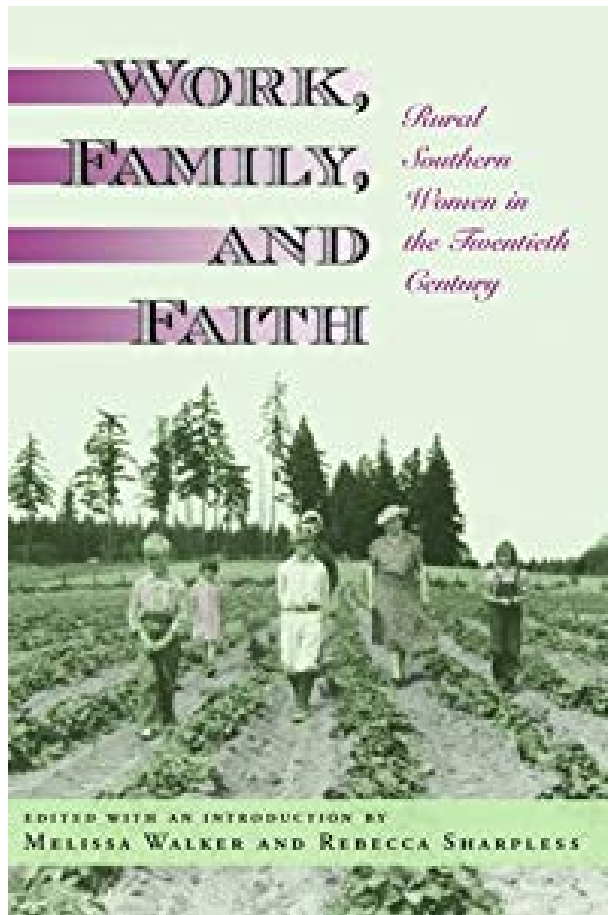


# Work, Family, and Faith: Rural Southern Women in the Twentieth Century



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<b>Author:</b>	Melissa Walker
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At the beginning of the twentieth century, the majority of rural southerners were dependent on agriculture and eked out a living as tenants on land owned by someone else. Women took on multiple duties, from child rearing to labor in the fields, to help meet their own goals of independence, well-being, and family persistence on the land. Over the course of the century, however, women found their lives and their work transformed.

Government intervention, the Great Depression, and industrial job opportunities created by the two world wars and the development of Sun Belt industries lured or pushed tens of thousands of black and white rural southerners off the land. As the American South changed around them, becoming more urban and industrialized, some women struggled to help their families survive in the increasingly large-scale and commercial agricultural economy, while other women eagerly seized opportunities to engage in rural reform, get better educations, and work at off-farm jobs. Whether they moved to the cities or stayed on the farms, most of these women continued to struggle against poverty and relied on tradition and inner strength to get by. This well-researched, sharply focused, and keenly insightful collection of essays takes readers across the twentieth-century South, from rural roadside stands to tobacco fields to Sloss-Sheffield Steel's "Sloss Quarters" in Birmingham. Covering the full scope of southern rural women's varied lives, this book will be of

particular value to anyone interested in sociology, women's studies, or southern history.