

in readiness for duty, and called upon the citizens to offer their personal services and means cheerfully to the United States officers in command there, to aid in the completion of the unfinished fortifications around the city.

“In response to the mayor’s appeal, a large meeting of citizens was held in the city-hall park, on Tuesday, the ninth of August, when a committee of defence, chosen from the common council, was appointed, clothed with ample powers to direct the efforts of the inhabitants in the business of protection.

“On the same morning the officers of General Mapes’s brigade, to the number of two hundred, gave the first practical response to the mayor’s appeal by crossing the East River from Beekman’s Slip, and, with Captain Andrew Bremmer’s artillery, marching to the lines traced out for the fortifications on the heights around Brooklyn by General J. G. Swift, and taking pick-axes, and shovels, and every other appropriate implement at hand, breaking ground at eight o’clock, and working lustily all day. They were followed the next morning by as many carpenters and cabinet-makers; and only four days after the meeting in the park, the committee of defence announced that three thousand persons were at work on the fortifications.

“They also reported the receipt of large sums of money; and, on the same day, it was announced that ‘two hundred journeymen printers, one thousand Sons of Erin, thirty pilots, seventy men from the Asbury (African) Church, with one hundred and fifty other colored men, two hundred weavers, and many heads of manufacturing establishments,’ were at work on the lines.

“Two days afterward the city newspapers were suspended, that all hands might work on the fortifications; and, on the twentieth of August, five hundred men ‘left on the Jersey steam-boat for Harlem Heights,’ to work on intrenchments there; and, at the same time, fifteen hundred ‘patriotic Sons of Erin’ crossed the ferry to Brooklyn for the same purpose. Two days afterward nearly one thousand colored people crossed the Catharine Ferry to work on the fortifications between Fort Greene and Gowanus Creek; and, on the twenty-fifth, the Washington Benevolent Society, an organization opposed to the war, inspired with zeal for the common cause, went over in a body, with their banner bearing the portrait of Washington—the largest number belonging to one society that had crossed over at one time. On the same day the butchers went to the line to labor, bearing the flag, on which was the figure of an ox prepared for slaughter, which had been used by them in the great ‘federal procession,’ in honor of the ratification of the national constitution in 1789.

“Masonic and other societies went in bodies to the patriotic task; and school-teachers and pupils went together to give their aid. Little boys, too small to handle a spade or pick axe, carried earth on shingles, and so added their mites in rearing the breastworks. It was a scene like that of cairn-build-