

Boyd, George Dillard ^[1]

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by Robert Wray Carter, Jr., 1979; Revised November 2022.

19 May 1797–16 Apr. 1886



An engraving of George Dillard Boyd published in 1908. Image from the Internet Archive.

^[2]George Dillard Boyd, legislator, merchant, miller, and planter-enslaver, was born in Rockingham County ^[3]. He was a son of Andrew Boyd, by whose will he inherited part interest in a gristmill ^[4] and farm on Piney Creek, near Speedwell Presbyterian Church, in 1815. Boyd continued buying adjoining land until he owned a plantation of 838 acres. He had opened a store by 1837. By 1860, he had enslaved over twenty people and had in operation a mill that produced both flour and corn meal and was also equipped to card wool. A steam-powered sawmill was operated adjacent to the gristmill.

As early as 1828, Boyd was appointed constable in his district. In later life he served many years as a justice of the peace. He was first elected a member of the House of Commons in the legislature of 1840. In the legislature of 1842 he served as a state senator and was appointed to the Committee on Education and the Literary Fund ^[5]. He continued to represent his district in the state senate during the sessions of 1844, 1846, and 1852. As an ardent Democrat, he ran for Congress against R. C. Puryear ^[6] in 1853, but he was defeated by about three hundred votes because of an overwhelming Whig ^[7] majority in the district. Returning to the state senate in 1854, he was appointed to the Propositions and Grievances Committee. He continued to serve as a state senator during the sessions of 1856 and 1858.

On 19 July 1827, Boyd married Minerva Hill, daughter of Samuel Hill of Rockingham County. Five sons were born to this marriage, the eldest dying in infancy. The second son, John Hill, entered the Confederate Army as captain of Company L, Twenty-first North Carolina Regiment, and died in Richmond, Va., 28 Aug. 1861, from exposure and disease. The third son, Samuel Hill, entered service as captain of Company E, Forty-fifth North Carolina Regiment, was later promoted to colonel, and was killed at Spottsylvania Court House on 19 May 1864. The fourth son, George Fulton, first enlisted in a Mississippi regiment but later transferred to the Forty-fifth North Carolina Regiment, became lieutenant of Company A, and was killed at Gettysburg 1 July 1863. The fifth son, Colonel Andrew Jackson Boyd ^[8] (24 Feb. 1836–18 Aug. 1893), became a lawyer and businessman of Reidsville.

Minerva Hill Boyd (b. 1808) died on 2 Mar. 1844 and was buried in Rockingham County. On 29 Mar. 1859, Boyd married Eliza C. Webb, a native of Georgia. One daughter, Minerva, was born to this marriage; she married Joseph H. Blackwell of Reidsville in 1883.

When Boyd died in 1886, he was buried beside his three sons in the Methodist church cemetery in Wentworth. His second wife died 11 July 1903 and was buried in Reidsville.

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Receipt from Boyd's store, 1837 (possession of Robert Wray Carter, Jr.).

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