

Biographical Sketch of Patrick Brown

The History of Brown Family Farms



Patrick Brown is farming on land that his family has owned for generations in a small community called Hecks Grove in southeastern Warren County, North Carolina. “The farm was established by my great grandfather, Byron C. Brown in 1865. Byron was born at the Oakley Grove Plantation in Northeast Warren County, NC in the community called Littleton. Byron and his mother Lucinda Fain were both born into slavery and owned by his father Jacob Falcon-Browne and Jacobs mother Mary Ann Falcon-Browne. Jacob and Bryon’s Mother Lucinda had a total of 7 children., Whom all left the plantation at the end of the civil war in 1865. I now own the Oakley Grove plantation I purchased it in May 2021 I plan to create an agrotourism division to add to my current farm operation and host family gatherings and barn yard weddings.” Patrick recounts. “While sharecropping He became a first-generation farmer who owned a business, grew commodity crops, timber and raised livestock until he died in 1931. My grandfather, Grover Brown, was a second-generation farmer who inherited his father’s businesses and farmed. He established a peach orchard in 1935, while cultivating grain and raising livestock up until his death in the 1978. My father, Rev. Dr. Arthur A. Brown, was the third-generation farmer “who taught me everything that I know about farming;” he continued raising livestock, and grew vegetables, grain, and tobacco up until his retirement in 2003. My father is currently 95 years old, and we are blessed to still have him here with us.”

Patrick was next in line. After graduating from Fayetteville State University in 2005 and armed with a degree in Business Administration in Management, he travelled all over the world as a federal contractor and federal employee, working alongside the USDA and other government agencies as an Agriculture Advisor in Afghanistan until 2011, while also managing his dad’s farm. In 2014, after industrial hemp was legalized, Patrick did extensive research on the specialty crop with his mother the late Celeste C. Brown over the next few years before planning his first crop of germinated hemp seed in 2018. “We stopped farming tobacco in 2017 and now we are focused on Soil Conservation, Regenerative climate smart practices and carbon sequestration while growing specialty crops that can actually help with food sovereignty, climate impact and holistic health aid.

“Our mission at Brown Family Farms is to help provide an alternative, holistic solution to customers, naturally, by processing and manufacturing carbon neutral plants like industrial hemp, natural herbs, and organic vegetables,” Patrick continues. “I have been successful in alleviating ailments with specialty crops such as anxiety, depression, OCD, ADD, ADHD, pain, autism, mood swings, PTSD, inflammation, soreness, fatigue, acne, eczema, migraines, and psoriasis. Our products can also help the cue-induced craving and anxiety for people who suffer from opioid addiction.” When harvested, Patrick’s crops are processed at a local distillery and decorticator to make products such as textile fiber, manufactured building material, topicals, creams, salves, and oils. “Not only am I an operator and cultivator, but I also have a license to process all my products,” he notes. “So, on my farm, we have a vertically integrated operation; we create, we process, and distribute our products here and online.”

In addition to providing product for the medicinal sector, Patrick notes that industrial hemp is also an excellent, cost-effective substitute for existing products such as textiles, cellulose polymers, bio-fuels, and, now, hempcrete, which is a relatively new composite material made from the plant's hurd, or core. Hempcrete provides a natural, vapor-permeable, airtight insulation material which also has great thermal mass, giving it a uniquely effective thermal performance. Hemp composites are light and strong, and, ideally, can even replace fiberglass and some carbon fiber.

"You have a Medicinal plant variety, and then you have your Fiber textile woven and non-woven varieties," Patrick says. In 2021 I grew over 170 acres of fiber hemp for Biophil Fibers out of Pennsylvania that created textile fibers products and 60 acres of fiber hemp that supplied VF Corporation in Durham, NC and Trace Feminine Care in Nashville, Tennessee. "We drill it, sickle it, rett it and bale it up like hay and sell it to large textile corporations. That's the future for the industrial hemp industry; it's the same way we've done with our hay over the years, and it's the way we will be able to farm industrial hemp at a commodity level regeneratively to help introduce farm practices that will improve the soil and help with carbon sequestration during our crop rotations like we do with our organic vegetables."

Patrick is also intent on helping other farmers, especially Black Indigenous People of Color, by teaching the future farmers of America how to start farming operations and to learn how to utilize their land for the good of the soil and atmosphere; planting and harvesting products that are regenerative, sustainable, environmentally friendly, and healthy for human consumption. In October 2019, he was featured as the keynote speaker for a panel called "Land of Opportunity in Black Agribusiness" at the annual Black Wall Street conference for entrepreneurs focused on the intersection of content, connections, and culture in Durham, NC. In January 2020, Patrick was featured on The Black Equity Network podcast panel "Dear Black Farmers" Episode 266. In 2020 Patrick and Brown Family Farms were featured in the September issue of Business View Magazine. In May 2021 Patrick was one of the keynote speakers at the 9th annual Vance Granville small business summit for agriculture alternatives and legacy farms seminar. In November of 2021 Patrick was the keynote speaker at the 31st Annual National Black Farmers Association Conference in Boydton, VA. On March 1st, 2022, Patrick was the first BIPOC farmer to speak at the 5th Annual Industrial Hemp Summit at The North Carolina Biotechnology Center in Research Triangle Park, NC. On August 20th, 2022, Patrick was the keynote speaker at the Southern Hemp Expo in Nashville Tennessee. And on October 1st, 2022, Patrick will be the Keynote speaker for the 1st annual W.A.S.H conference sponsored by Patagonia and VF Corporation in Liberty, NC.

In order to encourage young people to farm, the Brown Family Farms serves as a learning environment for organizations such as the Golden LEAF Foundation and the NC Corporative Extension offices. To date, 2 college interns from Winston-Salem State have volunteered over 200 hours which had helped them earn college course credits. "We're losing a lot of younger farmers, because either they don't have the proper educational processes to continue their farms, or they don't have the motivation to want to continue to farm anymore. So, we allow students from various colleges and agriculture programs to come out to our farm and obtain course credits, so we can provide education and give back to the community."

So, what's in the future for the Brown Family Farms? "We would like to be the farm that continues to create," Patrick emphasizes. "We would like to be one of the largest minority-owned farms; to be able to

provide education; to be able to provide funding for food banks; to be able to provide funding and products for herbal medicines; and to be able to team with some of the largest corporations for what we do here, organically, through our various certifications to grow natural products. In December of 2021 Patrick signed a MOU to become an Agricultural Advisor to the Littleton Academy located in Halifax, NC to do exactly what he has always envision being the glue in helping to build up the next generation of farmers. We must expand the educational protocol of our farm to motivate other younger farmers. And we don't just want to focus on one specialty crop. We want to become as diversified as possible with crop production so that we can an unlimited amount of niche products available to our clients : specialty vegetables, herbs, holistic aid, course curriculum, agritourism and seminars so we can feed, heal and cure our community in that way."