

A Lifetime of Change ^[1]

Imagine, for a moment, the life of an African American woman born in rural North Carolina just after World War I. As an infant she survived the influenza pandemic. She grew up in poverty during the Depression, helping her family with agricultural and domestic work that had changed little since the mid-nineteenth century. At every turn she faced discrimination and limits on her opportunities. But then, when she was in middle age, the world around her began to change — with sometimes shocking speed. Looking back on her life at the age of seventy, she saw a very different world than the one she had known as a child.

Rebecca Clark was just such a woman. In this series of excerpts from an oral history interview, she tells stories from her childhood in the Depression, her working life during the Civil Rights Movement, and her first engagement in politics in the 1960s. In hearing her story, you'll have the chance to put the changes of the postwar era in personal perspective.

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Professor Wallace Caldwell sitting at his dining table.

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