GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1995

H 1

HOUSE BILL 1222*

Short Title: Princeville Cemetery/Funds. Sponsors: Representatives Mercer; Fitch, Locke, and Tolson.	(Public)

May 17, 1996

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL RESOURCES SHALL STUDY THE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRINCEVILLE CEMETERY AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE STUDY.

Whereas, the town of Princeville, incorporated on February 20, 1885, has the distinction of being not only the oldest incorporated African-American community in North Carolina, but also the oldest incorporated African-American municipality on the North American continent; and

Whereas, some of Princeville's most influential citizens included Robert Taylor, a school teacher who served as county justice of peace, a two-term State Senator, and editor of the Edgecombe Watchman and William Mason, a teacher and minister who was elected to the State House of Representatives and the Senate and was a member to the North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1875; and

Whereas, Princeville was named for Turner Prince, who had been born a slave in North Carolina in 1843 and was one of the town's earliest residents; and

Whereas, the history of Princeville, its founders, and its earliest citizens is unique and significant; and

Whereas, the cemetery in Princeville is the eternal resting place of some of Princeville's early citizens, former slaves whose contribution in establishing the first African-American community in North America is noteworthy; and

2 3

4

Whereas, the cemetery of Princeville should be preserved and its historical significance documented; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

1

2

3 4

5

6 7

8

9 10

11

Section 1. The Department of Cultural Resources shall study the historical significance of the cemetery located in Princeville, the oldest African-American community in North America, shall consider what efforts should be taken to preserve and maintain the cemetery, and shall also consider whether the cemetery should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The Department of Cultural Resources shall report its findings and recommendations to the 1997 General Assembly.

Sec. 2. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Cultural Resources the sum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for the 1996-97 fiscal year to implement this act.

Sec. 3. This act becomes effective July 1, 1996.