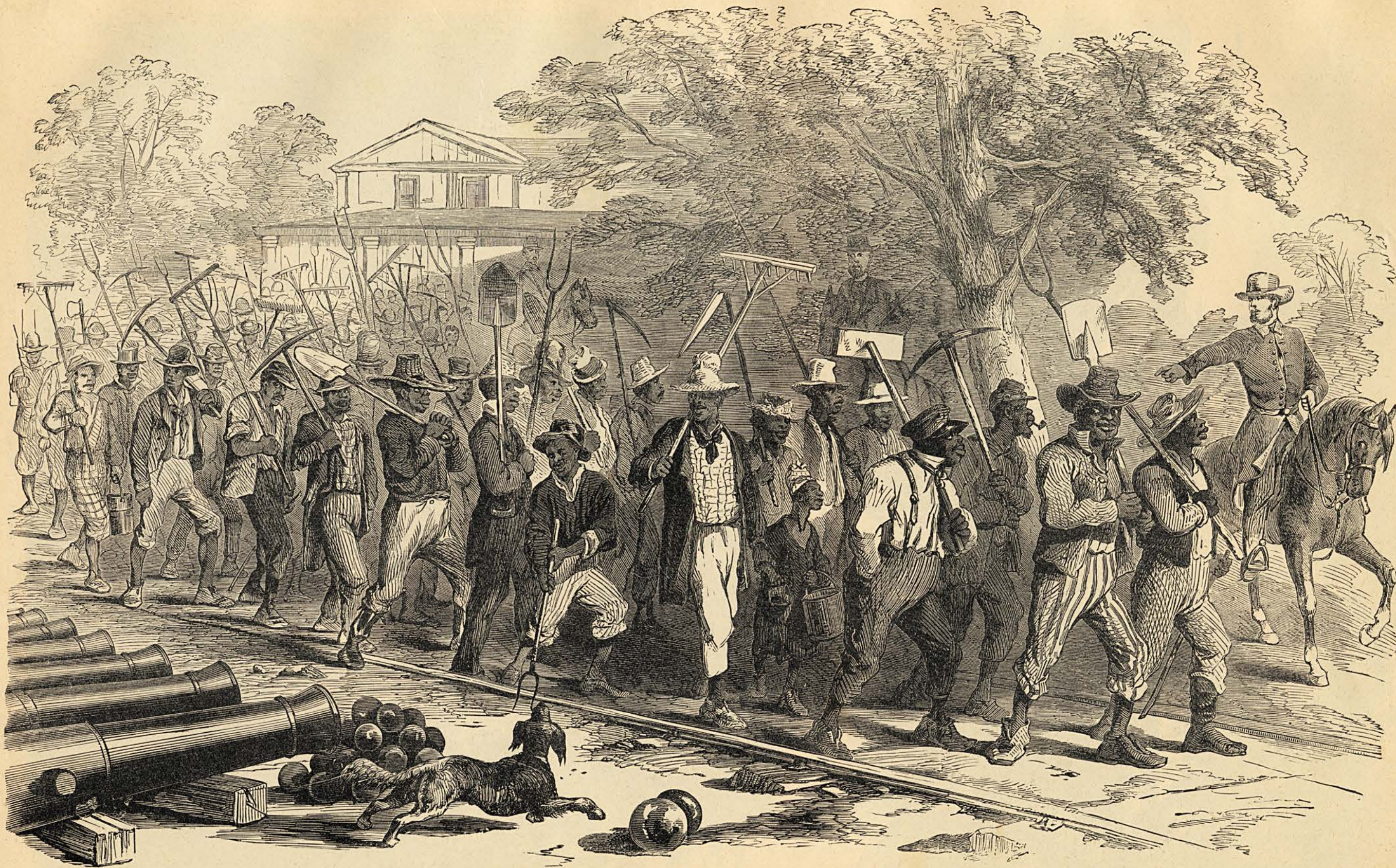




MORNING MUSTERING OF THE "CONTRABANDS," AT FORT MONROE, ON THEIR WAY TO THEIR DAY'S WORK.

At the beginning of the war it was customary for commanders of National forces to return fugitive slaves that escaped within their lines whenever their masters appeared and demanded them. The first to refuse was General B. F. Butler, commanding at Fort Monroe. He declared (May 26, 1861) that as slaves could be made useful to a belligerent in various ways, they were properly contraband of war, and he would not return any of them to disloyal masters. This gave rise to the use of the word "contraband" as a term for an escaped slave. Thousands of them came into the National camps, and many were made useful in constructing fortifications.