

**Sonya Burnett and Pamela Taylor**  
**The Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation**  
**September 4, 2021**

**[00:00:00.070] - Pamela Taylor**

-machine.

**[00:00:00.910] - Sonya Burnett**

45 what, records?

**[00:00:03.070] - Pamela Taylor**

No.

**[00:00:05.470] - Sonya Burnett**

You know what a 45 is.

**[00:00:06.200] - Pamela Taylor**

No, I don't.

**[00:00:08.230] - Sonya Burnett**

It's a record, not a album, but a record.

**[00:00:10.570] - Pamela Taylor**

Yeah, around, right, 45.

**[00:00:12.115] - Noah Shively**

[laughs]

**[00:00:13.150] - Pamela Taylor**

That's what I'm saying. They have the actual record player that plays 45's.

**[00:00:17.890] - Noah Shively**

What's a 45?

**[00:00:19.090] - Pamela Taylor**

It's a record, like that [laughs] Ram record. And then they have the albums, which is much bigger, you know what an album is. Well, it even even plays the albums too! Have you seen it?

**[00:00:29.830] - Sonya Burnett**

I got one! You're talking about a Bluetooth record player?

**[00:00:36.530] - Pamela Taylor**

No. [laughs]

**[00:00:36.580] - Sonya Burnett**

So you say you can put, what is it, Polly?

**[00:00:39.060] - Noah Shively**

A 45, on an actual 45 player.

**[00:00:41.850] - Pamela Taylor**

Literally take the 45 and put it on a literal record player.

**[00:00:44.740] - Sonya Burnett**

Okay.

**[00:00:45.940] - Pamela Taylor**

[whispered] I'm gon' buy me one.

**[00:00:52.270] - Lillian Eells**

Are y'all ready? Okay

**[00:00:55.790] - Pamela Taylor**

Is your phone ready?

**[00:00:56.810] - Noah Shively**

Yes.

**[00:00:59.990] - Lillian Eells**

Okay. I am Lillian Eells. Today is September 4, 2021. I am here with...

**[00:01:05.390] - Pamela Taylor**

Pamela Staten Taylor.

**[00:01:07.790] - Sonya Burnett**

Sonya Burnett.

**[00:01:09.350] - Lillian Eells**

To talk about their lives growing up in Sewanee as part of the Sewanee Black History Initiative through the Roberson Project. Sonya and Pamela, thank you for sharing your stories with us today. Would you please tell us your full name and when you were born and where?

**[00:01:24.230] - Pamela Taylor**

My full name is Pamela Staten Taylor, born March 23, 1956. Actually, my middle name is Elise. Born in Sewanne, Tennessee.

**[00:01:38.510] - Sonya Burnett**

My name is Sonya Zerina Burnett. I was born June 8, 1962, at Emerald Hodgson Hospital in Sewanee, Tennessee.

**[00:01:49.610] - Lillian Eells**

Thank you. So let's begin at the beginning, if you would tell us about your family and where you grew up.

**[00:02:00.030] - Pamela Taylor**

My family had seven of us. We had, it was four brothers and three sisters. We grew up in Sewanee, we were all born and raised in Sewanee. My oldest brother and my next to oldest brother were delivered by midwives.

**[00:02:21.750] - Lillian Eells**

What were their names?

**[00:02:22.710] - Pamela Taylor**

Their names was Ronald Staten and James Staten. And we grew up in one part of the town called, what they called SMA. It was the Sewanee Military Academy. And so we grew up on that side of town. We also, my dad worked for what was called SMA, which was a food service. And so he worked there. And my mother did house work. And we grew up in that area. And then we finally moved over to this side of town, which is called Oak Street.

**[00:02:56.550] - Noah Shively**

This is Alabama, but you grew up on Oak Street?

**[00:02:59.310] - Pamela Taylor**

I grew up in Oak Street, and that's where we actually grew up-

**[00:03:02.910] - Noah Shively**

Okay.

**[00:03:02.960] - Pamela Taylor**

-from age six on up it's where I lived, maybe age six to maybe twenty, I lived over there on Oak Street, brothers and sisters. And growing up here was pretty good, honestly. Growing up as children, we didn't experience a lot of the racism. We didn't experience a lot of the negativity because we never heard any negative speech around us. And what we did heard, my mother, in turn, would tell us how to counteract that. And that was with love or a smile. So that's basically, you know, we went to Lake Cheston. We walked to Lake Cheston from Oak Street, which was about maybe 6 miles or so, and so that's where we swam. We could go to the gym. You know, we rode our bicycles. We went to school, Sewanee Public, then later on- actually, before we went to school, to Sewanee Public, and when we moved over on Oak Street, there was a Church, there was a schoolhouse, and there was a club house. And this is where the black community went. It was a black community. And so that's where we actually went. And then once you got out of I think it was the 6th grade, you went to Townsend, which was in Winchester, Tennessee. And then my mother was a part of the NAACP. She marched, civil rights. She marched with them, trying to get the schools integrated. And so she did that for many years, but not really a bad experience. And there was a lot of things like I said that we didn't really know or understand, you know? We knew that we moved here because it gave our parents employment. And as I got older, I particularly didn't like a lot of things about the University, to be honest with you.

**[00:05:16.070] - Lillian Eells**

Yeah.

**[00:05:18.110] - Pamela Taylor**

Kind of still don't to be honest with you. Not really negative, but I think there's some things that could have been done a whole lot better, especially now. Maybe back then when they didn't know so much or did know so much and was afraid to do it. Now, this generation, I think we can do more and we can do better.

**[00:05:42.870] - Lillian Eells**

Yeah, do you have any- Sorry.

**[00:05:43.350] - Pamela Taylor**

No, go ahead.

**[00:05:44.070] - Lillian Eells**

Do you have any specific stories you think that show, like, how the University could have been better?

**[00:05:50.550] - Pamela Taylor**

Well, I think they could have been better, especially by allowing us to be integrated into theaters. We had a certain place we had to sit. We had certain places that we could go and could not go. So in that aspect, as far as mistreatments in doing so, they really didn't. Our churches were like I said, was it desegregated or would that be the word?

**[00:06:17.310] - Lillian Eells**

Yes.

**[00:06:18.930] - Pamela Taylor**

They are segregated, just separate. But I just think that the University could have done so much better toward the people on the mountain. I think they could have done more to make us want to stay here, to want to live here, to give us something to want to live on this mountain for, rather than prioritizing who gets this or who gets that. We just need to learn how to come together and do what is right for all people. If the University can get to that point, I think it would be so wonderful. And they've done a lot. They've come a long way, I'll be honest with you, they have come a long way. And it really has been a lot of good people on this University. I mean, really good people who have helped the black community, who stood with the black community, who fought for the black community. So I think they've really come a long way. Would you like to ask me something else?

**[00:07:13.890] - Lillian Eells**

Yeah, Sonya, would you mind telling us about your family, and your time growing up as well?

**[00:07:22.770] - Sonya Burnett**

Well. Basically, I live in Sewanee all my life. My mother, Lola Burnett, worked at the nursery school over here, Otey, I think 32 years till she retired. My Daddy worked at the University doing all kinds of different jobs. And to be honest, when it was time for me to go to first grade, I was kind of disappointed because I wanted to go to the all black school, but they no longer had that, so I went to Sewanee Public. I got three sisters, Charles, Iris and Jennifer. Pamela and I grew up together across the street from each other, so we're basically sisters. She babysat us when momma and daddy would go somewhere, she'd keep us. We used to have friends who were always together. Growing up, we were always together, friends in each other's houses, keeping the doors unlocked, car doors unlocked and playing softball in the middle of the road, playing softball in the house and playing different games together. And when it was time for me to go to College in 1980, I decided I wouldn't come back to Sewanee to live because there's really nothing to do here. It's just College town. I didn't want to work in this College town. And I- talked about the fact that Sewanee did things that she didn't like. This makes me daddy upset when I say this, but he talks about paying lease taxes and all these kind of things. I said "Leases-" Because you could buy your house, but you don't own the land.

**[00:09:42.330] - Lillian Eells**

Yeah.

**[00:09:43.350] - Sonya Burnett**

I said "Daddy, to me, it reminds me of sharecroppers," which you know, you could do, but you can't own your land. And, um... I know that if daddy were to sell his house today, that he'd have to give University part of that money, even though he worked hard for that house and paid it off and all these things, and he had to... keep it up. I went to Tennessee State, and I've been in Nashville ever since. A lot of changes. I've seen a lot of people come and go die, die off 'cause, used to be a lot of black people in Sewanee when I grew up, lots of us. Pools, Shedd's, Ms. Kelly, Rose, Ms. Rose, and-

**[00:10:37.010] - Pamela Taylor**

You can't name them all.

**[00:10:38.210] - Sonya Burnett**

Can't name them all. There's a bunch of 'em. And this center used to be somebody's house. Mr. Sammy Shedd. Mr. Sam Shedd's house. And when he died, they didn't even fix it up. They just went in there and started using it as a little club. Then they made it to the community center.

**[00:11:02.790] - Lillian Eells**

Would you mind telling me a little bit about your experience at Sewanee Public? Both of y'all?

**[00:11:11.250] - Pamela Taylor**

Well, my experience with Sewanee public was- I think I was one of the first ones when they started going. Jacqueline Paris and myself, I think. I can remember her, us being the first two. And I think we went over there in third grade. My experience, honestly, was not bad. I don't know if it's 'cause maybe I was such an outgoing child. But anyway, my momma had always given us instructions on what to do when we went to the school, and she told us how to act, what to do, what not to do.

**[00:11:42.870] - Lillian Eells**

What did she tell you?

**[00:11:43.890] - Pamela Taylor**

She told us that if someone said anything to us, if they called us the N-word, the nigger, to just look at 'em and smile. Or, you know, if someone started a fight, go to the teacher or whoever was out on playground, we would have to go to some adult to let them know and not in turn, fight back with them. So basically, I think the only thing problem that we had kind of coming up somewhat was when we lived in SMA before we moved to Oak Street, we would get out of school because we had to walk from SMA to Oak Street in that area to where our school was. And so we would have to pass the white school. And so our brothers would tell us to go on, go on ahead before the school turned out. So when the school turned out, the other kids would come out and call them names. And so the black community of kids would rock 'em. They would throw back at the white kids because the white kids would say "nigger!", and the black kids would say "stale crackers!"

**[00:12:54.555] - Sonya Burnett**

[laughs]

**[00:12:54.690] - Pamela Taylor**

And so- [laughss] I mean that's just the truth! But, it wasn't like real bad, like it was for a lot of people who were losing their lives who were just fighting constantly. And to be honest with you, some of the people that I went to school with, honestly, I don't know. It was one girl who kind of taunted me a little bit, but at the end, today, we grew up to be the best of friends. But she was probably one of the main ones who kind of maybe taunted me a little bit, but the teacher didn't go for it. That was a good thing, so. You know, I hear people have talked about the bad experiences, but I didn't really encounter those bad experiences. Maybe the police, some of them at that time was a little, you know... They were. But then as time went on,

the policeman that we had in Sewanee were some awesome policemen. I mean, they really were good. Good to us, good to the community. They would come, and because they knew our parents and knew how our parents were, they instead would bring us home to our parents because they knew that our parents was going to deal with us. So it wasn't like they just stopped you for nothing or locked you up or- they brought us to our parents. And we would probably have rather them locked us up.

**[00:14:21.020] - Lillian Eells**

[laughs]

**[00:14:23.010] - Pamela Taylor**

But as far as that other side of that bad experience, that's the only real... and that wasn't really a bad experience. I think we were blessed, honestly, to have been on this mountain in spite of how the University kind of did. But they didn't do it in such a way that it just really crushed us, caused us to lose any self esteem or not to want to do better in life. I think it was just something they had to do, just like with pastors. They had to follow man more than God. Not that they didn't want to, but they were more afraid of man than God. And I think some to the greedy University was more afraid of the people who were hired than their position. But, that's pretty much basically what it was for me. Did you experience...?

**[00:15:14.530] - Sonya Burnett**

I didn't experience anything bad. Some of the people that I met in nursery school, we're still friends. It wasn't very many of us from 1st through the 6th grade, started out with probably... I don't know... Me, probably about six or seven of us in 1st grade through 6th grade. No bad experiences. Some of the teachers, you could tell some of the teachers had a little bit in them, you know.

**[00:15:55.750] - Lillian Eells**

Yeah.

**[00:15:56.170] - Sonya Burnett**

Especially my 3rd grade teacher.

**[00:15:59.050] - Lillian Eells**

Is there anything specific?

**[00:16:01.210] - Sonya Burnett**

She was not nice to me. She hit me on the back one time, which was not necessary. But you could tell she didn't like us. I'm not going to tell you what her name was, but you could tell she didn't like us. Ms.



Moore is my 1st grade teacher. I don't know if you've heard of Ms. Moore. Nabella Moore. She died yesterday, Polly.

**[00:16:22.693] - Pamela Taylor**

Oh, did she?

**[00:16:22.720] - Sonya Burnett**

She's 94 years old and she was the best teacher you could ever want. She lived over there off of Greenville by the golf course.

**[00:16:38.270] - Lillian Eells**

Yeah.

**[00:16:40.130] - Sonya Burnett**

And me and her daughter are still friends to this day.

**[00:16:44.570] - Lillian Eells**

You said that you were still friends with a lot of your friends from elementary school. Do you remember anything specific about growing up with them?

**[00:16:55.190] - Sonya Burnett**

I have one name, Sydney. I'm gon' tell you about Sydney. Me and Sydney were friends for a long time. We used to spend the night at each other's houses. I'd go to her house on Fridays, and she always had spaghetti and cats and dogs. And that's where I learned to tolerate cats and dogs. She lived over... right behind the movie theater? You know where the movie theater is, she lived on that street right there. I don't know the name of it. And we're still friends to this day. We go to the movies together, just hanging out. When my momma died, she sent me a post saying that my momma was the first person that taught her about gospel music. My momma was very religious, and she'd have gospel music goin' in the living room. And she let us play our music in the back room and just close the bedroom door and just play our music. Put the speakers in the window let the whole neighborhood hear it, you know? Can't do that kind of stuff these days though. But we only went to 6th grade together, but I got some friends, one named Sarah that was nursery school, to... we graduated from Franklin County together. And I didn't have any bad experiences. But I do remember when Martin Luther King died, daddy said, "Get up." I said, "Get up for what?" He said, "We gon' go march." You remember that Polly?

**[00:18:29.190] - Pamela Taylor**

Mhm.

**[00:18:37.490] - Sonya Burnett**

And we marched. Blacks and whites marched when, we met up at Otey, and we marched when he died together.

**[00:18:45.950] - Lillian Eells**

Do you know how many people were there? Do you mind telling me a little bit more about that?

**[00:18:50.270] - Sonya Burnett**

I don't remember.

**[00:18:50.930] - Lillian Eells**

Okay. As you would have been pretty young?

**[00:18:52.790] - Sonya Burnett**

Yeah. [laughs]

**[00:18:56.310] - Pamela Taylor**

I will say this, after we integrated. We went to- I'm sorry. I didn't mean to cut you off.

**[00:19:00.453] - Sonya Burnett**

That's alright, dear.

**[00:19:01.650] - Pamela Taylor**

We started going to the Otey Parish Church, and I remember they called him Father Yeates. You remember him?

**[00:19:08.250] - Sonya Burnett**

No, we didn't go over there.

**[00:19:09.690] - Pamela Taylor**

Oh, well, we started going to Otey Parish, and we went to Church there for as long as we could remember, and that was good. There was no division there between colors. It was all the same. And I could honestly say this for every person that I went to school with here at Sewanee Public. It's like there's this connection even today, because when we see each other, we just know we're a "Sewaneetian".

**[00:19:46.350]**

[all laugh]

**[00:19:47.430] - Pamela Taylor**

We just know that! It's just that click, and it's always so good to see each other. And it's not like... Wherever they may be, it's not like they're ashamed. "Pam!" or whoever, we call out each other's name. And that's still today. And I'm just so thankful that we have gotten beyond the places that we used to be, being able to attend friends' funerals now that you thought you couldn't attend and all that, that's the way we are now. Sewanee people are just so glad when they see one another, wherever it is. And so we did. And they were good. Honestly, I didn't have anybody that was mean to me because I really think that their parents was teaching them the right way, too, just like our mother was teaching us the right way. And I think I may have had one little bad encounter with that one girl name. I'm not going to call, but today I just love her, and she loves me! Sewanee, wasn't a bad experience. It really wasn't. I just wish they had done more. So it would give us some encouragement to still want to live here, to still want to be here.

**[00:21:03.510] - Sonya Burnett**

'Cause we grew up by the old swimming pool, they talk about the Sewanee swimming pool. When I moved, when we moved over there, they were starting to put dirty in that swimming pool.

**[00:21:14.190] - Noah Shively**

Yeah, I was wanting to ask because growing up on Oak Street, you were right by that swimming pool-

**[00:21:19.100] - Pamela Taylor**

Next to it!

**[00:21:20.370] - Sonya Burnett**

Yeah! This was the pool, and this was our house.

**[00:21:24.550] - Pamela Taylor**

Well he's saying- What was you saying?

**[00:21:25.450] - Noah Shively**

It was not open long.

**[00:21:26.770] - Pamela Taylor**

No.

**[00:21:27.730] - Sonya Burnett**

No.

**[00:21:28.220] - Noah Shively**

And nobody took care of it.

**[00:21:28.810] - Sonya Burnett**

That's miss Chitty. Was that Ms. Chitty stuff?

**[00:21:30.190] - Pamela Taylor**

I don't know whose it was, but for what- Jackie Kennerly was the lifeguard at the time. And for what time it was open it was a wonderful experience. We had our little houses where we go get dressed in, but it did not last long. And I don't know why to this day.

**[00:21:47.770] - Sonya Burnett**

But we could go swim at the gym, at the University Gym. We all learned how to swim at that Lake.

**[00:21:54.850] - Noah Shively**

At what Lake?

**[00:21:55.690] - Pamela Taylor**

Lake Cheston.

**[00:21:56.530] - Noah Shively**

Okay. Was there, like, a preference to the pool over on Oak Street rather than a Lake?

**[00:22:04.570] - Sonya Burnett**

We didn't have a choice. It wasn't there.

**[00:22:05.230] - Pamela Taylor**

So it wasn't there for them.

**[00:22:06.439] - Noah Shively**

Right, right. Yeah.

**[00:22:06.610] - Pamela Taylor**

But for us, just a small amount of time. And we were kind of, hmm, a little bit young, but I'm wondering if they just didn't say, "Hey, okay, there's no need for this. We have a gym. Let's all come and do one place and not have to worry about keeping up another place." I don't know what the reason was for letting that go down.

**[00:22:26.590] - Noah Shively**

What about Willie Six field?

**[00:22:28.810] - Pamela Taylor**

Loved it. Love it to this day. It was the most wonderful place that we had to go-

**[00:22:35.470] - Sonya Burnett**

Where's that at?

**[00:22:35.520] - Pamela Taylor**

Right down there, Willie Six Field! This is what we own today. It was a place for us to picnic, softball, softball tournaments. We had people- let me tell you something, Sewanee was the place, especially in the Negro community, where so many people come from so many different places that enjoyed being- Willie Six, that ball field, boy, that was the highlight of Sewanee for us.

**[00:23:01.090] - Sonya Burnett**

Sewanee was like a different... What did Ms. Sarah call it?

**[00:23:04.160] - Pamela Taylor**

My mother?

**[00:23:07.610] - Sonya Burnett**

Yeah, she called it something. "Closest to heaven that you can get," or something?

**[00:23:11.810] - Pamela Taylor**

Oh, yeah. They used to say that. [laugh] "Sewanee's the closest to heaven you can get."

**[00:23:16.720] - Sonya Burnett**

'Cause\* this is the rock.

**[00:23:17.870] - Pamela Taylor**

That was my mom, but... Yeah.

**[00:23:22.370] - Sonya Burnett**

Ms. Sarah's her mother. Ms. Sarah, I loved Ms. Sarah.

**[00:23:23.390] - Pamela Taylor**

Yeah.

**[00:23:24.170] - Sonya Burnett**

Ms. Sarah taught me a whole lot of stuff.

**[00:23:25.790] - Noah Shively**

Do you agree with that sentiment? That Sewanee's the closest to heaven you can get?

**[00:23:31.110] - Sonya Burnett**

Yes! Uh, well, she was talking about the cicadas and the green stuff.

**[00:23:33.810] - Pamela Taylor**

She was just talking about the beautification that was here-

**[00:23:35.750] - Sonya Burnett**

And, you know, the [inaudible]- yeah. And the peacefulness.

**[00:23:39.190] - Pamela Taylor**

And the peacefulness. Yeah. And didn't have to worry about us walking here, walking there, and just bein'- She was able to just let us walk to the field without having to worry about, because everybody watched after everybody's kids, and everybody had the permission to spank us.

**[00:23:59.170] - Sonya Burnett**

Oh, yeah, we got- so anyway.

**[00:24:01.270] - Pamela Taylor**

But there was my mother and three other black ladies, and I'll call their names: Johnnie Fallow, Emma Hill, Dora Turner. They were the ones who marched for the desegregation of the school. Is that the word?

**[00:24:19.473] - Noah Shively**

Yeah.

**[00:24:19.497] - Lillian Eells**

Yeah.

**[00:24:19.500] - Pamela Taylor**

Yeah, they were the ones who marched. They got some slack behind it, but not real bad that they gave up. And then there were some other people who were Scott Bates.

**[00:24:30.270] - Sonya Burnett**

And they had that up there?

**[00:24:34.010] - Pamela Taylor**

Yeah, and they had a Memorial plaque put up for those people. I remember Scott Bates, Chitty. I can't remember the other. Oh, gosh, was his name? Anyway. And so they had them a plaque put up for what they had did back then because they really got slammed for doing it. But they never gave up. They never quit.

**[00:25:02.450] - Lillian Eells**

Did your mother ever tell you about her experience in fighting for desegregation of Franklin County schools?

**[00:25:09.830] - Pamela Taylor**

Yeah, she said it was awful, and they were looked down upon. You know, the shouts, derogatory words and watching the people get hosed and all that other stuff. But she didn't experience any of the hosing part of it. But she didn't talk a whole lot about it because I felt like she didn't talk a whole lot about it to us was because she didn't want that negativity in us towards white people. I really do. And that's my feel of it. That's my feel of it because I never heard her say anything negative toward white people. So I'm thinking that's why she never talked a lot about it. She was just teaching us the opposite of how to get along. One of her quotes was Dr. King's quote, "Man should not be judged by the color of his skin, but by the content of his character." That is what we heard all the time. We just never heard any bitterness. Thank God, because I'm glad that's not in my heart, instilled in our hearts. Yeah. She just had a love for people.

**[00:26:38.990] - Noah Shively**

That's really good.

**[00:26:40.310] - Pamela Taylor**

It is.

**[00:26:40.910] - Lillian Eells**

That's beautiful.

**[00:26:41.630] - Pamela Taylor**

If you had walked up on her doorstep and told her you were hungry, you better know you would get fed.

**[00:26:49.670] - Sonya Burnett**

That's the way. A lot of people in Sewanee, especially my momma, Ms. Sarah.

**[00:26:55.910] - Noah Shively**

Yeah, I've heard many amazing stories about your mother. Many.

**[00:27:05.370] - Sonya Burnett**

Momma... Momma fed a lot of kids. [laughs] She'd, "Come on in here!" you know? She used to teach us how to make different stuff, you know, sweets, and, just. My momma, she just said, "Come on in."



**[00:27:19.790] - Pamela Taylor**

And her mother had more of an interaction with the people because she was at the nursery, and so she got to interact more with more people. She knew a lot more people in that aspect. So that was good. That was good.

**[00:27:39.950] - Sonya Burnett**

Momma used to make this cake. It was a yellow cake with caramel icing, and she would have to hide it from certain people.

**[00:27:51.350] - Pamela Taylor**

Well, she didn't hide it from me, I just didn't get none!

**[00:27:53.940] - Lillian Eells**

[all laugh]

**[00:27:54.940] - Sonya Burnett**

Cause you know, Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, any kind of holiday, she had that cake, and we knew somebody's gon' knock on that door- [mimes knocking] -wantin' a piece of cake. Somebody'd knock on that door and say, "Lola, you got any, uh... what kind of new perfume you got?" "Go on back in there and look." She- momma kept perfume and I had friends come by and get the perfume so they can do it- they smell good, like they need to smell good.

**[00:28:22.570] - Pamela Taylor**

But she'd tell me, "you're not getting my perfume! You ain't getting in my perfume." Sonya'd say "I have some come over and get a little swig." But when she died, guess who we ended up with the perfume. I. Me.

**[00:28:32.310] - Noah Shively**

[all laugh]

**[00:28:33.510] - Sonya Burnett**

I said "Polly, come get this perfume."

**[00:28:37.730] - Pamela Taylor**

Yeah, she did. And Sonya would always have me a piece of cake waiting, but Lola would always do it, too. But like we said, it was a good experience up here. I really don't- and there are some people that can add some things that we're probably not even thinking about, but have you ever seen that house over there, that's next to the Sewanee public school? It's a little house.

**[00:28:56.400] - Sonya Burnett**

It's behind it- is it behind it?

**[00:28:57.600] - Pamela Taylor**

Yeah, actually, it's behind- there's a big white house then there's Sewanee's public school. But behind this big white house is a little house that these people used to live in. And it is still there! When I go by there and look at that, that is one of the most memorable, memorable things for me is to see that house. And it brings nothing but peace to my heart. And it's a little tiny house, and it is still here, and I'm 65 years old. And so it's been here ever since then, and before then.

**[00:29:39.770] - Sonya Burnett**

Have y'all heard about that house?

**[00:29:43.250] - Noah Shively**

I've been trying to figure out where it is, near Sewanee public school...

**[00:29:43.300] - Sonya Burnett**

Who lived in that house?

**[00:29:44.270] - Pamela Taylor**

Merle and Dina Hill, that house, if you were like, you were going in the back of Sewanee Public, you know how you turn in to go into the front of Sewanee Public, where there's a little road that kind of goes down between Sewanee Public and this huge house that sits over here on the right; huge house here on the right Sewanee Public is here. There's a little road that goes down through that. And as soon as you get to the end of that road, you'll see that lil ol' house that is still sitting there. [peaceful sigh] When I see that house- you ever see something that reminds you of your childhood? Reminds you of good-? Well, that's one of the most memorable things for me, is that house.

**[00:30:23.930] - Lillian Eells**

Why do you think so?

**[00:30:25.790] - Pamela Taylor**

I don't know, because to see something that maybe because you had a good childhood and you see something that's still a part of that past because we used to go to that house and she would make us cookies and they'd have koolaid. And we'd have to pass that house when we was on our way home from school on this side. So I think seeing that just gives you a sense of peace and calmness. That's about the best reason why, because when I see it, I absolutely just love it, more than anything. That's what gives me the memory. So you should see it if you're ever-

**[00:31:09.300] - Noah Shively**

Oh, I'm gonna!

**[00:31:12.110] - Sonya Burnett**

Then I could leave my house and go to a house on Willie Six. And momma would be on that front porch and holler for me to come home.

**[00:31:28.350] - Pamela Taylor**

Mhm.

**[00:31:28.401] - Sonya Burnett**

And we could hear it.

**[00:31:28.409] - Pamela Taylor**

From the ball field.

**[00:31:28.410] - Sonya Burnett**

"Sonya!" We could hear it.

**[00:31:28.410] - Pamela Taylor**

And if we didn't have our chores done, our father didn't holler-

**[00:31:28.410]**

[ringtone goes off]

**[00:31:28.410] - Pamela Taylor**

Sorry. Okay...

**[00:31:28.410] - Pamela Taylor**

Real quick, our father didn't shout, it was a path and we'd get ready to hit the ball or do whatever. And we'd look up and see him, they'd say, "Uh oh, here comes Mr. Ribb!" [all laugh] We'd take off, all the kids with us. We would take off. But we had so many people that were surrounded by this Willy Six road. You never seen the like of plum trees, you never seen the like of strawberry patches that was all up and down through here. You never seen the like of apple trees, pear trees, there were so many fruit trees in Sewanee, it was unbelievable. And nobody ever said, "don't come in my yard!" You might have one, but you know- Oh! We had grapes. People had grapevines, and- but that's, Sewanee was memorable.

**[00:32:31.870] - Sonya Burnett**

Because we used to have to walk through the path to get to school over here. And we had to walk through a plum tree every day. What was his name? Mr., uh-

**[00:32:42.610] - Pamela Taylor**

You talking about Mr. Houston?

**[00:32:43.150] - Sonya Burnett**

Mr. Houston had apple trees, and pear trees-

**[00:32:46.090] - Pamela Taylor**

And he sold candy.

**[00:32:47.280] - Sonya Burnett**

He sold candy, out of his house. Candy that you don't see today.

**[00:32:52.090] - Noah Shively**

How much was it?

**[00:32:53.820] - Pamela Taylor**

[scoff] If you had a nickel! [all laugh]

**[00:32:55.750] - Sonya Burnett**

With a nickel!

**[00:32:57.430] - Pamela Taylor**

You could literally buy a bag, at the store, you could literally buy a bag of potato chips, a candy bar and a cold drink for \$0.27. And Mr. Houston sold his candy, who lived right up on the hill above 26 Road, he sold his for, like, \$0.05 might even be \$0.03.

**[00:33:14.350] - Sonya Burnett**

But he didn't like us in his apple trees. He didn't like us in his apple trees.

**[00:33:20.390] - Pamela Taylor**

But he had somebody that stayed with him, and he would let us get some apples.

**[00:33:25.070] - Sonya Burnett**

Neil.

**[00:33:29.610] - Pamela Taylor**

There were so many people up on this mountain.

**[00:33:31.220] - Sonya Burnett**

We used to walk to the ballpark- ball field up here off of, um, I don't know, right behind a senior citizen center?

**[00:33:39.260] - Lillian Eells**

Yes.

**[00:33:40.160] - Noah Shively**

Yeah, yeah.

**[00:33:40.200] - Sonya Burnett**

We used to walk there.

**[00:33:41.130] - Pamela Taylor**

And we played there.

**[00:33:43.410] - Sonya Burnett**

Yep.

**[00:33:43.460] - Pamela Taylor**

Oh, there goes my brother. Well, I guess we get back before the people leave.

**[00:33:49.650] - Lillian Eells**

Can I ask you just a few closing questions? So what are one or two things that you would want people to remember about your childhood and about the history of living in Sewanee?

**[00:34:07.830] - Sonya Burnett**

My childhood was a great childhood, I wouldn't give anything for it. The things that we did then we can't do- it's hard for the kids now to do those things, you know: walk down the street without the police looking at them like, you know, "What are you going to do? You look familiar." Like she said, they didn't really care. We use to ride the school bus together, to school, to junior high and high school. And.. we didn't mind who sat beside us, you know? Everybody just treated everybody good. They did. They treated everybody good.

**[00:34:52.650] - Pamela Taylor**

Me what I want people to remember about my childhood was number one. I'm thankful that I did grow up in Sewanee. I am, because I had a good childhood. And second, what I want people to remember about the University: anybody that lived on this mountain couldn't have been in a better spot than to be at the University of the South because they had what they had to do, and they did what they had to do. But at the same time, they still gave us a sense of peace, of being here. And they still provided jobs, and they still did what they could help our parents out. But just for the peacefulness and the calmness that so many other cities didn't experience- I mean, there's peacefulness and calmness that a lot of cities didn't experience, we got to experience that here at the University of the South. And for that, I am truly, truly grateful and thankful because it was a peaceful place for us.

**[00:35:47.170] - Lillian Eells**

Okay. Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

**[00:35:50.770] - Pamela Taylor**

And we got to go to the party weekends!

**[00:35:53.410] - Sonya Burnett**

We did!

**[00:35:53.460] - Pamela Taylor**

And they didn't mind us coming, until people from other places started coming and doing... just not doing what they need to be doing. And it kind of had shut everybody out, you know, the public from coming except for the college students. But the College students, they would just invite us in. We would just have a great and marvelous time until others started coming in and wrecking it, so. But, yeah, we had a good time.

**[00:36:22.870] - Sonya Burnett**

Everybody loves Sewanee.

**[00:36:24.360] - Pamela Taylor**

Yeah, everybody.

**[00:36:29.270] - Sonya Burnett**

Yeah.

**[00:36:29.990] - Lillian Eells**

Okay.

**[00:36:30.071] - Pamela Taylor**

Is that it?

**[00:36:30.322] - Lillian Eells**

Yeah!

**[00:36:30.347] - Pamela Taylor**

Okay!

**[00:36:30.350] - Lillian Eells**

Wonderful, thank you so much.

**[00:36:32.330] - Pamela Taylor**

You're welcome, I hope that helps.