



Joe Comic

BRIEF HISTORY

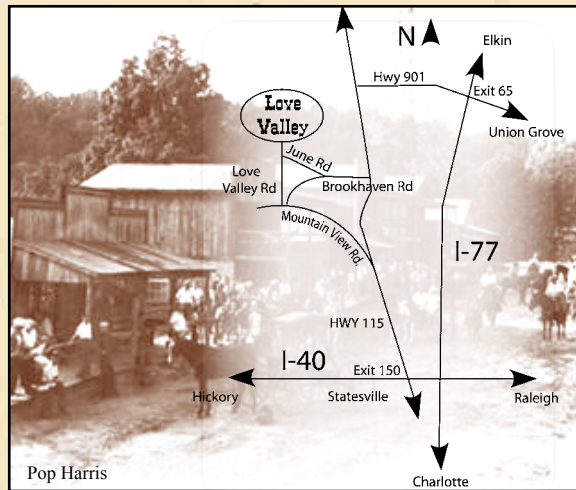
Love Valley is an authentic western town situated in the foothills of the Brushy Mountains north of Statesville, North Carolina. Love Valley is a boy's dream and a man's reality. Andy Barker always dreamed of living in a western town. So, at the age of 29 Andy left his lucrative general contracting business in Charlotte and moved his family to his new land in April of 1954. His wife Ellenora, daughter Tonda (age six), and son Jet (age two) moved to a little one-room shack. Andy used his crew from JA Construction Company, owned jointly with his father, to build the town of Love Valley.

The first building they constructed was the Love Valley Presbyterian Church. This was followed by the arena and the rest of the town, including its own post office. Originally the town was built around the arena, but in 1963 (the year it was incorporated) Andy decided to move the town to its present-day location overlooking the arena.

The first mayor was Andy's father, known as JA. But in 1965 Andy was elected for the first of many terms. In 1970 Love Valley had a rock festival with the Allman Brothers Band as the headline band. This brought over a hundred thousand people to the small town—some of whom still remain. In 1976 Andy ran for governor of North Carolina and once again in 1984.

In 1988 Love Valley's leathersmith Joe Ponder was inducted into the *Guinness Book of World Records*, having the world's strongest teeth. Love Valley was promoted even further when Joe was featured in *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. He appeared on the David Letterman Show and then traveled the world to perform his feats. In 1994 Andy was inducted in to the Mayors Hall of Fame. In the late 90s, the Love Valley Horseman's Association was formed, followed shortly by the Love Valley Mule Association. Both of the associations are still in existence and are responsible for many of the events that are presently held.

The Love Valley experience has attracted dignitaries at all levels, including NC and US senators, Indian chiefs, governors, generals, and presidents of our country. Musicians and actors featured in local events have come just to join in the fun — like Rex Allen, Arthur Godfrey, and Fred Kirby in the early days.



Pop Harris

A few words from the town founders ...

“Love Valley is a town all on its own, located away from the hustle of city life and offering the leisurely atmosphere of an old western community. Love Valley's downtown invites visitors to ride in on the dirt road, hitch their horses, stroll along the boardwalk and shop at the country store, horse rental barn, tack shop, gift shop, general store, hardware store, or blacksmith's shop. There's also a saloon, a bar and various other businesses. Parking is available for visitors by car, as well. Thousands of people frequent Love Valley in the prime season, from Easter to Halloween, for the events including rodeos, horse parades, benefit concerts, cook-offs, or a leisurely horseback ride along one of the winding trails. **Please remember to follow all of the Town Rules and Ordinances posted throughout town.** Come see us.”

ELLENORA & ANDY BARKER



Katherine Bomboy

LOVE VALLEY



COWBOY CAPITAL

