

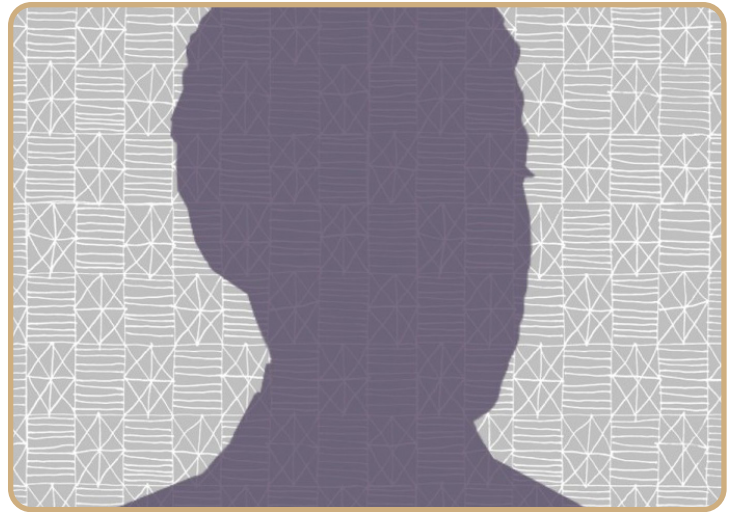
# Ollie J. White

**Author:** Yvonne Giles, Research Consultant

**Places:** Lynnville, Giles County, Tennessee; Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee; Henderson, Henderson County, Kentucky; Bowling Green, Warren County, Kentucky

**Birth:** April 16, 1917 **Death:** April 10, 1984

**Professions:** Groom, Trainer



*The contributions of Ollie White to the Saddlebred horse industry were introduced by Reverend Leslie Whitlock during his oral history interview May 18, 2019.*

## Birth and Family in Tennessee

Ollie J. White began life in Lynnville, Tennessee in 1917. His parents, Elberta and Ora Martin White, raised their family of eight children on a farm on Campbellsville Road.<sup>1</sup>

At the age of twenty-one, White married John Ella Mayfield. When White married his second wife, Mattie Adeline Whitlock, he became stepfather to her children from a previous marriage.<sup>2</sup>

## Beginning His Career

White began his career on the Milky Way Farm of Franklin C. and Ethel V. Mars in Pulaski, Tennessee. A photo shows seventeen-year-old White mounted on a Saddlebred of the farm.<sup>3</sup>

White worked there during a time when their Saddlebreds, Hackney Ponies and Roasters were gaining prominence. Summer Rain, Supreme, Blue Heaven, Denmark King and Park Lane were among the Saddlebreds under training. In the early 1930s, they won Horse Show and State Fair events at Chicago, Kentucky, and Missouri.

In 1934, Mars died. Ethel Mars, his wife, made the decision to develop Thoroughbred breeding and racing at the farm. 4

## Moving

White left Pulaski and moved to Nashville, Tennessee. In 1940, at the age of twenty-three, T.M. Strider employed him as a horse trainer at Westmeade Farm.<sup>5</sup> L. (Lewis) Richard "Dick" Duncan was superintendent.<sup>6</sup>

White moved again, this time to Henderson, Kentucky where he worked for a year at the Barker Farm. In 1960, his last move was to Bowling Green. He reconnected with L. Richard "Dick" Duncan who had been at Westmeade Farm in Tennessee. Duncan had returned to Kentucky to establish Woodburn Farm in the mid-1940s. He had become a show horse trainer and judge of Saddlebreds.

White groomed, trained and traveled with Duncan's horses to shows in Chicago, Kentucky and New York.

White owned My Golden Loralie, a five-gaited Saddlebred. He won first place at the Southern Kentucky Fair in Bowling Green.<sup>7</sup>

The horse breed was developed in the United States. They are noted for their even temperament and gentle stride. Five-gaited Saddlebreds are trained to walk, trot, canter, slow gait and rack. Their long flowing tails and mane add to their elegance and grace in performance. Three-gaited are trained to walk, trot and canter. Their manes are cropped to show their graceful necks.

## Accolades and Legacy

Ollie J. White died in 1984 in Bowling Green, Kentucky. His grave marker at Fairview Cemetery was inscribed with "No One Knew Him But To Love Him."<sup>8</sup>

Reverend Leslie Whitlock said of his stepfather. "He was a humble man. He never met a stranger. He was not self-centered. He was generous. He was a friend to everyone."<sup>9</sup>

White devoted his life to caring for Saddlebreds. He sought employment in places where he could be associated with them. He passed his love, knowledge, and skills to another generation.

His stepson, Leslie Whitlock, became a groom, trainer, and owner. He began a program - New Day Ministries- which employs young people referred by Juvenile Court. Whitlock teaches them to care for and work with horses. At the same time, they learn responsibility and develop pride in work they do. These are the same work ethics that Ollie White instilled in a young Leslie Whitlock.

## Sources

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"Death Certificate: Ollie J. White." April 10, 1984. Warren County, Kentucky. #10153

"Ollie J. White (1917-1984) Grave Memorial." n.d. Accessed February 1, 2021

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/19482753/ollie-j-white>

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Fourteenth Census of the United States,1920. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.<sup>1920</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>Whitlock, Rev. Leslie. 2019. Chronicle of African Americans in the Horse Industry Oral History Project

<sup>3</sup>Phelps, Johnny. 1991. Milky Way Farms. Giles Free Press. Pulaski, Tennessee

<sup>4</sup><https://www.milkywayfarm.org>

<sup>5</sup>World War II Draft Cards for Tennessee, 10/16/1940-03/31/1947. Records of Selective Service System, 1926-1975.

<sup>6</sup>Sixteenth Census of the United States,1940. Washington, D.C.:National Archives and Records Administration. 1940.

<sup>7</sup>Whitlock, Rev. Leslie. 2019. Chronicle of African Americans in the Horse Industry Oral History Project

<sup>8</sup>"Ollie J. White (1917-1984) Grave Memorial"

<sup>9</sup>Whitlock