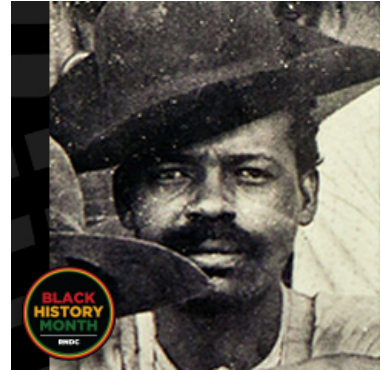Nathan 'Nearest' Green was the first African American master distiller whose recipe launched one of the most recognizable and historic brands of liquor, Jack Daniel's. Green was born into slavery in 1820 and emancipated after the Civil War. In the 1850s, Green was purchased by a wealthy landowner named Dan Call from Lynchburg, Tennessee. Call partnered Green with a young orphan named Jack Daniel who would become Green's apprentice, learning the art of whiskey making from Green.

After the Civil War ended in 1865 and Green was granted his freedom, Daniel started his own distillery and hired Green as his master distiller. Green was an essential part of perfecting the Jack Daniel's process with filtered whiskey through sugar maple charcoal. When Daniel decided to relocate and build a new distillery, Green did not follow. However, his three sons, George, Edde and Eli, went along.

Many of Green's grandchildren and great-grandchildren continued to work in the whiskey industry. There are thousands of documents detailing the partnership between Green and Jack Daniel. Many have been donated to the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The story of their partnership was known by Lynchburg locals and historians for decades but recently received national attention after a 2016 New York Times article revealed Green's identity and named him as Daniel's teacher.

*Pictured - George Green, the son of Green