

REMEMBERING SOUTH ROME

TIME: 6:30

APRIL WELLS:

Growing up in South Rome was a great experience to me. It was a community where we all worked together to raise the children. We didn't have to sleep with our doors locked. It's just like it was one great big family and we all looked out for each other.

PASTOR FANNIE LOU JACKSON

Oh, we were just, it was just like family. Everything was quiet and the children and all, we just played together. It was a lot of fun because it was a lot of children up in there.

ROY HACKETT:

The cliché that it takes a whole community to raise a child, was pretty much the way in South Rome. Because if you misbehaved away from home at a neighbor's house, you would likely get a spanking, and get another when you got home.

JUDY INGRAM:

[FADE IN]

My mom bought a house on Nixon Avenue, which was the dead-end street, and it still is a dead-end street with only eight houses on that street. And I remember when my mom bought the house, and it was five of us home, and we had to get out and just plant grass and go and get cow manure and turn it over in the yard and just kind of do a lot of work around the house. The house still stands down on the dead end of Nixon Avenue.

DENMON

Well, I was born and reared in a house located on Grover Street, and I lived there until I was grown. The streets was—they were not real narrow streets, but they were not like they are today, and they were dirt. A city truck with a sprinkler on it would come by and sprinkle the streets to keep the dust down, and our yards, most of our yards was dirt. But we had so much pride in our community, till we would get out and sweep those dirt yards to keep them clean. We just thought you had to keep a yard clean and your house clean. So that's what we would do. *[FADE OUT]*

[TRANSITION TO CHALLENGES]

BISHOP ALEX ALLEN, JR.:

My first beginning of South Rome—it as a bad area. Every time it rained it would flood out. Most of the streets would overflow. People had to move out.

F.L. JACKSON

You couldn't see nothing but the top of our church. And it went all up in the choir stand. That whole church. It was just flooded, up the walls.

CLARA CLARK RAGLAND

It used to flood to, all the way to Hardy.

HACKETT:

I can remember walking out of the house -- the house being surrounded by water -- having to walk out on boards.

RAGLAND:

It started from like Wilson, Nixon. I know that it used to come to the old lady's porch -- Miss Lucy -- it used to come to her porch, but it never went past her steps.

HACKETT:

But now since they built the levees, they're virtually non-existent.

[TRANSITION TO ACTIVITIES]

J. INGRAM: As a little girl, I remember the softball field and the swimming pool being down on the Hardy Street playground, which is now just a playground for the school and the community. We used to walk up and down the streets of South Rome and look at the pretty yards and talk to all the neighbors

DENMON

One lady—we remember her as the ice cream lady because she would make ice cream, and sometimes she would sell it to us. But we didn't mind that because we enjoyed the homemade ice cream. There was a man who lived in North Rome -- he didn't live in this area -- but he would come over to South Rome to turn gardens, and I call it plowing gardens, for the people in the area. And when he finished his work, he would put us on his wagon and just take us for a ride throughout the neighborhood. And we just thought that was great.

HACKETT:

In back of Brock's [grocery] was a field, not a very large field, but a field. And a lot of times the older guys, they dug holes and create a miniature golf course. That's where I learned to play golf, as a matter of fact. There and on the playground.

LAVADA DILLARD

And Sister Deola Peeks, she was a lady that, she had a guitar, and she picked the guitar, and she sung out in front of the church and anywhere in the neighborhood. But in particular I remember her being at two stands -- what we call stands is where people went on Fridays and Saturdays, people that had gotten off from work, and wanted to go in, drink a beer, play some cards, or whatever. But Sister Deola Peeks would be outside when they got ready to go in, picking the guitar and preaching. And she was a one-man church. She would, she wouldn't sing hymns. She sang songs that had a beat to them where she would stroke that guitar, and it was all about salvation and you know stuff like this. And if was 9 o'clock at night she'd be there picking that guitar, and everyone would be inside, with no guilt [laughs] enjoying themselves.

DENMON: Our church had a Sunday school picnic each year, and Reverend Vaughn was our spiritual leader at the time. They would usually charge us a small fee to ride on this truck. We

would go to Big Cedar on a truck, and if the kids didn't have the money, he would pay their way. We would go and spend a day at Silver Creek. It was Big Cedar, I believe. We would spend the day. We would swim. We would play ball. Reverend Vaughn would umpire the ballgames for us. And we would eat lunch. It was just, that was our vacation for the year. Families didn't have monies to go. We didn't travel a lot at that time, so we just enjoyed each other.

F.L. JACKSON

It was just – South Rome was a nice, quiet, good place to live and everybody knowed everybody. It was just like a big old family.

HACKETT:

And I would like, you know, the youth of South Rome to know that the area in which they live is rich in tradition, not only in tradition but rich in love, and understanding and patience.

WELLS:

South Rome is still special to me because it just feels like home. It feels like everywhere I go somebody in the neighborhood knows me and knows something about me or either a family member of mine, so it's -- that's the reason why South Rome is so special to me is because my family's been here all of my life. I've been in South Rome all my life . . .so, it's just family to me. Anywhere I go here I'm sure I could eat at anybody's house.