

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.**

VISIT

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PINE RIDGE, ARKANSAS

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Lost & Found

Do you recollect our art-tickle back in the August issue in which we covered Mrs. Delight Easton of Murphysboro, IL, who appeared on the radio with L&A while she was residing in a Los Angeles orphanage in the early 1940s? Mrs. Easton knew nothing about the program she was on, or the circumstances involved, but we now have the answer! The series was titled *Nobody's Children*, and according to respected radio historian John Dunning, it aired on the Mutual network from 1939 to 1941, and into 1942 on the West Coast only. It was the creation of Walter White and the Children's Home Society of Los Angeles, and indeed featured guest celebrities such as Jack Benny and Barbara Stanwyck interviewing "homeless" children (according to Dunning, the kids would then be hustled out of earshot while the specifics of their case were discussed for the benefit of the listening audience). Music for the show was supplied by the Mitchell



Boys Choir, which would later make a brief appearance on the half-hour version of L&A's Christmas broadcast. We are glad that we were finally able to bring this mystery to a close!



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Tim Hollis

*Front Cover: Lum & Abner
 appear to be reading their
 Christmas mail in this 1933 public-
 ity photo; notice the vintage Sears
 catalog under Lum's arm!
 (Courtesy of Mandy Lauck)*

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THE JOT 'EM DOWN

JOURNAL

December 2003

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DON'T MISS

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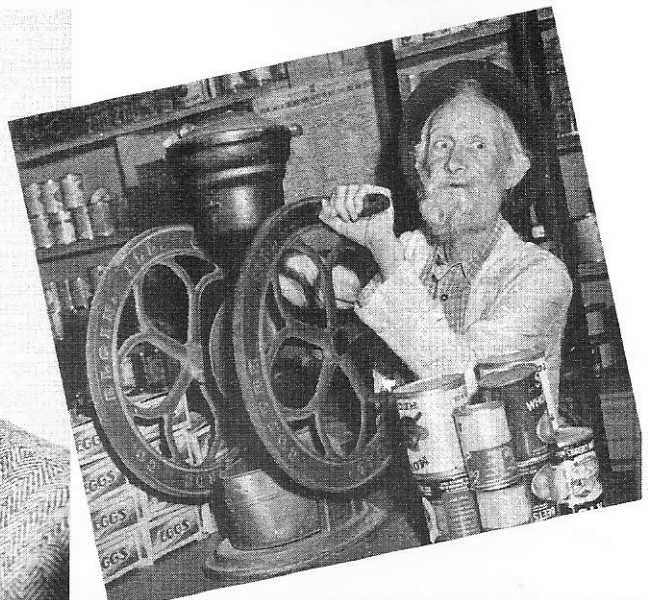
8:15 PWT—P.M.—9:15 MWT

*This classic ad appeared in the same September 1943 MOVIE-RADIO
 GUIDE as the article reprinted on page 4 of this issue.*

Lum & Abner® In The News

REPRINTS OF PAST LUM & ABNER ARTICLES

This lavish layout announcing L&A's *SO THIS IS WASHINGTON* appeared in the September 1943 issue of *MOVIE-RADIO GUIDE*. Apparently the plans it mentions to premiere the film in the real Pine Ridge never came off!



EVERYBODY who's ever tuned in on radio's Pine Ridge, Arkansas, boys and their Jot 'Em Down store activities knows quaint old Grandpappy Spears (Danny Duncan). Above: Grandpappy in scene at 1890-model coffee mill. L: Chester Lauck (Lum) and Norris Goff (Abner).



TIMELY whimsy on the troubles of grocery men, plagued by various and sundry ration coupons in this momentous year of 1943, starts the fun in fourth Lum and Abner movie, "So This is Washington." Above: Minerva Urecal as Mrs. Pomeroy tries to pull a fast one on Jot 'Em Down proprietors with some extra blue ration points

ABNER (Norris Goff) in role of inventive genius, aided by Lum (Chester Lauck), stirs up trouble and boiling dynamite as he tackles the job of creating a new formula for synthetic rubber, which he's sure will create a sensation among the big-wigs in Washington. Both men are mighty proud of big part they're playing in the war effort



Now They're **DOLLAR A**
Lum and Abner picture "So This is Washington" portrays

The story of "So This is Washington," Lum and Abner's fourth picture for RKO, concerns the adventures of the two leading citizens of radio's Pine Ridge, Arkansas, when they think Abner has discovered a formula for making synthetic rubber. The pair rush to Washington, D.C., as dollar-a-year men, where Mr. Marshall (Alan Mowbray), a bureau chief, is seeking war-time inventions contributed by the common man. In fact, the common man is an absolute fetish with Mr. M. After a series of comical difficulties, he gets Abner set for his big demonstration, only to have him conked on the head when Marshall's statue of the Common Man falls on him. The blow destroys Abner's memory. He can't remember who he is or how he made the rubber. Marshall and Lum rush Abner back to Pine Ridge in the hope of restoring his memory. How this is accomplished, and how Abner's invention turns out, proves a series of hilarious complications.

Arkansas-born Lum (Chester Lauck) and Abner (Norris Goff) are shown on this page as they look out of make-up -- two personable young men who always have been friends. Present plans are to hold the premiere of "So This is Washington" at the real Pine Ridge, Arkansas, village that changed its name from Waters on the strength of the Lum and Abner broadcasts. The village, with its population of only two hundred, has no electricity, but an exhibitor plans to take a first print of the film to Pine Ridge and show it in a Chautauqua tent. And of course Lum and Abner plan to be on hand to celebrate the occasion with their fellow townsmen.

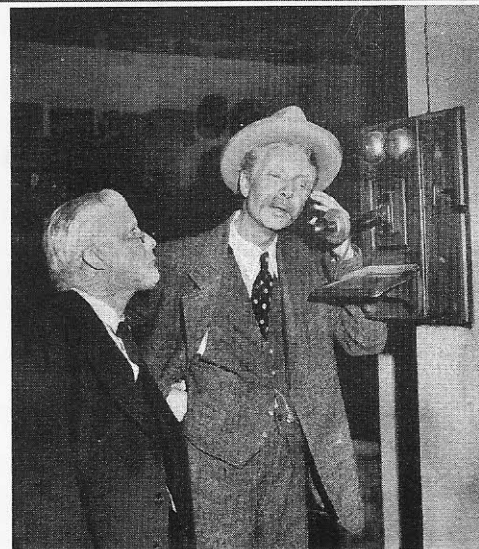


ANOTHER sequence in the picture, and one which is familiar to listeners to Lum and Abner radio show, is laid in the feed-room at the rear of Jot 'Em Down store. Scene above from "So This Is Washington" is the explosive result of Abner's inventive concoctions. Concerned-looking onlooker is little Bobby Larson

AT THIS counter in the Jot 'Em Down store all the troubles of Pine Ridge and its inhabitants are discussed. Placards behind Lum (Chet Lauck, left) and Abner (Norris Goff) testify to pair's importance in village scene. But in movie, as on radio, Lum succeeds in doin' the bossin', Abner most of the work. In real life, they're intimate friends

YEAR MEN

Adventures in Nation's Capital



PARTY LINE, famous in radio scripts, comes in for its share of attention in the picture. Above: Abner listens to conversation while Lum talks to Aunt Charity. Faithfully reproduced on the studio sets for picture are Pine Ridge's "Forty Acres," town's railroad station, exteriors around Jot 'Em Down, and all the characters on the Lum and Abner broadcasts are realistically portrayed

MEMBERS of cast and staff contributed gags during shooting of the picture. Much of the dialogue was written "on the cuff," made up right on the scenes by Lum and Abner; Ray McCarey, the director; Alan Mowbray, who plays the role of a bureau chief in Washington. His fetish is war-time inventions from the common man. Left: Lum and Abner, among other things, are tire inspectors.

60 YEARS IN *Washington*

We could not let 2003 run out without mentioning the 60th anniversary of the second L&A movie released during 1943, *So This is Washington*. This film has the distinction of being the only Lum & Abner feature to be nominated for an Academy Award. Yes, you read that correctly: *So This is Washington* could have won an Oscar... in the category of "sound recording." Now, just why it was nominated in that category remains a mystery, as the sound quality in it is no better or worse than any other B-movie of the period, but at least the two boys from Mena could have bragged that they appeared in an Oscar-nominated film!

There is another interesting bit of trivia associated with the publicity for the movie. RKO's 8 x 10 stills were identified by a code.. usually the initials of the film's title plus an identification number.. printed in white in the lower right hand corner of each photo. The stills for *Dreaming Out Loud* are labeled as DOL-15, DOL-47, and so forth. *The Bashful Bachelor* was an exception, as apparently the title was a late decision; its stills are identified as LA2-27, LA2-56, etc.

In the case of *So This is Washington*, the stills have a different sort of code: DAY-12, DAY-65, and so on. We have no idea what the "DAY" designation might indicate. Following the usual format, it would indicate that the movie's original title consisted of words beginning with those letters, but what it would have been is anyone's guess. (The NLAS Ossifers have long joked that perhaps the original title was *Oh What a Beauty Day*.)

As we have done in the past, here we want to take a closer look at the supporting cast of *So This is Washington* and find out just what sort of credentials each of the performers might have had. It will become painfully obvious as we go along, but to date *So This is Washington* is the solitary L&A feature to have absolutely no surviving cast members.

ALAN MOWBRAY

(*Mr. Marshall*)

The publicity department was correct in billing Alan Mowbray second only to Lum & Abner themselves, as by 1943 the veteran actor had a well-established screen persona. A native of London, England, Mowbray never attempted to lose his accent, and it served him well in the parts he played over the years. After his American screen debut as a butler in *God's Gift to Women* in 1931, Mowbray appeared in a wide variety of roles: majors, lords, doctors, professors, and any other type of dignified part. One of the few times his British accent seemed out of place was in *So*

This is Washington itself, where he played the head of a government agency in Washington DC. Presumably since the U.S. and Britain were allies, it made it plausible. Mowbray's final film role was in 1961, but he had not retired.. he simply busied himself with television work. Interestingly, his last role was as an Englishman (what else?) in a September 1968 episode of *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Mowbray died of a heart attack just a few months later, on March 25, 1969, at the age of 72.



MILDRED COLES

(*Jane Nestor*)

The traditional leading lady and romance angle for *Washington*, Coles was born in Los Angeles in 1920. The Internet Movie Database lists her screen debut as a 1939 Andy Hardy adventure, and summarizes her career as "a former beauty queen and Western character actress. Her favorite film was *Oklahoma Badlands* (1948), starring Alan (Rocky) Lane." Her 23 films listed on the web site do tend to lean heavily toward the wide open spaces; her other roles seem to have cast her as either a secretary (as in *Washington*), a debutante, or a chorus girl. Ironically, Mildred Coles was still living when the NLAS celebrated her L&A film's 50th anniversary in 1993, but we were unaware of that fact. She died on August 31, 1995, at the age of 75.



ROGER CLARK

(*Robert Blevins*)

A name that is not exactly unique, we can only hope that the information the IMDB gives for Roger Clark is indeed correct. It all seems to match up with the actor who befriends L&A in *Washington* and has an on-and-off-again romance with Mildred Coles in the story. It is interesting

to note that in the final scene, Clark and Coles appear together with all differences seemingly resolved, yet unlike most movies of the era, it is never specifically stated that they are getting married. Most of Roger Clark's film work was concentrated between 1941 and 1945; after that, work seems to have been



rather scarce for him. His last film role.. if indeed it is the same Roger Clark.. was as a lawyer in 1961's *Blue Hawaii*. Clark died from a stroke at the age of 70 on October 13, 1978. Presumably that was the end of his story; however, remember that the character he played in *Washington*, Pine Ridge boy-made-good Robert Blevins, had also been reported as dead on the *Lum and Abner* radio broadcast of June 4, 1942. Apparently this was a false rumor, since Blevins turned up hale and hearty in the nation's capital a year later in the movie. Roger Clark, for his part, has not been seen or heard from since the time of his death.

SARAH PADDEN

(Aunt Charity Spears)

Like Alan Mowbray above, Sarah Padden was originally from England, but unlike Mowbray she did not maintain a British characterization in her 156 films listed on the IMDB. Beginning with *Obey the Law* in 1926, Padden played any variety of landladies, nuns, mothers, and aunts. Around the time she brought her cheerful personality to Pine Ridge's beloved Aunt Charity, she was also stuffed into a fat suit and affected a hillbilly accent as Loweezie Smif in a live-action film adaptation of the *Barney Google and Snuffy Smith* comic strip, which was somewhat surreal to say the least. Between 1946 and 1948, Padden appeared in films based on another long-running comic strip, as the mother of *Joe Palooka*. In the early 1950s she brought her homespun style to such TV programs as *The Lone Ranger*, *The Cisco Kid*, *The Adventures of Superman*, and *The Roy Rogers Show*. These guest shots, and her film career, seem to have ended during 1956-57, but Padden did not pass away until 10 years later, on December 4, 1967, at the age of 86.



MATT McHUGH

(Stranger)

It is difficult to say whether Matt McHugh could look back on his movie career with any degree of satisfaction.

Although he appeared in nearly 200 films between 1931 and 1955, a glance at his listings shows that the vast majority of those were uncredited roles... bus drivers, cab drivers, milkmen, salesmen, drunks, carnival barkers, and other menial positions. In *So This is Washington* he did not even have a name, but made the most of his scene in which he rents L&A a room for the night... which in the morning turns out to be the display window of a large department store. When he died at the age of 77 on February 22, 1971, it is likely that no one paid much attention, but his film appearances (whether credited or not) live on.

BARBARA PEPPER

(Cab Driver)

Barbara Pepper's career ranged from comedy to tragedy, and that was in real life as well as in her work. She began



her career as a showgirl in 1933, her platinum blonde looks gracing such early musicals as *Kid Millions* and *Roman Scandals*. During this period she became friends with one of her fellow Goldwyn Girls, Lucille Ball, and once the redhead had overtaken and passed the blonde in fame and fortune,

Ball continued to use Pepper in bit parts as often as possible. Her single scene in *So This is Washington* played on her "dumb blonde" characterization, but as the years passed, health problems and alcoholism caused Pepper to lose her girlish figure, and roles became less frequent. During the last few years of her life, Pepper was most famous as dumpy Doris Ziffel, "mother" of Arnold the pig, in latter-day L&A cousin *Green Acres*. She indeed looked much older than her age of 54 when she died of a coronary thrombosis on July 18, 1969.

MINERVA URECAL

(Miz Pomeroy)

Let's listen to what the IMDB has to say about Ms. Urecal's career that spanned 228 movies: "A stage actress, Urecal made her screen debut in 1934. For the remainder of her career she played cleaning women, landladies, shopkeepers and the like. She went on to a career in television, playing in such shows as *Tugboat Annie* and *Peter Gunn*. Minerva claimed her last name was an amalgam of her hometown, Eureka, California." Not mentioned, of course, is that when Lum & Abner were preparing to launch the half-hour version of their



show in the fall of 1948, Minerva Urecal was one of the actresses who auditioned for what was going to be the major role of Sister Simpson. Apparently she did not let losing that role to Vivian Lasswell (aunt of *Snuffy Smith* cartoonist Fred Lasswell.. see how this all makes a big circle?) ruin her life, as she continued working in movies and television simultaneously for the rest of her life. One of her last movie roles was in the bizarre *Seven Faces of Dr. Lao* in 1964, and her final TV appearance (on an episode of *Petticoat Junction*) aired just one month before her death at age 71 on February 26, 1966.

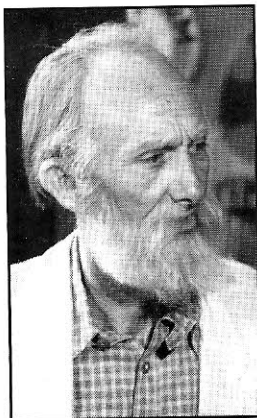
BOBBY LARSON (*Gomer Bates*)

Considering that he appeared in several scenes, it is strange that young Larson received no screen credit for his appearance with Lum & Abner. It was typical of his other film roles of the period; in fact, for all practical purposes, Larson's part in *Washington* could easily be considered the same character as played by Bobs Watson in *Dreaming Out Loud*. (Larson and Watson were even the same age.) Like many child actors, Larson appears to have not been able to



continue his career into adulthood; after he turned 20 years old, he left the sound stages for the classroom, and taught elementary school until his retirement in 1987. He ALMOST made it to *So This is Washington's* 60th anniversary, but not quite... he died of Parkinson's disease at age 72 on May 1, 2002.

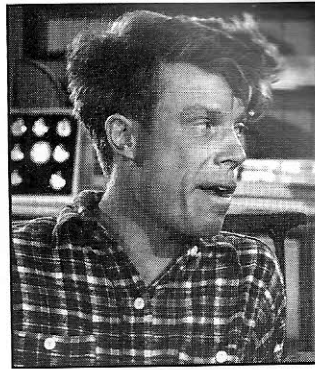
DANNY DUNCAN (*Grandpappy Spears*)



For all the mystery about his background, Danny Duncan appeared in more Lum & Abner movies than any other supporting actor. After playing Uncle Henry Lunsford (his recurring role from the radio show) in *The Bashful Bachelor* and Ulysses the postman in *Two Weeks to Live*, Duncan finally received his permanent characterization as Grandpappy Spears in *So This is Washington*. He would continue the part in the next two L&A features as well, although his

makeup would undergo some minor changes for those appearances. As we said in our discussion of Duncan earlier this year, no one seems to know when he was born or when he died, so he remains the man no one really knows.

Besides the cast listed above, there were a few actors



who made cameo appearances in *Washington*, and like Bobby Larson received no credit for doing so. Probably the most famous of these bit players was **Jimmie Dodd**, who appeared as the town ne'er-do-well in the movie's opening scene. After a short dialogue with Abner, he disappeared from the story until another scene toward the end of the film. At the time, Dodd was

knocking around Hollywood as a songwriter and character actor in a number of films, including being one-third of Republic Pictures' "Three Mesquiteers" team. As most people know, Dodd's big break came when he joined the Walt Disney studios in 1955 as leader of *The Mickey Mouse Club*, also writing numerous songs for the program, including the unforgettable "Mickey Mouse March" theme. Dodd was living in Hawaii when he died in 1964.

Among the eccentrics who crowd Alan Mowbray's office with their crazy inventions in *Washington* is a short fellow who claims to have invented a new hair restorer. When he tips his hat, of course it is revealed that he is totally bald himself. Although it is difficult to say for sure from his few lines of dialogue, this actor's voice seems to give away his identity as **Dink Trout**, who would later be associated with L&A in a number of roles during the radio show's 15-minute days (including ornery service station owner Zed Whitzit: "I don't sell ethyl!"), and would be a major supporting player as crabby Luke Spears during the half-hour days.



Returning from his identical role in *Two Weeks to Live* was perennial hotel clerk Jack Rice, again playing a hotel clerk! This time there is an inside joke associated with his scene, however. When he picks up the phone, Rice identifies his place of employment as the "Goff Hotel."

One actor whose identity remains a mystery is the doctor who attempts to cure Abner's amnesia; nowhere does it seem to be recorded who this balding, portly gentleman may have been. There are a number of other uncredited performers as well, including every single one of the congressmen who are helped by L&A's advice, the irate department store owner who finds L&A residing in his display window, the rest of the crackpots in Mr. Marshall's office (one of them has invented "elephant pills" to give soldiers perfect memories... but he cannot remember the ingredients he put into it), and a couple of porters in the DC railroad station.



- Tim Hollis

PINE RIDGE NEWS

Vol. I. No. I. ★ ★ ★ ★ PINE RIDGE, NOVEMBER, 1933 ★ ★ ★ ★ PRICELESS

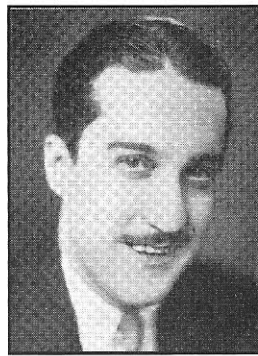
As we have seen in past issues, the offering of *Lum and Abner* premiums to radio listeners got off to a rather shaky start. The first known item to be offered that was directly related to the show and its characters was the *Lum and Abner and their Friends from Pine Ridge* book, which could be ordered in August and September 1932. The economic difficulties faced by the show since that time had prevented anything further being offered.

By November 1933, however, that had changed. With the giant Ford Motor Company as a sponsor and NBC as the network, it was again feasible to manufacture L&A premiums, and thus was born the infrequently-published *Pine Ridge News*. The first issue to be offered differed significantly from the ones that would follow... and besides, even that first issue exists in two completely different variations, so we thought it was appropriate to examine both of them more closely on the 60th anniversary of its publication.

The most commonly seen version of the November 1933 *Pine Ridge News* carries a large article on its front page explaining the backgrounds of Chet Lauck and Tuffy Goff. This, along with most of the other articles in the four-page paper, is the most important difference between it and the issues that would follow over the next three years: future papers were primarily comedic and represented the fictional goings-on in Pine Ridge, whereas the Ford issue is more or less a factual news sheet for fans of the show (sort of a Depression-era version of *The Jot 'Em Down Journal*). Much of the material stems from events taking place at the time: Lum's interrupted wedding to Evalena on October 13 (see our October issue for the complete script of that one) and his subsequent trial for embezzlement; the contest to name Lum & Abner's elephant (an example of the show from this period can be heard on Tape #270 in the NLAS Tape Library); and most important of all, the fact that the "Friday Night Sociable" had become so popular that Ford had decided to take it on the road, broadcasting from a different location each week. The article describing this new format read as follows:

Friday, November 10, saw the opening of the tour at Indianapolis, when ten thousand crowded the Cadle Tabernacle and thousands more had to be turned away. The following week Lum and Abner did all their broadcasting from New York, where they were featured by NBC as one of the leading shows put on during the gala opening of the new Radio City.

When on tour these "Sociables" are staged in the largest theatres available, and Lum and Abner, appearing in person along with their guest stars, send their broadcast out over the NBC network in full view of the audience. The stage actually becomes the



Stubby Gordon

studio, and the public becomes the "schoolhouse" audience.

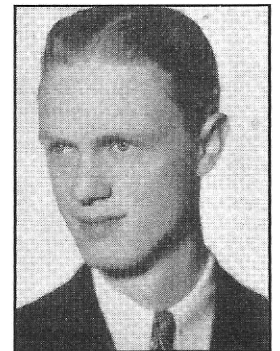
There were also profiles of some of the supporting cast of the Friday night spectacles, including orchestra leader Stubby Gordon. His biography read:

He's a quiet, retiring sort of chap who never raises his voice. But he raises a wicked baton that swings his 25 Rhythm Masters into lively action for the Pine Ridge Sociable. "Stubby" has quite a record as a specialist in orchestration, and even before he became one of the favorites on the NBC he was in big demand for his arrangement of dance specialties. While he shines best as a leader, Mr. Gordon is a versatile musician personally and there isn't a spot in the orchestra where he can't pick up an instrument and pinch-hit.

Another profile was for Gene Hamilton, who was serving as announcer for the series. His writeup reported:

Here he is, the owner of that mellow persuasive voice that comes over the radio each night, introducing the Ford program and putting across the incisive reasons why everybody should be fair to themselves and "see the new Ford...before you buy."

He is the only announcer giving his time exclusively to one account and he was chosen for Lum and Abner because of the impression he made while announcing for the Amateur Hour, Edison Symphony, Clara, Lu 'n' Em, Paul Whiteman and others on the big time in radio.



Gene Hamilton

Gene is a sandy haired youth of 25 summers, has traveled, and mixes a guitar with singing and boxing. That is, he did until an opponent broke Gene's nose (you'd never guess it) when he decided that he'd be better and more profitably employed in an intensive study of the radio business. At least that's why he says.

The humanitarian side of the radio celebrity business was indicated by this report stemming from the first "remote" Friday Night Sociable broadcast:

On the Friday morning during their Indianapolis visit, Lum and Abner received the following letter:

"Dear Lum and Abner: I am so happy you are coming to

"Tuffy" Goff as they really are. The appearance of the two young stars in tuxedos created a gasp of surprise and an outburst of applause. The great gathering refused to let the boys merely take a bow — they had to put on a typical Lum and Abner interlude and even then they were recalled time and time again before the crowd dispersed.

The back page of the paper is reproduced on page 12 of this issue of the *Journal*, and featured a selection of scenes that had been photographed earlier that fall. A short writeup explained just how these shots were accomplished:

Pine Ridge is a mythical town, of course, but the pictures shown on the back page of this issue were made "on location." The scenes are laid in a small town in Ohio where business goes on from day to day just as Lum and Abner portray it for the radio audience in "Pine Ridge." The stores, the jail, the Justice of the Peace office and the "No Fishing" creek are all natural and were found just ready for the Lum and Abner characters to step in and bring Pine Ridge into actual existence.

We'll let you into a secret. If you are ever visiting in the Cuyahoga river valley in Ohio, look for a small village named Peninsula, and you'll recognize the "location" at once. It is a quaint old place in a beautiful setting among rocks and hills, and if you get friendly with the people there, they may show you the creek that Lum jumped into when he discovered he had been "sleeping" on a snake during the taking of the fishing picture.

To date, the NLAS has been unable to locate anyone in Peninsula who can shed any sort of light on the Lum and Abner photo session there, but the community does have an impressive web site at www.explorepeninsula.com, and even today the town does seem to fit the Pine Ridge/Mena mold, so any of you members in that part of the country might want to visit it for yourself!

In our October issue we mentioned the fact that much of what we know about this period in L&A history comes from the collection of radio performer Mildred Funnell, donated to the Broadcast Pioneers Library in 1978. Ms. Funnell, you will recall, had the distinction of playing the role of Evalena during

the "wedding" broadcast, and apparently remained on the program in that capacity for some time thereafter. Among the papers she donated was a copy of the November 1933 *Pine Ridge News*... but it is not the same issue that the public saw!

Instead, the BPA's example is obviously a paper that was distributed exclusively to Ford dealers, as it contains mostly articles explaining how the vast popularity of the L&A show can boost sales. It was produced earlier than the commercially-released version, because in this one the Indianapolis program was yet to be done. Some of the promotional articles were the same in both

versions, but their placement within the issues were rearranged. The Ford version also has a short paragraph announcing that Tuffy Goff is the father of a new baby daughter; that's very cute, except that it was a son (Gary) who had just been born at that time... daughter Gretchen would not put in an appearance until a few years later.

There was also an announcement that photos of Lum and Abner were being made available for free to any Ford dealer wishing to display them in their showrooms (we wonder how many of those still exist in dusty, forgotten filing cabinets?). The same profile of Gene Hamilton was included, but not Stubby Gordon; instead, there was a photo and short writeup about Mildred "Evalena" Funnell, explaining why she had this rare example in her collection. The back cover, with the Peninsula photos, was identical in both the Ford and public versions.

Beginning with this rather elaborate premium, the Lum and Abner show would be a most prolific distributor of premiums throughout the rest of the decade, and in fact

right up to the United States' entry into World War II in 1941. The commercially-offered *Pine Ridge News* turns up occasionally for sale among antique dealers, but the example in the Mildred Funnell collection is the only known copy of the rarer Ford-only version; if you happen to find one of these yourself, hold onto it for dear life!

- Tim Hollis



PINE RIDGE NEWS

Published PINE RIDGE, NOVEMBER, 1933 Periodically

FORD RADIO CONTEST "BRINGS 'EM IN ALIVE"

"MOM" RUNS A LUM AND ABNER SOCIABLE OF HER OWN

Colleagues Are Her Guests

We have many reports of Lum and Abner parties every Friday night but Mrs. Charles E. Barton ("Mom") to all the college boys and girls) has a regular Sociable every Friday night. Her home at 402 Spruce Street, Morgantown, W. Va., is open house to the boys and co-eds from Morgantown College and the evening's entertainment is built around the Lum and Abner broadcast. Mom puts up a light lunch for the young people, and when they feel like it, the party may be rolled up (they generally are) for dancing to the String Band and Stubby Gordon's Rhythmic Masters.

As this lady tells the story, she likes young people and likes to see them enjoy "wholesome entertainment that is really fun." She says she has many friends who know that she is a "big" person.

WHEN AMERICA'S RADIO CITY IS OPENED

Lum and Abner to be NBC Feature Act

This month, when Radio City is opened at New York, it will be an occasion of all-star performances with the cream of radio talent on the air.

What the National Broadcasting Company think of Lum and Abner, is indicated by the fact that the Ford team is chosen as one of its feature acts of that great week—the broadcast of the Lum and Abner Sociable on Friday Night, November 17th.

This event marks one of the biggest forward steps in radio history and the place of prominence given to Lum and Abner is a compliment in keeping with their rapid rise to popularity and fame.

ABNER GETS A BRAND NEW BABY

Abner has been raised to a new baby recently. Mrs. Goff presented him with a baby girl a few weeks ago, and Tuffy was strutting around the NBC Studios exchanging their claims for congratulations.

Yes, thanker, mother and daughter are both doing nicely, but it looks as if the new daddy will take some time to get back to normal.

KEEP THE WINDOW POSTERS UP

Tie-up to the radio broadcast by keeping the window posters up. If your present supply is sold or destroyed, your Ford Branch will replace them without cost.

WHEN BOSTON TERRITORY LOST IT

A STORM OF PROTEST BROKE

There was a period of ten days when the Boston territory was without the Lum and Abner program—and the result was a pile of "making wavy."

It was a mixed bundle of protest, broadly representative of "the city and the province"; that is, city folks were as strongly represented as the smaller towns and farming communities, and the general theme of their complaint seemed to be that they had lost a program which was different and which had "let them down" at a point where they wanted to follow through on the doings of Pine Ridge.

And when they went on the air again, Lum and Abner got welcome-back mail including several who said "thank you for responding so promptly to our letter."

THEY HEAR IT IN AUSTRALIA TOO

How is this for long distance? The NBC people have received a "report" from an Australian short wave operator that he picked up Lum and Abner's "Ford Auto Program."

So, if any Ford dealers get an inquiry from the other side of the world, will they please write it up to the credit of the radio broadcast.

DO YOU WANT AUTOGRAPHED PHOTOS OF LUM AND ABNER?

Many dealers have asked for and received photos of this popular pair, and most of them have mounted them for show room displays to let customers see what the boys look like in real life.

They're yours for the asking.

Over One Million Entry Blanks Distributed by Dealers

Lum and Abner Mail Sets a New Record

The Ford Radio Contest, with a Ford V-8 Sedan as the weekly prize, has proved itself to be one of the finest merchandising ideas presented to the public.

Its popular acceptance by the radio audience can be measured with a variation of facts and figures. Here they are:

Over one million entry blanks were called for by the public—entry blanks that could only be obtained by going into a Ford Dealer's place of business, because that was the one and only method of distribution.

This in addition to the Ford interest aroused by the radio broadcast, and the constant hammering home of points of Ford superiority, might after night, these prospects were sent to the dealer all "swarmed up" for a demonstration and brass tack selling.

Frankly, it would be too much to expect that 100% of the entry blanks distributed would be completed and sent in, but the fact remains that, during the brief life of the contest, more than 1,000,000 of the dealers' than 150,000 of them were received by Lum and Abner—which makes an all-time record for any new high mark for mail response that is likely to stand for some time to come.

Mark you the broadcast was over a limited NBC Network—it was not Coast-to-Coast—yet it produced replies from every State in the Union.

ANOTHER MERCHANDISING PLAN

The Lum and Abner broadcast will continue to send prospects in to the Ford dealers for information and demonstrations. The contest recently closed proved its value and a new merchandising feature will be announced almost immediately.

The details will reach you through your Branch Manager.

TALK ABOUT THE FORD RADIO PROGRAM

All of your customers are interested in radio entertainment and they like to praise their favorites or explode their prejudices. Talk to them about the Ford program; ask them what they like, and tell them something about the inside story of Lum and Abner. Even if you run into some who are not 100% enthusiasts, they will all enjoy getting the personal "low-down" on a couple of popular stars.

Let your customers and friends see this copy of the *Pine Ridge News*.

Your Window

Best to the public best from day to day, show and watch what you need.

RG 171-66 CUT OF

Mildred Funnell

TO THE

BROADCAST PIONEERS LIBRARY

1711 N STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

2/27/78

The front of the "alternate" version of THE PINE RIDGE NEWS that was distributed only to Ford dealers.



Unless trick photography or retouching is involved, this photo from the PINE RIDGE NEWS purports to show the crowd that attended the November 10, 1933, broadcast of the "Friday Night Sociable."

Indianapolis you are my favorite radio entertainers. I am a little cripple boy and cant come to see you so wont you come and see me while you are here? Master Tom Dye, 1618 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis."

Even with a heavy day ahead of them, including a visit to Butler University, a noon parade downtown, rehearsal and the big "Sociable" broadcast in the evening, Lum and Abner decided that Tom Dye should get his wish. So the Radio Boys cut breakfast short and dashed out to Tom's house on Meridian Street.

The little paralytic, who is 14 years old and cannot leave his chair, gazed wide-eyed at Lum and Abner, and after mastering his excitement, told them in a Kentucky drawl, "You all don't look like I thought." He recognized Gene Hamilton's voice as that of the Ford announcer, but had to be introduced to "Stubby" Gordon of the orchestra.

The Pine Ridge boys told Tom a few things about the different characters, and who played them, and before they left they filled the little cripple's cup of happiness to overflowing when they presented him with an autographed photo. Meantime the String Band was in an adjoining room, and the little fellow said it was "just like being in Pine Ridge."

The Ford radio stars receive numerous requests from shut-ins for personal visits and, where the limitations of time make these impossible, they never fail to make their acknowledgements over the radio and by mail.

One of the few pieces to portray the Pine Ridge of the radio show was the gossip column, "Peabody's Pine Ridge Pickups." Here are some of the most humorous tidbits (and notice that throughout this issue, Sister Simpson's name was consistently misprinted as Sister Simpkins):

Sister Simpkins entertained Circle One of the Lazy Aid at a Pink Tea last Saturday afternoon. The table was decorated in dark brown after Aunt Charity Spears tipped over the teapot reaching for a cookie.

We are asked to deny that Squire Skimp instead of buying his young'uns ice cream, told them ghost stories to make their blood run cold.

Dick Huddleston reports that a traveling salesman came into

his store and didn't know any funny stories.

Mr. Lum Edwards reports there is a big strike on among New York's newspaper reporters, and that's why nothing has appeared in the New York press about his visit to that town.

A slightly serious accident was held at Main and Ridge this week. Ira Hammernail and a load of vegetables tangled with Hesa Bloch, the butcher's Ford truck, and for a while the street looked like beef stew.

There was a listing of the radio stars who had made guest appearances on the Friday Night Sociable broadcasts, including 19-year-old Frances Langford (misidentified as "Florence" Langford in the text), Annette Hanshaw, James Melton, Irene Beasley, and others. The most impressive feature was a 5-column-wide photo (reproduced here) showing the crowd that packed the Cadle Tabernacle in Indianapolis for the November 10 Sociable broadcast. The article explaining the photo read in part:

This photograph indicates the overwhelming response of the public to the broadcast of Lum and Abner's Friday Night Sociable. The Tabernacle, with accommodation for 10,000, was filled to capacity an hour before the show, and officials of the Indianapolis Police and Fire Departments estimated that from eight to ten thousand more people were clamoring at all entrances for admission. For several blocks in every direction the streets were packed with automobiles, and the crowds surged against the closed doors even after loud speakers announced that the house was already loaded beyond capacity.

The huge audience evinced intense interest when the orchestral strains of "Eleanor" announced that the broadcast was on its way to millions of listeners on the NBC network; Gene Hamilton, the exclusive Ford announcer, was seen at the microphone, and then Lum and Abner came on to the "stage studio" amid tumultuous applause. The "Sociable" was presented just as it comes over the air from the Pine Ridge schoolhouse, with Lum and Abner introducing the guest stars and furnishing interludes of that "homey" humor which has made them famous.

Following the "Eleanor" sign-off by the orchestra, the audience called for Lum and Abner and it was announced that in a few minutes they would be introduced to "Chet" Lauck and

"Tuffy" Goff as they really are. The appearance of the two young stars in tuxedos created a gasp of surprise and an outburst of applause. The great gathering refused to let the boys merely take a bow — they had to put on a typical Lum and Abner interlude and even then they were recalled time and time again before the crowd dispersed.

The back page of the paper is reproduced on page 12 of this issue of the *Journal*, and featured a selection of scenes that had been photographed earlier that fall. A short writeup explained just how these shots were accomplished:

Pine Ridge is a mythical town, of course, but the pictures shown on the back page of this issue were made "on location." The scenes are laid in a small town in Ohio where business goes on from day to day just as Lum and Abner portray it for the radio audience in "Pine Ridge." The stores, the jail, the Justice of the Peace office and the "No Fishing" creek are all natural and were found just ready for the Lum and Abner characters to step in and bring Pine Ridge into actual existence.

We'll let you into a secret. If you are ever visiting in the Cuyahoga river valley in Ohio, look for a small village named Peninsula, and you'll recognize the "location" at once. It is a quaint old place in a beautiful setting among rocks and hills, and if you get friendly with the people there, they may show you the creek that Lum jumped into when he discovered he had been "sleeping" on a snake during the taking of the fishing picture.

To date, the NLAS has been unable to locate anyone in Peninsula who can shed any sort of light on the Lum and Abner photo session there, but the community does have an impressive web site at www.explorepenninsula.com, and even today the town does seem to fit the Pine Ridge/Mena mold, so any of you members in that part of the country might want to visit it for yourself!

In our October issue we mentioned the fact that much of what we know about this period in L&A history comes from the collection of radio performer Mildred Funnell, donated to the Broadcast Pioneers Library in 1978. Ms. Funnell, you will recall, had the distinction of playing the role of Evalena during

the "wedding" broadcast, and apparently remained on the program in that capacity for some time thereafter. Among the papers she donated was a copy of the November 1933 *Pine Ridge News*... but it is not the same issue that the public saw!

Instead, the BPA's example is obviously a paper that was distributed exclusively to Ford dealers, as it contains mostly articles explaining how the vast popularity of the L&A show can boost sales. It was produced earlier than the commercially-released version, because in this one the Indianapolis program was yet to be done. Some of the promotional articles were the same in both

versions, but their placement within the issues were rearranged. The Ford version also has a short paragraph announcing that Tuffy Goff is the father of a new baby daughter; that's very cute, except that it was a son (Gary) who had just been born at that time... daughter Gretchen would not put in an appearance until a few years later.

There was also an announcement that photos of Lum and Abner were being made available for free to any Ford dealer wishing to display them in their showrooms (we wonder how many of those still exist in dusty, forgotten filing cabinets?). The same profile of Gene Hamilton was included, but not Stubby Gordon; instead, there was a photo and short writeup about Mildred "Evalena" Funnell, explaining why she had this rare example in her collection. The back cover, with the Peninsula photos, was identical in both the Ford and public versions.

Beginning with this rather elaborate premium, the Lum and Abner show would be a most prolific distributor of premiums throughout the rest of the decade, and in fact right up to the United States' entry into World War II in 1941. The commercially-offered *Pine Ridge News* turns up occasionally for sale among antique dealers, but the example in the Mildred Funnell collection is the only known copy of the rarer Ford-only version; if you happen to find one of these yourself, hold onto it for dear life!

- Tim Hollis



Published PINE RIDGE, NOVEMBER, 1933 Periodically

FORD RADIO CONTEST "BRINGS 'EM IN ALIVE"

Over One Million Entry Blanks Distributed by Dealers

Lum and Abner Mail Sets a New Record

"MOM" RUNS A LUM AND ABNER SOCIABLE OF HER OWN
College Girls Are Her Guests

We have many reports of Lum and Abner parties every Friday night but Mrs. Charles E. Barton ("Mom") to all the college boys and girls has a social affair every Friday night. Her home at 402 Spruce Street, Morgantown, W. Va., is open house to the boys and co-eds from Morgantown College and the evening's entertainment is built around the Lum and Abner broadcast. Mom puts up a light lunch for the young people, and when they feel like it, the party may be rolled up (they generally are) for dancing to the String Band and Stubby Gordon's Rhythmic Meas.

As this lady tells the story, she uses young people and likes to see them enjoy "wholesome entertainment" that is really fun. She says no artificiality in the party is known, that everybody is welcome and that everybody has a good time.

KEEP THE WINDOW POSTERS UP

Tie-up to the radio broadcast by keeping the window posters up. If your present supply is soiled or destroyed, your Ford Branch will replace them without cost.

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Lum and Abner to be NBC Feature Act

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This event marks one of the biggest, forward steps in radio history and the place of prominence given to Lum and Abner is a compliment to keeping with their rapid rise to popularity and fame.

ABNER GETS A BRAND NEW BABY

Abner has been raised to a new status recently. Mrs. Goff presented him with a baby girl a few weeks ago, and Tuffy was strutting around the NBC Studios exchanging congratulations.

Yes, thanks; mother and daughter are both doing nicely, but it looks as if the new daddy will take some time to get back to normal.

"COUNTING EARS" OF THE FORD FANS
Answering the Question "How Many Listen to Lum and Abner?"

In a public meeting it is possible to "count noses" to determine the size of the audience. Over the radio it is a case of "counting ears" and, strangely enough, this can be done.

The Arnold Research Service, 45 West 45th Street, New York City, do it.

These people took a section of New England and made a total of 5019 telephone calls during the broadcasting period of the Ford program. They asked if the radio was turned on, and when the answer was yes, they asked what program was being listened to.

Here's the result:

On the Tuesday evening, 44% answered "The Ford Program," the next highest scoring 14%.

On the Wednesday evening, 50% said "Ford," the runner-up getting only 20%.

On the Thursday evening 45% were listening to Lum and Abner, the next best audience being 30%.

Over the three nights 45% of the radio audience were tuned in on Ford and the most strongest competition had 25%.

The "Sociable" Leads Also

On the Friday night, the popularity of the "Sociable" was tested in the same manner. During the 15th fifteen minutes it scored 54% of all the listeners "checked out," with 35% declaring for the next highest program. In the second fifteen minutes of the "Sociable," 50% had the Ford program coming in fourth, and the next highest program had 15%.

Thus over the 30 minute broadcast 52% of these New England listeners were tuned in on Ford, and the next highest audience had 25%.

This New England audience may be taken as a cross section of the radio listeners covered by the NBC network—and would indicate that a substantial half of the radio sets turned on favor the Ford program presented by Lum and Abner.

And that's scoring a mighty high average.

WHEN BOSTON TERRITORY LOST IT
A STOMACH OF PROTEST BROKE

There was a period of ten days when the Boston territory was without the Lum and Abner program—and the result was a pile of mail asking why.

It was a mixed bundle of protest, broadly representative of "the city and the plow"; that is, city folks were so strongly represented as the smaller towns and farming communities, and the general theme of their complaint seemed to be that they had lost a program which was different and which had "let them down" at a point where they wanted to follow through on the antics of Pine Ridge.

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How is this for long distance? The NBC people have received a report from an Australian short wave operator that he picked up Lum and Abner's "Ford Auto Program."

So, if any Ford dealers get an inquiry from the other side of the world, will they please write it up to the credit of the radio broadcast.

Do You Want Auto-graphed Photos of Lum and Abner?

Many dealers have asked for and received photos of the popular pair, and most of them have mentioned them in their reports. Let customers see what the boys look like in real life.

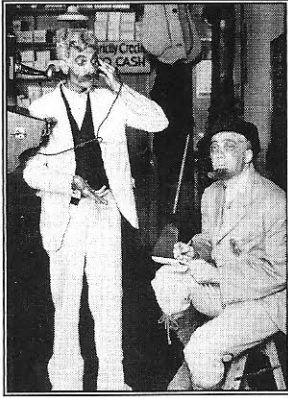
They're yours for the asking!

RG 171-66 GIFT OF
Mildred Funnell
TO THE
BROADCAST PIONEERS' LIBRARY
1771 N STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036
2/27/78

Your Window est to the public better from day to day, down and watch what you need.

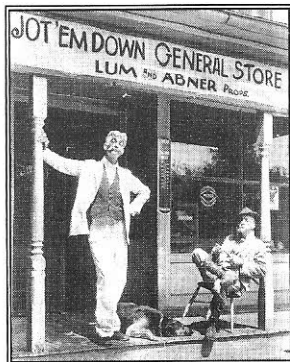
The front of the "alternate" version of THE PINE RIDGE NEWS that was distributed only to Ford dealers.

LUM AND ABNER IN PERSON AND IN ACTION



ABNER DRAWS A BLANK

He was day dreaming instead of taking down a lengthy grocery order, via Lum, from Sister Simpkins. What to do? Well, Lum fixed it by calling the lady and explaining that he was writing in the dark and didn't know there was no point on his pencil.



PINE RIDGE'S BUSIEST CORNER

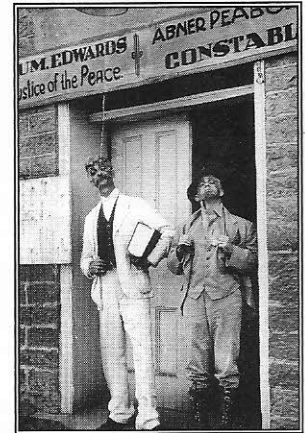
Here you have the radio headquarters of Lum and Abner, the hub of Pine Ridge, and the center of all its "doings."



YES! They're the Same Fellows

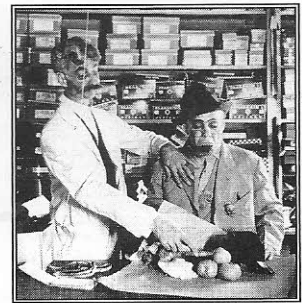
LUM TO THE LEFT - ABNER TO THE RIGHT The NBC Stars You Hear on the Ford Program

Here they are, a pair of snappy young fellows in everyday life who transform themselves into a couple of lovable old Hill Billies. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde had nothing on these boys.



MONARCHS OF ALL THEY SURVEY

As minions of the law they have a monopoly. Lum claims to have memorized all the "statuettes" in the tome under his arm. Abner says nothing - just brings 'em in and leaves the rest to Lum.



SOAP! SUGAR! SOCKS AND TOMATOES

They're all the same to Abner, but Lum wants the Jot-Em-Down Store to maintain its reputation for neat deliveries.



ABNER MAKES A PINCH

The little fellow knows there is no fish in the creek because he tried it out the day before. Nevertheless, it's too good a chance to pass up with Lum as the culprit.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Tense excitement that business can't interrupt. When a customer comes into the store Abner says, "Keep real quiet Lum, an' he'll think there ain't nobody here."