

Name _____ Date _____

African American Communities

Eatonville, Florida

Established in 1887, Eatonville is a town in the state of Florida, six miles north of the city of Orlando. It was one of the first all-black towns formed after the Thirteenth Amendment, which made slavery illegal. The town had its own government, church, and schools, all led by African American residents.

When it was first settled in 1880 by newly freed African American men, the area was known as Maitland. One of those men, Joseph E. Clark, wanted to start an official town where African American people could thrive. At the time, it was hard for African Americans to purchase land because many people were unwilling to sell it to them. Additionally, formerly enslaved African Americans did not have much money to purchase property. Eventually, Joseph Clark and others were able to buy land from a white landowner, Josiah Eaton. Because of Eaton's help, the town was named after him.

Eatonville's most famous resident was author Zora Neale Hurston, who wrote the popular book *Their Eyes Were Watching God* in 1937. Zora lived in Eatonville as a child. She described the city as a place where African American people could live as they desired, independent of white society.

According to a 2018 American Community Survey, Eatonville's population is more than eighty percent African American residents. Every winter, Eatonville holds the Zora Neale Hurston Festival of the Arts and Humanities (ZORA! Festival). At the event, participants can purchase African-inspired arts and crafts, listen to music, and enjoy traditional African American foods.



Notable Eatonville Residents

Zora Neale Hurston,
folklorist and author

Deacon Jones,
football defensive end

Norm Lewis,
actor and baritone singer

Directions: Answer the questions using text evidence. Underline the text evidence for each question.

- Based on the first paragraph, what was true of Eatonville when it was founded?
 - It was a town for wealthy people.
 - African American people were the city leaders.
 - It had a festival for Zora Neale Hurston.
 - It was named after an African American man.
- Why was it hard for African American people to purchase land after the Thirteenth Amendment?
 - They did not know where to buy land.
 - Many landowners were unwilling to sell land to African American people.
 - There were not enough people who wanted to buy the land.
 - The land was not good for farming.
- Eatonville author Zora Neale Hurston published an important book in 1937. What was the title?
 - Their Eyes Were Watching God*
 - Not Without Laughter*
 - I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*
 - The Blacker the Berry*