

Progress Amidst Prejudice:

Portraits of African Americans in Missouri, 1880-1920

Missouri State Archives

The Johnson Family: What can a picture tell us?

Original Document Worksheet

- 1) List the portraits in the order you believe they were taken:

- 2) What is the first thing you notice about the people in these pictures? (This is not a “right or wrong” question. Use your first instinct.)

- 3) Find one physical characteristic on each person that seems to be repeated in at least one other picture:

- 4) Do you disagree that all of these pictures appear to be the same family? If so, which picture doesn't fit?

- 5) Do any of these portraits seem to suggest a special occasion?

- 6) What assumption could be made by the absence of a mother in these photographs?

- 7) What can we learn from the Census Worksheet about the black population in Washington, Missouri, at the times these pictures were taken?

- 8) Based on the Fact Sheet, what possible occupations might Mr. Johnson have had?

- 9) Based on the Fact Sheet, might the Johnson children have been educated?

- 10) What are the chances that Mr. Johnson was literate?

- 11) Why is it of historical interest to preserve and make available to the public these portraits?