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*Front Cover: The cast of Lum's
 intended wedding to Evalena in
 Washington, DC, October 13,
 1933. Notice the sign advertising
 L&A's sponsor, the Ford V-8 auto-
 mobile. (Photo courtesy of
 Broadcast Pioneers Library,
 Mildred Funnell collection)*

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THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

October 2003

In This Issue:

- 70 Years of Lum & Abner 4**
- Lum & Abner in the News 8**
- Lum & Abner Meet Bob Hope 10**

L & A on C & D!

The response was so great to the offering of RESTORED Lum and Abner episodes on CD that our friends at **First Generation Radio Archives** are continuing to offer the series through the NLAS! The original 10-volume set (April 12 through June 20, 1944) is still available for **\$50**, plus **\$2.50** postage. There is also the additional 5-volume set containing June 21 to July 25, 1944, for **\$25**, plus **\$2.50** postage (at \$5 per CD, you can't beat that with a stick). (The old, unrestored versions are on **Tapes #137 to #146** in the NLAS Tape Library.) Until you have heard these L&A shows in their restored, pristine sound, you have no idea how clear they can be. As we pointed out before, during this period the L&A episodes were being distributed to the Keystone Network with no opening or closing music (although on one of the shows in the 5-CD set, part of the theme was accidentally caught by the recording technician!). Send orders to the **NLAS Executive Secretary, 81 Sharon Blvd, Dora, AL 35052.**

70 YEARS OF LUM AND ABNER®

When the summer of 1933 began winding down, things in the world of *Lum and Abner* were beginning to wind up and tick. Picking up where we left off in our last installment, we find a short but impressive article from *The Mena Star*, August 3, 1933:

"Lum & Abner" Stage Benefit, Collect \$15,000

Added honors have come to Mena's beloved pair of radio entertainers, "Lum & Abner" at Cleveland, Ohio, and there's no question now "Chet" Lauck and "Tuffy" Goff are about the two most popular residents in the big northern city.

Last Saturday night a big public entertainment was given in Cleveland's magnificent municipal auditorium to raise funds for sending underprivileged children on a six-week outing in the country. "Lum & Abner" were delegated to direct the program, and they assembled an array of talent that attracted an audience of 10,000 people, who paid admission to get in. Many individual donations were made through the solicitation of "Abner," who was stage manager, and it is reported that \$15,000 was raised for the fund.

One of Mena's biggest summertime events — that is, in the days before the annual NLAS conventions, har har — was the "Old Settlers' Reunion," where past residents of the town would get together for several days of old-fashioned music, food, and frolic. The 1933 Reunion was advertised with a double-page spread in *The Mena Star* on August 17, and it was decorated with spot drawings lifted from the previous summer's *Lum and Abner and their Friends from Pine Ridge* book... with no credit given to Chet Lauck for the artwork. Such is the life of a cartoonist...

Oh well, never mind whether the old home town was acknowledging L&A. Other sources were sitting up and taking notice, as reported in the *Star* on September 14:

"Lum & Abner" Among the Best

Good advertising for Mena's radio stars, "Lum & Abner," is contained in the latest issue of the RCA "Good News." The local entertainers are among the seven star radio attractions listed on a double page of advertising. "Lum and Abner" are identified in a fine photo showing "Chet" Lauck and "Tuffy" Goff in costume as their "Pine Ridge" characters. The boys are also announced as producers of "flivver fun" and the Ford Dealers of the Air.

All of this does nothing to help our speculation (in the August issue of the *Journal*) that the Jot 'Em Down Store was introduced into the series at around this same time. No mention was made of that event in the newspaper, nor of the contest that was run to name L&A's new business. (The story, as Lauck and Goff

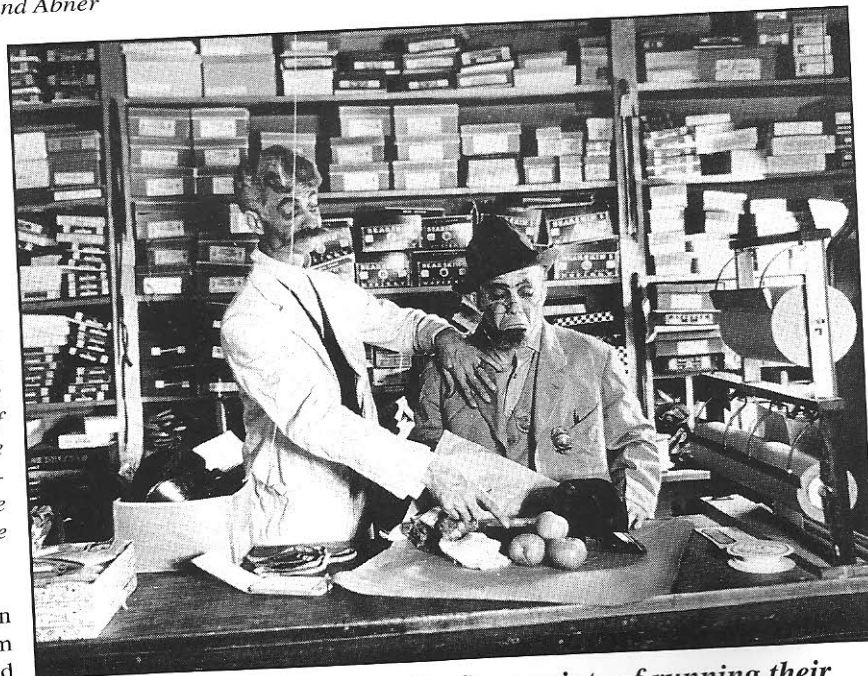
October 2003 - Page 4

told it later, is that more than one listener contributed the name "Jot It Down Store," but only one person suggested "Jot 'Em Down," so they awarded the prize to the latter entrant, rather than having to split it among multiple winners. "If we had known the store was going to be such an important part of the show from then on," Chet remarked, "we would have given the matter more thought!")

The September 21 *Star* mentions that an article about L&A was featured in the October issue of *RADIO NEWS*, and a few weeks later it was reported that the biographical article titled "Homely Wisdom" could be found in the current issue of *RADIO GUIDE*. (This article was reprinted in the April 1990 issue of the *Journal*, which now seems as long ago as 1933.) The October 5 *Star* had a short paragraph announcing the birth of Gary Goff, the first child of Tuffy and wife Elizabeth.

Gary made his debut in the world just in time for one of the biggest publicity events in L&A history. Throughout that fall there had been a building storyline involving the impending wedding of Lum and his schoolmarm sweetie, Evalena Schultz. (See the August issue of the *Journal* for a script that was performed during that big buildup.) The wedding date was set for October 13 (a Friday... shudder!), and at this point in the program's history Evalena seems to have had a family background that would never intrude upon the storyline again...

As it turns out, the wedding was to be held in Washington DC, because one of Evalena's uncles was a senator. Yes, that's right, although nothing was ever mentioned about this prestigious relation again. (Inside joke time... Evalena's politico kin is named



Lum instructs Abner in the finer points of running their newly-opened Jot 'Em Down Store, 1933.

Uncle Norris.) The fact that an entire episode was going to revolve around the wedding also meant that other cast members were needed. There is no indication as to just who played most of these other roles, although shortly before his death in 1989 the great Jim Backus recalled working on L&A's show while they were all together at WTAM. It is fascinating to imagine whether Backus might have played the part of Uncle Norris!

Particularly important was a female voice to portray Evalena. Stepping daintily into that role was Mildred Funnell, an actress from WTAM who also served as private secretary to the station's manager. We are fortunate that many years ago, in 1978 to be exact, Ms. Funnell donated her collection of papers and memorabilia to the Broadcast Pioneers Library in Baltimore, and among those artifacts were several items relating to her brush with Lum and Abner. One of them was the actual script for the wedding broadcast, which we present here.

Let's face it.. this script does not sound as if it is written by Lauck and Goff, so they probably enlisted help for such a prestigious occasion. The dialogue seems a bit stilted and stereotypical. We also do not know just what is meant by the stage direction "Mann impression" that occurs throughout the script, but it seems likely that the WTAM actors included someone named Mann who specialized in imitating various celebrities. The script does not indicate which voices he is to have done. So, now let us turn back the clock and see whether Lum and Evalena actually manage to go through with their hitchin'...

(THEME MUSIC:
ELEANOR)

ANNCR: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Through the courtesy of your local Ford dealer, and through the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company, we are able to bring you a description of the wedding of Lum Edwards to Miss Evalena Schultz, which will take place here in the mammoth Washington Auditorium. Over six thousand people have gathered to witness this event, and among the guests are many celebrities... Nationally known figures in public life.. stars from the stage and screen.. and well-known personalities of radio. This is unquestionably the social event of the season.

(Fade out Eleanor and come in with background music)

(APPLAUSE)

ANNCR: We can't see from where we are standing just who came in then. However, we hope to bring to the microphone soon several of the famous people who are attending. (APPLAUSE) Just now a well-known celebrity has come up to the microphone.

(FIRST MANN IMPRESSION)

ANNCR: I know that everyone is anxious to hear how our old



friends Lum Edwards, the groom, and Abner Peabody, the best man, are feeling at this big moment. We are going to take the microphone over near where they are standing, talking. Just a moment and we'll bring you their voices. (SWELL MUSIC AND FADE) Here we are in a small anteroom - Let's listen

(LUM AND ABNER'S SCENE)

(ORCHESTRA HAS FADED OUT BACKGROUND AND NOW TAKES UP "ONE ALONE")

ANNCR: While we wait for the ceremony to start, Mr. Bagranoff, of Washington, D. C., sings "One Alone," from the Desert Song.

(ONE ALONE - BAGRANOFF AND ORCHESTRA)

ANNCR: We hope to take the microphone around to where more of the celebrities are standing... let's see who we can find now...

(SECOND MANN IMPERSONATION)

(FADE IN AUNT)

AUNT: Oh, this all recalls my own wedding to your Uncle Norris, Evalena.

(AD-LIB FROM UNCLE AND AUNT)

ANNCR: (Whisper) We should look in on the charming bride... Miss Evalena Schultz, who is at this moment talking with her aunt and uncle, Congressman Dailey of Washington, D. C.

(SWELL AD-LIB)
(MUSIC BACKGROUND)

UNCLE: There, there Bessie don't cry, one should be happy at a wedding.

AUNT: (louder) I am happy (cries louder)

UNCLE: There, there Bessie... Evalena, you do look charming, a brida gown becomes you... You should wear one more often.....

AUNT: Norris, what are you saying?

UNCLE: No, no I mean, that if all girls would wear bridal gowns more often they... well no matter...

EVALENA: I'm sure this is the last

time I shall ever wear a bridal gown.

AUNT: You're happy, aren't you my dear?

EVALENA: Of course I am, Auntie, Mr. Edwards is a very fine man, and a very good man, and he's been so very kind to me...

UNCLE: Well now just because he's been kind to you is not a sufficient reason for you to marry him....

AUNT: Norris, what are you saying?

UNCLE: Nothing my dear... I mean that Evalena wants to be sure that she's in love with Lum.

AUNT: Of course she's in love with him, besides it's too late now to change her mind... even if she wanted to.

EVALENA: Please, Auntie... Please don't talk like that, I'm happy... very happy... Only I....

UNCLE: Only what....

EVALENA: I.... Oh, Auntie.... (starts to sob)

AUNT: There, there, what is it....
UNCLE: Evalena... my dear.... what..... is the matter....
EVALENA: Oh it's nothing, I'm nervous and I wish....
UNCLE: Wish what...
EVALENA: It's just the day... Friday the thirteenth... at first I didn't think but I've got a feeling that... I... Oh, I don't know what it is.... but I don't want a thing to happen or go wrong....
UNCLE: It won't, there's nothing in those silly superstitions of Friday the thirteenth or...
LUM: (coming into mic.) Evalena, you look wonderful...
AUNT: Oh, Oh.. you shouldn't see Evalena before the ceremony...
LUM: Why, we're to be married...
AUNT: It's bad luck for the groom to see the bride in her wedding gown before they meet at the altar...
LUM: Bad luck... Friday the thirteenth... I'll see you at the altar... (Fade out)
EVALENA: Auntie, he still has that mustache... I told him to shave it off.. but he didn't do it...
AUNT: Well, my dear, there's no better time than right now to show him that when you say a thing you mean it....
UNCLE: Now I think that Lum looks better with that mustache than without it.
EVALENA: But I asked him to shave it off.... it's more the principle of the thing, the idea of him not wishing to please me about one little thing...
UNCLE: Well, my dear, that mustache is a rather big thing. It's about the longest handlebar mustache I ever have seen.....
AUNT: Evalena, if you don't put your foot down now you'll never be able to handle him... when I married your uncle...
UNCLE: Now let's not go back over that.. that was a long time ago...
EVALENA: Please now let's not say any more.... people are listening....
 (APPLAUSE)
ANNCR: Just a moment — there's another celebrity standing near the microphone.. would you please say a few words?
 (MANN IMPERSONATION)
ANNCR: Here's a young lady... A star of the stage and radio land, who has known Mr. Edwards for some time. Mr. Edwards is acquainted with many celebrities who have in the past summered at the health resort hotel in Pine Ridge and appeared on the sociables in the school house. I take great pleasure in introducing Miss Fowler, who has a special song to sing, just to Lum.

(MARIE FOWLER - THERE WAS I WAITING AT THE CHURCH)

LUM: Now Miss Fowler, I wouldn't feel that bad about this wedding. I mean I'm not leaving you at the church. When you were in Pine Ridge there wasn't anything said that would leave you to think....

(APPLAUSE)

ANNCR: Just a moment Mister Edwards — I think the audience has recognized you. I wonder if you would say a few words over the microphone.

LUM: Well now, I'm more used to broadcasting over the party line at Pine Ridge, but if it's a speech you want, I can say (START COME HANDY SPEECH)

ABNER: Lum, just a minute, don't get started on that "Come Handy Speech" of yours, or you'll never get to the ceremony. Mr. Hamilton, here's four of the waiters that are going to serve the wedding supper, and I was listening to them singing in the dining room, and I want them to sing.

ANNCR: Well, now I don't know.

ABNER: Now look here, I'm the best man at the wedding, and a best man has got some rights.

LUM: Not at a wedding, Abner.. A best man at a wedding is like a Vice President in politics or business... (FADE OUT)
 (DIXIE HARMONIZERS)

(APPLAUSE)

ANNCR: And here's Senator McGillicutty, a well-known government personality. He has consented to say a few words....Senator.. just a FEW words please.

SENATOR: (STARTS SPEECH)

ABNER: He's as bad as Lum when it comes to long winded talking. Stop him or Lum won't ever get married.

ANNCR: Thank you Senator. That was very appropriate... (APPLAUSE) I'm happy to announce that another celebrity has just come in. He's at our microphone.

(MANN IMPERSONATION)

ANNCR: Ladies and gentlemen, we are ready. I have just received a signal that the wedding is about to begin.

(WEDDING MARCH — ORCH.)

ANNCR: (Ad lib - procession has started - minister - brides maids - Bride - Aunt & Uncle from left - Groom and best man from right)

(At the end of Wedding March)

ANNCR: They are now at the altar.

MINISTER: Who giveth this woman to be married?

UNCLE: I do.

(ORCH. & SINGER - OH PROMISE ME)

MINISTER: If there is anyone who knows just cause why these two people should not be joined together, let him speak now or forever hold his peace.

(PAUSE)

MINISTER: (Ceremony) Marriage is a joyous occasion. It is connected in our thoughts with the magic charm of home, and with all that is pleasant and attractive in the tenderest and most sacred relations of life. You will now join hands. Do you, Lum Edwards, take the lady whom you now hold by the hand to be your lawful and wedded wife? Do you promise to love and cherish her, in sickness and in health, for richer for poorer, for better for worse, and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as you both shall live?

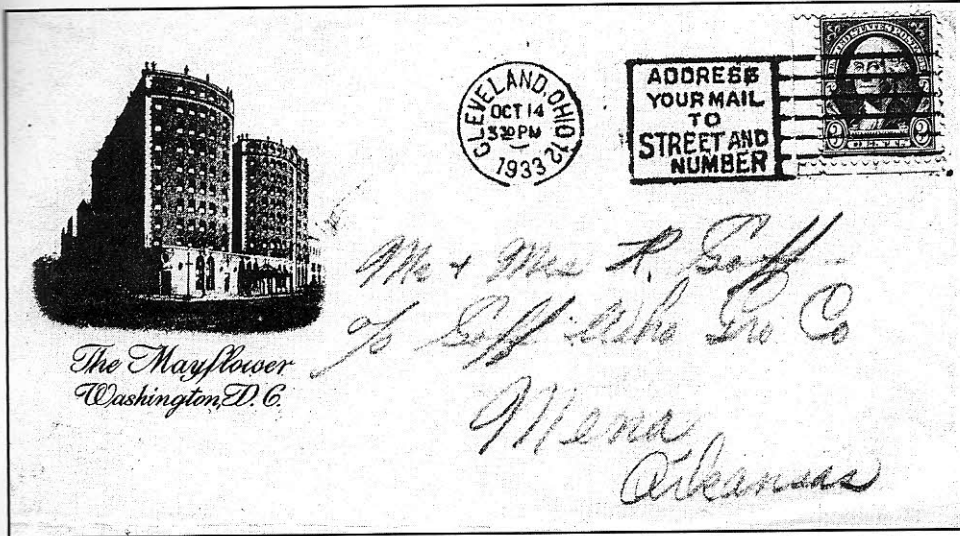
LUM: I do.

MINISTER: Do you, Evalena Schultz, take the gentleman who now stands by your side and who holds you by the hand, to be

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Congratulatory message sent to Mildred "Evalena" Funnell from her mother after the wedding broadcast.



The envelope in which Tuffy Goff sent his triumphant letter to his parents back home in Mena.

your lawful and wedded husband? Do you promise to love and cherish him, in sickness and in health, for richer for poorer, for better for worse, and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as you both shall live?

EVALENA: I do.

MINISTER: You mutually promise in the presence of these witnesses, that you will at all times and in all circumstances....

DETECTIVE: Just a moment, which one of you men is Lum Edwards?

(GENERAL HUSH AND AD LIB)

DETECTIVE: I have a warrant for the arrest of Lum Edwards of Pine Ridge.

ABNER: A warrant for Lum?

LUM: Arrest me...on what charge?

EVALENA: Oh, Oh (AD LIB, She's fainted) (Start build ad lib)

DETECTIVE: You are arrested for embezzlement.

(AD LIB NOW TOPS SPEECHES)

ANNCR: Let me have a microphone here, please.. Bedlam has broken loose. The groom has been arrested at the altar.... They are trying now to quiet the audience. What an ending for the biggest social event of the year.

(ELEANOR - ORCHESTRA)

(QUIET ... All ad lib)

ANNCR: (Commercial)

Wow, we are all on the edge of our seats by now! Obviously this was yet another development relating to the storyline that would be recycled in the summer of 1944, wherein Lum was again arrested for embezzlement (but was not getting married at the time).

What happened next? Good question! Mildred Funnell certainly considered this a highlight of her career, saving telegrams from family and friends that came in after the broadcast, and an item of even more unusual origin... a handwritten card that accompanied a bouquet of orchids sent by Walter Winchell! The newspaper in Ms. Funnell's home town of Sandusky, Ohio, also beamed with pride over her exposure. An undated article contained within her collection reads thus:

Local Girl in National Radio Role

One of Sandusky's fairest daughters has found a place for her-

self in the national limelight, since Mildred Funnell, daughter of the Rev. and Mrs. A. J. Funnell, has been playing the role of Evalena on the Lum and Abner radio program over a coast-to-coast hookup.

Lum and Abner have become two of the most popular characters on the air since their debut over the ether on the Ford commercial program, and from time to time the cast has been increased. Miss Funnell came to the networks as Evalena, Lum's sweetheart, two weeks ago when the program was being broadcast from Washington. As an indication of the popularity of the program, nearly 7000 people packed the auditorium in Washington from which the wedding ceremony that was part of the script took place, and over 2000 more were turned away, unable to secure seats to view the broadcast.

When the members of the cast arrived in Washington from Cleveland, they were

met by a fleet of decorated cars and given a welcome celebration. Their regular broadcasts were done in costume, and the wedding scene was elaborately staged.

If this article is to be believed, Ms. Funnell apparently remained on the show as Evalena for some time after the wedding broadcast. This fact, as well as the wedding itself, seems to have been forgotten later, as in February 1937 Lauck & Goff's secretary Velma McCall was said to have been the first voice other than their own to be heard in the show.

Another relic of this event is a letter that Tuffy Goff sent to his parents in Mena, postmarked October 14. This note remained buried in family memorabilia until 1997, when Tuffy's niece Bette Redman located it. It was written on stationery from the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, and reads as follows:

Dearest Mother and Dad:

This letter is being written to you while I'm flying 3000 feet in the air - just south of Akron, Ohio. It is very rough this morning so it will be rather hard for you to read this I guess. Just thought you might get a kick out of me writing you while flying - We are on our way home from Washington DC where we put on Lum and Evalena's wedding.

We rented the largest hall in town - It seated 6000 people and there was 7000 on the inside and over 2000 turned away that couldn't get in - And when Chet and I walked out on the stage they applauded for 10 minutes.

We are just starting down to land at Akron - Quite a sensation this starting down - We are in a Ford tri-motor plane - Must close, will write again - Hope both of you are feeling OK. We are down now.

Love, Tuffy

Obviously Goff was not able to mail the letter until he returned to Cleveland, where the return address indicates that at this time he and Elizabeth (and new baby Gary) were residing at 9823 Lake Avenue. Okay, you Ohio members, find that house and send us a photo of it!

What an autumn it had been for the "two boys from Mena." When the new year of 1934 arrived, it would bring surprises of both the welcome and unwelcome variety... but we will have to get around to those in another installment!

- Tim Hollis

Lum & Abner® In The News

REPRINTS OF PAST LUM & ABNER ARTICLES

We are not certain of the original publication date of the article below. Judging from its statement that L&A started broadcasting for Ford three months earlier, it must have appeared in the autumn of 1933. We also do not know in which publication it first appeared, but its constant plugging of Ford and the city of Cleveland may indicate that it was in some sort of regional dealers' magazine.

Things just seem to happen to Lum and Abner. Their meeting; their entrance into radio a few years ago; their first big break in Chicago over NBC; their present commercial series for most of the Ford distributors throughout the country. They're all things that just happened.

Out of a clear sky, three months ago, the Cleveland sales manager for Ford walked into WTAM. He wanted a radio program for the three hundred twenty Ford dealers in the Cleveland area. Some of his dealers had heard this team of Lum and Abner. Now, if he could only get something like that, he was sure he could put the program over in a really big way.

"Well, if you want something like Lum and Abner, why don't you audition Lum and Abner themselves?" he was asked.

"Why, I thought they were already on some commercial," he replied, "but if they're available, how soon can I have them audition for my men?"

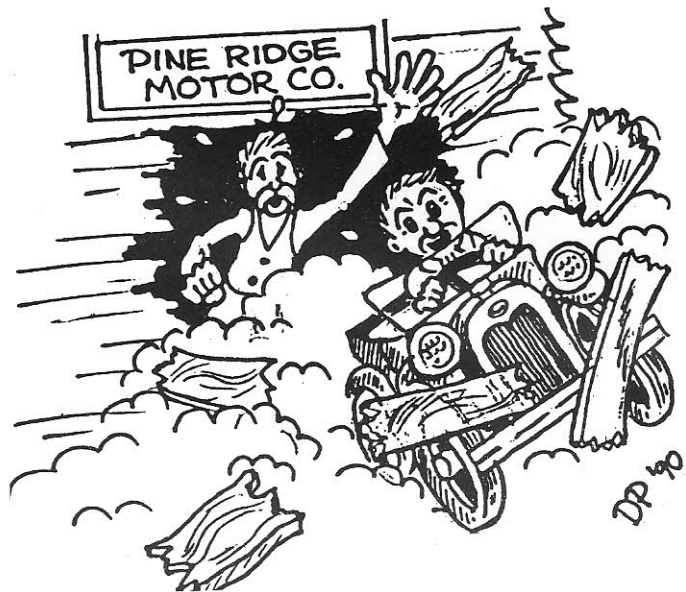
That night, he was told. And that night three hundred twenty auto dealers crammed into WTAM's studios to hear the rural team. Before they left, Lum and Abner were signed to go on the air for them over WTAM. They clicked immediately. People in northern Ohio liked their characters, who were somewhere between Tennessee hill bil- lies and Down East Seth Parkers.

Then this Ford salesman — W. W. Mitchell is his name — got a bright idea. If the people around Cleveland liked his radio show, why shouldn't folks throughout the country enjoy it? After all, Ohioans aren't much different in their tastes than other folks. So, he pulled a "Jim Farley."

By plane he went to Boston and talked to Ford dealers in that territory. He had a radio program that would bring them business, he told them.

He went to Pittsburgh and spread the same message. And before another week was up he had been to New York, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City and Washington. Everywhere he spread the gospel of Lum and Abner.

"Let's hear them," the dealers asked. So, one afternoon the following week, NBC tied up a good part of its Red Network for an hour-and-a-half to carry an audition by Lum and Abner for Ford dealers over thirty states. And before another seven



days, they were on the network for Ford, one of the biggest commercial programs of the year.

Lum and Abner met nearly twenty years ago. One of the Goff girls in Cove, Ark., had a birthday party. Chester Lauck was invited. He was about eleven then. He arrived polished and starched.

It seems that the Goffs forgot to put young Norris, seven, to bed. He spied Chester, was fascinated by his white collar and thought it would be a good target for a mud pie. So, Chester and Norris, now Lum and Abner, met.

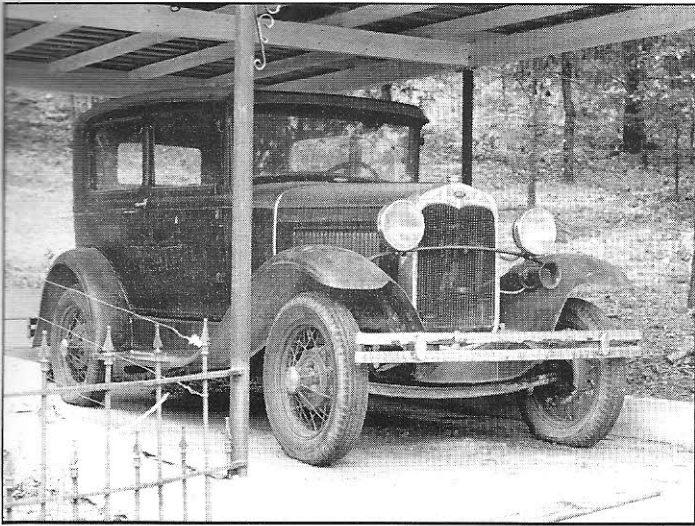
Lauck, who plays the role of Lum, is thirty-one. He was born in Alleene, Ark. Went to school at the University of Arkansas. Studied psychology and was a member of the glee club. He did a chalk talk and clog dance act.

Goff, who is Abner, is twenty-seven. He was born in Cove, Ark. Went to school at the University of Oklahoma to take an art course, but majored in dates with co-eds.

The two met again in Mena, Okla. (EDITOR'S NOTE: The magazine made a boo-boo. Of course, just a few more miles and Mena WOULD be in Oklahoma...) Lauck had settled there to manage an auto finance company. Goff was in the wholesale grocery business. They formed a black-face team and used to appear in home-town shows and minstrels.

The manager of KTHS, Hot Springs, Ark., hap-

Artwork by Uncle Donnie Pitchford



This vintage L&A-era Ford was once on display at the Lum & Abner Museum in Pine Ridge.

pened to be the luncheon guest of the Mena Lions Club one Tuesday. Lauck and Goff were there to entertain. He liked their act and asked them to come over to Hot Springs and appear on a Flood Relief Benefit broadcast. There was another black-face team on the program, so he asked them to think up another skit.

For ten weeks they traveled ninety miles every Sunday to broadcast their new act. It was soon one of the station's biggest features and the boys were drawing fan mail from all over the state.

Presently, a friend suggested an audition at the NBC Merchandise Mart studios in Chicago. NBC was looking for something to take the place of Gene and Glenn on the Quaker Oats program, as they were going away on a short vacation. After Lum and Abner had auditioned for the spot, they were signed.

Out of a clear sky have come some of NBC's outstanding stars to appear on the air with Lum and Abner. Every Friday night the boys have a thirty minute variety program called "The Sociable." It evolves around the telephone line in Pine Ridge, locale for the skit. Lum rings up the subscribers and has them listen in to the entertainment.

For their first network broadcast, Graham McNamee, ace NBC announcer, was sent to Cleveland to handle the program. Since then they've had Welcome Lewis, Countess Olga Albani, Ray Perkins, Sisters of the Skillet, and many others out for their program.

Here is what has been a carefully guarded secret. Lum and Abner were recently the central figures of one of the biggest hoaxes ever put over on a radio station. It nearly ruined the act as it left them broken-hearted.

Six months ago and suave-looking person by the name of James Jessak blew into town. Lum and

Abner had now been on WTAM as a sustaining act for some time. And like any radio sustaining feature they were eager for a commercial. Jessak represented himself as the agent for a cosmetic company. They had a new product they wished to introduce in Cleveland and wanted to do it by way of radio. Money didn't matter as long as he could get the right type of program.

Even in good times, a sponsor of this sort would be hailed as a patron saint by any radio station. And six months ago the radio business in Cleveland was pretty well shot. So, Mr. Jessak was winned and dined by all four stations in town.

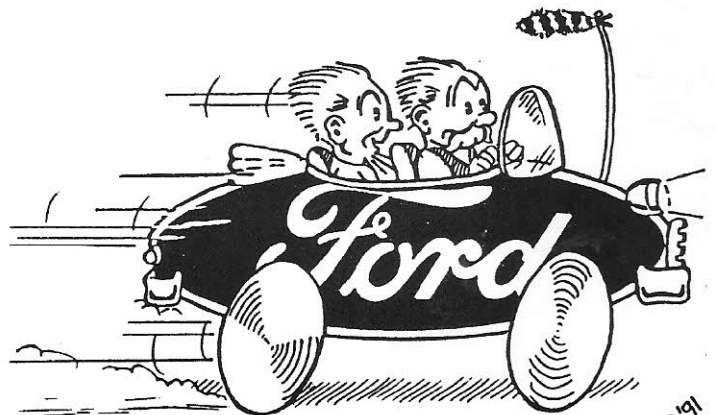
One of the stations imported talent from Chicago to audition for him. Another assembled a program with a cast of nearly one hundred people. Finally he chose WTAM and signed Lum and Abner and Emerson Gill's orchestra. In all he purchased over \$10,000 worth of radio talent and time.

Two days before Jessak's programs were to start over the four stations, they received a call from the police station. The chief wanted them to come down and identify a James Jessak, who was booked for passing bad checks.

Both of these boys are married. Lauck has two youngsters, and by the time you're reading this Goff will probably be a daddy. Golf and ping pong are their favorite pastimes. As golfers, they're still ping pong champions.

This article does put a different spin on some aspects of L&A history, such as having their first meeting as children occur before both families moved to Mena, contradicting most of what is known about their backgrounds. It is also unusual that the manager of KTHS is credited with having them change from a black-face act, instead of them making that decision on their own.

Most unusual of all is the James Jessak anecdote, which to our knowledge appears in no other source. It sounds much like something out of an episode of the now-defunct cable TV series REMEMBER WENN, but that was the state of radio in 1933.



Lum and Abner® meet BOB HOPE

What could we possibly say about the long-feared passing of Bob Hope at age 100 that has not already been said about him? There certainly isn't much, so as our own way of paying tribute to him, we shall examine the known times that he and Lum & Abner shared the microphone with each other.

What seems to be their earliest joint appearance is known from just a few seconds included on the now-legendary 1979 boxed record set *Bob Hope and his Friends*. In an extremely brief excerpt from one of Hope's radio shows (the sound of L&A's voices seems to date it as 1939 or thereabouts), we hear the following exchange:

HOPE: Well, I see you boys finally got here.

LUM: Yeah, I brung my partner... Abner, this is a feller you've heerd a thousand times on the raddio.

ABNER: Well!

LUM: Shake hands with Mister.. uh... what wuz yer name agin?

HOPE: The name is Hope.

ABNER: Oh, I've heerd you... Yer that "I hope I hope I hope" feller, ain't ye?

HOPE: No, that's not me.. You're thinking of the wrong program.

ABNER: Naw, I'm thinkin' of the right program, yer jist the wrong feller.

We have no way of knowing how much more there was in this appearance, as the entire show does not seem to be circulating (or, if so, we aren't aware of it).

There might have been other Hope/L&A teamings during the various shows produced by Armed Forces Radio for the servicemen during the war. Hope appeared on series such as *Command Performance* often, and

the NLAS archives contain several similar appearances by L&A, but not within the same episodes. The next known teaming of the three comics was on the *Bob Hope Show* broadcast of February 29, 1944.

We originally learned of this appearance when a 12" transcription of L&A's routine turned up among all the other disks they had preserved. (We first released it on our *Totally Hidden Lum & Abner* cassette.) Since that time, the entire broadcast has gone into circulation, and while L&A's scene is confined to the one we already had, the rest of the program has some interesting aspects as well.

The broadcast is split between the NBC studios in Hollywood and the Air Force's Brooklyn Field in Mobile, Alabama. Bob Hope himself remained in Los Angeles while the rest of the cast (announcer Wendell Niles, Frances Langford, Jerry Colonna, and Vera Vague) made their appearance at the military base; during his opening monologue, Hope explains that he was supposed to have made the trip, but his doctor advised him not to fly because he caught a bad cold: "I got a cold because of an unusual change in the California weather... it stopped raining one day and my system couldn't stand it." When Wendell Niles was in Mena for the 1989 NLAS convention, he reminisced about this very occasion... but at the time did not mention Lum & Abner's role in it (he was probably unaware of what was going on at the Hollywood studio while he and the crew were down South). He also mentioned one event that would not have gone out over the air, when they raised a considerable amount of dollars for war bonds by auctioning off Frances Langford's bra.

Most of the show betrays the fact that it had to be somewhat thrown together at the last minute. Niles's dialogue with Langford, Colonna and



L to R: Bob Hope, Chet Lauck, and Arkansas governor Winthrop Rockefeller at an unidentified event in 1968; we aren't certain about the connection between the watermelon, Bob Hope, and Hope, Arkansas, the watermelon capital of the state....

the others most definitely indicates that it was originally written for Hope to perform.. probably one reason Niles remembered the broadcast 45 years after it occurred. An example:

LANGFORD: *I wish someone down here would give me a good recipe for Southern fried chicken.*

NILES: *Well, that's easy to prepare, Fran... You just fry the chicken in batter, stick it in the oven and keep basting it with mint juleps...*

LANGFORD: *You keep basting it with mint juleps? For how long?*

NILES: *Oh, you don't have to time it.. When the oven door opens and it walks out whistling "Dixie," that's Southern fried chicken!*

Finally, after Jerry Colonna has thoroughly murdered "Mairzy Doats," toward the end of the show it switches back to Hope in Hollywood and he mentions that he is somewhat lonely on the stage at NBC all by himself. This is the cue for L&A's entrance:

LUM: *Yeah, this is the place we're lookin' fer.. See that sign, "BOB HOPE SHOW, Autygrafs, 25 cents." What's the rest o' that? "In ink, 35 cents.. Full name, 45 cents.. Dee-lux deal, autygraf, handshake an' kiss, one dollar."*

ABNER: *Who does he think he is, Red Skeleton?*

The boys from Pine Ridge announce that they heard Hope was ill, so they came over to help out. Hope explains that he thinks he picked up his cold at Bing Crosby's house: "He was making up a package to send to Frank Sinatra." Lum has brought an old family cold remedy from home:

LUM: *If you'd jist try this remedy of mine, you'd be a changed man.*

HOPE: *But I couldn't take that stuff, Lum.. People would laugh at me.*

LUM: *That's what I mean, you'd be a changed man.*

Finally, when Hope informs L&A that they are on the air with millions of people listening, L&A come up with the perfect cure: all Hope needs to do is take Alka-Seltzer and One-A-Day brand vitamin tablets. The closing music swells as Hope yells that his sponsor is Pepsodent, not Alka-Seltzer! Just before launching into his closing "Thanks for the Memory" theme, Hope tells L&A that "I'm going to come over and visit you on your own show soon."

As far as that next appearance was concerned, it came later than sooner. In fact, it was Monday, May 20, 1946, before that February 1944 promise was fulfilled. The storyline actually began a week earlier, when an officious gentleman named Mr. Hatstaff (played by either Frank Graham or Francis X. Bushman, it's hard to say) arrives in Pine Ridge to announce that Bob Hope will soon be visiting the tiny burg. (True to L&A's character, there is no acknowledgement of their previous meetings with Hope.) On May 15, L&A are visited by Hope's agent, Jimmy Diamond (played by our old friend Jerry Hausner). There was obviously some inside joking going on here that the general audience would not have caught: in real life, Hope's longtime agent was Jimmy Saphier (pronounced sapphire... Jimmy Diamond, get it?). Diamond/Hausner wants to know if there is a local theater at which Hope can perform. Lum remarks that they always have a good movie at the Lyric Theater in Mena; "He might even be lucky enough to see *Partners in Time*," Chet Lauck ad-libs.

At last the big day arrives, although L&A still have no idea why Hope would want to come to Pine Ridge. When Hope breezes in, he announces that he is there to see the ace comedy writer who has been sending him such great gags through the mail... a feller named Cedric Weehunt. L&A are understandably taken aback by this news, and Lum tries to protest that Cedric "ain't no writer."

HOPE: *Now listen, if you're trying to save him and peddle him to Cantor or somebody, just forget it.. I found him first, and he's all mine.*

LUM: *Yeah, but fer as him writin' sompin', he can't even write his own name without lollin' his tongue out.*

HOPE: *Well, I don't care how he does it, just so he gets those boffs down on paper. He's just the baby I've been looking for. I'm reconverting back to peacetime, so I've got to get rid of my war joke writers and put on a new genius.. and this kid here has got it! Didn't you see the stuff he sent me?*

ABNER: *Uh... them jokes, you mean?*

HOPE: *Yes, and what jokes! Such gags, such boffolas, such bellies! Cedric, give me a couple!*



Lauck and Hope exchange wisecracks in this film footage documenting Hope's 1968 arrival in Arkansas.

CEDRIC: *Mom?*

HOPE: *Hit me with a couple of those Class A atomic specials, will you? This kid's got a million! Come on, Ced!*

CEDRIC: *Er, uh... (L)... uh...*

HOPE: *Listen to those tumblers clicking in that head! Can you hear that?! Have you got it?*

CEDRIC: *Er... can I ast you a question, Mr. Hope?*

HOPE: *Oh sure, go ahead!*

CEDRIC: *Well, er... uh... what am I sposed to be doin'?*

HOPE: *"Supposed to be doing?"*

ABNER: *He wants ye to tell him some jokes, Cedric.*

CEDRIC: *Oh, why didn't ya say so... I got a whole pocket full o' them. Here, Mr. Hope.. all wrote down.*

HOPE: *Oh well, that's better.. you had me worried for a minute there.*

CEDRIC: *Yes mom.*

HOPE: *Now, let's see what sort of beauties you've got here.. Oh, this is wonderful! "This is Bob Pepsodent Hope, telling you folks I'm living by the skin of your teeth!" Well, that is wonderful.. very, very nice...*

L&A: *(L)*

CEDRIC: *Did I put that down there, too?*

HOPE: *Get a load of this: "Spring is wonderful in California.. The birds, the bees, the sunshine.. The breeze rustling through the slacks on Hollywood Boulevard." Rustling through the slacks! Do you get it?! This kid is melloroonie!*

ABNER: *He's honest, though.*

HOPE: *Hm? "This spring weather is so nice, I've been playing a lot of golf lately. I don't know if I play a good game or not, but every time I get on the green the holes start to yawn." (L) Oh, this kid's solid! The holes start to yawn!*

CEDRIC: *(L)*

ABNER: *What does that mean, Cedric?*

CEDRIC: *Oh, I dunno.*

HOPE: *Look. I don't expect him to be able to explain them... all I want him to do is write them. Let me go on with this... "I was playing with a dentist the other day, and every time he got on the green to putt, he'd say, 'Open a little wider, please.'" (L) Oh, isn't that wonderful?! "I think I was a little off my game yesterday. I hit one ball into the wind, and I don't know if it was blowing hard or not, but I now have the only caddy on the course with two Adam's apples." (L) Oh, brother! (L) What's the matter with you guys, why don't you laugh? These are great!*

ABNER: *They air? Well.*

HOPE: *Just listen to this: "I hit another golf ball and it landed in a farmer's back yard."*

ABNER: (L)

HOPE: Wait, wait, that's not the punch line.. Now, let's see: "It landed in a farmer's back yard, and one of the hens sat on it for a while then got up and said to her husband, 'Egad, Herman, I've gotta stay away from those smudge pots.. I've started to lay them hard boiled!'"

L&A: (L)

ABNER: Oh, that is a dandy..

HOPE: That's a crusher... You got that one, eh?

ABNER: Oh shore, that is a goodern... a talkin' chicken!

HOPE: No, you don't get it.. The idea is, this chicken, you see.. that is, the golf ball.. and there's a.. well, what I mean is, there's a smudge pot, and... Well, now, about this contract.. I've got to get back to Hollywood. Cedric old pal, there's where you write your name, right on that line.

CEDRIC: Er... put my name down here, ya mean?

ABNER: Charlie Redfield claims he knows a talkin' donkey, but I still don't bleave it.

HOPE: I know, I know, I'll leave that joke out... Go ahead, Cedric, what are you waiting for?

LUM: Jist a minit, maybe I'd better look it over fer him first.

HOPE: Well, it's just a simple contract, 12 years, with options every second and fourth Thursday of every first and third week of every alternating month except leap year and every other odd year, in which case the options will be reversed and fall on first and third Thursdays of every second and fourth week in non-alternating months, except Arbor Day.

LUM: Oh, well that's okay then..

HOPE: That's \$200 a week.

LUM: Well, yeah, I spouse... TWO HUNDERD?

HOPE: Well, he's only a beginner.

LUM: BEGINNER?

HOPE: Well, all right, he might have had SOME experience, but he hasn't worked on any big shows yet, has he?

LUM: Well, no, but grannies...

HOPE: All right, I haven't got time to quibble.. I'll make it \$250 and pay your expenses out to Hollywood. Here's \$150, that ought to get you out there.

CEDRIC: Yes mom, much obliged.

HOPE: Yeah, but remember, if I pay you that much cabbage you've got to deliver.. You can't let me down. Are you sure you can give me jokes like this every week?

CEDRIC: Oh, shore.. Gimme a sharp pencil an' plenty of paper.

HOPE: You're sure you wrote all of these yourself, nobody helped you?

CEDRIC: Oh, no mom, I done it all mysef. Cross my heart an' hope ta die.

HOPE: Well, don't go TOO far.. Does it come easy or is it pretty hard work for you?

CEDRIC: Only hard part is tryin' ta keep up. I hafta write jist as fast as I kin.

HOPE: Isn't that marvelous? An inspired writer! They come to you pretty fast, huh?

CEDRIC: Oh, yes mom.. Sometimes they come so fast I miss gittin' some o' the best ones down.

HOPE: Oh brother, I've hit the jackpot! Maybe I'd better boost that up to \$300.

CEDRIC: Course I kin write faster now than when I started. See, I'm six years older now.

HOPE: Oh, you've been at it that long?

ABNER: Yeah, he's in the third reader now.

CEDRIC: All them jokes I sent you I wrote down six years ago... when I first heerd 'em.

HOPE: Oh yeah, well that's s..... What's that? When you first heard them? Well, just a minute now.. who did you hear them from? That's the guy I want, I don't need a secretary! Come on, tell me.. where did you hear these? Who was the guy who said them?

CEDRIC: Wull, I heerd 'em on the raddio..

HOPE: The RADIO?

BOB HOPE
10346 MOORPARK ST
NORTH HOLLYWOOD CA 91602

Western Union Mailgram

4-0193668159 06/08/89 ICS IPMRNCZ CSP LSAB
2138778188 MGMS TORN NORTH HOLLYWOOD CA 58 06-08 0145P EST

WENDELL NILES PRODUCTIONS
4555 LEDGE AVE
NORTH HOLLYWOOD CA 91602

DEAR WENDELL
I WOULD LIKE TO ADD MY GREETINGS TO ALL THE FOLKS WHO ARE ATTENDING
THE CONVENTION IN HONOR OF MY TWO OLD FRIENDS LUM AND ABNER WHO
BROUGHT SO MUCH JOY AND LAUGHTER TO THE WORLD. I SEND MY VERY BEST TO
YOU ALL.
BOB HOPE

This telegram from Bob Hope to the 1989 NLAS convention, sent via longtime Hope announcer Wendell Niles, is today framed in the NLAS archives.

CEDRIC: Yes mom, and YOU'RE the guy that said 'em! (L)

HOPE: Holy Toledo!

CEDRIC: (L) How soon do ya want me ta come out ta Hollywood, Mr. Hope?

HOPE: Get me a cab... To HOLLYWOOD? YOU?!

CEDRIC: Yes mom, you give me that \$150 expenses, ya know.

HOPE: Well... Cedric old boy.. you can keep that \$150 if you'll promise me this... Don't EVER use it to come to Hollywood!! Stay just as far away as you can!! Cab, please!!!

ABNER: Where ya goin', Cedric?

CEDRIC: I'm goin' home ta start copyin' down jokes from Jack Benny an' Fred Allen! This is the one best business I've ever been in!

The hilarity in the studio did not end just because the script (and Cedric's career as a gag writer) was over. Throughout Gene Baker's closing commercial, one can hear Hope, Lauck and Goff continuing to crack each other up, and Baker too has trouble delivering his spiel.. especially when Hope breaks in to announce, "This is Bob Hope, I'd like a bottle of Nervine.. I'm playing Philadelphia." Baker goes into hysterics, and can barely finish his spot. No printed transcript of this program can possibly convey the camaraderie that obviously existed between the radio crowd, and it can be heard on TAPE #203 in the NLAS Tape Library for those who want to sample it for themselves.

This was the last known time that Hope and L&A appeared together, but there was a reunion of sorts 22 years later. Photographs and film footage document a 1968 visit Bob Hope made to Arkansas, where he hobnobbed with Chet Lauck (by then retired from Conoco) and governor Winthrop Rockefeller. We are not certain just what sort of event warranted this visit, but it seems to have had something to do with the famous champion watermelons grown in Hope, Arkansas... maybe.. we think. MOM?

After Chet and Tuffy were gone, as stated earlier, Hope's longtime announcer (and announcer for the 1948-50 half-hour *Lum and Abner*) Wendell Niles visited the NLAS Convention, and as a surprise he brought with him a telegram that his old "boss" had sent for the occasion. You can see the actual telegram reproduced here, but it read, "I would like to add my greetings to all the folks who are attending the convention in honor of my two old friends Lum and Abner, who brought so much joy and laughter to the world. I send my very best to you all."

If Hope's health had not begun to decline shortly after this, who knows? He might have ended up visiting Mena for the convention some year! As it is, we are certain to miss him just as much as the rest of the general public, and like thousands of others have already said, we thank him for the memories.

- Tim Hollis