

June 2000

VISIT

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1988: **Jerry Hausner** and **Elmore "Phinus
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1989: L&A announcer **Wendell Niles**

1990: 50th Anniversary of *DREAMING OUT
LOUD*, with **Bobs Watson**

1991: L&A's 60th Anniversary, with **Les
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WILL*

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New volume coming in August!

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THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL June 2000

**THE NATIONAL
LUM AND ABNER SOCIETY**
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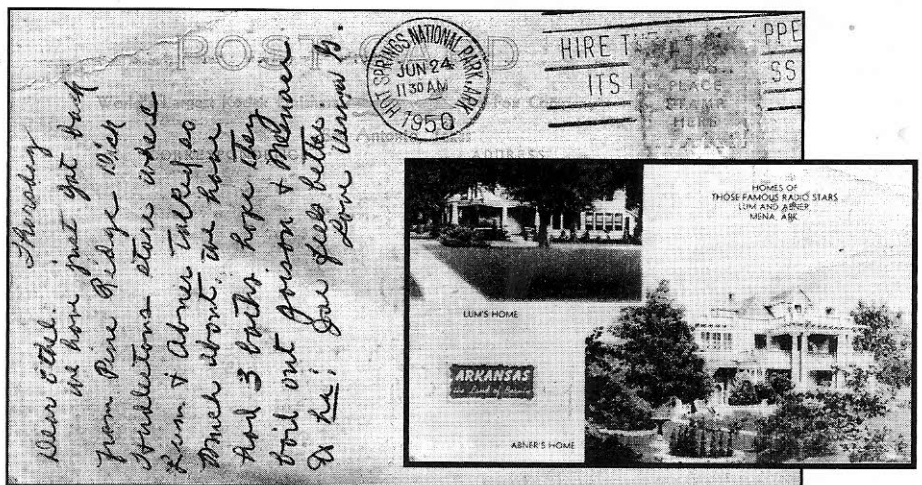
Cover: The A. A. McKinzie general store in Waters (Pine Ridge), Arkansas, posing as the Jot 'Em Down Store for a publicity photo, circa 1933-34. This building now houses the Lum & Abner Museum.

LUM AND ABNER is a registered trademark. Used by permission of Chester Lauck, Jr.

WELL I'LL BE DAD BLAMED DEPARTMENT: Arkansas historian **Harold Coogan** has informed us that we incorrectly identified the Arkansas governor pictured with *L&A Abroad* producer **Joy N. Houck** on page 11 of our April issue. The guy in question was **David Pryor**, not **Dale Bumpers** as we had him identified. I grannies.

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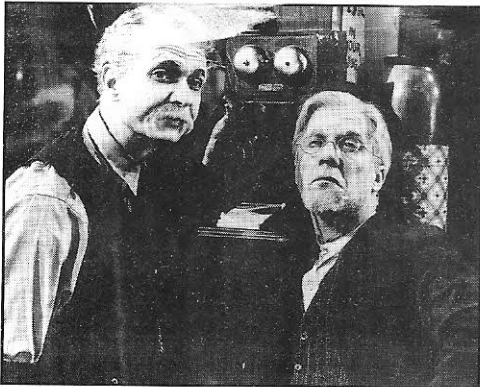
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Better have your plans made by now!



Even though the half-hour LUM AND ABNER show had ended in April 1950, tourists were still visiting Pine Ridge that summer. The above postcard was mailed from Hot Springs to Smithville, Mississippi, on June 24, 1950, and in case you cannot read the message, it says: "Dear Ethel, We have just got back from Pine Ridge, Dick Huddleston's store where Lum & Abner talked so much about. We have had three baths, hope they boil out poison and meanace [sic] too, ha! Joe feels better." The front of the card is a black & white depiction of the Lauck and Goff homes in Mena (see inset photo).

DREAMING OUT LOUD

IN A SHORT SNOOZE



1. The leading citizens of Pine Ridge, Arkansas, are Lum and Abner who, from the confines of their famous Jot 'Em Down Store, exert a profound influence upon the affairs of the community.



2. Miss Alice, town belle and postmistress, is shown with her brother, Jimmy. Alice is in love with young Dr. Ken Barnes, the son of old Doc Walt Barnes. Ken practices in a nearby town.

An RKO-Radio Production
CAST

Lum	Chester Lauck
Abner	Norris Goff
Alice	Frances Langford
Dr. Walter Barnes	Frank Craven
Jimmy	Bobs Watson
Ken	Robert Wilcox
Wes	Irving Bacon
Jessica	Clara Blandick
Will Danielson	Donald Briggs
Effie Lou	Sheila Sheldon
Joe	Robert McKenzie

Among the advance publicity sent out prior to the release of *DREAMING OUT LOUD* was this series of stills and captions that retold the movie's basic story in comic-strip-style fashion. Apparently at the time this was prepared there was still some uncertainty about some of the characters and their relationships; here, the town constable (played by Robert McKenzie) is referred to as "Joe," but in the movie he was given the name of Caleb Weehunt. This is somewhat odd, because obviously the movie had to have already been shot before these stills could be released, and McKenzie's character is constantly referred to as Caleb all the way throughout the picture. Maybe the publicity department had an earlier draft of the script to work from when preparing their ad campaign! Another interesting bit of "pre-publicity" for the movie was a series of questions put forth for Chet Lauck and Tuffy Goff to answer about themselves. These questions were prepared by *Dreaming Out Loud's* head publicist, Harlan Hobbs, who had previously worked with Chet & Tuffy during the 1936 Arkansas centennial celebration, when the town of Waters was officially changed to Pine Ridge. For Voco Productions (the studio's name was a combination of producers Jack Votion and Sam Coslow), Hobbs prepared a standard list of questions that could be used for any actor or



3. Tragedy enters the little community when Effie Lou, daughter of the town drunkard, is struck by a hit-run auto. Lum, Abner, and Alice come to the child's rescue, but when Doc Walt arrives Effie Lou is dead.



4. The excitement of the event adds to the strain under which Doc Walt has been working because of lack of adequate medical facilities, causes him to suffer a heart attack. Alice takes care of him.



5. Lum and Abner ask Alice's Aunt Jessica, the town's wealthiest citizen, to donate a mobile hospital unit to the town. Jessica, who in her youth had an unfortunate romance with Doc Walt, refuses.



6. His daughter's death shocks Wes (right) into reformation. He is sworn in as a deputy marshal by the town constable, Joe, while Lum and Abner watch. Wes is determined to capture Effie Lou's killer.

actress the company needed to promote. On the letterhead of "Voco Productions, Inc., RKO Pathe Studios, Culver City, California," Hobbs put the following request: "Please answer the following questions as completely as possible, as all information contained is to be used as a source for fan magazine and newspaper stories. Thank you."

So, here is how our two old friends from the Jot 'Em Down Store each answered these queries:

(1) SCREEN NAME

LAUCK: Lum Edwards
GOFF: Abner Peabody

REAL NAME

LAUCK: Chester H. Lauck
GOFF: Norris Goff

(2) HEIGHT

LAUCK: 6 feet
GOFF: 5'8"

WEIGHT

LAUCK: 165
GOFF: 150

COLOR EYES

LAUCK and GOFF: Blue

HAIR

LAUCK: Black
GOFF: Light brown

(3) NATIONALITY

LAUCK and GOFF: American

BIRTHPLACE

LAUCK: Alleene, Arkansas
GOFF: Cove, Arkansas

DATE

LAUCK: Feb. 9, 1902
GOFF: May 30, 1906

(4) EDUCATION

LAUCK: University of Arkansas
GOFF: University of Oklahoma

ANY SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

IN COLLEGE SPORTS?

LAUCK: No response
GOFF: Football

DRAMATICS?

LAUCK: Yes
GOFF: No

(5) FRATERNITY?

LAUCK and GOFF: Sigma Chi
SCHOOL PAPER?

LAUCK: Art Editor of Yearbook
GOFF: No response

(6) PLEASE GIVE ANY INTERESTING DATA REGARDING YOUR ANCESTORS, RELATIVES, ETC.

LAUCK: No response
GOFF: My uncle, General Goffe (the "e" has since been dropped from the name) sent out the message that the "British were coming."

(7) WHAT WAS YOUR EARLIEST CHILDHOOD AMBITION?

LAUCK: To be a cowboy
GOFF: To be a railroad engineer

(8) MARRIED?

LAUCK: Yes, Harriet Wood
GOFF: Yes, Elizabeth Bullion

CHILDREN?

LAUCK: 2 girls, Shirley & Nancy; 1 boy, Chester Jr.



7. Turning amateur detectives, Lum and Abner use the town police car as a model in showing constable Joe how to go about tracking down the hit-run driver. Jimmy watches the demonstration.



8. Evidence collected by Lum and Abner indicates that Jessica's auto was the death car. They present the facts to Jessica and her lawyer, Will Danielson, but are ordered out of the house.



9. A new crisis arises when Alice discovers her brother Jimmy is seriously ill. She tells her Aunt Jessica to call young Dr. Ken from Adamstown while she rushes to Doc Walt's office for aid.



10. Because of his illness Doc Walt has Jimmy brought to his office and diagnoses the case as pneumonia. Under his direction, Lum, Abner and Alice construct an oxygen tent and save Jimmy's life.



11. Dr. Ken arrives the next morning and finds that over-exertion has brought about the death of his father. He finds old Doc Walt in his unending sleep sitting in his favorite arm-chair.



12. Meanwhile, Lum and Abner discover that the driver of the death car was Will Danielson. They confront him with the evidence while angry townspeople cause a near riot.



13. Conscience-stricken by the tragic events, Aunt Jessica gives a modern mobile hospital unit to Pine Ridge. Dr. Ken, Alice, Jessica, and town constable Joe inspect the beautiful new first aid unit.



14. Dr. Ken decides to move to Pine Ridge, take up his father's practice and marry Alice. The young couple celebrate their happiness while Lum and Abner return to the quiet of their Jot 'Em Down Store.

GOFF: 1 boy, Gary; 1 girl, Gretchen

(9) HOW DID YOU HAPPEN TO GO ON THE SCREEN, OR STAGE, OR OTHERWISE BECOME CONNECTED WITH MOTION PICTURES?

LAUCK and GOFF: First professional experience was in radio and it happened accidentally as the result of amateur entertaining around the home town.

(10) WHAT PICTURE (OR PLAY) GAVE YOU YOUR FIRST OPPORTUNITY?

LAUCK and GOFF: Have not made any other pictures or appeared in any plays.

(11) WHAT ARTS ARE YOU MOST INTERESTED IN OUTSIDE OF ACTING?

LAUCK: Sketching, cartooning... Have always had a natural tendency for them and studied them at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts.

GOFF: No response

(12) WHERE DO YOU PREFER TO BUY YOUR CLOTHES: HOLLYWOOD, NEW YORK, PARIS, OR LONDON?

LAUCK and GOFF: Hollywood

(13) PLEASE ENUMERATE YOUR PET AVERSIONS.

LAUCK: Sandwiches

GOFF: Questionnaires like this one

(14) WHAT ARE YOUR PET ECONOMIES?

LAUCK: Turning out the electric lights

GOFF: Razor blades

(15) WHAT DO YOU DO TO KEEP FIT?

LAUCK: I don't do anything just to keep fit, but I enjoy golf, riding, tennis and swimming, and indulge in all of these sports from time to time.

GOFF: Get plenty of outdoor exercise and watch my diet.

(16) WHAT FORM OF DIET DO YOU FAVOR, IF ANY?

LAUCK: Have no particular form of diet, just plain well-balanced meals.

GOFF: Have no special form of diet other than to watch the calories.



Liz Goff and Chet Lauck team up against Harriet Lauck and Norris Goff for a typical Hollywood publicity shoot.

(17) WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE DISH?

LAUCK: Enchiladas

GOFF: Fried chicken

(18) IN WHAT OUTDOOR SPORTS DO YOU INDULGE?

LAUCK: Fishing, golf, tennis, swimming and riding

GOFF: Tennis, riding, fishing and swimming

(19) INDOOR SPORTS AND GAMES?

LAUCK: Ping pong

GOFF: No response

(20) WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE SPORTS TO WATCH?

LAUCK: Horse racing

GOFF: Hockey

(21) ENUMERATE YOUR HOBBIES.

LAUCK: Raising and racing horses

GOFF: Fishing and hunting

(22) YOUR PETS:

LAUCK: Cocker spaniel, dalmatian, and St. Bernard dogs

GOFF: Police dog

(23) AUTOMOBILES:

LAUCK: Ford station wagon, Lincoln Zephyr, and Lincoln sedan

GOFF: Ford station wagon, Packard 12, special Cadillac sport sedan

(24) HAVE YOU EVER LIVED IN A SMALL TOWN?

LAUCK and GOFF: Yes

WHERE?

LAUCK: Alleene and Mena, Arkansas

GOFF: Cove and Mena, Arkansas

HOW LONG?

LAUCK: 28 years

GOFF: 24 years

WHEN?

LAUCK and GOFF: All my life until I left home.

WHY DID YOU LEAVE?

LAUCK and GOFF: To enter the entertainment field.

(25) WHAT RADIO EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD?

LAUCK and GOFF: 9 years as LUM AND ABNER

(26) CAN YOU SING OR DANCE?

LAUCK: Not good

GOFF: No response

(27) CAN YOU PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT?

LAUCK: Drums

GOFF: Drums and jug

(28) HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN ARKANSAS?

LAUCK and GOFF: Yes

WHAT TOWN?

LAUCK and GOFF: Lots of them

(29) HOW DID YOU EARN YOUR FIRST DOLLAR?

LAUCK: Selling strawberries that I had grown myself; also selling Saturday Evening Post

GOFF: Delivering bills for my dad after school

At the end of this exhaustive questionnaire (which should certainly have told anyone more than they ever wanted to know), there was a legal codicil of sorts: "To All Whom It May Concern: Any part or all of the contents of the above questionnaire which I have answered may be used for publicity and advertising by Voco Productions and RKO Radio Pictures, Inc." However, after the release of *Dreaming Out Loud*, Voco Pictures ceased to exist as an entity (Coslow bowed out and Jack Votion produced the remainder of L&A's movies by himself). Harlan Hobbs remained in the publicity business, though, and on one copy of the questionnaire the Voco/RKO line is replaced with "Cliff Lewis and Harlan Hobbs," apparently after he was on his

own. Some of this firm's other clients must not have been as well-known as L&A, because on the copy of Chet's questionnaire the same questions have hand-written answers pertaining to one "Ella Logan," real name "George Armour Allen" (?!).

THE MENA STAR carried a few news items about the forthcoming L&A picture during June 1940. The first of them appeared on June 11, and was headed:

HERE'S HOPING MENA GETS PREMIERE SHOWING OF FIRST "LUM AND ABNER" PICTURE

The announcement that Lum and Abner had left the radio for the time being to make their first picture, DREAMING OUT LOUD, was real news to the many admirers of the radio stars. Especially was this big news for Mena and Polk County, the home of the two famed young men.

The pride Mena has in the achievements of these two is attested in many ways. Auto license stickers emphasize "Home of Lum and Abner." Chamber of Commerce literature tells of the rapid rise of the Mena youths. Large signs on highways entering Mena attest visitors are approaching the "Home of Lum and Abner" with likenesses of them both, in character, shown on the boards.

With this pride Mena folks have in their two boys, it would be but fitting for RKO Radio Pictures to have the first showing of the forthcoming picture in Mena. In Mena the young men were reared... in Mena they got their first start in radio... Mena they yet call home.

Van Buren, with a population comparable to that of Mena, had a premiere showing of a Bob Burns picture... Burns' home town. Van Buren has no more pride in their Bob Burns than does Mena and Polk County in Chester Lauck and Norris Goff.

Release date of the picture will be late summer or early fall. Advance notices indicate they have a hit, and they promise to become as popular on the screen as they were on the air.

Here's hoping the powers that be in the movie land will consider Mena's claim on the boys, and give us the premiere showing of DREAMING OUT LOUD, with its locale of Pine Ridge and the characters made known to millions on the air to come alive on the screen.

Although historically it is usually acknowledged that *DREAMING OUT LOUD* had its premiere at Mena's Lyric Theatre, technically speaking the actual "world premiere" took place a day earlier when the picture was released in Little Rock. However, that event did not garner near the publicity that the Mena premiere did, so most people were content to call Mena's showing the world premiere. Polk County historian Roy Vail found that, in reality, Mena probably DID indeed have the first screening of the movie after all, because the reels of film themselves arrived in town the morning before the Little Rock premiere, and Lyric Theatre manager Louie Gwaltney ran them that afternoon for a select audience of friends and relatives... beating the Little Rock showing by a scant few hours.

On June 15, 1940, *THE MENA STAR* reported:

LUM AND ABNER'S FIRST PICTURE IS COMPLETED

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Lauck, who left Mena Saturday on the noon-day train, plan to be away for at least a month and anticipate a happy visit with their famous son, Chester H. Lauck, at Beverly Hills, Calif. The journey westward and visit with their son and family is made at this time because "Lum Edwards" reports he's at leisure and there'll be opportunity for a real visit. "Lum and Abner" have finished their first picture, DREAMING OUT LOUD, and until its premiere is over and they start another, there'll be time for other things.

The only other known report connected with the movie before the media blitz that occurred upon its release in late August and early September appeared in the *STAR* on June 22, and remains a tantalizing tidbit for L&A historians:

LUM AND ABNER CAN NOW BE HEARD ON RECORD

Those who would care to hear the voices of "Lum and Abner" on a photograph record can do so in Mena now. Manager Gwaltney of the Lyric received a record Friday that's been put out as preliminary publicity for the radio stars' new picture, DREAMING OUT LOUD. One side carries a dialogue between these famous citizens of Pine Ridge, while the other has one of the songs from the forthcoming show, Frances Langford being the singing artist. To permit more to hear the voices of the Mena radio stars, the record has been made No. 13 at the coin operated machine at Jackson's.

Although surely some copies of this Frances Langford/L&A record must have survived, to date no one has come forward with one. How about it, you record collectors out there?!

And so, the stage was set. Once the hot summer began fading into autumn, Mena would become abuzz with activity, but for now the town had to sit still and simply await patiently the advent of L&A's screen debut. Join us next time for the details just as they unfolded 60 years ago!

- Tim Hollis

**GOLDEN GATE
INTERNATIONAL
EXPOSITION**
19 40
JULY 4, 5, 6 and 7
INDEPENDENCE DAYS
ON
TREASURE ISLAND
with
Lum & Abner
Andy Devine - Merry Mac's
All Star Cast - Hillbilly Contest
Dede Martin's
Nevada Night Herders
Dancing 8:30 to 12 each night
Good for One Adult General Admission to
LUM & ABNER-ANDY DEVINE
SHOW or
AMERICAN BARN DANCE
Coliseum - Treasure Island
JULY 4, 5, 6 or 7
PRICE 25c TAX FREE - VOID IF BLEACHED

TRIVIA: On July 4-7, 1940, L&A and their good friend Andy Devine appeared on stage together at the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco. Can any of you West Coast members locate more about this event in your local library's archives?

1970: Lum & Abner® in Syndication

Although the syndication of the LUM AND ABNER series had begun a few years before, it was during 1970 that the show really seemed to catch on with radio stations across the country. In the NLAS archives is the following piece that details what took place up to that point. We do not know who wrote this article, or even where it was published, except that it was apparently in one of the early OTR fan newsletters. Let's see what was going on down in Pine Ridge in 1970....

It was in 1967 that events began to transpire which were to lead eventually to a type of "rebirth" for Lum and Abner. Admittedly, this new life is yet in the infancy stage... but there are plans afoot which could lead to a fairly widespread circulation of the recordings.

Chester (Chet) Lauck now lives in Hot Springs, Arkansas... a bustling resort community of some 50,000 persons... famous primarily for its healing mineral baths. Lauck.. who once, for a very long time, answered to the names of Lum Edwards, Grandpappy Spears, Cedric Weehunt, and other aliases.. is engaged presently in the business of operating a public relations and advertising firm with his partner Harlan Hobbs and son Chet, Jr. Having moved to the Spa City in 1966, he was for 12 years prior a member of the PR department of Continental Oil (Conoco) in Houston, Texas.

Just before Christmas 1967, "Lum" was approached by Hot Springs radio station KBHS, and asked whether or not it would be possible to rebroadcast on the 25th the special Christmas show which the team had done for so many years before the program left the air in 1954. The manager of that station thought it might be interesting, and certainly a unique feature. Lauck had in his files a clear copy of the episode, and it was then rebroadcast.

But things didn't stop there. The management of another Hot Springs radio station, KXOW, began to ask itself whether other recordings existed of the program than the one which had been run on the opposition outlet. Upon contacting Lauck, they found that there were indeed such recordings... in fact, there were four years worth of the 15-minute episodes, all in order and all in relatively good quality. The years preserved: 1941-45. The discs were vinyl, not acetate, and had originally been issued for airing on the Keystone Network. This was a rather loose organization of outlets not hooked together by telephone wires but by transcriptions. The programs were aired first on NBC, live. They were recorded as aired, then distributed, thereby giving double exposure.

These particular discs had been stored at a Bekins warehouse in Los Angeles for years, but in the mid-1960s had been transferred to the care of a friend of Lauck's in Houston.

So, after preliminary arrangements for the recordings to be cleaned up and transferred to tape (by KPRC, Houston), Lum and Abner went on the air once more... 14 years after the Jot 'Em



The Arkansas Radio Network issued this brochure in 1970 to promote the syndication of LUM AND ABNER.

Down Store closed its doors. It was early February 1968, and the only station was KXOW, a town and country station on 1420 KC. But there was more to come... much more.

Lum and Abner, programmed once a day at 5:30 p.m., enjoyed success in Hot Springs... enough success to cause interest in a larger market: Little Rock. The capital city of Arkansas is no giant metropolis, but there was a potential listening audience of some 300,000 for the old fellows' humor.

KARK, Little Rock, wanted the show, and wished to put it on the Arkansas Radio Network, with its sprinkling of small stations throughout the "Land of Opportunity." KARK was, and is, the key originating station.

ARN began its run around April 1, 1968, with KARK itself beaming the show at 4:15 in the afternoon, Monday through Friday. After listener and sponsorship difficulties, it was moved to 6:45 p.m., with another airing at 5:45 a.m.

But there was to be no mass audience for Lum and Abner, and KARK ran its last episode on June 30, 1969. The Network stations had found a greater listener loyalty in their towns and hamlets, and continued the program. There it remains to this day.

Lauck and Hobbs have hope, however, of finding stations around the country... and to that effect have issued a brochure which is being sent around at this time. The rates are graduated according to the size of the market. There have been quite a few comers, with more in the future. At present, all of the out-of-state cities are small ones.

The reruns are enjoyable, and after more than two years of listening to every episode as it became available, I'm still hooked, and will be until we've reached the last possible program. At that time, I'll more than likely undertake a drastic search in all corners of the country for even more transcriptions.

As stated above, we do not know who authored the above report, but it came just before the big explosion of interest in the syndicated LUM AND ABNER. That keen interest continued through most of the 1970s and early 1980s, but then went into a decline. One reason the show is not being played on as many radio stations today is that the syndicated programs exist as reel-to-reel tape, and most stations discarded that sort of equipment long ago.

The NLAS is currently working to help change this situation, but in the meantime if you know of a station that would be interested in the LUM AND ABNER reruns, they should contact the present distributor, Program Distributors, 403 W. Parker Road, Jonesboro, AR 72401.

In our October issue we will be revisiting this subject and taking a look at a 1970 promotion for the syndicated series that has never been equalled before or since!

LUM and ABNER® IN THE NEWS

REPRINTS OF PAST LUM & ABNER ARTICLES

Since many of you will be visiting Pine Ridge this summer while you are in Arkansas for the annual NLAS convention in Mena, we thought it would be interesting to look back and see what was going on in the little community 40 years ago. In the spring of 1960, *Arkansas Gazette* travel writer Ernie Deane made a visit to Pine Ridge, and turned in this report on how Dick Huddleston and his store were dealing with changing times.

Pine Ridge Brings Memories of Lum & Abner

The photographs accompanying this article were all taken on a visit to Pine Ridge by Arkansas radio historian Ray Poindexter in April 1959. They were donated to the NLAS archives many years ago by his widow, Hazel Poindexter.

The rural community of Pine Ridge, Arkansas, lives on in the light of glory it won when the *Lum and Abner* radio program was among the most popular in America.

Although Lum, Abner, Squire Skimp, Cedric, Grandpappy Spears and other characters of the show are heard no more, a great many people still remember them fondly.

Dick Huddleston assured me this is true, and he ought to know because he welcomes them by the hundreds to Pine Ridge each year.

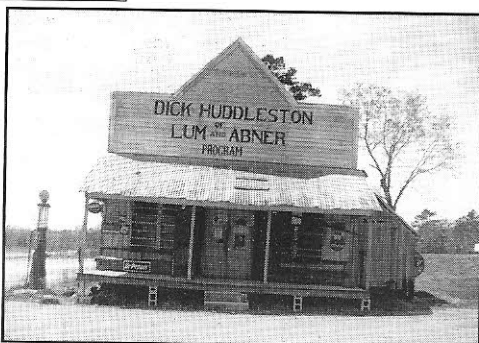
When *Lum and Abner* was in its heyday, the name of Dick Huddleston was one of the best known in the nation's show busi-

ness. This resulted from his being a favorite in the fictional doings around

in which he has done business for more than 50 years.

It's a lot easier to get to Pine Ridge these days than it was back in 1931 when Chester Lauck and Norris Goff of Mena broke into national fame as radio humorists. State Highway 88, which cuts through the community on the Pencil Bluff-to-Mena stretch, is paved. The motorist has to watch out, else he'll go rolling through without seeing Dick's sign which warns, "Drive Keerful Don't Hit Our Young'uns." Worse yet, he'll miss meeting Dick and Dick's girl Ethel if he hurries through.

Ethel is Mrs. Homer Graham. Her name used to come up often in the broadcasts, but few listeners knew that many of the backwoods expressions and humorous incidents used on the program were her contributions. She'd take notes



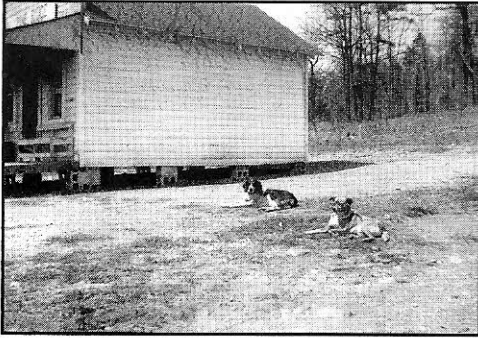
Pine Ridge, and from his travels all over the country with a team of entertainers giving *Lum and Abner* stage shows.

He was on the road for about 10 years, he recalled when I was visiting with him recently, and played nearly 150 county and state fairs coast to coast.

It was an experience for which he wouldn't take a million dollars, Dick commented, but he wouldn't want to go through it again. Memories of engagements in five states in one week's time, for example, are still with him.

He prefers to live at Pine Ridge, and to run the little country store





around her father's store while customers shopped for shoes, cheese, harness and other necessities, then send these to Lauck and Goff.

The talk in those days had genuine mountain flavor, Dick said. Lots of the customers were old-timers who had come into the area long years before, or were natives who'd seldom if ever been out of the hills.

Ethel and her husband are full-time residents of Pine Ridge now, and have taken over Dick's fishing camp on the banks of the Ouachita River nearby. They decided, after living for a while in South America, there was no other place quite like the Ouachitas of Arkansas, she said.

Dick is a walking, talking storehouse of information about "Chet" Lauck and "Tuffy" Goff, the creators of Lum and Abner. He knew their families intimately, and "the boys" too, as he calls them.

When "Chet" and "Tuffy" dreamed up their radio show, and first tried it out on a Hot Springs station, they had in mind using a pioneer community and its people for authentic source material. Mena was too modern, Dick remembered, but the village of Waters, some 20 miles to the east, fit their needs.

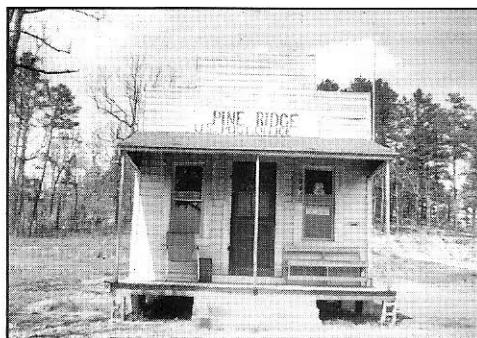
Waters became Pine Ridge in their radio show, and five years

later its name was changed. A *Gazette* news report of April 26, 1936, tells of the arrival in Little Rock of Lum and Abner, and of the public welcome they received. Dick had been a prime mover in efforts to get the Post Office Department to designate the Waters post office as Pine Ridge, and he received papers on that occasion making the change official.

State 88 was designated Lum and Abner Highway, and for some years there were signs along it bearing this name. They've disappeared. Dick is hopeful the Highway Department will put up new ones. This would help bring more tourists through Pine Ridge, he feels, and he's probably right.

The passage of time and the coming of the pavement have both made changes in Pine Ridge.

Several of the individuals who were so well known under their fictitious radio names have died. He sadly called the roll of these, including Cling Wilhite, who was Grandpappy Spears; Marion Bates, who was Walt; and Doc Hammond, who was Squire Skimp. The Widder Abernathy, however... Mrs. Chat Standridge... still lives nearby, he said. And he took me over to the post office to meet Ora Garrett, who was Mose Moots the barber in the show. Garrett actual-



ly is a barber, "the best in Pine Ridge," Dick called him, adding with wry humor that he's the only one.

Several of the old frame buildings, such as Sister Simpson's boarding house, have been torn down. The famous Jot 'Em Down Store lives on, however, a hundred yards or so away from Dick's place, although it's not in its original location, he said.

Chet Lauck gets back to Pine Ridge every three or four months to see Dick, and in fact had signed the visitors' register just the day before I was there. He makes his home in Houston but is busy as a public speaker and is often asked to appear before Arkansas groups. Norris Goff lives in Hollywood, Dick said, and hasn't been in Pine Ridge in recent years but writes from time to time.

Pine Ridge... or Waters... never was large from a population standpoint, and Dick estimates that it now has 60 residents. Postmaster Garrett said he serves 42 families regularly, including those on a star route.

It was big from a reputation standpoint, however, known all over the United States and abroad. A visit there should prove interesting to almost any tourist.

What's Up Down on the Farm?



Among Chet Lauck's many public speaking appearances during the ten years after LUM AND ABNER left the air was a 1960 meeting of the Outstanding Young Farmers in Durham, North Carolina. Upon that occasion, the above photo appeared in the local newspaper with the following caption:

"Waiting for the nation's outstanding farmers to arrive in Durham yesterday wasn't such a bad deal for Chester Lauck (Lum of the radio team of Lum and Abner). With Judith Denkle (Miss Outstanding Young Farmer) for opposition, Lum found something doing around the store. Wes Gilbert of Durham (standing) had a good word for checkers too."

No Use To Argy 'Bout It, Hit's Time Fer

The 2000 NLAS CONVENTION

June 23 - 24, 2000

Lime Tree Inn, Mena, Ark.

**Featuring the 60th Anniversary showing of the first
Lum & Abner movie, DREAMING OUT LOUD!**

As you can tell, this will be the last issue of the *Journal* before the annual convention in Mena, and this year we have found ourselves in a rather unusual situation. We have several deals pending for special guests, but the deadline for going to the printer arrived before any of them were finalized. It is possible that if time permits you may receive a special flyer announcing the convention guest(s), but don't hold your breath... just show up and then you'll find out who we have!

Regardless, as we have announced before, there will be three programs during the weekend. The first will be at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 23; the second at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 24; and at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday we will have the 60th anniversary showing of *Dreaming Out Loud* on the big screen. As usual, all events will be held in the meeting room of Mena's Lime Tree Inn.

That brings up a good point. There is another convention going on in Mena that weekend, and the Lime Tree Inn may already be totally booked up. You can

find out for sure by calling them at (501) 394-6350; if there are no rooms available, you can try the motel next door, the **Harvey House Inn**, at (501) 394-3710, or the motel across the street, the **Sun Country Inn**, at (501) 394-7477. If all three of these hostelrys are full, they can direct you to the next handiest location.

We'll be looking forward to seeing you there... and then we will ALL know who the special guest(s) will be!

