

0. CONSERVING FOOD IN WWI - Story Preface

1. CONSERVING FOOD IN WWI

2. WWI EMOTIONAL APPEALS

3. HARD TIMES

4. FOOD RATIONS

5. GAS RATIONS

6. HOW CHILDREN HELPED



Edward Penfield (1866-1925) was the artist who created this poster for the United States Food Administration during World War I. Online via the U.S. National Archives.

Although Americans did not have to endure food rations during the first world war, Britains did. By Christmas, 1917, U.K. rations (and lack of holiday food) had dampened the annual festive spirit.

Even though the United States did not ration food, the government urged people to conserve "before it is too late." Children were also called upon to show "thrift and economy" during the war:

- "Little Americans - do your bit...Save the wheat for our soldiers."
- "A Little American's Promise" meant, among other things:

*At table I'll not leave a scrap
Of food upon my plate,
And I'll not eat between meals but
For supper time I'll wait.*

- "Be Patriotic. Sign your country's pledge to save the food."
- As "war gardens" were popular in Britain, so were they encouraged in America.
- Even though children love food with sugar, "Uncle Sam" encouraged families to keep a lid on the family sugar bowl. "Voluntary Sugar Rations" consisted of two pounds, per person, per month so that America could send excess sugar to France, Italy and Britain.

Wheat was an especially important foodstuff. Americans were urged to forego it whenever possible so that more could be sent overseas to feed soldiers and Allies. A poignant government message, tacked to a horse-drawn carriage in Mobile, Alabama, specifically addresses the needs of French women:

SAVE WHEAT
*Will you help the Women of France?
They are struggling against starvation
and trying to feed not only themselves
and children: but their husbands and sons
who are fighting in the trenches.*

Meat was always in short supply. When not enough was available to meet the rationed amounts in Britain, butchers were urged to fairly distribute what they had between registered customers.

Governments of countries at war, urged children—as well as adults—to conserve everything, including garbage. And the emotional appeals which were made directly to children are most interesting, especially when compared with today's legal standards.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/CONSERVING-FOOD-IN-WWI-Children-in-War)

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See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/CONSERVING-FOOD-IN-WWI-Children-in-War)

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Poster: Christmas 1917

Image online, courtesy U.K. National Archives.

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