

# Robert Boyd

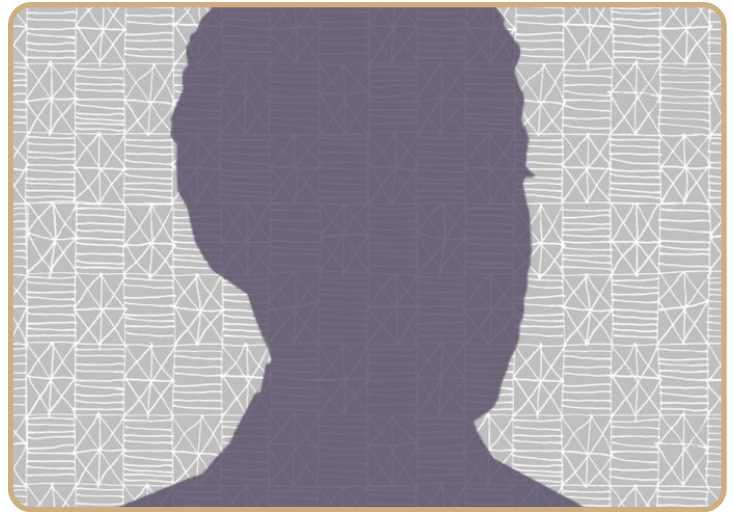
**Author:** Emily Hudson, Story Catcher

**Places:** Lynnville, Giles County, Tennessee;  
Pulaski, Giles County, Tennessee;  
Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida

**Birth:** January 20, 1902

**Death:** June 2, 1984

**Professions:** Groom



## Birth, Childhood and Family

Robert Earl Boyd was the oldest son of Solomon Sephus Boyd and Florence Perry Boyd, born January 20, 1902. His six siblings were Livingston, Bessie, Sarah Louise, Annie Pearl, John Andrew, and Everette Jehoy. Several generations of the family lived in the rural community of Lynnville, in southern Tennessee's Giles County.<sup>1</sup>

Boyd's grandparents were Solomon Boyd and Sovinia (Lavinia) Mullen Boyd. They married January 25, 1865, in Memphis, Tennessee. Solomon Boyd was a United States Colored Troops Veteran, serving in the 59th Infantry during the Civil War. He died in 1891. After his death, Lavinia Boyd moved to Memphis to live with a daughter.<sup>2</sup>

Robert Boyd married Annie Benjamin Braden on May 7, 1926 in Giles County.<sup>3</sup> He married his second wife Willie Estell Tillman on December 5, 1936 in Duval County, Florida.<sup>4</sup> They had five children.

## Milky Way Farm's Impact

Robert Boyd worked for one of the largest employers in Giles County, the Milky Way Farm. Frank Clarence Mars was a successful businessman and owner of the Mars, Inc. candy bar company. He continued his dynasty when he bought 2,805 acres of land in 1931 and built Milky Way Farm. The farm employed nearly 1,000 residents during the Depression and World War II.

Milky Way Farm was known for its Hereford cattle, beef cattle and Hampshire sheep operations. It also became recognized for its Thoroughbred horses. In 1935 Milky Way Farm had the largest number of Thoroughbred stables and barns in the South.<sup>5</sup>

When Mars died in 1934, his wife Ethel V. Mars continued to run Milky Way Farm with great success. The Farm had its first top-notch horse in 1937 in Forever Yours. Ethel V. Mars took great pride in Kentucky-bred Gallahadion, who won the Kentucky Derby on May 4, 1940.<sup>6</sup>

## Career in Tennessee and Florida

Robert Boyd was a Derby groom and caretaker at Milky Way Farm. After working for Mars, he moved to Florida where he was employed by Magnolia Farms in Duval County, Jacksonville, Florida. He also worked as a groom at a riding academy in 1940. He worked as a groom in Florida for twenty years.<sup>7</sup>

## Legacy

Robert Boyd died on June 2, 1984 and was buried in Rosemount Cemetery, Columbia, Maury County, Tennessee.<sup>8</sup> The three Boyd brothers, Robert, John and Everette, worked as grooms for a combined total of eighty-three years and made a significant impact on the horses in their care.

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# Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1910.”

<sup>2</sup>General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934: Pension #409909.”

<sup>3</sup>Tennessee State Marriages, 1780-2002.”

<sup>4</sup>Florida County Marriages, 1823-1982.”

<sup>5</sup>Phelps, Milky Way Farms.

<sup>6</sup>Gorham, Churchill Downs 100th Kentucky Derby First Centennial, 1875-1975.

<sup>7</sup>Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940.”

<sup>8</sup>Robert Earl Boyd Sr. (1902-1984) Find A Grave Memorial.”