February Newsletter

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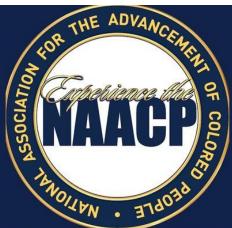
Welcome to the first edition of our monthly chapter newsletter. We hope you find it interesting and informative. Our aim is to for the newsletter to provide news and feature stories to complement announcements and other information that can be found on the website. We wanted to get the newsletter out before our next meeting which will be next Saturday at 9 a.m. at Faith Miracle Temple of Glory Church, 326 Wilson Dr. in Mayfield. Rev. George Hurd, our branch president, is pastor at the church.

Of course, this is your newsletter. We welcome your comments on how to make it better serve the chapter. We welcome stories, news items, announcements and photos from you. Just email them to bcraig8960@gmail.com.

Thanks!

Berry

Berry Craig, editor





Mayfield-Graves County NAACP Member BRUNCH

SATURDAY MARCH 2 | 10:30AM-12:30PM COME MINGLE AND BRING A FRIEND

DOOR PRIZES, FOOD, MEET LOCAL OFFICE CANDIDATES, MUSIC & VOTER REGISTRATION

WEST KENTUCKY RURAL ELECTRIC COMMUNITY ROOM
1218 W BROADWAY, MAYFIELD, KY

Sunday, February 25th Mayfield Middle School 1:30pm-4:00pm

Join us for a soul food meal with your choice of fish or chicken and all the fixins
Take a walk with us through the history of soul food and enjoy soul food prepared by some of the best soul food cooks in Mayfield

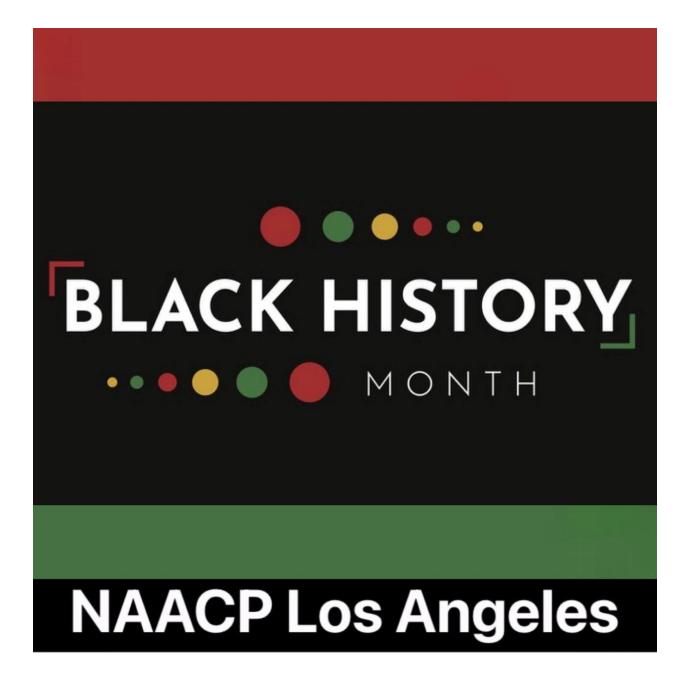
Tickets can be purchased at the door or from any Cultural
Diversity Student
Adults \$10
Students \$5
All proceeds benefit MISD Cultural
Diversity Program

Communty Soul Food Dinner

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Many soul food dishes are passed down through generations, and preparing and eating them can be a way to connect with family and friends. In addition, soul food has often been a way for African Americans to celebrate their cultural heritage and to find a sense of pride and identity.

Food for the Soul



Black History Month is a time to honor and celebrate the achievements and contributions of African Americans throughout history. In 2024, there are numerous noteworthy individuals who deserve recognition for their impact on society. Here are 10 inspiring figures we recognize during Black History Month 2024:

- 1. Barack Obama: As the first African American President of the United States, Obama's historic election shattered barriers and inspired millions around the world.
- 2. Maya Angelou: A renowned poet, author, and civil rights activist, Angelou's powerful words continue to resonate and inspire generations.

- 3. Harriet Tubman: Tubman's bravery and determination as a conductor on the Underground Railroad helped countless enslaved individuals escape to freedom.
- 4. Martin Luther King Jr.: A prominent leader in the civil rights movement, King's nonviolent activism and powerful speeches played a pivotal role in advancing racial equality.
- 5. Rosa Parks: Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a segregated bus sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott and became a symbol of resistance against racial segregation.
- 6. Mae Jemison: Jemison made history as the first African American woman to travel to space, breaking barriers in the field of science and inspiring future generations of astronauts.
- 7. Thurgood Marshall: As the first African American Supreme Court Justice, Marshall fought tirelessly for civil rights and equality under the law.
- 8. Shirley Chisholm: Chisholm became the first African American woman elected to the United States Congress and later ran for president, paving the way for future women of color in politics.
- 9. Frederick Douglass: A prominent abolitionist, writer, and orator, Douglass used his powerful voice to advocate for the end of slavery and equal rights for all.
- 10. Serena Williams: Williams is one of the greatest tennis players of all time, breaking records and challenging stereotypes in a predominantly white sport.

These 10 individuals represent a small fraction of the countless African Americans who have made significant contributions to various fields and have helped shape the world we live in today. Commemorating them during Black History Month 2024 is a way to honor their legacies and inspire future generations to continue the fight for equality and justice.

"Like Chasing Rabbits Back Home: Andrew Carman goes 'over the top' in World War I"

By BERRY CRAIG

Andrew Carman of Graves County, Kentucky, glimpsed No Man's Land only once. "It looked like an old broom sedge field," he remembered. "Nothing was growing. The ground was all torn up. There was barbed wire coiled up and some lower down to the ground. It looked like an old field somebody had just thrown away." 1

¹Berry Craig, *Hidden History of Kentucky Soldiers* (Charleston, South Carolina: The History Press, 2011), 72. The author interviewed Carman on his farm near Mayfield on October 16, 1981.

It was a killing field in France where Private Carman, 23, almost died charging the German enemy in World War I. "I don't know how long it was until I got hit by shrapnel," he said. "I went down and when I came to, I could feel blood all over my face and my left knee was hurting."

Carman returned to deepest western Kentucky in 1919 and spent most of his life raising crops and livestock on a 200-acre hill farm a half-dozen or so miles northeast of Mayfield, the county seat. He was entitled to sew a yellow wound stripe on the sleeve of his olive-green uniform. But in 1981, he decided he wanted a Purple Heart, a decoration which General George Washington created during the Revolutionary War. Afterwards, the medal fell into disuse and was not revived until 1932. "When I wrote the army about it, I said I just wanted to wear it a little while before I died," Carman explained. Death claimed the old soldier on May 3, 1983. He was 87.²

The shell that nearly killed Carman claimed the lives of two of his buddies in the storied 369th U.S. Infantry, an African American regiment mainly from Harlem in New York City. After Carman fell, the rest of the regiment kept pressing the Germans, inflicting and suffering heavy casualties. Already, the soldiers of the 369th, dubbed "The Black Rattlers," were known for bravery in battle. Their beleaguered German enemies nicknamed them the "Hell Fighters." The 369th was "in combat for 191 days, longer than any other American regiment in the war," wrote journalist and historian Stephen L. Harris. But the U.S. brass sent the regiment to fight in a French army. Most U.S. generals, all of whom were white, did not want black combat troops.³

A colonel in the headquarters of General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force, sent a secret document to the French warning them not to treat African Americans as equals. He explained that to do so abroad would undermine segregation stateside. Laws kept African Americans separate and unequal in Kentucky and states farther south. To one degree or another, racial discrimination was the social order almost everywhere else in America.

Most African American soldiers who stayed under U.S. command were detailed as laborers. The 369th wound up in the Fourth French Army, whose admiring officers showered them with praise and with medals. The first two U.S. Doughboys to win the coveted French Croix-de-Guerre with Star and Gold Palm were Sergeant Henry Johnson and Private Needham Roberts of the 369th. "He was a good-sized man and pretty quiet," Carman said of Roberts.⁴

After the war ended in 1918, the Kentuckian traveled to the Rhine River with the 369th. "The French felt these black American troops ought to lead the Allies" to the historic German waterway. The regiment occupied a trio of villages on the west bank "while before them, remnants of a beaten and cowed German army fled across the river." Carman brought home a small brown pebble he picked up from the riverbank.⁵

The son of ex-slaves, Carman was born on March 20, 1895, in Jimtown, near Mayfield, the county seat. When he registered for the draft, he was working on Dan McGuire's farm in Cuba, another county town. Before Carman risked his life for his country in a foreign field, he and other African

²Ibid., 72-73.

³Stephen L. Harris, *Harlem's Hell Fighters: The African-American 369th Infantry in World War I* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's Inc., 2003), 260.

⁴Craig, Carman Interview.

⁵Harris, *Harlem's Hell Fighters*, 259-60. Craig, *Hidden History*, 74.

Americans in Graves County endured the daily humiliation of second-class citizenship status and the threat of lethal brutality from their white neighbors. Violence against African Americans underpinned the Jim Crow segregation system in the old Confederacy and in border states like Kentucky. In the 1890s, white mobs lynched at least four blacks in Mayfield.⁶

One of the lynchings made front page news in the *New York Times*. On December 23, 1896, the paper reported a "Kentucky Race War" in Mayfield. Whites had lynched an African American and threatened "some of the colored families who lived on the outskirts" of town. *The Times* said "an army of negroes," weapons-in-hand, was expected to attack Mayfield, where armed whites "were being reinforced from all the surrounding towns." Whites shot and killed three blacks near Mayfield; a deputy shot and killed an African American teenager when he got off a train at the town depot. He was apparently unarmed and evidently knew nothing of the "race war." Mayfield was "quiet" by 9 p.m., according to *The Times*. At a mass meeting, a petition, appealing for peace and signed by more than 100 African Americans, was presented, and the violence ebbed. The youth's slaying "was declared unprovoked," and whites began raising money for his "aged mother," the paper said.⁷

Carman was drafted in July, 1917, and went through basic training at segregated Camp Zachary Taylor in Louisville. Just as in the Civil War and the Spanish-American War, white colonels commanded black regiments; most other officers were also white. The color bar remained firm in the military through World War II; President Harry Truman desegregated the armed forces by executive order in 1948.⁸

The army sent Carman "over there" from Newport News, Virginia, in a troopship convoy. Like thousands of other soldiers — white and African American — he was plagued by seasickness. "I was too sick to die," he recalled. Carman said he might have perished if not for fellow Graves countian Granual Whittemore. He coaxed Carman to eat to stay alive. "I'd chew something, swallow it and it would come right back up. But he forced me to keep trying to eat and I made it." "

After fourteen days at sea, Carman's ship docked at Brest, France. He was surprised when French soldiers and civilians welcomed him and other African Americans as warmly as they greeted white Doughboys. "Segregation and prejudice, I didn't see any of that," he said. "The French treated me like a man. They treated me better than I'd ever been treated in my own country." *Louisville Courier-Journal* reporter Bill Powell wrote that Carman told him that "he thought racial segregation of the U.S. armed forces at the time 'had something to do with me fighting with the French, but no one ever sat down and explained it to me." 10

Like other African American troops handed over to the French, Carman had to exchange his deadly-accurate Springfield rifle for a French Lebel, a much inferior weapon. "We nicknamed them 'Lilly-Belles," he said. The Lebels "had zero firing accuracy but were adequate as mountings for bayonets on which the French colonial troops chiefly counted in infantry attacks; they employed artillery to

⁶Andrew Carman, *Draft Registration Card, Family Search*. https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9YYF-98CD?cc=1968530.

Ralph Ginzburg, 100 Years of Lynchings (New York: Lancer Books, 1962), 261.

⁷New York Times, Dec. 24, 25, 1896.

⁸Bill Powell, "I'm so proud' ... Veteran wears Purple Heart to make up for lost time," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, January 4, 1982.

⁹Craig, *Hidden History*, 74.

¹⁰Craig, *Hidden History*; 74; Powell, "I'm so proud."

accomplish what Americans expected of their Springfields," wrote historians Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri in *The Unknown Soldiers: Black American Troops in World War I.* They added that a white American claimed the French system would bring out the best in the black Americans because they "simply doted on cold steel." The remark equated "in a typically racist way, American blacks with French colonials simply because they, too, were black; that the two groups had totally different cultural backgrounds was ignored."¹¹

When Carman reached the Western Front on the night of September 25, 1918, he had no idea that a massive attack against the German's vaunted Hindenburg Line was planned for the next morning. The troops were in position about 10:45 p.m.¹²

Even the veteran "Hell Fighters" Carman traveled with did not know where they were going. A convoy of trucks hauled the regiment through the night and deposited the men about thirty kilometers from the assault start line. The "Black Rattlers" marched to their destination on an ancient Roman road, the dirt packed as hard as asphalt. The 369th joined French and Moroccan troops and "at last came to rest somewhere—heaven knows where—in the inky darkness, and sank down to rest and wait for the barrage." Slung over the shoulder of each soldier was a musette bag stuffed with hard bread, chocolate and tins of sardines. The men also lugged their rifles, cartridges, hand grenades, barbed wire cutters and two canteens of water apiece. Gas masks were strapped across their chests "at the alert position." ¹³

The 369th —originally the 15th New York—had been in France since December, 1917, as part of the yet-to-be-formed 93rd Division. The outfit landed in Brest on the 27th, and was sent to St. Nazaire on January 2, where the men were detailed as laborers helping other rear-area troops in and around the seaport. (The regiment was re-designated the 369th in February.) For some time, the hard-pressed French commanders had been begging for American regiments to help bolster their decimated divisions; Pershing relented in March, and the 369th became part of the Fourth Army's 8th Corps, 16th Infantry Division at Givry-en-Argonne. In mid-April, the regiment was ordered to hold a 4.5-kilometer sector against the attacking Germans. After the Bolsheviks pulled Russia out of the war on the Allied side, the Germans transferred thousands of troops to the Western Front for a "win the war" spring offensive. Though the 369th comprised less than one percent of all U.S. troops in France, the regiment was responsible for holding 20 percent of all territory then assigned to the AEF. Johnson and Roberts had earned their medals for heroism in May; both were severely wounded and nearly killed.¹⁴

Having halted the German drive, the Anglo-French-American forces launched a July counteroffensive they hoped would finally force the enemy to give up. The "Black Rattlers" helped the Allies shove the Germans back. After weeks of hard fighting, the regiment was sent rearward for a brief rest; but the 369th was brought back to the front in September to help finish off the foe. The Germans were retreating, but grudgingly; the "Boche" were suffering heavy and irreplaceable losses but were

¹¹Craig, *Hidden History*, 74; Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: Black American Troops in World War I* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), 113.

¹²"Index…based on Memorandum on Chronology and Statistics," Headquarters Division. N.Y.G., July 1, 1920, 17. https://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/wwi/infantry/369thInf/369th_Infantry_1920_Report.pdf.

¹³Harris, *Harlem's Hell Fighters*, 240-241.

¹⁴Index, 7, 13; Barbeau and Henri, *Unknown Soldiers*, 116.

grimly determined to find a way to stop the French "Poilus," British "Tommies" and U.S. "Doughboys" from reaching the Fatherland.¹⁵

Carman found shelter just as the French artillery opened fire at 11 p.m. "You could look out of the ends of the dugout and see nothing but flame and fire from the big guns," he said. Colonel William Hayward, the 369th commander, compared the flashes to New York's Broadway, the "Great White Way." ¹⁶

The barrage lasted six hours and 25 minutes, according to Harris. "It sounded like the 'roll of a titanic drum, explosion so thick upon explosion that no separate sound could be distinguished." ¹⁷

Just before daybreak, the troops were ordered to prepare for battle. The 369th was no longer an all-New York regiment. Replacements like Carman were arriving from the South and Midwest. He was assigned to company G of the regiment's Second Battalion. Everybody in the regiment waited in a trench for the order to go "over the top" against "the Hun." When the command to attack came after daylight, the men fixed bayonets and swarmed into the open from their dugouts and trenches, dashing across No Man's Land between the French and German lines "like chasing rabbits back home," Carman said. But the quarry shot back.¹⁸

Hayward was surprised that German opposition was light, though the first German lines he saw had been obliterated. Nonetheless, a German shell from somewhere felled Carman. After the western Kentuckian regained consciousness, he tried to crawl back to the trench he had left. A German machine gunner pinned him down. "Every time I tried to move, it was 'peck, peck, peck, peck.' The bullets would hit all around me." Finally, the German was killed or chose another target, giving Carman a chance to crawl to safety.¹⁹

Carman said he was treated at the front and did not reach a hospital until October 1. But he recalled that two French doctors did a good job of setting his smashed nose. "I was in the hospital when this captain came around and asked me if I was ready to go back to the front and I said I was," Carman said. "He asked me how many Huns I'd get him, and I said 24 – 23 privates and an officer. 'We need you,'" the officer replied with a laugh. Carman remembered that when he got back to his company, he discovered he was the only man left from his squad. "There were eight other men, and I never did know what happened to them – if they were killed or wounded or transferred, or what."²⁰

Despite staggering losses, the 369th continued to attack. Joining the assault were two French regiments and a Moroccan unit. "Many prisoners were taken and sent to the rear, as well as large quantities of guns, machine guns, ammunition and supplies." The Third Battalion captured a town; the North Africans assaulted a heavily fortified hill. "The 369th dodged machine-gun fire from one shell hole to another in a wave formation and drove out the enemy with grenades and rifles; the Moroccans on their left charged into the guns in a mass and killed with their knives." By dark, the "Black Rattlers" had advanced about four kilometers. They captured 125 enemy soldiers and seized considerable enemy

¹⁵Ibid., 10, 17.

¹⁶Index, 17; Craig, *Hidden History*, 74; Harris, *Harlem's Hell Fighters*, 243.

¹⁷Harris, Harlem's Hell Fighters, 241, 259.

¹⁸Craig, *Hidden History*, 74; Harris, *Harlem's Hell Fighters*, 187.

¹⁹Harris, Harlem's Hell Fighters, 244; Craig, Hidden History, 74.

²⁰Craig, *Hidden History*, 74-75; "Old soldier finally gets decoration from Army," *Courier-Journal*, October 20, 1981.

ordnance, including twenty-five machine guns and a pair of 77-milimeter artillery pieces. But they paid a fearful toll in blood, a price that became dearer as the advance rolled onward.²¹

By the time, the 369th was relieved in early October, the "Harlem Hell Fighters" had driven the enemy back fourteen kilometers. The First Battalion was reduced to three officers and 100 men, the Second to ten officers and 300 men; all but seven officers and 137 men of the Third Battalion were gone. All told, 125 men were killed in action; three dozen later succumbed to their wounds. Another 636—including Carman--were wounded severely enough to require hospitalization. The regiment landed in France 2,400 strong.

From April 8 to Oct. 1, 1918, casualties in the 369th "were among the highest of any American regiment in the [Champagne] region," Harris wrote. He added that even the storied Rainbow Division, also all white, suffered fewer losses. "Although the Ninety-third Division did not officially fight as a division, its casualties were exceeded only by only one other division, the Second. Back then, you see, black was not a color of the rainbow." The author suggested, "Perhaps Hayward's men relished the fact that they had never lost a foot of ground nor had one of their own ever been taken prisoner." 22

The regiment enjoyed a well-deserved autumn rest in a quiet sector in the Vosges, low mountains in Alsace-Lorraine. Carman rejoined the 369th after spending a month undergoing treatment for his wounds. The "Black Rattlers" were still in the mountains on November 11 when the Germans agreed to an armistice, in effect a surrender. Afterwards, the 369th advanced to the Rhine and were returned to the AEF. "I remember that they took our French rifles and gave us back our American guns," Carman said. Though judged combat-ready, he was assigned to a company of walking wounded on March 19, 1919. Although he was neither ill nor suffering from his wounds, he was in a convalescent center when the army discharged him.²³

"Before I left, they gave me a wound stripe. They said a medal would come later." Carman said he did not know what kind of medal to expect. "But I was proud to get the Purple Heart." ²⁴

Meanwhile, when he left the army, Carman was offered a five percent disability pension. He waited until 1928 to apply for the money, and he received \$12.50 a month.²⁵

He needed the funds to help make ends meet on his little hardscrabble farm. Two years before, he scraped together enough cash to buy two run-down acres about six miles east of Mayfield on the Benton Road. His land was gully-creased and choked with weeds and scrubby brush. "People asked me, 'What do you want those old hills and gullies for?'" he reminisced. "And I told them I planned to make something out of them if I lived." Undaunted, he built a house, filled the gullies with "brush dams" and chopped down the weeds and bushes. He husbanded his precious earth through contour plowing and rotating crops. Carman's sweat and hard work paid off; through the years, he made enough money to expand his acreage a hundredfold. In 1948, he was named Kentucky's "No. 1 Negro conservationist" in a contest sponsored by the Association for the Advancement of Negro Country Life in conjunction with local soil conservation district supervisors. He earned a \$100 prize and was in the running for another

²⁴Craig, *Hidden History*, 75.

²¹Index, 18; Barbeau and Henri, *Unknown Soldiers*, 119-20.

²²Harris, *Harlem's Hell Fighters*, 260.

²³Powell, "'I'm so proud.'"

²⁵Powell, "'I'm so proud.""

\$50 as "the South's No. 1 Negro conservationist. "I have always had a love for the soil," he said in 1952. "When I was a little boy I would work soil with my hands to see how different kinds of soil would feel and how they would hold water." ²⁶

Carman lived on the family farm with his beloved wife, Evie Bush Carman. The county named the gravel lane leading from what became Kentucky Highway 80 to the farm "Andrew Carman Road." The Carmans had no children, but when he was 67 and his spouse, 61, they adopted Luke and his sister Laura.²⁷

Carman credited the Mayfield Red Cross chapter with helping him receive the Purple Heart, which was pinned to the lapel of the suit in which he was buried. He wore the medal every time he donned his "Sunday clothes." Carman explained, "It took me so long to get my Purple Heart, and I'm so proud of it, I want to wear it as much as possible in the time I've got left." He added, "It's not just that I was wounded ... wearing the Purple Heart is a way of showing that I am proud of being an American citizen." Also proud of his military service, Carman joined the local "black" American Legion post; the national veterans group, like the military and society, was segregated.²⁸

The medal was pinned to his lapel as he lay in his coffin during funeral services at red brick St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church in Mayfield, where the Carmans were members. It is not clear if his widow unfastened the medal and kept it or if she left it pinned to his suit. A retired county school teacher, she was 104 when she died in 2004. The couple is buried side by side in historically African American Oak Rest Cemetery, which adjoins Maplewood Cemetery, whites-only for years. In life and death, Jim Crow segregation persisted in Mayfield and elsewhere into the 1960s.²⁹

The First World War "resulted in greater freedom for Poles, Yugoslavs, and Czechoslovaks, but not for the American Negro," historians Francis Butler Simkins and Charles P. Roland wrote after World War II. Racism surged after the war. More than 70 blacks were lynched in 1919, according to *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes,* by historian John Hope Franklin. "Ten Negro soldiers, several still in their uniform, were lynched. Mississippi and Georgia mobs murdered three returned soldiers each; in Arkansas two were lynched; while in Florida and Alabama each took the life of a Negro soldier by mob violence."³⁰

Carman and 13,583 African American Kentuckians served in World War I—2,418 lost their lives. Those who survived "found few new freedoms as a result," wrote historians Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter in *A New History of Kentucky*. "One decorated black soldier [Rufus B. Atwood, president of Kentucky State University from 1929 to 1962] was warned not to return to his Hickman hometown in the uniform he had honored, because the police chief did not like blacks in uniform." His experience was not unusual, the authors added. "Improved race relations would not be an outcome of this war." ³¹

²⁶Craig, Carman interview; "Mayfield Negro Wins Honor For Conservation," *Courier-Journal*, August 6, 1948;

[&]quot;Work and Conservation Build 2 Acres Into A Good Farm," Courier-Journal, June 23, 1952.

²⁷Powell. 'I'm so proud."

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹"Evie Bush Carman," *Courier-Journal*, April 10, 2004.

http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/louisville/obituary.aspx?n=evie-bush-carman&pid=2117327.

³⁰Craig, *Kentucky Soldiers*, 90; John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), 472.

³¹Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 290-291; Craig, *Hidden History*, 75-77.