

REP Education Sheet: The Revival of Africatown



Africatown, a small community in Mobile, Alabama founded and built by enslaved Africans, has a wealth of history of resilience and freedom, but has been economically devastated by redlining, environmental racism, and industrial pollution. Now, the recent discovery of the remains of the Clotilda, the last slave ship to the United States, is bringing hope of economic and historical revival to Africatown



- Africatown, surrounded by a paper mill, chemical plants, and oil storage tanks, has a major highway that cuts through the community. Homes and businesses are boarded up, and the population has declined from about 12,000 in the 1960s to under 2,000 today. Residents struggle with impoverishment and health defects from industrial pollution
- Many of the residents of Africatown are descendants of the Africans who were trafficked to Alabama on the schooner Clotilda by a plantation owner who smuggled kidnapped Africans from Benin into the United States more than 50 years after the slave trade from Africa was outlawed
- In 2018, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture joined the Clotilda research through its Slave Wrecks Project (SWP). The project was created in 2008 to research and document the
- international slave trade through the lens of maritime archeology and the study of sunken slave ships.

Sources:

- <https://www.npr.org/2019/06/19/733996699/alabamas-africatown-hopes-for-revival-after-slave-ship-discovery>

- <https://nmaahc.si.edu/about/news/statement-discovery-slave-ship-clotilda>