



Hwy 34 Volunteer Fire Department

Narrated by Stanley Woodward

<Video opens walking into the Volunteer Fire Department>

1. Hwy 34 VFD Hash (03:42)

<Video shows Cecil Smith, shift leader, Keith, Steve, and a woman>

S. Woodward: Is this the Highway 34 Volunteer Fire Department?

C. Smith: Yes sir. Come on in.

S. Woodward: What you doin'?

C. Smith: Ah, we're cookin' hash. Well, we'll let you take a paddle and help, uh, we'll teach you how to cook some good hash.

S. Woodward: Now you're usin' a wooden paddle, is that a tradition down here?

C. Smith: Uh, we found that a wooden paddle is better than the, uh, a metal paddle...so, we've always used the wood paddles. We tried-we have a metal paddle, but, uh, nobody likes it.

<Video shows the hash momentarily before showing Cecil Smith again>

C. Smith: We started about twelve o'clock today, uh, first shift. Uh, they put the meat and the onions in and basically that's all we doin' is just cookin' the meat down, uh pickin' out bones that float up-

Woman: And fat.

C. Smith: And fat. We'll do this until...seven or seven thirty and then we'll-at that time we'll grate up our potatoes and put them in and then from-from nine to three o'clock all we do is stir, pick fat, and dig out bones. At three o'clock we put our seasoning in...cook it for about another hour, swap pots, and then about five-thirty we'll cut the heat off and, uh, box it up. Now right now, all we got in here like I said, is just the meat and the onions and we cookin' it down. We got-if we get-get a hold of some big chunks-

Keith: *<Grabbing a big chunk of meat with tongs>* C'mere chunk.

C. Smith: What Keith's doin'. Keith and Steve over there, they'll take the big chunks and just, uh, dice it up into smaller. Sort of speed up the process. And the third shift, all they'll do is just stir it, 'til three o'clock before they put the seasoning in.

<Video shows Melvin Fouchee, hashmaster>

S. Woodward: Hey.

M. Fouchee: Good morning.

S. Woodward: Are you the hash master-

M. Fouchee: Yes sir.

S. Woodward: -for the fire department here?

M. Fouchee: I am.

S. Woodward: How long you been cookin' it?

M. Fouchee: For about fifteen years now.

S. Woodward: Now where did you get started doin' that?

M. Fouchee: We got started at 96 Pentecostal [????] Church. Cooked it there for fundraiser for a number of years for the men's fellowship and a fellow by the name of Mr. Ike Berry was the one doin' the cookin' there and, of course, back then we used old wooden fire under some cast iron pots-

S. Woodward: Oh yeah.

M. Fouchee: -and, uh, not long before Mr. Berry died, I asked him would he pass the recipe along. He agreed to. So we sat down on his front porch one afternoon and he told me what he put in it, how to cook it, and how to do it, and so we've been carrying on the tradition since then.

<Video shows the hash pot being stirred>

M. Fouchee: There's a lot of hours put into it, from start to finish and it's a slow process.

<Video shows Melvin Fouchee again>

It's something you can't rush and, uh, you've got to be willing to put forth some effort and the weather's hot and normally when we cook it's-it's never-it'd be nice if we had a nice air conditioned kitchen to cook it in but with all the steam that is produced it'd be rather difficult.

2. The cast iron pot (01:41)

<Video opens showing two cast iron pots before rotating over to Melvin Fouchee>

S. Woodward: Kind of hard to get these pots anymore isn't it?

M. Fouchee: These pots are very hard to find and, uh, there's some foundries around that still make some cast iron, but it's very different from the old cast iron pots that was made.

S. Woodward: Oh really?

M. Fouchee: They-they leave it-where these are usually have a fairly smooth finish, of course some of them have rust pits in it, but other than that, the new cast iron has a rough finish inside it, it's not machined down for some reason.

S. Woodward: Do you know where-where there is a foundry that makes them?

M. Fouchee: There's a foundry up in, uh, North Carolina towards coast. Lagrange is the name of the company-

S. Woodward: Um hum.

M. Fouchee: -that still makes some, but I think it's made more for show than it is for actual use, without doin' a lot of work on the pots to get them smoothed up inside.

S. Woodward: I see. So to get a pot these days, you've got to...

M. Fouchee: -You've got to find an old one.

S. Woodward: You've got to find an old one and they're kinda hard to come by.

M. Fouchee: They are. A lot of them'll develop cracks in them and so that-you-some of them can be welded but some can't be too successfully so they, uh, they get destroyed in that manner sometimes.

S. Woodward: Well in that since I guess these become pretty treasured items-

M. Fouchee: -They do. They really do for these hash cookin's

S. Woodward: Well these look like they're almost in a hash shrine or somethin'. <They laugh>

M. Fouchee: That's right. We-we feel like we have a pretty good setup here with the gas burners under it to keep from stokin' the old wood and makes it, uh, a whole lot more comfortable being around the pots, we can get close to'em and work with'em, so it's-it's just a nice, clean setup we feel like.

3. Hash tradition at Hwy 34 VFD (02:13)

<Video opens with Jeanie Shenal walking up>

J. Shenal: Well how did you like it?

S. Woodward: I liked it.

J. Shenal: Wonderful.

S. Woodward: [It was very good.]

J. Shenal: Glad, I'm glad.

S. Woodward: We were talking yesterday a little bit about the history of hash, where as how far it goes back. <Says something inaudible>

J. Shenal: <Points> Yeah.

S. Woodward: Have you been making hash all your life?

J. Shenal: All my life. Forever.

S. Woodward: How far back do you think hash goes in South Carolina?

J. Shenal: Oh, in South Carolina, it probably goes back to when the first people came to South Carolina and settled and, uh, I'm sure it was called stew then. Uh, you know? I don't know where the word actually the word "hash" came from. Melvin may know more about that than I do. But, um, people just threw whatever they had in a pot, 'cause I'm sure they didn't have a whole lot, uh, it had to be wild game, uh, whatever they could catch that they would throw in there and um, like I said, I think potatoes and onions especially were probably, uh, easy to grow around here and they probably found a lot of wild onions 'cause I find a lot in my yard. <They laugh> But, uh, somehow along the way, stew cooked down and eventually became what we know as hash now. Like I said last night, probably just the seasonings have been changed, um, and I'd say fairly recently, wouldn't you, on-on the seasoning?

S. Woodward: Yeah.

J. Shenal: Um, everybody has their own recipe. Everybody guards it very jealously. Um, just like a lot of my mother's recipes; she was notorious. She was a terrific cook.

S. Woodward: Yeah.

J. Shenal: Somebody ask for a recipe, she might by accident leave one little ingredient out of it. <They both laugh>

S. Woodward: Well, it is a competitive thing though, because you've got-

J. Shenal: -Yes-

S. Woodward: -you've got people sellin' hash against each other on these holidays.

J. Shenal: That's exactly right. You know, you try to put out a good clean product and that's-and when I say clean, I mean clean. Um, it's just like people's barbecue sauce. You know, one state really likes it with tomato base; another state likes it with mustard base. Um, very competitive we have, um, um, barbecue cook offs around here frequently for fundraisers. Um, so yeah, we're competitive with out hash. We think we put out a real good hash. And most of our community they'll agree...past our community.

4. Hash Delivery (04:26)

<Video opens with Cecil Smith on the phone>

C. Smith: Come here for a second sir.

S. Woodward: Yeah. Yeah.

C. Smith: Alright we've got a gentleman. We're cooking our hash now.

S. Woodward: Yeah.

C. Smith: You can smell it outside.

S. Woodward: Right.

C. Smith: We've got a gentleman behind our house, right now, behind the fire department.

<Camera moves towards the window>

C. Smith: Right over here sir, standing on the back porch. He smells our hash cooking and he's done called over. He wants four quarts in the morning.

<Video shows Cecil Smith getting in a truck>

C. Smith: Ready?

S. Woodward: Ready.

C. Smith: Let's go see him.

S. Woodward: Alright.

C. Smith: Get him out of bed.

<Video shows Cecil Smith driving the truck>

S. Woodward: So you're gonna take it to him?

C. Smith: We're gonna take it to him.

S. Woodward: That's being a good neighbor, isn't it?

C. Smith: Well yeah, yeah. I've got, matter of fact, I've got to take four quarts to a-a widow who doesn't get out much anymore.

<Video cuts momentarily>

C. Smith: I mean, uh, they're doing us a service by buying it.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

C. Smith: The least we can do is bring it to them.

S. Woodward: Right.

<Video cuts momentarily>

C. Smith: This gentleman we're going to see now...uh...I think he said he bought some last time, but, uh, he's a relatively new customer.

<Video cuts momentarily>

S. Woodward: Well now, there seems to be a real close relation between the volunteer fire department and the community.

C. Smith: Well yeah, yeah, uh, they know that if they have, uh, they have a problem they can count on us and you know, likewise we can count on the, uh, citizens to help us.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

<Video shows the truck pulling up in Kevin Flick's yard>

C. Smith: Yep, this is the house. I feel like the, uh, Ed McMahon now. *<They both laugh>*

<Video shows Cecil Smith getting out of his truck>

C. Smith: Ok.

<Video shows Kevin Flick>

C. Smith: [Todd]! *<Cecil Smith laughs>*

K. Flick: Morning.

C. Smith: What's goin' on.

K. Flick: I don't know.

C. Smith: Hey it's-it's past seven thirty-

K. Flick: -Welllll-

C. Smith: -and you haven't come up to the fire department yet. *<They both laugh>*

K. Flick: Little bit warm inside this morning.

S. Woodward: He was-he was really waving at you yesterday to get-

C. Smith: -Right. I mean he was ready to come over yesterday and get it before it was even seasoned.

K. Flick: Ya'll got it-

C. Smith: -Was it smellin' good?

K. Flick: Boy I tell you what, ya'll had it right. Ya'll had it right.

C. Smith: Well I tell you what, the next time we cook, you ought to come up and help us.

K. Flick: I'd be more than happy to. I'd be more than happy to. As long as I can sit there and nibble on it all night. *<They all laugh>*

C. Smith: In other words, we may come up a couple quarts short.

K. Flick: No, just about a quart.

<Video cuts momentarily>

S. Woodward: How long you been eating hash here?

K. Flick: Uh.

S. Woodward: You not from this area.

K. Flick: No sir. Uh, actually I've been down south about seventeen years. I'm originally from up north. Uh, I really didn't know what hash was until I come down south.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

K. Flick: But, uh, Lord knows, I probably had my first sample of hash when I was, probably about eleven, and ain't nothing like it. I'm sorry. I don't care what anybody tells you, ain't nothing like it. It's good.

S. Woodward: Well how come-how come you don't find it up in North Carolina and down in Georgia?

K. Flick: Just different cultures and the traditions they've got. I mean like, you look they've got the grits down here and cream of wheat up there.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

K. Flick: And there's a big difference in the two. *<They all laugh>*

<Video cuts momentarily>

S. Woodward: Now, when you ate that first hash when you were a little kid, did you like it right away? Do you remember?

K. Flick: It was-it was a different...it was a different type of meal.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

K. Flick: Uh, I thought it was mush...

S. Woodward: Um hum.

K. Flick: ...at first. And then for some odd reason it didn't take long and I started acquiring a taste and a crave.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

K. Flick: You just get a craving for it and then there's-like I said-there's just nothing like it all.

<Video cuts momentarily>

S. Woodward: Now I saw you waving like a wild man to this guy on the phone yesterday *<Kevin Flick laughs>*. You really wanted some of that didn't you?

K. Flick: Yes sir. Uh, matter of fact, I'd talked with some friends earlier on that, uh, we needed to get together and cook one. Uh, we normally do one once a year out at the farm at a hunt club I have.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

K. Flick: And uh, I mean, we cook anywhere from a hundred forty to two hundred quarts.

C. Smith: Right.

K. Flick: And uh, we normally just distribute it within the members and then whatever's left over, we kinda have us a big shindig and have a bunch of people out and eat. Uh, but it's just somethin'-

S. Woodward: So hash cooking is big with the hunt clubs too.

K. Flick: Yes sir. Very big. 'Cause it's-it's just the fellowship time. You can get together, you-I mean, it normally doesn't take us but about six hours because we normally mince ours up, where most people, they like to do it the traditional way and really just cook it out-

S. Woodward: -Um hum-

K. Flick: For a good twelve to fourteen hours. And like I said, it's just a fellowship time. Everybody get together and enjoy themselves and, you know, talk and tell stories and really just-just hash it up is the best way to say it. *<They all laugh>*

C. Smith: What a pun for that.

5. Hash as fellowship (01:50)

<Video opens showing Clyde Ellison>

S. Woodward: This hash is cooked still in these black iron kettles in a lot of places and it takes a lot of people to make the hash. What-what is it about the making of the hash that seems to continue it on as a tradition?

C. Ellison: Fellowship I would guess... 'cause you really get to know people in a hurry when you make that, 'cause it takes... it takes a lot of work. You have to have people cutting up onions, cutting up potatoes. You cook the meat and then after you get it cooked, you have to take it off the bone and cut it all up and then start redoing it all over again and, uh, you have a lot of good fellowship, a lot of good times, uh, and, it's a lot of hard work. It takes time. Uh, I have some this weekend. Already got some at the house and I'll have more this weekend and this-that when I get-I get, uh, two quarts 'cause you're limited to the amount you can get 'cause they only make so much. And uh, and both quarts are subject to be gone probably by Monday *<They both laugh>*.

S. Woodward: So they limit the amounts of quarts you can buy?

C. Ellison: Well, they can only make so much and they have a waiting list and they take care of those and, uh, anybody who came after the waiting list they-they try to take care of as many people as they can.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

C. Ellison: And-

S. Woodward: They don't have much left over I guess.

C. Ellison: They do not have much left over. The one I got in, uh, July, I think they sold something like eight or nine hundred quarts that they made and sold out. Uh, I got there around seven o'clock on Saturday morning and at, I don't know, ten thirty or eleven I think they were sold out.

S. Woodward: Wow.

C. Ellison: And so the people know they're making it, they go get it.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

C. Ellison: And they get their name's on the waiting list so when, uh, they make it, they get called. They get theirs reserved for them.