

MURPHY'S HOLLOW SPRING

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Murphy's Hollow Spring is located on the east side of Murphy's Hollow Road and a short distance south of Interstate 24. It appears on the New Home GA/AL/TN quadrangle of the U.S. Geological Survey maps.



This beautiful spring, located beside the Murphy's Hollow Road, was much used during the war. Two divisions of the 14th Army Corps and all of the 21st Army Corps of the Federal Army of the Cumberland used this route. Colonel Edward A. King, 2nd Brigade, 4th Division of the 14th Army Corps was the first unit in the area. He filed this report on his activities: "I have the honor to report that, in pursuance of orders, I crossed the Tennessee River last night with my brigade, and with 376 men of Second Tennessee Cavalry under Colonel Ray, who reported to me as directed by Major-General Reynolds. I sent Colonel Ray in advance, with instructions to proceed toward Chattanooga and if he could, without exposing his regiment too much, to go within view of the enemy at Lookout Mountain, falling back upon my brigade if hard pressed, at the junction of the Trenton and Chattanooga road [Murphy's Hollow Road in Whiteside], where I supposed I could be in time. Colonel Ray carried out his instructions handsomely, driving in the enemy's pickets at daylight, and approaching within five-gun battery at Lookout Mountain. He captured an acting rebel commissary of subsistence, whose saddle-bags I examined and found \$2,735.50, which presuming to be public funds, I took possession of and will turn it over to order. I left the Trenton road at 9 a.m. to-day, reaching Shellmound at 2 p.m. The Chattanooga Road is, in many places, quite bad."

Scattered units of the 3rd Confederate Cavalry attempted to slow the Federal advance. There were several small skirmishes near the Tennessee River, and the bulk of the 3rd Confederate Cavalry engaged in a running fight with the Federal 2nd Tennessee Cavalry that started near the River and continued along Murphy's Hollow Road almost to Trenton. During this action, the Federals captured several of the Confederate cavalymen. Sergeant G. W. Simms and Private John Webb of Marion County, Tennessee, along with Arch Thomas of Jackson County, Alabama, were sent to Rock Island Prison. Jesse Cox and A. J. Gibson died at Camp Chase prison.

The divisions commanded by Generals Reynolds and Brannan of General Thomas' 14th Army Corps of the Army of the Cumberland used this route to enter Dade County. They were followed by General Crittenden's 21st Army Corps. At 2:00 A.M. on September 3, 1863 General James A. Garfield, General Rosecrans' Chief of Staff, issued the following orders to Corps commanders: "The general commanding announces the following orders for the movement of the army General Crittenden will move his corps up the valley of Running Water Creek to Whiteside's where he will post one regiment, and send one division along the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, to the Trenton road, with orders to push forward as near to Chattanooga as practicable and threaten the enemy in that direction. With the remainder of his force he will occupy a position near the junction of Murphy's Valley Road with the road marked on the map as a good wagon road to Naylor's.' He will hold his train on his right and rear, and be in readiness to move wither upon Whiteside's, the Trenton Road, or Shellmound. These movements should be completed on the evening of September 4."

General Crittenden, commander of the 21st Army Corps, reported to Garfield from the junction of Murphy's Hollow and Nickajack Roads at 9:35 A.M. on September 6. "I have the honor to inform you that I have just arrived at this point with General Palmer and his First Brigade, General Van Cleve is between here and Whiteside's, and will encamp about 2 miles from here, where there is good water. General Wood had moved in the direction of Chattanooga."

"The general commanding approves the disposition of your forces" General Garfield replied to Crittenden. "Department headquarters are fixed at this place [Trenton] for the present." The road was so congested that several days were required for all the men to get through. After reaching the Trenton to Chattanooga Road, Crittenden's Corps turned north and continued on to Chattanooga. Reynolds' and Brannan's divisions of Thomas' 14th Army Corps turned south toward Trenton.

References: Official Records of the War of the Rebellion Archive and files Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park Raymond Evans, The Civil War in Dade County

Significant Views: A good viewshed for this area exists along both sides of Murphy's Hollow Road leading south toward Trenton from the Tennessee State line.

Setting: The setting is very rural and highly scenic in nature. At the point where the road leaves Tennessee there are a few visual intrusions from recent residential developments. Soon, however, the road passes between wooded mountains on either side to the site of the spring in an area that has changed little since the time of the war.

Documented Structures, Sites and Features: The ruins of the war time Murphy house are near the road. A beautiful rest stop can be found at the Murphy Spring on the east side of the road. Thousands of soldiers paused and camped here during the Chickamauga Campaign.

Presumed Wartime Features: This was the major route for troop movements during the Chickamauga campaign. There are rumors of Confederate Graves near the spring. These may be casualties from the cavalry fight at the start of the campaign in this area.

Original Terrain: Except for the road being paved, the original terrain in this area is unchanged from the time when the soldiers passed through here in September 1863 on their way to Chickamauga.

Related Sites: Cole's Plantation and Academy.

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