

# Nile's gift

## 3.- Prince Pius Hill

The farm of La Florida or “flowery grove” was a large estate located north of Madrid, between today’s St. Vincent’s Way and Puerta de Hierro (the Iron Gate). In the late 17th century it was owned by the Marquise of Castel Rodrigo, married to the Prince Pius of Saboy, who gave his name to the hill in the south area of the estate. In the 18th century the property was acquired by King Charles IV to create the Royal Site of La Florida.

Prince Pius Hill witnessed one of the most tragic episodes in the Peninsular War. In the dawn of May 3, 1808, 44 citizens who had been arrested after the rebellion of the previous day were conducted to the hill and shot to death by the French army. Their bodies were displayed for two days as a warning to the population of Madrid. Today they are buried at La Florida graveyard, on the side of the hill.



*Flowery grove*

After 1860, the north-west area of the hill was included in a development plan that created Ferraz St. and other avenues. The North Railway Station was built in the south part, while the top of the hill became the site of an army barracks with capacity for 3,000 soldiers.



*Cuartel de La Montaña*

The Cuartel de la Montaña barracks played an important role at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, when General Fanjul took refuge there with 1,500 soldiers and some civilians and proclaimed the state of war in Madrid on July 19, 1936. The building was bombed and besieged by Republican forces and militias, who eventually conquered it in the noon of July 20.

The barracks suffered extensive damage and was not rebuilt after the war. The site remained in ruins for 30 years until 1970, when it was handed over to the Madrid City Hall to be used as location for the Debod Temple.