

Progress Amidst Prejudice: Portraits of African Americans in Missouri, 1880-1920

Missouri State Archives

Fact Sheet

Education:

In 1876-77, 42% of school-aged African Americans were enrolled in schools, versus 55% of the Caucasian population.

Robert, *Negro Civilization in the South*, "Table Showing the Comparative Population and Enrollment of the White and Colored Races in the Public Schools of the Recent Slave States for 1876-77," 1880, p. 131. Primary source: Rober, Charles Edwin. *Negro Civilization in the South: Educational, Social and Religious Advancement of the Colored People*. Nashville, Tenn.: Printed by Wheeler Bros, for the author, 1880.

In 1931-32, there were approximately 229,000 African Americans living in Missouri. Of this number, 46,200 were estimated to be between the ages of 5 and 17 years. Of that total, 38,271 (or approximately 83%) were enrolled in either kindergarten, elementary, or secondary school.

"Distribution of Negro Population, Children of School Age, and School Enrollment in 16 Southern States: 1931-1932," *Negro Year Book: An Annual Encyclopedia of the Negro, 1937-1938*, 1937, p. 169. Primary souce: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Business:

There were 49 businesses owned by black citizens in Missouri in 1899.

"Negro Business Men by States." W.E.B. DuBois, ed., *The Negro in Business*, p. 6

In the United States, between 1890-1900, there were several trades that saw a large gain in African American workers. The mining industry saw a 132% gain, the masonry industry saw a 49% gain, the dressmaking industry saw a 65.3% gain, the Iron and Steel industries saw a 112.7% gain, and the stationary engineering industry saw a 62.4% gain.

"Trades in Which Negroes Have Made Large Gains," Monroe N. Work, ed., *Negro Year Book: An Annual Encyclopedia of the Negro*, p. 204.

In 1929, there were 575 stores with black proprietors. The most popular of these were restaurants, cafeterias, and eating places (229) and stores specializing in the sale of food, including candy, grocery, and other (165).

"Stores Operated by Black Proprietors, by States 1929," U.S. Bureau of the Cenus. *Negroes in the United States: 1920-32*, pp. 509-510.

Of the 3,073,000 gainfully employed black Americans in 1890, 57% were working in agriculture, forestry, and fishing occupations, 6% were working in manufacturing and mechanical occupations, 5% were working in transportation and communications fields, 31% were working in domestic and personal service

fields, and 1% were classified under “other occupations.” By 1910, there were 5,193,000 gainfully employed black Americans, with 55% employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing fields, 13% in manufacturing and mechanical fields, 5% in transportation and communications fields, 22% in domestic and personal service fields and 6% in “other occupations.”

“Occupation of the Gainfully Employed Population 10 Years Old and Over by Sex: 1890, 1910, and 1930,” U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States: An Historical View, 1790-1978*, p. 72.

In 1910, the most common occupations for black women in the U.S. were: Farm Laborers, home farm (704,150), Laundresses (not in laundries) (361,551), Farm Laborers, working out (263,403), Cooks (205,584), Servants (184, 889), Farmers (79,308), Teachers (22,528).

“Occupations in Which in 1910 There Were at Least 5,000 Negro Women,” Monroe N. Work, ed., *Negro Year Book: An Annual Encyclopedia of the Negro*, 1918-1919, p. 340.

In Missouri in 1910, 28,796 black women were gainfully employed. The most common occupations were: Laundresses, not in laundry (12,980), Servant (10,660), Dressmaker (729), “Other Occupation” (658), and Teacher (612).

“Negro Females 10 Years of Age and Over Gainfully Employed: by States: 1910.” U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Negro Population, 1790-1915*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918, p. 522.

In 1910, the most common occupations for black men in the U.S. were: Farm laborers (981,922), Farmers (798,509), Laborers, building trades (166,374), Laborers, sawmills (91,181), Laborers, railroads (86,380), Porters, not in stores (51,471).

“Principal Occupations of Negroes—1910,” U.S. Bureau of Education. *Negro Education: A Study of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States, Vol. I*, p. 84.

Literacy:

In 1860, 41% of black Missourians over the age of 20 were illiterate.

[Untitled Table], *Negro Year Book: An Annual Encyclopedia of the Negro, 1937-1938*, 1937, p. 161. Primary source: United States Census for 1860.

In 1910, 17.4% of black Missourians were illiterate. This number dropped to 12.1% in 1920, and 8.8% in 1930.

[Untitled Table], *Negro Population, 1790-1915*, 1918, p. 429. Primary source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Negro Population, 1790-1915*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printnig Office, 1918.

Home Life:

In 1890, 30% of black Missourians owned their own homes.

“Home Ownership, by Divisions and States: 1890—Number of Farm Homes and Other Homes Owned Free, Owned Encumbered, and Rented by Negro Families,” U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915*, p. 470.