

## SMITH'S FORD - HICKORY GROVE, SC

Smith's Ford is one of several important river crossings in York County. It received its name from Mr. Henry Smith who received a small land grant on Mud Creek of the Broad River in present day York County. It is of interest that Henry's Augusta County Virginia neighbor was none other than William Bratton. Each man acquired property in York County within days of each other in August of 1765.

Not only had Smith's Ford been used as an important trade link with the western Indians during the 17th century fur trade, but it also served as an important spot before, during, and after the American Revolution. One of the first important documented crossings was recorded in 1776. A force of men under the command of Colonel Andrew Williamson's expedition against the Cherokee in 1776 recorded in his journal that on "Saturday, the twenty-fourth, (August 1776) we started from Camp, and marched to Mr. Smith's at Broad River...". The expedition ended in the defeat of the Cherokee and the opening of large sections of land for future settlement.

Four years after this campaign during the Southern American Revolution, Smith's home once again was involved in a major military event. Hilborn's book, Battleground of Freedom, states on page 163 that, "An early account tells how (General Thomas) Sumter"... was placed in a raw bullock's hide, fastened between two horses, and thus carried with a guard of five men to the mountains." During this trip Sumter's wounds were nursed by Smith's while he lay at their Smith's Ford home.

Other interesting facts about Smith's Ford are:

Patriot militia leader, McDowell, from his camp on the east side of Smith's Ford, sent his raiders on a night attack on Loyalists and British at Musgrove's Mill.

Part of Colonel B. Tarleton's British troops may have crossed here in flight following the Battle of Cowpens.

Around 1800 Mr. Michael Gaffney came to western York County and found a bride, "Polly" Smith and soon thereafter established a store in what is now the heart of Gaffney, SC.

Smith's Ford is still maintained by members of the Hamrick family that now own one of the Smith homes at Smith's Ford. The crossing was closed to the public in 1913 when a ferry was built to accommodate automobiles.