



COOPER'S GAP

CHICKAMAUGA CAMPAIGN HERITAGE TRAIL



The first obstacle facing the Federal Army in the September 1863 invasion of Walker County was getting over Lookout Mountain. Cooper's Gap, Stevens' Gap, and Dougherty's Gap proved to be

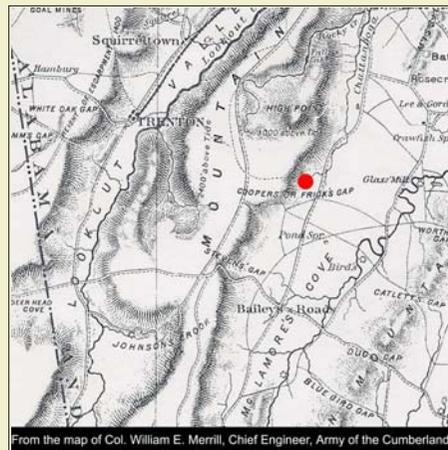


WARTIME ROAD

serviceable. "Ascertaining that the rebels were just commencing to obstruct Cooper's Gap," General James Negley reported to 14th Corps headquarters on September 8, "I pushed forward a brigade and occupied the gap at 8 a.m. The rebels fled after cutting down about a dozen trees. I ordered one regiment to be sent to the foot of the gap and occupy and hold it. The road appears to be good at this point. I will report in the evening. One regiment was sent to seize and occupy Stevens' Gap, which is reported heavily obstructed with fallen trees; these will be cut out to-night if possible. The road to Frick's Gap branches

off the Cooper's Gap road about 1 mile northeast of this point; the road is pronounced impassable for wagons. There is a great scarcity of water here; men and animals will suffer if we remain here. The batteries and brigade teams are all up the mountain. I hope to get the supply train up by dark. The only reliable news I have from the valley represents about 2,000 rebel cavalry on the road between Stevens's and LaFayette."

General Beatty commanded the Federal infantry brigade that captured Cooper's Gap. His report of this action provided additional information. "Started at four o'clock this morning," he



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

stated, "and pushed for Cooper's Gap. Surprised a cavalry picket at the foot of the mountain, in McLemore's Cove, Chattanooga Valley. In this little affair we captured five sabers, one revolver, one carbine, one prisoner, and seriously wounded one man. While standing on a peak of Lookout, we saw far off the east long lines of dust trending slowly to the south, and inferred from this that Bragg had abandoned Chattanooga, and was either retiring before us or making preparations to check the center and right of our line."

General Negley elected to take his division over the mountain by way of the Stevens' Gap road. This movement was observed by Confederate cavalry under General William Martin who later informed General Braxton Bragg that the Federals were off the mountain and moving toward Davis' Crossroads, adding that they appeared to be vulnerable to a surprise Confederate attack. "During the 9th," General Bragg later wrote, "it was ascertained that a column, estimated at from 4,000 to 8,000, had crossed Lookout



CROSSING THE MOUNTAIN

Mountain into the cove by way of Stevens' and Cooper's Gaps." Plans were made to block the Federals at Davis' Crossroads.

General Baird brought his division through Cooper's Gap on September 10th in time to support Negley when he was under attack at Davis' Crossroads. During the days that followed more and more Federal soldiers came through the gaps and began moving up the Cove in preparation for the Battle of Chickamauga. Cooper's Gap continued to be an important route for the rest of the campaign.

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