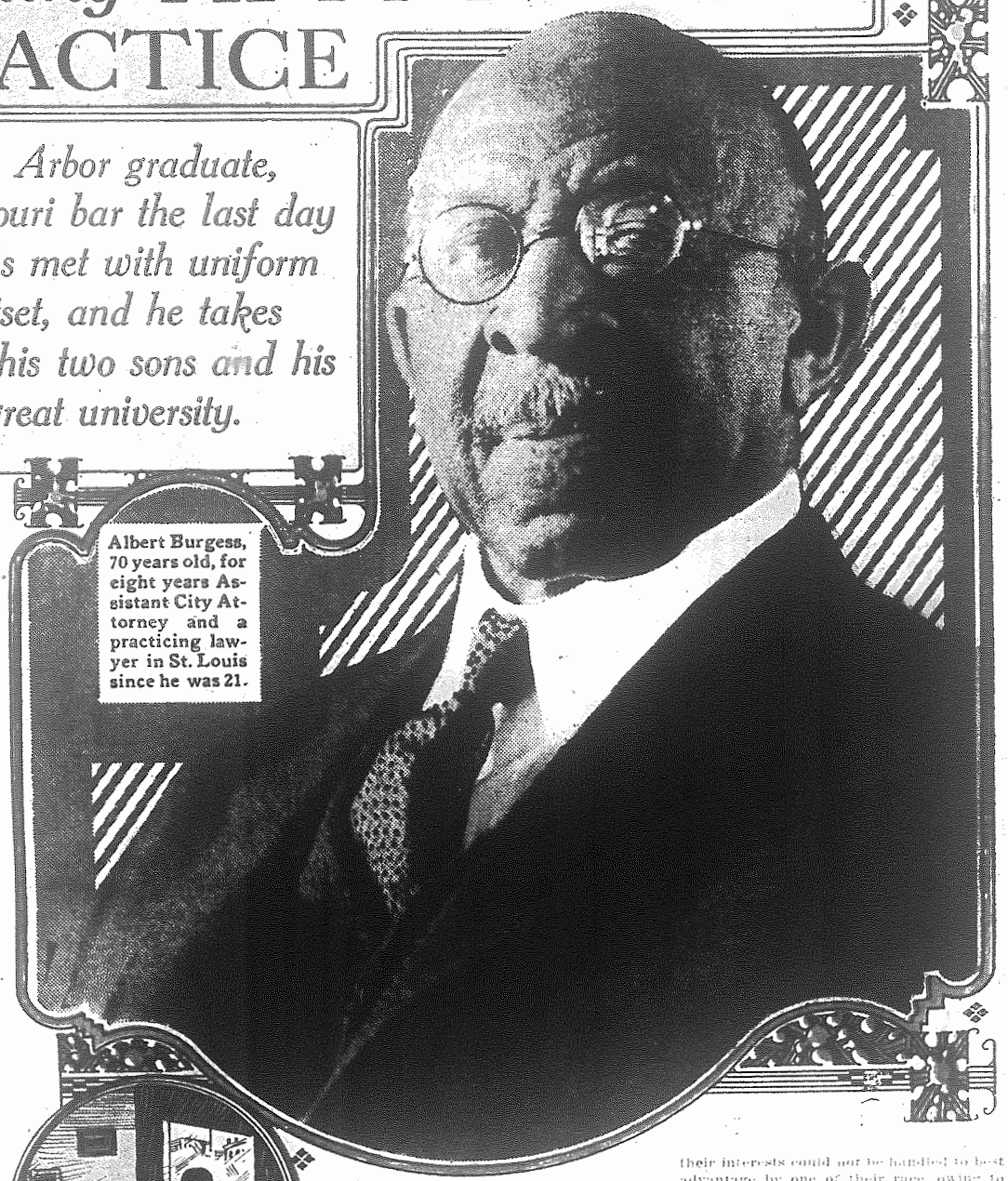
First NEGRO LAWYER *in St. Louis Completing* FIFTY YEARS *of* PRACTICE

Albert Burgess, Ann Arbor graduate, admitted to the Missouri bar the last day of 1877, says he has met with uniform courtesy from the outset, and he takes pride in having sent his two sons and his daughter through a great university.



Albert Burgess, 70 years old, for eight years Assistant City Attorney and a practicing lawyer in St. Louis since he was 21.

By a Globe-Democrat Staff Writer.

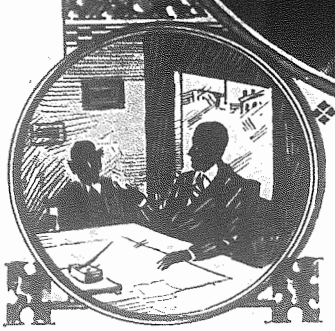
ALBERT BURGESS, the first negro lawyer in St. Louis and very likely the first in Missouri, sat in his office at 1225A Market street after fifty years of constant practice in the courts and submitted cheerfully to "cross-examination" by a white layman. Through a course of direct questions—Lawyer Burgess probably would call it a direct examination—direct responses were evoked which built up an unusual story of human struggle and achievement. Albert Burgess is a rich man—money and worldly possessions not being considered in the reckoning. His wealth consists largely in the satisfaction he derives from having put his three children through a great university and from seeing them settled in useful careers.

"It almost broke me to educate them," he said, "but I have no regrets. I am proud of my two sons and my daughter, and I feel that I have good reason to be proud."

The race question seems never to have bothered Burgess. Being himself a university graduate, his scholarship has assisted his inborn common sense in making him something of a philosopher. Naturally he has had from the outset certain difficulties to surmount which do not beset a white man in his profession. These he minimizes in telling the story of his life—in fact, but for persistent questioning he would have ignored them altogether.

Started on Court Procedure When Just a Boy.

"I was born in Detroit," he said, "on the 14th of October, 1856. My father, Amos Burgess, was a free Negro, originally from Kentucky; he never was in slavery. In early life he had been a sailor at sea, and after he went to Detroit he was a lake sailor for years. Injured in an explosion, he retired from the lakes and became custodian of the Detroit City Hall, where he had half a dozen men working under him. I was one of these employes at times; during school vacations I worked around the



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"My father had five children, all of whom he kept out of idleness and sent to school. He believed in education and insisted that his children get the best educations they could attain. When I was a small boy the races had separate public schools in Michigan, but when I was about 12 years old the status was changed so that negro children could go to school with white children. I entered a grade school, the first colored boy that ever attended there. Three colored girls entered that school at the same time. At first I feared some physical violence, but nothing of the sort happened. After finishing the grades I enrolled in high school, from which I was graduated in 1874.

"From high school I went to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. I took one year in the regular academic department, then entered the law school of the university. In that period the law course was completed in two years. I got my law diploma in March, 1877, about seven months before my twenty-first birthday. The celebrated James B. Angell was president of the university in my time. In the law school there were only four professors, but they were able men. One,

the dean, was Judge Thomas M. Cooley, a member of the Supreme Court of Michigan and author of several treatises on law topics much used by students and lawyers. There was one other colored man in my graduating class.

"My diploma admitted me to the Michigan bar, so I was a member of the bar before I could vote. I went home, to Detroit, and became a clerk in the law office of Francis G. Russell, whose brother, W. H. H. Russell, was practicing law in St. Louis. After a short time I worked similarly in the offices of Mitchener & Speed, able lawyers. I did all the clerical work and had a chance to learn pleading, of which I took full advantage, my purpose being to begin independent practice as soon as possible.

"In November of that year, 1877, I determined to come to St. Louis. I had been reading a negro newspaper published here, which told of the large number of colored people in St. Louis and their need of a lawyer of their own race. My father provided me with funds for the venture. Like many young fellows, I owed small bills around town, and so before I left Detroit I went around and paid up. This consumed most of the cash my father had given me. I said nothing to him about that, however. I reached St. Louis on November 15. The only person here, so far as I knew, that I ever had seen before was the white lawyer Mr. Russell, to whom I brought a letter from his brother in Detroit.

"On New Year's Eve I passed the law examination before the St. Louis Court of Appeals and was admitted to practice in the courts of Missouri, surely the first negro lawyer so admitted in St. Louis and I believe the first in the state. Another colored man, a West Indian Negro, John D. S. Ferrier, underwent examination at the same time but failed to pass. He had been practicing for eight years at Jackson, Miss.; and he knew more about law practice in a minute than I knew in a month, but having been out of college so long he was rusty on some technical points and so had to brush up before he passed the test, which he did two or three months later. We then went into partnership under the firm name of Burgess & Ferrier, and he was with me until he died of tuberculosis a few years later.

"But I did not wait for Ferrier—I opened a law office on my own account immediately after I was admitted to practice. That will be fifty years ago next January. My office was in the Hutchison Building at the northwest corner of Olive street and Broadway, then called Fifth street. It was a three-story brick structure for lawyers and, of course, all save myself were white men. I had no unpleasantness whatever—the profession received me with perfect courtesy, both lawyers and courts. But it was some time before I got to the courts. Once for forty-eight hours I went without a mouthful of food. I never let my father know I was broke. To return home defeated would have been too humiliating. I struggled along, and finally clients began to come.

"At first the colored people were rather shy of me. Some of them fancied that a Negro couldn't make a good lawyer, and the more intelligent ones were afraid that their interests could not be handled to best advantage by one of their race, owing to prejudice. But as time went on they came around to me, found that I could handle their legal business and that they could get an even break in the courts with a Negro lawyer as counsel. Many white clients eventually discovered the same fact, too."

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Young Burgess was doing so well after eight years of practice here that he was able to marry in 1885. "And I married well," he says, "and got along nicely." Mrs. Burgess died early in 1923, after about thirty-eight years of happy married life and after seeing her three children well started in professional careers. She had co-operated with her husband in saving up to send them through college and she shared his pride in their success. The sons are Wilmont A. Burgess, now principal of the Dessalines School at Fourteenth and Brooklyn streets, and Elmer A. Burgess, director of physical culture for the negro schools of Baltimore, Md. Miss Myrtle A. Burgess, the daughter, is a music teacher in St. Louis. All are graduates of the University of Toronto, the daughter having won a diploma from the Conservatory of Music which is a part of that institution.

"My children were prepared for college by going through the local public schools," said Burgess. "There being no institution of higher learning in Missouri for Negroes, it was necessary to send them elsewhere. Ann Arbor, my alma mater, suggested itself; but one of my boys had spent some time at the home of a sister of mine in Windsor, Canada, and he became interested in the University of To-

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Selling U. S. Army in St. Louis to the Nation's Youth

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velop an uncanny ability to tell at a glance whether or not there is use in talking to the approaching stranger. And, believe the sergeants themselves, they meet some queer birds!

Col. Eames himself tells of enlisting, recently, a brigadier general from the Mexican Army as a private in the United States forces. He was a tall, lanky Texan who arrived here via Union Station, direct from the border, which he reached two jumps ahead of his army. He fell into the hands of one of the recruiters here and told the colonel that he had gone to Mexico seven years ago as a mine manager. But he had to fight bandits so frequently in defense of the mine that he came to the conclusion it would be more profitable to be a bandit and joined out with a gang. Presently one of the perrenial revolutions came along and he became a revolutionist and rose to be a brigadier general in command of 600 men —a very sizable army for that country. But everything didn't go well and one day he had to ride fast to keep ahead of the firing squad. He enlisted in the air service here.

Physical perfection, while frequently sadly lacking, yet is encountered occasionally. Recently a man a bit over 6 feet, weighing 195, was enlisted. He had a wrist 9 inches around—bigger than Jack Dempsey's. The colonel sized him up as a heavyweight prospect and predicts that he will be heard from in the squared circle before his enlistment ends.

Some of the physical tests are revealing —especially the eye test. Sergt. John C. McFau, who has spent years at recruiting, tells of many instances in which a man, reading perfectly with one eye, is at a loss with the other and ofttimes it is discovered that the applicant is totally blind in one eye. Others—especially the illiterate—attempt to run the various letters displayed on an optometrist's chart into a word, which is an impossible feat and many are the strange sounds and grunts they produce. Some do not even know the alphabet.

The sergeant tells, too, of "buddies," who come in to enlist together. Generally, he remarks, the couple is composed of one perfect specimen and one short, gawky runt who would never make the grade in the physical examinations. When informed of this, usually both will leave with their noses sti king in the air.

Most of the youngsters want foreign service and all of them want to get into the cavalry. "They think if they get on a horse and down around the Mexican border, everything will be like the Wild West and the movies," the sergeant explained. "They are looking for adventure, but they don't want the air service, where there is plenty of opportunity."

Col. Eames is a native St. Louisan, son of William H. Eames and brother to William S. Eames, who was senior of the firm of Eames & Young, architects. He is 55 years old, was educated at Smith Academy, now a part of Washington University, and entered the army as a private, rising during thirty years to the rank of colonel, a remarkable achievement. He is a man experienced in the ways of soldiers and an apt picker of applicants and his manner of administering the oath to those accepted is one of the impressive ceremonies of the office.

A Gentle Hint.

Wife (buying a new hat). What sort of a bird shall I have on it?

Hubby. One with a small bill.

St. Louis Negro Lawyer Practices 50 Years

Continued from Page Four.

ronto. So he went to that school, his brother and sister followed him, and for a time all three of them were there together. I don't know, hardly, how I managed to stand the expense, around $1500 a year, but I am glad and proud now that I was able to manage it."

Burgess is the only colored man who has served as a prosecutor in a St. Louis court. He was appointed by Mayor Walbridge one of the three Assistant City Attorneys, reappointed by Mayor Ziegenhein, and served until about the middle of the first term of Mayor Wells, who then named a Democrat to the office. Burgess was in office through the World's Fair period. For eight years he was prosecutor in the Police Court at Ninth and Wyoming streets, first under Judge T. F. W. Zimmerman and later under Judge Frank M. Klieber. The City Attorneys under whom he served were Perry Post Taylor and Henry Clover.

"My court was in an almost exclusively white territory," said Burgess. "I was prosecutor there during the great street car strike in the summer of 1900 and handled all the cases originating in South St. Louis from riots and other disturbances connected with the strike. Appealed cases I followed up to the higher courts. When I first took office there were only about twenty-five to thirty cases a week in Judge Zimmerman's court, but in time there were that many every day. The work consumed only a few hours each morning and I was allowed to continue in private practice. For twenty years my office was at 1111 Clark avenue, opposite the old Four Courts Building.

"My service as a city prosecutor was of much value in getting white clients. When people found out that I could handle the court work they began to come to me with their civil business. Some of my best clients came from the district where I was prosecutor. In my time I have handled much legal business for white people. I was a sort of nine days' wonder when Mayor Walbridge first appointed me to office, but the novelty soon wore off and I was accepted generally and the matter of color didn't count. I wish to say that throughout my long career as a lawyer in this city I have met with continual courtesy and consideration upon the part of white lawyers and court officials, and for that matter of the general public.

"As a lawyer I have known all the celebrities who have held office in this city and have been treated well by them. I have practiced also in other Missouri towns, being called out frequently to handle legal business elsewhere. For some years I have been in charge of a part of City Collector Kocin's official legal work. That is why I continue to keep my law office so close to the City Hall.

"There are now about thirty Negro lawyers in St. Louis, many of them doing well. I may say, without boasting in the slightest degree, that I paved the way for them. I came here as a poor boy without friends in the city, with no experience in my profession excepting a few months in law offices in Detroit as a clerk. As I have stated, even people of my own race looked upon my venture at first as an experiment and as one that was bound to fail. I did not so regard it, and I kept doing my best at all times and giving such service as my education, training and experience permitted.

"Now that I am past 70 years old, I can look back over the half century of professional efforts in this city with pleasure. I have worked hard and have had, particularly toward the first, hard times; but the great courtesy with which the white members of my profession received me, and the continuation of that courtesy through fifty years, helped much; and there have been other compensations.

"I showed that it was possible for a colored man to be a lawyer in this great city and state. I have kept my character high according to my ideals and my skirts clean in professional life. And I can point with pride to my children."

Archery Makes Graceful Athletes of Cleveland Girls

Continued from Page Five.

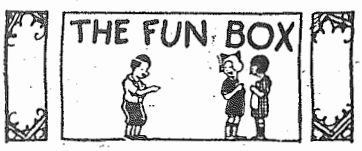
experience are the only things that matter in the final score.

The president of this club is Rosemary Lilie; vice president, Ruth Due; secretary, Adelaide Gatter; treasurer, Wilma Shoetker; sergeant at arms, Grace Stroupe; social correspondent, Margaret Rhedans; Orange and Blue reporter, Blanche Flood; scorekeeper, Caesarine Maglione. Other members are: Dorothy Fuller, Doris Horst, Louise Carr, Barbara Gloeckner, Grace Shannon, Jean Grove, Margaret Hampe and Edna Holzer.

Many of the girls are enthusiastic about their membership and few miss the Tuesday meetings. Miss Grove is especially active in the sport and was one of the first to qualify over the shortest course. She displays at all times a lively interest, both in the sport itself and in the social life that is part of it.

For archery is not merely a game. There is sociability to it also, and keen rivalry. But good fellowship plays an important part and she who is a hard loser is not the type for this kind of a group. Here is found another important benefit from archery—in its rivalry and good fellowship, for it teaches youth not only consideration and courtesy, but also the pleasures of friendly competition and amicable association. Games of skill of almost any kind, but especially archery, are promoters of lasting friendships that do not arise from games of chance; and the youth who obtains a foundation of "getting along with others" is being prepared for success in older age.

So the archery club has become an important adjunct to the educational work of Cleveland High School—so much so, in fact, that there is every reason to hope that some day the school authorities will recognize its value far enough to provide facilities for more to play and will bear the expense of the equipment.



How Careless.

Mother. Poor Jimmy is so unfortunate.

Caller. How is that?

Mother. During the track meet he broke one of the best records they had at college.

Father Had Nothing to Say.

Father. When Abe Lincoln was your age he was making his own living.

Son. Yes, and when he was your age he was President.

Calories Quips.

Patty. I had three pieces of pie for dinner.

Skinny. That's nothin'. I had 300 calories.

Picturesque Horsemen of Italian-American Cavalry

Continued from Page Seven.

the members lost interest in the military aspect of the association and the uniforms were sold or hung up as souvenirs, the swords were discarded and the members found more time to devote to social and benefit duties.

There is now a free physician for members who need his services. The sick benefit fund and the death benefit fund frequently help out. Committees visit the sick and give such aid as may be required. When a member dies he is sure of an official representation at his funeral. Names of seven men are drawn alphabetically, beginning from the last man drawn at the latest funeral. If any of these fails to attend the funeral of the deceased brother he is fined $5. The association maintains a large burial plot in Calvary Cemetery, where many of the former members are buried. The graves are kept green by the society's care and flowers and shrubs beautify the plot.

In recent years the Italian Cavalry Association has been active in many good works. During the world war period the Red Cross received frequent contributions. Many of the younger members, including Victor Zerega, now president, served in the army. As a body the society showed thorough loyalty to American institutions; which attitude, for that matter, it has held from the first. Veteran members feel that the chief object of the organization as set forth in the constitution has been fulfilled —that of presenting before the local public the Italian citizens of St. Louis in a favorable light. Many members are highly successful business men and all are, as the constitution requires, citizens of good record.

From the funds of the society are contributed, from time to time, sums of money for special relief work. The disastrous hurricane in Southern Illinois two years ago was not ignored; the Red Cross received a substantial amount voted by the Italian Cavalry. The recent flood situation found the organization voting promptly a contribution to relief of sufferers.

"Of course, the glorious days of military display are remembered by the old-timers with pleasure," says President Zerega, "but there is no doubt that the Italian Cavalry at present is a bigger and a better body in most ways than it ever was before. We are devoting our energies to mutual aid and, as I have stated, not ignoring outside appeals. The members take much interest in the monthly sessions. The new generation is in the saddle now—figuratively speaking, of course—and we hope to continue along our present lines and to develop new lines for better service and I think we can and do function quite as well as our elders did when they really were in the saddle."

The name of the organization seems sure of remaining what it always has been, whatever other changes may result. No member would dare propose dropping the "cavalleria," any more than he would suggest that the portrait of the chief founder or "socio promotore," Cherubino Dell' Angelica, who also established the well-known Angelica Jacket Company, be removed from its place of honor in the hall where the meetings are held. Angelica perished many years ago when the French steamship Bourgogne foundered.

Present officers of the cavalry, other than the president, are Leo Giovanninni, vice president; A. L. Caruso, secretary; L. J. Capestro, financial secretary; Steve J. Boggiano, treasurer; Owen Zignago, marshal.

The association is a large stockholder in the ownership of the Italian Fraternal Building.