

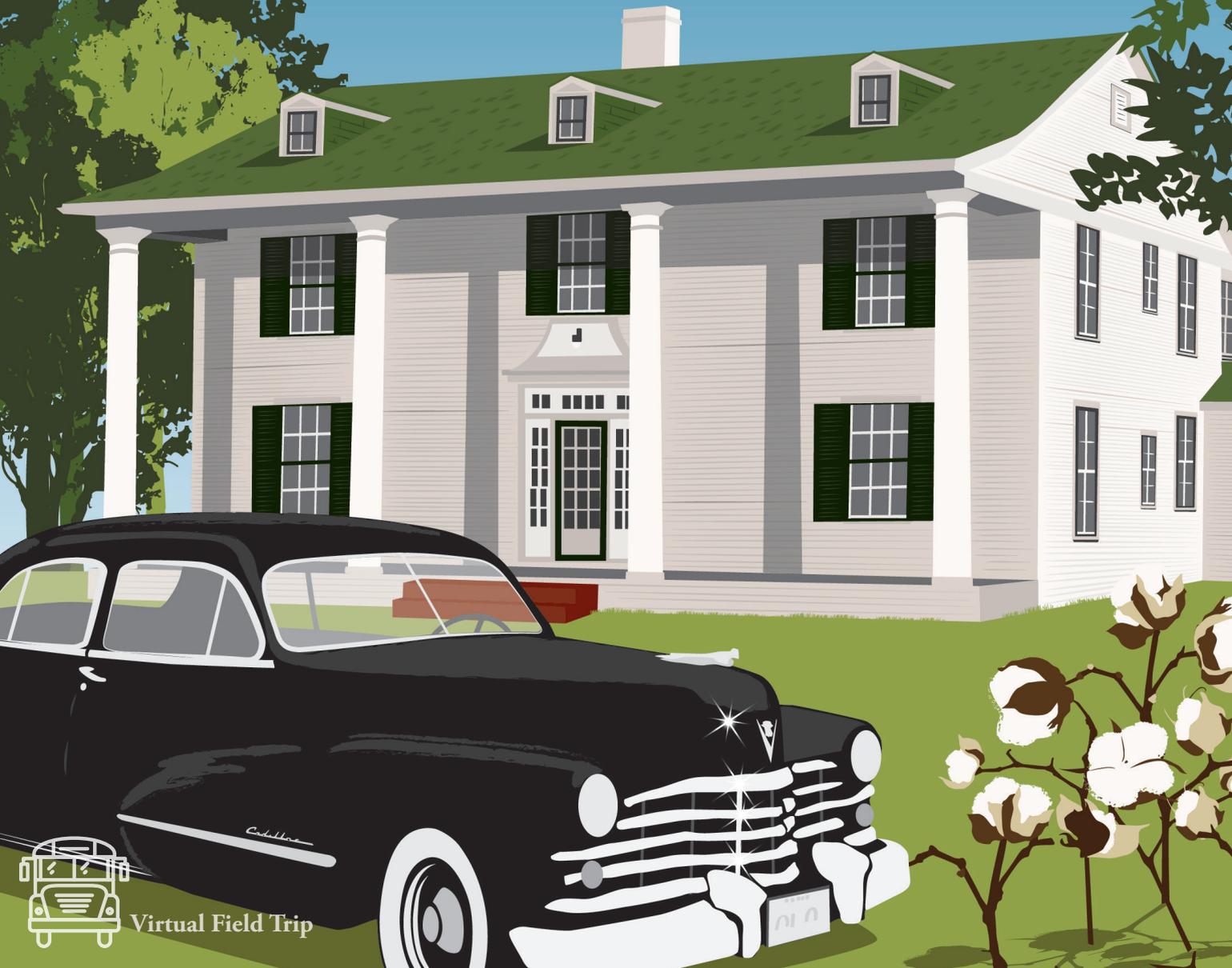
Texas Historical Commission

Mr. Sam and World War II
High School

SAM RAYBURN HOUSE

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —

Bonham, Texas



Virtual Field Trip



President Franklin D. Roosevelt (L), Speaker of the U.S. House Sam Rayburn (C), and Senate Majority Leader Alben Barkley, January 20, 1941. Image courtesy of Sam Rayburn House State Historic Site Collection.

Mr. Sam and World War II

Overview: Northeast Texas at War

On September 16, 1940, Sam Rayburn was elected Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and thrust into a robust effort to prepare the nation for the pending war to come. He would hold the title of Speaker for seventeen non-consecutive years. Sam Rayburn was influential in wartime legislation such as the Lend-Lease Act, Extension of the Selective Service, the G.I. Bill of Rights, and the acquisition of funds for the atomic bomb. In this lesson, learners practice rationing and compare and contrast WWII rationing and today's recycling efforts.

Objectives

- Demonstrate understanding of the WWII rationing system
- Compare WWI scrap drive practices to current recycling efforts
- Reflect on the personal and cultural impacts of WWII home front efforts

U.S. History Since 1877 TEKS

2B, 7E, 17A, 18B, 23A

Additional Discipline TEKS

Social Studies 28 ABCDE, 29 AB, 31

Resources

- Activity 1: It's a Scrap Drive!
- Activity 2: 24-Hour Rationing Challenge
- 24-Hour Rationing Challenge activity resource
- Resource images

Vocabulary

Allies (AHL ize) or **Allied Powers** (noun): a coalition of the United States, Great Britain, China, Soviet Union that joined forces to defeat the Axis Powers. Allied leaders, often referred to as The Big Three, were Franklin D. Roosevelt (U.S.), Winston Churchill (Great Britain), and Joseph Stalin (Soviet Union).

Axis (ACK siss) **Powers** (noun): a coalition of Germany, Italy, and Japan that sought to expand their power across the western world. Axis leaders were Adolph Hitler (Germany), Benito Mussolini (Italy), and Emperor Hirohito (Japan).

constituent (kuhn STIH chew ent) noun: a voting member of a community or organization

Grumlin (GRUHM linn) noun: a slang term used by Sam Rayburn to describe a U.S. citizen who complained about the effects of World War II on the home front

rationing (RAAH shuh ning) noun: a process deployed by the government during World War II that set limits on the amount of high-demand food and personal items that the public could purchase

Historical Context

During World War II (1939-1945), the world was gripped by political upheaval, shortages in supplies, violence, poverty, hunger, and genocide. U.S. Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn and his constituents of the 4th Congressional District of Texas made contributions on the home front, sent sons and daughters to war, and together prepared Northeast Texas for life after the Allied victory in 1945.



Model of the "Little Boy" atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Image courtesy of National Security Archive.

Sam Rayburn was influential in wartime legislation such as the Lend-Lease Act, Extension of the Selective Service, the G.I. Bill of Rights, and the acquisition of funds for the atomic bomb. In February 1944, Rayburn was approached by Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Army Chief of Staff George Marshall and Vannevar Bush, director of U.S. Office of Scientific Research and Development. These men asked Rayburn to discreetly procure funds for the Manhattan Project, the secret code name of the development effort for an atomic weapon.

Rayburn agreed and was able to convince Congress to appropriate \$1.6 billion for the project, informing only the leaders in both the House and Senate about the actual purpose of the money. The work was so secret that not even Vice President Harry Truman was aware of it.



When asked if Rayburn wanted to see the testing site in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, he declined, noting that if he didn't know the particulars of a secret, no one could divulge that secret to anyone else. As a result of the Manhattan Project, atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan in August of 1945. The bombing and resulting destruction effectively caused Japan to formally surrender to the allied forces on September 2, 1945.

During the war, both military installations and alien prisoner of war camps were operational in Rayburn's 4th Congressional District. in the area. The U.S Army Air Corp conducted pilot training classes at Perrin Field in Sherman, Jones Field in Bonham, and Majors Field in Greenville. British pilots earned their wings at the No. 1 British Flying Training School in Terrell. Five of the seventy WWII prisoner of war camps were located within the 4th Congressional District in Denison, Farmersville, Kaufman, McKinney, and Princeton. Three P.O.W. camps provided much needed farm labor to communities during the war. Axis prisoners at Denison's P.O.W. camp helped construct Denison Dam. Rayburn also successfully brought the U.S. Army's Ashburn General Hospital to McKinney. Today, the former hospital is home to the North Texas Job Corps Center.



WWII flight line at Terrell Flying School. Image courtesy of Texas Historical Commission.

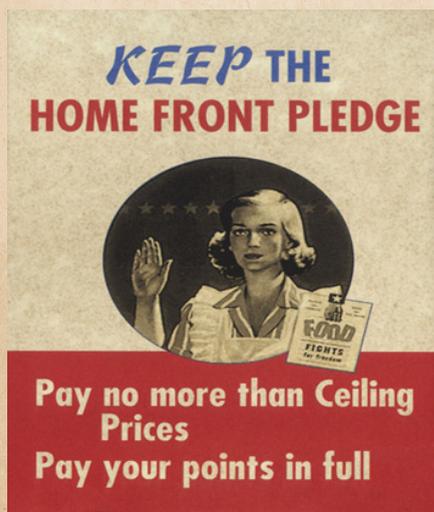


Image courtesy of JSTOR.

Along with his successes, there were also failures. Many constituents in the district were unhappy with wartime costs, rationing, and wages. Many wrote letters to Sam Rayburn complaining about the necessity of rationing. They were unhappy with the Office of Price Administration (OPA), the agency that regulated rationing and price controls. Farmers could not make a profit when the OPA controlled the cost of cattle and corn. Family farmers in the area complained to Rayburn about the War Labor Board, the government agency which provided overtime pay to those war industry workers who worked more than four hours a week. Farmers were not issued overtime pay, and they wrote to complain Rayburn about it. Rayburn heard so many complaints, he

coined the term "Grumlin" to describe those who complained about the effects of the war at home while American men and women abroad were risking and sometimes losing their lives defending the country.



Activity 1: It's a Scrap Drive! 30 minutes

In this activity, learners collect and sort supplies to understand the scrap drives that took place regularly across the country during World War II. Shortages of industrial resources such as aluminum, brass, copper, tin, iron, steel, rubber, and petroleum caused the American government to ask its citizens to save scrap, donate anything that could be melted down, and reduce speeds to 35 m.p.h. to assist the war effort. Scrap drive items were recycled to make military equipment such as ammunition, weapons, and vehicles.

Common items collected during WWII scrap drives included:

- **paper:** newspapers, magazines, brown wrapping paper, paper bags, corrugated boxes, books, and wastepaper
- **cloth:** old rags, silk and nylon hosiery
- **rubber:** tires, boots, raincoats, gloves, girdles, garden hoses, and swimming caps
- **metals (aluminum, brass, copper, tin, iron, steel etc.):** pots, pans, metal cans, toothpaste tubes, metal toys, cars, bicycles, farm equipment, and iron fences
- **fats and oils:** cooking lard and kitchen grease (not used for this activity)

Put four boxes labeled Paper, Metals, Rubber, and Not Recyclable on a table covered with a tablecloth. Arrange “scrap drive” items on a table. Have learners sort each item into the correct box. After the activity, discuss the similarities and differences between WWII scrap drives and today’s recycling efforts as well as the purposes of each.

Extension activities could include:

- Organize a school-based recycling drive. (Check with the local recycling center for acceptable items).
- Interview a family/community member who remembers scrap drives. Share/publish the interview.
- Create a graphic display of items at home that can be recycled, repurposed, or reused.



Collecting scrap, 1942 Image courtesy of U.S. National Archives and Records Administration



Activity 2: 24-Hour Rationing Challenge

Historical Background

The American government began to ration certain foods during World War II in the spring of 1942 in order to control supply and demand. The food rationing program allowed all Americans to have an equal opportunity to purchase foods that were becoming scarce due to the war. Families were issued ration books and could not purchase those foods without presenting ration stamps to grocery clerks at checkout. Red stamps allowed the family to purchase meats, butter, cooking oil, and lard. Blue stamps were used to purchase vegetables, beans, soups, and baby food.

Rationed Item	Rationing Duration
Tires	January 1942 – December 1945
Cars	February 1942 – October 1945
Sugar	May 1942 - 1947
Bicycles	July 1942 – September 1945
Rubber footwear	October 1942 – September 1945
Coffee	November 1942 – July 1943
Shoes	February 1943 – October 1945
Meats including canned fish	March 1943 – November 1945
Milk and milk products	March 1943 – November 1945

Source: Ames History Museum, "Rationed Goods in the U.S. During World War II"

In this 24-hour activity simulating rationing practices of World War II, learners monitor and control their own 21st century commodities and activities with coupons.

Distribute the **24-Hour Rationing Challenge coupon code activity resource**. Review the activity instructions and the coupon code graphic. Explain that after each coupon representing a commodity is crossed out due to use or consumption, that resource is no longer available for the rest of the 24-hour period.

After the 24-hour activity has been completed, discuss the difficulties and challenges learners experienced with limiting their access to daily necessities. What strategies would they have used to cope with the much longer and much more constricting rationing practices during World War II?



Activity 2 Resource: 24-Hour Rationing Challenge

For the next 24 hours, you will ration your use of consumer products using the resource coupons below. Once you have used up the resource, cross out the corresponding coupon. When the coupon allotment is spent, that resource is no longer available to you during the 24-hour period. This is only a small example of what every American experienced for up to five years during World War II!

COUPON CODES

B = 6 oz. carbonated beverage

M = 1 text or call on mobile phone

S = 6 oz. coffee

C = 1 oz. candy

P = 1 oz. potato chips or other crunchy snack

T = 1 hour of television



Resource: Sam Rayburn Quote



Sam Rayburn, 1936
Image courtesy of Library of Congress

“How soon can we bring the boys and girls back home? I [wish] to God I could tell you, but I do not know. No one in the government knows the answer to that agonized question; no commanders in our Army or Navy know the answer to that question. Our enemies do not know the answer to that question.”

Sam Rayburn
May 31, 1944

Resource Image: Map of 4th Congressional District of Texas



Image courtesy of the Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

Resource Image: Ration Book Announcement

Designation of ration periods and weight value of Stamps valid therein

Ration period	Stamp valid during ration period	Weight value of stamp
No. 1 (May 5 to May 16, 1942)	Stamp No. 1	1 pound
No. 2 (May 17 to May 30, 1942)	Stamp No. 2	1 pound
No. 3, (May 31 to June 13, 1942)	Stamp No. 3	1 pound
No. 4 (June 14 to June 27, 1942)	Stamp No. 4	1 pound

Image courtesy Sam Rayburn House State Historic Site
Artifact Accession #2010.1.4a



Resource Image: 1942 Transcribed Letter from Sam Rayburn

Feb. 14, 1942
Tuesday

Dearest Katie,

I have intended writing ever since my birthday which you were sweet enough to remember and which I so much appreciate - Now you have remember me at Valentine Day - you always remember and are always so fine and sisterly - I must take the time to tell you how deeply I appreciate you and how much your love means to me.

Well we are really in a war - and what a war it is to be - and for how long no one can tell or even approximate - We must serve, every one of us, to the limit of our capacity - We are not yet ready to say we are as well prepared as our adversaries and that will take some time - but must and will out build and out fight them in the end -

Terrribly sorry I cannot be at Fort Worth for the meeting next Monday night, but Franklin the President told me he did not think I should get that far away at this time -

My love to you,

Sam

