



**NEAREST GREEN FOUNDATION HONORS FORMER SLAVE'S  
CONTRIBUTION TO THE TENNESSEE WHISKEY INDUSTRY**

*Plans include street renaming, museum, memorial park, book and a scholarship fund*

**NASHVILLE, Tenn. (July 19, 2017)** – A New York Times best-selling author, captivated by the story of a former Tennessee slave's involvement in the most successful whiskey brand in the world, has announced plans for a dozen projects to honor the man, including a museum, memorial park, book about his life and college scholarships for his descendants.

Nathan "Nearest" Green was the master distiller for the whiskey operations for Dan Call in the mid-1800s in Lynchburg, Tenn., where a young Jack Daniel got his training in the business.

Green's place in the whiskey tradition of Tennessee was highlighted in a 2016 story by New York Times journalist Clay Risen.

Best-selling author Fawn Weaver was on an international business trip with her husband when she read and was struck by the narrative – a slave whose significance in the Tennessee whiskey industry was uncovered and acknowledged. As she dug deeper, she realized the story was not about just two men, but rather an entire community of African-Americans and whites in the South living and working in harmony.

"The idea that there were positive stories out there of whites' and blacks' working side by side, through and beyond the Civil War, resonated with me," Weaver said. "I liked the story of Jack Daniel, but Nearest Green's story and the community at large really stayed with me."

When he was growing up, Daniel did chores for his neighbor, Call, and he took an interest in distilling. Call instructed Green to teach Daniel everything he knew, and in the 1967 official biography of Daniel, titled "Jack Daniel's Legacy," Call described Green as "the best whiskey maker that I know."

"It was on the Call farm that young Jack became one of the world's most famous pupils and Uncle Nearest, the greatest teacher in the fine art of distilling Tennessee whiskey," Weaver said.

Call would later hand over the still to Daniel, and Weaver has uncovered documents showing that the Daniel and Green families worked together for decades, including original paychecks from Daniel's descendants to several of Green's children and grandchildren, some of whom still work in the whiskey industry to this day.

"When Fawn contacted us, we were excited to hear that someone was bringing to light all of this information about our family," said Mitchell Green. "Until now, only our family and a small community were aware of the impact our ancestor had on the Tennessee whiskey industry."

What began as an idea for a book has grown into an entire foundation to honor Green.

([www.NearestGreen.org](http://www.NearestGreen.org))

Weaver and her husband purchased the old 313-acre Call farm, where the original Jack Daniel's Distillery was located, where Green taught Daniel the craft of making fine Tennessee whiskey and was the master distiller for Jack Daniel's until at least 1881. The two-room dogtrot cabin where Green lived during the Civil War and the Greek Revival home where Call and Daniel once lived are being rebuilt by the same construction team that was used to restore Daniel's original office and other historic buildings around Lynchburg. A beautification project is near completion in the 2-acre area surrounding the original spring where the water for early bottles of Old No. 7 can still be seen pouring gallons of water out 24 hours a day.

The Nearest Green Foundation was created to ensure that, once his story has been told, it will never again be forgotten. Already in the works are artifacts being placed on permanent loan to the Smithsonian National Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.; plans for a museum in Lynchburg dedicated to the history of Tennessee whiskey; the renaming of a street to Nearest Green Way; the Nearest Green Memorial Park in Lynchburg; a book scheduled for completion this year; an improvement project at Highview Cemetery in Lynchburg, where Green is believed to have been buried; and a scholarship fund to benefit his direct descendants. The scholarship's first recipients are Matthew McGilberry and Marcus Butler, both attending college this fall.

To correct the record, Weaver has written a new foreword and preface for Jack Daniel's official biography, "Jack Daniel's Legacy," which will be republished this month in honor of the 50th anniversary of its original release. Weaver worked with reporter and author Ben Green's heirs to republish the book, with proceeds going to the Nearest Green Legacy Scholarship fund.

"Nearest and his wife, Harriet, could not read or write," Weaver said. "Neither could their children. Most of their grandchildren were pulled out of school as early as the sixth grade to work. With a heritage like that, we thought one of the best ways to honor Nearest Green would be to ensure each of his descendants who gets accepted into college need not worry about how it will be paid for and can just think about succeeding and then paying it forward."

Weaver has interviewed more than 100 people connected to the story, including Green's 106-year-old granddaughter, who identified the African-American man in the famous picture sitting to the immediate right of Jack Daniel as her uncle. Also interviewed were descendants of Jack

Daniel, dozens of local historians and other Green family members. More than 20 archivists, genealogists, conservators, archaeologists and researchers have assisted her in uncovering the story that already includes more than 2,500 hours of collective research.

Although not a part of the foundation, a group Weaver helped pull together is releasing a handmade, Tennessee-crafted whiskey called Uncle Nearest 1856 this month, which will help in supporting all the various foundation efforts. “When I met with the descendants of George Green, the son most known for helping his father, Nearest, and Jack Daniel in the whiskey business,” Fawn recalled, “I asked them what they thought was the best way to honor Nearest. Their response was, ‘No one owes us anything. We know that. But putting his name on a bottle, letting people know what he did, would be great.’” With that request, an ultra-premium whiskey brand built on the most authentic (and verified) story to enter the spirits industry in the last century was born.

**Media contact:**

Katy Varney  
MP&F Public Relations  
615-259-4000  
[kvarney@mpf.com](mailto:kvarney@mpf.com)

Ben Baden  
MP&F Public Relations  
615-259-4000  
[bbaden@mpf.com](mailto:bbaden@mpf.com)