



Boyd Shuford Hilton tells the tale of the Casey Meaders jug(02:58):

B.S. Hilton: Anyway, the Casey Meaders jug tale, which is a classic story of a country potter and well deserving of being preserved other than word of mouth, was that Casey liked whiskey like a lot of potters. It seems to be, I guess they were bored to death with their work and resigned to starving to death for the rest of their lives, they eased their woes with alcohol.

C. Mack: They also traded a good deal didn't they?

B.S. Hilton: Oh yes, they traded and they chased women too. In other words, they were men.

C. Mack: (Laughs)

B.S. Hilton: But Casey liked to drink and he'd apparently what my mother would call, a "drown drinker" it's a term from me to you; it's a guy who will sip a little every day but never gets drunk. I mean every day too. At that time, it was before the days of prohibition, supposedly when this happened. I'm not sure about my dates but there was a lot of small government licensed distilleries in this country and they were partly supportive of the jug trade too.

C. Mack: Sure, sure.

B.S. Hilton: They used local made jugs. But uh, it is my understanding that this was not a locally licensed distillery, it was a bootleg operation even if it was before the days of prohibition and it might have been in the twenties. I don't know, but anyhow the story is that Casey made his own whiskey jug naturally being a potter, he would. And he would take it to the still house, it was so called, and I won't mention the name although I know it because we don't want to insult the children of the bootleggers. You understand my mission there, I respect them and I think a man's got a right to make whiskey if he wants to make whiskey. If the government says he can't, well the government's wrong, and I don't drink. He would take his jug and he would get it filled up and he would take it back and sip on it until it was empty and he would go back and get it filled up again, out of their barrel. The thing about it was, that Casey made his own jug and he put a big fat

three on it to hold three gallons and everybody accepted it as that. The jug actually held, measured four and a half gallons...are you reading me now?

C. Mack: (Laughs), beautiful.

B.S. Hilton: And he would take his three gallon jug, so plainly stamped and beautifully made into the distillery and they would put four and a half gallons of whiskey in it and just leave enough room for the stopper and he would pay them for the three gallons and everybody went home happy. Now that has been told more than once and in different directions, it is apparently a true story.

C. Mack: That's beautiful, I wonder if the jug is still in the shop.

B.S. Hilton: Quite possibly the jug is still in existence, which would make it an extremely valuable story, (laughs).

C. Mack: (Laughs), extremely valuable story.

B.S. Hilton: Now that's the story of Casey Meaders' whiskey jug.

Boyd Shuford Hilton (02:47):

C. Mack: We're talking about Casey Meaders and his pottery in North Carolina. Where was that located?

B.S. Hilton: About uh, fifteen miles airline from here, down in the Balls Creek area. You've heard Balls Creek mentioned Balls Creek is also where that mill is that Ernestine painted on the...

C. Mack: Yeah.

B.S. Hilton: Well it's about fifteen miles east of here, twenty...fifteen-twenty.

C. Mack: And they say the story is painful.

B.S. Hilton: Oh, part of it. Casey Meaders came up here from Georgia, that is generally accepted and apparently there was some family friction when he came, because he never went back according to the legend. And they didn't come to visit him, whence came through observation that he disappeared, he didn't disappear. He came up to North Carolina and started making pots, by himself. I have a friend who had helped Casey Meaders dig clay, who has helped Casey Meaders fire his kiln, when he was a kid twelve-years-old. And who has helped him haul it around in a T-model pickup and sell it. But I've never got the full story but there is that much in existence, which is available. What

is not available is the inside of Casey's shop, which is still in existence, completely surrounded by cement blocks and a roof and a locked door, and on the property of where his daughter now lives.

C. Mack: The shop is encased...in another building?

B.S. Hilton: She... she took that shop and she built another building around it and locked the key and said, "Nobody goes in there, my daddy was the best potter that ever lived and nobody's going to handle his stuff or break his stuff, or steal his stuff." And this, I'm quoting legend now, these aren't facts. But you get enough of these legends together and they all lock in and they intermesh, you begin to see that they make a complete story.

C. Mack: So right after the day he died?

B.S. Hilton: Not the day he died, after he died

C. Mack: I mean this...

B.S. Hilton: It's apparently; according to one person, who claims to have been in it, is that the inside of his shop is exactly how he left it, tools and all. But you can't go in it, Terry Sugg wasn't permitted to go in it and Terry can be quite persuasive to little old ladies. Because he has that nice easy going manner you see, and you tend to accept Terry as not a smart aleck or a fast buck artist, cause he's not. And all that is that story of Casey Meader's shop and it's there, and if you want to try it, you go ahead; it's your head and their stone wall.