

Thoroughbreds Trained At Enoree Center

BY LOUISE PETTUS
AND RON CHEPESIUKE

Talk to Greg Smith about horses at his home in rural Enoree and it's hard to imagine that not too long ago he worked a 9 to 5 job selling clothes at Sears in Anderson.

Dressed in his working outfit of faded blue jacket and denims and a button-down oxford shirt, he moves about the family's 400-acre horse farm looking every bit the young man with horses in his blood.

Smith knows exactly what he wants to do with his life. "I want to be the best trainer I can be," he says. "Someday I'm going to train a horse that wins the Kentucky Derby."

It's a lofty ambition perhaps, but as a member of the family that runs the Enoree Training Center, Greg is in the perfect place to realize his dream. Over the past few years the center has become nationally known for its training of thoroughbred horses.

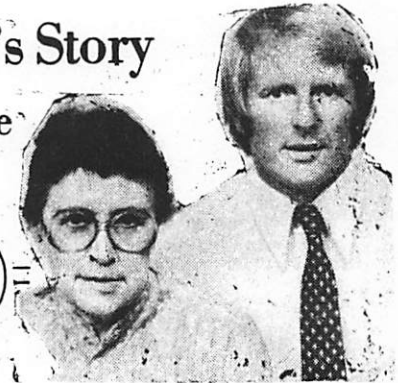
South Carolina has no thoroughbred racing, but it does have many training centers that play a significant role in the thoroughbred industry. Unlike many that are large conglomerates run like corporations and mainly located in Camden and Aiken County, the Enoree Training Center is the state's largest family-owned operation.

The center's overseer is 44-year-old Franklin G. Smith, better known as Goree, a nickname picked up as a child from a Texas uncle, Goree Kind. Helping Smith run the business, in addition to his son Greg, are his brothers John, a trainer; and his wife, Barie, who as bookkeeper and accountant, the whole family admits, is "the glue that keeps the whole thing together." Another brother, Hammie, is based in Maryland and helps to train some of the horses owned by the family.

Goree Smith's grueling schedule demands that he wear many hats: business manager, talent scout, PR man, nutritionist, physical therapist, and others.

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Young horses arrive at the center in April as yearlings. They are broken and trained through the winter and then in the spring sent back to their owners ready to race. Smith also spends much time traveling the country, looking for horses to buy and for races in which to enter the ones his family own.

Smith and his brothers were introduced to thoroughbred horses by their late father, Dudley Smith, a farmer who, during World War II, accepted three thoroughbreds to settle an unpaid feed bill. The brothers grew up near Lone Star, located about nine miles from Enoree and a few miles from Orangeburg. Goree broke horses as a teenager and then began training horses in 1968 at his father's "Running Horse Farms."

Since purchasing the Enoree Training Center in 1976, the Smith family has expanded the business from a 136-acre, 48-stall operation to a 400-acre, 215-stall spread, which each March, hosts one of South Carolina's spring horse races, the Enoree Trails. People come from as far as North Carolina and Myrtle Beach for the race.

Since opening the Goree Training Center eight years ago the Smiths have had much success turning out winners. The first was "Royal Ski,"

the top money-winning two-year-old of 1976. The center has trained the offspring of such famous sires as Sentennial, Alyador and Seattle Slew. Demons Begon, the 1987 favorite for the Kentucky Derby, was also a graduate.

The center's most famous alumnus is a jockey. Chris Antley rode as exercise rider for three years before heading for success at the race tracks and fame as a jockey superstar. Since leaving the center in 1983, Antley has been one of horse racing's top 10 winning riders. In 1985 he led all jockeys, with 471 victories to his credit.

"There are probable few better places in the country for a young person to start building a career as a rider than Enoree South Carolina, and far fewer better teachers to learn from than Franklin G. Smith," writes Edward C. Murano of the respected trade magazine The Thoroughbred Record. Such acclaim led the national Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association to name Goree Smith South Carolina's top owner-breeder of 1985.