on the nutritional benefits of those foods, the proper way to store or preserve them, and new recipes to try. Besides having to convince women that buying these items in bulk was not hoarding (contrary to all the black market and anti-hoarding literature), OWI officials informed them that using the surplus was both intelligent and patriotic. The press release “Cabbage Named WFA Victory Food Selection” told women that with “[farmers’] sons at war, much of their labor force working in the war plants... America owes a debt to these farmers which it cannot easily pay.”⁹⁸ By taking advantage of surplus foods women presumably reduced waste and protected farmers’ families and livelihoods. In addition, using surplus food was also friendly on the ration pocketbook.

⁹⁷ “Why must Sugar be rationed?” RG 208, Box 144, File: Rationing, n/a.

⁹⁸ “Cabbage Named WFA Victory Food Selection,” February 21, 1944, RG 208, Box 6, File: Food Fights For Freedom Surplus Foods.

Recipes found in OPA and OWI records varied in their ability to be ration-friendly. Recipes for dishes like hash, quick potato soup, and potato pancakes were practical and advantageous to women who prepared foods under rationing. These recipes used little fat, stretched ingredients by using little or no meat, and added more nutritious vegetables to the dish. Other recipes, like one for “potatoes escaloped” called for four tablespoons of fat – a big sacrifice for a family who would have limited amounts of fats at its disposal.⁹⁹ The same applied to recipes not part of collections on surplus items. Often the recipe suggestions tried to be helpful in thinking of new ideas for meals that stretched rationed foods. Recipes in *The Victory Newsletter* and “Nutrition Notes” press releases gave information on cooking different types of meats, like lamb or beef tongue or how to add flavor to dishes like cabbage or plain boiled vegetables to make them more palatable. Some recipes even suggested ways to save fuel by baking two small cakes rather than one large one or making one-dish meals.¹⁰⁰ Others gave hints on proper ways to cook foods to maximize their nutritional content, such as cooking vegetables in less water because it led to a loss of vitamins. Even these messages about food were caught up in the language of war. Foods substitutes like beans and cheese were described as “fighting food” that rivaled meat as a way to fuel the body and build muscle.¹⁰¹

Other recipes demonstrated the surplus of American food and appealed emotionally to women by reminding them of how other nations struggled with food. One particularly unique recipe found among the press releases was a recipe received from war-torn Holland. The release actually contains two recipes for *gevulde kool*, or stuffed cabbage. The first recipes showed how

⁹⁹ “Program to Utilize the Plentiful Fall Potato Crop,” October 1943, RG 208, Box 3, File: Programs - Food Fights, Etc, Bklets, etc, 8-9.

¹⁰⁰ See recipes in *The Victory Newsletter* and “Nutrition Notes” memos, RG 208, Box 6, File: Food Fights For Freedom – Master File Industrial Nutrition. Interestingly, some of the memos are specifically targeted toward the African American press, though the recipes do not appear to differ from the recipes sent to white presses.

¹⁰¹ “Dry Beans” memo, May 6, 1944, RG 188, Box 768, File: Background Material – Food Production, 2.

Dutch women prepared the dish before the war; the second showed how the Dutch prepared the dish while coping with wartime shortages. The change was drastic. The first had cabbage, beef, pork, bread and various seasonings; the second called for cabbage, “meat extract (if available),” rice, bread, salt and pepper. Even the steps for preparation are drastically shorter for the war version.¹⁰² This press release aimed to show how cooks in wartime needed to be resourceful, but it also served to reinforce how fortunate American women were. Stretching meat was much different than having to go entirely without it. By comparing the rationing situation in America to that abroad, government officials urged women to participate in rationing programs.

Government officials also appealed to gendered understandings of food consumption to remind women of their duties in the home and family. In a memo on healthy lunches to serve to teenaged war workers, the author recommended one lean sandwich for women (who, as the author reminded, *just* worked as clerks) while men in the war industries might require three or even four sandwiches. These suggestions for war lunches were very ration friendly, but were definitely designed for men. Each suggested menu had two sandwiches. For example, one menu had a chopped liver sandwich and a peanut butter sandwich, with sides of milk and tomato juice. Another contained a chicken sandwich, a cheese sandwich, milk, and orange juice.¹⁰³ On one hand, the calorie math makes sense. Those working in war factories did need more calories for their active jobs. On the other hand, many times these pamphlets operated under the assumption that all men needed more calories than women. No matter what the profession, men inherently needed more calories, specifically meat calories, to be masculine. Suggesting masculine meals

¹⁰² “Wartime Dutch Recipes Require Resourcefulness,” RG 208, Box 6, File: Food Fights For Freedom – Surplus Foods.

¹⁰³ “Especially Nutritious Meals Needed by Working Juveniles,” RG 208, Box 6, File: Food Fights for Freedom – Master File Industrial Nutrition, 2-3.

for workers also reinforced working outside the home as a man's duty. These heavy duty lunch recipes were for women to prepare for other war workers, not for themselves.

Nutrition and food preparation became another front in making food and women fight for freedom as kitchen citizens. The information included was helpful and demonstrative of ways to cope with rationing and price control, but reinforced assumptions about women's role in the family and their role as soldiers on the home front. Government officials also played to gendered ideas of food and calorie intake and preparation. Through nutrition information, the OPA and OWI appealed to gendered understandings of home and family life in the 1940s.

Conclusion

With U.S. entry into World War II in December 1941, the U.S. developed a deliberately gendered food policy to meet the demands of war. The Office of Price Administration established rationing and price control measures to regulate the civilian food supply on the home front while the Office of War Information sold the program to the American people. The OPA and OWI recognized and utilized women as consumers and wartime food campaigns played to middle class notions of femininity that, in the 1940s, viewed women as homemakers and mothers. It is no coincidence that obligations typically assumed to be feminine – sharing, self-sacrifice, compassion – became some of the most used themes in spreading information and garnering support for the food programs. Advertising and propaganda campaigns were meant to appeal to feminine emotions and traditional domestic roles to induce a willingness to participate whole-heartedly in the war effort.

In doing so, government literature focused on three main themes. First, they played to gendered understandings of sharing and sacrifice, appealing to women as moral centers of the

home and nation. Second, they emphasized domesticity as a weapon of war, setting up enemies and battle stations in the home and markets for women to participate in the war effort. Third, they appealed to motherhood as a way to ensure proper nutrition for American citizens. The OPA and OWI bombarded women with images informing them that cooking was an important war job and that they ought to perform it well.

But the government was not the only group bombarding women with images and messages about food. The United States in the 1940s was part of a large consumer world filled with advertising agencies and large corporations. Notions of femininity and domesticity as war obligations also filled the pages of commercial cookery texts. The government instructed these agencies on how to support OWI and OPA food messages, but commercial cookery texts also utilized women's role as homemakers for their own benefit.

Chapter 2
Mass-Producing Kitchen Citizens:
Commercial Cookbooks and Citizenship in World War II

*To the Housewives of America –
Those soldiers tried and true
Who are struggling on the home front
To serve good meals to you!
To their steady smiling courage –
To their judgments keen and sound –
As they learn to use their coupons
To make the food go ‘round!’¹⁰⁴*

With these words, Prudence Penny dedicated her 1943 cookbook, *Coupon Cookery*, to American housewives who learned to adapt to the various changes of the World War II home front. As a pseudonym for a plethora of home economists and editors who wrote for the *Los Angeles Examiner* and Hearst Publications, the fictional Penny set out to clarify the new rationing rules to women and explain how to adjust their budgets and attitudes to wartime regulations.¹⁰⁵ Implicit in Penny’s work and the genre of commercially published cookbooks, however, is a deeper signifier of gender and citizenship that suggested only women could “make the food go ‘round.’”

Rationing and price control measures directed by the Office of Price Administration altered the food landscape during World War II, changing the way women shopped for and prepared food. While many commercial cookbooks explained how to use rationing coupons, stretch meats and sugars, and provide families with nutritionally sound meals, they also reinforced gendered notions of citizenship that linked women to the home and men to the

¹⁰⁴ Prudence Penny, *Coupon Cookery* (Hollywood: Murray & Gee Inc., 1943), vii.

¹⁰⁵ “Marion Manners and Prudence Penny: The First Celebrity Chefs,” *The Los Angeles Times* April 22, 2009. <http://www.latimes.com/features/food/la-fo-prudence22-2009apr22,0,514020.story> accessed 1/28/12. Many cookbooks used popular pseudonyms like this. Another example is Betty Crocker, a creation of the Washburn Crosby Company (purchased by General Mills in 1921) and home economist Marjorie Husted. See Jennifer Horner, “Betty Crocker’s Picture Cookbook: A Gendered Ritual Response to Social Crises of the Postwar Era” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* Vol 24 (2000): 332-345.

fighting front. Aimed largely at a female audience, cookbooks conveyed the specific message that women, as preparers of food, served both the family and the state. Commercial cookbook authors and publishers reproduced the links seen in government messages between women and food, emphasizing women's role as soldiers of the home front, natural experts in the kitchen, and successors to previous generations of strong, nation-building women. Though women had long occupied the moral center of the nation through their domestic duties, commercially published cookbooks, like government publications, reinforced the role of American women as citizens in the kitchen. This was not a citizenship dependent on voting rights, economic employment or taxation. Rather, kitchen citizenship linked domestic service as an obligation of American women in service to the nation.

This chapter uses over fifty cookbooks published from 1941 to 1945, as well as government advertising and publishing guides sent to publishers about the proper ways to sell rationing and price control programs to demonstrate the similarities in how government and large publishing companies sold kitchen citizenship.¹⁰⁶ In my study, the introductions and chapter narrative provide the most meaningful evidence of kitchen citizenship. I examine the stated purposes for writing the cookbooks and analyze the rhetoric for clues to underlying assumptions of gender and the role of women in the home and nation. I also examine cookbook images for displays of gender. Some images are technical and intended to help the reader develop culinary skills while others were chosen by the author or publisher to support the overall message of the cookbook. Last, I look at the recipes themselves. The recipe titles, ingredients, instructions, and

¹⁰⁶ While most cookbooks discuss World War II directly, not all do. I suspect this choice reflects desires from publishers for the cookbook edition to last longer than the war, because the majority of those cookbooks still mention difficult times and stretching foods to last longer. Interestingly, in a few of those that feature the war in their narrative, it appears to have been a gimmick to sell copies because their recipes do not reflect the goals of rationing or only provide one or two pages of wartime recipes. For example, see Ruth Berolzheimer's *Victory Binding of the American Woman's Cook Book* (Chicago: Consolidated Book Publishers, 1943) where her final section on wartime cookery contains only a page of tips and no recipes. However, all of the books can be read as a cultural reflection of understandings of femininity during the 1940s.

overall order of recipes in the chapter and the book as a whole show the authorial judgments on the domestic skill and knowledge levels of their targeted audience.

Although the questions and approaches of culinary historians ground this analysis of cookbooks, an understanding of kitchen citizenship in commercial cookbooks also requires that cookbooks be read in the context of the development of the home economics, or domestic science, movement of the first half of the twentieth century. Home economists served as principle authors or supporting institutional testers for many early and mid-twentieth century commercial cookbooks. As Laura Shapiro argues in *Perfection Salad*, the domestic science movement was integral to the development of the modern cookbook. She asserts that “the women who founded and led the domestic science movement were deeply interested in food, not because they admitted to any particular appetite for it, but because it offered the easiest and most immediate access to the homes of the nation.”¹⁰⁷ Publishing cookbooks and founding cooking schools served as a means for female home economists to access the public sphere and demonstrate their expertise.¹⁰⁸

The first domestic scientists pushed their work into institutions, newspapers, and magazines around 1899.¹⁰⁹ They founded many cooking schools, such as the famous Boston Cooking School with Fannie Farmer, and established home economic departments in universities around the country. Home economists then found partners for their endeavors in the new corporate capitalist system that developed around the same time. Shapiro writes, “The best known cooks of the day happily identified themselves with the manufacturers and processors who were applying scientific techniques to food on such a dramatic scale. The manufacturers, in

¹⁰⁷ Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986), 5.

¹⁰⁸ Shapiro, *Perfection Salad*, 35.

¹⁰⁹ Shapiro, *Perfection Salad*, 7.

turn, lent the impersonal authority of national industry to the cooking-school cooks.”¹¹⁰ By the end of World War I, the alliance between corporate capitalism and home economics resulted in the modern commercially published cookbook.¹¹¹

During World War II, corporate capitalism, a popular resurgence of the link between domesticity and citizenship for middle class women, and home economics worked in alliance with the government to create kitchen citizens. Women’s magazines had a hand in pushing this message.¹¹² So did government agencies, as shown in Chapter 1. The content of wartime cookbooks, however, shows how these three elements worked together. Cookbooks published from 1941-1945 conveyed widespread prescriptions of femininity and domesticity and provide an important place to examine women’s relationship to the state as citizens.

A Helpful Aid in Wartime

At their most basic level, cookbooks contained a great deal of useful information for housewives adjusting to new wartime restrictions. The home economist authors believed they were engaging in a crusade of moral reform in kitchens across the nation to help keep American families healthy and well fed. As a genre, cookbooks and other cookery texts served as places where women could find solutions to problems or demonstrate their creativity.¹¹³ When the challenges of new food rules emerged during World War II, cookbooks, using guidance provided by professional home economists, gave women helpful advice in navigating new food rules and

¹¹⁰ Shapiro, *Perfection Salad*, 192. For a discussion of non-commercial cookbooks, see my next chapter.

¹¹¹ Sherrie Inness, *Secret Ingredients: Race, Class, and Gender at the Dinner Table* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 28. Not all home economists worked with large corporations. Home economists who worked at the local level are the subject of my next chapter.

¹¹² See Tawyna Adkins Covert, *Manipulating Images: World War II Mobilization of Women Through Magazine Advertising* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2011) and Melissa McEuen, *Making War, Making Women: Femininity and Duty on the American Home Front, 1941-9145* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

¹¹³ Theophano offers an interesting perspective on the surplus of poetry and quotes from literature in the genre. She sees the inclusion of these texts as a demonstration of the author’s education and an expression of her creativity. See *Eat My Words*, 142.

maintaining nutritional standards. In other words, cookbooks helped women become efficient and effective kitchen citizens.

In those cookbooks that explicitly mentioned the war, rationing advice figured prominently in the narrative. Cookbook author Marjorie Mills opined that women felt “stumped” by the lack of familiar ingredients with which to prepare their meals, and thus dedicated her cookbook to managing the changing conditions and devoted an entire chapter on tips to maximize ration points.¹¹⁴ Another publication, *The Wartime Cooking Guide* by Gertrude Voellmig, gave step-by-step instructions on how to use ration points, including tips on tasks as simple as when and how to tear out the stamps. Other books offered charts to help women organize and keep track of points and when they expired.¹¹⁵ Authors even gave specific advice for using the ration stamps, suggesting that readers “save [their] ‘blue’ stamps by using fresh fruits in season when abundant and at their best...” and combine canned products with fresh or dried ones.¹¹⁶ To act as kitchen citizens, women had to understand the new rules of shopping and consuming under rationing and price control.

Likewise, authors heavily emphasized ways to stretch existing foods so that they lasted longer and provided more substantive uses for the family. Almost all World War II-era cookbooks contained recipes for stretching butter and fats by adding gelatin or combining other fats with butter. These volumes provided similar advice for extending meats with recipes for meatloaf, hash, and stews.¹¹⁷ These techniques proved helpful for stretching milk and dairy products as well. Betty Crocker’s *Your Share* cookbook even advised women to rinse cream

¹¹⁴ Marjorie Mills, *Cooking on a Ration: Food is Still Fun* (New York: Literary Classics Inc., 1943), ix, 162-164.

¹¹⁵ Gertrude Voellmig, *Wartime Cooking Guide: Stretching Your Points* (New York: Reilly & Lee, 1943), 8. See also Helen Robertson, Sarah MacLeod, and Frances Preston, *What Do We Eat Now: A Guide to Wartime Housekeeping* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Publishers, 1942) and Penny, *Coupon Cookery* (Hollywood: Murray & Gee, 1943).

¹¹⁶ Crocker, *Your Share*, 22. Consumers used blue stamps to purchase processed foods.

¹¹⁷ Taylor, *Square Meals on Short Rations*, 56; Ruth Berolzheimer, *American Woman’s Food Stretcher Cookbook* (Chicago: Consolidated Book Publishers, 1943), 33; Mills, *Cooking on a Ration*, 38.

containers with milk to get every last bit, and to rinse milk containers with water to be used in soups. Other advice included eating more bread and grains – “the official extender during wartime rationing” – and saving bones and vegetable scraps for hearty soups.¹¹⁸ If an ingredient could be extended in any way, it is probable that at least one cookbook from the period suggested ways to do so.

Cookbooks contained extensive nutritional advice because kitchen citizens needed to know how to provide healthy food despite wartime shortages if they were to keep their families and the nation strong. Authors dedicated entire cookbooks to the purpose of maximizing health in prepared foods. Titles such as *Victory Vitamin Cookbook*, *The Complete Vitamin Cookbook* and *Nutrition with Sense*, emphasized the important role nutrition played in the body and in wartime victory. These books offered complete lists of vitamins and which foods they could be found in.¹¹⁹ Some cookbooks explicitly recommended following government guidelines for nutrition. Many cookbooks highlighted the “Key 7” nutritional plan graphic, which showed an American family with the sun in the background standing on top of the “Key 7” nutritional categories (see IMAGE 3). The image symbolized a strong, well-fed family conquering the evils of wars and the Great Depression, maintaining nutrition and health in meager times.¹²⁰ Some cookbook authors encouraged women to seek out the latest nutritional findings coming out of the government, extension agencies, and home economics departments.¹²¹ These practical pieces of

¹¹⁸ Crocker, *Your Share*, 12, 24 See also Mills, *Cooking on a Ration*, 2

¹¹⁹ Jay Morton and Lily Wallace, *The Complete Vitamin Cook Book* (New York: Books, Inc., 1943), 7; Florence Harris, *Victory Vitamin Cookbook for Wartime Meals* (New York: Wm. Penn Publishing Corp., 1943); Eleanor Sense, *Nutrition with Sense* (New York: M. Barrows and Company Incorporated, 1944).

¹²⁰ See Taylor, *Square Meals on Short Rations*, 3; Margot Murphy, *Wartime Meals: How to Plan Them, How to Buy Them, How to Cook Them* (New York: Greenberg, 1942); and Ella Corban, Esther Hallock, and Mabel Martin, *Eat to Live: The Blue Book of Cooking* (New York: M.S. Mill Co., Inc., 1943), viii; Harriet Hester, *300 Sugar Saving Recipes* (New York: M. Barrows and Company, Inc., 1942), 169-173.

¹²¹ Voellmig, *Wartime Cooking Guide*, 122; Berzolheimer, *American Woman's Food Stretcher Cookbook*.

advice helped inform women on proper nutrition in times of war and peace, but also deepened the link between citizenship and the kitchen.

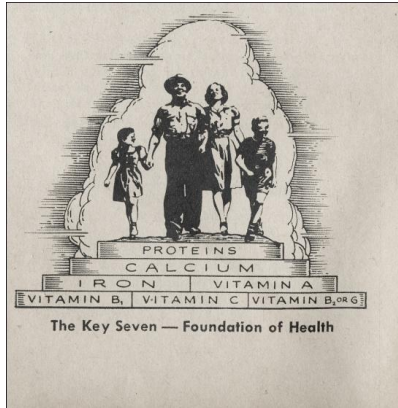


IMAGE 3: “The Key Seven.” “The Key Seven.” in Demetria M. Taylor, *Square Meals on Short Ration: How to Adapt Your Family's Meals to Wartime Conditions* (New York: Home Guide Publications, 1943), 4. This image was part of a government campaign for proper nutrition, but was often found in commercially published cookbooks. Used in accordance with fair use policy.

Cookbooks published during the war served as an important source of information for women who had to adjust to shortages and point rationing. Whether through offering substitutes, stretchers, or reminding women of foods with important nutritional values, cookbook authors provided women with a familiar source to find the information they needed. Embedded in the helpful information were reminders about the proper role of kitchen citizens in the family and nation. In keeping with government food propaganda, cookbooks delineated specific duties for female citizens in wartime.

Government Guidance

Commercial cookbook publishers did not print war messages without direction. During the war, the OPA and the OWI attempted to direct food messages in cookbooks through a series of pamphlets and advertising guides. These pamphlets energized publishers to link the government’s own food propaganda campaigns with their own commercial publications. Almost all of these guidelines suggested that food information ought to be honest and upfront, with as

many truthful facts and figures as possible regarding how much food was needed to meet demand and how rationed food was distributed among civilians, military, and lend-lease.¹²² They also emphasized that food information be upbeat and helpful, praising women who followed government guidelines. The guides stated that publications ought to remind consumers of what benefits they received in kind, most significant among them victory, but along with that shortening the war, and the return of soldiers and normal life. The guides admitted that rationing was not an easy feat for Americans. The OWI knew that it was asking Americans to live with a form of “modified prohibition.”¹²³ However, rather than emphasizing rationing’s disruption of everyday life, the OWI recommended portraying small sacrifices as acts of heroism and patriotism, allowing rationing to “sell itself” while at the same time acting to help sell the publishers’ own materials. Some government guides from the Office of War Information suggested themes or article ideas included “Rationing as a Factor in the Saving of Lives,” “Rationing: An Old American Tradition,” and “The Morale Benefits of Rationing and Its Effect on War Production.”¹²⁴

Overall, the OWI and OPA suggested that cookbook authors and editors focus on the idea of victory, not loss of resources. Explaining the reasoning, one OWI advertising pamphlet author prompted publishers with “Americans love a champion – they fire a losing coach.”¹²⁵ Reminding Americans daily that the Allies could lose the war would be detrimental to building morale. Instead, they argued that rationing should be projected to the American people as

¹²² “Suggestions by Walter J. Thompson on Point Rationing Information Campaign” RG 208, Box 144, File: Point Rationing, 1-6.

¹²³ “The Necessity of Rationing,” RG 208, Box 144, File: Rationing, 2. This reference refers to the unpopular 21st Amendment prohibiting the production and sale of alcohol.

¹²⁴ “The Necessity of Rationing,” RG 208, Box 144, File: Rationing, 2-4.

¹²⁵ “The Necessity of Rationing,” RG 208, Box 144, File: Rationing, 8.

“calmly, wisely, realistically, co-operatively” as possible.¹²⁶ These guides chastised the use of fear in advertising campaigns or publications. One guide even strongly recommended not making references or alliterations like “Hitler Helpers” in regard to defiant housewives, unless the need for compliance became so desperate that it necessitated the use of negative emotional appeals.¹²⁷ Common suggestions included the use of humor, patriotism, and sacrifice for the common good. Mostly, these guides emphasized realism. Offering women tools such as blank stamp charts and pantry inventory sheets could do a lot in helping the government and women negotiate the new realities in wartime.¹²⁸ Overall, the publishers’ guides encouraged positive yet realistic depiction of the war and the food situation. But like the focus of government propaganda itself, commercial cookery texts adopted these pragmatic themes and integrated them with the ideological appeals rooted in concepts of gender, identity, and citizenship.

Soldiers on the Home Front

The primary way cookbook authors and publishers delineated women’s role in wartime victory involved transforming the kitchen into a battle station and positioning women as soldiers on the home front. Echoing the rhetoric conveyed in government publications, the 1943 Betty Crocker cookbook proclaimed: “Hail to women of America!...Just as did the women of other wars, you have taken you positions as soldiers on the Home Front.”¹²⁹ Another asserted: “Use your wits and ingenuity and you’ll be part of the great army of Kitchen Commandos who are

¹²⁶ “A Call to Action: How Industry Can Cooperate in the ‘Food Fights for Freedom’ Campaign, RG 208, Box 3, File: Programs – Food Fights, Etc., Bklets, etc., 8.

¹²⁷ “Suggestions by Walter J. Thompson on Point Rationing Information Campaign” RG 208, Box 144, File: Point Rationing, 4.

¹²⁸ There is evidence of interaction between corporate publishers and government, mostly in the form of correspondence with magazine editors. See RG 188, Box C-13 through Box C-16 “Records Relating to Magazine Articles, 1943-1946.”

¹²⁹ Crocker, *Your Share*, front cover.

doing an invaluable part to win the war.”¹³⁰ If women questioned their role in the war effort, one group of authors provided the answer: “... managing the home well.”¹³¹ Demetria Taylor, author of *Square Meals on Short Rations* advertised her book with the slogan, “Every American Kitchen is on the battlefield ... put your kitchen on a wartime basis.”¹³² These comments suggest that the military was not alone in shouldering the burden of war, and that women were no less important to the war effort than men. Women could not all be in the “thick of battle,” but, as cookbook author Alice Winn posited, “the [role] to be played by American housewives in their own kitchens is no less important than that of the worker in the munitions plant or the soldier advancing with the tank.”¹³³ She continued, “just as necessary as shouldering a rifle, is the shouldering of our responsibility in the home. It is a ‘commanding job’”¹³⁴ Home economists, editors, and publishers embellished the role women played in the war effort and their messages integrated the kitchen into the strategy for victory. In making women soldiers, the ultimate expression of citizenship, through their work in their kitchens, cookbook authors and publishers linked domesticity and citizenship for American women.

The kitchen was essential to prescriptive duties for wartime women. Even in references to women working in war industries, the text emphasized the so-called ‘real job’ of women in the home. For example, Gertrude Voellmig wrote that “by planning ahead the ‘working’ homemaker can anticipate her needs.”¹³⁵ By placing “working” as an adjective in quotations, Voellmig made it clear that she thought women’s primary identity was as a homemaker, not as a laborer. Working outside the home was not something defining for women; it was merely a

¹³⁰ Mills, *Cooking on a Ration*, 166.

¹³¹ Robertson et. al. *What Do We Eat Now: A Guide to Wartime Housekeeping*, v.

¹³² Taylor, *Square Meals on Short Rations*, back cover.

¹³³ Hazel Young, *The Working Girl Must Eat*, (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1944), 48 and Alice Winn-Smith, *Thrifty Cooking for Wartime* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), vii.

¹³⁴ Winn-Smith, *Thrifty Cooking for Wartime*, ix. This sentiment was echoed by other authors. See Prudence Penny and her rhetoric of cooking for victory (Penny, *Coupon Cookery*, iv).

¹³⁵ Voellmig, *Wartime Cooking Guide: Stretching Your Points*, 12.

secondary identity. Other examples were more subtle. Ida Allen suggested that “time saving is doubly important now. But many other aspects of keeping house and feeding the family adequately, wisely, and well under war restrictions, shortages and other conditions are also of vital importance to every woman in the home and to the country as a whole.”¹³⁶ Allen acknowledged that women were busier during the war, though it does not specify why. Allen also specified that keeping up with housework on top of an outside job was the real focus. In another example found in Hazel Young’s *The Working Girl Must Eat*, there are also a few recipes to make for dates with a boyfriend, but far fewer mentions of a husband. This suggests a cultural expectation that even single, working girls had to become skilled in the kitchen, preparing themselves for their future roles as wives and mothers.¹³⁷

In placing women as soldiers on the home front, cookbook authors elevated the patriotic rhetoric about food and cooking to match the idea of women as soldiers. In cookbook narratives, foods found themselves wrapped up in wartime service. Dried beans ought to be used in place of canned beans because canned beans found themselves “at war.”¹³⁸ Eggs warranted the comment: “Don’t you agree the little red hen should have a Navy ‘E’ for her industry...”¹³⁹ And “when whipped cream joined the war casualties...” substitutes were quickly found in support of the war effort.¹⁴⁰ Through this rhetoric, both men and food served military duty for their country. Vitamin A became known as the “blackout vitamin” because it adjusted the eyes to the darkness when one closed the blackout curtains. In one drawing, vitamins even signed up for the draft.

¹³⁶ Ida Allen, *Double-Quick Cooking for Part-Time Homemakers* (New York: M. Barrows and Company, 1943) jacket.

¹³⁷ Hazel Young, *The Working Girl Must Eat*.

¹³⁸ Crocker, *Your Share*, 21.

¹³⁹ Mills, *Cooking on a Ration*, 73. The “Navy E” refers to the Army-Navy E award, known as the Army-Navy Production award, given to companies for excellent production of war equipment during World War II. See: “Army-Navy Production Award, Circular No. 228” in *Compilation of War Department General Orders, Bulletins, and Circulars* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1943).

¹⁴⁰ Mills, *Cooking on a Ration*, 131.

(see IMAGE 4) In Betty Crocker's *Your Share*, subject headings for cooking vegetables exploited graphic war terminology to describe women's obligations to nutrition. Women were told to "prevent mass execution" of vegetables through proper cooking. Soaking vegetables too long became described as: "submarine attacks sink the minerals and vitamins." Exposing vegetables to too much air yielded the comment, "air raids fatal to Vitamin C." Over-cooking transformed to: "continuous fire destroys vitamins." Bread, formerly the "victim" of a lack of nutrients, became a warrior due to new recipes and advances in fortified flour. The personification of food and the battle rhetoric reinforced both gender obligations and women's role on the home front. As both men and food went to war, women cared for, prepared, and fostered both to fulfill wartime obligations to the nation. It was the kitchen citizen's responsibility to properly care for family, food, and nation to help win the war.

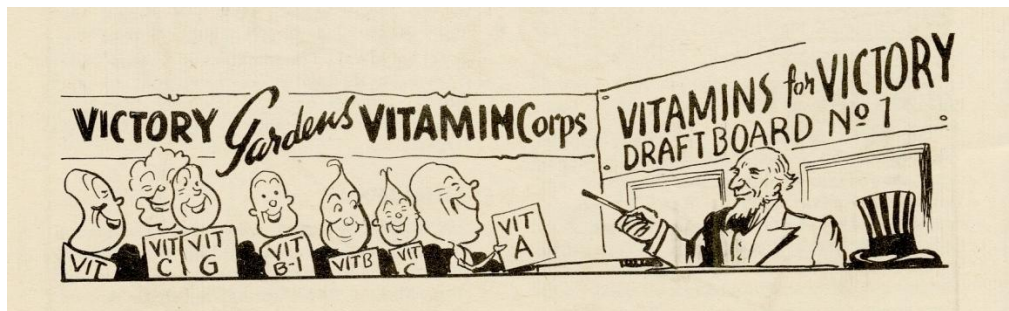


IMAGE 4: "Vitamins for Victory" *Victory Garden Guide: A Compilation of Facts, Figures, Tables and Charts to Make Backyard Gardening Easier* (S.l: s.n., 1944), 28. This image shows vitamins enlisting in the nutritional battle. It is also interesting to note that the vitamins in this image are all gendered male. Used in accordance with the fair use policy.

Between the covers of wartime cookbooks, even packing lunches for wartime workers became a duty for female citizens. Authors instructed women to pack a "hearty sort of sandwich; the kind that goes to work in a battered lunchbox and enables a tired man or woman to go back to bench or lathe, refreshed for work that's vital. Every ounce of food in that sort of

lunch box works for victory, for nourishment of the body and spirit.”¹⁴¹ But Betty Crocker’s idea of a “Victory Lunchbox” also included “a surprise to give him a ‘lift.’”¹⁴² She asked women to “[t]ake a peek before you close the cover. Would you want to eat the contents 5 hours later?”¹⁴³ Packing a lunch fit for a war industry worker meant fixing something hearty, healthy, *and* pleasing to the eye. Besides packing wartime lunches, women were expected to adjust their own schedules to the schedule of their working husbands and family members. Crocker advised women to be ready to serve meals at odd times because of new work schedules, and included a list of snacks to eat while waiting for meals.¹⁴⁴ These ideas reinforced the fact that it was women’s job to fight through sacrifice while serving the needs of those men who provided physical labor for Uncle Sam. In these publications, women served as the support staff, foregoing their own needs for the good of the family and nation.

Being soldiers on the home front did not mean giving up the traditional female traits. Rather, it meant becoming a better woman and house manager, evidenced by the cookbooks’ emphasis on traditional female roles and emotions. Taylor prefaced her collection of recipes with the statement that, “**Rationing Means Sharing.** Fighting men need plenty of food. Your ration books are symbols of your willingness to share with them... Food is a powerful weapon of war.”¹⁴⁵ Food politics clearly spoke to national obligations, but it was the gendered obligation of sharing that signified women’s role in the war effort. Men fought; women shared. These examples confirm that women not only had a duty to serve on the home front, but should participate willingly and honorably in the fight.

¹⁴¹ Mills, *Cooking on a Ration*, 110.

¹⁴² Crocker, *Your Share*, 39.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Taylor, *Square Meals on Short Rations*, 6. Emphasis in original. For more examples of sharing, see also Mills, *Cooking on a Ration*, 153 and Crocker, *Your Share*, 43.

Rationing food also involved giving food to those who needed it most – children and war workers. What seemed like common sense, giving more calories to those who needed it, was conveyed through gendered rhetoric specific to the duty of home front soldiers. More than one cookbook author informed readers, who were presumably middle-class wives and mothers, that satisfying their family was still important, even if it meant sacrificing on their own part. Taylor emphasized, “*In times of food shortages, children naturally have first considerations.*”¹⁴⁶ Likewise, women were told to drink milk to keep the body strong and healthy, but should sacrifice it if there was not enough for both herself and her children.¹⁴⁷ And though it was a time of rationing, cookbooks also told women to continue to fulfill the desires of their children and husbands. Lack of sugar was not enough reason to skip creating desserts: “Shining eyes around the dinner table have always been the accolade mothers worked for, and we’re not going to let low tide in the sugar canister prevent it.”¹⁴⁸ Mills continued, “It will be a sorry day for the small fry when Mother doesn’t manage to keep the cookie jar filled... Dad, who is only a small fry grown up when it comes to cookies will make for the jar too.”¹⁴⁹ Two cookbooks even mentioned that women should continue to make sweets or, by the end of the war, they would forget how to make them.¹⁵⁰ Cookbooks did not present the contradiction of sacrificing for country while continuing to keep the cookie jar full for husbands and children as a conflict. Rather, authors assumed that women would figure out a way to manage both. Irma Rombauer, author of *The Joy of Cooking*, suggested that women would question why substitutes would be necessary in the first place. Rombauer acknowledged that, “The answer is that many children

¹⁴⁶ Taylor, *Square Meals on Short Rations*, 7. Emphasis in original.

¹⁴⁷ Crocker, *Your Share*, 12.

¹⁴⁸ Mills, *Cooking on a Ration*, 116.

¹⁴⁹ Mills, *Cooking on a Ration*, 141.

¹⁵⁰ Marion White, *Mother Hubbard’s Cookbook* (New York: M. S. Mill Co., Inc., 1944), 165 and Louise Kent, *Mrs. Appleyard’s Kitchen* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), vii.

and grown-ups clamor for homemade sweets, and it is sometimes expedient to use them.”¹⁵¹ Substitutes like honey, molasses, maple syrup, and corn syrup, when necessary, solved the contradiction. In the many changes that the war brought with it, cookbook authors insisted that the most important duty of the female soldier and citizen was taking battle stations in the kitchen, fighting, sharing, and sacrificing.

Cookbooks and Foods for Men

One revealing place to examine understandings of gender in cookery texts are 1940s cookbooks targeted at men. These texts were limited in number but do reveal a different relationship between men and the kitchen. In some cases, men challenged the expertise of female home economists by entering the kitchen. For example, the technical language so prominent in the texts written by home economists was missing, suggesting that men did not need the technical skills necessary to prepare various types food, and thus did not need detailed instructions. These cookbooks demonstrated a different connection between men and food, one not linked to citizenship.

Cookbooks for men also linked men’s cooking with masculine qualities. Frank Shay, author of *The Best Men are Cooks*, explained, “Men should be good cooks for they have a greater feeling for food than women have; they taste as they go along; they are adventurous and willing to take chances, and the most involved and intricate recipes is only a challenge to masculine ability.”¹⁵² This example relates men’s skills in the kitchen to masculine characteristics like daring and boldness. Even if their supposed “takeover” of the kitchen, cookbooks for men admitted that it was in a masculine way: “Men have invaded the kitchen in a

¹⁵¹ Irma S. Rombauer, *The Joy of Cooking* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1943), 787.

¹⁵² Shay, *The Best Men Are Cooks*, (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1941), vii.

really big way, easing the little women to chairs on the sidelines, sending them off to the movies, even home to their mother in tears.”¹⁵³ These authors suggested that men could be better cooks because of their masculinity, and framed women as highly emotional beings.

In other cookbooks for men, authors described women as having inherent domestic natures that allowed women to be successful in domestic endeavors. Lawrence Keating, author of *Men in Aprons*, discussed cooking in terms of women’s “secrets.” He believed that women possessed an innate understanding of food that allowed them to make good meals, whereas men did not. As such, he lamented that so many young women seemed incapable of cooking. Keating assumed that knowledge immediately transferred from mother to daughter, by nature of their gender. It is only because of this failure to transfer knowledge that men ought to step into the kitchen.¹⁵⁴ For Keating, it was not that men could not cook, but that they did not need to cook unless it was necessary. Along the same line of thinking, *Come and Get It* author George Martin wrote in his preface that his cookbook was “intended as much for the ladies as it is for masculine wielders of the skillet. While the feminine touch may not be so apparent in these pages, they have, nevertheless, had the scrutiny of my wife...”¹⁵⁵ The passage could be interpreted in many ways, but it suggests that Martin respected women’s expertise in the kitchen. The cookbook is an unusual one, reading more like a Boy Scout manual than a collection of recipes, but in seeking his wife’s approval of outdoor cooking on grills or campfires – which by the gendered norms of the time women would not have done much of – he believed that even if she did not have experience cooking with them, she could innately recognize a good recipe or

¹⁵³ Shay, *The Best Men Are Cooks*, v.

¹⁵⁴ Lawrence Keating, *Men in Aprons: “If He Could Only Cook.”* (New York: M. S. Mill Co., Inc., 1944) ix-xv, 18-19.

¹⁵⁵ George Martin, *Come and Get It! The Compleat Outdoor Chef* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1942),vii.

suggestion from a bad one.¹⁵⁶ Martin also wanted to prove to his readers that the recipes were approved by women – the domestic experts. These authors suggested that men’s connection with food is not linked to their identity, but cooking was something they could adopt when necessary.

It was not just the gender identity of the chef that differed in these cookbooks, but conceptions of masculinity and femininity in food also reverberated from the texts. As discussed in Chapter 1, the government’s “Share the Meat” program emphasized the fighting forces’ need for five and a half pounds of meat per week, while men, women, and children on the home front were given rations of two and a half pounds. Taylor told women: “Our armed forces and lend lease requirements need huge quantities because meat is recognized as one of the leading foods in any adequate diet, and our soldiers eat more meat than they did as civilians.”¹⁵⁷ This quote again reinforces the gendered nature of women sharing on the home front, but also included gendered ideas of food. Scholars such as Jessamyn Neuhaus and Sherrie Inness have shown that meat was considered a masculine food.¹⁵⁸ This example suggested that as women sacrificed for the war effort, they would become more feminine through sharing. Men at war, on the other hand, became hyper-masculine with the additional consumption of meat.

The relationship between gender and food manifested itself in other ways. In looking at a few cookbooks directed toward men, the recipe chapter on meats was often significantly larger than recipe sections for desserts. The majority of cookbooks written for women contained a

¹⁵⁶ While most studies on the gendered understandings of indoor versus outdoor cooking focus on the postwar period, there are a few that see the trend going back into the middle of the twentieth century. See Tim Miller, “The Birth of the Patio Daddy-O: Outdoor Grilling in Postwar America” *Journal of American Culture* Volume 33 No 1 (March 2010): 5-11.

¹⁵⁷ Taylor, *Square Meals on Short Rations*, 28-29.

¹⁵⁸ For an in depth discussion on differences, see Neuhaus’ Chapter “Lady-like Lunches and Manly Meals” in *Manly Meals and Mom’s Home Cooking*, 73-99 and Sherrie A. Inness, ed., *Cooking Lessons*.

more balanced recipe index, complete with meats, vegetables, and a variety of desserts.¹⁵⁹ Other references were more obvious and intentional. Keating, mentioned above, wrote: “The cook must consider, too, whom he is feeding. A group of ladies will prefer piquancy to solidity. Women like light salads and creamy dishes, dainty things, colorful things. Men prefer heartier dishes – for example they like French fried potatoes but look upon shoestring potatoes as a nuisance.”¹⁶⁰ Another cookbook emphasized that women should try various recipes to stretch and substitute for meat, “but it takes practically a genius to serve one that won’t bring forth sarcastic comment from paterfamilias.”¹⁶¹ These examples reflect the idea that the meat rationing at home would not satisfy men who remained on the home front. Women had to utilize all of their skills and resources to prepare meats properly for their families to keep them happy and satisfied.

A Heritage of Sacrifice

Along with appealing to natural tendencies in women and the role of women as soldiers on the home front, authors of commercial cookbooks appealed to a strong heritage of American women as support staff as another way to call women into service as kitchen citizens. Home economists insisted that sacrifice was an important American tradition with particularly strong feminine roots. Serving and sacrificing on the home front in World War II was just another chapter in this particular version of the history of women in America. Cookbook authors harkened back to every war from the Revolution to World War I as well as the struggles of pioneers, emphasizing that women had *always* risen to the challenge placed on them. Marjorie

¹⁵⁹ *200 dishes for men to cook* has a meat chapter 58 pages long, and desserts 10 pages. *The Best Men are Cooks* has a dessert chapter with 13 pages, a meat section with 44 pages, not including fish or poultry. In contrast, *Coupon Cookery* has a meat chapter 24 pages long, with desserts 11 pages. *Wartime Cooking Guide* has a meat chapter 11 pages long, and a dessert chapter 16 pages long.

¹⁶⁰ Lawrence Keating, *Men in Aprons*, 119-120.

¹⁶¹ *More Thoughts for Food: A Menu Aid* (Vanguard Press, 1943), 139.

Mills, in *Cooking on a Ration*, stated that she built her recipes from the tricks-of-the-trade she learned from mothers who had provided for their families during other times of meagerness and implied that this ingenuity “helped build a nation out of wilderness.”¹⁶² In *What Do We Eat Now?: Guide to Wartime Housekeeping*, Helen Robertson, Sarah MacLeod, and Frances Preston emphasized the long history of resilient American women. They wrote: “Our responsibility is a grave one. It compares with that which confronted our forebears. We too face the unknown and drastic changes in our way of living. We must be able to meet these changes...as did the early settlers - in ways that will promote the welfare and happiness of the family and thereto the Nation.”¹⁶³

Focusing on women who struggled on the frontier, Robertson, MacLeod, and Preston continued: “One sees the pioneer woman, who knew necessity to be the mother of invention, standing with her hand in that of this modern homemaker, giving her courage to make the best of what she has - to go back in some instances to simpler methods of the past, but with enrichment that time, experience, and progress have brought.”¹⁶⁴ In yet another reference to the women who traveled westward, Mary Taylor wrote that the war would be a “challenge to the ingenuity of housekeepers...reminiscent of challenges met by pioneer women.”¹⁶⁵ In *Double Quick Cooking for Part-Time Homemakers*, Ida Allen recounted seeing a statue of a frontier homemaker in Kentucky that inspired her cookbook. Allen recounted that like women in the 1940s, pioneer women also had many jobs. They tended the garden and reared the children, preserved food for the winter and made soap and candles for the family. Allen stated that the only real difference between women of the 1940s and the frontier women was that modern women had a second job

¹⁶² Mills, *Cooking on a Ration*, ix-x.

¹⁶³ Robertson et. al. *What Do We Eat Now: A Guide to Wartime Housekeeping*, v.

¹⁶⁴ Robertson et. al. *What Do We Eat Now: A Guide to Wartime Housekeeping*, xii.

¹⁶⁵ Mary Taylor, *Economy for Epicures: A Practical Menu and Recipe Book* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1943), insert.

outside the home, rather than the multiple jobs inside the home. She continued, “But you, too, are pioneers - in industry, in war, on the home front. Like other pioneer women you are Americans adventuring in new paths. Like them, you can keep serene, resourceful, strong, purposeful, carry on your two jobs, and protect the health of your family by providing wholesome food.”¹⁶⁶ Allen appealed to the strength of American women, essentially informing women that while they may have to do it all, they were capable of carrying on this uniquely American historical legacy.

By arguing that women had long influenced nation-building in American history through their supporting role in the home, cookbook authors reinforced government messages about patriotism and food and the dangers of hoarding. In this example, cookbook author Margo Murphey tried to convince women of the evils of hoarding by reminding women of the chaos it caused during the Civil War. In *Wartime Meals*, Murphey dedicated an entire chapter to reasons why women should refrain from creating an emergency shelf of goods not immediately needed. Though she talked about things like the rationing program and sharing with everyone, the bulk of her argument rested in the role of hoarding during the Civil War. She wrote: “Hoarding was the unforgivable crime in the South during the Civil War, and, among old families, the descendants of those who committed it are often to this day unkindly reminded of their forebears’ treachery. The shame of such criminal rocking of the boat during an emergency should, indeed, live on for generations.”¹⁶⁷ By reminding women of the short term and long term repercussions of hoarding, Murphey supported government messages. Though this specific instance reflects women in the Confederacy, Murphey simultaneously linked proper food management and government compliance with the duties of American female citizens.

¹⁶⁶ Allen, *Double-Quick Cooking...*, 9.

¹⁶⁷ Murphey, *Wartime Meals*, 135.

In another example, Mary Fisher referenced her own grandmother's experience during World War I to illustrate how domesticity was a duty of female citizens. In doing so, she explained that for her grandmother, rationing for the war was not such a tedious chore, as she had already been practicing economy for the good of her family for a long time. Fisher emphasized that any housewife truly loyal and dedicated to the United States was already living on a war budget because basic American values and common sense necessitated reducing waste. For Fisher, rationing in wartime would only be difficult for those women who had not been practicing frugality in their homes. Those who struggled or complained were not living up to the highest value of American women. In this example, Fisher noted that female citizenship included frugality and sacrifice in peacetime, as well as the duration of the war.¹⁶⁸ Efficiency and frugality in the kitchen were necessary skills for American woman. Kitchen citizenship was not only a sacrifice in wartime, but a necessary obligation to run efficient households in times of peace as well.

Some cookbook authors stressed that women had nothing to complain about in the 1940s, and that real American women adapted to adversity with ease. Hazel Young, in *The Working Girl Must Eat*, argued that "Food restrictions and rationing have made the housewife more adaptable. If she can't get what she wants then she wants what she gets."¹⁶⁹ Because of the necessary adjustments women made in times of rationing or shortage, women sacrificed and made do without complaint. Additionally, living in the 1940s afforded them more resources than women of previous generations. Florence Brobeck lamented that she and other women of the upper and middle classes would have to take on more work, since "Mamie" had sought out war employment and would no longer be working in the kitchen. Brobeck continued, "That leaves us

¹⁶⁸ Mary Francis Kennedy Fisher, *How to Cook a Wolf* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942), 12-15.

¹⁶⁹ Young, *The Working Girl Must Eat*, 154.

right where we were before Grandma and Grandpa could afford a hired girl – we'll be doing the housework ourselves and liking it much more than Grandma liked it, because we'll have a whole new world of satisfyingly easy and beautiful wares and tools with which to do our job.”¹⁷⁰

Though the war seemed like a burden with women having to perform more work, either because they worked outside the home themselves or because their hired staff left for war employment, according to cookbook authors, modern conveniences and technologies could help ease the burden. In examining the difficulties of past generations of women, modern conveniences made soldiering on the home front as kitchen citizens more easy and convenient than what their forebears experienced. The message insinuates that women should adjust themselves to the changing social and economic conditions and should enjoy the work they were doing to help their family and nation in wartime.

Cookbook authors not only looked in American history for a heritage of sacrifice, but pointed to sacrifices of European women in the past and present. *Cooking Without Cans* author Betty Wason compared the situation in America in the 1940s with her perception that European women had lived with war and famine for hundreds of years, yet still managed to create a healthy, vibrant society. She then admitted that many of the recipes included in her book were adopted from those of European peasants she encountered while travelling through Europe at the outbreak of war.¹⁷¹ Lily Wallace, a cookbook author and home economist known for gourmet cuisine, argued that Americans did not appreciate the nutritional value of soups like the “foreign cousins” and thus could learn a great deal from European Allies in food preparation.¹⁷² Another book contained advice on using herbs, stating that: “The lowliest European peasants of pre-war

¹⁷⁰ Florence Brobeck, *Serve It Buffet* (New York: M. Barrows and Company, Inc., 1944), vii.

¹⁷¹ Betty Wason, *Cooking without Cans* (New York: Smith & Durrell, Inc., 1943), iii.

¹⁷² Lily Wallace, *Soups, Stews and Chowders* (New York: M. Barrows & Company, Inc., 1945), 64. See also Marion White, *Mother Hubbard's Cookbook* (New York: M. S. Mill Co., Inc., 1944), 16.

days could justly qualify as gourmets, because, after all, cost has little to do with good taste in food.”¹⁷³ These peasants knew how to work and manipulate herbs and flavors to produce quality healthy food in times of war. These comparisons to European women intended to help American women see their own privilege, but also a challenge to kitchen citizens to do more with that privilege. American women should not be average kitchen citizens, but the best in the world in order to help the nation.

By making an example of previous generations of women in both America and Europe, cookbook authors demonstrated women’s role as citizens in the nation as fulfilled through their resilience and ingenuity with food in times of crisis and scarcity. In appealing to women in this way, cookbook authors and publishers reinforced the guidelines outlined in government publication guides, as well as cultural tropes about patriotic womanhood. They adamantly professed that American women were capable of meeting the challenge by virtue of their American heritage. If women could help found a nation, pioneer westward, and overcome a civil war and a world war, they could persevere again. By emphasizing the history of American women as one of domestic sacrifice for the good of the nation, commercial cookbooks accentuated the kitchen as the location and cooking as the means to citizenship and nation building in the United States.

Conclusion

Commercial cookbooks, written largely by home economists, served many purposes during the war. On one hand, they fulfilled an important duty inherent in the cookbook genre: they provided helpful information to understand rationing and price control while also giving tips on new recipes and stretching or conserving foods. On the other hand, cookbook authors

¹⁷³ Taylor, *Square Meals on Short Rations*, 58.

reinforced the idea that female citizenship was earned and demonstrated best in the kitchen. Once again, the kitchen served as a woman's link to the war and a means to serve her country. Direct comparisons to women as soldiers on the home front in contrast to the fighting front reaffirmed this connection. Cookbooks aimed at men illuminated the differences between men's and women's different links to the kitchen. Lastly, cookbook authors reminded women of the struggles of previous generations of American women for inspiration and prompted to take their place as dutiful citizens to fulfill the needs of their country in wartime. These strategies supported an idea of citizenship where working outside the home was either temporary or secondary, and could be fulfilled in the kitchen.

Reflecting and intensifying government propaganda surrounding female citizenship, commercial cookbooks reaffirmed women's service to the country through domesticity. While it is impossible know how many cookbooks women read or whether or not they internalized these messages, it is possible to see how these messages were represented at the local level through community cookbooks and home economists working directly with rural women.

Chapter 3: Kitchen Citizenship at the Local Level?: Community Cookbooks, Home Economists, and Projections of Domestic Identity

“Cookery means the knowledge of Medea and of Circe and of Helen and of the Queen of Sheba. It means the knowledge of all herbs and fruits and balms and spices, and all that is healing and sweet in the fields and groves and savory in meats. It means carefulness and inventiveness and willingness and readiness of appliances. It means the economy of our grandmothers and the science of the modern chemist; it means much testing and no wasting; it means English thoroughness and French art and Arabian hospitality; and, in fine, it means that you are to be perfectly and always ladies – loaf givers. – Ruskin”¹⁷⁴

The Ladies of Galax, Virginia’s First Christian Church chose the selection above to begin the collection of recipes they published in 1944. Originally found in Fannie Farmer’s *Boston Cooking-School Cookbook* first published in 1896, the quote is attributed to John Ruskin, a Victorian-era art critic and social philosopher. Their book had no clear political purpose; the women designed it to include the best recipes they could find, like Miss Maupin’s Banana Bread and Mrs. Hardy F. Byrd’s Apple Crisp. Based on the selection they used to preface their recipes, cooking clearly meant more to the women of the First Christian Church than simply the act of preparing food. For these women, cooking meant living up to the highest standards of art and science, and being a woman meant proudly embracing the role not only of life giver, but “loaf giver.”

In contrast to commercially published cookbooks, community cookbooks and publications by local agricultural extension agencies demonstrate perceptions of femininity as they revealed themselves at the local level. These publications were not written by nationally famous home economists or commercial printing agencies. Rather, home economists who worked on the front lines in rural areas, or groups of women organized for a singular cause, published these texts to share recipes and their ideas on homemaking with other women in their

¹⁷⁴ Quote by John Ruskin, in: First Christian Church (Galax, Va.), *Galax Cook Book*. (Galax, Va: Ladies of the First Christian Church, 1944), title page.

community. The publications examined here are significantly fewer in number than commercially published texts, but when viewed as a whole they demonstrate the complicated messages women gave and received about their own womanhood during the wartime years. While they spoke publically about their own lives or worked professionally outside their homes, community cookbook authors and home economists prescribed domesticity for their fellow women. Community cookbooks and local agricultural extension pamphlets published during World War II demonstrate women's view of their own identity as homemakers and kitchen citizens.

Community Cookbooks

Written cookbooks have existed in the United States since the colonial period. Prior to the development of a mass consumer society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the most common form of cookbooks were individual or community compilations of recipes. Women wrote community cookbooks, sometimes referred to as fundraising, regional, or local cookbooks, not only to raise money, but, as Anne Bower suggests, to “formulate and express their [the authors'] collective value system and to produce texts of their own, balancing generic cookbook characteristics with their own desires for innovation and style.”¹⁷⁵ In short, these cookbooks served as a way for women to creatively share their kitchen knowledge and belief systems with a greater audience without stepping outside the perceived boundaries of the home. Cookbooks also provided opportunities for women to express their own understandings of femininity at the local level. Community cookbooks, which scholars previously regarded as text

¹⁷⁵ Anne Bower, *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 4.

about the private or unimportant act of cooking, were in fact used by women as a form of public participation and community building.¹⁷⁶

Scholars can read community cookbooks for commentary on femininity and social life, in the same way that they interpret commercially produced texts and government publications. Culinary historian Janice Longone, the primary contributor to the Janice Longone Culinary Archive at the University of Michigan, deconstructed the community cookbook genre in her article “‘Tried Receipts’: An Overview of America’s Charitable Cookbooks.” She suggests one major reason for publication was to delineate the authors’ beliefs about the role of women. Longone cites titles such as *How to Keep a Husband*, *What the Baptist Brethren Eat and How the Sisters Serve It*, and *How to Win a Heart* to show that women viewed themselves as influential members inside the home and saw food preparation as having significance beyond satisfying hunger.¹⁷⁷ Similarly, Anne Bower argues that community cookbooks can be understood in terms of setting, plot, and theme, just like any text. The family kitchen, or more generally the home, dominates the setting, though community cookbooks often incorporated the historical time period, especially in the case of World War II. Bower argues that most community cookbooks fit into four traditional plots: (1) integration and assimilation in a community, (2) expressing their difference from a larger community, usually religious or ethnically based, (3) a story of moral or religious triumph as homemakers, and (4) a historical plot where women share recipes in order to claim part of the larger history of the town or

¹⁷⁶ Scholars did not begin to seriously examine community cookbooks until the 1970s and 1980s. Cookbooks came to be viewed alongside quilts and other domestic artifacts as new sources to view women’s lives in the home where few textual sources existed. See Janet Theophano, *Eat My Words* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 2-3.

¹⁷⁷ Janice Longone, “‘Tried Receipts’: An Overview of America’s Charitable Cookbooks” in *Recipes For Reading*, 25-26.

region.¹⁷⁸ These plots suggest that women intentionally chose the direction of their writing and made conscious choices about the content and messages of their cookbooks.

Community cookbook authors aimed their publications at an audience similar to that of commercially published cookery texts. Upper or middle class women published texts for other upper and middle class women. Bower believes there is a reason for this, beyond the simple access to time and money required to complete the project available to middle-class women. She argues that women of higher social classes published cookbooks to “project their authors’ sense of achieved status” as privileged members of society.¹⁷⁹ Because these women rarely worked outside the home, these cookbooks asserted the “importance of woman’s domestic role and her power within the home as angel, minister, nutritionist, manager.”¹⁸⁰ Middle and upper class women used this medium to express and celebrate their status in society and promote domestic femininity and kitchen citizenry to their community and future generations.

Though they shared similar audiences, community cookbooks differed from commercially printed cookbooks in several ways. For one, they were designed by local women to sell to other women in their own community. This means that the recipes were not always practical or simplistic. Rather, they generally reflected the best recipes that the community could produce, perhaps sacrificing simple recipes for more intricate ones. Oftentimes, the women were already known for their famous recipes. Recipes were often attributed to the author at the end of the recipe or her name is reflected in the title, allowing for her own self-representation. For

¹⁷⁸ Bower, “Cooking Up Stories: Narrative Elements in Community Cookbooks” in *Recipes for Reading*, 32-44.

¹⁷⁹ Bower, “Cooking Up Stories: Narrative Elements in Community Cookbooks” in *Recipes for Reading*, 31. Bower generalizes that most community cookbooks are in fact written by middle class women, but acknowledges that what we read in the cookbooks is only a fraction of their existence. We cannot know how they achieved their socio-economic status or what that means to each individual in the group.” Thus, Bower safely calls community cookbooks “communal partial autobiographies” (30-31).

¹⁸⁰ Bower, “Cooking Up Stories: Narrative Elements in Community Cookbooks” in *Recipes for Reading*, 47. This is consistent with other works on female writers in the 19th and early twentieth century, who argue that women generally used the home as prominent setting or plot in their works. See Ann Romines, *The Home Plot: Women, Writing & Domestic Ritual* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992).

example, recipes and tips submitted for the *What's Cooking at Columbia* cookbook were submitted by a “Mrs...”¹⁸¹ It is important to note that in this example women were identified not by their own first names, but as Mrs. Husband's-first-name Last-name. In an area where women could project their own expertise, they still chose to be identified by their family identity.

Second, while authors of commercially cookbooks filled the pages with narrative outside the recipes, most community cookbook editors assumed that the women who purchased them would already know something about the community's value system. Therefore there is much less narrative in these cookery texts. The greater focus in these books is on the recipes themselves.

Third, the form in which women wrote the recipes also differentiates community from commercial cookbooks. After the standardization of cookbooks in the 1920s, most commercially published texts listed the ingredients and their measures at the top, with a fairly detailed description of step-by-step instructions to make the dish. In community cookbooks, the form of the recipes varies widely, and the language itself is reflective of the audience. Colleen Cotter argues, “The way language is used in the context of recipe discourse shapes our interpretation of many aspects of the cookbook, not only considering things culinary but also how we view a particular community and its values.”¹⁸² In other words, women, knowing they were writing recipes for other experienced women, put few instructions in their recipes, again demonstrating their belief that all members of the community had a set of shared values and similar levels of domestic knowledge and skills. Some books did not list ingredients separately from the

¹⁸¹ Columbia University Committee for United War Relief. *The Columbia University Committee for United War Relief Presents What's Cooking at Columbia: A Recipe Book*, 1942, 114. See also *The Connecticut Cookbook, Query Club Recipes*. Along with claiming recipes as their own, I would also speculate that including women's names was beneficial to the readers of community cookbooks, allowing women to make value judgments on the recipes based upon the perceived esteem of the recipe writer. If two recipes for the same dish are included in a text, knowing the recipe writer would help women choose which recipe they wanted to recreate. For example, see the two recipes for Lentil Soup in *The Connecticut Cookbook*, 36.

¹⁸² Colleen Cotter, “Claiming a Piece of the Pie: How the Language of Recipes Defines Community” in *Recipes for Reading*, 52. Cotter compared pie crust recipes in community and commercial publications as her primary example, counting the number of imperative verbs and the length of the recipe.

instruction. Others did not put specific measures for ingredients. Rather they suggested using a handful, pinch, or let it to the preparer to make judgments on measurements. Furthermore, the structure of the recipes assumed connections between author and audience that reflected women's understandings of each other and presupposed a standard knowledge of cooking techniques within a community. For example, in the women who penned *Recipes from the Time of Washington* the recipes wrote in narrative form. There was no list of ingredients in the top, just basic instructions for preparing the dish. In contrast, *Recipes from Old Virginia* has very detailed recipes, probably due to the fact that a Federation of Home Demonstration Agents wrote and published the book. There is no narrative other than the introduction. The Drexel Women's Club, made up of faculty, wives, and administrators, published their cookbook as a series of handwritten recipes to give it a more homemade feel. As part of the Drexel Institute, the women would have had access to better publishers or typewriting tools, but chose to keep the historic form of handwritten recipes for their final product.¹⁸³ The *Farmer's Guide Cookbook* was a different sort of community cookbook where *Guide* readers submitted their own recipes for publication. It is quite a lengthy text, but the authors described the recipes included as favorites of the readership.¹⁸⁴

Community cookbook authors generally used cookbooks to explain the mission of the organization or their purpose for writing the book. This information is some of the most revealing material in the book in regard to women's beliefs on femininity. For example, in *Recipes from Old Virginia* the women of the Virginia Federation of Home Demonstration Agents explained the goal of the organization as a group of women focused on making home life better for family women. They wrote, "Food is an important interest of this organization, but only one.

¹⁸³ *The Drexel Women's Club Cook Book*. 1945.

¹⁸⁴ R. D. Everson, *The Farmers Guide New Cook Book: Tested Recipes* (Huntington, In: The Farmers Guide, 1945).

Housing and clothing are of vital concern to us. Satisfying relationships within the family and community are goals for which we are striving.”¹⁸⁵ In essence, a full sense of domesticity and feminine traits concerned the writers of *Recipes from Old Virginia*. As representatives of Virginian women, their goal in the cookbooks was to showcase the best of what Virginian women had to offer. The authors stressed that the book contained “...recipes that had been ‘passed down’ from one generation to another - recipes that, in the past, had brought fame to the cooks and kitchens of the Old Dominion.” The women also proudly boasted that the recipes were tested over and over again, listing by name the fifty-six women involved with the organization who prepared them.¹⁸⁶ These statements allowed the women of the Virginia Federation of Home Demonstration Agents to claim authority over the success of Virginia cookery and highlight the best recipes they had prepared. Though they stated that they were concerned about a variety of home issues, the thought that their recipes (i.e. tradition) would not be passed on forced them to put their recipes into writing. They defined themselves as Virginian women through their ability to prepare certain types of food.

Beyond defining their geographic identity, community cookbooks also defined their own understanding of their identity in the home. The First Christian Church of Galax Virginia dedicated their cookbook “... to the housewives of Carroll and Grayson Counties whose savory dishes and delicious beverages have been a rare part of their gracious hospitality.” They stated that their recipes “combine the old-fashioned cooking of their mothers and grandmothers with the science of the modern chemist.”¹⁸⁷ The Galax women saw themselves both as keepers of

¹⁸⁵ Virginia Federation of Home Demonstration Clubs, *Recipes from Old Virginia* (Richmond, Va: Dietz Press, 1946), forward.

¹⁸⁶ Virginia Federation of Home Demonstration Clubs, *Recipes from Old Virginia*, preface.

¹⁸⁷ First Christian Church (Galax, Va.), *Galax Cook Book*, title page.

tradition and scientifically advanced home economists. These women considered themselves experts in the home, and this identity was something they took pride in.

In explaining and identifying their identities as homemakers, sometimes, rather than dedications, women's groups chose passages from literature or pithy quotes to begin their recipe collection. Just like the quote selected by the women of the Galax First Christian Church, these quotes spoke to broader understandings of their own place in the family and community. In the *Query Club Recipes*, the first page in the book was a Chinese proverb: "When you put on your clothes, remember the weaver's labor; when you take your daily food, remember the husbandman's hard work."¹⁸⁸ Though the broader context in this example was to be appreciative of all the work involved in any task, its direct correlation to food insinuated that men's work was more important than the work of preparing food. Though women had labored to prepare the meal, the rightful gratitude was directed toward the male breadwinner.

One community cookbook, written by the Westport Connecticut Women's Group, was more direct in linking women's role in the home with duties as citizens on the home front. The Westport women dedicated their cookbook to raise money for the war effort. They explain, "Meat and bread, vegetables and fruit, coffee and milk have become symbols. They are no longer merely the sustenance of physical being but the strength of the will to win... this is a war to maintain spiritual ideals. It is a war of progress against degeneration, of civilization against slavery, of the power of right over the rule of evil."¹⁸⁹ These women clearly saw themselves – and the food they prepared – as part of a larger morality and as soldiers on the home front. As the primary household cooks, it was their duty to use these symbols as economically as possible. This example even adopts the rhetoric of social reform, arguing that food was part of the battle

¹⁸⁸ E.P. Allen, *Query Club Recipes* (Louisville: John P. Morton & Company, 1941).

¹⁸⁹ Woman's Club of Westport, *The Connecticut Cookbook: Being a Collection of Recipes from Connecticut Kitchens, Equally Adapted for Wartime and Peacetime* (1943), v.

on the home front. Furthermore, before the recipes they reprinted a lengthy quote from *Van Loon's Lives*. This popular book from 1942 recounted visits from a variety of historical guests, but the quote chosen by the Westport Women's Club stated that bad food and poor digestion was responsible for villains such as Hitler, Napoleon, and Ivan the Terrible. Good food and healthy digestion, prepared for great philosophers like Kant, made men smarter and more honorable. Food, then, acted as a patriotic symbol and as a causal factor of good or bad behavior. Women, in performing their duty on the home front, had the power to make men – their sons, husbands, and soldiers – great or notorious.

Continuing with the theme of social reform, the women of Westport Connecticut believed that the war taught them to be better, more economical citizens. They wrote: "Today when the sacrifice is demanded of us, we have learned the true value of each and every comfort. We are growing to understand that in having less, our ingenuity is called upon to devise a means by which we shall make much of little."¹⁹⁰ Like true American women, they should learn to adapt to food shortages. Sacrificing food on the home front directly helped the soldiers fighting overseas, making food not a luxury, but "the bread of survival."¹⁹¹ They believed that cooking must become more of a science than an art. Food should neither be wasted nor played with. Additionally, they reported that women had sole responsibility for caring for the health of the family, noting that "It is the duty of each wife and mother to ensure her family good nutrition."¹⁹² Nutritionist, homemaker, chef, citizen – these were the responsibilities the women of Westport, Connecticut assigned themselves and their community members.

The women of Westport Connecticut also recognized the need to share not just with soldiers, but with their fellow citizens. They adopted language straight from government

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Woman's Club of Westport, *The Connecticut Cookbook*, xii.

publications, saying, “The men and women working in our industrial plants also need and must have adequate food for their daily tasks. We must accept these needs and make sacrifices. We must make sure all share alike.” *The Connecticut Cookbook* then continued to provide a rationing tips page that seemed to come straight from a government guide.¹⁹³ It seems that they internalized messages from government and commercial sources, and saw their own acts in the kitchen as important on a national level.

Even though the women of Westport Connecticut acknowledged that women could choose to work outside the home, they did not believe that working outside the home would change the responsibilities in the household. The Westport Women’s Club criticized women who used store bought bread, calling it “the poorest excuse for bread in all the world.” One of the greatest time-saving commercially produced products was transformed into the enemy of health and nutrition. The contributors continued: “Perhaps one of the compensations coming out of the war will be that more women will know the real satisfaction and pride of a week’s baking and more children will know the joy of homemade bread and butter.”¹⁹⁴ This sentiment suggests that the women of Westport believed that the war would provide opportunities to return to earlier domestic versions of femininity. These women rejected new notions of femininity that promoted using canned or commercially produced food as a short-cut. Other than canned or processed meats, dairy products like cheeses and butter, and a few sauces like Worcestershire, their recipes call for nothing pre-made. Though the women of Westport Connecticut might accept that other women worked outside the home, they could not accept that they did not prepare foods from scratch.

¹⁹³ Woman's Club of Westport, *The Connecticut Cookbook*, xiii.

¹⁹⁴ Woman's Club of Westport, *The Connecticut Cookbook*, 1.

The recipes in community cookbooks varied as widely as those in commercial cookbooks. A few books seem dedicated to providing ration-friendly meals. *Recipes from the Time of Washington to the Second World War* has a section for wild game meats and other alternate meats, as well as “Thrift Meat Dishes,” “Busy Day Meals” and “Wartime Desserts.” The recipes found in these sections are fairly ration friendly, but otherwise meals in this book were not designed with wartime economy in mind.¹⁹⁵ In *The Connecticut Cookbook* there are three extreme ration recipes on the first page of recipes – one for fried egg shells, one for wrapping your bread in the butter wrapper to get all of the butter off, and another for boiling cans to make stock because every last ounce in the can counted.¹⁹⁶ It also contained recipes for stretching meats, hearty soups, and alternate meat dishes. Other books did not stress wartime economy. As a hallmark of the genre, perhaps the community cookbooks did not include them because they could not sell the books without including the communities’ best recipes. Or, they did not want print economical cookbooks because they wanted to show case their skills as cooks or homemakers.

Recipes in community cookbooks also played to gendered understandings of food. The Women’s Society of Christian Service from the Bland Methodist Church opted to print all of their desserts first in the cookbook. It was not until page fifty-five that non-dessert foods appeared, but the authors returned to desserts or sweets from pages seventy-three to eighty-eight. The gendered meanings of food – meats for men, sweets for women – are prominent in this text. Perhaps they assumed that their female audience would want the desserts first.¹⁹⁷ The *Recipes from Old Virginia Cookbook* contains a variety of recipes, but the images associated with the

¹⁹⁵ Mrs. George Lyman, *Recipes from the Time of Washington until the Second World War* (Boston: Thomas Todd Company Printers, 1942).

¹⁹⁶ Woman's Club of Westport, *The Connecticut Cookbook*, xi.

¹⁹⁷ Bland, Va. *Bland County Cook Book*. 1945. For a further discussion of gendered foods, see Jessamyn Nuehaus’ Chapter “Lady-like Lunches and Manly Meals” in *Manly Meals and Mom’s Home Cooking*, 73-99.

recipes also have meaning. The section header for pies and pastries depicts a girl cutting cookies while her father and brother watch on in the background. Even though she is a child, she is still seen preparing food for her male family members. In front of the cake section three women from different historical period carry cakes, showing that their role had not changed over time. Since images for meats, seafood, and salads did not contain images of women, it is meaningful that women are present in the dessert ones.¹⁹⁸

Community cookbooks can and do provide insight into the way these women thought about their lives. We can assume, based on their organizational affiliations, and the texts themselves, that these women were part of the upper or middle class. They wrote about food with their own expertise. Though the cookbooks I examined were not all dedicated to supporting the war effort, they do show how femininity in the 1940s meant homemaking, whether or not one worked outside the home. Cooking was a significant part of women's identity. It was something to be proud of, and important enough to pass on to other women and future generations. These cookbooks appealed to a heritage of expertise in cookery and domesticity to demonstrate their own expertise and claim their roles as American women. Middle and upper class women used community cookbooks to define their own version of femininity that saw their culinary skills as influential to their own identity. While government and commercial sources explicitly linked cooking with citizenship, community cookbooks reflected greater variance in the ways women understood themselves and their connection with food, the kitchen, and the nation.

Local Agriculture Extension Agencies

In the previous chapter, I outlined the role of home economists who worked at the national level with large food corporations and publishers, utilizing mass media and commercial

¹⁹⁸ Virginia Federation of Home Demonstration Clubs, *Recipes from Old Virginia*, 162, 183.

publications to reach their audiences. But not every home economist chose or had the opportunity to work at that level. More often, home economists who trained at the various cooking or demonstration programs throughout the United States went on to teach the next generation of home economists or to work directly with women through agricultural extension agencies.¹⁹⁹ Their publications read like a combination of government-produced texts and community cookbooks, though low on narrative and heavy on technical skill.

Home economics or domestic science programs developed out of the tradition of moral reform in the Progressive Era. Home economists, largely women, viewed the home as another front in the campaign to create a better nation. They believed good nutrition and proper cooking techniques could make better citizens and families. As historian Mary Hoffschwelle wrote, “Home economists exhibited the reformist and professional tendencies of other reformers, espousing a mixture of liberal social reform attitudes and traditional values. They joined other social feminists in asserting women’s unique role in promoting social change through their actions as wives and mothers.”²⁰⁰ Rather than looking at settlement houses as sites for reform as urban reformers did, these women looked to rural farms as spaces to utilize their expertise for positive change. Work in home economics also provided an opportunity for women to express their beliefs about femininity while accessing a profession outside the home. With the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 and the development of agricultural extension agencies, women found a new venue and demographic with which to practice their profession with women in small communities.

As part of the moral reform movement and as an entry point for providing women access to a profession outside the home, home economics originally served as a means of advancement

¹⁹⁹ Today, these agencies are known as Cooperative Extension Agencies.

²⁰⁰ Mary Hoffschwelle, “The Science of Domesticity: Home Economics at George Peabody College for Teachers, 1914-1939” *Journal of Social History* Vol 57 No. 4 (Nov 1991), 663.

for educated women. However, as historians have suggested, home economics eventually became a site for the continued association of women with domestic work.²⁰¹ Mary Hoffschwelle's study on home economists at George Peabody School for Teachers, suggests that though they utilized science and expertise as tools for social reform, home economists were ultimately focused on the traditional roles of women as homemakers.²⁰² As home economists and home demonstration agents taught women to add to the family income, better feed their families with more nutritious foods, and better manage the home, they advocated a socially conservative role for American women.

Home economists first got the opportunity to prove themselves and their profession with American entrance into the First World War by demonstrating how effectively managing the home could contribute to the national war effort. After their success in World War I, the primary focus of home economics programs shifted away from social reform and improvement through the home and toward homemaking as economical and efficient.²⁰³ At the same time, home economics was solidified as a feminine profession and moved to the periphery of academic departments. Shapiro writes, "By calling themselves home economists ... [rather than scientists or nutritionists], women created a special, female version of those careers and simply shored up the barriers between what was seen as women's work and the real world."²⁰⁴ Ironically, their success led to greater isolation and disdain within the academic community.

During the Great Depression the status of these women dropped further, as fewer women could afford the tuition required for higher education and society developed a greater social emphasis on male breadwinners. For example, the home economics program at Virginia

²⁰¹ Jill Conway, "Women Reformers in American Culture, 1870-1930" *Journal of Social History* 5 (Winter 1971-72), 165-166 and Shapiro, *Perfection Salad*, 220.

²⁰² Hoffschwelle, "The Science of Domesticity," 661.

²⁰³ Hoffschwelle, "The Science of Domesticity," 669 and Shapiro, *Perfection Salad*, 218.

²⁰⁴ Shapiro, *Perfection Salad*, 219.

Polytechnic Institute (VPI) began in 1921 but disappeared from 1933 to 1937.²⁰⁵ But rather than re-embrace the profession's origins in social reform and female empowerment, home economists reasserted women's role in the home and, as Hoffschwelle states, "followed a broader social trend away from a public role for women and toward a personal and domestic definition of femininity."²⁰⁶ In order to preserve their own profession they proposed a limited view of women's role in the home. Many came to see the study of home economics in the Great Depression as nothing more than the scientific application of traditional gender roles.²⁰⁷

The end of the Great Depression and the beginning of World War II led to a significant increase of interest in home economics programs. Though they had suffered from understaffing and underfunding during the Great Depression, extension programs were well established to take on the necessary projects of wartime. At VPI, enrollment in the reinstated home economics program soared. From 1921 to 1933 VPI conferred only nineteen degrees in home economics. From 1940 to 1945 it conferred ninety-four.²⁰⁸ Though extension home economists performed many tasks during World War II, including serving on OPA panels, promoting war bond drives and Red Cross initiatives, food programs made up a significant part of their work. In her study on Iowa State home demonstration agents, Dorothy Schweider argues that over 80 percent of the Iowa population during World War II had been reached by local home demonstration agents

²⁰⁵ Jenkins Mikell Robertson and Fred Harley Armstrong, *VPI Historical Data Book* (Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1964), 36. VPI has since been re-named Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, commonly referred to as Virginia Tech.

²⁰⁶ Hoffschwelle, "The Science of Domesticity", 677 and Susan Ware, *Holding their Own* (Boston: Twayne, 1982), 16-17. It is important to note that at this time, college education for women began to be seen as a place to find a husband, rather than a career. See Ware, *Holding Their Own*, 66-67.

²⁰⁷ See also Kathleen Babbitt, "The Productive Farm Woman and the Extension Home Economist in New York State, 1920-1940" *Agricultural History* Vol 67 No 2 (Spring 1993): 83-101

²⁰⁸ Virginia Polytechnic Institute, *Bulletin of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute* (Blacksburg, Va: Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1948), 200.

about food conservation or home gardening.²⁰⁹ World War II revived the profession and gave home economists another opportunity to justify their expertise in the home.

Like authors of community cookbooks, rural home economists worked with women at the local level, and spoke with a variety of voices. As agents of federal and state funded institutions, they represented government interests and programs. Their programs sometimes collaborated with government subsidized corporations such as the Wheat Flour Institute for events such as bread clinics. Extension pamphlets directed their projects largely toward rural, working-class audiences. These rural women generally did not work outside the home, though they were sufficiently busy with larger families and the demanding labor of rural life.²¹⁰

Though home economists may have been driven by a desire to prove themselves as professionals during World War II, they also genuinely sought to help women run their homes and farms more efficiently. The food drying, canning, gardening, and general rationing advice helped rural women learn about how to preserve foods. In 1942, home economists Lucy Alexander and Fanny Yeatman published “Meat for Thrifty Meals.” They emphasized that “[i]n times of war and stress, even more than in days of peace and plenty, meat is a food it pays to buy with thrift and cook with care.”²¹¹ In the pamphlet they wrote advice about different cuts and grades of meat, how to store it, and ration-friendly recipes for preparing it. Because it was written by home economists with a focus on expertise and industrializing the kitchen, the pamphlet was full of technical photos, like how to pound and braise a pork roast. It also contained a lot of stretcher recipes and recipes using leftovers, as well as large sections on choosing alternate meats.

²⁰⁹ Dorothy Schwieder, “The Iowa State Cooperative Extension Service Through Two World Wars” *Agricultural History* Vol 64 No. 2 (Spring 1990), 227.

²¹⁰ “Janet Lowe Cameron” in Janet Cameron Papers, Ms2011-011, Box 1 Folder 1, 1.

²¹¹ “Meat for Thrifty Meals,” 1942, Ms2011-002 Box1-2. 1.

Home economists believed that a healthy diet was essential to developing the family and nation, and thus helpful nutritional information also played a large role in these publications. As the extension cookbook *Cooking for Ohio Families* instructed, “A knowledge of the nutritive value of food, its adaptation to the needs of various individuals, and good cookery are all essential if the family is to be well-fed.”²¹² To make nutrition easier to remember, VPI home economist Janet Cameron wrote poems like “Cheese is mellow, / Cheese is piquant, / So nutritious - serve it frequent (ly) / Roquefort, Limberger, and Cheddar / There’s no food that’s any better.”²¹³ Cameron published this poem in a series of pamphlets titled “Nutrition for National Defense” that discussed the importance of fruits, cheeses, eggs, and dairy products under rationing programs. Other pamphlets published by the VPI extension agency during wartime also promoted home production of foods through canning and the proper ways to preserve them to keep the family healthy and well-fed through the winter.²¹⁴ These pamphlets all recognized the role food played in the war effort. They emphasized that knowing about basic food groups and producing foods through Victory Gardens helped keep the family happy and healthy. These pamphlets, like commercial cookbooks, gave women who did not work outside the home a place to serve their nation in wartime. In both these texts, proper preparation of food was an issue of national defense.

For home economists, women’s identity in the kitchen was not just linked to the final result of food on the table, but also on the technical skills needed in the kitchen to prepare that food. This reflected of home economists’ scientific approach to cooking, but also an attempt to define their own expertise in the kitchen and help other women become more proficient.

²¹² A.L. Garvin, M.E. Gerlaugh, and E. Green. *Cooking for Ohio Families*. (Ohio State University, Agricultural Extension Service, 1945), 4.

²¹³ “Nutrition for National Defense Lesson XI,” 1942 in Janet Cameron Papers, Ms2011-011, Box 1 Folder 5.

²¹⁴ See National and State Agricultural Publications, Ms2011-022, Boxes 1 and 2.

Cooking for Ohio Families suggested, “Success in using recipes depends largely on the ability of the worker to follow directions intelligently. She must also develop good technique and use suitable materials and equipment.”²¹⁵ In order to provide women with the proper cooking technique, these recipe pamphlets and food literature also contained very technical instructions in the recipes, including photographs, charts, and specific directions on how to cut, knead, or fold. With these skills, women could transform normal foods into something special. In the “Dried Fruits in Low Cost Meals” pamphlet, home economists wrote that dried foods were “...one of the magic foods in the kitchen... A clever cook [could] take them, dry and wrinkled as they [were], and change them into a tempting hot dish or a tasty fruit dessert.”²¹⁶ They also emphasized the value of dried fruits as healthy additions to cold cereals, good substitutes for candy, and tools to make cookies or muffins “extra special.” It took a different approach to see the new uses for dried fruits. Home economists demonstrated these supposed middle-class values to rural women.²¹⁷

Even in pamphlets not discussing the wartime food situation, domesticity dominated the text. The home economists who worked with extension agencies focused on the efficient running of the entire household, and reminded women that the entire household needed to operate on a wartime economy. One pamphlet discussed how to make ironing equipment last longer. Though it claimed to be aimed at both men and women, ironing was a household chore

²¹⁵ Garvin, Gerlaugh, and Green, *Cooking for Ohio Families*, 4.

²¹⁶ “Dried Fruits in Low Cost Meals” (Bureau of Home Economics in U.S. Department of Agriculture, June 1942), Ms2011-002, VT, Box1-2. (2)

²¹⁷ Another interesting example of this is “Beating the Biscuits in Appalachia” by Sherrie Inness in *Cooking Lessons*. She tells the history of reformers who tried to get rural Tennessee women out of poverty (or the stigma of poverty) by changing the way they ate and prepared food in the Progressive Era. What the reformers did not realize was that the women did not have the tools or ingredients to change their food. By making beaten biscuits instead of cornmeal, they had to buy expensive cooking tools and ingredients. She also argues that cornmeal was quick and easy to prepare. Women in Appalachia had a lot of other duties, including helping work the gardens and living in general a more difficult life. However, gender roles did not seem to be as strict. With the arrival of people training them to make beaten biscuits, they had to spend more time preparing food, thus changing and solidifying the gender roles they had previously avoided. See Sherrie Inness, *Cooking Lessons*, 151-168.

most likely performed by women. Men might have had control over the say of buying new material, but it was the woman's duty to take care of the equipment and make do with less than ideal conditions. The pamphlets stressed that economy was necessary for these types of household equipment because as more and more metal was needed for the war effort, industry produced fewer items for the household. This particular pamphlet author elevated economical metal use to national significance by asserting, "Proper use of irons and ironing also contributes to the all-out for victory..."²¹⁸ Ironing and other domestic duties in addition to cooking provided space for women to serve the nation in wartime.

In contrast to local agriculture extension pamphlets aimed at women, publications aimed at men revealed different themes. In the "Iowa State Wartime Food Policy Pamphlets" prepared by sociologists and economists for the Iowa Agriculture Extension Agency, the authors provided economic advice to rural farmers for how to deal with the crises of production and labor shortages that came with the war. Though the authors were both men and women, the information in these eleven pamphlets did not discuss consumption of goods at all. Even in the pamphlet written by a woman about the food situation, the focus was not on the purchasing of food. Margaret Reid's "Food Strategy #1" gave a forthright analysis about who the United States was feeding with the rationed foods. Her analysis of the food situation read like something straight out of the government propaganda in terms of the information presented regarding the distribution of rationed foods. Absent from her analysis, though, is the focus on femininity and the role women played as consumers and cooks in making these programs work that filled the

²¹⁸ "How to make Ironing Equipment Last Longer," 1942, Ms2011-002 Box 1-2. See also *How to Store Your Victory Garden Products*. E-363. Blacksburg, Va: Va. A. & M. College & U.S.D.A. Cooperating Extension Service, 1943 in Ms2011-002; and Janet Cameron and Mary L. Thompson. *Canning for the Home*, Bulletin No. 128, Revised, June 1944 in Ms2011-021.

text of publications for women.²¹⁹ Another pamphlet was highly critical of U.S. food publicity's failure at maintaining morale with the food situation. Again, the criticism was on the economic focus of government messages and a belief that the publications did not give enough attention to the issue of equal distribution of food for every citizen.²²⁰ Other publications discussed topics such as food subsidies, post-war agricultural production, and agricultural labor in wartime. Thus, in publications aimed at a male audience, economics and technicalities reigned. In publications aimed at women, domestic ideology and a desire to perfect the home for the good of the nation read prominently in the texts.

Home economists saw World War II as a chance to reinvigorate their profession and demonstrate their expertise on cooking and home management. In doing so, they further solidified their belief in women's place in the home and expressed proper food management and production as the duty of women in wartime.

Conclusion

In analyzing the local level through community cookbooks and local extension agencies, historians can see that there are similarities and differences in the ways femininity in wartime is portrayed. Though perceptions about femininity are complicated by tensions between progressive actions with conservative aims and personal versus popular conceptions of femininity, both home economists and community cookbook contributors expressed domesticity as the ideal for womanhood in the 1940s. Based on this source material, middle-class women still felt respected because of their identity as homemakers. Home economists working at extension agencies had something to prove in their work. Throughout the 1930s their profession

²¹⁹ Iowa State University, *Wartime Farm and Food Policy: Pamphlets 1-11* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 7-9.

²²⁰ C. Arnold Anderson, "Food Rationing and Morale," (1943), in *Wartime Farm and Food Policy: Pamphlets 1-11*.

seemed to become less significant in universities and extension agencies. It was not until war began in Europe and then the official entry of U.S. into the war that numbers of home economists began to rise. Thus, the war provided them an opportunity to reaffirm their expertise as trainers of efficient households for rural and lower class women. In doing so, they proposed a middle-class notion of femininity and national service for women that placed the home at the heart of the women's participation war effort.

Community or fundraising cookbooks from the same period project the equivalent image, though aimed at a very different audience. Middle and upper class women writing for others of their social status published cookbooks for many reasons – sometimes to raise money for the war, sometimes to preserve their own heritage. Either way the message remained the same: women performed femininity and womanhood through domesticity. More specifically, the kitchen became a place for women to act as women and citizens. Though the war figured less prominently in these cookbooks, it certainly played a large role in the real lives of the women who wrote them. In a time when femininity was being challenged by women in war industries, middle and upper-class women wrote cookbooks reaffirming and reasserting their position in the home. These women, who largely did not work outside the home, rejected the Rosie-the-Riveter image of wartime femininity and elevated their middle and upper class vision of women as homemakers to the general populace.

Conclusion

Inside the back cover of Betty Crocker's 1943 *Your Share* cookbook was a note to homemakers about what to expect in the future: "You can count on this: The discoveries of wartime research are today being applied to peacetime problems in laboratories all over the country. Hundreds of exciting new products, designed to help lighten your housekeeping tasks, are being prepared for manufacture as soon as the war ends."²²¹ This selection highlights many important themes, among them the scientific approach to the kitchen and housekeeping (thanks largely to the work of home economists) and a promise of new consumer goods to satisfy women who had to go without purchasing new products during the war. Along with these themes, Betty Crocker also promised that after women helped win the war, their reward would be new household products and a continuation of housekeeping duties. Kitchen citizenship was not just a prescription for wartime.

Historian Leila Rupp poignantly describes what happened to women at the end of the war, saying: "Rosie [the Riveter] stepped out of her overalls, still wearing her apron underneath."²²² The prevailing narrative of the post-war period is a powerful one. As popular memory suggests, when the war officially ended with Japan's surrender in August 1945, women happily left the workplace, returned home, bore many children, and lived the suburban dream. In reality, the situation was much more complex. Women were often forced from their jobs despite desiring to stay there.²²³ Many women returned to the home or continued their lives as homemakers, but they were not all satisfied with the situation. Tensions rumbled beneath the

²²¹ Betty Crocker, *Your Share: How to Prepare Appetizing, Healthful Meals with Foods Available Today*. (Minneapolis: General Mills, 1943), inside back cover.

²²² Leila Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 175.

²²³ Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1981), 156-178.

surface. Jumping ahead over fifteen years to 1963, Betty Friedan wrote a critique of this lifestyle and its domestic ideology. Her book, *The Feminine Mystique*, became part of the second-wave feminist movement, which again changed how women related to the state, to the items they purchased, to men, and to each other.

While so many individuals associate World War II with the image of Rosie the Riveter, domesticity was a significant part of women's experience during the war. While the popular narrative has women leaving the workplace to go back to the home, the image of a kitchen citizen suggests that women never left the home in the first place. Food and cooking literature, in concordance with other scholars' work on women's magazines and advertisements, demonstrates that domesticity was central to prescriptive texts and images for women during the war. Government propaganda, commercial cookery texts, community cookbooks, and publications from agriculture extension agencies prescribed domestic service – what I call kitchen citizenship – as women's duty as citizens in World War II. Kitchen citizenship required women to sacrifice for their nation and their fellow citizens, protect the home and family as soldiers on the home front, and use resources wisely as American women of previous generations had done before them.

Kitchen citizenship was rooted in notions of middle-class femininity. Government publications, written by middle-class government officials in the OPA and OWI, pulled from their own life experiences and social scientific research in creating messages about food for the public. Commercial cookbook authors and extension agents, a population largely made up of educated female home economists, put forth their own conception of femininity and its link to the state. These women had a stake in proving their own expertise and usefulness as a profession, and saw the war as a time to relink their work as domestic professionals to the war as

citizens. Finally, middle and upper-class women who had re-embraced the link between domesticity and citizenship because of the changing social and economic landscape of the interwar period saw their own identity tied up in the home. Their writings in community cookbooks show a desire to personally define their own womanhood, but all connect their primary identity to the kitchen. Though self-identification as homemakers does explicitly exude kitchen citizenship, it still places the home at the center of female efforts during the war, in contrast to the male service abroad. These various actors all describe women's identity as homemakers as central to their existence on the home front as citizens.

This thesis argues that cookbook authors and government officials prescribed homemaking as the proper role and identity for female citizens during World War II. However, this argument can be strengthened through further research. While I examined over seventy-five commercially published texts and community cookbooks published from 1941 to 1945, that is certainly not an exhaustive list of publications. Inquiries into youth cooking literature and the technology of cooking would be excellent topics to consider in building on this project. Also, finding more community cookbooks, which often lay hidden in bookshelves, tucked in larger cookbooks, or even unopened in attics, would add significant depth to our knowledge of the ways women understood themselves in this period. A greater search into discovering working class community cookbooks would provide a deeper class analysis to the ways women perceived themselves and the connection between cooking and the state.

My argument can also serve as a basis for future projects. A deeper examination between this source material, the real shopping locations, and consumer culture would be revealing of the ways kitchen citizenship affected consumer choices. This project could add a gender and

citizenship analysis to the differences between producing and stretching supplies during the war and consuming processed and packaged foods prior to and after the war.

Another way to build on this project is to look more deeply at the women, mostly home economists, who helped write much of this literature. There is much more to be uncovered about these women who used domesticity as a profession and a means for personal gain while prescribing conservative gender roles for other women. I believe their story is important not just to World War II and the concept of kitchen citizenship, but is essential to understanding the way society views, interacts with, and thinks about women in the twentieth and twenty-first century.

Despite the limitations and areas for further study, this project reveals the way prescriptive literature appealed to women as citizens in wartime. In creating kitchen citizens, cookbooks and food literature redefined women's relationship to the state – not in terms of access to voting rights but in terms of a gendered obligation entirely different from that of men. Kitchen citizenship, built out of the long history of women using their feminine identity for access to the political sphere, obligated domesticity in return for calling themselves American women in World War II.

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