

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic Foote's Crossing Road

and/or common

2. Location

Inhale Nat. Forest

street & number

not for publication

city, town Nevada City vic. X vicinity of congressional district First

state California code 06 county Nevada Sierra code 057 (091)

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

street & number

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Foote's Crossing Road is a 15.1 mile stretch of unpaved county road extending from the site of Columbia Hill in Nevada County to the small community of Alleghany in Sierra County. This 1913 road is still in use, identified as Road 191 in Sierra County and Road ^{613AA2} in Nevada County.

The nominated property is accessible in Nevada County from the Tyler-Foote Road, which also serves as access to the Malakoff Diggings, a National Register site, and other mines in the important North Bloomfield-San Juan District. The Foote's Road begins at the site of Columbia Hill, at an elevation of 3420 feet above sea level. In 4.4 miles, the road descends over 1200 feet in elevation, crossing the Middle Fork of the Yuba River at an elevation of 2180 feet. The road then climbs the opposite side of the steep river canyon, gaining approximately 2000 feet in elevation in 10.7 miles, reaching an elevation of about 4400 feet at its terminus in the town of Alleghany. The road averages about fifteen feet in width throughout this stretch, rarely wide enough for two cars to pass safely.

The road is physically and visually notable in three respects: for the rugged beauty of the river canyon it traverses; for the skillful manner in which the road negotiates the precipitous descent into the canyon while maintaining an even seven percent grade; and for the visual beauty and craftsmanship associated with a dry-laid rock wall which comprises the bed and retaining wall for approximately one mile of the road in Nevada County. These three qualities are captured in the following description, taken from Historic Spots in California, by Middledred Hoover, H.E. Rensch, and E.G. Rensch (Stanford, 1966), p. 494:

A portion of (Foote's Crossing Road) has been described as "America's most spectacular mile of mountain road"... Cut into the face of a stupendous precipice high above the deep gorge of the Middle Fork, it takes a narrow, threadlike course along the almost perpendicular cliffs reaching hundreds of feet above and below. A bend in the tortuous defile now and then reveals the value of this awesome roadway and the daring and skill of its builder. The rock walls, above and below, are of the type known as dry masonry, and are "so perfectly matched and carefully laid that, after decades of winter storms, soaking water, and swelling ice, they remain in perfect condition."

The road along its entire 15.1 mile length retains a high degree of integrity. A small section of the road in Nevada County has been oiled. The rock wall in Nevada County is almost entirely unchanged, except for natural vegetation which has partially obscured some of the rock. The original wooden bridge across the river was repaired in 1924 and destroyed by flooding in 1955. The road remained closed until the present bridge was built in 1958. The longer stretch of road in Sierra County is almost entirely unchanged. It is, however, considerably more deteriorated than the Nevada County road, with deeper and more prevalent washouts. This deterioration may owe to differential maintenance or to the skill with which the two parts of the road were constructed. A.D. Foote, a prominent Western mining engineer who conceived the idea for the road and for whom it is named, took personal charge of construction on the Nevada County side of the canyon, while the Sierra County road was engineered by a subcontractor.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1913 (Completed) **Builder/Architect** A.D. Foote, Engineer

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

Foote's Crossing Road is significant in several respects: as an engineering achievement, particularly with respect to the dry-laid rock wall in Nevada County (Criterion C); as a notable work of the prominent Western mining engineer, A.D. Foote (Criterion B); and as a crucial transportation link in opening the Alleghany mines, some of the richest and longest-producing mines in California.^(A) The road is an important example of the many bold ventures undertaken by Western mining engineers and entrepreneurs who in the pursuit of financial gain contributed significantly to the general development of the regions in which they operated.

Arthur DeWint Foote (1849-1933) had a distinguished career as a Western mining engineer, contributing to important mining ventures throughout the mining West. In 1874, Foote was employed as Assistant Engineer on the Sutro Tunnel in Nevada's Comstock mines. Foote was subsequently employed in surveying San Francisco's Golden Gate Park and the Tehachapi Pass Route of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Foote also served as resident engineer at the New Almaden quicksilver mine near San Jose, and was an engineer with the fledgling United States Geological Survey in the late 1870s in Leadville, Colorado. In the 1880s, Foote was Chief Engineer for the Idaho Land Irrigation Company, surveying and designing a water development project on the Boise River, one of the most ambitious of late nineteenth century reclamation projects. Although this private firm was unable to construct Foote's great reservoir and canal system in Idaho, that plan was subsequently adopted and implemented by the Reclamation Service as one of the original projects undertaken by that agency. In 1895, Foote settled in Grass Valley, California, where he served as chief of operations for the North Star Mines until his retirement in 1913.

In 1911, Foote headed a group of investors which purchased the Tightner Mine near Alleghany. The road from the railroad terminus at Nevada City to the Alleghany mines was virtually impassible during most of the year and closed altogether during winter months. During the winter, supplies were packed in and gold packed out by men on skis. Even in good weather, a five-day round trip was required to carry goods from Nevada City to the mines and back. Foote envisioned a new road which could be travelled year-around in three day round trip.

The road, which was to benefit the public generally and the Tightner Mine in particular, was a joint public-private venture, with funds provided by Sierra County, Nevada County, the United States Forest Service, and the Tightner Mine. Foote was responsible for operations generally and for construction on the Nevada County side. Engineer George Scrafe, Jr. was in charge of the Sierra County road. The bridge contract was let to a Mr. Hathaway.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property Approx. 37.3 acres

Quadrangle name Alleghany

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UMT References

A

10	675480	4362150
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

10	674350	4362050
Zone	Easting	Northing

C

10	674250	4364750
Zone	Easting	Northing

D

10	684950	4371050
Zone	Easting	Northing

E

10	685500	4371000
Zone	Easting	Northing

F

10	675400	4364100
Zone	Easting	Northing

G

Zone	Easting	Northing

H

Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification Within the coordinates of UTM points A, B, C, D, E, and F above, the roadbed and right-of-way for Foote's Crossing Road, designated as County Road 613AA2 in Nevada County and County Road 191 in Sierra County..

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marian F. Conway

organization Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission date

street & number 11898 Auburn Road telephone (916) 273-3886

city or town Grass Valley state California 95945

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title _____ date 12/1/80

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[Signature] date 1/29/81
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: [Signature] date 1/29/81
Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED JAN 29 1981

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Nevada County
County Courthouse
Nevada City, California 95959

Sierra County
County Courthouse
Downieville, California 95936

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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Nevada County Department of Public Works
County Courthouse
Nevada City, California 95959

Sierra County Department of Public Works
County Courthouse
Downieville, California 95936

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The final descent into the canyon of the Middle Fork canyon from the Nevada County side, a nearly vertical drop of hundreds of feet, posed the most challenging aspect of the undertaking. Foote's solution to this problem was essentially to hang a rock shelf along the precipice. Skilled Italian, Swiss, and Slovenian stone masons were employed to perform the dangerous and intricate task of blasting the rock from the face of the mountain and carefully shaping and fitting the stone to form a rock ledge. In some areas, workers were lowered on stagings hanging 1500 feet above the river bed. Steel eyelets were driven into the rock cliff to hold the new rock wall, which was entirely dry-laid. Horse-drawn dragline scrapers leveled the roadbed.

The road was originally estimated to cost \$7000. When major overruns were encountered, Foote was able to raise another \$28,000 from the principal parties involved. The final cost, however, reached \$85,000, most of the remaining \$50,000 being contributed by Foote personally.

The Foote Crossing Road is a testament to its engineer, not only for the boldness of his approach to technical problems, but also for the contribution he made to general public transportation in the region. Mr. Edmund Kinyon of the Grass Valley Union captures the full contribution of Foote when he writes:

Contrary to the general belief, the Foote road was not built as a toll road or as a commercial venture of any sort, but wholly as an aid to the mining operations at Alleghany and in the interest of shorter transportation to the railroad terminal in Nevada City. Some minor participation was had by the counties of Nevada and Sierra and probably by the mining companies. In the main, however, the burden of the notable undertaking was borne by its projector--perhaps one of the most notable examples of individual enterprise in the interest of the general public in California highway and road history.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Bibliography

1. Mary Hallock Foote, A Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West: The Reminiscences of Mary Hallock Foote (Ed. Rodman Paul) (San Marino, California, 1972).
2. Mildred Hoover, H.E. Rensch, E.G. Rensch, Historic Spots in California (Stanford, 1966).
3. Edmund Kanyun, "History of Alleghany," newsfile of Grass Valley Union.
4. James Sinnott, History of Sierra County.
5. W.B. Clark, Gold Districts of California (Sacramento, 1970).
6. Personal papers of A. B. Foote (Son of A. D. Foote).

FOOTE'S CROSSING ROAD
Nevada and Sierra Counties, California

UTM: A-10/675480/4362150
B-10/674350/4362050
C-10/674250/4364750
D-10/684950/4371050
E-10/685500/4370000
F-10/675400/4364100

