

Loyd Ford, Jr., Sr.? Who Knows for Certain?? 1748 - 1843

Loyd Ford. If you are local to Washington or Sullivan County, you have at least heard the name. And another thing, it is LOYD, not Lloyd, and that is important to the Ford family. For many years, I researched this as a direct line for me, but DNA has now proven this wrong. I have a direct line on paper, but DNA says otherwise.

There are several in the Ford family that carried the given name of “Loyd,” and it takes some work to figure out which one was which. Our profile will focus on Loyd, one of the original Ford settlers that came into Washington County from Baltimore County, Maryland.

Loyd Ford was born about 1748 in Baltimore County, Maryland, the son of Loyd Ford and Mary Grant. It was there that he married Mary. It is widely accepted by researchers that her maiden name was Wood. At the time that the war broke out, Loyd would have been in his early thirties, and served as a Private in the Militia while in Baltimore County. The couple had had several children, including a son named Loyd, born in 1783.

After the war was over, several of the Ford families moved from Baltimore County into what was then, Washington County, North Carolina. The land, when platted to a map clearly show that the bulk of the land was in Washington County, but a portion was in Sullivan County, as well. Two warrants were issued to Loyd Ford, 371 acres on Sinking Creek, and 200 acres on both sides of Cavetts Mill Creek. The early Sullivan County courts met in homes until 1795, when they laid off the county seat and established a courthouse at Blountville. Loyd would have filed the entries and grants at some “official home” in Sullivan County.



Two North Carolina land grants in Washington and Sullivan Counties show the property of Loyd Ford. The property in this area, stretching out from Loyd’s property has been known as “Fordtown” for many years.

Loyd Ford is first found on the Washington County tax lists in 1787, along with several other members of the Ford family.

No	Name	Acres of Land	Situation	White Sols	Black Sols
	Ann & Mrought			1	
178	Tho Shepley	160		2	
175	Saml Shepley	700		1	
174	Wm J. Ford	120		1	
177	Loyd Ford Junr	122			1
170	Loyd Ford Senr	100		1	
179	Mordeca Ford	220		1	
180	Thomas Ford	120		1	

Later in his life, his situation became much more complicated. Loyd had slaves and fathered several children by them. His wife divorced him, and their children pretty much deserted him. He had made a will directing that the bulk of his property be given to the children of his slaves, to ensure that none his children would become slaves of any of his other children.

The will was placed with Richard Hale and his wife for safe-keeping. After Loyd's death in 1843, his children born to Mary were unhappy to learn that the bulk of the property had been given to his enslaved children, and that these children were now free. They filed suit in Washington County court, and eventually it went all the way to the Tennessee Supreme Court, at Knoxville. In the end, the land went to the formerly enslaved children.

A historical marker located on Bob Jobe Road gives a summary of this part of his story.

This marker reads:

FORD vs FORD

This land brought about the historic court case of Ford v. Ford. Loyd Ford (1748 - 1843) freed his five enslaved individuals and gave them his farm located here. His children challenged the will and the five who were freed fought the case up to the Tennessee Supreme Court. In 1846, Judge Nathan Green authored an opinion which ruled that an enslaved individual is "Not in the Condition of a horse or an ox...he is made in the Image of his creator." The state's highest court recognized the enslaved humanity as other "persons and property." Those formerly enslaved won their case and kept their freedom and land. The Tennessee Supreme Court's decision affirmed the legal right of those enslaved to bring suit to probate the will.



After Loyd's death, Mary attempted to get his pension for service in the Revolutionary War. Since they were divorced, she was turned down.

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As for Loyd's burial place...several years ago, a photocopy of a photo of a tombstone was passed around through the descendants. The hand-carved rock in the photo had only the initials, "L. F.," and we were all certain that it had to be the one that had marked his grave. Unfortunately, no one knew where this marker had been found, but it was said that it had once been in the nearby Ford Cemetery, which contained the graves of several generations of the family. I have asked other descendants if they have a copy of the "L. F." photo, but I've yet to find one. It would be great if a copy could be added to the archives collection for safe keeping. If you happen to have a copy, please consider sharing with us.



Ford Cemetery located on Gentry Hamilton Road in Gray.