

D.L. PARKER – HENDERSON BOTTLING WORKS

Born in March 1849, the son of Richard Parker and Ruthy Adderton, Drewry Lovelace ("D.L.") Parker, was a native of Rowan County, N.C. Family letters as well as entries in deed books reflect that D.L. went by the name "Love." According to his granddaughters, family members often called him "Lovey."

Raised in the southeastern section of Rowan, not far from Gold Hill, Love's father and grandfather were farmers on property adjacent to the Yadkin River. Love was born at a time when this part of North Carolina was booming from the gold rush. In 1873 he would marry Eleanor Jenkin, the daughter of Cornish mining captain Bill Jenkin, who, with other Cornishmen, had come to Gold Hill in the mid 1840s.

Bill Jenkin died in 1868, about 5 years before Love Parker married his daughter in 1873, but it's possible Bill had some influence upon Love Parker's "career path." In addition to mining, Jenkin became involved in distilling liquor during the Civil War. He was a partner, along with his own brother-in-law, William Richards, and others, operating a distillery in Chester, S.C., which held a contract to provide liquor to South Carolina's Confederate troops.

By 1880, Love and his wife had moved to Wadesboro, where he is enumerated as a "bar keeper" in the 1880 census. Anson County deeds also reflect that D. Love Parker was a merchant in partnership with Henry Williams, doing business as "Parker and Williams." Parker also owned the Central Hotel in Wadesboro.

Why Love and Eleanor chose to move to Henderson shortly before 1900 isn't known. They do not seem to have had relatives in the area. Their daughter, Lottie, said Eleanor agreed to move only if Love would build her a house exactly like their house in Wadesboro, which he did at the corner of Henderson's East Montgomery and College streets. The house remained owned by the family until 1988.

The 1900 Vance County census shows "D.L." Parker's occupation as a "dealer in whiskey." Letterhead from Henderson Bottling Works shows the business was located at 119 Montgomery Street.

Both letterhead and early advertisements for Henderson Bottling Works show the company manufactured "ginger ale, soda water, jersey cream and celery cola," but collectors know that whiskey also was bottled. The political backdrop is important to note. The prohibition movement was

well underway in North Carolina in this timeframe. In 1881, North Carolina's voters defeated prohibition, but by 1883, North Carolina's first chapter of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union was established in Greensboro, with 11 more chapters forming by 1884. In 1902, the Anti-Saloon League had organized in the state, and in 1903, the Watts Law enacted rural prohibition, although towns still retained local option. In 1908, North Carolinians voted to outlaw all manufacture and sale of "intoxicating beverages." State prohibition went into effect Jan. 1, 1909.

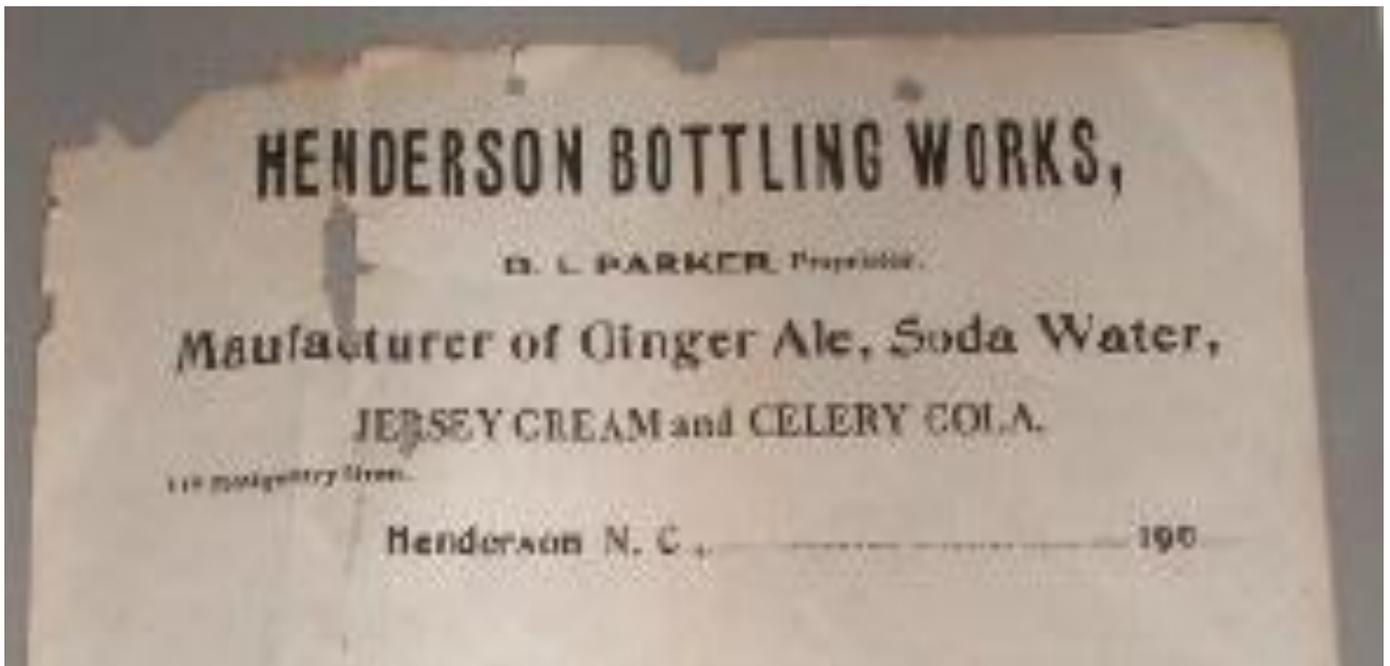
It has been said that a "speakeasy" was operated from the Henderson Bottling Works during this period, but actual evidence has proved elusive.

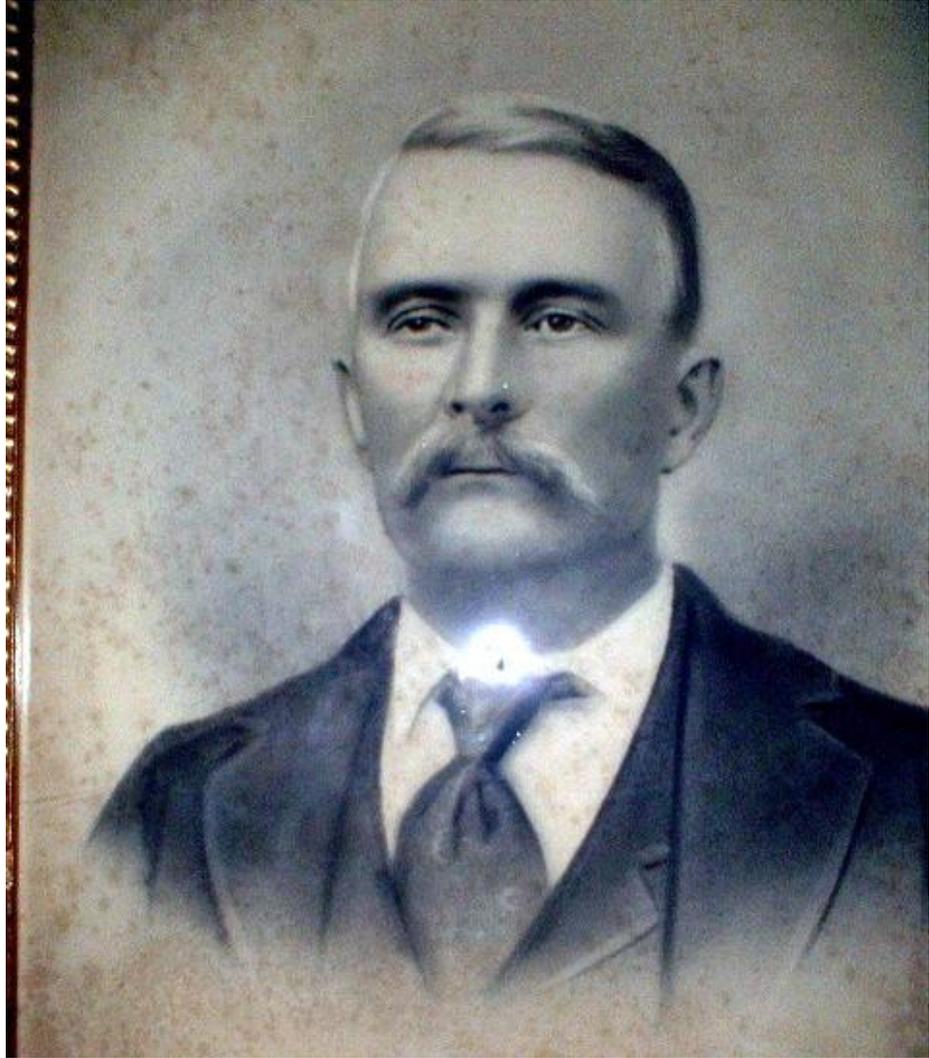
Before his death, the Vance County business incorporation records show Parker became a lesser partner in the Pepsi Cola Bottling Company. Presumably, Henderson Bottling Works became part of this operation.

Drewry Lovelace Parker died 26 March 1917, and is buried in Elmwood Cemetery in Henderson.

--Sandy Hoyle Bolick, gr-granddaughter of Drewry Lovelace Parker

Below is a letterhead from the Henderson Bottling Works and a portrait of D.L. Parker. Many thanks to Sandy for these two items and a wonderful story.





Many thanks to Donnie Medlin for this image of the label from a pint sized whiskey flask.

David Tingen
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Photo by David Tingen

Photo by D.T.