

History of Princeville

Denise Davis-Gains*

*Buoyant Foundation Project, Univeristy of Waterloo, School of Architecture
Cambridge, Ontario, Canada*

Abstract

Before Hurricanes Floyd and Matthew, the rest of the state, let alone the world, knew very little about Princeville, NC and its legacy. FEMA would have the town relocate or elevate. The townspeople have other ideas. In this presentation I would like to share the significant history of this little town, approximately 2,000 residents (2010 census), the struggles that the people are facing today due to increased flooding and potential solutions that amphibious architecture can provide to preserve and protect the towns historic appearance and constitution.

The old black town is now in the spotlight as a global concern. At first glance there is little to know about the town except that it was one of the oldest towns established by African Americans, ex-slaves, in the United States after the Civil War. A place where, at that moment in history, the veils of prejudice and bigotry were pushed open and a “holy” realm was created where, despite a lack of change in circumstance (the townsfolk still picked cotton for the same landowners), a change in the essence of life evoked the unshackling, an untethering and the evolution of freedom of a people. Princeville’s existence is profound in the history of the United States of America and is globally significant in the struggle towards the ideal of freedom. We cannot let it slip away into the tides of time and rising floodwaters.

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* Corresponding author

E-mail address: ddavisgains@icaade.org