

June 1990



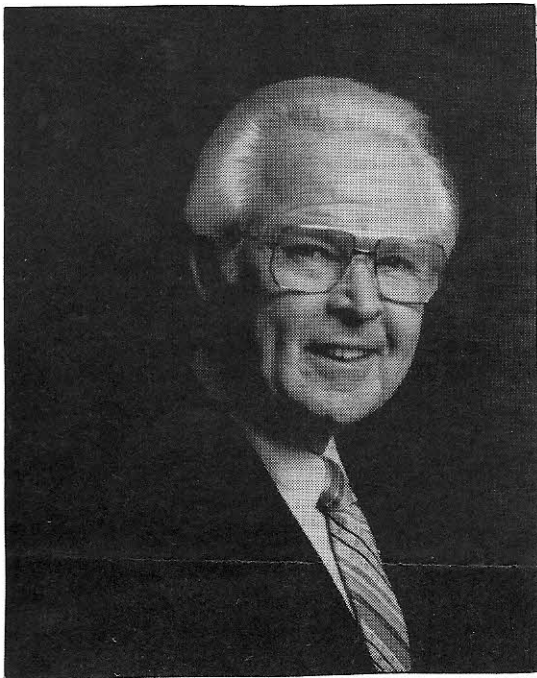
Convention

Mena, Arkansas

June 30, 1990

Special Guest

**BOBS
WATSON**



Time is creeping ever closer to the date for the 6th Annual NLAS Convention at the Best Western Lime Tree Inn in Mena, Arkansas. As we mentioned in the last issue of the Journal, this year marks a major change of date for the Convention; rather than Father's Day weekend (as it has always been), this year's date is SATURDAY, JUNE 30. (The annual L&A Day in Pine Ridge will still be held on Father's Day, with no connection to the Convention.)

The theme for this year's event is the 50th Anniversary of L&A's first movie, "Dreaming Out Loud" (which had its world premiere in Mena on September 6, 1940). In keeping with that idea, our special guest will be former child actor Bobs Watson, who plays a pivotal role in the film.

In addition to the change of date, the Convention will operate under a totally different schedule as well this year. Activities will begin with a luncheon at noon on Saturday, June 30; Bobs Watson will speak at that time, and there are other surprises in store ... which we won't spoil by telling you about here!

At 7:00 p.m., the Lime Tree meeting room will be transformed into a replica of a 1940-era movie theatre; the occasion will be the 50th Anniversary "re-premiere" of "Dreaming Out Loud" on the big screen! (It has not been shown any way other than on TV or as a video tape since the early 1950's.) The L&A feature will be the main focus of an entire evening's movie programme, including a cartoon, travelogue, sing-along, and the whole works! Bobs Watson will still be on hand as the special guest of the premiere.

There will be no scheduled events for Sunday, July 1, but conventioners will undoubtedly plan excursions to Pine Ridge, to enjoy the L&A Museum and soak up the local color.

It's always a good idea to make your reservations early, so the Lime Tree number to call is (501)394-6350. Also, if you plan to attend, please drop the Zekatif Seketerry a note and let us know you are coming. It will help us a lot.

See you in Mena on June 30!!

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THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

June 1990

THE NATIONAL LUM AND ABNER
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COVER: Billboard jointly
 promoting L&A, Dick Huddle-
 ston's Store, and Horlick's,
 on Highway 88 in Arkansas,
 1936. (Photo courtesy of
 Ethel Huddleston Ball.)

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ABOVE: CHET AND TUFFY SHARE SOME HORLICK'S
 TABLETS IN AN EARLY PUBLICITY PHOTO FOR
 THE MALTED MILK CO. (COURTESY OF
 UALR ARCHIVES)

PITCHFORD'S PRITTLE PRATTLE

As "prez" of the wonderful National Lum and Abner Society, I have not had an opportunity to "prittle prattle" at you for quite some time, but seeing as how the other zeckatif ossifers finally let me out of the feed room, here I am!!!

Seriously, I'd like to take this opportunity to invite all our members, their families and friends to our Sixth Annual NLAS Convention on Saturday, June 30! As you read this issue, we ossifers are rapidly assembling the final details, preparing for our "invasion" of Mena, Arkansas! We are editing together movie film, painting various signs and backdrops, writing scripts, gathering sound and video equipment, and generally running around like Chester the Turkeys with our heads chopped off (with all due apologies to Lum)!!

This year's convention will be like no other, with a special luncheon featuring our guest star, Bobs Watson (and some real surprise "guests!"), followed by plenty of time for our members to tour the real Jot 'Em Down Store and Lum and Abner Museum in Pine Ridge, as well as Mena, the hometown of Chet Lauck and Tuffy Goff. Plus, we're very excited about the evening's movie premiere of "Dreaming Out Loud" (with extra attractions), which will be shown on FILM, not videotape.

A new feature we would like to begin in the Jot 'Em Down Journal is called "Meet the Members". We would like to feature a photo and a quarter-page article about each and every member in future issues! The NLAS is beginning to seem like one big, happy family, and this would almost be our "family album". We will print the articles four per page, when possible. If you'd like to participate, write up a couple of paragraphs about yourself, and send it along with a picture, to DONNIE & LAURA PITCHFORD, P.O. BOX 869, CARTHAGE, TX 75633. We plan for the finished articles to resemble the "Meet the Ossifers" pages we published back in the June, 1985 and October, 1987 issues. The main difference, of course, is that "Meet the Members" will feature the bright, shining faces of our members, rather than the ugly mugs of the ossifers!! For those of you who will be attending the convention, we will be happy to photograph you "on location", and you may write your information on the spot. You may tell us anything you like: your name, where you live, your family, your job, your hobbies, how you got interested in L&A, etc.

God bless you all, and I hope to see you in Mena June 30! (Drop Tim a line to let him know you're coming!)

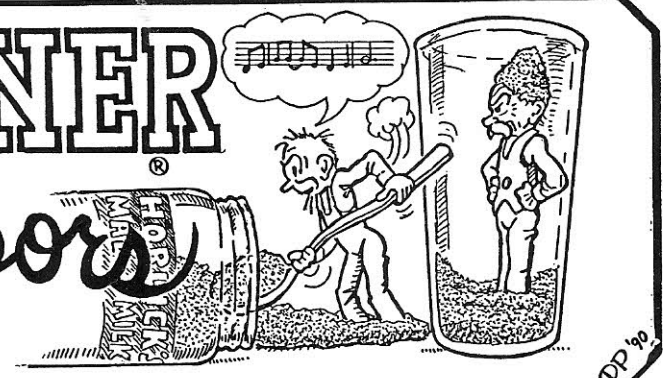
Wonderful world,

Uncle Donnie Pitchford
Uncle Donnie Pitchford

LUM AND ABNER

and their Sponsors

PART 3 OF A SERIES



Here is our story up to this point: Lum & Abner have faced both ups and downs during the tenures of their first two sponsors, Quaker Oats and the Ford Motor Co. Under the latter, they have first obtained true national fame with their highly-acclaimed "Friday Night Sociable" broadcasts, in addition to their normal continuing storylines. The time is now the spring of 1934, and our friends have been forced once again to look for a sponsor.

A likely prospect shows up in, of all places, their fan mail. Among the many letters from across the country is one from a Mr. William Horlick, the colorful founder of the Horlick's Malted Milk Corporation in Racine, Wisconsin. His enthusiasm for their show convinces them that he just might be willing to sponsor them, and at Elizabeth Goff's urging, Chet and Tuffy head for Racine. Mrs. Goff recalls: "I said, 'Go! NBC thinks you're just a couple of hillbillies, and you're not ... so, go see Mr. Horlick in Racine!' It's a terrible thing to do that without the agency, but I said, 'Nuts to the NBC agency; they're not trying to sell you!' So they went to see him, and that's how they got the job."

Horlick's was certainly no newcomer to the world of business; in fact, even though the company is primarily remembered today because of their sponsorship of "Lum and Abner," it had already had a long and distinguished history prior to that time. Horlick's Malted Milk had first been manufactured by William and Arabella Horlick in 1883; it was originally used as a nutritious, easily-digested drink for infants, invalids, and hospital patients. Their malted milk product was also used in ration kits by the armed forces during the Spanish-American War and World War I. From 1908 until 1945, there was a separate Horlick company in England, operated by William Horlick's brother James. In 1969 the Horlick corporation was sold to Beecham Pharmaceuticals, who continue to make Horlick's Malted Milk today...even though it is rather difficult to find on store shelves!

William Horlick was delighted at the opportunity to become the third sponsor of "Lum and Abner," even though (to our knowledge) the Horlick company never sponsored any other radio series either before or since. The only problem arose when the sponsor began



trying to buy time on a network; for some reason or another, neither NBC nor CBS had a time slot available for a 15-minute Monday through Friday series. In fact, Mr. Horlick wound up being able to place his new show on only one local radio station!

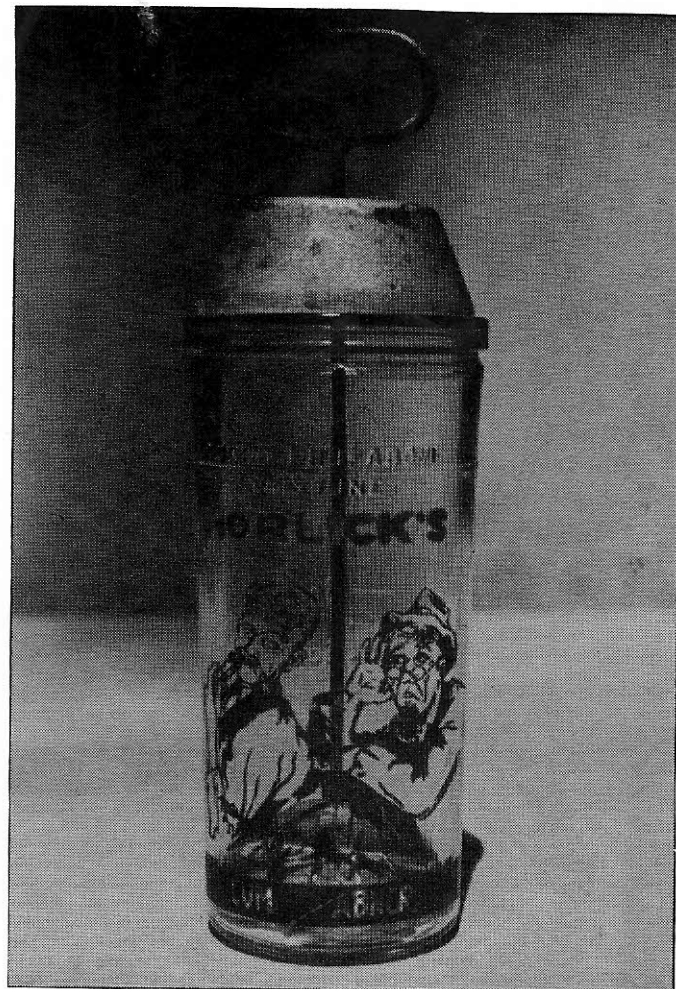
And so it was that "Lum and Abner" made its debut for Horlick's Malted Milk on April 2, 1934, on station WOOD, Minneapolis, Minnesota. At 810 on the dial, the fairly powerful station could even be picked up as far away as Mena in those long-ago days of clear-channel radio. The show was broadcast Monday through Thursday; the Mena Star reported that L&A planned to revive the popular Friday Night Sociable at a later time (there is no indication that they ever did).

It was during their first weeks in Minneapolis that Tuffy Goff almost got himself into a spot that would not have even been believable on the show itself. The Mena Star of April 19, 1934, reported that

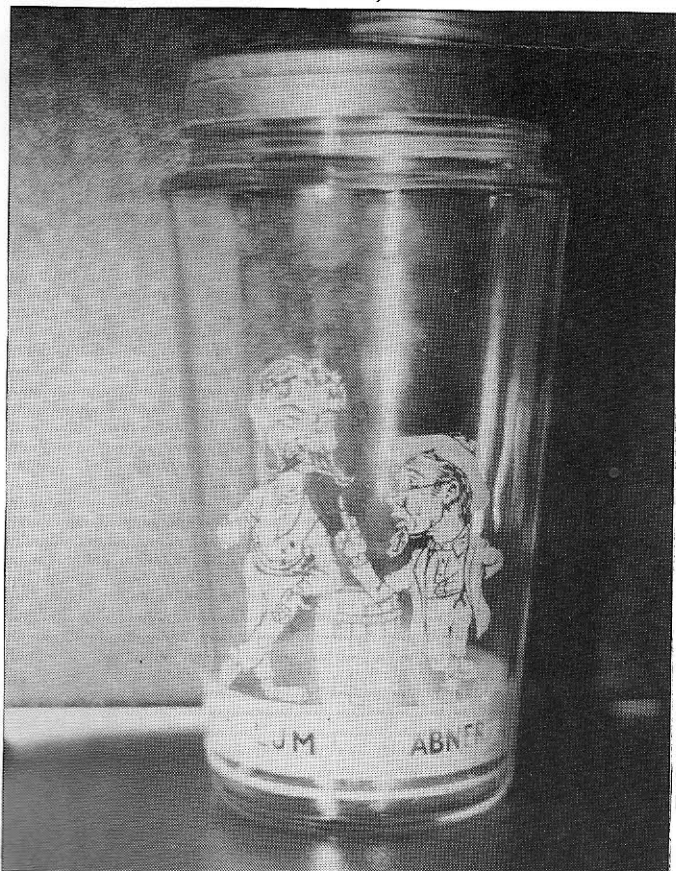
Minneapolis police "had received a hot tip that a young Southerner very much resembling John Dillinger in speech and appearance had registered at a certain apartment house in the city, in company with a red-headed woman. The cops staged an early-morning raid on the apartment house, breaking into Tuffy's room and covering him and his pretty wife with machine guns. It required some 30 minutes ... for Tuffy to establish his identity and convince the police that he was not the much-wanted Dillinger, but just an honest radio broadcaster in the city for an engagement."

Later in 1934, a new radio network began to form, initially consisting of stations WGN (Chicago), WLW (Cincinnati), WOR (New York), and WXYZ (Detroit). It would eventually be known as the Mutual Broadcasting System, and it soon became the home of the new Horlick's series, "Lum and Abner." (It has been reported that Mutual was formed expressly to accommodate L&A, but this is not exactly true. It was actually WXYZ's hit series "The Lone Ranger" that was the driving force behind Mutual ... "Lum and Abner" was, however, one of its earliest features.)

The exact date of L&A's first show on Mutual has not yet been determined, but by August 4, 1934, they could be heard over WGN six nights a week, Sunday through Friday. That autumn, Horlick's brought out another issue of the Ford-begun Pine Ridge News (as far as we know, there had been no issues since the first one in November 1933). That Autumn 1934 issue



HORLICK'S MALTED MILK MIXER,
1935



RARE MALTED MILK SHAKER,
CIRCA 1934

R. SCHULTZ

is not dated in its front page, but the time of its appearance can be calculated by some of the references to specific dates in the articles themselves.

The issue's main focus is L&A's search for a "lost Spanish gold mine" near Pine Ridge, in which Squire Skimp has been selling stock (of course). Promos for Horlick's Malted Milk pop up everywhere in the paper: as "filler," in the middle of articles, and even in a non-L&A pseudo-comic strip, in which Horlick's is endowed with some of the same vitality-giving qualities as Popeye's spinach.

The front cover of the issue features a large caricature drawing of L&A, by an anonymous artist; this same drawing (with minor variations) turns up painted in yellow on a glass Lum & Abner "shaker" belonging to NLAS member Ron Schultz...the only example of this item that has been seen.

More often encountered...though far from plentiful...are the Horlick's Malted Milk Mixers offered in 1935. Made of heavy glass, they sport a more realistic drawing of L&A, this time pictured in blue. NLAS member Loren Cox recalls that the mixers were given away as prizes for yet another in the long string of L&A's "Name The _____" contests, this time to name a diner Lum had opened. The mixers were originally



POSTCARD SENT IN RESPONSE TO FAN LETTERS; ON REVERSE SIDE IS HORLICK'S ADVERTISEMENT

distributed with a small booklet containing recipes using Horlick's.

Recordings of approximately six months of programs from 1935 exist (although there is concrete evidence that episodes were being recorded daily as far back as the early Mutual shows; these discs just have not yet surfaced). These episodes can be found on NLAS Tape Library cassettes #10 through #21; unfortunately, the Horlick's commercials were deleted from them for purposes of syndication. From time to time, reports surface of recordings that still contain their original Horlick's ads, but as of this writing none have ever actually come into our possession. (For the record, the 1935 shows we do have contain references to still another "Name The _____" contest...for L&A's new "rolling grocery store" on wheels. Editing of the recordings has eliminated details as to what the prize was.)

Finally, over a year after the Horlick sponsorship began, L&A were finally able to return to the NBC network on September 2, 1935, and even more national attention began to be lavished on the old fellows. It is going to take another whole installment of this series of articles to document the remainder of L&A's association with Horlick's Malted Milk, because the period from 1936-38 was to be the busiest in the program's history. Join us next time for the full details!

-Tim Hollis

The Golden Era by Gary Stivers



The Many Faces Of Ben Withers

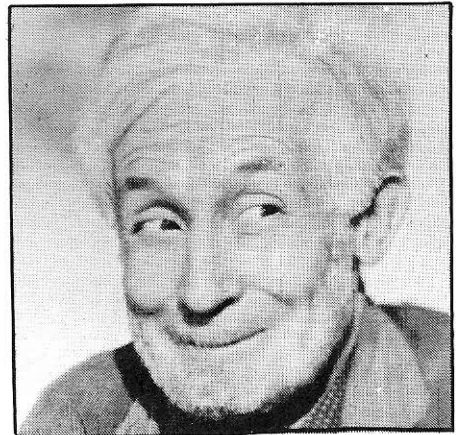
The visualization of radio characters has been a subject of much fascination; as evidence, witness the profusion of publicity photos and motion pictures featuring radio performers that appeared during the 1930's and 1940's. I&A and their associate characters, while often left up to the listeners' imaginations...part of the great appeal of radio...were depicted visually literally from their first weeks on the air until the show's demise, and then afterward. In this series of articles, created by Uncle Donnie Pitchford and Squire Rex Riffle, we will be exploring these various depictions of the I&A characters.

In this issue, we concentrate on the most eccentric citizen of Pine Ridge, the one and only "Doc" Ben Withers!

Prez Donnie Pitchford relates: "When I first heard Ben Withers, he looked in my mind much like the real Clarence Hartzell (although of course I had never seen Clarence at the time!), only much shorter...even shorter than Abner. A small, thin, and frail-looking character, with little glasses and curly, grayish-colored hair." (See D.P.'s sketch [#1] of his idea of Ben.)



#1



#2

Rex Riffle contributes: "Doc Withers most of the time wears an old, beat-up suit and a very different-shaped brown hat...more rounded on top than flat. He wears a dark vest, white shirt, and high-topped shoes. He has roundish wire-framed glasses, and always a very amused expression on his face (everything is always 'fine'); he sees no clouds on his horizon anywhere."

Zec Sec Tim Hollis's idea of Ben follows the others fairly closely, with one major exception: he sees Mr. Withers as a roly-poly little fat man, rather than the slender versions of Pitchford and Riffle. This is also indicated by James and Janet McMurrin of Harrison, Arkansas: "Doc Withers is round and short, and barely escapes waddling instead of walking. He has a high hairline caused by balding, and wears glasses halfway down his nose, giving him a slightly pop-eyed look."

And finally, we should bring up that, during the 1985 NLAS Convention, when we asked Clarence Hartzell himself what he always imagined Ben Withers' appearance to be like, he responded that he saw him as looking like the rural vaudeville comedian "Chic" Sale (#2).

Since Ben Withers was basically a continuation of Hartzell's portrayal of Uncle Fletcher on the "Vic and Sade" series, we might presume that a publicity photo of Clarence in makeup as Fletcher (#3) might also serve as a Ben Withers depiction of sorts.



Dick Huddleston did sell a "Doc Withers" post-card in his Pine Ridge store (#4), but the word "Withers" appears in a slightly different typeface than the rest of the lettering on the card. This, combined with the fact that the photo is of Pine Ridge resident John Miller, suggests that this card may have originally been intended to represent Doc Miller, but underwent a change of identification when Withers became a regular on the show in 1946-49.

NLAS artist Gary Stivers appears to have used Cliff Arquette's well-known characterization of "Charley Weaver" for his mental picture of Ben (#5); intriguing, since when Clarence Hartzell left the L&A series in the spring of 1949, it was Arquette who was added to the cast as the local eccentric old man! (On occasion, some of Ben Withers' former material was recycled for Opie Cates as well.)

Our next few installments will concentrate on those characters whose depictions were so few as to not merit full articles by themselves (Elizabeth Peabody, Doc Miller, Ulysses S. Quincy, etc). Don't fail to join us!



L&A MUSEUM



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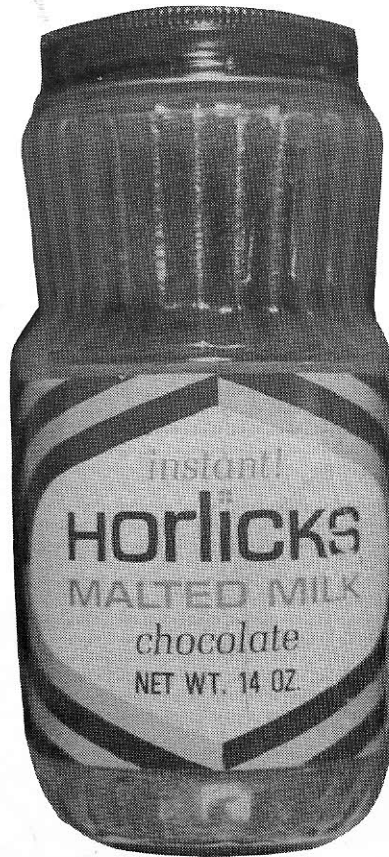


News from the TAPE LIBRARY

After quite a long spell, we are proud to announce the release of 11 new cassettes into the NLAS Tape Library. These are Tapes #289 to #299. Included among them are the audio soundtracks of the 1987, 1988, and 1989 NLAS Conventions, L&A episodes that were previously listed as missing, new discoveries, and assorted interviews and guest appearances by L&A and their associate performers.

The Tape Library is also undergoing a major sound renovation. Formerly, several of our tapes (mainly the lower numbers) have had their share of sound problems (primarily due to wear on the master cassettes). Many of these (but not all, unfortunately) have now been redubbed and sound much better. Also, the following tapes, which formerly had episodes listed with sound problems, have now been upgraded: #'s 61, 62, 63, 66, 91, 99, 101, 102, 105, 106, 110, 113, 122, 124, 126, 140, 143, 145, 151, 153, 154, 155, 159, 160, 161, 163, 166, 167, 168, 170, 172, 173, and 214.

If you already have a Tape Catalog, simply send a self-addressed stamped envelope to receive the listings of the new releases (make sure your catalog currently goes through Tape #288). If you need a whole catalog (including the latest additions and changes), the price remains at \$5.00. Orders should be sent to the Executive Secretary at Route 3, Box 110, Dora, AL 35062.



HORLICK'S MALTED MILK AS IT APPEARS ON THE MARKET TODAY



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