

Name _____

Date _____

Worksheet 1 Investigating Sources

“In 1878-79 my dear parents sent me to Cincinnati to be Bar Mitzvah. It must have been a considerable hardship for them because of their very small earnings and the primitive conditions that prevailed in Champaign in those days. My dear mother had to care for seven children without help. Once six of us came down with typhoid fever and we had no nurse or any of the modern conveniences.”

From a memoir written by Isaac Kuhn found in the papers saved and held by his daughter, Ruth Kuhn Youngerman

Isaac Kuhn’s memoir is considered a primary source because he wrote it, and he experienced it; however, it is only a glimpse of what his life was like in the late 1800s. As with many primary sources, it suggests some key questions. Among them are:

- Were the seven children mentioned all offspring of Joseph Kuhn and his wife?
- Who was Isaac Kuhn’s mother?
- What primitive conditions prevailed in Champaign in 1878-79?
- What is typhoid fever? Was it the only illness that plagued residents of Champaign as the community was growing?

To answer these questions, additional primary and secondary sources are needed. Remember that a primary source is a firsthand account or document produced by a person who was there at the time. A secondary source includes interpretation because it is a retelling of the oral or written information found in primary sources.

Directions: Use the 1880 United States Federal **Census**, the executor’s **report** for the Joseph Kuhn estate, Joseph Kuhn’s **obituary**, and the **record** on pages 1 and 2 of Jos. Kuhn & Co. to answer the following questions. Use the words in bold type to indicate what source(s) you used to determine each answer. Put a “P” for primary or an “S” for secondary after each source you list to tell what type of source it is.

1. Who was Isaac Kuhn’s mother? _____

Source(s) and type(s): _____

2. Was she younger or older than her husband? _____

Source(s) and type(s): _____

3. Was his wife still alive when Joseph Kuhn died? _____

How did you determine this? _____

Source(s) and type(s): _____

4. When did Joseph Kuhn and his wife marry? _____

Approximately how many years were they married? _____

Source(s) and type(s): _____

5. Who were Isaac Kuhn's siblings? List them in order from oldest to youngest.

a. Isaac Kuhn

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

g. _____

Source(s) and type(s): _____

6. Did Isaac Kuhn have any sisters who married? _____ If so, add their married names next to their maiden names.

Source(s) and type(s): _____

7. Were Isaac Kuhn's siblings all still living at the time their father died? _____

How do you know? _____

Source(s) and type(s): _____

8. Where was Joseph Kuhn born? _____

Source(s) and type(s): _____

Worksheet 1 – Continued

Now that you are familiar with the type and format of information found in each source, answer the following questions.

9. What difficulties did you encounter when using the primary sources?

10. What advantages are there in using primary sources instead of secondary sources?

11. What are some disadvantages of using secondary sources?

12. What advantages are there in using secondary sources?

13. What conclusions have you reached about the use of primary and secondary sources when investigating a person's life?
