

Trained Dempsey, World Champion

John Tholmer, the Gigantic, Good-Natured, Well-Known New Orleans Boxer, Released From Army Duty, Comes to Omaha, Where He May Decide to Make His Home.

WAS BOXING DIRECTOR AT CAMP FUNSTON

Popular With Officers and Men; Has Excellent Testimonials For Efficient Work in Camp; Is Strong Advocate of Boxing as Means of Physical Development.

Mr. John A. Tholmer, known throughout the country as a heavy-weight boxer, is in Omaha, where he is considering making his home. Ten years ago Tholmer was a scrapper of some class, doing most of his milling in and around New Orleans, a city that



will always be remembered in connection with fisticuffs. For years big John laid all comers low till Harry Wills, believed by many to be Jack Dempsey's master, beat him for the southern championship. Tholmer, it is said, did not train properly for the contest, holding Wills, whom he had taught to box, too cheaply. This contest took place in November, 1912, at New Orleans. Tholmer, then a star in southern pugilism, gave up the game and engaged in managing and training boxers, a business he follows to the present day.

Before America's entry into the war he trained and taught Jack Dempsey, present world's champion; Eddie Palmer, said to be the world's most skilled boxer. Palmer is a Colored middle-weight and lives in Algiers, La. Dempsey, it is claimed, learned the tricks of the game by his connection with the Tholmer-Palmer combine.

Early in 1918 Mr. Tholmer was appointed a boxing instructor and assigned to the Ninety-second division, United States army, and sent to Camp Funston, where he remained till August 4, 1919. During his nineteen months at the cantonment he has boxed with thousands of pupils, officers and men, white and Colored, who attended his school of instruction. Of fifty appointments by Dr. Joseph Racroft's commission of athletics, Mr. Tholmer was the only Colored man, the other forty-nine being white.

Mr. Tholmer says the credit for the work done in the army camps by the athletic men belongs to Dr. Joseph E. Racroft and the men under him. Dr. Racroft has always been a firm believer in physical training for the human body, holding that a strong body helps to develop a sound mind. Dr. Racroft, in the spring of 1917, was made head of the division of athletics. He selected some of the best known boxing men in the country as his aides and sent them into the military camps to train the army. The result was that hundreds of thousands of men who otherwise would never have received a boxing lesson learned the rudiments of the game. Some made such rapid progress that after they were discharged they declared their intention of taking up the calling as professionals. The coming season will see many new faces in the roped arena.

Mr. Tholmer says boxing, as conducted by the army boxing instructors, according to rules laid down by the boxing directors' convention, held in Des Moines early in 1918, would meet with universal favor if understood by persons opposed to the sport. In the

army they use the two-minute round system generally; only in championship affairs are they permitted to allow three-minute rounds. All men, except where titles were at stake, were required to box with large gloves, with no hard tape bandages. No stalling was permitted. The result was that the men quickly learned what was expected of them and they had high-class bouts always.

Mr. Tholmer says: "I made it a rule whenever I staged a boxing show, and that was often, to invite persons whom I knew to be not favorably impressed with our work. By that means I had many chaplains of all denominations witness our shows, and as many have personally congratulated me on the fairness, the absence of brutality and the good of the work as an asset to healthy, vigorous manhood."

From time to time women visitors to the camp saw some lively bouts that highly pleased them.

As to opposition to boxing the trouble lies in the fact that a vast majority of the people who have never taken an active interest in this line of sport, without studying its virtues denounce it as a game for roughnecks and low-brows, while they have never taken time to witness a single glove contest. Of course boxing, like any other game, can be brought into disrepute; so can tea parties and church socials, if not properly conducted. Too much of anything with an extra amount of coloring is sure to have a bad effect and become distasteful.

Mr. Tholmer said: "I have been closely associated with the boxing game for twenty-five years and I am pleased to say, without a tinge of untruth, that I owe my present perfect physical condition to my work with the gloves. Boxing is the greatest exercise that one can engage in. Every muscle in the human frame must be brought into action. It promotes a good blood circulation, keeps the heart and organs of the stomach in order and adds strength to the body. All boys should learn to box. It should be made a part of the studies in all schools."

Tholmer is a splendid specimen of manhood, standing 6 feet 2 in his stocking feet. He is happily married and is exceedingly proud of his wife and two children, who are at their home in New Orleans.

He has splendid letters from officers and war workers at Camp Funston, from which we select one from Captain Ogden and from the general secretary of the Knights of Columbus, which show the esteem in which he is held by them.

Under date of June 11, 1919, Captain Ogden writes:

"Dear Tholmer—I wish to take this opportunity before the work of the commission is completed and before I leave camp to thank you for the efficient service you have given, the steadfastness to your work and the splendid spirit of cooperation you have shown. Your work has materially aided in keeping the morale and military efficiency of the troops with whom you have worked at a high level. Your record has been of the best.

"Sincerely,
"BENJAMIN V. OGDEN,
"Captain, U. S. A.,
"Camp Athletic Director."

And this from General Secretary Gallagher:

"Camp Funston, Kan., July 30, 1919.
"This is to certify I have known John A. Tholmer, boxing instructor at Camp Funston, Kan., for the past sixteen months and have been closely associated with him, his headquarters being in our building No. 3, and have found him to be a real man in every sense of the word—courteous and even tempered and as big in every way as he is physically, and I feel sure he did as much for the Knights of Columbus as he could have done had he been employed as K. of C. secretary."
"J. H. GALLAGHER."

NEBRASKA RATIFIES SUFFRAGE AMENDMENT

She Is the Fourteenth State to Support Federal Change.

Lincoln, Aug. 12.—Nebraska ratified the federal woman suffrage amendment when the house, by a vote of 94 to 0, passed a joint resolution providing ratification. The senate voted for ratification on Thursday of last week.

Nebraska is the fourteenth state to ratify.

NOTICE TO WAITERS

The long-expected meeting of vital interest to Omaha waiters will be held at 9 p. m. sharp, Thursday evening, August 21, at 2226 Seward street. Come early.

WAITERS PROTECTIVE EMPLOYMENT ASSOCIATION.
E. L. Ellis, President.
E. A. Lytle, Secretary.

New Orleans, Aug. 10.—The date for the filing of applications for examination for teacher's certificates closed Friday with 131 applications for positions. Of these 101 are Negroes and thirty whites.

SOME FACTS ABOUT LABOR

South Omaha, Aug. 12. Colored Brothers and Fellow Workmen:

For some time past I have been thinking of telling you of the packing house industry as it was and is in South Omaha. Below I shall relate some of my experiences as a laborer in above mentioned industry.

In 1888, in my early boyhood days, I entered the packing house at the age



of 13 years. My first employment was "tending door" at the "very adequate" salary of 50 cents a day. At that time there were no conditions for any of the laborers as you find today and certainly not for the Negro laborer. The hours of work were from 7 a. m. to 11 p. m. for the same 50 cents a day. If you complained about conditions you were told to get out. I have often prayed that I might see the day when a Negro laborer could have his rights. That day has come, and I am glad that I am spared to see it.

In 1888 and 1889 the Negroes who worked in this industry were driven as if they were slaves or draft animals. They were compelled to do two men's work for \$1.50 per day, which was only one man's pay. Whether you worked ten hours or fifteen hours, the wages were the same. After finishing your day's work the white man would pat you on the back as if you were a pet horse or dog and say, "Well, nigger, you did a reasonable day's work." If you were an extra good slave you were paid \$10.50 per week and you were told you were receiving the highest wages in the country.

In 1893 I became a cattle gutter and received \$10.50 per week, the top-notch wages of that time. I was only a young lad at that time, but had to keep up my work with the older and more experienced men. When I got too far behind I was helped by some of the men. If not, the boss would say, "Say, nigger, if you can't keep up, get out."

I have often been fired because I would not take the boss' abuse. I have seen men kicked out if they did not get out by the white foreman. When the dull season came a day was set aside to lay off men. The most of the men laid off were Colored men. At that time they had what they called "voting democrat," and if a boss said that you had voted democrat that was a sign for you to get out. I have seen tears stand in the eyes of men who had large families to support. Without work the Negroes were forced into the streets to steal and commit other crimes which otherwise would not have been committed. Then they were thrown into jail, while their wives and children were starving for want of food and freezing for want of shelter.

In the winter, when packing house labor was pleasant, the white man forced the Negro out; while in summer the Negro had to bear the cross. If you wanted a raise you had to sneak around and ask the boss for a few extra pennies. Then if you told your fellow workmen you would lose your job.

In 1897, when McKinley was elected president, the Negro became a more potent factor in the packing house. They began to realize that they had at last gained some of their rights. In 1904 the Negroes woke up and a labor union was organized. In this union the white was to himself and the Negro to himself. Having antagonistic opinions as to the labor movement it is easy to conclude why the strike of 1904 in the packing houses was won by the packers.

In 1917 the two races united and formed another union. This time all were working under the same banner and there was no discrimination. A strike was called and the union won. This goes to prove that an injury to one is an injury to all and should be the concern of all.

The white man has opened the door of opportunity to the Negro, but the Negro will not take a hold as he should. As an example to prove the above statement: In 1918 many Negro delegates were asked to represent their race at the labor convention and only one attended. By non-attendance they let one great opportunity slip by. This shows that the Negro might be more progressive if they accepted some of the opportunities offered them.

In the convention of 1919 there were three delegates of the race and the

white people were glad to see that the Negro was at last beginning to wake up. One resolution that was introduced and concurred in by the resolution committee was to the effect that no discrimination should be made against the Negro in public work of any nature. This will be presented to the legislature by the legislative committee in the form of a bill.

The unions have at last taken down the bars against Colored people from public work, and the Negro can work in any place he is capable of filling, provided, however, that he is a union man.

A labor campaign was started on August 11 and all Colored men and women are asked to join the labor organization that represents the trade or craft or line of work they are following. The campaign will end September 1.

WAR CAMP COMMUNITY ESTABLISHES CLUB FOR RETURNED SOLDIERS

When the call to the colors came about 500 Colored men from Omaha responded. Some of these men were privileged to go overseas, while others by force of circumstances remained on this side. All did their duty and with pride in our hearts for the splendid manner in which they conducted themselves we welcome them home.

The War Camp Community Service, after consulting with the Ministerial union and other prominent citizens of Omaha, has decided to open a club for all returned Colored soldiers. The hall at the corner of Twenty-fourth and Burdette streets is being fitted up with reading and writing tables, piano and everything which goes to make a pleasant, homelike place.

The American Legion will establish headquarters at the club in the near future.

A director and assistant will be in charge of the club. The War Camp Community Service is fortunate in securing Mr. S. H. Dickey of Washington, D. C., as one of the club managers. Mr. Dickey is a returned soldier. During the war he was commanding officer of the 351st machine gun battalion of the Ninety-second division, A. E. F. He is well qualified in every way for the position which he holds and it is his desire to have the interest and cooperation of all the Colored people.

AMONG RAILROAD MEN

Railroad men are requested to send in news items for this department.

Joseph B. Robinson, a senior in the Meharry Medical school, Nashville, Tenn., is spending his vacation and earning money to complete his education by running out of Omaha in the Pullman service.

Isaac (Ike) Mumford, an old employe of the Soo Line out of Minneapolis, was an Omaha visitor last week. He confided to railroad friends while here that he was on his way to San Antonio, Tex., to take unto himself a wife.

A. G. Marshall, of the radiant smile, who was formerly Pullman porter on the Deadwood line of the Northwest, is now running to Casper, Wyo. He dropped into The Monitor office last week.

PLANS FOR ENTERTAINMENT OF RETURNED SOLDIERS

Omaha has made plans to entertain all returned soldiers at Krug Park, Wednesday, August 27. Free admission to all concessions, entertainments of various kinds and a barbecue are among the features. Invitations are to be sent to all returned Omaha soldiers without distinction of race or creed, and all are to be given a cordial welcome. Mayor Smith and the committee desire the widest publicity given to the fact that all Omaha soldier boys are expected to be on hand and spend a pleasant time.

"COLORED GENTLEMAN" NEED NOT APPLY

Jackson, Miss., Aug. 8.—In reply to a query from a Chicago newspaper as to how many Negroes Mississippi could absorb, the governor wired: "Mississippi has room for all the 'niggers' in the world, but none for 'Colored ladies and gentlemen.'"

SPECIAL GRAND JURY STRIKES

Refuses to Serve Until Charges Are Brought Against White Rioters.

(By Associated Negro Press.)

Chicago, Aug. 10.—One of the peculiar and interesting developments in the aftermath of the Chicago race riot happened when the special grand jury, composed of leading business men, went on a strike, giving as their reason that out of the forty cases considered up to that time, all of them had been Colored people. One of the jurymen exclaimed, "Bring on some white people; we are certain the Colored people were not fighting among

themselves." The states' attorney declared that the strike of the grand jury had politics behind it and that it was the purpose to prosecute and deal with all alike, regardless of race. The incident, however, serves to demonstrate the high caliber of the grand jurors and their determination to see that there shall be even-handed justice meted out. The matters were eventually adjusted and several white people have been indicted.

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