

AG & NATURAL RESOURCES

Cotton, Healthcare and Go-Cart Racing: Over 200 Years of Elbert County History

Although Eavenson Farm's operations span many acres in Elbert County, the heart of it sits at the intersection of Thirteen Forks Road and Floyd Road. The original farm was settled by the Gaines family in the late 1780's. Bobby Eavenson's mother was a Gaines and her family grew cotton on the property for many years. Bobby is the 5th generation farmer to have worked this land. Although it has been several years since he has grown cotton, Bobby still makes up a large part of the row crop farming in Elbert County. Wheat, corn, oats, barley, canola, and soy beans, have all been part of the annual rotation. Bobby Started farming this land with his father in 1965. They had cattle up until 1976 when they realized that the land was just too good to not grow row crops.

The family farm is rich in history. The old Floyd Road went right through the tree-lined homestead and can still be seen in several places. In fact, during dry years the old road bed can be detected in the fields by a noticeable difference in the crop due to soil compaction. The old family home still sits on this site, although, it has taken on an entirely new look. In the early 1800's, a one room log cabin was constructed. That original structure now sits encased in a somewhat modern day structure that was added to several times. The front window of the house was cut out with a chain saw and



the porch and clapboard siding now hide the 1800's logs.

The family property holds many other historical secrets as well. One dilapidated structure on the site used to house a doctor's office. Bobby's great-uncle, a doctor, would occasionally come from Dewey Rose to see patients. On one side was a waiting room with an exam room next door. A blacksmith's shop and his maternal grandfather's general store occupied this site as well. In later years, the general store was moved to the site at Thirteen Forks and was then operated by his paternal grandfather. In the 1950's, Bobby's family ran a race track on the farm property. Go-cart type vehicles raced an oval track which is still evident by the banked curve at one end. Bobby's father would oversee the start and finish of the race while his mother would run the concession stand. Bobby and his brother would often compete in the racing, although due to their competitive nature, his father would not let them run in the same races for fear of them hurting each other.

Bobby and wife Judy have been married for 47 years. They have seen many changes to their farm, Elbert County, and farming in general. This is evidenced by the farm equipment that the family owns. A fully restored 1939 John Deere tractor which was owned by Judy's father, sits next to a spray rig that will drive itself through the field using GPS. Bobby reminds me though; he still has to occupy the machine. "We have not progressed that much" he says. When asked if he could remember any bad years, he responds "I'd prefer to forget those. Good years come about every one in four."

Legend has it that the name of the area comes from an old oak tree which had thirteen forks to its branch structure. The tree no longer stands, but a granite monument commemorates the site. Although many things have changed, one thing remains constant. Farmers like Bobby are still feeding our world. So, the next time you buy groceries, or cook a meal, thank a farmer. Specifically, thank Bobby!

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