

OWING'S FORD AND CHILDRRESS PLANTATION



CHICKAMAUGA CAMPAIGN HERITAGE TRAIL

In 1863 there was a thriving farming community along West Chickamauga Creek in the vicinity of Birds Mill. One



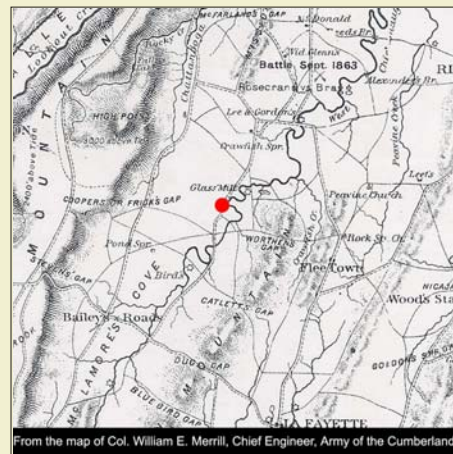
THE CHILDRRESS HOUSE

of the most important plantations was the Childress Plantation. Significance of this family was such that the road now known as Old Bethel Road was called Childress Road during the war.

John Owings came to the area from North Carolina with his wife Elizabeth. They had seven children. In 1860, the Federal Census showed John as a farmer who owned six slaves. Richard Childress came to Walker County from South Carolina and his wife was from North Carolina. They had five children. In 1860, Richard was a 72 year-old farmer who owned nine slaves. Owing's Ford

(called Owen's Ford in the official records) was an important crossing point.

By the second week of September, 1863, the Confederate Army of Tennessee, under General Braxton Bragg, was largely consolidated on the east side of the Creek, while the Federal Army of the Cumberland, commanded by General William S. Rosecrans, was still widely scattered. West Chickamauga Creek lay between the two forces. To protect his men while marching north, Rosecrans sought to cover all the likely crossings south of Lee and Gordon's Mills. One of these important crossing places was



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

Owen's Ford. Wartime records indicate a major skirmish at this site. John Lindsey dates the skirmish at Owen's Ford as the 18th and involving the 8th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment of Dibrell's Brigade in Armstrong's Division of General Nathan Bedford Forrest's Corps. "Skirmished all day at Owen's Ford," he wrote, and with the aid of Captain A. L. Huggin's [Tennessee] battery were enabled to hold the position taken during the day."



OWENS (OWING'S) SPRING

"Just before sundown [on September 18]," General Daniel H. Hill, Confederate Corps Commander, wrote, "our cavalry pickets were driven away at Owen's Ford, some miles above the mill, and the Yankees crossed over a considerable force. I hastened there in person with Daniel W. Adams' brigade, but the Yankees did not advance beyond Childress'. The next morning Adams' brigade was withdrawn to Glass' Mill." When the Federal Army invaded the local area, all livestock and provisions were confiscated. The residents were told to seek refuge, many of the local civilians left the area for safer places. Susannah Childress Jones, wife of Dr. George W. Jones, wanted to go to Pigeon Mountain because that area was still in Confederate hands. She was, however

faced with a problem because all the horses and mules had been taken by the army. Nevertheless, her difficulty was overcome and she and her baby, Kirby, were pulled to the mountain in a buggy drawn by one of the enslaved Africans.

The Childress site today consists of a two-story frame structure with columns in front that is believed to be the main house of the wartime Childress plantation. The residents of the area remember it as the Henderson House, and say that the last Childress widow had a brother named Henderson who acquired the property.

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