

[Photo: A logo reads, "Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum."]

Narrator: Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum presents the following interview with Derrick Evans, "Like a Pot of Gumbo". The interview takes place in Turkey Creek where he works as an educator and community activist in his hometown. Derrick sits in room wearing a black coat and blue cap.]

[Photo: A large tree sits in front of a home near the road.]

Derrick Evans: When I grew up Turkey Creek community and its sister

Derrick Evans: communities in Gulf Port and Harrison County

Derrick Evans: and in coastal Mississippi

Derrick Evans: were very, very, very rich places with oral history.

Derrick Evans: I grew up.

[Photo: A home sits behind red bricks and a mailbox on a sunny day.]

Derrick Evans: By the time I was a teenager and, you know,

Derrick Evans: taking history in school and stuff and being exposed to oral history

[Photo: A creek stretches through a large field of grass.]

Derrick Evans: and like the scholarship of

Derrick Evans: Herbert Gutman and all of these great historians from the sixties, seventies,

Derrick Evans: and eighties,

Derrick Evans: I knew that I came from a place that any of them would be like, yeah,

Derrick Evans: that's it. This is it. This is why oral history is so important and instructive.

[Photo: A group of community members talk outside with one another near the side of a home.]

Derrick Evans: That's always been Turkey Creek.

[Photo: A framed photo shows World War II veteran Mr. Eugene Johnson of Gulf Coast Mississippi.]

Derrick Evans: And, but not just Turkey Creek.

[Photo: An archival photo of Gulf Coast residents.]

Derrick Evans: Like I said, all the sister communities,

[Photo: A wooden area of trees.]

Derrick Evans: the constellation of this cultural milieu communities up and

Derrick Evans: down these little roads.

Derrick Evans: And obviously as a younger person, I just always figured it just,

Derrick Evans: just kind of naturally just always just live on and on and on,

Derrick Evans: because it's so rich and deep and embedded.

[Photo: A older community member points towards the side of a wooden house.]

Derrick Evans: And this is a place where there's a

[Photo: Dr. David Holt, a university professor, overlooks a map of the area.]

Derrick Evans: the culture is defined as much as anything by the term storytelling.

[Photo: Derrick sits with some residents of Turkey Creek.]

Derrick Evans: And so, when I came back home in 2001.

[Photo: A steel fence boards a cemetery.]



Derrick Evans: After the cemetery was bulldozed that year,

[Photo: Derrick with residents of Turkey Creek.]

Derrick Evans: and I realized I had to begin to make a permanent presence of

Derrick Evans: myself here, which I was able to do by 2003,

Derrick Evans: didn't quite know what to do,

[Photo: Smithsonian's Gail Lowe shows a paper to a resident that sits on the couch.]

Derrick Evans: but I did know that the history of the community,

Derrick Evans: um,

[Photo: A sign reads, Mississippi Coastal Birding Trail Turkey Creek showing images of local birds in the creek.]

Derrick Evans: was going to be one of the keys or at least the material.

Derrick Evans: That could,

Derrick Evans: be used to defend this community and to hopefully reverse its fortunes.

[Photo: A male and female wearing summer attire smiles to the camera.]

Derrick Evans: And so, when I found it in 2003 or co-founded with some,

Derrick Evans: my cousins and community members,

Derrick Evans: most of whom are deceased now because they tended then to be in their seventies,

[Photo: An elder Turkey Creek resident wearing a maroon checkered shirt and glasses smiles to the camera in front of a home.]

Derrick Evans: eighties, and nineties, but they were it.

Derrick Evans: I mean, they were the right folks

for that job. At that time.

[Photo: Two plants sit beside a blue wheelbarrow. Trees and dirt reside in the background.]

Derrick Evans: And the mission was to conserve,

Derrick Evans: restore and, utilize for education and other socially beneficial

[Photo: A house at dusk with an older car parked on the lawn.]

Derrick Evans: purposes, the unique cultural, historical,

[Photo: A road sign reads "Turkey Creek" near the side of the creek.]

Derrick Evans: and ecological assets of the Turkey Creek community and watershed.

Derrick Evans: It's a very, very broad,

Derrick Evans: deliberately broad and inclusive mission statement.

Derrick Evans: Because then I knew, we knew,

[Photo: Tree roots grow to the right on the creek.]

Derrick Evans: we agreed that what this community and this watershed needed was

Derrick Evans: first of all, the community needed to be construed,

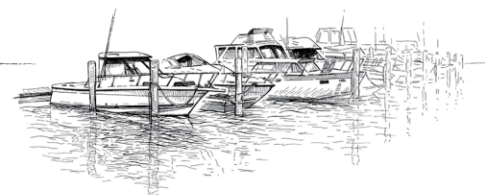
Derrick Evans: not just in terms of the footprint on Rippy Road,

[Photo: A creek in the middle of a tall grass area.]

Derrick Evans: but in the larger context of its drainage basin, right?

Derrick Evans: The Turkey Creek watershed,

[Photo: Weeds grow over the creek near the side of a road.]



Derrick Evans: which includes other very closely kindred communities

[Photo: A female wearing a black shirt smiles inside a gutted home.]

Derrick Evans: and included a lot of,

[Photo: A color and black and white map of the community.]

[Photo: A dirt field with scattered trees.]

Derrick Evans: human activity and planning and development,

[Photo: A community member presses his hand against a wood panel inside a home.]

Derrick Evans: that would impact us either positively or adversely in an

Derrick Evans: area far larger than our immediate community.

Derrick Evans: Also knew that that mission statement,

Derrick Evans: needed to reflect the role that

Derrick Evans: environmental science, ecology, environmental law,

Derrick Evans: urban planning, architecture, education,

Derrick Evans: even theology, and really very, very importantly,

Derrick Evans: oral history.

Derrick Evans: Oral history would play in forging the,

Derrick Evans: not just the historical memory, right?

Derrick Evans: And the history for history sake, which is very rich.

Derrick Evans: This is one of the richest under historicized

Derrick Evans: American locations and cultural melilla

Derrick Evans: that there has been and is in these United States.

Derrick Evans: And again, a lot of that richness and complexity and

Derrick Evans: ultimately attractiveness and usefulness to

Derrick Evans: people who grow up here or who learn about it from other places,

Derrick Evans: has to do what it's very interesting

Derrick Evans: convergence, right.

[Photo: The Turkey Creek watershed.]

[Photo: A sign reads, Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church.]

[Photo: A white sign reads, Turkey Creek Head Start on the side of a grass field by a building.]

Derrick Evans: Of environmental and cultural and economic and social elements.

Derrick Evans: It's a pot of gumbo is what it is.

Derrick Evans: It's a gumbo

Derrick Evans: and there is no math or a no science or no law or anything else that

Derrick Evans: quite captures the flavor of that gumbo,

Derrick Evans: like an aggregation of its good stories.

