



By Payton McCormick
 In Vernon, it isn't uncommon to find generational farmers. Fathers farming lands passed down by their fathers, and sharing their way of life with sons of their own.
 For the past four seasons, the White family has had three generations working the fields at the same time.
 Dan White and his wife Sheila have been blessed with a healthy lineage of 32 grandchildren and 28 great-grandchildren.
 Their youngest son, Clint, has worked with Dan for many years. The family farms traditional wheat in Wilbarger County but also has made a name for themselves in the peanut industry.
 They have been nationally recognized for their success with peanuts and have been published in magazines and on television.
 Dan says his grandson Colby, is a sixth-generation farmer of the White family.
 Colby, Clint's son, moved back to Vernon after graduating from Texas Tech, the university of choice for the White family.

"I just came back to what I know," Colby said. "I got married, and have a beautiful 11-month old daughter now. This is the fourth crop since I moved back."
 Colby was operating a digger, a farming rig designed to gently lift the peanut plant out of the ground, shake off the excess dirt, and place the plant peanut-side up to dry for several days.
 Dan says peanuts are such a unique crop.
 "They are resilient," he said. "When most other crops would have died, the peanuts stick around."
 According to the National Peanut Board, peanuts don't grow on trees or bushes. They're legumes that grow underneath the soil. This helps make peanuts a sustainable crop because they add beneficial nitrogen to the soil and require much less water than other nuts.
 Harvesting peanuts is a two-step process. First, a farmer drives a machine called a digger along the peanut rows. The digger pulls up the peanut plant, flips it upside down and sets it back down on the row. The peanuts dry for a few days then the farmer uses another machine called a

shaker or a picker, which separates the peanut pods from the rest of the plant.
 Peanut harvest starts along the Southeastern U.S. in September and October and can continue until November as far west as New Mexico and Oklahoma. Peanuts have a relatively long growing season, taking about 180 days to mature before they're ready. During harvest time, farmers want to avoid wet weather and get their peanuts off the ground before the first frost.
 Food safety is super important so peanuts aren't usually sold directly to consumers from the farm. Many farmers can attest to the joy of eating a peanut fresh off the vine though. After harvest, farmers take their peanuts to a buying point where they're tested and cleaned.
 US farmers can produce a lot of peanuts per acre. In 2015, farmers harvested about 4,000 pounds of peanuts per acre. Investments in research and responsible growing practices help peanut farmers keep their yields high.
 The White family history reaches back to the 1800s with a photo of

Dan's ancestors from the Bowie area. His great grandfather, James Franklin, built a rock house near Sunset, Texas. Dan's brother, who lives in Vernon, found the original site of their family's home and discovered the foundational stones which outlined the old house, still sat on the ground untouched.
 Today, Dan and Sheila have the actual cornerstone of their family's history on display at their house in Odell.
 Franklin moved to Wilbarger County in 1890. In 1895, Stark Brothers Nursery sat out an 80-acre orchard for Franklin. Dan said they were to choose any crop they wanted for 15 years for payment of the trees. They plowed the land but a severe windstorm in March 1896 sandblasted all of the trees. Stark Brother Nursery came to look at the trees which they had taken a mortgage on the 80 acres, and based on the damage, released the mortgage.
 "My grandfather had the sense to scratch the bark and if he saw green, he left the tree," Dan said. "At the end of it, he came out with 80 acres clean and dry."