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## Socastee Interview, Participant #16, April 29, 2021

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## **"Flooded Afterlives Project" Interview**

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Participant ID: 16  
Community: Rosewood/Socastee  
State: SC

Interviewer: Kiana Cox  
Interview date: 4/29/21  
Interview location: Zoom

This protocol for this study was approved by the Coastal Carolina University Institutional Review Board (Approval #2021.102) on March 3, 2021. All subjects gave their informed consent for inclusion before participation in the study.

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Interviewer: How are you today? I wanted to ask.

Participant: Good, good. Is this only relating to women, or is it men and women?

Interviewer: It's more to women because it's more of a Women and gender studies class.

Participant: My husband is over there.

Interviewer: Hi, how are you?

*[in background]* Good.

Participant: We both resided in our home in Socastee together so. And now we're in Indiana.

Interviewer: Oh okay. Extremely far move. *[laughs]*

Participant: Yes it is. Totally different climate.

Interviewer: Is it nicer there?

Participant: It's different, its cold.

Interviewer: Oh okay. Yeah, I can understand. I'm from Cleveland, so I can understand.

Participant: Oh well yeah, you know the winters.

Interviewer: Yes ma'am. Okay well, I'll start with the questions whenever you're ready.

Participant: Sure enough.

Interviewer: Was this your first time experiencing a flood?

Participant: Did we experience one flood, or did we experience floods in other homes that we've lived in?

Interviewer: Yes ma'am, that's the question. Other homes you've lived in, any experiences?

Participant: Not in any previous homes that we've lived in.

Interviewer: What time did it occur? What was the weather like that day?

Participant: Which one of the many times we were flooded? Six or seven times we flooded. So, we bought the house in 2014, so it started that summer when we had our July of 2014, when we had our first mini flood and that was from a little hurricane that blew through. And then after that we had about six or seven more floods after that, through the course of us owning the house when we sold August of 2020, which was this past August.

Interviewer: Right, okay. I heard you say six to seven, or seven to eight times?

Participant: Probably seven to eight times we flooded. In varying degrees of intensity but yeah, I think, yeah, seven to eight times.

Interviewer: Did it grow in intensity each time or was it different each time?

Participant: It was different each time. It fluctuated based upon the reason for the flooding. Hurricane Florence was probably the worst- was the worst. The other times some of it was due to tremendous amounts of rainfall. Some of it was related to king tide, some of it was related to dam releases from North Carolina.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Participant: Did I say some was just related to an abundance of rainfall? Yeah, so we never knew really when it was going to come. I mean obviously after a lot of rainfall, but there were times when the flooding just happened that we didn't know that Duke Energy in North Carolina was doing simultaneous dam releases...Did you want to add anything to that? He is shaking his head no.

Interviewer: Were you prepared? I know you said you wouldn't know depending on the amount of rainfall and the dams, so would you say you were prepared when the water grew to a certain level?

Participant: Well, we never turned our back on the water um because it could not be there one minute then it's there. With the hurricane, you're given a little bit more notice because

you know it's coming. Like with hurricane Florence um, the weather forecast kept saying the flooding's coming, the flooding's coming. So, we had about ten days, we already evacuated because of the hurricane. Actually, we were here in Indiana as an evacuation procedure. But my husband had to fly back and move a lot of stuff in the house to higher ground to accommodate all of the warnings about how high the flooding was going to get. Let me preface all of my remarks. We lived right on the intercoastal waterway. Our backyard was the intercoastal waterway. Our house is raised eight feet above ground level, so we had noticed the fact that we could see the water creep up the backyard and from behind the houses behind across the street from us there's a triangular shaped pond. So, we would get water from the intercoastal and the overflow of these ponds. So yeah, we were prepared, and we would always move our stuff in our storage area under our house up, but there were times when we never thought the water would get that high and we did get surprised by the water, how much water there actually was just from even a dam release.

Interviewer: What type of damage if any damage did it cause to your house? Neighborhood? And or community?

Participant: Well, like I said, as far as damage goes, we probably had the least of the damage because our house is raised, and we don't have living quarters underneath our house. Many of our fellow neighbors who have raised houses have enclosed their bottom part of their house to make it an apartment, a man cave, an outdoor place to socialize, ours was strictly utilitarian. [*person in background talks*] Yeah I was getting to that. Ours was strictly utilitarian. So, in that respect, the majority of the damage that occurred to us was replacing tools and other things like that that got damaged from the flood waters. We had to have our electric on the ground floor rewired and we had a new air conditioner component, one piece of it is outside of the house and when we our AC replaced, they didn't raise it. So when Florence came, our brand-new air-conditioning unit got totaled. So, you know, we had some damage to replace a brand-new air-conditioning unit that was only five months old.

Interviewer: Okay. What about the neighborhood?

Participant: Yeah, the neighborhood was devastated. You know Socastee, we lived in Rosewood Estates. As you know- have you driven through that neighborhood?

Interviewer: Yes ma'am.

Participant: So, you know that there's a mix master of houses. There's some of us that are raised at back directly up to the ICW and then outside of the area there are all these small little starter ranch homes and sort of empty nester homes that completely got devastated. I think after Florence was probably the worst because it took the neighborhood after that about two years to get people back in, feeling comfortable again and the flooding just started well over again. So, these smaller homeowners were completely beyond any help because after Florence, most of their houses were like swimming pools. Samaritans came in and did help people raise their houses. Some people I think never came back, they just walked away. Our neighborhood pretty much looked like a warzone because everybody ripped out all of sheet rock and insulation and everything was out in the front yard piles and piles of debris that attracted all sorts of vermin and all sorts of nasty stuff.

Along with the polluted flood waters, I mean it was really disgusting after Florence. The stink, the stench that was in area for probably two to three months after that.

Interviewer: How has it impacted your life today? Till now?

Participant: Well obviously we were fortunate enough. We put our house up for sale and it sold right away. So, I don't know how this has impacted the new owners, but we were always concerned because we didn't know when the next flood was going to hit. If we were going to go on vacation, you know was the house going to get flooded in the interim. We were away part of last January and February and I believe that's when Duke Energy had the dam release. Yeah. It was probably last January or February. It was probably mid-February, was probably around mid-winter break, schools were probably around president's day and everything flooded. And fortunately, I had good neighbors who took my car out of my driveway and moved it to higher ground. You rely a lot on your neighbors to help you out in these circumstances. So, it was very taxing, you go away and the weathers perfectly fine and then all of a sudden you turn around and you have flooding due to not weather but through a dam release. So, there's no way to protect yourself, there's no way to know when or what affect these dam releases will have on your property.

Interviewer: What would be some uplifting advice you would give someone who's going through losing their home or going through a flood?

Participant: Well, there's two things. First of all, the people who are staying in these small ranch houses and can't afford to raise them, they have no recourse. You just need to be prepared and to understand that there's certain things you're going to need to do to try to minimize the damage in your house.

Interviewer: Mhmm.

Participant: Obviously, you can't take out sheet rock and insulation and stuff like that when you have a one-story house and it's at ground level. The other thing that really sort of annoys me and I'm sure you've interviewed some of my neighbors who have raised houses that have built these apartments and man caves and Airbnb's in their ground level that completely enclosed them. Alright, I'm going to be totally honest with you, there's a reason the house is raised. You shouldn't be putting living quarters on a ground floor that is known to be flooding. It's raised for a reason. You shouldn't have living quarters down there. That's it. You want to use it as minimal storage, your gardening tools, you know bicycles, whatever that's fine. But you shouldn't be making apartments out of that. That should really be outlawed. You know, nobody should be using that bottom as living quarters. That's all I can say.

Interviewer: Thank you for being so honest.

Participant: Yeah, I mean there's people who have raised their house that have done this then they turn around and excuse me they b\*\*\*\* about how they got wiped out all over again. Hello, you shouldn't be doing that down there to begin with. So, you are your own worst enemy for doing this. So don't expect to be compensated from insurance when what you've done shouldn't have been done to begin with.

Interviewer: Right, I completely understand. That's all the questions I had.