Fermentation

Fermentation uses naturally occurring yeast and bacteria to raise the acidity of a food product in order to preserve it. Fermentation is used to make bread rise, to culture cheese, and to make pickles. There are many common foods created using fermentation, but also many drinks. One byproduct of fermentation is ethanol and creating alcoholic beverages by fermenting grains and fruits has long been a way to preserve the calories in agricultural products.

The earliest evidence of alcoholic beverages created in eastern North America shows that Native Americans created a drink similar to beer by fermenting corn. They also fermented persimmons and berries. Unlike many of todays fermented beverages, which strain out the grain or fruit and use only their sugars, these early drinks were higher in protein and other nutrients. The fermented beverages that are more commonly known today such as spirits, wine, and beer have a long history in Onslow County.

In 1904 Onslow County enacted a prohibition law banning the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. Federal agents began busting people making and selling "monkey rum," a liquor distilled from fermented molasses.

OFFERS "BARGAIN" IN "MONKEY" RUM; LANDS IN JAIL

Would you pay $1.75 for a Coco-Cola bottle filled with home-brew corn whisky That ?is the price Chester Burnett, colored, is said to have been offering that quanity of "monkey" when he was arrested by the police at Jacksonville, N. C. The negro was brought here yesterday by A. B. West, United States deputy marshal, and lodged in the county jail for trial in the federal court.

Deputy West says that the negro was very open in his operations. The officer says Burnett attended the tobacco sales at Jacksonville and made a specialty of selling the booze in Coco-Cola bottles to visiting farmers.

Some of them are still making efforts to still. Last week the United States revenue authorities captured four big moonshine outfits in Onslow county. The Onslow Progress states that they had been making a specialty of monkey rum. Something that is said to be close kin to blue lightning.

Wilmington Morning Star, February, 1917 & September, 1920

The county court set prices for alcohol sold at colonial taverns, which included drinks such as New England rum, West Indies rum, English beer, and country cider. By the mid nineteenth century corn whiskey had become more prevalent than rum and many general stores carried the product, often distilled in the area. Onslowans also produced alcohol at home in the form of homemade wine using muscadine grapes as well as other fruits. Onslow adopted prohibition in 1904, sixteen years earlier than national prohibition, and struggled to keep people from producing and selling alcohol. After prohibition ended, Onslow County became one of the largest growers of muscadine grapes for making wine. Today Onslow is home to distilleries and wineries as well as avid homebrewers and winemakers.

Col. Montfort's wife took first and second place for her scuppernong wine in Onslow's first county fair. Onslow's first winery, Onslow Wine Cellars, opened nearly 100 years later in Holly Ridge.

Best do Scuppernong wine, mrs Col Montfort, 1
2d " do do do do 50c
" do Tomato do do 1
" do Strawberry do mrs E W Fonville, 1
" do Blackberry do mrs J B Kelley, of Duplin, 1
2d " do Blacberry do mrs E W Fonville, 50c.
3d " do do do mrs M L F Redd, 50c.
" do Scuppernong do without spirits, do mrs M L F Redd, 1

To learn more about wine making in Onslow County scan the QR code or visit the associated URL.

https://youtu.be/is4Wwy3qWho