



Greenwood County Hash
Interviewed by Stan Woodward

1. Grendel Mill Hash House (01:48)

<Bass plays a few notes as introduction>

J. Gantt: I have a clipping in my hand here, from a local newspaper where my mother and my aunt, dipping hash out of the pot here in this building and-and also a picture of me stirring the hash and they're doing the dipping. They're dipping the hash out to service to the community.

<Zooming in on woman in photograph>

J. Gantt: This is my mother on the right, my aunt [Ola] Mabry in the middle, and this is me stirring the pot.

<Cut to inside of the house>

J. Gantt: Yes, yes....Somebody got the pot.

S. Woodward: Somebody got the pot.

J. Gantt: Um hum. But that's the way it was. Pot sat in this here stand here.

<Walking out of the house>

S. Woodward: [Harry Hibbel's] going to see [Adna].

J. Gantt: Uh, this is uh, Beth Rembert.

<Cut to Beth Rembert>

B. Rembert: I have a lot of memories of the hash house as a child. Coming down when the uh, men would be cooking and they would ask us to uh, work and peel potatoes and onions. We'd play around for awhile and then we would leave, um, because uh, the interest was there only for a short while when we had to peel potatoes or onions. But the community did benefit from it because the word got out that there was wonderful hash and stew being made.

<Cut to Sharon Deas>

S. Deas: Alright, this is my dad. He cooked the hash at Grendel Mill every Fourth of July. And my father's name is Charles Flinn.

S. Woodward: And you have kept his pot out back?

S. Deas: Right.

S. Woodward: Why have you done that? Why have you kept this pot?

S. Deas: Mainly because it belonged to him and it's very sentimental...to me because he enjoyed doing it so much.

2. The Stump Meeting (02:31)

<Some string instrument plays ascending notes>

<Dog barks>

J. Dorn: Come on in. Lemme introduce you to my dad. This is my father, Bryan Dorn.

S. Woodward: Hi. How are you sir?

W. J. B. Dorn: Fine. Thank you.

S. Woodward: You know uh, I-I heard some stories about you. I heard that, uh, you were pretty famous for hash. Is that true?

W. J. B. Dorn: <laughs> Well we had stump meetings for people to-to come and meet the candidates.

S. Woodward: And, uh, what did you serve at those stump meetings?

W. J. B. Dorn: Well, the principle ingredient was hash.

S. Woodward: And why did you pick hash?

W. J. B. Dorn: It was easy to fix and was commonly liked by most everybody.

J. Dorn: <Showing picture on the wall> And this is a actual shot from 1966, one of the barbeques here on the farm. You can see how the tables were just thrown together, old plank boards. And you can see the pickle jar here. And there's a man there with a black hat actually serving hash to these kids right here, of whom I'm one of. And so looking at my age there, I'm guessing I'm around six, so that would be 1966. You can just see the long lines off in the background. There's a table back over here and as folks would come in-that's out in the cow pasture. So that's how they looked every time we did one.

<Cut from picture to J. Dorn>

J. Dorn: Daddy used to always tell me though when he was growing up, his father in teaching and training him in how to speak would say 'Bryan, when you're making a speech at these barbeques, you make your speech to the guy in the back who is stirring

the hash.’ Said, ‘He is a paid guy. He’s not there because he wants to be there. He’s there and it’s his sole job to stir the hash.’

W. J. B. Dorn: Guy that was cooking the hash. He had to keep stirring because if you stopped, his pot was iron and it might stick.

J. Dorn: So he’s not interested in what’s going on. He doesn’t care what’s going on. So if you can start aiming your whole speech to him. And if you get to the place where the guy in the hash is doing this-he’s sitting back there and he’s stirring the hash round and around and around. And then all of a sudden he-every now and then he starts looking up, like this. Said, ‘you know you’re getting somewhere.’ Said, ‘you keep’-in my father’s words, ‘you keep pouring it to him.’

W. J. B. Dorn: So I poured it to him and stomped around on the platform.

J. Dorn: And all of a sudden he gets slower and slower. Said, ‘you keep speaking to him. ‘Just keep speaking to him Bryan.’ He gets slower and slower and finally he stops.

W. J. B. Dorn: And finally he just let the stick go and [had] his hands on his hips and start listening.

J. Dorn: You know when his mouth hangs open. And all of a sudden you look up and you know you’re getting somewhere because, again, he’s paid, he’s not supposed to be interested. Then all of a sudden he’ll catch himself again. Said, ‘you know you have achieved your objective of making a great speech, if the guy who’s stirring the hash takes the big boat paddle kind of a stick out of the pot, taps it on the side, and lays the stick over to the side, and listens to the speech. <S. Woodward and J. Dorn laugh> You know you’ve done real well.

W. J. B. Dorn: It was quite a circus cooking it. Everybody talking and some would slip off into the woods to get them a drag of corn. Come back and stir it more vigorously.

3. Origins Ninety-Six Hash (02:26)

S. Woodward: How did hash get started in-in the Greenwood area, as far as you recall?

R. McDaniel: Well, it originally came when the great crowds came to pay homage to Preston Brooks. Preston Brooks was a representative from the Greenwood County which took care of-of Greenwood, Abbeville, part of Laurens, and part of Saluda county.

S. Woodward: Now when we talking about? What time frame?

R. McDaniel: We're talking the period of 1856-

S. Woodward: Oh, wow. OK.

R. McDaniel: -before the Civil War. And uh-

S. Woodward: That goes back aways.

R. McDaniel: Yes.

S. Woodward: Well-well-

R. McDaniel: He had been a hero in the-the Mexican War.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

R. McDaniel: And he came back home and he ran for the State House of Representatives and won.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

R. McDaniel: Then two years later he ran for the, uh, Federal State House and, uh, uh, Washington and won.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

R. McDaniel: And so that's when he and, uh, Senator Summers, who was the old senator from Massachusetts, who had been making real hard remarks about the South and the South and the states' rights. So, uh, he proceeds to go to the senate floor <laughing> and take his cane and give-give Mister, uh Summers, uh-uh, a going over. And uh, so from then on, uh, the people came to ten thousand five-I mean six to ten thousand people came to pay homage for a big barbeque out at Star Fort. And they came by trains, by horse and buggy, by carts. Their trains were backed up to Newberry and they'd have to rent, uh, horses and carriages and bring'em up. And when they got here, these people were having to try to feed'em. So, they were cooking barbeque and to keep it from spoiling, because back those days [in October to the second] there was no way to keep food from spoiling and so they put'em in wash pots and syrup pots and they would barbeque and bone it then they'd stir'em. Add potatoes and um, onions and things to it. Make it-and they kept stirring it to keep from scorching it. Taste-and so they could feed all these people and it became a favorite in this area. Mr. Brooks was reelected without any opposition. He resigned from the House, but he was reelected and he only lived three months afterwards. He died in, uh, after three months going back to Washington. I think it was pneumonia, I'm not sure what he had. But anyway, he died three months later.

S. Woodward: Well at least he had some hash before he went.

R. McDaniel: <Both laughing> Yes, he had hash. He had some of the Ninety-Six hash before he died. And that was not the thing that killed him either.

4. Ninety Six Canning Company (02:31)

J. Gantt: We have our relatively new product; it's-it's been on the market about two years now, what you call the old fashioned string and meat hash. It's got seventy percent beef and it's thirty percent pork too. We chip our meat we put into cans for the-for the hash. But in the refrigerated containers we use that stringy type meat. It resembles my father's hash back when they cooked it on the Fourth of July. It's cooked basically the same way, except back then they used a black cooking kettle-black pot. And they used uh, wood for fire.

<Stringed instrument plays a lively tune as cans are shown going through the line>

J. Gantt: <While screwing the lock on the lid> Lock down. Lock the lid down.

<End music>

J. Gantt: When I was real young, my dad and my uncle, they would cook hash at the cookhouse on Grendel Mill Village. It belonged to Abney Mills in Greenwood. And they would cook hash for the community every Fourth of July.

5. Senator Drummond and the hunt club (04:11)

J. Drummond: Let's run out to the-what we call the deer camp and I'll let you take a picture of that and we'll come on back.

S. Woodward: Alright. And what is the deer camp? Tell me that.

J. Drummond: That's where we started about twenty-five years ago, what we call a father-son hunt club-

S. Woodward: Um hum-

J. Drummond: For deer. There was....and we had a young man that died of a heart attack one morning while we were hunting, so we changed the name to Carroll's Hunt Club. His name-he was-his name- first name was Carroll.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

J. Drummond: So it's called Carroll's Hunt Club. It's about 2,300 acres....strictly.

S. Woodward: How long have you been a member of that hunt club?

J. Drummond: Oh we started the hunt club-we started it probably twenty-five, thirty years ago.

S. Woodward: Now we're gonna see some hash pots out there. Am I right?

J. Drummond: No, you won't see the hash pot because someone stole my hash pot about four years ago.

S. Woodward: Stole your hash pot?

J. Drummond: And one weekend, uh, someone decided to take it home with them. I think we had some-I don't want to accuse anyone but there was some construction people building a house back down not a mile or so away and they had to come through the road.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

J. Drummond: And if-we had never lost anything in that-years and years. And then had a little storm that weekend. It was there on Saturday morning and on Monday one of the guys went over to hunt and it was gone. So it left the premises sometime between Saturday afternoon and Monday morning. And they left the burner and all underneath so I imagine it was probably a pickup truck and some guys-cause one guy could not of handled it. It was a heavy-and to put it in the back of a pickup truck it'd take more than two people to also.

<Cut to outside of hunt club>

J. Drummond: But the old pot sat right here, right here and we'd use the tables here cooking for this here hunt club.

<Cut back to car>

S. Woodward: What kind of hash would you guys make?

J. Drummond: Course the hash we made-you've been hearing the rest of them talk about. We used fifty percent deer meat, the best deer meat. You know we'd eat the hams and uh, twenty-five percent Boston Butt. It's the same as they use here in their-in the cannery of Ninety-Six. And about twenty-five percent beef. So every place had a different formula. Some had all beef. Some had all pork. All pork usually gets too rich.

<Cut to outside of cookhouse>

J. Drummond: I mean this is, uh, this is what the cookhouse-I cooked most of the meals over here.

S. Woodward: Uh huh.

J. Drummond: Especially biscuits. They liked my biscuits. So were pretty well isolated down here and that's why I knew just anybody couldn't come in here and steal my eight-sixty gallon pot.

S. Woodward: And this is where it was.

J. Drummond: And this happened right here. They took it away and we haven't cooked hash since. So you said-

S. Woodward: Now they had to go to some trouble to steal your sixty gallon pot, didn't they?

J. Drummond: Well, you know, a lot of people that-who went to North Carolina think maybe they decided to start cooking hash up there, North Carolina.

<Both laugh>

J. Drummond: But anyway, it's uh, it was a stainless steel-I had a stainless steel lid, like you saw the wooden lids.

S. Woodward: Right.

J. Drummond: Uh, course that was different from any other pot-[that one had it], so if I ever see it or I hear from somebody, I know, I know, I know the difference.

<Cut back to car>

S. Woodward: Well that says something about those pots being valuable to certain people, I guess.

J. Drummond: Yeah. Well they still-its still-I don't think they make them anymore, I understand, so what you do-it just changes hands now. I guess the older generation passes them on down, what you just heard. There'll be some to hold on for many more years probably.

6. Ninety Six Mill Village Hash House (02:43)

S. Woodward: Where you gonna take me now, Senator?

J. Drummond: I'm gonna take you to the Ninety Six Mill Village and show you the old house, what they call the hash house. And the young boy that's-he's made a-he's really added to it and he's got a little-and that's his home now.

S. Woodward: Senator, why do you think that-that there's so much hash cooking in the Greenwood area here? Seems to be a hash club.

J. Drummond: Because, well, I think, you know, the Greenwood area was, uh, until 1960, we were ninety eight percent native bred. And uh, then we got Monsanto, where there's chemistry an-and all these other companies moving in, <Short shot of Solutia Plant sign> and, uh, it's been the best thing that ever happened to South Carolina-to us, Greenwood, bringing in these new people from all over the nation. But back then it was strictly textiles.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

J. Drummond: I think we had, maybe had one or two other-maybe a brick-brick company, Southern Brick Company. But other than that it was all textile, textile mill villages and, uh, every one of those mill villages, and [owner's self] mill village, he built what they call 'hash houses'. And uh, they had big iron pots and certain times of the year they would-each one would try his hand. I guess, different ones-here at Ninety Six it was Mr. Mc...Mr. McDaniel and Johnny Butler and uh, Pewee Ellisons and Mr. Winger, which was the magistrate. They the big hash makers and the other mill villages, I know they had others that were famous for theirs. And uh, it was-it was a big thing. Especially on holidays. And especially on Fourth of July. Labor Day. Of course back then, we didn't make-we didn't know too much about Labor Day. We worked on through that.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

J. Drummond: <Camera pans to the right to show ball park> Right here on my right is where the ball park was. Each-each team had his own-you can see-you can still see the tree line. That was where the old fence was.

S. Woodward: Um hum.

J. Drummond: And right where I'ma show you now and I think you can see it right here was-see right behind the ballpark, was-and this was a hash house.

<Camera pans to brick house> And if you see right here, the-that section on the left was actually the hash house he's built on-the young boy's built onto the right of his house, but you notice how the chimney's-

S. Woodward: So the left-the left side was the hash house-?

J. Drummond: The left side was what they called 'the hash house'.

7. Lower Lake Greenwood VFD Hash (01:54)

J. Drummond: We'll go down to the volunteer fire department and-down on Lake-toward Lake Greenwood I believe they call it Lake Greenwood Fire Depar-Volunteer and show you the big iron pots that they cook the hash in and that's where they-the volunteer fire department cooks the hash and then sells it, certain times of the year, especially on the Fourth of July to help support the volunteer fire department.

<Camera shows shot of Lower Lake Greenwood Vol. Fire Department>

<Followed by shot of hash house>

S. Woodward: Now, looking at that hash house, was it-was it called a 'hash house' because they cooked hash in it?

J. Drummond: Yes.

S. Woodward: Inside it?

J. Drummond: Yes.

S. Woodward: And-but that would be a lot of smoke-

J. Drummond: That was where-that's where all-that's where it was done. The preparation of the food and the hash and the cooking-ing of it and the, uh, and the uh, packaging of it. And people came to the hash house to buy the hash.

<Camera cuts to inside of hash house and man wearing a red shirt – Anthony Kelly>

J. Drummond: This is-this is-

S. Woodward: Are these cast iron pots?

A. Kelly: <nodding> Um hum.

S. Woodward: Can we take this-

J. Drummond: Yeah let's take this off.

A. Kelly: <Folding cover of pot> [Lean on folds.] Forget your hands.

Unidentified Person: Oooh Lord.

J. Drummond: Yeah this is the old-

S. Woodward: Man that's a big pot-

J. Drummond: No, this is the old pot.

S. Woodward: That's a big pot.

Unidentified Person: <In the background> Eighty gallons.

J. Drummond: Yep.

S. Woodward: How big is that?

A. Kelly: Eighty. Gallons.

S. Woodward: Eighty gallons. Do you help-

Unidentified Person: Here it is right. Eighty right-

S. Woodward: -Help these folks cook the hash?

A. Kelly: Yes sir.

S. Woodward: You cook the hash?

A. Kelly: Well Mr. Ernest [Nunn], he-he cook it. We help him out. He-he do all the ingredients and everything else too.

S. Woodward: He-he's-he's the hash master?

A. Kelly: Yes sir.

S. Woodward: Yeah, that's great.