

Rebecca Clark and the Change in Her Path in Education ^[1]

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In Mrs. Clark's youth, children were not required to go to school until they were sixteen as you are required to do. Many children never made it past the fourth grade. We know that Mrs. Clark had to work even when she was in school, yet she almost graduated from high school. Mrs. Clark is going to tell us one of her educational dreams and why she wasn't able to achieve it.

Preliminary questions

1. Medical care has progressed rapidly since Mrs. Clark was growing up. Can you think of an example of medical treatment we have now that we did not have when your parents were young?
2. Mrs. Clark mistook "a bad case of indigestion" for appendicitis. What do you think it might have cost her to get care from a doctor at that time?

The recording

Running time: 1:25.

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Transcript

I was to go into the eleventh grade but I had to stop. And I didn't finish high school. I had always wanted to go to Tuskegee, Alabama, and I had saved money to go to Tuskegee, Alabama. And I saved money the year that I was telling you about that I went to live with this family and this lady became ill and I was to stay there with her and her children, go to school, come back and cook and clean up for the teachers. That was going to be my job.

I became ill with what I thought was appendicitis but it wasn't at that time. And that's when I had to go to the hospital. I had a bad case of indigestion, didn't know what it was. That took my money. It was only 100 dollars something but I had already written Tuskegee asking them could they use a student to finish high school and work with some of the faculty members in the other college. I don't know why I wanted to go to Tuskegee, Alabama. I just wanted to go to Tuskegee because that's where the man did the peanuts. Can't think of his name, now, I'm forgetting.

Anyway, I didn't get to college. I don't regret it. I regret it, but I didn't, but I always wanted my children to because I worked hard so my children could go to school.

Follow-up questions

1. Tuskegee University was founded in 1881 in Tuskegee Alabama. She mentions one of the University's most famous teachers when she refers to "the man [that] did the peanuts?" Who is that person?
2. How many famous professors of universities can you name? On what basis will you decide where to go to college? How is that different or similar to Mrs. Clark's reasons for wanting to go?
3. How much had Mrs. Clark saved before she needed medical care? What action to go to school had she already taken before she got sick?
4. What is your reaction to Mrs. Clark's last statement about her regrets about not getting to college?

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