

DREAMING OUT LOUD

Words and Music by SAM COSLOW



OCTOBER 2000

as sung by
FRANCES LANGFORD
In the RKO Radio Picture Production
"DREAMING OUT LOUD"
STARRING
LUM and ABNER
WITH
FRANCES LANGFORD * FRANK CRAVEN
PHIL HARRIS * BOBS WATSON
Directed by HAROLD YOUNG
Produced by
JACK VOTION and SAM COSLOW

Coslow MUSIC
1619 B'WAY • N.Y.C.

NLAS CONVENTION VIDEOS

For those of you who may have come in late, we should remind you that we offer VHS tapes of our past conventions. Each one features a special guest who worked with Lum and Abner either on their radio show or in their movies. Eleven volumes are now available, with more coming soon:

1985 - With writer **Roz Rogers** and Clarence "Ben Withers" Hartzell

1986 - With **Ethel Huddleston** ("Dick's Gurl") and Pine Ridge historian **Kathy Stucker**

1987 - With actor **Jerry Hausner**

1988 - **Jerry Hausner** returns, with **Elmore "Phinus Peabody" Vincent**

1989 - With announcer **Wendell Niles**

1990 - The 50th anniversary of *DREAMING OUT LOUD*, with **Bobs Watson**

1991 - Lum and Abner's 60th anniversary, with **Les Tremayne**

1992 - The 50th anniversary of *THE BASHFUL BACHELOR*, with **Louise Currie**

1993 - With "Great Gildersleeve" **Willard Waterman**

1994 - With **Shirley Lauck**, daughter of "Lum"

1995 - With character actor **Parley Baer**

Tapes are **\$10.00** each. Send orders to the *Executive Secretary, 81 Sharon Blvd., Dora, AL 35062*

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VISIT

The Jot 'Em Down Store & Lum & Abner® Museum



Located on Highway 88
(the "Lum & Abner Highway")

PINE RIDGE, ARKANSAS

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Two Weeks to Live • So This Is Washington
Goin' To Town • Partners In Time
Lum & Abner Abroad*

\$29.95 each

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Lum & Abner Associates
135 Circle Drive
Hot Springs, AR 71901

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THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

OCTOBER 2000

**THE NATIONAL
 LUM AND ABNER SOCIETY**
Zekatif Ossifers

PRESIDENT
 Donnie Pitchford

VICE-PRESIDENT
 Sam Brown

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
 Tim Hollis

Cover: Sheet music issued for the
 title song from *Dreaming Out
 Loud*, 1940. This particular exam-
 ple was Bobs Watson's own per-
 sonal copy, donated to the NLAS
 archives in 1990.

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 about.



The DREAMING OUT LOUD set was a popular place for Lauck & Goff's show biz friends to hang out. Here we see Clark Gable visiting with L&A and director Harold Young. According to the film's publicist, Harlan Hobbs, another almost daily visitor to the set was RKO contract player Lucille Ball.

“An All-Arkansas PREMIERE”

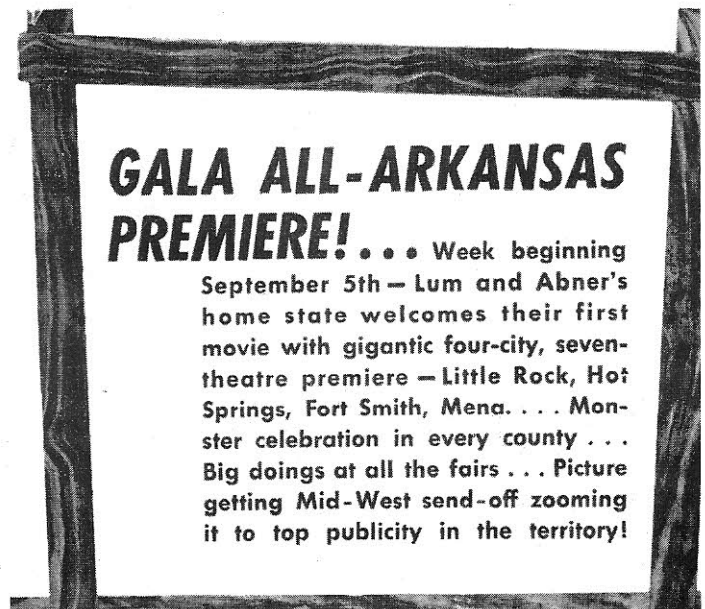
In the past couple of issues of the *Journal* we have seen how the people of Mena (and the rest of the nation) were prepared for the advent of the first Lum and Abner motion picture, *Dreaming Out Loud*. As soon as Labor Day 1940 had been consigned to the history books, things began shifting into high gear for the actual premiere of the movie. Actually, the term should be “premieres,” because RKO Radio Pictures’ advertising really seemed to consider its four initial showings in Arkansas to comprise a single event. Probably if the film could have “premiered” in all four locales on the same day, that would have suited RKO’s intention a lot better... but since Chet Lauck and Tuffy Goff were to make personal appearances at each theatre, the “four premieres” had to be spread out over a period of slightly less than one week.

Although everyone knew the two radio celebrities were coming, the actual news broke in one of the two Little Rock newspapers, *The Arkansas Gazette*, on September 3, 1940. The article was primarily concerned with the film’s producer, Jack William Votion, and read like this:

New Film Result of One Man’s Faith in Lum and Abner

Lum and Abner’s first feature picture, “Dreaming Out Loud,” was produced on a dare, Jack W. Votion of Hollywood, producer, said here yesterday. The motion picture industry did not believe a successful picture could be made starring two Arkansas rural characters, so he made it himself.

Mr. Votion said he became acquainted with Chester Lauck and Norris Goff, Lum and Abner respectively, about three years ago while he was associated with the National Broadcasting Company, on whose networks Lum and Abner were broadcasting. He conceived the idea of starring them in a feature film.



The MOTION PICTURE HERALD issue of September 7, 1940, prepared theatre owners for the upcoming series of premieres.

Unable to find someone else to do it, he realized a longstanding ambition and produced it himself.

The picture will have its world premiere at the Capitol and Pulaski theaters Thursday, and Lum and Abner will make personal appearances at both theaters.

Mr. Votion has been connected with Hollywood for 18 years. He was born and raised in Belgium and served in the Belgian army during the world war. At the close of the war, he decided he wanted to be an actor and went to Hollywood. A 6-month

The ad on the facing page occupied an entire page of *THE MENA STAR* on Thursday, September 5, 1940. Notice that the *STAR* corrected RKO’s slogan for the movie that promoted L&A as the “Wizards of the OZarks” by typesetting their own alteration. Also, some of the advertisers who took out space on this page have interesting L&A connections. Dan Davis (second from top left) was, in the early 1930s, actually used as a character on the radio show, much as Dick Huddleston was; the Mena Studio (fourth from top right) did indeed make the first publicity photo of L&A in makeup in 1931; and the Lauck Lumber Company (third from bottom right) was, of course, owned by W. J. Lauck, father of “Lum.” It is interesting that out of all the ads on this page, Chet’s father was the only one who did not include a celebratory greeting to the boys!

Welcome Home, Lum and Abner

We Will Be Glad to See You in Person and to See and Hear Your New

Picture "DREAMING OUT LOUD"
FRIDAY, SEPT. 6

WE APPRECIATE
 LUM AND ABNER HAVE DONE IN GIVING
 CITY AND SECTION NATION-WIDE
 PUBLICITY.

REFINING COMPANY
 W. WITHERSPOON, Distributor.

HELUM AND ABNER!
 SALE OF LIVESTOCK EACH TUESDAY
 At K. C. S. Stockyards.
 INDUSTRY GROW IN POLK COUNTY
 DOES IN OTHER PLACES—IT IS GOOD
 BUSINESS FOR ALL.

DAN DAVIS, Manager
 T. H. BOATRUGHT, Auctioneer.

Lum and Abner Are 'Hits' Anywhere
 TRUCKS AND TRUCKS have also been
 winners for years.
 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BIGGER
 AND BETTER 1941 MODELS.

MOTOR COMPANY
 MENA, ARKANSAS

TO SEE THE SUCCESS
 BEING MADE BY "OUR BOYS"
 DRESSES for the Juniors and Misses, in new
 styles, Hose and other needed items for school

Worthington Shoppe
 DRESS SALE EACH SATURDAY
 Bargain place, with Bargains Galore. Be sure
 and visit

The Bargain Store

SATISFYING SERVICE
 ment has "made" Norris and Chet. Our
 Congratulations to both.

SATISFYING SERVICE
 to the motorist comes from using
 CITIES SERVICE PRODUCTS.
 VISIT OUR MODERN STATION

Carver's Service Station

COME TO OUR FRIENDS,
 LUM AND ABNER.
 attending their first talking picture and seeing
 person on the stage.
 SEE THE 1940 PLYMOUTH NOW ON
 DISPLAY AT OUR SHOWROOMS.
 Your Old Car Will Make Down Payment on
 This 1941 Beauty.

INSON MOTOR COMPANY
 PLYMOUTH SALES-SERVICE.

We Know 'Em a Long Time
 APPRECIATE WHAT THEY HAVE DONE
 FOR MENA AND POLK COUNTY.
 FOUNTAIN IS JUST ACROSS THE
 STREET FROM THE LYRIC.

JACKSON DRUG COMPANY

THE TWO MENA BOYS
 GHT MUCH FAME TO MENA. OUR BEST
 WISHES TO THEM.
 With Us—and we also have "Lum and Abner"
 Cards and Folders.

HARVEY'S COFFEE SHOP



LYRIC..MENA
 Admission 30c to All

CONGRATULATIONS,
 CHESTER AND NORRIS, ON YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS
 Ladies, get a FREE DEMONSTRATION OF DERMATICS
 —replacing old fashioned cosmetics—the Make-up of
 Tomorrow, featured in World of Tomorrow's Beauty
 Shop at the New York Fair.
 Let us explain the special features.

SPENCER'S BEAUTY SALON

CONGRATULATIONS
 to Norris and Chester on their success in radioland
 and we know their new picture will be as good as
 their sketches.

Southwestern Sewer Company
 "Guardians of Community Health."

WE TAKE THIS SPACE
 to express appreciation for the two Mena boys who made
 good in a big way. Their efforts have meant thousands of
 dollars in tourist trade to this section. Our hats are off to
 Chet and Tuffy.

Fred Philpot -- Albert Middleton

**WE WERE GLAD TO HAVE HAD
 THE HONOR OF MAKING
 THE FIRST PICTURES**
 OF "LUM AND ABNER" IN CHARACTER, AND
 REJOICE WITH OTHERS AT THEIR RISE TO FAME.
 We have Lum and Abner Postcards and Folders.

THE MENA STUDIO
 L. OSCAR PLASTER, Prop.

**BOYS, YOU HAVE MADE GOOD
 IN A BIG WAY**
 OUR CONGRATULATIONS AND HOPES THAT YOU
 WILL CONTINUE TO STILL HIGHER
 ACHIEVEMENTS.

Beasley-Wood Funeral Home

Compliments of
LAUCK LUMBER COMPANY
 MANUFACTURERS OF
 YELLOW PINE LUMBER

A WARM WELCOME
 TO CHET AND TUFFY, NOW FAMOUS
 AS "LUM AND ABNER."

WILL S. MacLAFFERTY

NICE GOING, LUM AND ABNER!
 Complete line of the new
 1941 STEWART WARNER RADIOS
 MAYTAG WASHING MACHINES
 RADIO PARTS AND SERVICE.

Washburn & Liles Radio Service
 502 Pickering Avenue -- Phone 9

HERE'S TO
Chet Lauck and Tuffy Goff,
 the home town boys who made our community known in
 radioland as "The Land of Lum and Abner."

KONKLER'S GROCERY
 OPPOSITE POSTOFFICE
 Send your friends the new Illustrated Folder, "Lum and
 Abner, as the Home Folks Know Them."

SEE THE FIRST PICTURE
 OF "LUM AND ABNER"
 and watch for the dates of our showings of the 1941
 PLYMOUTH AND 1941 DODGE cars. We assure you
 something different and pleasing, just as we know
 "Dreaming Out Loud" will be a winner.

BARHAM MOTOR CO.
 DODGE-PLYMOUTH SALES-SERVICE.

WHEN YOU ATTEND THE
"DREAMING OUT LOUD"
 picture, bring us your
 CREAM, CHICKENS, and EGGS.
 TOP OF MARKET CASH PRICES
 AT ALL TIMES.

CROUCH PRODUCE
 De Queen St.—Back of Turner's.

LUM AND ABNER
 HAVE MADE A GREAT SUCCESS
 and we appreciate what they have done in making
 our section of the country famous.
WE MAKE GOOD, TOO,
 with our Repair Service. Prices Reasonable. Skilled
 Mechanics and Guaranteed Work on Every
 make Car and Truck.

MENA GARAGE

career on the screen convinced him his destiny lay in other fields. So he went to work as a prop boy for one of the studios.

Attributing to his army training an ability to organize, Mr. Votion told how he rose to the position of assistant producer.

Lum and Abner will arrive at Adams Field at 1:30 pm tomorrow, where they will be welcomed by C. G. (Crip) Hall, secretary of state. At 4:30 they will be entertained at a reception by Governor Bailey and state and county officials at the Albert Pike Hotel. Thursday, they will attend a luncheon given by the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club at Hotel Marion at 12:15 pm.

The secretary of state, Crip Hall, would enter L&A history once more when Chet Lauck returned to Little Rock to address the state legislature in 1951. The existing recording of that appearance (found on Tape #258 in the NLAS Tape Library) was made from the public address system in Hall's office.

The next day's paper elaborated on what was to occur in the skies over Little Rock, although typically for the media they were not telling the whole story:

Escorted by 154th Observation Squadron National Guard planes which will meet the airliner en route, Lum and Abner will arrive at the Municipal Airport at 1:30 pm today to attend the world premiere of their first feature motion picture, "Dreaming Out Loud," at the Capitol and Pulaski theaters tomorrow.

They will be featured in a radio broadcast over a Little Rock radio station at 9 pm today, and will be introduced by Crip Hall, Mrs. Lauck and Mrs. Goff, who are accompanying their husbands, and Mrs. Jack Votion, wife of the producer, will appear on the KLRA "Woman's Magazine of the Air" in an interview by Theda Drennan, editor, at 8:45 am tomorrow. Mr. Votion will talk over KLRA at 8:45 am today.

What the newspaper was not telling is that the plane the National Guard was meeting and escorting to the airport was carrying only Chet and Harriet Lauck, not the Goff family. As we saw last time, the Goffs had arrived in Mena some time earlier aboard the maiden trip of the Kansas City Southern's Southern Belle luxury train; they actually drove over to Little Rock in order to join the Laucks for all the hoopla. This fact was mentioned belatedly, when on Thursday the paper reported on the goings-on at the airport:

TONIGHT---Personal Appearance

Radio's Cracker-barrel Favorites on the screen!



Lum and Abner Pleased by Reception

Making a motion picture is quite different from radio broadcasting, Lum and Abner said after arriving in Little Rock yesterday for personal appearances at premiere showings of their first movie, "Dreaming Out Loud," at the Capitol and Pulaski theaters today.

"Rehearsing for a movie, you go over a scene only once," said Lum, who had never seen a movie set in action before he was in pictures himself. "If a scene is bad, you make it over. A mistake on the radio is 'right there.'" Lum was impressed, he said, by the large number of persons required in making a movie "shot."

Lum, whose real name is Chester Lauck, and Abner, who is Norris Goff, were pleased by the reception several hundred persons gave them at Adams Field. Abner motored here from Mena, their old home town, where he had spent the past week. He slipped out to the airport to greet Lum when the latter arrived on an American

Airlines plane shortly before 1:30 pm.

"We appreciate the courtesies Arkansas, the governor, and the mayors of Little Rock and North Little Rock have shown us," Lum said. Governor Bailey has designated today as "Lum and Abner Day."

Lum and Abner had not been in Little Rock together since April 26, 1936, when they celebrated the changing of the name of Waters, Montgomery County, to Pine Ridge in honor of the hamlet featured in their broadcasts.

Secretary of State C. G. Hall officially welcomed the comedians at the airport. His friendship with them started at the University of Arkansas, where Mr. Lauck was a student in 1922-25 and Mr. Goff the first semester of 1923.

Late tonight or early tomorrow, the famous team will leave for Mena, where they will have a homecoming in connection with the showing of "Dreaming Out Loud" at the Lyric Theater. Lum and Abner are known as "Chet" and "Tuffy" in the home town, where they were once members of a quartet. "We sang," Lum said. "Bad."

Somewhat oddly, the premiere showing of the movie itself seems to have been something of an anticlimax, at least in Little Rock. The Arkansas Gazette ran a whole story about Lauck and Goff's appearance at the Rotary Club luncheon, but covered the

premiere only in the closing paragraph:

After the luncheon the comedy team went to the Pulaski and Capitol theaters where they made personal appearances at the world premiere of their first motion picture. They were greeted by large crowds at both theaters. The theaters did not open until 11:45 am yesterday but lines began forming at 10:30 am.

And now... let's see what was going on down in Mena while the big city was treating our friends to all sorts of honors. On the same day *Dreaming Out Loud* was having its actual premiere in Little Rock, the picture was also being viewed by a select group of folks in the home town. *The Mena Star* reported:

"Dreaming Out Loud" Given a Preview Showing

The films for "Dreaming Out Loud," the Lum and Abner picture to be shown at the Lyric on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, arrived Thursday, and to see that all was in good shape, Manager Gwaltney made a preview showing with relatives and a few others witnessing the first time presentation of the picture.

Spectators found "Lum and Abner" at their best, and the two Mena boys went through the picture like veterans of the screen, as did the supporting cast.

The picture is not just comedy and Pine Ridge characters, but has a strong plot throughout. Plenty of fun and plenty of heart throbs are present in the new picture. The characterization of the mountain folk in helping their neighbors in need are shown by the "Jot 'Em Down Store" in its credit extension, and country doctor in his faithful service. The love angle, too, is present and as usual love finds the way.

The first-lookers were strong in their praise of the picture and believe it will prove a winner wherever shown, and will be followed by several other successful pictures by the former radio stars. As has been announced, Chester Lauck and Norris Goff



Crowds wait outside Mena's Lyric Theatre for the hometown premiere of DREAMING OUT LOUD.

will appear in person Friday night following each show, the first to begin at 6 pm. The picture hold over Saturday and Sunday, but will not have the personal appearance of the two Mena boys, who go to other points to make personal appearances.

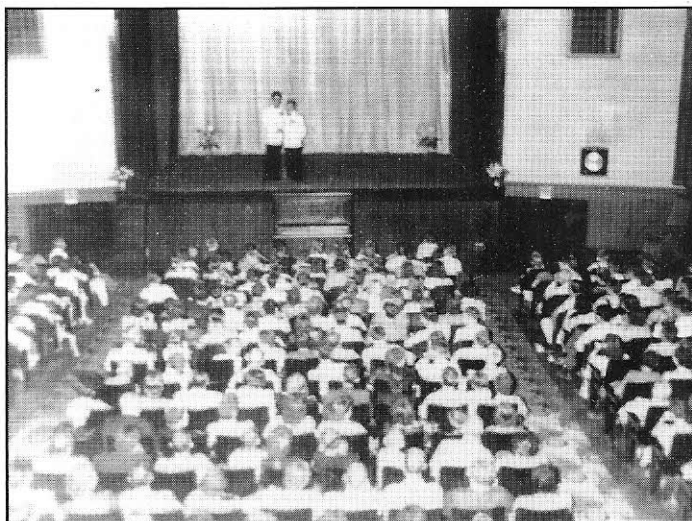
Friday, September 6, was the big night in Mena. The Lyric Theater was decked out with a facade duplicating the Jot 'Em Down Store as it was depicted in the movie, and the following Monday *The Mena Star* reported on what happened that evening:

More Than 3100 People Saw Lum and Abner Picture

Lum and Abner's new motion picture, "Dreaming Out Loud," which closed at the Lyric Theater Sunday afternoon, set a new record for attendance at the local playhouse, with more than 3,100 people viewing the show during its 3-day run. It met with great approval here, and reports from Little Rock and Hot Springs, where it has also been shown, indicate that it was well received in those places.

Yes, as soon as Lauck and Goff were finished with their appearances on stage at the Lyric (unfortunately, that stage was blown away by a tornado several years ago and the back part of the theater had to be rebuilt), they were on their way back to Hot Springs for the next of the three premieres, which was to take place on Saturday, September 7. Unfortunately, the *Hot Springs Sentinel-Record* must not have been in communication with the other locales, because the weekend preceding this event the paper headlined its "Amusements" page with the banner, "LUM, ABNER TO APPEAR AT WORLD PREMIERE HERE, SEPT. 7." The article went on to say:

W. Clyde Smith, city manager of Malco Theatres Inc., has announced that the world premiere of the new Lum and Abner picture, "Dreaming Out Loud," would be held in Hot Springs on



Chet Lauck and Tuffy Goff appear on the stage of the Lyric following one of the movie showings.

Saturday, Sept. 7. The picture is scheduled to be shown simultaneously at the Paramount and Central Theaters, both matinee and night. Lum and Abner, co-stars of the new production, will be here in person and will make one appearance in the afternoon and one appearance at night in both theaters.

Lum and Abner will be quite at home in Hot Springs, as it was at radio station KTHS that the two made their debut on the air. Since that time they have risen to be one of the top fun-making teams on the national hookup.

By Friday, the paper was still calling the film's showing the "world premiere," but thankfully had dropped that claim by the time it reported on the actual event in its Sunday edition:

Lum and Abner Put in Busy Day at "Homecoming" and Premiere of First Picture

Lum and Abner came back yesterday to Hot Springs, where they started on the road to radio fame a decade ago and received on every hand an enthusiastic welcome and good wishes on their new venture in the movie field. Their visit here, which included four public appearances, a luncheon, a radio broadcast, and two informal press conferences, left the people of Hot Springs impressed with their engaging friendliness.

At the theaters where they appeared, the two celebrities were accorded a hearty welcome. Large crowds attended the first showings here of the movie, which was well received.

At a "welcome home" luncheon, given for the radio team by the Chamber of Commerce at the Arlington Hotel Fountain Room, Lum and Abner declared they would "boost Hot Springs and its wonderful hot baths" at every opportunity, and said that Arkansas no longer was considered the hill-billy state in other sections of the nation they have visited.

"When we left Arkansas," Goff told the civic leaders attending



The original 1940 half-sheet poster for DREAMING OUT LOUD.

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the luncheon, "the people were not talking much about their state. We find there has been a great change come over them. Something has happened. Today the people of Arkansas are boosting their state. They are proud of it, and they should be. It will be a pleasure to continue to talk about Arkansas."

After the Hot Springs hoopla was over, Lauck and Goff were able to take a breather for a few days. Tuffy Goff returned to Mena, where a family reunion was being held at the home of his wife's parents, Mr. & Mrs. J. P. Bullion. Chet Lauck was also having to make time for the in-laws, remaining in Hot Springs to visit wife Harriet's family. The two comics were due in Fort Smith for the last of the four premieres on Tuesday.

For whatever reason, the Fort Smith media seemed to have a tough time dealing with L&A's visit there. Perhaps it had something to do with the fact that, unlike Little Rock, Mena, or Hot Springs, Fort Smith had never previously played any role in Lum and Abner history, so the people there were less familiar with Lauck and Goff personally.

Our two pals should have sensed that something was wrong when the *Fort Smith Times-Record* announced their impending arrival, and misquoted Tuffy Goff's nickname as "Tubby." The strangest article to appear, however, got their names right but seemed to have an almost condescending tone toward the pair... perhaps the writer was simply biased against "Hollywood types," but it read like this:

Lum and Abner Plenty Funny — Even When Eating Breakfast

"How are you, Tuffy?"

"Hi, pretty."

So Lum and Abner, in real life Chester Lauck and Norris Goff of Mena, greeted each other at breakfast at the Goldman Hotel coffee shop Tuesday morning.

Lum, a tall, well-dressed young man with wavy dark hair, and Abner, short, dapper and with a mustache, didn't look much like the Pine Ridge characters their radio fans know. Lum wore nail polish.

They are in Fort Smith for personal appearances at the Joie and New theaters Tuesday afternoon and evening, in connection with the showing of their first picture, "Dreaming Out Loud."

"I'll take radio," said Abner when asked whether he preferred being on the air or before the cameras. Lum agreed. Both, however, are under contract to Voco Pictures and plan to make two or three movies a year of the same type as "Dreaming Out Loud."

The two gagsters appeared to agree on nearly everything, including the fact that they don't like to get up at 9 o'clock for an interview.

"Honest people don't get up this time of the morning," said Lum.

"I thought maybe you had us on the board of trade, opening at

9 am," said Abner. "I knew I was low."
 "You wouldn't want a picture of me sleeping?" Lum asked the photographer who was preparing to make a picture of the team as they ate their breakfast. Lum had ordered tomato juice, corn cakes with strips of bacon, and coffee. Abner had tomato juice and coffee.

"You'd better be drinking that coffee out of your saucer," Lum advised Abner.
 "I'll show you I'm well-mannered," responded his partner. "I'll fan it with my hat."

Abner, who hadn't been in Fort Smith in about ten years, said he thought the new city-county building and federal building were beautiful, and Lum said he had noticed in the paper that Fort Smith showed a bigger proportionate population gain in the 1940 census than any other city in the state.

Mena looks good too, they said.

About that time, the photographer's bulb flashed but the camera shutter didn't click. The picture was a fizzle.

"Even your camera doesn't like this early work," said Lum.

Do they write their own radio scripts?

"We never have found anybody who can write it for us outside of the asylum," said Lum.



Lauck and Goff have breakfast in Fort Smith in this fading newspaper photo.

Here they are Your Favorite Native Sons!
LUM and ABNER

—in—
PERSON
 and—Just as you've pictured them . . . in their first motion picture . . . The Pine Ridge philosophers . . . "Jot-Em-Down" store and all . . . for a new kind of heart thrill!

---tomorrow
 —at Both the
JOIE and NEW
 THEATRES
 MATINEE and NIGHT
 All Seats 45c Including Tax
 NO SEATS RESERVED

with
FRANCES LANGFORD
FRANK CRAVEN
BOBS WATSON
PHIL HARRIS

At 1 o'clock in the afternoon of the days they broadcast, Lum and Abner go to their office and they don't come out until they have a script, Abner explained. Sometimes the ideas come more slowly than others, but if they start near the deadline they're sure to write faster than if they start a

long time ahead, because they know they have it to do. The shortest time in which they can turn out a 15-minute script is 45 minutes.

They never rehearse, or even read what they've written, before they go on the air.

For recreation, both like to hunt and fish and both have horses, but Lum has race horses and Abner has saddle horses. Lum owns a racing stable in partnership with Don Ameche.

Fan mail, they said, varies according to how exciting a plot they're in on the radio. "If we break up on the air, we always get lots of letters," said Lum.

At first, he added, most of their fans thought they were really like the characters they portray, but all the publicity they've received in the ten years they've been on the air has taught most of the public that the program is pure fiction.

"When we were young, people thought we were old men," explained Abner. "Now that we're really getting old, they think we're young."

A week later, the big *Dreaming Out Loud* ballyhoo in Arkansas was over. On Friday, September 13, Norris Goff left the Mena depot, headed for Kansas City, where he was to meet up with his good friend Phil Harris. Goff and Harris then flew to Chicago to pick up two more cronies, Charley Hunter of the Marshall Fields department store and artist Julian Petty (of "Petty Girl" fame). These four were bound for Saskatchewan, where the pheasant, grouse, and duck hunting season was to open the following Monday.

As for Chet Lauck, he and his family remained in Mena until Sunday, when they too lit out for home. Lyric Theater manager L. E. Gwaltney drove the Laucks to Little Rock, where the family caught a plane for Dallas. From Dallas, Harriet and Shirley Lauck headed back to Beverly Hills, while Chet and his brother Jess struck out for Lake Meade, Colorado, to do some fishing.

The publicity for *Dreaming Out Loud* would continue into the fall and winter months, but only bits and pieces of it would trickle back home to Mena, where things were finally able to get back to normal. (Actually, the movie did return to the Lyric Theater in July 1941 for another showing, but with no fanfare.) Join us next time to see how L&A's initial screen epic fared in the rest of the nation!

- Tim Hollis

“Who ARE All Those People?”

The Dreaming Out Loud Supporting Cast

Of the seven feature films made by Lum and Abner between 1940 and 1955, without a doubt *Dreaming Out Loud* had the largest and most distinguished cast of supporting players. This was probably due to the fact that Jack Votion and RKO wanted to be sure their first screen venture with the as-yet-untested radio characters would have something for everyone. Each of these performers, of course, had notable careers of their own, but they will forever be a part of the *Lum and Abner* universe by virtue of their participation in this single movie.

Frances Langford was cast as Alice, the beautiful romantic lead for *Dreaming Out Loud*, and in fact the story is that

the movie was not even going to contain a musical number until she was confirmed as the leading lady. Langford had appeared in at least ten movies prior to this one, and of course during World War II became a

regular on Bob Hope's radio show and overseas USO tours. She proved herself to be an accomplished comedian when she was teamed with Chet Lauck's good friend Don Ameche for the *Bickersons* radio series. An intensely private person, Langford now lives in southern Florida and makes only the rarest of public appearances. She is the only known living cast member from *Dreaming Out Loud*.

Frank Craven was a true show biz veteran by the time he appeared as Pine Ridge's kindly old Doctor Walter Barnes, a thinly disguised version of the radio series' Doc Miller. Born in 1875, Craven was a former playwright who made his motion picture debut in 1928. His most famous role was as the narrator in the stage and film versions of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, another portrayal of small-town America. It seems that life also imitated art: in *Dreaming Out Loud*, Craven's doctor character dies of a heart attack after a period of extreme

stress and overwork. In real life, Craven too died of a heart ailment in September 1945, just five years after completing his L&A role.

Bobs Watson was one of the most popular child actors in Hollywood. He played the pivotal role of Jimmy, who witnesses a terrible crime but is afraid to snitch on his wealthy and cranky aunt. Bobs had literally been in movies all his life, and

had developed a speciality of being able to cry convincingly. This meant that most of his screen roles were tragic ones, in which either he or someone he loved would experience unspeakable tragedy. In his



adult life, Watson developed into a character actor who could be extremely funny or touching, whichever personality was required. He continued using his theatrical experience as an ordained Methodist minister for many years. Watson was the guest at the 1990 NLAS Convention, but passed away in June 1999 after a long bout with cancer.

Robert Wilcox was the handsome but somewhat wooden leading man for Frances Langford in *Dreaming Out Loud*. As Dr. Kenneth Barnes, son of old Doc Walt, he had little to do in the story except romance Alice and listen to her sing the title song. At the end of the story, after his father dies with his stethoscope on, he stays on in Pine Ridge to serve as the town's new doctor. Unfortunately, Wilcox himself had no such happy ending, as he died of a heart attack on a train near Rochester, New York, in June 1955.



Irving Bacon was truly one of the busiest character actors in Hollywood when he appeared as town drunk-turned-deputy Wes Stillman in *Dreaming Out Loud*. The “Internet





Movie Database” lists some 349 feature films in which he appeared between 1927 and 1958. Although he had the distinction of making a brief appearance as a soldier in *Gone With the Wind*, his most famous continuing

movie role was in Columbia’s *Blondie* series, as the postman who daily gets flattened by Dagwood as Mr. Bumstead rushes off to work, late as usual. Obviously Lauck and Goff enjoyed working with Bacon, as the actor appeared in their next two films in wildly varying roles. In the 1950s, Bacon appeared in a couple of memorable *I Love Lucy* episodes, in one of which he played Ethel Mertz’s daffy father. He passed away in February 1965.

Sheila Sheldon had a

small but important role as Wes Stillman’s daughter, Effie Lou, who looked like a character straight out of *The Waltons Move Into the Little House on the Prairie*. Her only function in the story was to be run over and killed by Will Danielson. Apparently that was about the extent of her acting talent as well, because she has only one other movie (another 1940 production, *The Great McGinty*) to her credit. Her present whereabouts are unknown.



Clara Blandick was Pine Ridge’s wealthiest woman

and grouchiest spinster, Jessica Spence. Although the story did not exactly make the situation clear, it seems that she at one time had been in love with Doctor Walt, but he had chosen another to marry. This had caused Jessica to become embittered and cranky, and she took it out on niece Alice and little Jimmy. Blandick, in case you haven’t guessed, is world-famous today for playing similarly ill-tempered (but much poorer) Auntie Em in 1939’s *The Wizard of Oz*. By all accounts, in real life she was just as bitter over her perceived lack of success in movies as the characters she often portrayed,



and in April 1962 she committed suicide at the age of 81.

Donald Briggs was *Dreaming Out Loud*’s true villain, a

crooked lawyer named Will Danielson, who manipulated Aunt Jessica’s already-warped mind and was guilty of hit-and-run murder. Regardless, those who knew him have nothing but good

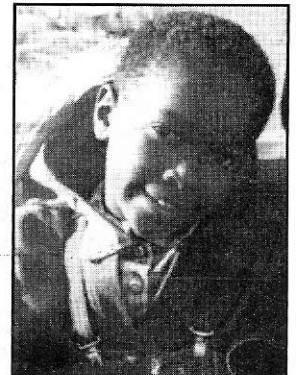


things to say about Briggs the human being. Most of his movie work was centered between 1936 and 1940, but in the early 1960s he made a comeback of sorts as a character actor, appearing as Vivian Vance’s jolly boyfriend on *The Lucy Show*. He died in February 1986. Unaware of that event, that summer the NLAS obtained his phone number and reached his wife, who informed us that he would have been most happy to discuss his single appearance with

Lum and Abner, as it was one of his favorite roles... “even though he was the bad guy,” Mrs. Briggs said.

Troy Brown Jr. was another

actor with only a minor role in *Dreaming Out Loud*, apparently being there solely to give Bobs Watson someone to confide in. He appeared in only three other movies besides his L&A work, and reportedly died just four years later, in November 1944.



Robert McKenzie was an industry oldtimer who was

cast as Pine Ridge’s constable, ignoring the fact that either Abner or Uncle Henry Lunsford always held that position on the radio show. To confuse moviegoers even more, McKenzie’s constable character was referred to as Caleb Weehunt, who on the radio was the illiterate

blacksmith father of Cedric. Regardless of what he was called, McKenzie’s character was not unlike the figures he played in most of his other 156 movies; more often than not he was seen in



Westerns as a sheriff, judge, justice of the peace, or other rustic authority figure. He died in July 1949. His daughter, Faye

McKenzie Waldman, sent a nice letter of tribute to him for the 2000 NLAS Convention in Mena.

Phil Harris had perhaps the most unnecessary part of any actor in *Dreaming Out Loud*, but he was included both because he was an extremely popular radio personality (*The Jack Benny Show*) and a close personal friend of Chet Lauck and Norris Goff. He had only one scene in the movie, which runs less than five minutes on the screen. However, *DOL*'s co-producer Sam Coslow had an interesting story about the difficulty encountered in getting this single routine committed to film. Here is the story as Coslow told it in his autobiography, *Cocktails for Two* (1977):

Phil had the part of a typical "city slicker," a fast-talking salesman trying to sell his merchandise to Lum and Abner. On the day Phil was scheduled to do his big comedy scene, I received a call to rush over to the set.

I found they were still trying to get the first take after three



hours. Every time Phil began his opening lines, he fluffed... over and over again. The director, Harold Young, was pacing up and down, muttering under his breath. Votion

kept looking at his watch, mentally figuring out what sort of dent an unproductive half day would make in our skimpy budget. I could see that Phil was both nervous and embarrassed over blowing his lines repeatedly, so I suggested the company break for lunch to give Phil a chance to calm down. Phil spent his lunch hour in his dressing room, going over his lines. After lunch, Harold Young broke Phil's lines into very small segments, and we finally got a take in the can by midafternoon.

It was not until a couple of months later that I learned the reason for the costly delay. I ran into one of the boys in Phil's band at a restaurant, and we discussed Phil's strange performance on the set. "You remember Phil's wife, don't you?" the musician asked me.

I told him I did indeed. Phil was married to a very attractive dark-haired girl who looked like Joan Crawford's twin sister. I had seen her around town with Phil at various social gatherings. Phil always seemed extremely devoted to her. They looked the picture of an ideal couple very much in love.

Phil's musician told me that on the morning of Phil's big scene with us, he awoke to find his wife gone, leaving only a short note to say she wanted a divorce. They hadn't even had an argument the night before. Phil had gone to bed with no inkling of what was to come. Until he saw her note, Phil was still under the impression that he was a happily married man. Her sudden departure came as a complete surprise, and Phil arrived at the studio in a state of shock. That, of course, explained everything.

Phil was interviewed by the Arkansas Educational TV Network in 1986 for their documentary *Lum and Abner: The Laughter Never Dies*, and also by the NLAS the following year,

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but obviously because of the situation described above he remembered practically nothing about working in *Dreaming Out Loud*. As we all know, a couple of years after that unfortunate incident he married beautiful Alice Faye, and they remained together until Phil's death in 1995.

Sing Along with Lum and Abner



Many people in 1940 probably wondered what the title *Dreaming Out Loud* had to do with Lum and Abner in the first place. This confusion continues today: a movie service that syndicates a butchered version of the film to TV stations provides the following synopsis, which appears quite often in newspaper television listings: "A man has a vision that leads to trouble." HUH?

Actually, reports are that the original working title was *Money Isn't Everything*, which doesn't make any more sense. Once Frances Langford was cast in the film, producer Sam Coslow, who was a prolific songwriter, decided she needed a tune to perform in the movie, and his romantic ballad became the final title. That was simple enough!

I see a chapel, the organ plays,

I m so excited, so proud...

I beg your pardon, I was just dreaming out loud.

I walk beside you right down the aisle,

We fight our way through the crowd...

I beg your pardon, I was just dreaming out loud.

With my imagination, I ought to write fiction, I guess.

Just for illustration, I just dreamed up my wedding dress.

We re close together and your embrace

Helps to erase every cloud...

I beg your pardon, your humble pardon,

I was just dreaming out loud.

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(But we doubt if anyone ever bothered to renew those rights!)