

# John Boyd

**Author:** Emily Hudson, Story Catcher

**Places:** Lynnville, Giles County, Tennessee;  
Pulaski, Giles County, Tennessee

**Birth:** March 5, 1912

**Death:** February 1, 1986

**Professions:** Groom



## Birth and Family

John Andrew Boyd was the second son of Solomon Sephus Boyd and Florence Perry Boyd. Lynnville, a town nestled in southern Tennessee's Giles County, was the Boyd family home. His sisters were Annie Pearl, Sarah Louise, and Bessie. His brothers were Livingston, Everette Jehoy and Robert Earl.<sup>1</sup> His grandparents were Civil War veteran Solomon Boyd and Lavinia Boyd.<sup>2</sup> John Andrew Boyd married Hannah May Wagstaff on May 23, 1937 in Columbia, Tennessee.<sup>3</sup>

## Economic Opportunity

Boyd, at the age of nineteen, was the first of his brothers to begin work at Milky Way Farm in 1931. Milky Way Farm, owned by Franklin Clarence Mars, was one of the largest employers in Pulaski, Tennessee from 1931-1945. Built on 2,805 acres of land purchased in 1931, as many as 935 local workers made \$. 50 a day working with Hereford cattle, Thoroughbred horses, commercial dairy, beef cattle, and Hampshire sheep. Founder of the Mars candy company, Franklin Mars named several of his horses after his candy bars.<sup>4</sup>

## Career as Groom

Frank Mars did not own racehorses at the time, so John Boyd groomed the gaited horses and walkers. In 1935 Milky Way Farm had the largest number of stables and barns in the South.<sup>5</sup> Forever Yours was their first top-notch horse in 1937.

When Mars died in 1934, his wife Ethel V. Mars continued to successfully run Milky Way Farm. Boyd was on hand to witness Gallahadion, the horse he groomed, win the Kentucky Derby on May 4, 1940. He stayed with the Mars family until the farm was sold in 1945 to hotel operator and cattle breeder Albert D. Noe, Jr., from Jackson, Tennessee. Boyd spent thirty-three years as a groom working at the best stables in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

## Legacy

John Andrew Boyd died on February 1, 1986 and was buried in Rosemount Cemetery, Columbia, Maury County, Tennessee.<sup>7</sup> Boyd became famous for his checkerboard grooming techniques.<sup>8</sup> The three Boyd brothers, John, Robert and Everette, worked as grooms for a combined total of eighty-three years and made a significant impact on the horses in their care.

## Sources

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[www.milkywayfarm.org](http://www.milkywayfarm.org)

<https://findagrave.com/memorial/171656125/john-andrew-boyd>

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Fourteenth Census

<sup>2</sup>Civil War Pension

<sup>3</sup>Marriage Record. Columbia, Tennessee, May 23, 1937

<sup>4</sup>[www.mikywayfarms.org](http://www.mikywayfarms.org)

<sup>5</sup>Phelps

<sup>6</sup>Phelps

<sup>7</sup>Find-a-grave memorial #171656125

<sup>8</sup>Phelps