

This is an interview with Roy Reed conducted on January 8, 1974.

: Most striking political change?

Roy Reed: The defeat of Orval Faubus for governor of Arkansas was the most striking single political act I saw and that was symbolic of the whole change. He was retired undefeated but when he came back four years later and tried to get back in office and was soundly defeated by Dale Bumpers, that said to me that Arkansas had come more than just ten years forward, but a full generation. When you get to looking around, there are no Orval Faubuses any left, Not even George Wallace is an Orval Faubus any more, giving him his full due. The politics of race has changed and therefore these people have changed, so that we now see Arkansas, which in late fifties and through sixties made no progress in industry, public education, indices that people measure progress by . . . Arkansas made none because it was so involved with integration of schools. We have gone from that to where schools virtually all are integrated. But we have a governor who not only has capitalized on industrial-

ization of the South but he actually has questioned kinds of industry that come in.

Well, you might date end of the second Reconstruction to the inauguration of Richard Nixon. I think we pretty well stopped forward movement there, as far as government was concerned, government as advocate of civil rights. Within six months after Nixon had taken office I was in federal court room in Jackson, Mississippi to than Inc. Fund and Justice Department for first time were on opposite sides on a desegregation case. The Justice Department having gone over to . . . I started to say a segregationist point of view, if you make allowances for that simplification. Some things were being done in government in spite of Nixon--the Civil Rights Commission most notably, the people at Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in spite of one of his guys being at the head of it. But in general the government no longer takes the lead it did in the early sixties and through the Johnson years.

: How South different?

Reed: White politicians don't ignore black votes any longer and you find them going into black communities and doing and promising things peculiar to black needs, still playing to catch up for sins in the past.

You wouldn't have that in Iowa. I suppose in a way we're paying off a debt now in the South. Fifteen years ago we didn't acknowledge we owed a debt. Now we do.

We're paying it off and will be paying it off for a long time. As long as that goes on I suppose there'll be differences between this region and others. I know deep inside of me the South is different, but it's not as easy to say how it's different as it used to be.

(End of Interview.)