



**MARION LOYD HOMESTEAD**  
**GRAND PRAIRIE SIGNIFICANT LANDMARK**  
**Site Medallion No. 48; State of Texas Marker**  
**Loyd Park, 3401 Ragland Road**

Before he was even 25 years old, Francis “Marion” Loyd moved from Illinois to Arkansas, and then to Dallas, settling in the grassy prairie lands of southeastern Tarrant County. Today, such travel wouldn’t warrant a care. But Marion Loyd was born in 1835. He traveled by covered wagon. His treks took months through uncut timbers, rivers with no bridges and lands with no laws. Many people lost their lives attempting such an expedition. Yet Marion Loyd pursued his dream until he found it in what is now southwestern Grand Prairie.

**Building A House And A Home**

For Marion and his younger brother, James, the house they built on the unspoiled Texas prairie marked the start of a new home on the open range. Today, we might term the area “the middle of nowhere,” but to them it was paradise. When the Loyd brothers purchased 78 acres in what is now part of Loyd Park near Joe Pool Lake, much of the land was without timber and bursting with abundant grass. The flat land offered the perfect spot for raising cattle and horses.

Marion (1835-1927) and James Loyd (1837-1922) purchased the land on which the Loyd Home stands in 1857. The next recorded action on the land was in 1929, when it was officially deeded to Robert Loyd, confirming that Marion remained on the land until his death.

A study conducted by Southern Methodist University for the Corp of Engineers in the 1970s could not confirm if the current Loyd home was built by Marion and James or later by Marion’s son, Robert. The study did conclude, however, that the structure was typical of the mid-1800s. If built by Marion and James, the home would represent the oldest example of board and batten technology using sawn oak in North Texas.

According to family recordings, the Loyd house was built using milled lumber from Eagle’s Ford, a mill located about five miles west of Dallas in the mid-1880s. The home was a two-room Cumberland structure made of sawn post oak and pecan lumber with the interior faces milled. A carriage house, brick-lined cellar, corral and several barns also made up the homestead. The home was subsequently modified, with rooms added to the rear, and the roof replaced with milled pine. Today, the home has been modified with 20<sup>th</sup> Century veneer.

## **The Call of the West**

When Marion Loyd was just a toddler and his brother an infant, his parents, John A. and Ann Loyd left Illinois in a covered wagon train headed southwest. They settled in Arkansas and bore seven more children. Ann Loyd died shortly after giving birth to her ninth child, a daughter. As soon as the infant could travel, John again joined a wagon train and moved his family southwest. He settled on the south side of the Trinity River just a few miles west of Dallas in 1856.

By 1857, Marion and James, strapping men in their 20s, felt the area around Dallas was becoming too crowded for farming and running cattle and horses. They purchased 78 acres, as described in family records, *“on the north side of Walnut Creek, sloping and rolling up to beautiful oak and pecan groves. It was park-like with several springs.”*

In 1860, after building their home, they persuaded their father, John, and Marion’s siblings to move and live with them on the homestead. Later that same year, tragedy struck. John left to round up horses grazing in the creek bottom and never returned. The family assumed horse thieves or Indians killed him. Marion and his new wife, Friendsina, and James took on the responsibility of raising Marion’s younger brothers and sisters. James married and moved back to Dallas in 1869.

Over the years, Marion and his family suffered other tragedies. Friendsina passed away while giving birth to their fourth child. Just three years later, Marion’s brother Thomas, whose wife and two children lived on the homestead, died suddenly. Marion and Thomas’ wife Ann, both left as single parents, married some years later. Together, they had three more children.

Marion encouraged everyone in the family to learn to read and write. Shortly after the Civil War, he founded The Loyd School on his homestead. Family and neighbors, children and adults, attended when possible. The Loyd School remained on the land until 1905.

As the Loyd family grew, so did the need for water. In 1885, Marion hired a local contractor to dig a new well for the homestead. Using horses, the contractor took six weeks and dug one hundred and twenty feet deep to complete the well. Soon, Marion allowed everyone in the community to use the well. Neighbors would come at all hours to fill their wooden barrels with the precious soft water, and the well helped the homestead become a regular stopping point for travelers and wagon trains.

In the years that followed, Marion’s youngest son, Robert, followed his father into the family business of raising cattle. In 1927, at the age of 93, Marion Loyd passed away. His grave and those of his two wives, several brothers and sisters and children are located in the Estes Cemetery not far from the Loyd homestead. The house and land remained in the Loyd family until the late 1970s when acquired as part of the Joe Pool Lake development. In 1980, the home was awarded a Texas Historical Marker.

## **Cattleman, Family Man**

A cattleman by trade, Francis “Marion” Loyd founded a homestead that would support his younger siblings, 10 children and many of their families. Although his homestead was built at a

time when land measured a man's worth, Marion showed that family was the true measure of his value.