

Women's Reflections on Food Rationing in the 1980s

S. born 1954, employed at the telephone company under communism, currently working as an artist, married, three children, interviewed in Braşov, Romania, summer, 2003.

And then you'd hear a voice: they've got *telemea*! [feta cheese] You'd rush down the stairs to be at the front of the line... and if you had a kid next to you they'd give you two times [the regular] quantity.... And kids, you'd borrow them. For example I had a neighbor [who would ask] won't you give me Nae so I can wait in line.

M. born 1955, worked as an electrician under communism, now unemployed, married with two children, interviewed in Braşov, Romania, summer, 2003.

I'd come home, sit down on the chair in the kitchen and begin to invent meals... because I couldn't follow a cookbook.... I needed to see [what I could possibly make], hmmm, what food will I make tonight... if you followed a cookbook... I don't have parsley... I can't make this because I need cheese... so then I prepared food that you would not find in any recipe.... I would make the first and second course and I only had potatoes... I would make potato soup and mashed potatoes... I'd add a vegetable... some eggs with flour...and also make a goulash soup....

E. born 1948, office worker under communism, currently a homemaker, married, one child, interviewed in Braşov, Romania, summer, 2003.

Romanians are very curious. When foreigners would visit friends during the Ceauşescu period and everything was rationed... the freezer was full of chicken, of meat, everything. It's incredible, the inventiveness of Romanians.... How did you get a hold of it [food]... I can't say.... If you went to anyone's house, they'd put it on the table like you wouldn't believe. Everyone managed, everyone had relations.

Source: Anonymous Interviewees, interview by Jill Massino, oral histories, Brasov, Romania (Summer, 2003), tape, Indiana University Institute for the Study of History and Memory.