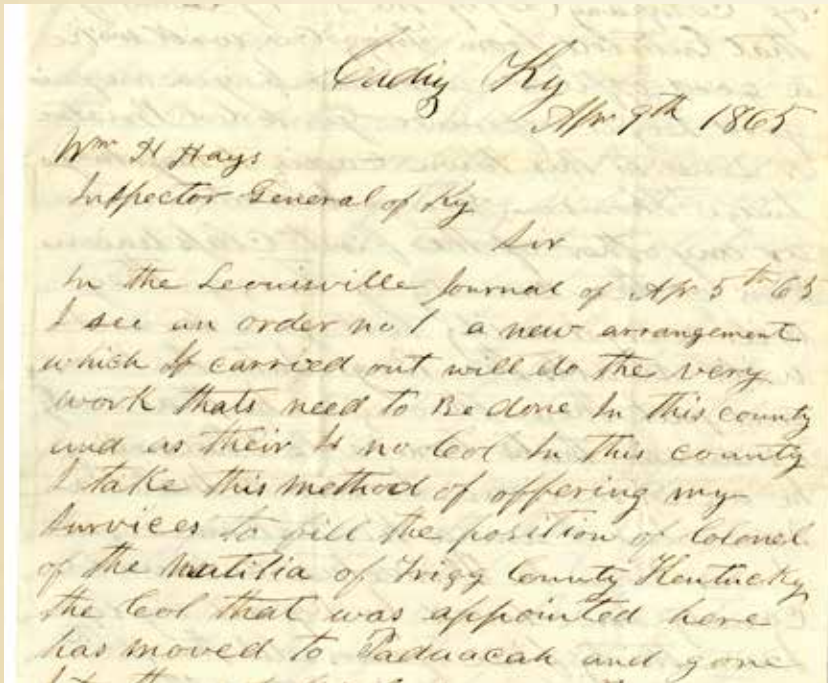


PRESENTED BY

KentuckyHistoricalSociety

CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS: JAMES W. RICHERSON



Kentucky Historical Society collections

TRIGG COUNTY — James W. Richerson was a semi-literate Union man who had been a plantation overseer in Trigg County before the Civil War. He wrote several letters to Gov. Thomas E. Bramlette and the adjutant general seeking a commission to raise a body of militiamen to defend the loyal people of Trigg County.

Richerson illuminates the mingled hostility to slavery as an institution and slaveholders as a class (which underlay much Union loyalty across the state in the geographical or, as in this case, social fringes

of Kentucky's slave society) combined with the sort of racial prejudices which prevented many loyal Kentuckians — and, indeed, many white Northerners — from welcoming African Americans into the body politic. While proclaiming himself to be “honestly & candidly” in favor of “Immediate Emancipation of all the colored population,” Richerson expressed reservations about their continued residence in Kentucky.

Believing that both rebels and African Americans were — in different, but related ways — responsible for the coming of the war and doubting that the two could live peaceably after it, Richerson proposed that those, “let them Be white or Black male or female,” who might again threaten the peace of the republic be “picked up and sent not only out of Ky but Intirely from the continent of America to some place that the Government may procure.” Richerson's letters highlight the tangled relationship between race, class and loyalty in wartime Kentucky.

The Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) links Kentuckians with their past via archival collections that document people from every walk of life, reaching back to 1509. The “Civil War Governors of Kentucky” (CWG-K) is a multi-year documentary-editing project dedicated to publishing documents associated with all five of the state's Civil War governors: the three Union governors, Beriah Magoffin (1859 – 1862), James F. Robinson (1862 – 1863), and Thomas E. Bramlette (1863 – 1867); and the two provisional Confederate governors, George W. Johnson (1861 – 1862) and Richard Hawes (1862 – 1865).

KentuckyHistoricalSociety

100 W. Broadway | Frankfort, KY 40601
502-564-1792 | www.history.ky.gov



The Kentucky Historical Society is an agency of the
Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet.