

Family Reunion



1978 - 2018

Celebrating Forty Years

of Ford Family Reunions

The Ford Family Reunions have made great strides from its modest beginning 40 years ago to the well-organized formal organization it is today. It is built on the tradition started by Charlie and Mary Ford who decades earlier summoned their thirteen children and host of grands and great-grands back home to celebrate Christmas together. This tradition was passed on to their children and ultimately gave rise to the current version of family reunions we enjoy today



Mary Hill-Ford

1870 - 1972

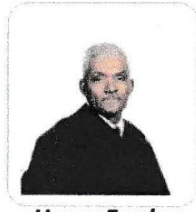
Charlie Ford

1861 - 1962

The Off-Springs of Charlie and Mary Hill-Ford



Lonnie Ford



Henry Ford



Ethel Ford-Anderson



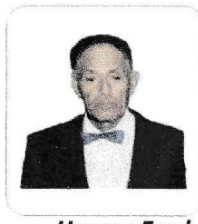
Sidney Ford



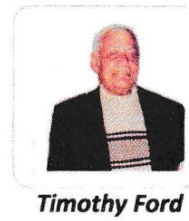
Alene Ford-Hobbs



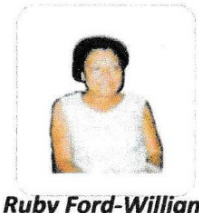
Ernest Ford



Harvey Ford



Timothy Ford



Ruby Ford-Williams



Ernestine Ford-Johns



Felton Ford



Verdis Ford



Andrew Ford



Ford Family Reunion

A Historical Snapshot from 1978 - 2018

The Tradition of Annual Family Gatherings and focusing on the Family originated with **Charlie and Mary Hill-Ford** who from the 1940s until the 1960s summoned their 13 children and a host of grands and great-grands back home every year to celebrate Christmas together. After a break with tradition for more than a decade the current version of Ford Family gatherings reemerged in 1978.

Phase I: 1978 – 1980- Reunions were held at Private

The First Ford Family Reunion was held in Live Oak, Saturday July 8, 1978 at the Home of Alice Ford Bass. It consisted of a backyard cookout with potluck trimmings. It was intended to be served on tables that was setup under a shade tree. But an unexpected summer shower popped up and sent the family scrambling to the basement of nearby Ebenezer AME church where the meal was served. An impromptu program was put together after the meal, Ozell Ford was spur-of-the-moment speaker



Ozell Ford addresses Family at First Reunion
In The basement of Ebenezer AME Church



FFR1978 – First FFR, the Backyard Cookout

The second Family Reunions was held Saturday July 14 1979 in Dade City at the home of Millie Ford-Grubbs. More planning went in to the second reunion; although it retained the same basic format as the first. Everybody who came was on their own; no lodging were arranged. There was a Saturday afternoon picnic consisting of a cookout with potluck trimmings. Also, the family attended Church together on Sunday morning. Thus the tradition of Sunday morning worship by the family was born

** Robert I Ford's* three year quest to get the family together for a reunion finally succeeded in 1978. There was very little prior planning or communication other than a letter of invitation sent to family members. Everybody who came was on their own; no lodging were arranged. Funds for food, paper plates, plastic ware, table clothes, condiments etc. was provided by just a few members and was collected the morning of the reunion. *This Funding practice continued throughout phase I and part of phase II.*



FFR1979 Cookout, Home of Millie Ford-Grubbs



FFR2000 Cocoa FL, Henry Ford Sponsor

The third Family Reunion was held Saturday July 19, 1980 in a Gym next to the home of Henry Ford. It retained the same basic format as the first two. However, as you may suspect, the quality of food was kicked up notch; Henry being a Chef. There was an afternoon Picnic along with a program that included a keynote speaker. On Sunday morning the family attended Greater St. Paul Baptist Church in Cocoa.

Phase II: 1981 – 1987- Reunions were held at the Social Sewing Club, a facility located in the African American community (the hood), of Live Oak.

This phase represents a turning point in the progression of Ford Family Reunions. The reunions became more organized. A permanent committee was formed as a decision making entity. It established agendas, and coordinated the events. A registration system was devised, flyers were printed and mailed to members. Outreach extended to all members of the Charlie and Mary Ford Clan rather than just the Sidney Ford Clan as was the case with Phase I. The program of activities expanded to include Friday evening receptions with focus on the youth of the family. The “Certificate of Achievement” was established. The committee was responsible for cleaning the facility, setting up tables and chairs, food preparation, decorations, etc.



FFR1986 Social Sewing Club

During phase II the reunion was kept in Live Oak; mainly for the convenience of the ageing 2nd generation of Fords



FFR1997 2nd generation at Suwannee Agricultural complex

Phase III: 1988 – 1998- Reunions were held at the Suwannee Agricultural Complex. It was a major upgrade from the social sewing club. It was cleaner, had central air conditioning, and a kitchen.

During the decade of phase III the reunion continued to refine. It expanded the program of activities to fill the entire weekend. *The Ford Family Good Samaritan Award* was established and the family business meeting became a permanent feature. This opened up the decision making process to include all members. The younger generation quickly took the opportunity to press the decision to start rotating the reunion from live Oak to other in-state locations. Thus a new phase in the progression of FFR was hastened.

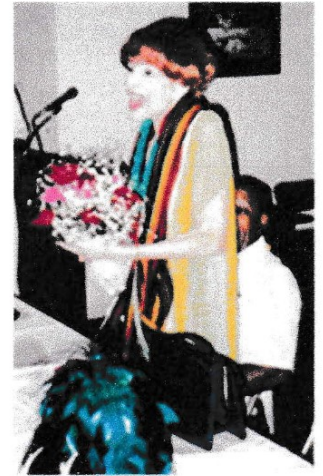


On July 25, 1992 *Horace Ford* is presented the First *Good Samaritan Award* from Ford Family Historical & Welfare Association, President Ozell Ford.

Phase IV: 1999 – 2016- The Ford Family Reunion started rotating to other cities within the State of Florida.

Prompted by this decision the Ford Family Reunion accelerated the pace of progress. It became a strong, sophisticated, smooth operating, formal organization that proved the ability to function effectively regardless of the location it is held:

1. It became a formal nonprofit 501 (c) organization that qualifies donations by family or friends to be exempt from federal taxes.
2. It obtained a Florida State sales tax exemption Certificate. The savings from sales taxes on expenses and expenditures are rolled back into association bank account.
3. It implemented a modern website that simplify reunion planning and coordinating by providing a full range of online transactions.
4. It Published a Standard Operating Procedure that creates structure, ensures continuity and promotes consistency for planning and implementing Reunions and related activities.
5. It established a Scholarship Award Program.
6. It held the first out-of-state reunion in Atlanta Ga. In 2017.



FFR2002 Aunt Ernestine gets Roses



FFR2017 Scholarship Award Winners



The Ford Family Reunions have made great strides from its modest beginning 40 years ago to the well-organized formal organization it is today...It is built on the tradition of focusing on the family that was emphasized by Charley and Mary Hill-Ford decades earlier that gave rise to our current version of family gatherings...All by the Grace of our Great God.

Note: To The Next Generation: The first point I want to emphasize is that the term "Ford Family" is used generically, and applies equally to all who by Blood, Marriage or Adoption, are related to the first Fords; Charlie and Mary; regardless of your last name.

The second point: A high bar has been set for you. Your charge is to carry on in a manner that honors the work of generations before you; they had little resources, less education and fewer opportunities than you are blessed to have. Therefore, your inherent obligation is to reach for even higher ground, so that future generations may enjoy the fruit of your labor, just as you now enjoy the same from generations before you. Never forget the many blessings of our family heritage, or our Great God from whom they flow.