

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name _____ Nation Ford Road
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 5 noncontiguous sections of roadbed in Fort Mill township not for publication
city or town Fort Mill vicinity X
state South Carolina code SC county York code 091 zip code 29715

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, S.C. Dept. of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
I, hereby certify that this property is:		
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.		
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.		
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register		
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register		
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain):		

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____	buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	_____ 5 _____	_____	structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____ 5 _____	_____	objects
				Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

Resources of the Nation Ford Road Area

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: TRANSPORTATION

Subcategory:

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: TRANSPORTATION
VACANT/NOT IN USE

Subcategory:

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation
walls

roof
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
b removed from its original location.
c a birthplace or a grave.
d a cemetery.
e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
f a commemorative property.
g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

ca. 1650-1912

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
X Local government
University
Other
Name of repository:
Catawba Regional Planning Council,
Rock Hill, S.C.

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Nation Ford Road and its related resources provide a unique record of the history of eastern York County from pre-history to the early twentieth century. The road existed as a trading path in prehistoric times. It was known to European traders as early as the 1650s. Its use expanded with the movement of thousands of settlers to the Piedmont of the Carolinas and Georgia from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and other northern colonies. As the area became more thickly settled, Nation Ford Road became a local traffic artery, helping to influence development patterns. The road played a role in the American Revolution and the Civil War because of its strategic value and its relation to the crossing point of the Catawba River at Nation Ford. With the development of more modern roads to accommodate automobile traffic, Nation Ford Road passed out of use along much of its route.

Several segments of Nation Ford Road are still visible today. These segments have been identified in this nomination as segments 1 through 5.

Segment 1 (Catawba River to Banks Street). On the north side of the Catawba River at Nation Ford, the roadbed of Nation Ford Road is visible leading north from the river toward the Town of Fort Mill. In this section, the roadbed is a depression running through the heavily forested areas along the river. It parallels the Catawba River, skirting a small hill before turning north and running parallel to present Banks Street for a short distance. Due to industrial development which has taken place in 1996-97 in the area, the road bed has been removed north of this point.

Segment 2 (Brickyard Road from new southern bypass to U. S. Highway 21). The road is next visible at the south end of Brickyard Road, just west of its intersection with the Norfolk Southern Railroad line. It follows the current roadbed of Brickyard Road into the Town of Fort Mill and the intersection with U. S. Highway Business 21 (Spratt Street). From this point through the Town of Fort Mill, development has obliterated the path of the road.

Segment 3 (North White Street to old airfield). Just beyond the Town of Fort Mill's northern boundary, a segment of the old road bed is visible near the William Elliott White Homestead. It leaves the path of modern North White Street (S. C. Highway 160) just west of the Homestead and is visible as a depression parallel to a modern dirt road just to its west. The route here enters the Ann Springs Close Greenway. At the horse barns of the Greenway, the road bed was destroyed for a distance as the result of the construction of a private airfield.

Segment 4 (Old airfield to south bank of Lake Haigler). In the wooded area north of the old airfield runway, the roadbed again becomes evident as a depression which runs north to the shore of Lake Haigler. It passes under the waters of Lake Haigler.

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Section 5 (North bank of Lake Haigler to Springfield Plantation). On the north side of the lake, the roadbed is clearly visible as it climbs the grade. A portion of the road bed is used for a hiking trail and road within the Ann Springs Close Greenway heading north and then turning east to cross Steele Creek. It fords Steele Creek and turns northeast to parallel a field road. Along this section, the road bed is used as a hiking trail for the Greenway. Just west of the barn which has been converted into a conference center for the Greenway, the bed of Nation Ford Road rejoins the Greenway access road and travels northeast as a dirt road. Just east of the Greenway headquarters, the old road bed turns toward the north and leaves the current dirt road to travel through a wooded area as a depression. The visible section of the road ends just south of the Springfield Plantation house. Sections of the road to the north of this point were apparently obliterated in the construction of U. S. Highway 21 Business.

Historically, the road continued north into North Carolina. Portions of the road still exist in Mecklenburg County under the name Nations Ford Road. Other sections of the road may be identified as part of existing roads to the south of the crossing at Nation Ford in the Rock Hill area.

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Nation Ford Road and associated resources had a major influence on the early development of eastern York County. Sections of the road which still exist are eligible to be placed in the National Register under Criterion A because the road is associated with events over a long time frame which have contributed to the development and character of eastern York County. The presence of Nation Ford as one of the few reliable crossing places on the Catawba River led to its use by the Catawba Indians and other tribes. Gradually, a north-south path developed which led from Virginia to the Nation Ford. This path was being used by white traders as early as 1650.¹ The trading path which crossed at the river here was known by many names, including the "Occaneechi Path," the "Catawba Path," and on Mouzon's map of 1775 as the "Indian Road."² One of the oldest documented travel routes in the southeast, it began at the James River, traversed southern Virginia, crossed the Piedmont of North Carolina, passed into South Carolina, and forked just south of Nation Ford. The route eventually became known as Nation Ford Road in the sections on either side of the river which approached the ford. It provided the Catawbans and other southern tribes with an access route for trade and communication with northern tribes. It served as a route for the first white traders and later for settlers who entered the Piedmont of the Carolinas from the north. The route of the trail and the sites associated with it have great significance in the history of eastern York County.

Nation Ford was one of several spots along the Catawba River where the relative shallowness allowed for a crossing on horseback or wagon when the river level was at normal stage. Nation Ford was shown on many early maps as one of the most important features of the Catawba valley. The presence of Nation Ford determined the point where the Catawba Path crossed the river. By 1786, traffic had grown to the point that a ferry was established to provide a more reliable crossing of the river. The South Carolina Legislature established a public ferry "near a place known by the name of Old Nation Ford" to be operated by Thomas Sprout [Spratt] and Daniel Sturges [Sturgis].³ The ferry was reauthorized a number of times, but the ford continued in use. In the 1780s and 1790s, York County appointed Road Commissioners to lay out and mark a road from Nation Ford to York Court House, and later to the Chester County line.⁴ Nation Ford Road gradually fell into disuse in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Portions of the road were incorporated into more modern roads, and other portions were obliterated by development. By the early twentieth century,

¹Sam B. Mendenhall, remarks at the dedication of Nation Ford Historical Park, July 30, 1960, recorded in the Federal Register, August 22, 1960.

²Douglas Summers Brown, The Catawba Indians: The People of the River, University of South Carolina Press, 1966, p. 69.

³Statutes at Large, p. 304.

⁴York County Minute Books, A, p. 142, 179, 187, 346; B: p. 34, 73, 77, 117, 152.

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automobile traffic led to the erection of bridges to connect the Fort Mill and Rock Hill sides of the river and Nation Ford Road was largely abandoned.

Nation Ford Road has been associated with many historical trends and events because of its strategic importance. As the flood of settlers began to move into the Carolina backcountry from the north, Nation Ford Road became one branch of the "Great Waggon Road" from Pennsylvania. Many of the early European settlers of the upper Piedmont of South Carolina used the road and crossed the Catawba at Nation Ford. Thomas Spratt became one of the first to locate in what is now York County when he settled alongside Nation Ford Road at the invitation of the Catawba Indians sometime in the 1750s. Other early families in the Fort Mill area, including the Erwins, Garrisons, and Whites, also settled near the road.

The road became a strategic point in both the American Revolution and the American Civil War. During the Revolution, it is known that General Thomas Sumter and 500 men under his leadership camped at Nation Ford in July 1780.⁵ After the defeat of the British at Kings Mountain on October 7, 1780, Lord Cornwallis began to move his troops from Charlotte to the relative safety of Winnsboro. He came down Nation Ford Road to cross the river at the ford. However, the river was in flood and he decided to camp for several days at Thomas Spratt's plantation on Nation Ford Road. It was finally decided to move down the eastern bank of the river and attempt a crossing at Landsford.⁶

In the late 1840s, plans were developed for a rail line to run between Charlotte and Augusta. The line followed very closely the Nation Ford Road between the Catawba River and Charlotte. The route necessitated a trestle over the Catawba, and Nation Ford was a logical choice. Nation Ford Road was the scene of one of the final actions in the Civil War when a skirmish occurred in April 1865 at the Nation Ford. President Jefferson Davis and members of his Cabinet passed along the road shortly afterward as the remnants of the Confederate government fled southward. The President and his party crossed on April 29, 1865, proceeding south to Yorkville.⁷

The railroad trestle was soon rebuilt, and has continued to play an important role in the economic viability of the area. With the improvement of other routes of travel, most sections of Nation Ford Road gradually fell into disuse. By 1912, the roads leading to the ford on either side of the river were abandoned.⁸

⁵Brown, p. 267.

⁶Joseph Johnson, M. D., Traditions and Reminiscences Chiefly of the American Revolution in the South. Charleston: Walker & James, 1851, p. 347.

⁷Thomas, p. 4.

⁸Rock Hill Herald, "Should Reopen Nation Ford To The Public," October 3, 1912.

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Nation Ford Road is significant because it provides evidence of an ancient transportation route which has helped to shape the modern world. The presence of the road led many early European settlers to locate in the area. As the major transportation artery in the area, it influenced the course of events in everyday commerce and in the most important armed conflicts to be fought on American soil. The development of the railroad, which largely followed the earlier route of Nation Ford Road, helped to shape the modern development patterns of the area by determining the location of depots which would grow into Rock Hill and Fort Mill. Although superseded by more modern highways, Nation Ford Road established the basic route that they followed, from U. S. Highway 21 in the 1920s to I-77 in the 1970s. Although largely forgotten today, Nation Ford Road had a significant role in shaping the face of eastern York County.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, Douglas Summers. The Catawba Indians: The People of the River. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1966.

Johnson, Joseph. Traditions and Reminiscences Chiefly of the American Revolution in the South. Charleston: Walker & James, 1851.

Mendenhall, Sam B. "Remarks at the Dedication of the Nation Ford Historical Park," 30 July 1960, in the Federal Register (Washington, D.C.), 22 August 1960.

"Should Reopen Nation Ford To The Public." Rock Hill Herald (Rock Hill, S.C.), 3 October 1912.

Thomas, Sam. "A Site Survey of a Civil War Gun Pit at the Old Nation's Ford Near Rock Hill, South Carolina," unpublished paper for Anthropology 320, University of South Carolina at Lancaster, 1989.

York County Minute Books A and B, York County Courthouse, York, S.C.

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UTM REFERENCES (Continued)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
Segment 1:			Catawba River to Banks Street
A (Beginning)	17	503761.83	3868764.39
B (Ending)	17	504247.61	3869565.71
Segment 2:			Brickyard Road to Spratt Street (U.S. Hwy. 21 Business)
C (Beginning)	17	504655.01	3871387.04
D (Ending)	17	504485.37	3873038.85
Segment 3:			William Elliott White House through Anne Springs Close Greenway
E (Beginning)	17	504439.87	3874598.20
F (Ending)	17	504604.24	3875129.48
Segment 4:			Old Airstrip to Lake Haigler
G (Beginning)	17	505084.16	3875712.87
H (Ending)	17	505107.64	3876473.10
Segment 5:			Lake Haigler through the Anne Springs Close Greenway to Springfield Plantation
J (Beginning)	17	505236.79	3876578.03
K (Ending)	17	506623.70	3878176.28

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nomination includes five discontinuous sections of Nation Ford Road which can be easily identified in the Fort Mill Township. These are described in the Narrative Description section and are shown on the USGS map. They are listed below:

1) From the point where the road reached the Catawba River at Nation Ford, a portion of the roadbed is visible heading east and north as a depression in the ground. This section of the road parallels the river for a short distance, skirts a small hill, then turns north and runs parallel to Banks Street for a distance. Recent industrial development has removed any additional traces of the road.

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2) The road is next visible at the south end of Brickyard Road, just west of its intersection with the Norfolk Southern rail line. It follows the current roadbed of Brickyard Road approximately 1.2 miles, passing the Spratt cemetery and ending at the intersection with Spratt Street (U. S. 21 Business).

3) Just to the north of the Fort Mill town limit, portions of the roadbed are visible as a depression passing just west of the William Elliott White House. This section continues north into the Anne Springs Close Greenway. It ends near the horse barns for the Greenway at the site of an old airplane landing strip, which destroyed evidences of the roadbed.

4) Just north of the old airstrip, the road reappears as a depression. It continues north and enters the waters of Lake Haigler, a man-made reservoir.

5) North of Lake Haigler, the road reappears. In this area the road is a clearly visible as a depression which rises to the hilltop, where it is incorporated into a modern dirt road . This road approaches Steele Creek, fords the creek, and climbs the hill on the north side. The old roadbed is visible to the north of Steele Creek, where it runs parallel to the modern dirt road. In this area, it presently serves as a trail which is part of the Anne Springs Close Greenway. Near the conference center of the Greenway, Nation Ford Road again serves as the roadbed for the modern dirt road. After traveling northeast for a distance, it veers to the north, where it is visible as a depression ending at the driveway for the Springfield Plantation house. The section of the roadbed north of Lake Haigler is the longest visible section, totaling approximately 1.25 miles.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The sections of Nation Ford Road which are selected include the only visible sections of the original roadbed in the Fort Mill Township of York County. The locations were verified from historic maps, property plats, and verbal descriptions of the road. Other sections of the road which are not included have been destroyed or heavily altered by urban or industrial development, or cannot be documented.

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PROPERTY OWNERS

Parcel 705-01	Hugh M. White , Jr., 2530 Sam White Road, Fort Mill, S. C. 29715
Parcel 706-01	Close Family Real Estate Partnership, P. O. Drawer 460, Lancaster, S. C. 29721
Parcel 730-07	Anne Springs Close, c/o Springs Company, P. O. Drawer 460, Lancaster, S. C. 29721
Parcel 712-03	Leroy Springs and Company, P. O. Box 1209, Fort Mill, S. C. 29716
Parcel 710-02	Close Family Real Estate Partnership #1, P. O. Drawer 460, Lancaster, S. C. 29721
Parcel 730-01	Leroy Springs and Company, P. O. Box 1209, Fort Mill, S. C. 29716

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The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Nation Ford Road
Name of Photographer: Paul Gettys
Date of Photographs: September 1997
Location of Original Negatives: Catawba Regional Planning Council, Rock Hill, S.C.

These photographs are listed from north to south along the route of Nation Ford Road, beginning at Springfield Plantation and ending at the Catawba River.

1. Springfield Plantation (ca. 1806), listed in the National Register 9/12/85, was located along the Nation Ford Road. Existing evidence of the road begins in the yard of the house at left.
2. View to NE along service road in Anne Springs Close Greenway, which is on the alignment of Nation Ford Road.
3. View to SW in Anne Springs Close Greenway from same spot as in photo #2.
4. Segment of historic roadbed in the Anne Springs Close Greenway used as an accessible trail for wheelchair use.
5. Segment of historic roadbed used as a hiking trail in the Anne Springs Close Greenway.
6. View to SW along trail leading down to Steele Creek.
7. Suspension bridge over Steele Creek adjacent to the roadbed.
8. View to E, where roadbed fords Steele Creek
9. View to W of roadbed, used as a hiking trail, rising from Steele Creek
10. View to N, back toward Steele Creek; banks on either side of roadbed are up to 8' high
11. View to N, from open area in front of environmental education center at Anne Springs Close greenway; this section is used for vehicular traffic
12. View to S, from same spot as in photo #11; area to left is used for parking
13. View to NW from roadbed

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14. View to S going downhill from open area toward Lake Haigler
15. Footbridge crossing railroad
16. Roadbed leading S from footbridge toward Lake Haigler; banks on either side of roadbed are 6' to 7' here