



ROCK SPRINGS CHURCH

CHICKAMAUGA CAMPAIGN HERITAGE TRAIL



The majority of the people who established Walker County were deeply religious. Soon after establishing their farms, the residents of most areas usually

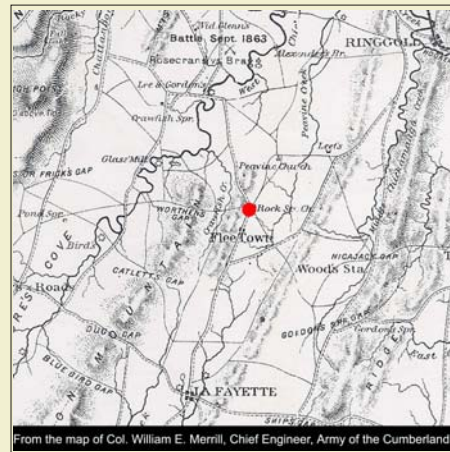


GENERAL BENJAMIN CHEATHAM

built a church. In a typical example, the Rock Springs Methodist Church was established in a log building near the spring on the east side of the LaFayette Road. In 1854, the log structure was moved "out towards the creek" and used as a school. On the original site, the church met in a new framed and weather-boarded building. The building had two doors in front so that the male and female

worshippers could enter separately and seat themselves on opposite sides of the church. A sizeable community grew up around the Rock Springs Church on the LaFayette Road.

During the Chickamauga Campaign the Confederate forces occupied and camped in the Rock Spring community. "In line of battle near Rock Church," James H. Fraser, 50th Alabama Infantry, noted in his diary on September 13, "8 miles from LaFayette, Georgia. The order to move at sunset was countermanded and orders received to march at 12 o'clock at night. At the appointed time we moved out of Lafayette, marched 8 or 10 miles and this



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

morning we are [in] line of battle at or near Rock Church Springs. We are expecting to meet the enemy at any hour, some heavy skirmishing has been going on. General Cheatham has been busy forming the line of battle."

The expected Federal attack did not come and the next day the Confederate forces moved back to LaFayette. Five days later, however, as General Braxton Bragg made ready for his major attack on the Federal Army of the Cumberland, elements of the Confederate army returned to Rock Springs. "Moved onto the Rock Spring Church," Edwin H. Reynolds, 5th Tennessee Infantry, wrote in his diary on September 18, "and took up our old position of the 13th inst, where Gen. Bragg's Battle order was read... We moved on slowly in the direction of Gordon's Mills down the 'Long Hollow' road." The next day, they moved north and began crossing the creek for the Battle of Chickamauga.

Although the departure of Polk and Hill's men marked the end of major Confederate concentrations at Rock Springs, there was still a presence in the area for sometime after the battle. At least one post-war account by a Federal prisoner captured at Chickamauga indicates that the Confederates held hundreds of captive Federal soldiers in



WOUNDED FEDERALS AFTER THE BATTLE

Rock Spring after the big battle. Adam S. Johnston, 79th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, stated that he was captured at Chickamauga and "sent to the rear seven miles, to Cheatham's headquarters, or hospital, called Rock Springs." There he said that the Confederates recorded every man's name, regiment, rank, and place of residence, and then turned them over to "rebel citizens [armed] with double-barreled shotguns, rifles, pistols, sabers, old scythes... and almost everything you could mention." He then stated that the approximately 700 prisoners were formed into "double square" and marched to Ringgold, Georgia.

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