# FHS Oral History Project – Edward H. Greene

**Description:**

Edward H. Greene was born in Winter Park, Florida, in 1948. He grew up in several communities across Orlando in the 1950s and 1960s, most notably in Eatonville. He recalled his adolescent experience in Eatonville, particularly attending Hungerford High School. Edward's family intersects deeply with Eatonville's history, as his grandmother's uncle was Joe Clark, the formerly enslaved African American who founded Eatonville in 1887. Edward's grandmother, Catherine "Willie" Clark Alexander, also remains significant to Eatonville's history, as she served as the town's first postmaster for twenty-four years from 1955 to 1979. Edward shared his grandmother's story, specifically the day she was abducted from the post office and brutally murdered, which remains one of the most heinous crimes in Eatonville's history. Additionally, Edward recounted his collegiate experience at Bethune-Cookman, which mandatory military service temporarily interrupted. Lastly, Edward discussed how Orlando has changed since his adolescence, specifically within a racial context.

N.B. We conducted this interview at the end of the Zora Neale Hurston Festival of the Arts and Humanities, when the lawn maintenance crew cleaned the area and event staff packed up equipment, disrupting the audio. Additionally, Edward's mic did not function until approximately 3:40, thus any audio from him before remains faint, but not completely inaudible.

**Transcription:**

00;00;03 - 00;00;20
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** This is Sebastian Garcia interviewing Edward H. Greene on February 2nd, 2025, at the Zora Neale Hurston Festival of the Arts and Humanities for the Florida Historical Society Oral History Project. Mr. Green, can you please tell me where you were born?

00;00;20 - 00;00;27
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** I was born in Winter Park, Florida, and I still remember the address: 201 West Lyman Avenue.

00;00;27 - 00;00;33
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Excellent. Can you share with me your experiences growing up in Winter Park?

00;00;33 - 00;00;39
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Well, I was born there, but I didn't necessarily grow up there.

00;00;39 - 00;00;39
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Okay.

00;00;40 - 00;00;58

**EDWARD H. GREENE:** I grew up all over Orange County. Different places: [*inaudible*], Apopka, Orlando, Maitland, Eatonville—just several different places just all around Orange County.

00;00;58 - 00;01;10
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Out of all those places, which one did you spend the most time in growing up?

00;01;10 - 00;01;14
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Well, I think it may be equally distributed. [Maybe] Orlando and Maitland.

00;01;22 - 00;01;29
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Can you talk to me a little bit about what life was like in Eatonville, specifically?

00;01;29 - 00;01;52
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Life was good in Eatonville, especially when I was in Hungerford High School…[*inaudible*]. My first high school year was in Jones High School. And when I transferred to Hungerford, I found out that Hungerford was heritage in my family on both sides. My mother went to Hungerford, I had uncles and aunts on both sides of my family that went to Hungerford, cousins—so you can get part of my heritage in Hungerford. My great-great uncle Joe Clark founded Eatonville—that was my grandmother's—Catherine—uncle. Catherine Wille Clark Alexander. I am also…I found out years later that I was related to Zora Neale Hurston on my mother's side of the family. And at that time, I hadn't even heard of Zora because I was living in North Alabama. I don't think her story got out until Alice Walker came through Eatonville looking for my great aunt Matilda Clark—I mean Matilda Mosely. Her and another write from Winter Park came to Eatonville looking for somebody who grew up and knew Zora Neale Hurston. So they went to my great aunt Matilda's house. She wasn't home at the time, but before they pulled out the driveway, she came to the house, and they had a chance to interview her. But what they didn't know was that my grandmother was the postmaster, and they could have talked to her also because she knew Zora Neale Hurston, but they did not get an opportunity to talk to her.

00;03;39 - 00;03;53
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Before we continue, let me…[*fixed audio issue*]. There you go. So you mentioned that you went to Hungerford High School. Can you talk to me about that experience attending Hungerford?

00;03;53 - 00;04;46
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Yes. At first I didn't want to go to Hungerford because, you know, I was at the big high school in Orlando at Jones High, and, my parents separated, and that's how I ended up in Eatonville. And so my mother was going to sacrifice and let me finish at Jones High. But being separated from her husband, raising three teenagers—when I slept on it—I decided I wasn't going to put my mother through that kind of stress of trying to send me to

Orlando every day to go to school. So I decided to go to Hungerford, and I realized years later that was the best thing that I could have done to finish at that high school of our heritage.

00;04;46;23 - 00;04;54;14
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And talk to me about that one year that you were in Jones High. What was that like?

00;04;54 - 00;05;13
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Well, it was exciting for me. Back then, we didn't have middle school. So you graduated from the sixth grade, and then in seventh grade you were in high school. So for me, going from elementary school to high school was an exciting year for me.

00;05;13 - 00;05;30
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And you mentioned how you are related to Joe Clark and Zora Neale Hurston from different sides of the family. Can you just talk to me a little bit more about that connection—that relative connection with Joe Clark first, and then we'll talk about Zora?

00;05;30 - 00;06;42
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Well, I knew I was related to Joe Clark because, as I said, that's my grandmother's uncle, you know, and I knew I was related to him. But being…growing up as a kid, you really didn't pay much attention to, you know, the history of your family like that closely. So. But, I realized years later that Joe Clark, founded Eatonville in 1887, and they built Hungerford High School in 1889. The Hungerford High School was built on 120 acres of land. Named after the school was named after Robert Hungerford, who had died, and his parents donated the land to the school. And…I'm actually the last…I was in the last graduating class of Hungerford High School before they changed the school to Wymore Tech.

00;06;43 - 00;06;45
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And what was that like?

00;06;45 - 00;07;37
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** It was heart breaking for us to have the name of our school changed to a road that just went down beside the school. We tried to fight it. The kids did. Since I'm an artist, I was actually painting the protest signs to fight that. And it was sad because our principal came out—Mr. Otey came out—and talked us out of it. And the thing about it, the kids from Jones High were going to help us protest. Now, they did not allow the changing of the name of their [Jones] high school. They stuck together. But we over here [at Hungerford], we didn't. Now the school is a—it was a historic school and now it's been leveled. And that's a sad thing.

00;07;37 - 00;07;38
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Absolutely.

00;07;38 - 00;08;11
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** And then that was during integration and what the sad thing about it…they brought a white principal in and put over Mr. Otey and made him assistant principal.

He had been the principal of Hungerford for years. And they put the white principal over him. And that that was just a travesty. And a heartbreak for the rest of us.

00;08;11 - 00;08;13
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And what year was this?

00;08;13 - 00;08;18
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** As I said, that was a 1967.

00;08;18 - 00;08;28
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** 67. And talk to me a little bit more about race relations growing up in Orlando in the 60s.

00;08;28;14 - 00;09;22
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Well, we had—we were never—my brothers and I would never taught racism in our home. Our parents worked in white people's homes and worked on their jobs. They never came home and preached hatred. But as kids just walking down the streets in Orlando, white teenagers, you know, would drive by, of course, they could afford cars and we couldn't, we were walking, and they would drive by and blurt out hateful statements towards us for no good reason other than we were different as far as our looks. But we never did get in fights over.

00;09;22 - 00;09;36
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And circling back to that relative connection. So you said you're a relative of Zora from your mother's side. And you said you found out years later. How did you discover this?

00;09;36;05 - 00;15;55
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Yes. Zora's books came back into print after Alice Walker—[who] before she became famous did research on Zora—and Alice Walker is the person who brought Zora books back into to the limelight. I had moved away to North Alabama for a career and my wife is in a book club in North Alabama, and one of the book club members knew who Zora was—she read her books. One day, maybe back in 2001, she loaned me one of her books. And when I started reading the book, I realized that I was some kin of Zora Neale Hurston through her grandparents back in Otis Oak, Alabama. And I kept reading the book. And then I saw my grandmother's name in the book, Catherine Wille Clarke Alexander, whose name is on the Eatonville Post Office as of today. Her name was in the book. My grandfather's name was in the book. Zora was writing—she was on my mother's side, but she was writing about people on my father's side who she grew up with. And I saw my grandfather's name in there, George Brown. And my father had an older brother, Hubert Alexander, and she wrote about him. She mentioned him in her book. Zora did. And years later—well when Zora used to come back to Florida, she would stay with Great Aunt Matilda, and I read in one of the books with that particular book where she saw Hubert Alexander playing with other kids—back then the streets weren't paved, they were dirt roads—in front of Aunt Matilda's house because she was sitting on the front porch. But then years later, that same friend who loaned me Zora's book had a magazine—the Smithsonian magazine—and she said there was an article on Eatonville, and it

was in 2001, I think. And, when I started reading the article on Eatonville, they had black and white photos in, of Eatonville and Zora Neale Hurston. And I saw a little boy that Zora had snapped a photo of in the Smithsonian magazine. I've never seen a picture of my uncle as a child, but when I saw the little boy, I knew that was my Uncle Hubert. My father wanted to be him, but this was a 12 year old boy. At the time, my father was only five years old. And my father's complexion was closer to yours, Uncle Hubert, close to mine. And I knew that was my uncle when I saw him and never saw a picture of him as a child. So anyways…

A lot of people thought Zora wrote some of her stories as fiction, but she was actually writing about real people. That's why a lot of people today do not like Zora, because she wrote about them. And she made them look ignorant in some cases. I was talking to one of my first cousins that live right over here the other day. And she was giving Zora the rundown in a negative way because of who Zora was when she was living. And a lot of people, when they found out she was writing about them, just shied away from, you know. Now, when I read Zora books, what I realize is that Zora was a pioneer. I think she was the first woman in America that smoked in public, when smoking was illegal in public for women. You know, she walked down the street of New York, streets of New York smoking a cigarette. She was an anthropologist. She was a writer, a storyteller, a researcher. She did all kinds of things that was ahead of her time, as far as a woman. Those are the things that the people from Eatonville should be celebrating—her accomplishments, not her personal life. Because all of us got a personal life. And all of us got skeletons in our closet. The scriptures say, how are you going to take a splinter out of somebody else out when you got a log in yours. So you have to realize that. God say everybody should love each other. He didn't say love what each other do. But we should love each other. But some people won't because of what the other person do. But then all of us would be hypocrites if we felt that way.

00;15;55 - 00;16;04
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Can you share with me any memory or any story you have about the post office right in front of us that you said is named after your grandmother?

00;16;04 - 00;17;27
**EDWARD H. GREENE:**
Yes. In the 1800s, when Joe Clark started Eatonville, he went to Orlando to have a…he built a store in Eatonville, and he wanted Eatonville to have a place for mail. And he wanted it in his store. And the community told him the white folks are not going to let us have a post office. He went everywhere, and he started a post office for this community in his store. And I think over the years, it just faded away. My grandmother started it again. She was the postmaster for Eatonville at least for 20 years before she was murdered. She was abducted one day during her lunch hour and brutally murdered. And that was in the national news. And one reason it was because she was a federal employee.

00;17;25 - 00;17;27
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** What year was this?

00;17;27 - 00;20;41

**EDWARD H. GREENE:** I think it was 1977 or 78. It might have been anywhere from 1977 to 79, something like that. I remember that because I was newly married during the time that happened, and I was living in Alabama. And I had a hard time with that because I loved my grandmother, and I know she loved me. While I was a student at Bethune-Cookman, one summer, she actually got me an interview to get a job as a letter carrier, which was good money back then. But I had to decline, and I had to explain to her why because she knew I was struggling because Bethune-Cookman is a private college that cost more than a state, and I put myself through and I was struggling, and she knew it. She knew I needed money, but I had to turn it down on the job because it was a good job and I felt like if I'd taken the job that summer, I might not have gone back to school. And I explained it to her like that.

But anyway, when she was murdered, I was…the weekend she was murdered, I had an intuition to call both of my grandmothers for some reason that Friday—I just had a strong feeling I needed to call both of them, and I didn't know why. That Saturday, one of my aunts called me and said, your grandmother has been abducted. My aunt on my mother's side, not my father's side. Your grandmother has been abducted. Your father's mother has been abducted. And that's when they call out the police department, the sheriff's department, the highway patrol, the FBI. And they found her that Monday. Murdered. They had beaten her, stabbed her, shot her, and ran her over with a car. I was crushed. I was hurt. That was just too much. And my grandmother was a feisty person, and I suspect that's what got her killed. What they did is they robbed the post office. The post office wasn't at this location at the time. It was at Mr. Verine's building, right by the I-4, on the corner, on the right side of Kennedy. They just brutalized her, and she was, if I can remember, she was 75 years old, and that's the year she was going to retire. Never got a chance.

00;20;42 - 00;20;45
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Who were the murderers?

00;20;45 - 00;23;40
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** I used to remember his name. I don't anymore. But you can always pull it up on the internet. If you get her name and pull it up on the internet, the whole story will come up. If I could have gotten to the man myself back then, they wouldn't have had to put him on death row. That's how I felt. But years later, after I had just picked up—I was encouraged by the Holy Spirit to pick up the Word of God and read it. And learn what true forgiveness was. And he was on death row, probably about 20 years or more. And my Uncle Hubert, who at the time lived in Williamsburg, Virginia, would come down to Tallahassee and urge Jeb Bush, the governor at the time, to do his job and execute the man. Well, after I had learned what forgiveness was, I was really appalled at my uncle's decision to push for the man's execution because I think, well, he was a so-called Christian in the church, well, if you're a Christian, you should know what forgiveness is. And I don't know whether he actually regretted it after the man was executed or not, but some of my family members looked at me cross-eyed when I told them I forgave the man. They didn't want me…They didn't want those words to come out of my mouth. But I told them in a way. And the day they decided to execute the man, my brother came and told me they're going to execute the man who killed her. When I found out my grandmother was murdered, I cried like a baby in my wife's arms. Twenty something years later, when they

told me the man was going to be executed, I cried like a baby in my mother's arm because I did not want to see that. Even though I would have killed myself 20 years earlier.

00;23;40 - 00;23;47
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And you mentioned to me that you attended Bethune-Cookman. Talk to me about that experience.

00;23;47 - 00;29;32
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Well. I grew up a poor kid. That's why all those different places I named that we lived, that's why we live all those different places, because we did not have a permanent home. We just had to go where we could afford to live, especially after my mother got divorced and raising three teenagers by ourselves on either minimum wage back then or less. My education is strange because the first four years of elementary school I couldn't learn anything. I was on the bottom of the class for four years in a row. Not because I didn't try. I didn't understand the lesson. I couldn't read. Could write, couldn't spell. But I got a teacher one year that they didn't even know my name—and it sounds horrible—but everything she taught, I understood. That lady was a real teacher because I struggled trying to learn. I went from the bottom of the class one year to among the tops in the class the very next year. I still got that report card and see back in Alabama, I was a substitute teacher for 11 years and two school systems simultaneously, the city and the county. I did pre-K all the way up to 12th grade any subject, any school, any time. And I used to show that report card to the kid to encourage them and tell them my story. I tell them I could relate to anybody in this class, whether you're at the bottom or the top, because I've been there. And on that report card I had that year, I had 39 A's and 31 B's, no C's. But the year before, I tell people, if I was going to drop out of school, it would have been elementary school because I couldn't learn. I don't know what if I was dyslexic, sometimes I think I am now, I don't know what I was A.D.D. Attention Deficit Disorder because back then for black kids, they weren't screens or anything like that. They couldn't afford and they didn't know anything about. So the kids struggle and some of them dropped out of school because they didn't get any help. But I was determined that I was going to learn. And, by the time I finished sixth grade to go to Jones in the seven…well, in first grade, I got promoted to the second grade. My mother fought the school board and made them send me the first grade the second time. She fought the school board, she said, you didn't teach my child anything. So by the time I went from six to the seventh grade, the school board skipped me over seven. They put me from six to the eighth grade because I had made the year by a loss. My mother fought them again. She said, you going to get my child a whole year of education. I think not. She didn't do it. When I had to change high school, go to Hungerford at the end of my ninth grade year, I won a four year academic scholarship to Morehouse College in Atlanta at the end of my ninth grade year. They said, go to 10th grade instead of being a junior in high school, you'll be a freshman in college, on full academic scholarship. My mother, I showed her my letter. She said, no. I went to Mr. Otey's wife, who was the counselor, Mrs. Otey, I showed her my letter. She said no. I said, well, I show it to the principal. I went and showed it to the principal, Mr. Frank Otey. He said, no. So my mother had a valid argument that I could not…I did not having anything to come back on. She said, son the prerequisite classes you need for college are in your junior high school year, and you trying to skip two years of that. She didn't let me go. So by the time I finished high school, I got accepted to every college I applied to, but the scholarship offers weren't there. So now I go to Bethune-Cookman on a special program

where I only paid $18 for the first year. That just got me started, but I actually dropped out after two weeks.

00;29;32 - 00;29;36
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** How come?

00;29;36 - 00;30;58
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** They lied to me about the program, and I was upset they weren't honest about the program. The program I was on was supposed to be kids who struggled learning, but I had gotten past that years earlier. And they had a lot of real smart kids in the program for slow kids. I wasn't slow anymore. As a matter of fact, all of the kids, my buddies, my college buddies and my fraternity brothers that was in that program, we're the ones that came out of the program, out of Bethune-Cookman, as the scientists and engineers and stuff ahead of any of the regular kids. But after being out of school for a semester, making minimum wage, I said, no, I can't do this. I got to do something. So I enrolled in the Orlando Trade School. After two weeks, I got a letter from Bethune-Cookman saying, come back. So, after two weeks in the trade school, I dropped out and went back to college. And this time I stayed until I got drafted going into my senior year of college.

00;30;58 - 00;31;02
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And what year was this?

00;31;02 - 00;31;03
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Which year are you referring to?

00;31;03 - 00;31;05
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** When you got drafted.

00;31;05 - 00;31;36
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** 1971. February 1971. Stayed in the military 21 months. I suppose been there 24 months, but I typed out my own way out of the Army three months early on my own typewriter, and I had a reason. If I had to wait to get out, that my exact two years, the second semester will have started with if I got out three months earlier, I could catch the second semester and wouldn't have to wait all the way to the summer.

00;31;37 - 00;31;41
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Talk to me a little bit about your military experience.

00;31;41 - 00;37;00
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Well, when I went in the military drafted going into my senior year of chemistry, I was devastated. They almost had to drop me full time because I was smart enough to keep getting out of it legally. That must be a record. I don't know. But they finally caught up with me, Senator Ed Garner, given my grandmother by my mother's side, she used to work at Rollins College—it was called the Harvard of the South—but she worked there, and she knew people. And Senator Ed Gardner had something to do with Watergate back during Nixon's time. He sent a letter to keep me out. But the letter was two days too late. Two days

after I took the oath of being in the Army. But I had such a bad attitude when I went in the Army. I wasn't trying to keep from being drafted, I was just trying to finish my last year because most of the time, if you have a break in the education, a lot of times you might not get back. And I've seen that before. A lot of people, if they have a break, they don't ever get back to finish. And I was determined I was going to finish, but I was drafted, going into my senior year, I had to go play soldier for two years. And I went in the Army with a terrible attitude because of that.

But I'm the kind of person that I do everything that I can the best that I can, no matter how pissed off I might be. And so I scored real high in the Army, and I remember the score, but at the time, I didn't know what it was about until about until I was in my 50s or 60s. I finally looked it up my score on the internet and find out what it was about. But because I scored so high in the Army—I was trained to kill—but the first day I landed in Germany, I landed a job as a Computer Keypunch Operator in  data processing. I studied data processing at the Army Education Center. I became an assistant instructor. Then I became an instructor. And when I got out of the Army, I studied Fortran Four, which is a scientific and engineering language—a computer language. But anyway, that program, I went on it at Bethune-Cookman. I went back to it in anyway. I don't know if you ever heard of the Evelyn Wood Speed Reading Program. Back then, they said President Kennedy could read 10,000 words every 60 seconds. That's awesome. They had us two reading classes in that program. One year they gave me 100 stories to read for one year. Every story get progressively harder as you go up from the first to the hundredth story. And then they had one class—you've seen these prompts where the words cross—they had a class like that. In that class, they put up something for you to read. And when they take it down, they give you a test immediately. They do one line at a time. You go in one day, you reading two lines at a time. You get to the point where you read a whole paragraph at a time. They flash it up and take it down. You got to read it. When they tested me. When I went back, I was a whole semester behind both of those class. Well, the top student in the reading class, he already read sixty stories, he was way past me at point. They didn't know what to do with me so they couldn't start me at the first story, so they started me at 35. I was 25 stories behind him. By the end of that semester I was four stories behind him. I start at 25 stories behind him, ended up for—Nobody got to 100. He got to 96. I got to 92…in one semester. They tested me when I first got back to the program, reading 200 words a minute. At the end of the semester, I was reading 2000 words every 60 seconds. Can't do that now. You have to be able to see better.

00;37;01 - 00;37;10
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And what was your life like after you came back from military service, and you completed your degree?

00;37;10 - 00;40;11
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Believe it or not, that year I finished my chemistry degree, I was the only student from Bethune-Cookman who finished a degree in chemistry. The year before me it was only one. The year after me, the kid was two years after me in chemistry. We were rare. And during integration, if any of the Fortune 500 companies wanted a chemist or wanted any student they went to the college campus, predominantly black college campuses and recruit. So I had about at least eight Fortune 500 companies trying to hire me. IBM wanted me to build

computers. General Electric wanted me to…Well, IBM was in Boca Raton, Florida. General Electric was in the Tampa Bay area. They wanted me to work in that neutron plant. The United States Patent Office sent a man from Washington, DC wanted me to work in the patent office. I had a private teaching job offer. I had an insurance job offer working in quality control. The Monsanto Chemical Company wanted me to be an engineer in research and development. General Motors wanted me to go to Warren, Michigan, and work in that testing ground with a no limit budget. They said if you work for us, you can order 500 motors, put them in the parking lot and run them wide open and blow all them up, and we won't even ask you why you did it. Unlimited budget. So I had all these good job offers to choose from because when they came to Bethune-Cookman looking for a chemist they had to ask for me by name. They were calling Orlando. They were calling here to my mother's house, "where's your son?" And when General Motors interviewed me, they asked me—it was two interviewers—they said, "what do you know about a carburetor?" Back then, they weren't too many fuel injection carburetor. I told them I could take a full barrel carburetor and break it down, clean every part individually, put it back together and make it run better, and I don't need a diagram. They say we want to have somebody like you with a mentality like that because we want people that work on the car on the job all day long and go home in the garage and work on the car all night long. They said we can find a chemist all day long but not like you. And I took the job with…I took the job with Monsanto Chemical Company, as an engineer in research and development. But it's kind of ironic. I retired from General Motors.

00;40;11 - 00;40;14
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And where was that first job at?

00;40;14 - 00;40;35
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** It was in Decatur, Alabama. On the on the Tennessee River. When I hired in, it was 3700 people working at that plant. 3300 worked in production, 400 worked in research and development. I was at one of the 400.

00;40;35 - 00;40;39
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Where you one of the few black people that worked at that company at that plant?

00;40;39 - 00;40;45
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Yeah. Well, on a salary basis. Yeah.

00;40;45 - 00;40;48
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Okay. And what was that like?

00;40;49 - 00;41;24
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Well, for me, it was no big deal. You know, it didn't bother me. You know, it's kind of ironic because it was an African, a Nigerian interview for the job I got. They gave it to me instead. He interviewed first. Guess where he is now? He's in Nigeria. He's the king of the southeast province of Nigeria, West Africa. He's the king now. And they gave me the job. But he wasn't the king then. He was going to school in Huntsville, Alabama, him and his brother. But today is a king.

00;41;38 - 00;41;43
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Did you ever return to Florida after you worked in Alabama?

00;41;43 - 00;41;43
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** No. Just to visit.

00;41;43 - 00;41;44
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Just to visit.

00;41;44 - 00;42;12
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** I still live in North Alabama. I'm only down here because my mother became ill and came down to help my nieces care for my mother until she passed Christmas morning. And the reason I'm still down here, I got to sell the house. My wife is longing for me to come back home, but I got to finish my business here first.

00;42;12 - 00;42;33
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:**
And from your experiences, how have racial relations changed? You told me a story when you were growing up, you're walking, and the white kids were driving, and they were shouting hateful things. Fast forward to today and throughout your life. How has that changed? If it's changed.

00;42;33 - 00;43;10
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** I can't say it hasn't changed in. Because, you know, a lot of people held racism in their heart until Donald Trump came along. And then they said, this is our brother. And then they came out of the woodwork. But that's not to say that all white folk feel like that because that's not true. It's not true.

00;43;10 - 00;43;13
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Have you attended the Zora Festival before?

00;43;13 - 00;43;18
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Years ago.  I came to it before you had to pay to get it.

00;43;18 - 00;43;19
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And what year was that?

00;43;19 - 00;43;22
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** I don't even remember. I don't even remember.

00;43;22 - 00;43;25
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** What did you think about today's festival?

00;43;25 - 00;44;07

**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Well, I just got here 30 minutes before this interview. So I didn't get a chance to see it. I came Friday over here to the north side of Eatonville. And I thought the way they had the barriers up on the street were ridiculous. So I just got up today and came over here to see what was going on. I guess I came a little late because I was looking at Iowa, the women's basketball game. I stayed there until the end of the game before I got up and came over here.

00;44;07;15 - 00;44;13;16
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Well, how much has this area in Orlando more broadly has changed since you've lived here?

00;44;13 - 00;44;37
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Well, when I was a kid, we used to walk from one side of Orlando, as large as Orlando is area wise, we used to walk from one side of Orlando to the other as children. But now you get in the car and try to drive, you get confused, like where do I get off the 408? And where do I get off I-4 to go here? I can remember when I-4 was being built through Eatonville.

00;44;37 - 00;44;38
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Wow.

00;44;38 - 00;44;39
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Yeah.

00;44;39 - 00;44;43
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Was the community upset about that?

00;44;43 - 00;45;38
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** I don't even know. I was a kid though. I wasn't aware of that kind of stuff. But I remember they built right across Hungerford's property, the 120 acres, they built right across it. I remember as kids, we used to—while they were building the interstate—on the weekends when we're out of school, we used to go over there in the construction zones, unauthorized and crank up those big earthmovers. And drive them up and down. We used to do a lot of stuff that we, you know, today, they catch you doing, you get in serious trouble. But we used to do that kind of stuff, they were building I-4 right through here. And we were teenagers. I'm 76 now.

00;45;39 - 00;45;44
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Is there any other ways Orlando has changed since you've lived here and you coming back to visit?

00;45;44 - 00;46;28
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Well, gentrification. They hogging up all the black communities. And Eatonville is going to be the next to fall. Back in Winter Park, the Hannibal Square, you hardly ever see any black people over there now. Some are still over there, and they still got their homes and stuff, but the house that I was born in on Lyman Avenue was demolished years

ago, and it's just about 3 or 4 lots on that corner now on the corner of New York and Lyman Avenue. The house is gone. My grandfather built that house.

00;46;28 - 00;46;30
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Do you know what year?

00;46;30 - 00;47;06
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** He built that house probably in the 40s during the war. Back then, during World War II, you couldn't hardly buy first hand material. You had to have built a house with what you get. And I can remember as a two year old hearing his skill-saw buzzing at midnight, and he would be working with an electric drop cord as his light.

00;47;06 - 00;47;09
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And what was the address of the house?

00;47;09 - 00;47;12
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** 201 West Lyman Avenue.

00;47;12 - 00;47;12
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And that's where you were born, correct?

00;47;12 - 00;47;39
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** I was born there. Doctor Schanke was on the couch, sleep, while my grandmother delivered me because she was a midwife. She was a nurse and a midwife and during her career she must've delivered between 600 to 700 babies and not just black babies in her career. And she actually grew up with Billie Holiday as a teenager in New York.

00;47;52 - 00;48;04
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Are there any ways that you plan on solidifying or remembering Zora now that you know that you are related to her?

00;48;04 - 00;50;01
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** I had started writing a book on years ago. But I guess I need to find my transcript and finish it. I started writing 4 or 5 books, hadn't finished any book, but I do publish short stories. My short stories have been read in Alabama and Georgia and other places only online. In my community, in the community newsletter that's put out every month for three months straight, I would submit, one of my stories. And the community didn't want the stories to stop. But the lady who published my stories retired. And the people at town hall, the one they are now, they weren't interested, but the community was upset because they wanted the story to keep coming. I write supernatural stories. That's one of my things I do. These stories are either told to be true or are true. The ones the told to be true are other people tell me their stories. The true stories are of my own personal experience. I got a couple of UFO stories. One is mine, one is somebody else, a neighbor's. I got a lot of ghost stories. Some are mine and some are other people. I even got Sasquatch story. I got two Sasquatch stories of my own, and other people told me their stories and experiences.

00;50;01 - 00;50;26
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And lastly, what is something from your observation, from your life experience, that you would want future generations to know? You know, someone let's say listening to this recording in 50, maybe even 100 years from now, what do you want them to know about you and Orlando or the nation?

00;50;26 - 00;53;26
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** Well, what I'd like for people to do is to pass their heritage and history on to the generations that's coming under them. A lot of time, we just too busy to do anything. We don't ask our mothers and fathers and grandfathers anything. They don't volunteer anything. But our history is lost or told by other people who can't tell it as well as we can. You know, that's one thing that I would like for us to do. When I was a teenager growing up in this community, me and my best friend France Coon, would seek people my age, elderly people, and pick their brain. We sit down—young people today don't have time for old people like me. They don't want to listen. They don't want to hear nothing you got to say. We are a waste of time to them, and we got wisdom and knowledge to pass on to them. And they just don't have any interest. And that's how everything get lost. You know, you don't sit down and talk to your elders. They know a lot. They know more than you. Even though you think you know everything. They've been there and done that. You know, we talked to this one old man. He was old enough to be our grandfather. He was a friend of the family, and we were teenagers. And we asked him his name was Nathaniel Bell. We ask him, when you were a young man, who were you and what did you do? How were you? He was a ladies man. He said back when he was young he had $500. Back then, that was a lot of money when he was young, in the early 1900s, that was a lot of money and probably like $50,000 today. And we ask him, what do you do with the money? He said, well, it was somebody in Winter Park that offered him some land. It was a lot of land along 1792. And he said, I took the money and bought me a red convertible to attract the ladies. So he didn't invest in the land. And back then we asked him—that was in the late 60s when he was talking to him—we say, we call him Mr. Nathaniel, and Mr. Nathaniel—what did that land worth today? He said probably about $5 million I could got for 500. That was in the late 60s. What would it be worth today? 500 million?

00;53;26 - 00;53;32
**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Well, Mr. Greene, thank you so much for sharing a little bit of your life story with us. I really appreciate it.

00;53;32 - 00;53;33
**EDWARD H. GREENE:** You're welcome.