



COLE PLANTATION AND ACADEMY

CHICKAMAUGA CAMPAIGN HERITAGE TRAIL

William I. Cole was a prosperous 51 year old farmer at the time of the 1860 Federal census, living with his wife and



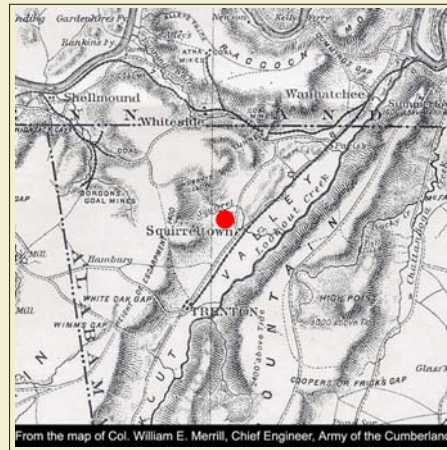
COLE PLANTATION SPRINGHOUSE RUINS

three children. With a plantation on Squirrel Town Creek, he was one of the best known slave owners in Dade County. In addition to his plantation, Cole also operated a boarding school for boys (known as Cole's Academy) that had a reputation throughout the south. General Edward Porter Alexander, Chief of Artillery under Longstreet, wrote: "I had heard of Trenton nearly 20 years before as the location of an awfully strict & severe boarding school for boys in that unhappy town which could only be reached through Alabama or Tennessee, & my father had held up to me, when I was about nine years old,

the idea that I might be sent there if my deportment was unsatisfactory."

When it became apparent that a major Federal army was coming toward Dade County, William Cole decided to send all the slaves south to Alabama. He placed a mature woman named Adaline, he called her "Ad," in charge of the group, giving her a thousand dollars in gold, and telling her to use it if necessary to keep them together and to return home after the war.

Two Federal divisions camped on Cole's property in September 1863. Private Bliss Morse, 105th Ohio



From the map of Col. William E. Merrill, Chief Engineer, Army of the Cumberland

Infantry, wrote on Friday, September 4th, "We camp on a seesh farm. Turchin's Brig. Was ahead, and the boys dug his potatoes, eat his honey and killed his hogs and sheep. He would not take any green backs in pay for his produce."

Private John W. Nesbitt, also with the 105th Ohio Infantry Regiment, wrote: "We went into camp near an old secesh whose potatoes, apples, corn, and honey rather suffered on his account. We offered to pay for what we got in greenbacks, but he said he would not have it, and all the boys did not have confederate money, so they did not pay for what they got."

General John M. Brannan, 3rd Division of the 14th Army Corps, stated: "On the night of the 7th," he wrote, "I advanced to this point [Squirrel Town Spring on the Cole plantation] with the remaining portion of my command, and encamped at about 1 p.m. The water at this point is plentiful enough for a large army."

The war devastated Cole's plantation and left him utterly destitute. He often



COLE'S SPRING ENCAMPMENT AREA

wondered what had become of his enslaved Africans that he had sent south. Then, one day as he was looking down the lane he saw a band of Negroes coming toward the house. As they drew closer, he could see that they were led by Adaline, the woman he commonly called "Ad." Although they were no longer slaves, each of the faithful Blacks had come home. Adaline returned to Cole all of the thousand dollars in gold that he had trusted her with during the war. He used the money to rebuild the plantation.

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