

Official Publication of the National Lum and Abner® Society

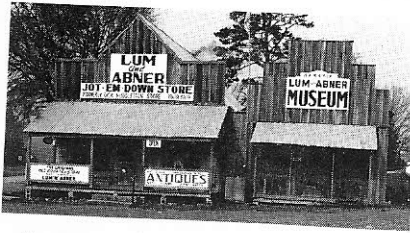


**It's Time
for Our Final Farewells...**

Summer 2007

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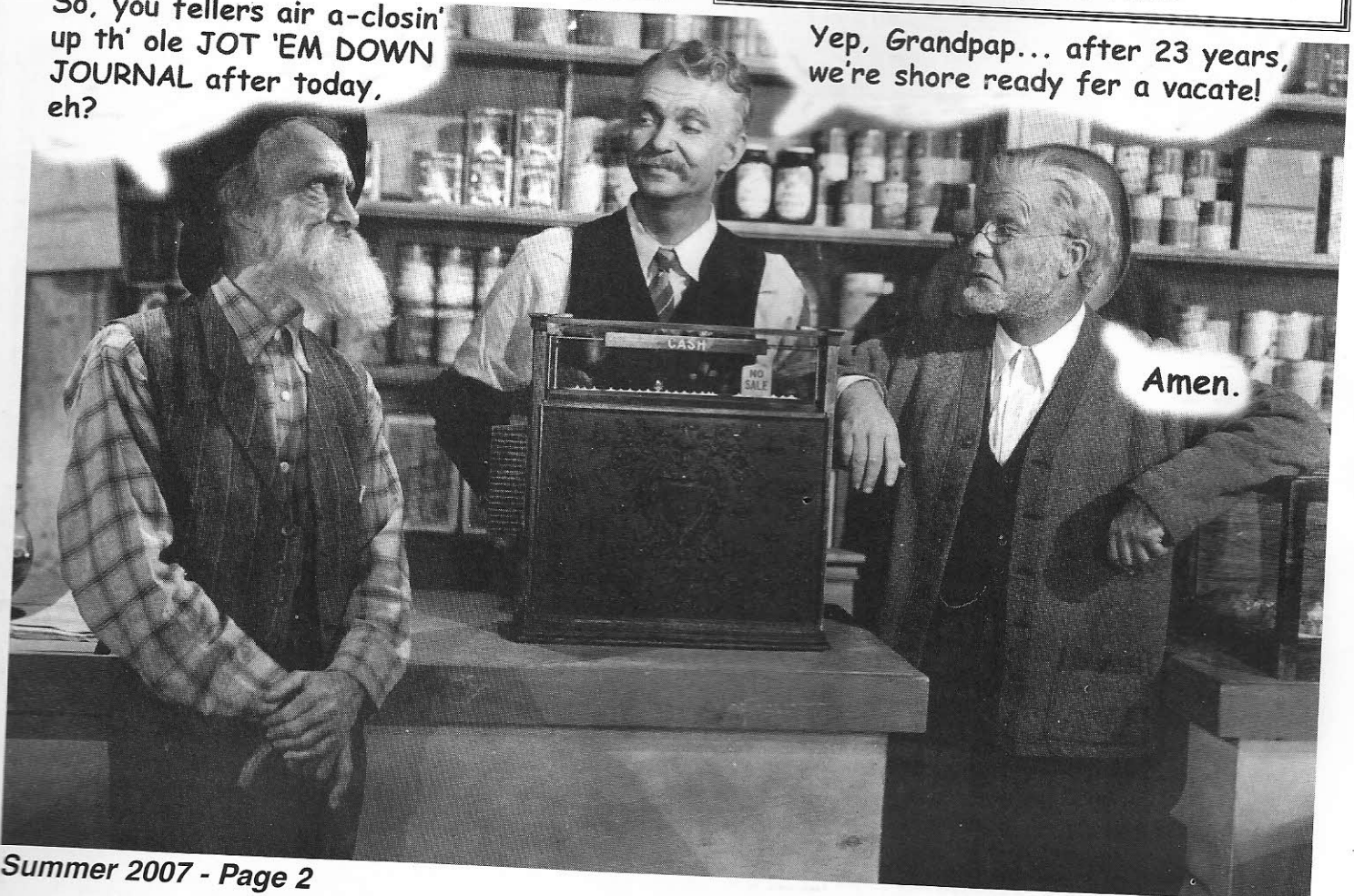
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So, you fellers air a-closin'
up th' ole JOT 'EM DOWN
JOURNAL after today,
eh?

Yep, Grandpap... after 23 years,
we're shore ready for a vacate!



Amen.

The Jot 'Em Down Journal, Volume 23, Number 5 (Whole Number 133), Spring 2007. We thank all of you who have chosen to become members of the NLAS through the years. Send editorial and subscription correspondence to the Executive Secretary, Tim Hollis, #81 Sharon Boulevard, Dora, AL 35062, e-mail Hollis1963@aol.com.

**THE NATIONAL
LUM AND ABNER
SOCIETY**

Zekatif Ossifers

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Front Cover: Lum and Abner, along with Clara Blandick (Jessie Spence), Frances Langford (Alice) and Robert Wilcox (Walter Jr.) mourn the passing of kindly old "Doc" Walter Barnes (Frank Craven) in DREAMING OUT LOUD (1940). This was fitting as the last L&A photo to grace the cover of a JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL.

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THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

Summer 2007

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A couple of months ago, all of you should have received a letter explaining why this is the final issue of THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL. The National Lum and Abner Society is not going away, but in the coming weeks and months we will be retooling ourselves as strictly an Internet presence. When we have everything up and running, we will send out another letter to all of our past members, announcing the new web site address. In the meantime, our longtime webmaster Jim Temple will be maintaining the NLAS's past web site at www.lumandabner.org.

Stay tuned for the "next big chapter" in NLAS history!

MUSIC TO THE EARS: THE STORY OF RALPH AND ELSIE MAE EMERSON

Ask some fans of *Lum and Abner* about the theme music for the series. Often you get a different answer:

"Sure, it was called 'Eleanor,' everybody knows that. Why, I have the sheet music."

"Oh no, no, it was called 'Evalena.' I heard an interview with Chet Lauck and he said so."

"No, you're both wrong, it was called 'Down on the Old Party Line,' and I have the sheet music in my collection."

Well, of course, all three answers are correct! At different times during the 1931-54 run of the

Lum and Abner radio program, different themes were used. The final theme was "Down on the Old Party Line," and the NLAS was honored to have one of the composers of that song as an honorary member, Elsie Mae Emerson. Mrs. Emerson and her husband, Ralph Waldo Emerson II, both served as organists on the series. In recent years, we have been honored to receive correspondence from their son, Ralph Waldo Emerson III, who has shared some interesting information about his gifted parents.

Ralph Waldo Emerson II was born in 1895 in Elkhart, Indiana. The NLAS has often been asked, "Was Mr. Emerson's father the famous poet?" Ralph III explains, "No, my father was not a son. My father's father was a cousin of the original." Ralph II's future wife, Elsie Mae Look, was born in 1903 in Kaukauna, Wisconsin. "We don't know where my father studied music," Ralph III tells us today, "but she studied at Lawrence Conservatory in Wisconsin, and later with my father." Ralph II served in



This is the only known photo of Chet Lauck and Tuffy Goff with organist Ralph W. Emerson II.

the United States Army during World War I, stationed in France, during which time he befriended a fellow soldier named Joseph Frank Keaton. It seems Keaton's budding career had been interrupted by his military service. The career was one of performing in film comedies under his more familiar nickname. Of course, "Buster" Keaton would emerge from World War I and go on to tremendous fame! (There is even a *Lum and Abner* sponsor connection much later, when

Keaton appeared in a television commercial with Speedy Alka-Seltzer, voiced by our friend and honorary member Dick Beals, but we digress...)

Ralph Emerson returned to the United States in 1919, touring the country on a motorcycle, playing concerts wherever he went. From 1921 to 1922, he and his older brother Ernest formed an orchestra. In 1923, he moved to Chicago and opened the Barton Theater Organ School, where, by 1924, the 29-year old musician had become the director. "In a six-year period," Ralph III tells us today, "the Barton Organ School placed 700 students in permanent positions. In the early 1920s, my mother Elsie came from Kaukauna to study pipe organ with Ralph as her teacher. They fell in love."

Ralph II was quite a pioneer and trendsetter in the world of broadcasting. According to his son, in February 1924, "He was the first pipe organist to play on radio." *The National Barn Dance* debuted on WLS Radio on Saturday,



A formal portrait of Elsie Mae Emerson

April 19, 1924, originating from the Hotel Sherman in Chicago. In July, Ralph II joined the staff of WLS, and in 1927, Ralph and Elsie Mae were married - on the air - in a broadcasting first! The couple was hired by Dan Barton as consultants in the design and building of the massive Barton Pipe Organ in Chicago Stadium, which was to become the world's largest such instrument. According to Ralph III, "It had six keyboards and 848 five-position stops along with six or eight swell pedals. It was a monster." Ralph II played the dedication concert, and for the next few years both he and Elsie Mae performed at the stadium, filling the Chicago air with incredible music.

Ralph Waldo Emerson III was born to the couple in 1930, and his brother John Skinner Emerson followed in 1934. Their parents continued successful careers with WLS Radio until 1939, when the family moved to Phoenix, Arizona and KOY Radio for Elsie's health. By this time, Elsie was semi-retired and raising the two sons. Residence in Arizona was brief. A move in 1940 to North Hollywood, California, found Ralph II as staff musician for NBC, additionally playing evenings at Eaton's Restaurant in Santa Anita. Talented Elsie was permitted to fill in at Eaton's on nights when Ralph worked on radio programs.

In 1945, Ralph II was hired as musical director of the *Lum and Abner* radio program, replacing Sybil Chism Bock (who is credited with composing "Evalena," the second theme, first heard in 1941, which most collectors grew to know from the syndicated series that has been broadcast on radio stations since the late 1960s). Mr. Emerson's brilliance at the keyboard accounts for the many "tags" and extra flourishes featured on the programs from that point forward. For a brief time, "Eleanor," the first theme used

on the series, made a return, but the broadcasting world was being shaken musically by the American Federation of Musicians and their president, James C. Petrillo, as well as by ASCAP (the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers). Apparently the rights to both "Eleanor" and the specially-composed "Evalena" were impossible to obtain (or else the royalties were too expensive), and Chet "Lum" Lauck and Tuffy "Abner" Goff turned to their musical director for assistance.

Perhaps it is best to let Elsie Mae Emerson explain. Mrs. Emerson was kind enough, in 1987, to record a special greeting to the attendees of the NLAS Convention, which was played during our banquet that year on Saturday, June 20 at the Holland House Restaurant in Mena, Arkansas (prior to this year, NLAS Conventions had been held in nearby Pine Ridge, hence her reference):

"To all of you in Pine Ridge, I'd like to say 'hello.' My name is Elsie Mae Emerson. Ralph and I were the ones that wrote the *Lum and Abner* theme song after the fight with ASCAP with the networks. They'd had 'Eleanor,' so we came up with something that would be similar in the melody so that the fans wouldn't be distressed when they tuned in the *Lum and Abner* theme song. Well, to do this, we stayed up all night until about 3:00 in the morning. We finally decided that we'd come up with something that we felt everyone would be pleased with. We took it in to the station and sold it to Lum and Abner. To make it legal, we had to ask a dollar for it. (Laugh) That is an interesting little sidelight of the theme song of *Lum and Abner*. In fact, I'd love to be there with all of you, but as long as this wasn't a time that I could do that, I'm going to play the theme song for you now, and I hope you'll enjoy it!" Enjoy it we



Elsie Mae Emerson made a special organ recording of "Down on the Old Party Line" especially for NLAS use in 1987.

did! This greeting and special recorded performance remains a unique event in the history of the NLAS.

Ralph III, a teenager at the time of his father's employment with L&A, delighted in collecting memories of the "behind-the-scenes" goings-on. Announcer Gene Baker had replaced Lou Crosby as narrator and pitchman for Miles Laboratories, "the makers of Alka-Seltzer," and Ralph tells us, "Gene Baker was forever being bedeviled by both Chet and Tuffy. While Gene was pitching Alka-Seltzer, the 'boys' would take his clothes off and leave him finishing the commercial stark naked! What could he do? Nothing, because it was a live show! Many a time, Chet and Tuffy would light fire to Gene Baker's script during commercial readings. They had it timed so that when he got to the last word, the script was gone."

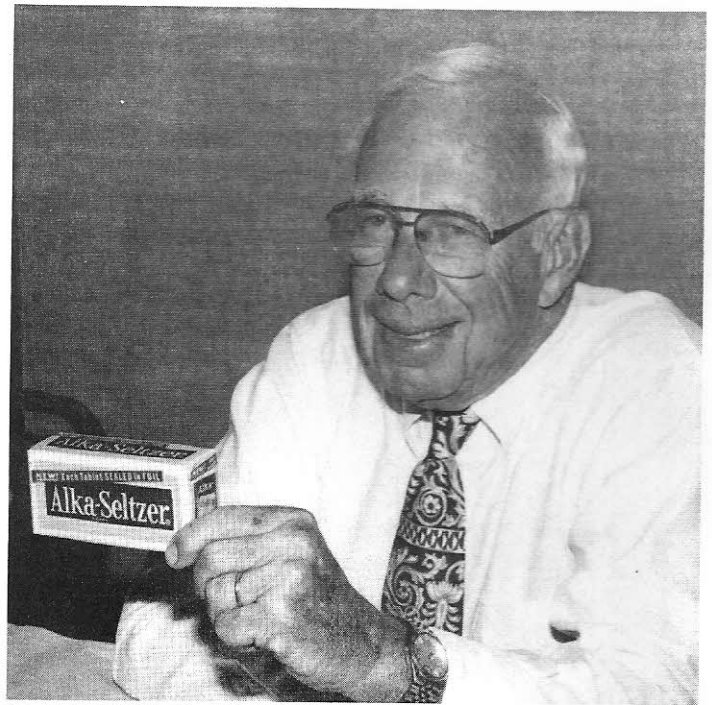
But what of Ralph Emerson, the jovial gentleman making mighty with the studio organ? "They left my dad alone most of the time. Their main target was Gene Baker, and he suffered silently while they plotted new ways to bedevil him. Another L&A trick was to slowly lower the microphone as he was pitching the product. He would wind up on the floor lying on his side to finish the commercial. They would also move the microphone around the studio during his pitches. He would have to walk while reading, being careful not to trip!"

You would think all these high jinks would create audible on-air laughter. Did either Lauck or Goff burst out with giggles while pulling their stunts? Ralph III comments, "Very few people could make either Chet or Tuffy laugh. They were dedicated professionals and very serious about their work. It was their call, always, and that is the way it was."

Attendees of the 1996 NLAS Convention will remember with fondness our special guest, Forrest Owen, who was



LUM & ABNER announcer Gene Baker



Forrest Owen served as Wade Advertising's producer for LUM & ABNER from 1946-48.

the producer for Wade Advertising, representing Miles Laboratories. Mr. Owen is the gentleman later responsible for auditioning another NLAS celebrity, Dick Beals, mentioned earlier, who became the unforgettable voice of Speedy Alka-Seltzer, one of advertising's greatest icons. Ralph III recalls, "When Forrest Owen came on as producer, it was a bit testy in the old Studio G. L&A had gone for years and years, just doing their thing, and now there was this young buck sitting in the control room with a stopwatch trying to 'manage' them. Actually, they were very kind to him. They paid no attention to him but made him feel like he mattered and that was a nice thing to do. It wasn't his fault he was there. He just wanted a job."

Forrest Owen himself was happy to reminisce recently about his friends the Emersons: "When I arrived in Hollywood in 1946, Ralph was already their regular organist. There were no recordings or musical tapes used during the days of this live radio show. Theme music and all interludes between plot sequences were done live by him on cue. The organ was electric, then rather new, and he was an old time organist who had adapted to the new technology. To us it was his job, he did it live every day, and he was a very friendly, happy musician who became a friend to all of us. Unusual was the fact that his wife Elsie Mae was also an organist and could fill in for him if he should get sick.

"On the personal side, Ralph and Elsie Mae took a liking to my brand-new bride and me, their brand-new producer, and we were sometimes invited to their house nearby in the San Fernando Valley for dinners or snacks. Ralph had a serious side, and I think we probably talked a little politics and a little social justice from time to time. After all, his

name was Ralph W. Emerson, which meant something to those of us who read American literature. My memory says 'talent and professional competence' at the studio but an unusually friendly and kindly man in person. Of course, our stars Chet and Tuffy had to be pleased, for we all knew where the broadcast production approvals had to come from. Ralph was part of their family and eventually they let me in too.

"Elsie Mae was more lively and volatile, perhaps more ambitious for both of them than Ralph appeared to be. Of course I was the new kid on the block and looked up to them both. My wife Mary Lee and I soon had two babies and they were generous and kind to us.

"When Ralph sickened and died it was a sad, sad time but Elsie Mae was used to filling in and promptly took over. She did the same professional musical job. I remember nothing but plaudits for her work too as the show continued. So far as I can remember, she continued to the end of the radio show, which was well after we dropped the show from the Miles Laboratories schedule. The agency kept the time period however, because it was valuable drive time as TV began to erode nighttime schedules. We moved the Curt Massey-Martha Tilton musical show for Alka-Seltzer in their place."

Forrest Owen concluded with his high regard for "these two consummate human beings who were talented musicians with an ear for humanity and kindness to others. I remember them well, more as people, than as talent. But talented they both were."

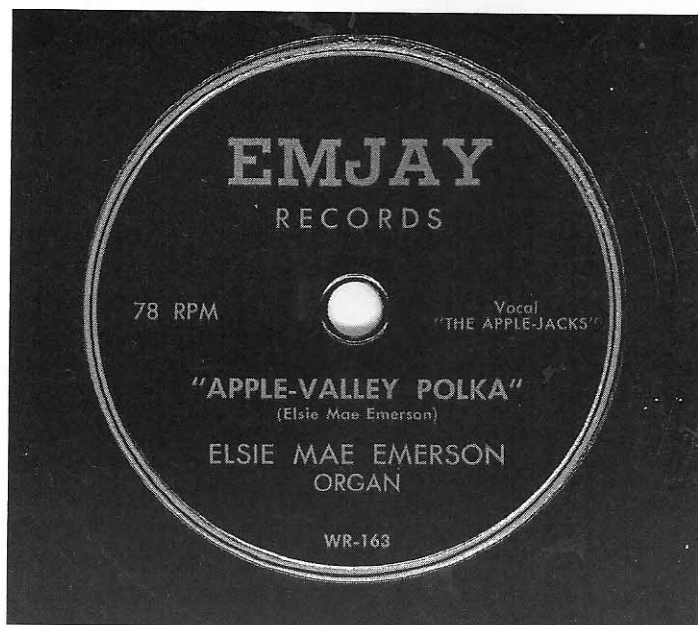
Comic actor and musician Clarence Hartzell had joined the cast of *Lum and Abner* in 1946, playing "Dr. Benjamin Franklin Withers," an eccentric veterinarian. (Later, after complaints from Miles Laboratories regarding the doc's embarrassing antics - it seems they were trying to market

products to real veterinarians - the character became plain "Ben Withers," and was, for a time, a constable.) One evening in April 1948, Ralph III and his brother John were visiting Clarence and Marguerite Hartzell: "Clarence was a great guy and full of mischief, which made him great for kids. We were watching a TV set, one of the very first, which Clarence had put together from a kit. My Mom and Dad were at Arthur Bisswanger's home in Encino with Tuffy Goff at a dinner party. My Dad was stricken with a massive heart attack right after dinner and the rest is history. The night he passed away, Tuffy Goff was the one who broke the news to me and was a great comfort. Probably one of the roughest things he had ever had to do... inform a 17-year-old and a 12-year-old that their father had passed away. He was wonderful to us and I will never forget his gentle way of dealing with an awful problem. Interesting to note that when my Dad passed away, many old friends disappeared from our lives. We found out later that my Dad had lent several folks a lot of money when, of course, remains unpaid back to this day. I do know that L&A did a tribute to my dad on one of their programs. He died just a week into his 53rd birthday." (We are still searching for a recording of that tribute and hope to locate it someday. Newspaper clippings from that period indicate that it was one of the very few times Lauck and Goff stepped out of character during one of their shows.)

Elsie Mae Emerson's role was to become even more important due to this tragedy. At 45, she left retirement to take over as musician on *Lum and Abner*. The 15-minute series was nearing the end of its long run for Miles Laboratories, however. The 1948-49 radio season brought about the debut of, as it was introduced by announcer Wendell Niles, "*The New Lum and Abner Show*," sponsored by Frigidaire. "Down on the Old Party Line" was



Clarence Hartzell, a.k.a. Ben Withers



Elsie Mae Emerson composed this song for the new resort area of Apple Valley, California, in 1950.

arranged for orchestra, and first Felix Mills, then Opie Cates conducted the Emerson-composed theme, which continued to be heard until the series concluded in 1950. For the 1953-54 revival, Elsie Mae Emerson was hired to record the theme and various incidental musical bits on the organ, which were used for this final series of quarter-hour ABC programs.

In the NLAS archives is a package containing a 78 rpm record and sheet music, along with an order blank and printed instructions for a dance. The ad offers "A Gift Suggestion!" in which a consumer could purchase the record and two sets of sheet music "all for \$1.00 prepaid" from Valley-Hill Music Company of Hollywood. The two pieces of music, "Apple Valley" and "Apple Valley Polka," were composed and performed by Elsie Mae Emerson in 1950. Ralph III explains, "A man named Levin Jester was promoting a new resort area called Apple Valley. My mother wrote the songs for the park. It has developed into a high desert town. I believe Roy Rogers and Dale Evans were also involved, but as time went by, Mom moved on." It's interesting to note the artist for the sheet music (only "Apple Valley" exists in NLAS files) was none other than John Emerson, Ralph III's younger brother!

Mrs. Emerson's career accelerated in the 1950s, and included an appearance in the celebrated film *High Noon*, as well as positions as musical director on such network radio programs as *Queen for a Day* (featuring former L&A announcer Gene Baker), and *When a Girl Marries*. She is also credited as organist on *Strike it Rich*. Additionally, Elsie Mae was employed by the Birkel-Richardson Music Company, becoming a top Baldwin Piano sales person, winning numerous awards. Her 1987 recorded performance for the NLAS led to a hope that she might be able to attend one of our conventions, but sadly, in 1989 Elsie Mae Emerson suffered a stroke and passed away at age 86. Ralph III commented, "She was tiny, shy and demure until she sat down to play. She was confident and unwavering in her musicianship. She had perfect and absolute tonal pitch. She was incredible at transcription sight reading. She could look at a score and play it at tempo on sight. She leaves a legacy of thousands of sheets of music and books dating from the 1700s to the 1980s."

Speaking of both parents, Ralph III continues, "He was a marvelous musician with no professional hang-ups. He concertized all over the U.S. He had a most productive life cut much too short. Because of the limitations of recording techniques during that era, no one really made a decent recording of a pipe organ. The piano did fairly well, though the pipe organ just didn't make it. She was the only one that was ever recorded with modern techniques."

Ralph III enjoyed a 43-year career with ABC Radio and Television, telling us, "I was there from 'day one' and participated one 'first' after another. We had some marvelous times and each day was a challenge we couldn't wait to meet. I met my wonderful wife (Deloris Dewey) when ABC had offices in the old NBC building at Sunset and Vine. I worked as a Music/Record Librarian, Music



The cover for Elsie Mae's "Apple Valley" sheet music was drawn by son John, later an artist with the Walt Disney studio.

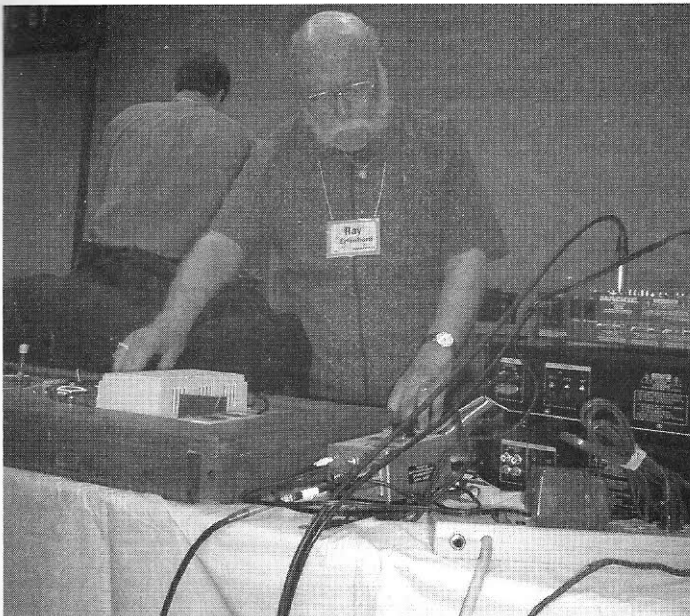
Programmer, Engineering Equipment Stock Supervisor, Video/Audio Tape Editor, Supervisor Sound Effects Department, and Foley artist, Post-production Supervisor. I have won two Emmys and numerous commendations for just doing what I loved to do. I also invented and operated the 'ABC Audience Augmentation System' better known as the infernal 'Laugh Trax'... yes... I perfected and performed that controversial deed for many years." His younger brother, John, also an NLAS Honorary Member, was a Disney artist for 45 years and is now retired.

Ralph Waldo Emerson III concludes with these comments about his parents: "He was a magnificent musician, as was my mother. He was the consummate entertainer. He loved to perform. His friends and family responded enthusiastically. She was the very opposite of him in terms of playing for parties or home entertainment. They were the best parents a child could have. Though they were seldom home for many a year, when they were home, the party never stopped. Dad saw to that and mom followed reluctantly but lovingly."

- Uncle Donnie Pitchford

In memory of
Ray Erlenborn

1915 - 2007

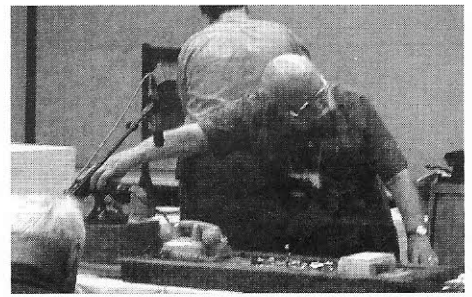


**Ray Erlenborn doing what he did best:
providing sound effects for the 2004 REPS
convention in Seattle.**

Longtime NLAS Honorary Member Ray Erlenborn passed away on June 4, 2007. He was born January 21, 1915 in Denver, Colorado. As a child, he performed on the vaudeville stage as a singer and became a child actor in small parts in silent films, including *Safety Last!* (1923), *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* (1925), *Tell It to the Marines* (1926), *The King of Kings* (1927), *The Wedding March* (1928), and Chaplin's *City Lights* (1931). He had a starring role as one of the "Winnie Winkle Boys" in the *Winnie Winkle* film series produced in 1926 and 1927.

His singing talents earned him spots on several 1930s local radio shows in Los Angeles, among them *Junior Hi Jinx* and his own weekly three-hour program. His introduction to network radio came in 1937 when he was employed by CBS affiliate KNX, where his sound effects work began in earnest. His day began at 6:00 a.m. with a recorded rooster crow for *Hancock Oil News Review* and concluded 15 to 20 programs later with *Nightcap Yarns* at midnight, which starred Frank Graham (who would wind up on *Lum and Abner* as the unforgettable character Diogenes Smith, among others).

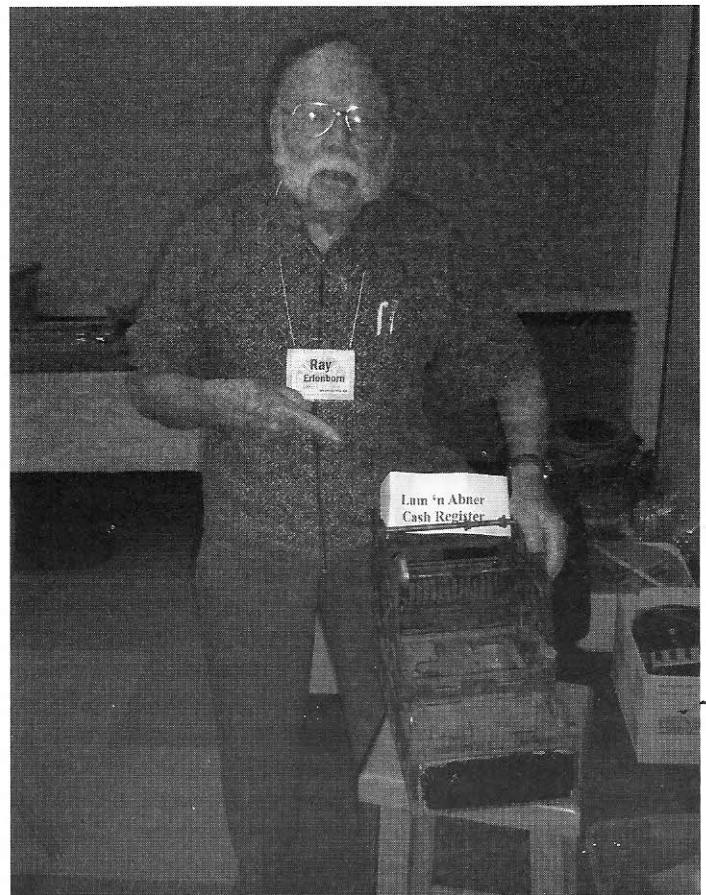
Erlenborn's list of radio credits is simply amazing, and this, in alphabetical order (with some titles simplified), is in no way a complete one: *Amos 'n' Andy*, *The Bickersons*, *Big Town*, *Blondie*, *Bob and Ray*, *Burns and Allen*, *Calling*



All Cars, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Jack Benny, Joe Penner, Lum and Abner, Red Ryder, Red Skelton, Scattergood Baines, Stan Freberg, Suspense, Witch's Tale, etc.

World War II found Erlenborn stationed at the Army Air Force's First Motion Picture Unit at the Hal Roach Studios in Culver City. After the war, he found work creating sound effects for television programs, including *The Buster Keaton Show*, *The Carol Burnett Show*, *Crusader Rabbit*, *The Danny Kaye Show*, *Playhouse 90*, *Sonny and Cher*, *The Smothers Brothers*, *Texaco Star Theater*, etc. He also appeared as an actor on early TV shows starring Ed Wynn, Buster Keaton, Betty White, etc.

In 1977, Ray retired from CBS to resume his acting career, appearing in dinner theater and productions of *Show Boat*, *The Music Man*, etc., with one of his most memo-



**Erlenborn with one of his prized possessions,
the mechanism he said provided the cash
register sound effect for LUM & ABNER.**



We know that L&A used a cash register in their movies, but we aren't sure just when they utilized Ray Erlenborn's sound effect on the radio.

able roles being that of the Wizard in *The Wizard of Oz*.

His final television performance was, fittingly, a radio recreation entitled *Merry Christmas, George Bailey*, based on the 1947 *Lux Radio Theatre* adaptation of the classic motion picture *It's a Wonderful Life*. Erlenborn's role? Sound effects artist, naturally! The program was first broadcast by PBS on Christmas Day 1997.

For several years, the National Lum and Abner Society "Ossifers" had hoped to feature Erlenborn at one of the NLAS Conventions. Executive Secretary Tim Hollis spoke to him numerous times, and the artist was excited about the possibility, promising to bring his vast array of equipment, which included "the original *Lum and Abner* cash register." "Singin' Sam" Brown, for years the NLAS's own sound effects artist, was eager to step aside or assist Erlenborn in any way. Sadly, the scheduling of other OTR organizations' conventions and the rigors of traveling the distance to Mena, Arkansas prevented the connection again and again.

The closest the NLAS came to working with Ray Erlenborn was in June 2004. The NLAS opted not to conduct a convention that year, and "Uncle Donnie" Pitchford was invited by Joy Jackson, then of REPS (Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound), to attend their Showcase in Seattle, Washington. He was asked to present an audio-visual history of *Lum and Abner*, and on his panel were past NLAS Convention guests Dick Beals, Sam Edwards, Barbara Fuller and Ginny Tyler, plus (by telephone) Forrest Owen. Dick Beals was assigned the job of directing and acting (as young Ellie Connors, a.k.a. Mary Edwards) in a recreation of a *Lum and Abner* script, with actor Frank Buxton portraying Lum, "Uncle Donnie" as Abner, Art Gilmore as narrator, Ed Scott as commercial announcer, Bill Edwards performing music, and the one and only Ray

Erlenborn creating sound effects!

"Uncle Donnie" recalls, "I was the amateur of the lot, of course, and it was my honor to meet and work with Ray Erlenborn. I found him to be a lot of fun and a real pro. He had the '*Lum and Abner* Cash Register,' of course, and I asked him about working with Lauck and Goff. He remembered them well, but was uncertain of the dates of his service. 'Probably the 30s,' he said. As we rehearsed the script, with Dick directing, I remember Ray stopped us and said, 'Here's where Lum tells Mary he has her change.' Dick said, 'What do you mean, Ray? It's not on my script!' Ray said, 'I know, I just added it!' Dick was concerned. 'Why?' he said. Ray answered, 'So we can use the cash register!' I was about to say, 'But they never really had one in those days,' but I let it go. It was all in fun. That night, at the final banquet, when we were called upon to perform the script, Ray said to me, 'I forgot the phone ringer!' I whispered, 'Can you fake it?' With a twinkle in his eyes, he said, 'Sure!' So he took a tiny handbell and cupped it in such a way that he was able to shake it just right to simulate the ring of the Jot 'Em Down Store phone! He was a master."

The question about the "*Lum and Abner* Cash Register" still remains. Those who have listened to many of the classic 15-minute episodes will know there was no cash register in the store. Lum and Abner used a "cash drawer," and Abner was absolutely fearful of even an adding machine. He didn't trust them. If Erlenborn worked on *Lum and Abner* during their 1938-40 CBS run, where would a cash register have been used? Possibly in a scene taking place in Mena, in a larger store? It is entirely possible it was in a program or series of programs not extant on transcription discs. Of course, a cash register was shown in the series of *Lum and Abner* motion pictures. Perhaps Erlenborn was called upon to supply sound effects for the films ("Foley" work before it was called by that name), since he did in fact do such work throughout the years. Perhaps it's more likely his cash register was used in the 1948-50 CBS half-hour series, which featured a more technically advanced production. (Some may recall that there was a cash register in the storyline about L&A starting their own radio station, VPR, the "Voice of Pine Ridge." Mose Moots sponsored a parody of *Information Please* known as *Thank Ye Fer the Infermation*, and every time one of the contestants missed an answer... which was about 100% of the time... the ringing of the register would send Mose into fits because it meant he was paying out prize money. However, both times this storyline was done, in 1947 and again in 1953, L&A were broadcasting on ABC, not CBS, so that does not help the mystery at all.) Whatever the case may be, Erlenborn's memory of working with Chet and Tuffy and knowing the gentlemen by name indicates he was a true associate of Lum and Abner - and proud of it!

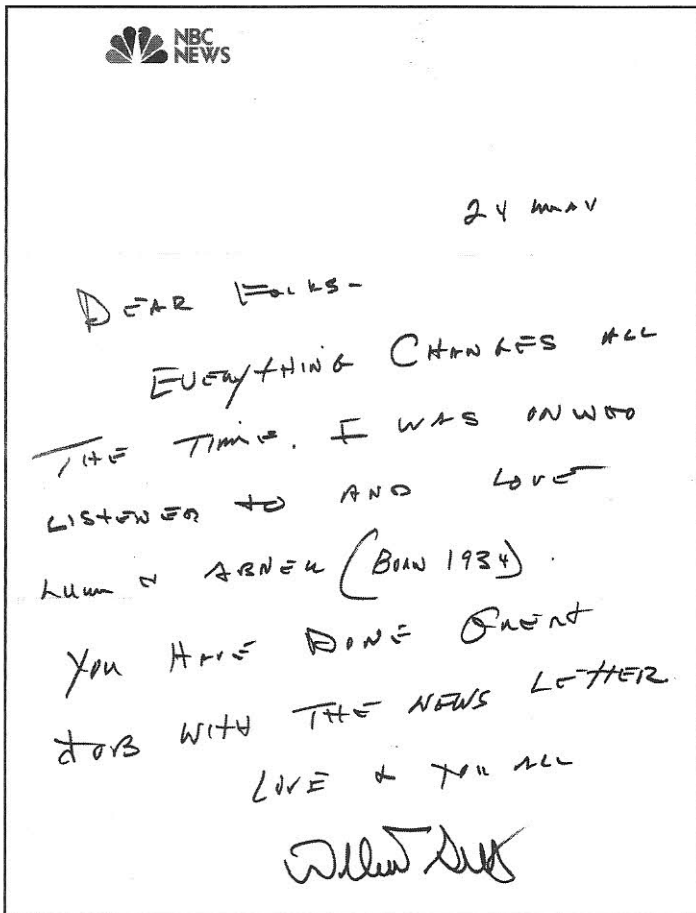
The National Lum and Abner Society offers condolences to the family and many friends of the multitalented artist, Mr. Ray Erlenborn.

- Uncle Donnie Pitchford

Before We Go...

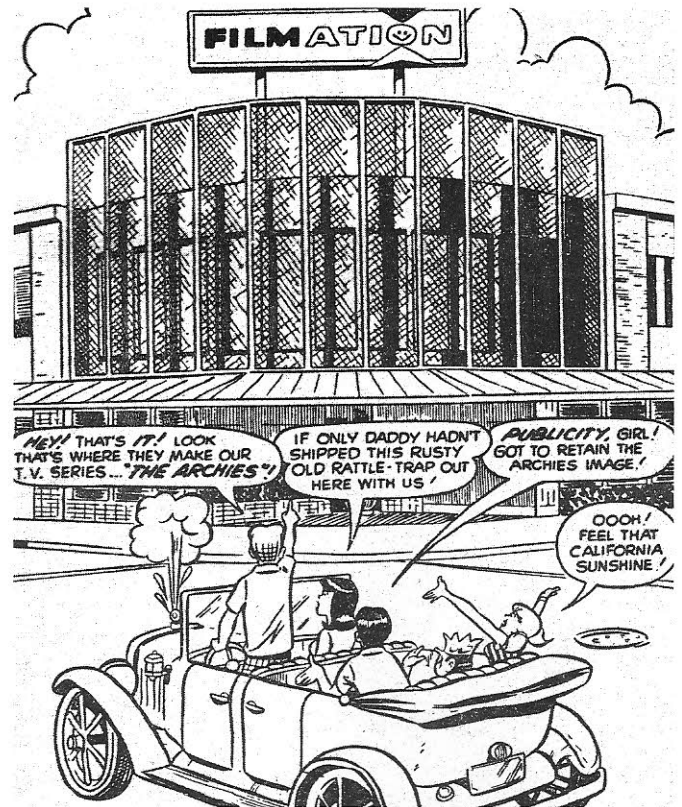
Well, after twenty-three years we have finally made it down to the last page of the last issue of *The Jot 'Em Down Journal*. But before we lock the door, we wanted to share a couple of letters we received from some of our honorary member friends.

First, when the letter went out announcing that the JEDJ was suspending publication, one of the responses we got was this one:



We had often hoped that longtime member **Willard Scott** would be able to make it to one of our conventions in Mena, but his schedule never seemed to permit that. Who knows, though, someday we may have another meeting there, and perhaps he can be with us then!

Another letter was not directly in response to the JEDJ's suspension, but was connected with the tribute we did to our late friend (and 1997 convention guest) **Mary Lee Robb** in the Winter 2007 issue of the *Journal*. This note, loaded with memories, came from radio and cartoon voice legend **Jane Webb**, best known as the voices of Betty, Veronica, Sabrina the witch, and many other characters in the *Archie* cartoons of the late 1960s (recently released on DVD). Jane shared these thoughts about her good friend Mary Lee:



Jane Webb is best known for her voice work on the *ARCHIE* cartoons produced by Filmation Studios in the late 1960s.

Thank you for sharing so many happy memories of the Pine Ridge folks, Lum and Abner. We've enjoyed recalling old friendships.

Your bio of Mary Lee Robb gave me a tear or two. Her dad, Alex Robb, held my NBC contract and managed to arrange for playtime with Mary Lee when she visited NBC. We sat on the floor of the NBC main lobby in Merchandise Mart and played "jacks" while Studs Terkel would be marching back and forth, joking and conversing with actors sitting on the hardback benches against the wall, hoping to attract a director's eye! Golden age of radio!

Wishing you continued success in your work,
Sincerely, Jane

We should also mention that Jane's husband is **Jack Edwards**, a fine actor in his own right who was the brother of our beloved 2001 convention guest **Sam Edwards**. We thank Jane for her note, and hope to catch up with her and Jack someday soon.

That goes for all of you too, so as we turn out the lights and head out the door the final time, we want to thank all of you who have supported the NLAS these many years. It has been fun, and we hope to run into any and all of you somewhere down the road. So long, folks!



DON'T LOOK SO SAD, ABNER. WE KIN OPEN IT UP AG'IN SOMETIME.