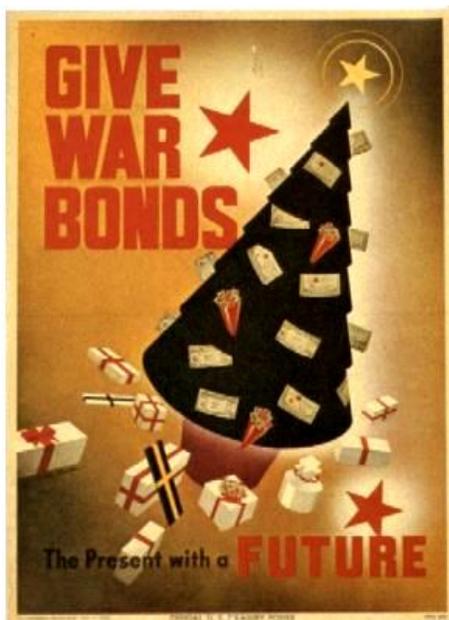


Christmas on the WWII Home Front

- ✧ During World War II Christmas trees were in short supply because of a lack of manpower to cut the trees down and a shortage of railroad space to ship the trees to market. Americans rushed to buy American-made Visca artificial trees.
- ✧ In 1941, a five-foot Christmas tree could be purchased for 75 cents.
- ✧ The shortage of materials—like aluminum and tin—used to produce ornaments led many people to make their own ornaments at home. Magazines contained patterns for ornaments made out of non-priority war materials, like paper, string, and natural objects, such as pinecones or nuts.
- ✧ Electric bubble lights were created during the 1940s and remain popular even today.
- ✧ To give their Christmas tree a snow-covered effect, people mixed a box of Lux soap powder with two cups of water and brushed the concoction on the branches of their tree.
- ✧ Fewer men at home resulted in fewer men available to dress up and play Santa Claus. Women served as substitute Santas at Saks Fifth Avenue in New York City and at other department stores throughout the United States.



- ✧ *"I'll Be Home For Christmas"* and *"White Christmas"* were both written during the 1940s and quickly gained popularity with the war-weary, but optimistic, population.
- ✧ Travel during the holidays was limited for most families due to the rationing of tires and gasoline. Americans saved up their food ration stamps to provide extra food for a fine holiday meal.
- ✧ Many Americans threw their German blown-glass ornaments and exotic Japanese ornaments in the trash as soon as the war began. Shortly after the war, Corning Glass Company in New York began mass-producing Christmas tree balls using machines designed to produce light bulbs. Corning could make more ornaments in a single minute than a German cottage glass blower could make in a whole day.

Happy Holidays from
The National WWII Museum