

August 13, 1862 - "I made requisition for 1,000 negroes, with tools, &c., without loss of time." Slave labor supply problems slow the construction of fortifications in occupied Nashville



CAMP AT SAINT CLOUD'S HILL, Nashville, August 13, [1862.]

Col. J. B. FRY,

Assistant Adjutant-Gen. and Chief of Staff:

The railroad bridge will be fortified against all attack except distant bombardment.



Saint Cloud's Hill will be secure against any attack except regular approaches and investment. Capitol Hill the same. These will be provided each with four pieces and six companies. The building corner of Broad and Spruce will have garrison of two companies; it will overlook a position selected for reserve of one cavalry regiment and one battery of horse artillery. Said works will be completed in order of importance, which is as above. The total garrison will be two regiments infantry, one of cavalry, and two batteries. I lost forty-eight hours by the tardiness of the citizens in answering, the requisitions of the commandant of the city for negroes, teams, tools, cooking utensils, and provisions. Up to this date I have received but about 150 negroes, and to tools, teams, &c., except those I got from Government officers. I was ready to employ 825 negroes at daybreak on the 11th had they been furnished in compliance with my requisitions. Work was begun on the bridge on morning of the 11th; on Saint Cloud's Hill this morning.^{Note 1} I am not responsible for any delay the general may remark upon. I made requisition for 1,000 negroes, with tools, &c., without loss of time. My arrangements are in advance of the labor furnished. I have anticipated your order just received for guarding north side of bridge. It will be perfectly safe except against cannonade, that would demolish the bridge from a distance, from pieces concealed from our guns to be located in flanking positions on south side.



J. ST. C. MORTON, Chief Engineer, Army of the Ohio.

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Note 1: This date marks the beginning of the construction of Fort Negley.