

## EATONVILLE HOLDING ON TO HISTORY.mov

[00:00:00] Unknown: Where did you learn this particular way

[00:00:03] Zora Neal Hurston: Well, I heard the first verse I got in my native village of Eatonville, Florida from George Thomas.

[00:00:11] Unknown: And what version are you going to sing?

[00:00:13] Zora Neal Hurston: I'm gonna sing, oh, I guess, well the tune is the same, I gonna sing verses from whole lot of places

[00:00:20] Clarise Hopkins: I love the town of Eatonville, This is my family's history. To be a part of a black community that was started by my ancestors.

[00:00:35] Clarise Hopkins: Joseph Clark was a man with a vision. He was an entrepreneur. He was innovative. He was a visionary. And to think him and 26 other men. That's how this town got started. So I'm very, very proud of that background.

[00:01:02] Louise Franklin: But everybody was much friendly because they were about five or six houses in Eatonville, in this area. Everybody looked out for each of them.

[00:01:13] Clarise Hopkins: It was that kind of close knit community where everybody looked out for everybody. We used to never lock our doors. We just didn't we didn't lock the doors because we didn't have any crime going on in the area.

[00:01:32] Louise Franklin: We went to church in Eatonville. We went to school in Eatonville. Yeah, we didn't go to the white school up here in Maitland. And we walked everywhere. All my friends, not all of them, but most my friends from Eatonville. So that's why I say, lots came out of Eatonville. And still do.

[00:01:57] Clarise Hopkins I think that the church has had a lasting, profound impact on the community. Eatonville has always been in a community that went to church. They love the Lord.

[00:02:19] Louise Franklin: We didn't have but three little churches in Eatonville. That was the St. Lawrence, my church, Macedonia, Open Door, the little church you just passed. Those were the only three churches. And Macedonia and Open Door got their start right out of St. Lawrence.

[00:02:37] Clarise Hopkins: Originally, St. Lawrence was the first established church in Eatonville. The AME church

[00:02:45] Clarise Hopkins: Well, about six months later, there were people of the Baptist denomination who actually met in the Methodist church. So on the first and third Sunday, the Methodist would meet in their church and on the second and fourth Sunday, the Baptist with me.

[00:03:10] Clarise Hopkins: And that tradition went on until, believe it or not, until 1987.

[00:03:24] Louise Franklin: During my time there was only one school for the blacks and we went to Hungerford.

[00:03:30] Louise Franklin: It was called Hungerford school, where that library is now.

[00:03:48] Clarise Hopkins: A lot of those students stayed at my grandmother's house until the weekend because they didn't, the parents didn't have the means of getting them back home, especially if they stayed for football practice or basketball practice, you know. But that was the type of community that it was. Everybody looked at everybody.

[00:04:16] Clarise Hopkins: When they took our school away from us, I think that had the most devastating impact on this community, that dashed a lot of hope for a lot of people.

[00:04:34] Louise Franklin: And, no we not gon, it's written. My parents took us, asked us, children, please don't sell any of this property. Ever. So I've been hanging in there, you know, hanging on to.

[00:04:47] Louise Franklin: And no, I don't want sell to nobody.

[00:04:51] Louise Franklin: No, I'm happy down here. I am peaceful and happy. I am from one porch to the other porch. Nobody in front of me bothering me. You know, why leave? Why sell for money?

[00:05:04] Rose Bynum: I was sitting in a hotel and he came in. He said, "you have a nice place." I said, "thank you." He said, "are you interested in selling it?" I say, "I'm enjoying it."

[00:05:15] Rose Bynum: So, easy come, easy go. You know, the parents leave the property they sell.

[00:05:25] Andra Bynum Thomas: He was offering forty thousand dollars for those houses.

[00:05:35] Andra Bynum Thomas: And I think it was my generation that was, just that forty thousand dollars look like a million bucks.

[00:05:45] James Benderson: First, you gotta know what your stuff is worth.

[00:05:48] James Benderson: You, you have to understand the value of what you have, your community and the bigger picture.

[00:05:56] James Benderson: And some people, this is just my opinion. Some people value what they can put in the hand more than the heritage of the community.

[00:06:09] James Benderson: If you leave a property to a child, grandchild who says, "I'm never coming back there. I get tired of paying property taxes on it." That's what they'll say. And you get what you get. So what do you do?

[00:06:31] Clarise Hopkins: I want to see us buy back our community. I mean, there are still people who definitely have a lot of pride in Eatonville, but we want even more, you know, because we are the oldest incorporated municipality in the United States of America.

[00:06:56] Clarise Hopkins We want people to know that.

[00:06:57] Clarise Hopkins: We want people to see that. I think we just have such a rich history and we need to just just make sure everybody knows about it. We need to have museums here, that tell the story to tell our story. And I think that's one of the things that's going to help us to accomplish a lot of things is we have to tell our story, people have to know about Eatonville.