“We Were a Soft People”

ASCETICISM, SELF-DISCIPLINE AND AMERICAN FOOD CONSERVATION IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR
ABSTRACT

When the United States entered the First World War in 1917, food supplies seemed vitally important to winning what had become a contest of endurance on and off the battlefield. Woodrow Wilson created the United States Food Administration, a powerful wartime agency charged with exporting as much American food as possible to western European allies and neutrals. While official food administration policy urged Americans to eat plenty, as long as they ate wartime substitutes rather than exportable commodities, individuals within and without the administration saw the wartime food conservation campaign as an opportunity to champion the moral value of austerity, drawing parallels between righteous physical self-control and the virtues of strong, even autocratic, government. This paper examines the relationships in First World War America between self-discipline, a distrust of the pleasures of food, and views of the war as a morally and politically purifying experience.

Introduction

Towards the end of January 1918, the United States Food Administration sent a press release to newspapers around the country announcing that hundreds of the wealthiest families in New York City would soon be placed on “voluntary war rations.” According to the press release, more than 300 of the city’s most socially prominent women had recently petitioned for explicit government instructions on what to eat “in order to help solve the present world food problem.” The Food Administration had accordingly printed special ration cards, and the women were going to start themselves and their families on their patriotic diets immediately. Their ration allowed only modest weekly quantities of red meat, butter, cooking fats, wheat flour and sugar, but they could eat “as much as necessary” of milk, vegetables, non-wheat cereals, fish and poultry. After seeing their ration cards, some of the New York matrons called the program a “stiff one,” but they added that the government could not demand too much of them if their sacrifices would help win the war.

When the United States entered the First World War in April 1917, food supplies seemed vitally important to winning what had become a contest of endurance on and off the battlefield. After the US entry into the war, one of Woodrow Wilson’s first steps was to create the United States Food Administration, a powerful new wartime agency that combined extensive volunteer networks with unprecedented federal power in order to export as much food as possible to western European allies and neutrals, who were...
suffering from chronic shortages. To head the Food Administration, Wilson named Herbert Hoover, a young mining engineer turned public servant who had led relief efforts to feed Belgian and French civilians since the beginning of the war. Pressed for shipping space, the Food Administration's goal was to send nutrients to Europe in their most concentrated form. By the nutrition standards of the day, this meant prioritizing the export of beef, pork, white flour, butter and sugar. As a result, the federal government actively discouraged its citizens from eating those same foods, dietary staples for many Americans. Official Food Administration policy urged Americans to eat plenty, as long as they ate wartime substitutes rather than commodities needed for export. Despite the official position, however, individuals within and external to the administration clearly saw the food conservation campaign as an opportunity to champion the moral value of austerity, and they drew parallels between righteous physical self-control and the virtues of strong, even autocratic, government.

Throughout the war, food administrators simultaneously exalted voluntarism while threatening to impose compulsory rations should these weak “democratic” means prove insufficient. To resolve and elide the contradictions in their reasoning, administrators and other Americans adopted a rich vocabulary of sacrifice in which austerity and self-discipline figured both as the virtues fueling voluntary food control and as casts of mind sympathetic to the possibility of righteous governmental oversight of shared and obligatory sacrifice. Amidst Progressive Era disputes over the nature of government and the meaning of democracy, Americans during the First World War came to make striking associations between self-discipline, a distrust of the pleasures of food, and views of the war as a morally and politically purifying experience.

“Democracy Can Yield to Discipline”

The Food Administration’s motto, “Food Will Win the War,” was more than empty rhetoric. Since the beginning of the war in 1914, millions of European farmers had left their fields for the trenches, while drought and cold weather further depleted crop yields across Europe. In previous decades, the populations of both Germany and Britain had come to rely heavily on imported food, and when the war started, both nations took aim at this shared weakness. Both the Allied naval blockade of Germany and the German U-boat campaign aimed to induce capitulation through military and civilian hunger. Despite the constant invocation of starvation in Food Administration propaganda, western Europeans were not starving, although regular wartime food shipments were the only bulwark against famine in some areas.
In order to export surplus food to Europe, American food administrators needed it in hand in the first place, ready for shipment in their warehouses by the New York ports. In the immediate prewar years, production levels of major crops had only just exceeded those of consumption, so securing surplus food required not only getting farmers to produce more exportable commodities (again, foods like beef, pork, wheat, sugar and butter) but also required, somehow, getting consumers to eat less of them.

The first major issue food administrators confronted was the problem of soaring food prices, an immense public concern in the 1910s. Between William McKinley’s inauguration in 1897 and Woodrow Wilson’s reelection in 1916, the cost of living in the United States had risen by almost a third. Wages had risen too, but they had not kept pace with inflation. In early 1917, food prices, which already seemed extraordinarily high, doubled. In February, food riots erupted in major US cities, including New York, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Saint Louis and Chicago. A few weeks later, when Russian food riots sparked the revolution that toppled the tsar, they seemed to observers like an ominous, or hopeful, forecast of US events. After the United States entered the war, thousands of Americans from across the country wrote in to the still unofficial Food Administration demanding to know, as Sallie Bardette, a mother of thirteen in West Virginia, put it, “why the food bill can’t be passed in a way by which we may have a bite to eat in speaking distance of wages.”

The “food bill,” or Lever Bill, was on the minds of many people by the summer of 1917. Intended largely to define and expand the government’s capabilities to dampen food prices while increasing wartime food exports, the bill faced fierce opposition from opponents anxious about its substantial amplification of federal power, especially the unprecedented capacities it would grant the government to intervene in the market. When the Lever Act finally passed Congress in August, it made the Food Administration an official wartime agency with extraordinary power to regulate the distribution and prices of food in the United States. Hoover, however, publicly declined to use the full powers granted his administration. Administrators pegged a wholesale price for wheat, but they otherwise eschewed formal price fixing. Instead, they guaranteed a minimum price for any food farmers produced, they regulated wholesale distribution, and they asked newspapers to publish monthly lists of “normal” prices to tip off consumers to price-gouging retailers. These strategies dramatically increased agricultural production while slowing the rise in food prices, thus helping to mollify both producers and consumers during the war.

Hoover also used an ethos of voluntarism to make such gathering of power at the federal level more acceptable to his critics. He insisted that his title was “Food Administrator,” not “Food Controller” or “Food Dictator,” as critics and admirers alike sometimes called him. He accepted the job of Food
Administrator on the condition that he receive no salary, and that, apart from a clerical staff, the work be done by unpaid volunteers. While the Food Administration's paid staff of 3,000 people was small compared with the 800,000 volunteers mobilized in networks across the country, by contemporary standards the administration was both brawny and big.

Hoover also applied his ethos of voluntarism to the other major issue confronting food administrators—the question of whether or not to institute rations. Among the powers the Lever Act granted the Food Administration was the ability to impose a nationwide rationing system, and a fierce debate over the dangers and merits of rationing raged for the duration of the war. The Food Administration's official stance was that voluntary food conservation was greatly superior to compulsory rationing. The strongest power the administration ever exercised over consumers was the "50-50 rule," which stipulated that consumers could purchase unlimited amounts of wheat flour as long as they bought an equal amount of some other grain at the same time, like corn, barley or rye flour. Otherwise, the war ended without the government ever having directly controlled what Americans bought or ate.

The story of the Food Administration's sole reliance on voluntarism went something like this: while over-rationed Germany languished and its demoralized homefront collapsed, the United States succeeded in provisioning its soldiers and its hungry allies unto victory precisely because it never forced Americans to sacrifice, but instead inspired them to do so willingly. According to this reasoning, the means of the war were inseparable from its ends: voluntarism trumped compulsion, democracy trumped autocracy. Prescriptive versions of the formula circulated throughout the war.

The equation of rationing with autocracy and voluntary food conservation with democracy is intriguing because it is so patently flawed. It was a lopsided comparison—sloppy, really—with its bizarre inference that the only factor differentiating blockaded, war-weary Germany from the crop-rich United States was the respective imposition or absence of government rations. The facts that all the other major Allied governments had imposed strict rations by the end of the war and that the American government had conscripted two and a half million men into its army rendered the comparison weaker still.

During the war, the argument that the Food Administration's choice between voluntarism and rationing was a "test of American democracy" appealed to many Americans, but this test had as many possible implications as there were meanings of democracy. Then, as now, the word "democracy" had a range of uses and emotive connotations, but at the time two definitions were particularly clear, particularly distinct from each other, and particularly central to the debate over rationing. The speeches and writings
of either the Republican Hoover or the Democrat Wilson seem to reveal, at least at first glance, an understanding of “democracy” as a term roughly synonymous with individual freedom, in this case the freedom to decide whether or not to comply with food conservation suggestions. In contrast, other people across the US political spectrum used “democracy” to mean instead equality of burden, and according to them, rationing was inherently more democratic as it prevented one group (the patriotic) from bearing the double-burden of compensating for another (the shirkers).  

The specific motivations behind pleas for compulsory rationing were diverse. Some feared that in the absence of strong laws, German Americans would “buy and eat and hoard all the wheat they possibly can.” Some believed that poor blacks and immigrants were ignorant and wasteful, while others worried that as the rich splurged on delicacies the patriotic poor would now suffer real deprivation. Many Americans wrote to the Food Administration to say they believed that compulsion actually inspired cheerful willingness, whereas voluntarism got largely apathetic results. The South Dakota Food Administration used a quotation from Charles Kingsley, a nineteenth-century English writer and clergyman, as the header for one of its bulletins: “Being forced to work and forced to do your best will breed in you a hundred virtues which the idle never know.” At a confidential meeting on the “Food Needs of the Poor” held in New York City, home economists working with the Food Administration concluded, “People want orders—not advice.”  

Whatever they might have said publicly, many food administrators agreed. Despite Hoover’s vocal defense of voluntarism and his later strident opposition to Franklin Roosevelt’s rationing system in the Second World War, the fact that the United States never instituted rations during the First World War had more to do with the short duration of the war after American involvement than with Hoover’s or anyone else’s steadfast ideological conviction. Behind the scenes, administrators seriously contemplated the possibility of imposing rations starting in the fall of 1917. In the summer of 1918, the administration commissioned a secret report on the British rationing system in order to consider the application of a similar system to the United States. The underlying willingness to impose rations, should Americans not conserve food voluntarily, arose again and again in the food control message. “If we are going to be selfish,” Ray Wilbur typically said in one of his speeches, “[w]e will have to say the Prussian system is right—make them do it.” An eminent physician and an old college friend of Hoover’s, as well as the president of their alma mater, Stanford University, Ray Lyman Wilbur was also one of the most powerful figures in the Food Administration, the director of its Home Conservation division. To express a willingness to impose rations while simultaneously equating voluntarism with democracy required considerable rhetorical finesse, and perhaps no
one's rhetoric so successfully balanced these contradictory ideas as that of Ray Wilbur.

Of the Food Administration's leaders, the gaunt and towering Ray Wilbur emerged as the most outspoken advocate of self-denial as a tenet of food conservation. It was prohibitionist Wilbur who hinted broadly that excessive sugar consumption, like excessive drink, testified to "low moral resistance," and it was Congregationalist Wilbur who said that failing to finish all the food on a plate was a "a fundamental sin." For four months during the war, Wilbur toured the country full time, giving thunderous, sermon-like orations in twenty states. "We were a soft people," he informed his audiences in an imperative past tense, but wartime food conservation was transforming the United States from a spoiled land of plenty into a hard and righteous nation. Wilbur dismissed any complaints about food conservation as mewling weakness and said that Americans were simply "suffering from [their] prosperity" when abruptly confronted with the trying realities of war.

"Nations are like individuals," Wilbur said, "and develop or lose character or morale in just the same way." The United States "had to harden," and could best do so by becoming stronger and more efficient: a nation lean not because it was small, but because it was powerful. Wilbur heartily endorsed harsh British penalties for wasted food, and he concluded, after citing one example of a woman who was jailed for thirty days for throwing out half a rice pudding, that "[w]hen England starts in to take care of a thing of this kind, she takes care of it." He also spoke in reverent terms of the utterly "autocratic position" Hoover had occupied as head of the Commission for Relief of Belgium; although he "could have starved any community in a part of France and in Belgium by the nod of his head," the munificent Hoover instead used his "autocratic powers" to channel nourishing imported food to hungry civilians despite harrowing war conditions.

In Herbert Hoover's hands, Wilbur clearly believed, autocratic power would be a force for good. Hoover was a Midwestern orphan and a self-made man who had forsaken his profitable position as a mining engineer to head wartime food relief efforts, and he made an appealing subject of news and magazine stories about the heady potential of a "simon-pure American." A veritable cult of personality emerged around Hoover during the war, and his figure became inseparable from the concept of food conservation for many Americans. Administration staff, prodded by Hoover himself, consistently fought against the personal association of Hoover with the Food Administration, and regular memos went out reminding staff to make every effort to "eliminate such terms as 'Hoover's pledge', 'Hoover's Day', 'Hoover's rules', etc." Though staff members avoided such terms themselves and corrected anyone who wrote in using Hoover's name...
inappropriately, these terms, and others, persisted. Horace Fletcher, apostle of slow chewing and one of the most prominent food faddists of the early twentieth century, was a zealous admirer of Hoover's, and he began writing a book called *HOOVERSANITY: Warfare Against Waste and Want*. Magazines encouraged readers to "Hooverize" or to "Save and Serve with Hoover," and poems and ditties appeared on both sides of the Atlantic with titles like "Hooveritis" or "Hoover's Goin' to Get You," celebrating the Food Administration as Hoover's personal achievement: "Who kept the Belgians' black bread buttered / Who fed the world when millions muttered / ...Hoover—that's all!" A small boy in San Diego apparently found Hoover's name so ubiquitous that he asked his grandmother if Hoover was God.

In 1918, the word "dictator" didn't carry the same ugliness for most Americans that it would acquire in the following decades, but it was still not a word people used particularly lightly; instead, it was with genuine gusto, or genuine scorn, that many people continued throughout the war to write letters to Hoover addressing him as Food Dictator. Laudatory articles appeared about Hoover with titles like "In Favor of Autocratic Food Control" and "The Autocrat of the Dinner Table." Though Hoover pooh-poohed all such odes to power, in a *Saturday Evening Post* interview he gave shortly before accepting the job of Food Administrator, Hoover said that "[t]o carry on war successfully requires a dictatorship of some kind or another."

Even while he rallied Americans to the banner of food conservation with his praise of democratic voluntarism, Hoover did so while believing, and saying, that the inefficiency and disorganization of America's "loose democracy" threatened its very survival. Many Americans sincerely believed in the first definition of democracy outlined above, as a term primarily meaning *individual freedom*. A closer examination of Hoover's writings, however, suggests that at the time of the war he was deeply ambivalent about such a definition himself. Instead, he said, "the whole foundation of democracy lies in the individual initiative of its people and their willingness to serve the interest of the Nation with complete self-effacement in the time of emergency." Note Hoover's words carefully: he did not say the foundation of democracy was individual freedom to choose whether to sacrifice; rather, he said its foundation was the people's willingness—their already having chosen—to place their own interests below those of the nation.

During the public debates over whether or not to impose rations during the First World War, food administrators were well aware that to equate voluntarism with democracy was facile, at best. Even while they praised democratic voluntarism, Hoover and other food administrators remained willing to use rations to compel Americans to act with the required "self-effacement," if necessary. To resolve the contradictions inherent in this logic,
food administrators extolled self-effacement, self-discipline and austerity as uniquely democratic virtues in themselves.

"We are Beyond All Measure a Wasteful People"

For all the fretting and the threats, voluntary food conservation did take hold to a considerable extent. Why did voluntarism work at all? Certainly, many Americans remained wholly unwilling to modify their diets in the slightest. The Food Administration received tens of thousands of letters critical of its policies, and taking factors like literacy levels, proficiency in English, fear of the government, and plain lack of interest into account, it seems safe to assume that most people who did not like the Food Administration did not write a letter telling them so.47 Yet the administration also received hundreds of thousands of enthusiastic letters, and more than fourteen million Americans—mainly women, at whom the campaign was aimed—signed the Food Administration’s membership cards pledging themselves and their families to comply with food conservation measures. By the Food Administration’s reckoning, about seventy per cent of American families joined the Food Administration during the war.48 Partly as a result of individual food conservation, the United States tripled its wheat exports during the war and more than quintupled red meat exports compared with the immediate prewar years, shipping more than 2.8 billion pounds of red meat in 1918.49 The next time meat exports reached that quantity again was in 1943, and then not again until 1995.50

A significant reason so many Americans responded enthusiastically to the voluntary food conservation campaign was that it offered what proved to be welcome opportunities for austerity and self-discipline. Overeating, luxury, greed and waste: according to many Americans, these had all gained too strong a sway over national eating habits. The natural abundance of the country’s food resources itself posed a dangerous threat to upright living.51 The war was a “great national calamity,” of course, wrote one author touting the benefits of milk-drinking, but “in the midst of its evils there will come to us certain benefits,” including the realization “that we are beyond all measure a wasteful people” and the resulting “great awakening we have had to our bad eating habits.”52 In the generations of peaceful prosperity since the civil war, many said woefully, extravagant living had led to physical and spiritual laxity. As a result of the plentiful availability of land and good jobs, one woman wrote, Yankee thrift had wilted, and in its place had flourished a slipshod and undisciplined “come-easy-go-easy spirit.” In light of wartime food needs; she hoped other women would become “so aggressively thrifty that their wasteful neighbors may call them stingy.”53 Whenever they “get their hands on food,” an article in the Montgomery Advertiser observed,
"Americans stuff and gorge."® One Food Administration brochure laid out the necessity “to divest ourselves of all the preconceptions that are bred in us by generations of ease, indolence and luxury,” especially the false notion that wheat, which Hoover elsewhere called “the most luxurious grain,” was a necessity.®

Wealthy city dwellers, with their supposed penchants for imported foods, high teas, after-theater suppers, and multi-course meals, came under special scrutiny. In his interview with the Saturday Evening Post, Hoover mused that while he supposed no one would succeed in passing sumptuary laws under the Constitution, the government could still do a lot to rein in feasting and display.® Hoover, who was himself a wealthy man (and at the time quietly making plans to build a lavish twenty-one room house in Palo Alto), blasted the idle rich for not sharing the food-saving burden, and he cautioned that the urban upper class had to do away with extravagant entertainments before the Food Administration could ask the “frugal housewife of the American farm and village” to do any more scrimping.® Second-in-command at the Food Administration was Stanford evolutionary biologist and lice expert Vernon Kellogg, who described attending a dinner party at which a richly dressed man “beamed patriotically and sacrificially” at the other guests after announcing that he had limited himself to just two slices of toast in the morning, instead of his habitual three or four. Kellogg, disgusted, used the anecdote as prelude to his description of the 150,000 Belgians he’d recently seen waiting in freezing weather for soup.® One woman heaped scorn on those “gorging rich wasters” who were now “puffed up like poisoned pups with patriotism because they eat cornbread made with eggs and milk, and fruit with great pitchers of cream,” foods many Americans couldn’t afford in the first place.®

The choice to live more ascetically was a luxury, and the notion of righteous food conservation struck those who couldn’t afford it as a cruel joke. One of the bitterest objections to food conservation measures was their incommensurability with the economic realities facing poor Americans. Although by the late 1910s Americans on the whole “probably err[ed] on the side of abundance rather than scarcity,” according to nutritionist Helen Atwater, there were many, especially those living in big cities and in Appalachia and the Deep South, whose diets were already damagingly inadequate and who simply could not further economize on food.® Like civilians in the most ravaged parts of Belgium and northern France, the American urban poor had at best scanty access to milk, fruits and vegetables, and decent meat. A caseworker on New York’s East Side recorded stories of desperately poor Jewish families subsisting almost entirely on bread and coffee, with watery noodle soups for dinner and only occasional scraps of meat. One mother she interviewed went to the market three times a day, because otherwise her perennially hungry children cried for any food
remaining in the house. Keeping a steady supply of wheat in New York was as important as maintaining it in Paris, food administrators believed, because in either place a shortage might “impair morale,” as food administrator and physiologist Alonzo Taylor mildly put it; after the American food riots of February 1917, administrators remained wary of the possibility of further, more violent, urban unrest. At a meeting in New York City attended by Lou Henry Hoover, the food administrator’s wife, one woman stood up to tell her “there has got to be some coordination between the alleged patriotic saving of the rich and the condition of the poor,” or else, she warned, “we’ll have a fine old honest-to-God Bolsheviki here.”

Even among Americans who weren’t destitute, many were pressed close enough to the “very rock bottom of economy” to resent any implication that they had wasteful habits to correct. A glaring problem in the Food Administration’s public relations was that many of the foods its materials blithely suggested as wartime substitutes, like eggs, cheese and various kinds of fowl and fish, were priced beyond the means of many laborers, and priced beyond all reason for the very poor. The writer of an unsigned letter to the Food Administration wished that those rich people deigning to give advice on thrift could be put on a poor man’s diet for a week and find out what it was like to eat nothing but rice, corn meal, tea and the cheapest stew meat. After reading a few Food Administration circulars instructing readers to economize on food, Pittsburgh railroad worker John Donahue wrote in furiously, “Economize! If I could follow your directions and give my family what you direct I would consider myself a millionaire.”

To diffuse anger over high food prices, Food Administration dictates evoked a supposedly common legacy of civil war privations. Hoover was well aware that parts of the United States had suffered prolonged food shortages in living memory, and he tried to use the experience as a selling point for the administration’s suggested wheatless diet: “Our population has lived before this on corn. For three years the Southern States lived and put up a good fight with no wheat.” Although Miss Ida Beale in Cherrydale, VA pledged cheerfully enough to raise her own “Potatoes, Cabbage, Turnips, Kale Spinage,” and, with a nod to hungry Belgium, “Brussels’ Sprouts,” she added that she knew better than any Washington administrator what war and food shortage meant. She was a Southern woman, she wrote, and “old enough to remember the great privation of the South in 1861 and 1865—they had corn meal and meat but that was all and we didn’t starve.” Posters appeared in Virginia calling for any physically able civil war veterans, regardless of “Whether They Wore the Blue or the Gray,” to help win the war by working on local farms. Food administrators also specifically enlisted, and received, the aid of Confederate organizations. The United States entered the First World War shortly after the fiftieth anniversary of the ending of the civil war, and Hoover played on popular celebrations of
sectional reconciliation as he reminded Americans of their supposedly shared historical experience with food shortages.71

Supporters of the temperance movement, seemingly natural allies of efforts to make American food habits less decadent, initially fought against food conservation efforts. In the summer and fall of 1917, letters poured into the Food Administration from across the country protesting any talk of wheat conservation as long as alcohol manufacture remained legal. When Hoover solicited the support of American clergymen, he provoked a storm of angry replies on the subject of prohibition. A typical response was that of C. J. Boppel, a Presbyterian minister from Idaho who wrote back, "no sir, I have no heart to beg the people to save in minute ways when President Wilson comes out as a champion of the millions of bushels of waste—and worse, going into the making of beer. What's the use?"72 Efforts to include a prohibition clause in the Lever Bill failed, but wartime food conservation measures directly contributed to growing national sentiment that the use of grain in alcohol production, however Americans might feel about alcohol otherwise, was a luxury the country couldn't afford. Although it didn't go into effect until January 1920, the Eighteenth Amendment, prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, was passed in the Senate in December 1917.

"We're Growing Thin and Wiser"

Officially, the Food Administration did not encourage Americans to eat less, just to eat differently. The administration's official line, which appeared on placards, membership cards, posters, and in instructional guidelines for volunteer canvassers, was that Americans "should eat plenty, wisely and without waste."73 Americans received instructions to eat one meatless and one wheatless meal each day, and to observe one meatless and one wheatless day each week. Wartime pamphlets, posters and cookbooks instructed Americans how to cook and eat what were to many people unfamiliar wartime substitutes, like oatmeal, peanut butter, cottage cheese, rice cakes and pasta.74 Hoover frequently reiterated that no one was asking Americans to starve themselves.75 Substitution, not reduced consumption, was the ostensible centerpiece of the food conservation campaign.

Despite the policies condoning ample consumption of substitute foods, however, talk of eating less riddled food conservation material. A large banner hung in Grand Central Station during the war proclaiming, "Eat less, look better, feel better, help win the war."76 One wartime poem jauntily asserted, "We're talking now of eating less—a fine decision, I confess."77 Another claimed, "We're growing thin and wiser."78 One of the "Patriotic Fillers" the Food Administration provided to farm journals for insertion in their texts
read: "Thousands die every year from over-eating—don't dig your grave with your teeth." Ray Wilbur (an esteemed physician, remember) calculated that Americans ate as much as forty per cent more food than their bodies should have. Hoover wrote an article for the Journal of Public Health claiming that if the food conservation campaign managed to reduce the amount of food Americans ate, it would greatly improve public health.

The idea that eating less might be healthful was relatively new to most Americans. For decades, public nutritional concern in the United States had focused primarily on the problem of undernourishment, a term long virtually synonymous with malnourishment. By the late 1910s, however, dramatic advances in nutritional understanding made clear that even someone who appeared to be sleekly well-fed might turn out to be suffering from unseen vitamin, or other, deficiencies; meanwhile, a greater general availability of food and increasingly sedentary habits made being overweight a more common problem. Public interest in food fads and fasting manias had crested a decade or two before the war, but their popularity had stimulated a growing belief that reducing consumption could be healthful. The bible of home economics courses of the era, Henry Sherman's *The Chemistry of Food and Nutrition*, advocated strict limits on calorie and fat consumption.

If nations were like individuals, as Ray Wilbur believed, then food conservation was a chance for Americans to harden along with their government. Historian Harvey Levenstein argues that it was just during the First World War era, from roughly 1917 to 1920, that "overweight and underweight reach[ed] a kind of balance in public concern." Occasional columns appeared in newspapers during the war suggesting, for example, that young women "desires of having a slender, sylphlike form and graceful carriage" and "all adipose ladies and gentlemen who wish to preserve their figures and serve the nation" had special incentive to eat less in wartime. Associations between food conservation and weight loss for predominantly aesthetic reasons were relatively rare, almost drowned out by pronouncements about self-discipline and sacrifice as ends in themselves. Yet the steady presence of such associations—unthinkable during civil war food shortages—suggests that the idealization of thinness that would come to dominate twentieth-century American conceptions of beauty was deeply compatible with wartime ideals of self-control, moral righteousness and asceticism.

In the context of the personal association of Herbert Hoover with food conservation, it is interesting that physical depictions of Hoover so often described him as strong and trim. Hoover was certainly trimmer in the war years than when he entered the White House a decade later, but he was never particularly slender, and the starched collar fashionable for men in the 1910s only accentuated his ponderous jowls and tendency towards a double chin. Still, one journalist described Hoover as "slight of build," while
another author claimed that Hoover “thinks himself thin,” and that his “rather spare figure” resulted from his “abstemious personal habits” as well as from his intensive brainwork. Others described him as physically “Herculean,” or said that in contrast to average “flabby invertebrates,” Hoover radiated strength. One journalist said Hoover was the model of the sort of “he-men” the country needed, and another wrote that Hoover “gives at once an impression of force. His limbs look hard; his smooth face is strong.” In an age when photographs were still a relatively expensive luxury in print media, detailed physical descriptions were common fare in journalism, but the almost phrenological assessments of Hoover hint at an expectation that if those who shirked food conservation were the “fat and disloyal,” then food conservation personified was naturally hard and lean.

Moral as well as physical strength could result from abstention and discipline. The Food Administration had “awakened the conscience of the American people,” Wilbur insisted, and not just because Americans were sending food to hungry friends abroad; giving up desired foods was a moral act in itself. Vernon Kellogg counseled Americans to renounce not just “all personal luxuries,” but also “tastes and desires” themselves. Real patriotism demanded not just forsaking the foods needed for export but also forsaking any longings to have them. One wartime cookbook author deemed it the housewife’s duty to “purchase for nutriment rather than to please her own or the family palate.” If people found eating unfamiliar substitutes unpleasant, another cookbook writer counseled sternly, they should just “keep trying.” While particularly important for curbing the whims of fussy children, eating what you were told to eat was a moral practice for adults as well. Mrs. B. C. Anthony wrote to Hoover from El Paso complaining about the unpatriotic pickiness of the men in her family and suggesting that Hoover insert into the administration’s pledge the promise to eat willingly any food offered, as “any dislike of good, wholesome food, properly prepared, and served is just giving way to a morbid consideration of Self.” From Mississippi, Edward Arps mailed a copy of his homemade treatise on food saving to the Food Administration, in which he argued that Americans could feed millions abroad if they would only accept God’s message “to let go of false and vicious eating habits.” He provided a handful of sample menus, Spartan meals composed of berries, nuts, and milk, and he warned his readers that if the meals “leave an empty feeling stomach, a knowing or craving stomach, just remember that you have a diseased stomach and you don’t cure it by filling it up with hot biscuits, cornbread and molasses.” According to Food Administration rules, of course, cornbread and molasses were ideal substitute foods, but for Arps, as for many others, the details of Food Administration directions were less important than the structure wartime food conservation provided to advance food crusades of their own.

Beyond the immediate obligations to send food to Europe, many
Americans believed that food conservation's "greater purpose" was an explicitly religious one. The daily self-discipline required by food conservation could "go hand in hand with spiritual quickening." The writer of an editorial in the Kansas *Wichita Eagle* opined that if Americans followed the food conservation program, the country "will emerge from this war nobler, less selfish, nearer to God as a nation, than she has ever been." The war brought regrettable suffering, but Hoover hoped it might also divert Americans from their peacetime materialism to focus on life's "higher purposes." Food administrators actively enlisted the involvement of the clergy. Several times during the war, Hoover sent a circular letter to preachers around the country asking for general support from the pulpit and that they devote certain Sundays to food conservation sermons. Thousands wrote back expressing enthusiasm and thanks for the chance to demonstrate their "Christian patriotism." The Food Administration created an agency to work with Jewish organizations and to carry out food conservation propaganda in Jewish communities; one condescending fable in a state food administration publication told of how the war converted "Papa and Mamma Rosenbloom," grocers and former Socialists, into patriotic synagogue-goers who now "wouldn't sell you flour without substitutes for a million in cash." The Food Administration published a regular "Bulletin for the Clergy" ostensibly intended for all Christian and Jewish religious leaders, although usually containing implicitly Protestant material. An author of one of the bulletin's articles wrote that Americans had been "in grave danger of making our bodily wants supreme," but that food conservation was teaching Americans that physical pleasures were "subject to higher regulations." The author did not specify whether the higher regulations were those of the Food Administration or those of God.

**Conclusion**

In the spring of 1918, the Food Administration published a pamphlet urging truly patriotic Americans to eradicate all wheat from their diets until the next harvest, six months away. Yes, the pamphlet's author acknowledged, wheatless days were already hard, and giving up wheat flour altogether would be onerous, but that was largely the point. "Now is the hour of our testing. Let us make it the hour of our victory," the author urged, victory not just over "the enemy of freedom," but also, crucially, "victory over ourselves."

The food conservation campaign of the First World War contributed to complex and lasting beliefs about American food, including what came to be a central theme of food saving appeals, that "the secret in eating is to become master of yourself." Wartime exhortations to Americans to
change their eating habits came at a time of significant changes in the ways Americans produced, ate, and thought about their food. The Food Administration did not introduce radically new ideas about food or consumption, but its dietary injunctions—loaded with a moral clout of which food advertisers could only dream—gave form and coherence to diverse ideas about food already in circulation by the late 1910s. At this transformative juncture, many Americans came to believe that, at the table, self-discipline was necessary to temper the country's natural abundance and to control individuals' untrustworthy desires.

Notes


5 One reason food shortages seemed so acute was that while meager but adequate calories were usually available in some form, the wheat flour and meat to which many western Europeans had grown accustomed in recent decades had virtually disappeared (Offer, The First World War, p. 66).


Address from Sallie Bardette in Prudence, WV to “The President or Congressman or Senators,” 25 July 1917, Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (5HA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, Box No. 288, Papers of the United States Food Administration, Record Group 4, United States National Archives and Records Administration (College Park, MD).


These “normal” prices were based on wholesale prices plus what administrators deemed acceptable profit margins.

The Food Administration received hundreds of admiring letters addressing Hoover by these titles (Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (5HA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, USFA collection, NARA).


For example, in a May 1917 speech frequently reprinted over the next year and a half, Wilson promised that a voluntary alteration of eating habits “will be the finest possible demonstration of the willingness, the ability, and the efficiency of democracy,” and he insisted that the “last thing that any American could contemplate with equanimity would be the introduction of anything resembling Prussian autocracy into the food control of his country.” Early in the war, Hoover said he was confident that “democracy can yield to discipline,” and he echoed Wilson’s faith in “our ability to defend ourselves without being Prussianized” (“United States Food Administration. Chronological Sketch.”) “If men have not self-control,” said the president yesterday in his address at Buffalo, ‘they are not capable of that great thing we call democracy” (“Self-Control,” November 13, 1917, folder “Leadville Democrat Edit (CO),” Box no. 532, Headquarters Organization, Educational Division, Press Clipping Section, Press Clippings (12HJ-A1), 1917 (C-F), USFA Collection, NARA). The article referred to Wilson’s address to the American Federation of Labor Convention in Buffalo, New York on November 12, 1917. The story was even cleaner after victory. On the day after the armistice, Hoover exulted that by relying on voluntary compliance rather than rationing, the Food Administration had clearly demonstrated “that there was no power in autocracy equal to the voluntary effort of free people” (Herbert Hoover, “United States Food Administration—Letter to all Representatives of the Food Administration,” November 12, 1918, from bound folder “Addresses, Letters, Magazine Articles, Press Statements, Etc. Inclusive Dates: April 30, 1918 –September 16, 1919, Volume I, Part 2, Herbert Hoover Collection, Box 93, Accession Number 62008 9.21/23, Hoover Institution).

The populations of most of the major European belligerents and several neutral countries (including Belgium and Switzerland) had been on strict rations for years, though Britain did not adopt them until February 1918 (Raymond Pearl, “Weekly Rations in Allied Countries,” April 10, 1918, Folder 50, Collection K 23/2/749, Box 17, New York State College of Home Economics records, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University). For more on conscription, see John Whiteclay Chambers II, To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America. New York: The Free Press, 1987; David M. Kennedy, Over Here: The First World War and American Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 144–69.


20 Letter from Annie Irving Keeler in Jacksonville, FL, n.d., Folder 41, Collection K 23/2/749, Box 17, New York State College of Home Economics records, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University.

21 For example, Helen Moore, writing from Milwaukee, advised, “It is often easier to do a big, hard thing than a little one” (Letter from Helen Moore, Milwaukee, WI, January 25, 1918, Folder 41, Collection K 23/2/749, Box 17, New York State College of Home Economics records, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University).

22 Food and the War: Federal Food Administration for South Dakota, Vol. 1, No. 18, Aberdeen, SD: December 1, 1918, Folder “South Dakota,” Box 30, States Division, USFA Collection, Hoover Institution.

23 Typed Summary of “Confidential Meeting on the Food Needs of the Poor,” held in Russell Sage Foundation Building, 130 East 22nd Street, New York, February 5, 1918, Folder 60, Collection K 23/2/749, Box 17, New York State College of Home Economics records, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University.


29 Wilbur, Address at Conference of County Food Committees of Ohio in Senate Chamber, Columbus, December 3, 1917, Folder “Dr. Wilbur. Speeches. Articles. Statements. Notes. 1-1917,” Series 5H—Box 2, Home Conservation Division, USFA Collection, Hoover Institution. Wilbur was not, of course, the only person to suggest that wasting food was sinful. One of the typical “patriotic fillers” the USFA recommended for inclusion in farm journals stated, “Food is sacred. To waste it is sinful” (‘Patriotic Fillers,” Press release for farm journals for week ending June 15, 1918, Folder “Farm Journals Sections. Press Releases. 1918,” Series 12H—Box 41, Education Division, USFA Collection, Hoover Institution).


32 After the war, Wilbur confidently predicted, the United States would quickly prohibit alcohol and grant woman suffrage, good things, in theory, though he believed that as they entered the political sphere proper for the first time, women, prone to sacrificing of self but to dangerous leniency for others, must be “helped to meet squarely the harsh issues of self government and self protection” (“Vital Issues After the War,” Summary of address by Ray

33 See note 32.

34 Wilbur, Address at Conference of County Food Committees of Ohio.

35 See note 34.

36 Vernon Kellogg, Herbert Hoover, as Individual and Type, The Atlantic, March 1918. Writings about Hoover, Herbert Hoover Collection, Box 219, Accession No. 62008 9.21/23, Hoover Institution.

37 Wilbur, Memo to USFA staff, July 21, 1917, Home Conservation Division, USFA Collection, Series 5H—Box 1, Folder 8, "Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur. 17 May-24 November 1917," Hoover Institution.

38 This sort of name recognition inevitably contributed to Hoover's early political success, although similar monikers haunted him by the time of the Depression's "Hoovervilles."

39 By 1918, Fletcher was living in Copenhagen, where his fading health embarrassingly belied his pretensions to nutritional expertise (Letter from Horace Fletcher in Copenhagen to Vernon Kellogg, June 11, 1918, Folder "Fletcher, Horace," Box 127, USFA Collection, Hoover Institution).


42 Emphasis original (Letter from Emma F. Way in San Diego, CA to Hoover, November 4, 1918, Folder 50, Collection K 23/2/749, Box 17, New York State College of Home Economics records. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University).


44 Hoover, quoted in an originally anonymous interview by his old college friend and eventual biographer Will Irwin (First Aid to America: How Civilians Must Get Together and Get Behind Strong Leaders, The Saturday Evening Post, March 24, 1917, from bound folder "Addresses, letters, Magazine Articles, Press Statements, Etc. Inclusive Dates: February 1, 1917-April 6, 1918," Volume I, Part 1, Herbert Hoover Collection, Box 93, Accession Number 62008 9.21/23, Hoover Institution). Irwin later wrote, "In the SATURDAY EVENING POST of March twenty-fourth I published an interview with an eminent American, under the title First Aid to America. The victim was Hoover" (Irwin, The Autocrat of the Dinner Table).

45 Hoover, Food Administration in Relation to the Farmer—Address Before Conference of Editors and Publishers of Farm Papers, Chicago, August 25, 1917, from bound folder "Addresses, letters, Magazine Articles, Press Statements, Etc. Inclusive Dates: February 1,
1917–April 6, 1918,” Volume I, Part 1, Herbert Hoover Collection, Box 93, Accession Number 62008 9.21/23, Hoover Institution.

46 United States Food Administration, Chronological Sketch.

47 Home Conservation Division, General Office. General Correspondence (5HA-A1) 1917, USFA Collection, NARA.

48 Hoover, introduction to Mullendore, History of the United States Food Administration, p. 12.


50 In 1943, the US population was almost a third higher than it had been in 1918, and the overall production of red meat was already more than 40 percent of what it was in 1918. In other words, the proportion of meat being exported as a percentage of the total produced was higher in 1918 than it ever was again, although the United States still exported only about a sixth of its total beef supply in 1918. In 1995, the US population was roughly 250 percent higher than it was in 1918. Economic Research Service: United States Department of Agriculture, Total Red Meat: Supply and Utilization, available from: http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/foodconsumption/FoodAvailSpreadsheets.htm (last updated January 26, 2005; accessed November 6, 2005).


54 How We Americans Eat, February 4, 1918, Folder “Montgomery Advertiser Editorial (AL),” Box No. 549. Headquarters Organization, Educational Division, Press Clipping Section, Press Clippings (12HJ-A2), 1918 (A), USFA Collection, NARA.


56 Hoover, quoted in originally anonymous interview by Irwin, First Aid to America.


62 “Address by Alonzo Taylor,” USFA, 20 May 1918, Folder “Address. Taylor, Dr.,” Box 22, USFA Collection, Hoover Institution.

63 Typewritten transcript of meeting, Folder “New York,” USFA Collection, Hoover Institution.

64 Where the Food Campaign Fails to Get Across, January 28, 1918, Folder “Where the Food Campaign Fails to Get Across,” Series 5H—Box 3, Home Conservation Division, USFA Collection, Hoover Institution.


67 Hoover, Food and the War.

68 Emphasis original. Letter from Miss Ida P. Beale in Cherrydale, VA, to Hoover, June 1, 1917, Box No. 288, Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (SHA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, USFA Collection, NARA.

69 “To My Comrades Everywhere/Whether They Were the Blue or the Gray,” Farm recruitment poster, Phoebeus, VA, Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (SHA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, Box No. 288, USFA Collection, NARA.

70 For example, in response to Hoover’s request to help, “Commander-in-Chief” of the Sons of Confederate Veterans Ernest Baldwin replied, “I would be unworthy of the glorious heritage, which I have as a Son of a Confederate Veteran … if I did not lend my energies in any way toward helping our National Government in the present crisis” (Letter from Ernest G. Baldwin in Memphis, TN to Hoover, June 21, 1917, Box No. 288, Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (SHA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, USFA Collection, NARA). In a wavering hand, the Chaplain General of the United Confederate Veterans in Chattanooga also responded enthusiastically to Hoover’s letter asking clergy to help (Letter from J.W. Bachman in Chattanooga, TN to Hoover, June 22, 1917, Box No. 288, Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (SHA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, USFA Collection, NARA).


72 Letter from C.J. Boppell in St. Maries, Idaho to Hoover, June 30, 1917, Box No. 288, Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (SHA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, USFA Collection, NARA.


74 Pasta made an acceptable bread substitute because it was made with semolina flour, considered inappropriate for bread making.

75 United States Food Administration, Chronological Sketch.

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78 Gooding, "Hooveritis."


80 Wilbur, Typed text of article for Ladies' Home Journal.

81 His authority for this statement, he said, was his experience leading relief work in Belgium, which he described as the largest nutritional laboratory in history. The Belgians had not only survived on small rations, he reported, but their health had actually improved as a result of eating so little (Hoover, Food Conservation and the War, American Journal of Public Health, November 1917, from bound folder "Addresses, letters, Magazine Articles, Press Statements, Etc. Inclusive Dates: February 1, 1917—April 6, 1918." Volume 1, Part 1, Herbert Hoover Collection, Box 93, Accession Number 62008 9.21/23, Hoover Institution).

82 Some food fads and their adherents were still around, of course. Several people wrote to the Food Administration advocating Fletcherism as an antidote to overconsumption (e.g. Letter from H.L. Atkinson in San Francisco, CA to Julius Kahn in the House of Representatives, June 25, 1917, Box No. 288, Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (SHA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, USFA Collection, NARA). One man informed administrators that he was already traveling the country to encourage "Ralstonism," or one-food-meals, as part of food conservation (Letter from Mark Barrett in Eau Claire, WI to Hoover, July 15, 1917, Box No. 288, Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (SHA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, USFA Collection, NARA).


84 Levenstein, Revolution at the Table, p. 166. For a discussion on Americans' increasing investment in the thin ideal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Stearns Fat History: Bodies and Beauty in the Modern West. See also Roberta Pollack Seid, Never Too Thin: Why Women Are at War With Their Bodies. New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1989.

85 Eat Less Sugar, Be Sylphlike, Cooke's Advice to Young Women, May 9, 1918, Folder "Philadelphia North American News (PA)," Box No. 568, Educational Division, Press Clipping Section, Press Clippings (12HJ—A2) 1918 (P), USFA Collection, NARA. Reducing Excess Weight, December 13, 1917, Folder "Merced Sun Editorial (CA)," Box No. 530, Headquarters Organization, Educational Division. Press Clipping Section. Press Clippings (12HJ-A1), 1917 (A-C), USFA Collection, NARA.

86 Ways of the World, December 11, 1917, Folder "San Francisco Bulletin Editorial (CA)," Box No. 531, Headquarters Organization, Educational Division, Press Clipping Section, Press Clippings (12HJ-A1), 1917 (C), USFA Collection, NARA.

87 Irwin, The Autocrat of the Dinner Table.


90 Hoover—the Man and the Moral, January 27, 1918, folder "New York City Tribune Editorial (NY)," Box No. 566, Headquarters Organization, Educational Division, Press
Clipping Section, Press Clippings (12HJ-A2), 1918 (N), USFA Collection, NARA; Ernest Poole, “Hoover of Belgium,” The Saturday Evening Post, May 26, 1917. Writings about Hoover, Herbert Hoover Collection, Box 219, Accession No. 62008 9.21/23, Hoover Institution.

91 Ben Allen, the director of the administration’s “Educational Division,” or propaganda department, worried about how to appeal to the “fat and disloyal” (Ben Allen, Inter-office Memorandum to Gertrude Lane, September 13, 1918, Folder “Home Card, Oct. 1917–1918,” Series 5H—Box 3, Home Conservation Division, USFA Collection, Hoover Institution). Sometimes descriptions of Hoover were explicitly phrenological, for example Vernon Kellogg’s statement that “when one sees a photographic reproduction of Herbert Hoover’s face and head, and notes the marked type of brain-case and lower jaw presented by it, one can confidently make a beginning in understanding this newly arisen American personality, who tells us so insistently what and what not to eat, and so incisively why and why not” (Kellogg, Herbert Hoover, as Individual and Type, The Atlantic, March 1918. Writings about Hoover, Herbert Hoover Collection, Box 219, Accession No. 62008 9.21/23, Hoover Institution).

92 Wilbur, Notes on his speech at unnamed conference, August 17, 1918, Folder “Dr. Wilbur. Speeches, Articles, Statements, Notes. II-1918,” Series 5H—Box 2, Home Conservation Division, USFA Collection, Hoover Institution.

93 Inter-office memo from Vernon Kellogg to W.A. Dupee, States Administration Division, June 28, 1918, Folder “W.A. Dupee,” Series 6H—Box 11, States Administration, USFA Collection, Hoover Institution.


96 One of the strictures from home economics that entered food conservation wisdom was the importance of accepting any food that was served “without question or comment.” Several professors of home economics, a discipline that had begun to emerge in land grant institutions in the 1870s and was gaining widespread academic credibility by the 1910s, held high-ranking positions on the Food Administration’s staff, and home economists across the country were active as state and community leaders of food conservation activities. Quote from “Care of Children,” Home Demonstration in Care and Feeding of a Normally Well Child, No. 276, New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, Department of Home Economics, 1919?, Folder 2, Collection K 23/2/749, Box 18, New York State College of Home Economics records, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University.

97 Emphasis original. Letter from Mrs. B. C. Anthony in El Paso, TX to Hoover, June 22, 1917, Folder 11, Box No. 288, Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (5HA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, USFA Collection, NARA.

98 Edward Arps, Conservation of Food: What it Means and What it Will Unfold, Typed Circular, Box No. 288, Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (5HA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, USFA Collection, NARA.


100 See note 99. The National Service Committee of the Presbyterian Church promised its members that a "relentless program of food conservation vitalized and sustained by motives that are both religious and humanitarian will bring to every church participating definite and enriching spiritual results" (Bulletin for the National Service Commission of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Letter in bulletin to Pastors and Committees from William Chambers Covert, Representative in the Department of Food Conservation, 10 August 1917, Folder “Cooperating Organizations. Religious, Fraternal, Patriotic, Labor, Agricultural, Commercial, etc.”, Series 5H—Box 3, Home Conservation Division, USFA Collection, Hoover Institution).

101 It Does Us Good, October 31, 1917, Folder “Wichita Eagle Editorial (KS),” Box No. 535,

103 Letter from H.L. Bailey in “Piqua, O” to Hoover, June 21, 1917, Box No. 288, Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (5HA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, USFA Collection, NARA.

104 Reverend Dr. Joseph Krauskopf was in charge of food conservation propaganda aimed at Jewish people. Subcommittees were formed to carry out food conservation propaganda within individual religious organizations, like the Independent Order Free Sons of Israel, a Jewish fraternal organization (Letter from Hoover to M. Angelo Elias, August 9, 1917, Box No. 290, Home Conservation Division, General Office, General Correspondence (5HA-A1) 1917, Am20-Br 50, USFA Collection, NARA. Also Augustin M’Nally, “The Conversion of the Rosenbloom,” Keep Old Glory Waving: A Weekly Review of What your Food Administration and Your State Food Commission Are Doing to Help You Win This War, No. 6, n.d., Folder “New York,” 6H—Box 15, States Division, USFA Collection, Hoover Institution).


106 “Until Next Harvest,” USFA pamphlet, April 1918, Folder 6, Collection K 23/2/749, Box 18, New York State College of Home Economics records, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University.

107 Arps, Conservation of Food.

108 Since roughly 1880, for example, the United States had experienced the rise of industrialized food production and mass distribution, a burgeoning food advertising industry, a revolution in nutritional understanding, repeated attempts by reformers to Americanize the diets of immigrants and improve the diets of the poor, and, since the turn of the century, a dramatic spike in food prices.