

OCTOBER 1990

You Can't Lick LUM & ABNER®

(Not yet, anyway)

Member Charles Pitts of Garland, Texas, and Kathy Stucker of the L&A Museum in Pine Ridge have started a campaign to get the U.S. Postal Service to issue a commemorative Lum and Abner stamp. Such a proposal has to be made at least three years before the issue is logical, so Pitts' idea was to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the program's end (1954-1994).

The Postal Service informs us that a Lum and Abner stamp has indeed been considered in the past, but no action was

taken. "However," their letter reads, "policy requires that a topic be considered again if renewed interest is demonstrated."

If you wish to send a letter encouraging this campaign, you may write to the U.S.P.S. Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, Room 5800, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, DC 20260-6700. Mentioning the National Lum & Abner Society might have a positive effect on the outcome.



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THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

OCTOBER 1990

In This Issue:

THE NATIONAL LUM AND ABNER SOCIETY

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

Rex Riffle

COVER: Lum and Abner examine a can of their current sponsor's product, Postum, about 1938. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Harriet Lauck.)

LUM AND ABNER is a registered trademark. Used by permission of Chester Lauck, Jr.

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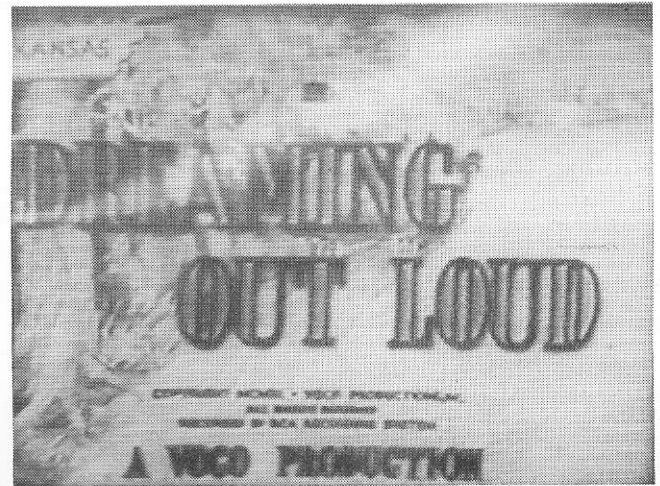
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The Making of **Dreaming Out Loud,** 1940

During the mid-to-late 1930's, the Hollywood motion picture studios began raiding the radio airwaves for talent. Such personalities as Ed Wynn (*The Fire Chief*, MGM, 1933), Jack "Baron Munchausen" Pearl (*Meet The Baron*, MGM, 1933), Amos 'n' Andy (*Check And Double Check*, RKO, 1930), and Fibber McGee & Molly (*This Way Please*, Paramount, 1937) had already appeared on the silver screen, while former stage comedians Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Fred Allen, and others were finding movies a profitable compliment to their radio series. (This trend would continue and grow throughout the

concrete evidence to support this, but it looks like a definite maybe.

The details as to how L&A actually did end up in the movies can be found in songwriter Sam Coslow's autobiography, *Cocktails For Two* (1977). He describes his association with former Belgian army officer Jack William Votion (who had in succession become casting director for Paramount and was presently with the Joyce & Selznick talent agency); Coslow writes, "Jack asked me to lunch with him at the Brown Derby one day, to discuss a project. He thought that Lum and Abner



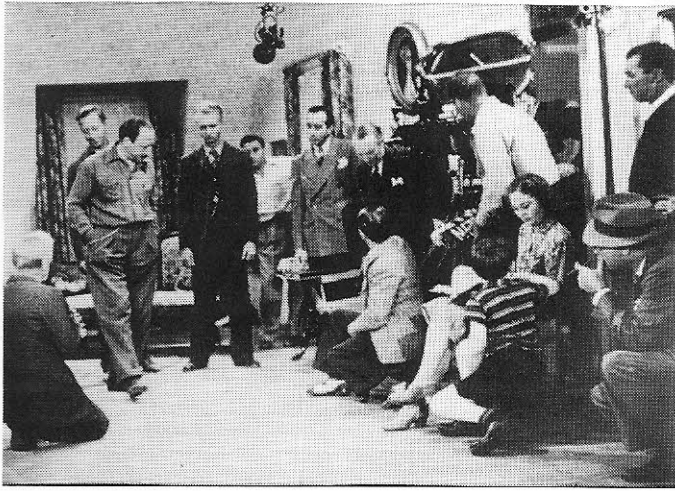
1940's).

When the *Lum and Abner* program moved its headquarters from Chicago to Los Angeles, Chet & Tuffy found themselves likely candidates for the same screen treatment. An article entitled "Pine Ridge Goes Hollywood" in *Radio Stars* magazine (July 1937), reported: "Being in the movie capital, they have been giving some thought to the making of movie...but not just any movie. They won't make one at all unless the right vehicle can be found; something that will represent Pine Ridge and its inhabitants as they really are, and are portrayed to you over the air. They will not risk spoiling the illusion that has been so carefully created..."

In 1935, Paramount had released *The Big Broadcast of 1936*, containing a sequence in which Amos 'n' Andy (Freeman Gosden & Charles Correll) were inexplicably cast as owners of a grocery store. This might lead one to suspect that the role could have originally been intended for Lum & Abner, but had to be changed for unknown reasons. We have no

had a large enough following to warrant starring them in a movie, and the boys had agreed to let Jack explore the idea. He felt that the project should be a musical, including other radio personalities to support Lum & Abner. He therefore wanted to set up a deal whereby I would co-produce the film with him. He knew very little about how musicals were made, and I had been involved in fifty or sixty of them. I decided to give it a try, and joined Jack as a full partner.

"The first step was to get a major release commitment, which would make it easy to get the backing. To achieve this, we went to New York to see an attorney we both knew quite well, Bill Fitelson. Bill had made numerous releasing deals for independent producers. We hadn't even the germ of an idea for a script, but Bill liked the notion of Lum and Abner doing a film. So he put together a deal for us which included an RKO release, backing from the General Finance Corporation for a low-budget musical, and enough 'front money' to enable us to get a brief story outline. If RKO should approve the story idea,



(Courtesy of Delmar Watson)

General Finance agreed to supply the necessary funds, for which they would receive half of our profits...

"Tailoring the right vehicle, especially for an offbeat team like Lum & Abner, was no easy assignment. But two of my friends who were well known screen writers, Barry Trivers and Bob Andrews, agreed to tackle the job. They wrote an untitled story outline which was immediately approved by RKO head George Schaeffer, and we moved into the Goldwyn studios to get started. We cast popular songstress Frances Langford, veteran Broadway stage star Frank Craven, and Phil Harris in featured roles to support Lum & Abner. With Frances Langford in a leading role, I decided to write a song for the film, a ballad called 'Dreaming Out Loud.' When I played it for Harold Young, whom we had engaged to direct, he insisted we also make it the title of the film."

Apparently the details relevant to the movie were worked out late in 1939, because by March 1940 L&A had taken their radio show off the air for the making of the picture. By that time, one more writer (Howard J. Green) had been added to the staff, and prominent roles had been given to child actor Bobs Watson, screen grouch Clara Blandick, and busy character actor Irving Bacon.

An unusual event occurred when, on May 7, 1940, *Dreaming Out Loud* became the first motion picture to be televised while in production. A crew from the Don Lee TV studio in Hollywood set up their primitive equipment on the sound stages, and the actors went through their performances for the TV cameras. Bobs Watson's brother, photographer Delmar Watson, has kindly provided a sheaf of photographs from the occasion, as well as the original press release that was sent out. The press release clearly states that no kinescope or permanent record was being made of the telecast.

While most of the scenes in the movie were filmed on indoor sound stages, a studio backlot was used for scenes on the streets of Pine Ridge. The Pine Ridge set was heavily used in other movies, mostly westerns... in fact, when RKO began a series of movies about folksy character Scattergood Baines, the facade of the Jot 'Em Down Store doubled as Baines' general store!

Enough has been written about the actual storyline of *Dreaming Out Loud* in past issues of the *Journal* to preclude such a discussion here, but suffice it to say that it had more serious drama incorporated into it than most radio-comedy-based-films of its type (apparently Coslow's original plans to make it as a musical were also dropped somewhere along the

way). Young men Lauck & Goff were able to bring off their physical portrayals of L&A with only minor moments of awkwardness (even these were eliminated in future movies), and while the movie was not entirely faithful to the image of Pine Ridge and its citizens as presented on the radio programs...the town actually looks more like Mena, and even though Cedric, Grandpap, Squire, & others are mentioned, they do not appear on screen...it is still an extremely enjoyable story, taken on its own terms.

The world premiere of *Dreaming Out Loud* was set to be held at the Lyric Theatre in Chet & Tuffy's hometown of Mena, Arkansas, on September 6, 1940. Tuffy actually arrived in town on August 23, on the maiden journey of the Kansas City Southern's new luxury train *The Southern Belle*. Goff, his wife Elizabeth, and children Gary and Gretchen were met at the depot by a large crowd that included Tuffy's mother, Dora Goff; the scene is preserved in Technicolor for all time in a KCS promotional short. Chet Lauck did not arrive until later, but both actors were settled in by the date of the premiere.

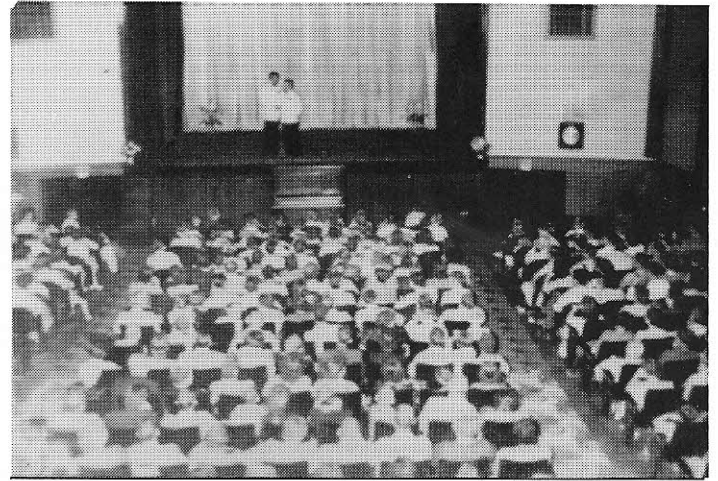
The *Mena Star* outdid itself in promoting the new film, although they did take it upon themselves to alter one aspect of the movie's advertising. RKO attempted to cash in on the success of 1939's *The Wizard of Oz* by promoting the L&A picture with the slogan "Meet The Two WIZARDS of the OZarks." Mena has always been sensitive about constantly being placed in the wrong Arkansas mountain range, so they reset the type in the pre-printed ads to read "Meet The Two Wizards of the Ouachitas," destroying the meaning behind the slogan in the process. Articles and photos...largely taken from the film's pressbook...filled the newspaper's pages for days before the premiere.

On September 6, the paper reported: "The films for *Dreaming Out Loud*, the new Lum and Abner picture...arrived Thursday, and to see that all was in good shape, manager [L.E.] Gwaltney made a preview showing, with relatives and a few others witnessing the first-time presentation of the picture...The first-lookers were strong in their praise of the picture and believe it will prove a winner wherever shown, and will be followed by several other successful pictures by the former radio stars..."

The town turned out in droves for the actual premiere; the



Mrs. Dora Goff greets her son Tuffy at the Mena railroad station, August 23, 1940



At the Mena premiere of *DREAMING OUT LOUD*, September 6, 1940: (left) The Lyric Theatre, decorated as the Jot 'Em Down Store; (right) Chet & Tuffy entertain the audience after the showing of the film
(Photos courtesy of Shirley Goodner)

Star 's report read: "Lum and Abner's new motion picture *Dreaming Out Loud* set a new record for attendance at the Lyric Theatre, with more than 3,100 people viewing the show during its three-day run..."

After the premiere, *Dreaming Out Loud* went into general release, not arriving in some cities until December or later. But it was definitely a success (at least on the terms of B movies), and RKO committed themselves to a second Lum and Abner picture (they would eventually release six such films). Sam Coslow wrote that he bowed out of his co-producer relationship with Jack Votion in favor of other entertainment projects, but *Dreaming Out Loud* had already served its purpose of kicking off L&A's movie careers. Future films would more accurately reflect their traditional material, but this first movie, which incidentally was cited by Chet Lauck as being his favorite, still stands as one of the very best.

-Tim Hollis

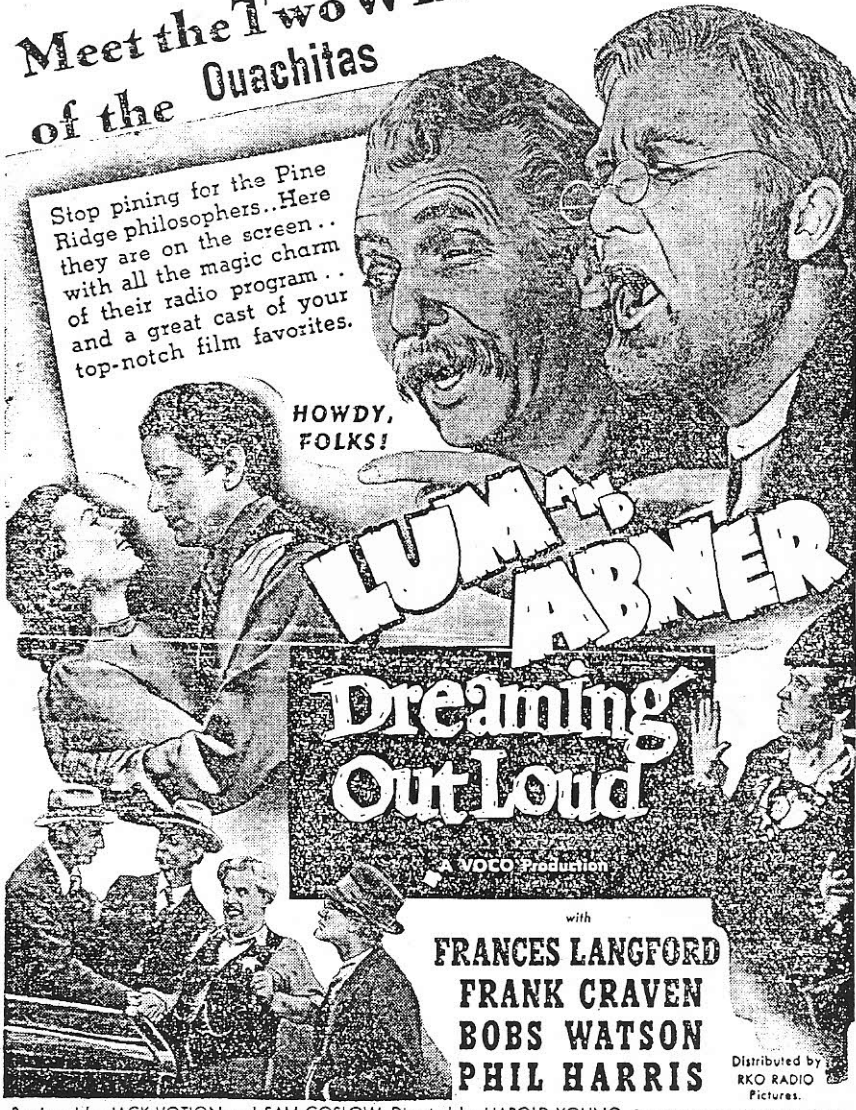
The Golden Era by Gary Stivers



FRIDAY, SEPT. 6

Also On the Screen Only Saturday and Sunday

Meet the Two WIZARDS of the Ouachitas



Produced by JACK VOTION and SAM COSLOW. Directed by HAROLD YOUNG. Screen play by Howard J. Green, Harry Travers, Robert D. Anderson.

LYRIC..MENA

Admission 30c to All

*Advertisement for the DREAMING OUT LOUD premiere,
from The Mena Star ,
September 5, 1940*

LUM AND ABNER

and their Sponsors

PART 5 OF A SERIES



When the Horlick's Malted Milk board of directors finally canceled their sponsorship of *Lum and Abner*, Chet and Tuffy found themselves in a considerably different position than they had been in when being dropped by past sponsors. No longer did they have to beg, plead, and knock on doors to convince someone that their show was a worthwhile investment; indeed, according to Elizabeth Goff, by the time word got out that Horlick's had dropped the show, other sponsors were standing in line to be the malted milk company's successor. Now Lauck and Goff could hand-pick the sponsor that they wanted.

The first criterion they set up was that they would accept no tobacco or alcoholic beverage sponsors, because they felt that their average listeners would not approve of such advertising on their show. At last, out of the products presented to them, one seemed to be the most desirable choice: Vicks' Vapo-Rub, also known as Vicks' Salve. Before negotiations could be completed, however, they decided that Vapo-Rub would be too seasonal a product (very few people used it except during the peak of the colds season)...they checked and double-checked their options.

Finally, they decided on a product that they also feared might be difficult to sell, but that seemed most compatible with their style: that product was the famous coffee substitute Postum. Like Horlick's Malted Milk, it came with a distinguished history of its own. Postum had been invented in 1895 by C.W. Post, an employee of the Seventh-Day Adventist sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan. Looking for a substitute for coffee (caffeine drinks were prohibited by the church's beliefs), he created his new beverage from natural ingredients such as wheat, bran, and molasses. (Interestingly, at this same time, at the same hospital, a fellow named W.K. Kellogg was busy inventing a cereal product that would also be compatible with the church's accepted diet; his creation turned out to be Corn Flakes. Before long, C.W. Post had jumped into the cereal business as well, and the two companies the men founded are still competitors today!)

By the time Postum came aboard as a sponsor of *Lum and Abner*, it had become a product of the giant General Foods Corporation (who continue to market it today). The first L&A broadcast for Postum was heard on February 28, 1938; a good indication of the omnipotence of sponsors in that era is that the night before, Jack Benny announced L&A's new sponsorship on his own show, which was sponsored by Jell-O (another General Foods product). What makes this event so unusual is that the Benny show was heard on NBC, while the new L&A Postum series was to be broadcast on CBS! Only the power of the sponsor could cause one network to allow one of its performers to advertise an upcoming show on a competing network!



Under its Postum sponsorship, *Lum and Abner* was heard three nights a week, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. (This format had started during the last days of the Horlick series, when the malted milk makers were obviously trying to pull out gradually.) Lou Crosby came aboard as announcer, as his smooth, relaxing voice told listeners about the "mellow, tempting mealtime drink," reminded them to "Switch to Postum...there's a reason," and closed each show with "Remember Postum, your best bet for a...**GOOD NIGHT.**" (The easygoing style of the L&A program made it uniquely suited to the promotion of products such as Horlick's, Postum, and, later, Miles Nervine, all of which promised to provide restful sleep.)

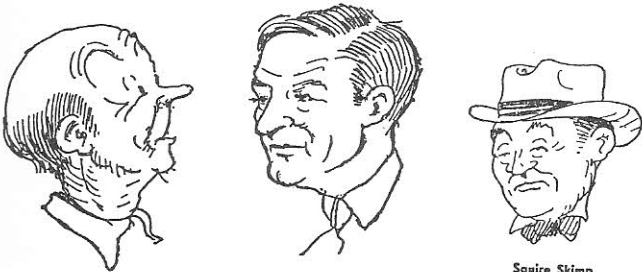
There was little or no change in the actual format of the show during its Postum years. The main event from this period was the marriage of Lum's longtime sweetheart Evalena Schultz to con man Spud Gandel (Jerry Hausner). As Justice of the Peace, it fell to Lum to perform this heartbreaking ceremony; apparently this storyline was the inspiration for the main plot thread of the 1946 L&A movie *Partners In Time*.

Jot 'em Down Store

CATALOGUE, CALENDAR & GAME
AND PARTY BOOK FOR 1939

By Lum and Abner

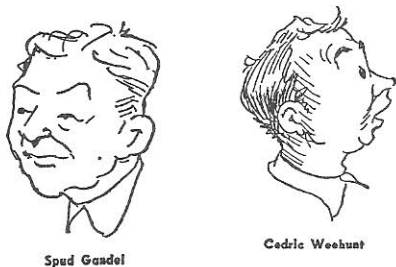
Being a compilation of things
about Pine Ridge, Arkansas, and
also the best darn catalogue
ever put out by a store.



Grandpappy Spears

Dick Huddleston

Squire Skimp



Spud Gandel

Cedric Weehunt

Illustrations by Chet Lauck for
The Jot 'Em Down Store Party Book
(1939)

With Evalena married and gone, it was Lum's fate to have a rapid succession of temporary heartthrobs for the rest of the program's run.

The only premium that appears to have been offered by Postum was a thick hardback book published by Blue Ribbon Books, *The Jot 'Em Down Store Catalog, Calendar, and Party Book For 1939*, the title of which is often abbreviated to *The Jot 'Em Down Store Party Book*. This book, which was actually an attempt to continue the L&A Almanacs of Horlick's fame in a new format, was actually condensed from several joke/party-games books Blue Ribbon Books had earlier published in 1936 and 1938; this version had about 20 pages of L&A material inserted at the beginning. The usual calendar pages for 1939 were included; on alternate pages were selections from the Jot 'Em Down Store's "mail-order catalog," consisting of old-fashioned catalog illustrations with humorous captions (many of which were ghost-written by "Spud" Hausner). There was also the obligatory section with illustrations of L&A and their friends; it has only recently been learned that these illustrations were the work of amateur cartoonist Chet Lauck himself, in a style quite different from his drawings for *Lum and Abner and Their Friends* (1932). Copies of *The Jot 'Em Down Store Party Book* are not as difficult to find as you might think...it was obviously a very successful promotion.

Finally, late in 1939, the details were worked out for Lauck and Goff to appear in a Lum and Abner movie for RKO Radio Pictures. According to Chet Lauck, when that deal was finalized, they began incorporating into their shows subtle hints as to what L&A were supposed to look like, so that those listeners who might not have seen any of the illustrated premiums would not be totally shocked. Fortunately, the shows from the months of January, February, and March 1940 exist on tape in their unedited form (complete with commercials), and from the very beginning of that series, references to L&A's personal appearances are multitude. Toward the beginning of March, the storyline had a Hollywood talent scout visiting Pine Ridge and falling in love with its rustic charm. Within days he has convinced his company to make a movie about the Jot 'Em Down Store! Finally, it is revealed that since the movie is to actually be filmed on location, the store will have to be closed during production. At the end of the March 27 program, Lou Crosby announced that as of the following Friday, L&A would be leaving the air to begin filming their motion picture. That March 29 program is undoubtedly one of the funniest and saddest (at the same time) shows L&A ever did. The first half is humorous, as Abner fails to understand the Ole Eddards Sayin' about locking the barn door after the horse has been stolen. Then, the motion picture company calls to say they are ready to begin production; L&A must close the store and turn it over to them. Lauck and Goff weep genuine tears as they ring up their listeners on the "party line," and bid them farewell "til we meet again" (not forgetting to ask their fans to write letters of appreciation to Postum for sponsoring their show for the last two years...obviously, their own future in radio/movies was quite uncertain to them at that point!) Lum locks the door and Abner hangs a sign on it, at which Lum comments, "That don't look hardly right...Jot 'Em Down Store, Temporary Closed."

Lou Crosby delivered the sign-off, wishing "my two good friends, Lum and Abner" success in their new motion picture venture, and then ended the Postum series (and an era in *Lum and Abner's* history) with "Thanks for a swell association...good night...goodbye...this is the **Columbia Broadcasting System.**"

- Tim Hollis

Dreaming Out Loud

50th Anniversary Showing

In a continuation of our 1990 NLAS Convention report from last issue, we now recap the historic "50th Anniversary Premiere" of the first Lum & Abner motion picture, RKO's *DREAMING OUT LOUD*. This film was shown in a recreation of a 1940-style "evening at the movies" format, complete with a special guest star, Rev. Bobs Watson, who portrayed "Jimmy," the younger brother of Frances Langford's character.

Following the NLAS luncheon on Saturday, June 30 (see last issue), the Ossifers and several members set about to convert the banquet room of the Lime Tree Inn in Mena into the 1940 Lyric Theatre! Two 16mm film projectors were wired into a stereo amplifier, along with a slide projector and an audio cassette deck. Rev. David Porterfield saved the day by constructing a huge movie screen from white bulletin board paper. Singin' Sam Brown and Charles "Ulysses" Thurman arranged chairs into theatre-style rows, while Mike "Popeye" Brooks helped hang the **LYRIC** sign, an impressive two-by-four-foot lighted sign designed by Tim Hollis (based upon actual old theatre marquees of the 1930's) and constructed by Uncle Donnie. This sign used chasing white lights to "write" the word **LYRIC**, while twice as many lights followed the red and blue borders around the edges...all culminating in a red and yellow arrow pointing to the entrance!

Original *DREAMING OUT LOUD* posters, lobby cards, and movie stills greeted the moviegoers in the "lobby" area, as did recreations of posters for the travelogue *Southern Belle*, and the cartoon. Thanks to Doy Grubbs of the Mena Optimist Club and the Coca-Cola Company of Mena, the "Lyric" was complete with a popcorn machine and a soft drink dispenser! Refreshments were offered at 1940 prices: 10 cents for popcorn, a nickel for drinks. Aunt Laura Pitchford and Ava Porterfield volunteered to run the popcorn concession, while Ava's husband Rev. David sold soft drinks. Many thanks to these fine folks!

At 7:00, the audience of 75 people, made up of NLAS members and Mena citizens, sat back to enjoy the free show. Vice-Prez Singin' Sam Brown introduced the first segment, which was comprised of *Fair Today*, a 1941 Walter Lantz

cartoon with voices by Mel Blanc, and *Southern Belle*, a beautiful color travelogue following the maiden voyage of the Kansas City Southern train of the same name. Interesting about this film is the fact that one of *The Southern Belle*'s passengers was none other than Tuffy (Abner) Goff, en route to the 1940 Mena premiere of *DREAMING OUT LOUD*. Our deepest appreciation to John Knuppel of Yukon, Oklahoma, who obtained an original print of this film for us from the Kansas City Southern Historical Society. Thanks, "Grand-pap!"

The opening segment of the program was concluded with an old-time "sing-along," in which the audience...well, **some** of them, anyway...lent their vocal cords to two L&A themes, *Eleanor* and *Down On The Old Party Line*, as performed on tape by Chris McPherson on the Alabama Theatre Mighty Wurlitzer Organ (Birmingham, AL) and 1948-54 L&A organist Elsie Mae Emerson, respectively. The words to these tunes were flashed on the screen via a series of colorfully lettered slides created by the talented Tim Hollis (what, **him** again??).

Rev. Bobs Watson was introduced, and the former child star/adult actor-turned-United Methodist minister addressed the audience briefly, reflecting on his career and his work with Lum and Abner.

For the first time in many years, *DREAMING OUT LOUD* flashed upon the big screen from an original film print, its sound booming forth from stereo speakers. Frances Langford's lovely voice delivered the Sam Coslow title song beautifully, just as it did fifty years before at the Mena world premiere. Our thanks to Mr. Chet Lauck Jr., for allowing us the rare opportunity to show this original print of the movie. For those of you who are interested, Mr. Lauck sells video cassettes of all the Lum and Abner films through his company, **Lum and Abner Associates**, 35 Circle Drive, Hot Springs, AR, 71901.

As the credits appeared on the screen and the film ended, Uncle Donnie thanked the applauding group for attending, and introduced Mike and Debbie Brooks of our "cousin" organization, the Popeye Fan Club (for information on joining this fine...and fun...group, write 5995 Stage Road, Suite 151, Bartlett, TN, 38134).

With the conclusion of the "re-premiere," the 1990 NLAS Convention, our sixth, had come to a close as well. As it is every year, we ossifers experience a tremendous "let down" after we return home to our respective jobs and activities. All our efforts have produced another great convention, we've renewed some good friendships, and made some new ones as well. It's difficult to put each convention behind us, because they are so enjoyable. Our thanks to Rev. Bobs Watson and his wife Jaye for being our guests! And thanks to each member who made our 1990 NLAS "Double Convention" such a success! Everyone begin making your plans to attend in 1991, when we celebrate yet another milestone...the **60th Anniversary** of *Lum and Abner*!

Uncle Donnie Pitchford



“AND NOW...”

Let's see what's going on in today's "wonderful world" of Lum and Abner! Well, it seems that this past June, one of the subjects taught at an Elderhostel offered at Queen Wilhelmina Inn in Mena, Arkansas dealt with none other than that town's two favorite sons, Lum & Abner! Joyce Tinsley of Wilhelmina State Park originally contacted Mr. Chester Lauck Jr., son of the man who portrayed "Lum," but Mr. Lauck suggested Tim Hollis of the NLAS for the job of teaching L&A history. Since Mena was a bit far for Tim to travel twice during the month of June (the other trip being for the 1990 NLAS Convention, of course), Tim suggested Prez Uncle Donnie Pitchford for the honor. In case you have never heard of an Elderhostel (Uncle Donnie had not), it is something of a continuing education "retreat" for senior citizens.

A representative of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock was scheduled to teach the Monday and Tuesday L&A classes (June 11 & 12), while Uncle Donnie was to follow on Wednesday through Friday. Family illness prevented the UALR instructor from making the trip, so a package of L&A movies was hastily shipped to Queen Wilhelmina for those two days. Upon the arrival of Uncle Donnie & Aunt Laura, the forty Elderhostel folks were more than ready to hear and learn more about the L&A of radio, having seen a good sampling of their movies.

On Wednesday and Thursday (June 13 & 14), the group was split into an "Abner" group and a "Lum" group, and each took a turn touring the Jot 'Em Down Store and L&A Museum in Pine Ridge, under the capable direction of Lon and Kathy Stucker. While one group was in Pine Ridge, Uncle Donnie and Aunt Laura entertained the other group with discussions and playbacks of classic L&A programs. Donnie chose some of his personal favorites: March 29, 1940 (L&A leave the air for the making of *Dreaming Out Loud*), June 1, 1942 ("Coals to Newcastle/Owls to Athens"), February 15-27, 1945 (edited highlights of the "Silver Mine Cave-In" series), April 26, 1945 (the "Fran Sansisco Conference" program), and of course, the 1946 recording of the annual Christmas show.

In addition to all of the nice folks at the Elderhostel, Uncle Donnie and Aunt Laura got to visit at length with NLAS member Paul Corzine of St. Charles, Missouri. Paul posed for a *Meet The Members* photo and submitted some information on

himself...would you believe he grew up in Dongola, Illinois (the home of Singin' Sam Brown)? Watch for Paul's article in the near future!

Friday's presentation was a multi-media history of *Lum and Abner*, with their story being told by Chet Lauck, Tuffy Goff, Ethel Huddleston Ball, Roz Rogers, Clarence Hartzell, Jerry Hausner, Grandpa Jones, Elmore Vincent, and Wendell Niles, via a variety of film, video, and audio clips, woven together by slides and radio show clips. Uncle Donnie acted as "DJ," narrating between the recorded segments, and programming the VCR, audio tape deck, amplifier, and slide projector. Aunt Laura videotaped the presentation for the

NLAS Archives, and was invaluable in assisting her spouse with every aspect of the presentation (okay, Laura honey, you can stop reading over my shoulder now). One member of the Elderhostel said,

"I came in with dozens of questions about Lum & Abner, but your presentation answered them all!" Questions still came, of course, as the fond memories of L&A were rekindled in these folks who remembered the Pine Ridge philosophers from their original radio days.

In addition to his Elderhostel duties, Uncle Donnie took care of advance convention publicity with Mr. Doy Grubbs (Optimist Club of Mena/Northside Food Center), Leon Toon (*Mena Star* newspaper), Edward Stevenson and Dwight

Douglas (KENA radio), and dropped in on the Stuckers in Pine Ridge for a quick "research" break.

All in all, these activities prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that interest is still high in *Lum and Abner*! And who knows...the NLAS may be coming to an Elderhostel near **you!**

- Uncle Donnie Pitchford



MEET THE MEMBERS

CHARLES THURMAN

Of Paducah, Kentucky

JOHN AND

CAROL KNUPPEL

Of Yukon, Oklahoma



"I'm sorry about the delay, but Ed Beckley seems to have lost my fillums, and I had to get Kodaked again.

"I was born a modest kid of a boy at a tender young age. Before I was five, I was helping to split the logs to build the cabin I was later born in. Hardship was my joy. Many a trail of blood was left in the snow as I walked the five or three miles to school with frost-bitten toes, winter and summer, to get a meager education. I studied my books by

candlelight well past sun-up most every night. I don't normally like to brag or cast compliments right in my own face, but I am a self-made man...a man who has pulled himself up by his own bootstraps (albeit I was thinner then). Being a self-made man is what I attribute my great success to. No one ever passed any special rules to get me through. No one pampered me in school. It's not so hard for someone made of the right stuff. I could have set back and let other folks help me and become a failure; but no, I mean lifting myself above the mob, up above the generality run of folks. I've never looked back.

"You will note that I have autographed my photo. I know you didn't ask for it, but I figured it would be the 'icing on the cake,' so to speak. So, this has been a glimpse, although brief, into the intermost workings of the life of a famous NLAS member...a sort of 'Ambassador at Large.' You may keep the photo. And do you know any barn painters?"

(Charles played the part of Ulysses S. Quincy in our 1990 NLAS Convention play; see last issue!)



Both natives of Oklahoma City, John and Carol (Jewell) Knuppel were married there in 1952. A daughter, Katie, was born in 1959. She is now Mrs. Jon Eric Buckman of Mustang, and they are parents of Jonathan Charles Buckman. The Knuppels are Lutherans, like "Singin' Sam" and Carole Brown.

John has many hobbies; he has been interested in old-time radio for nearly twenty years. The first radio convention he attended was the Oklahoma City "Multicon" in 1972. Lum and Abner were the special guests that year, and he is sorry to say that he didn't even see them. All he did was buy a few cassettes to start his collection. "Lum" (Chet Lauck) had been knocking around this part of the country for Conoco Oil for nearly fifteen years. John is also a big fan of *Perry Mason*, and has all of the tapes and books. Lately, he has been taping Andy Griffith shows. He also collects old gas pumps and memorabilia, and is a railfan.

Carol has only one hobby...after the grandson...and that is genealogy. She is regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution - Yukon Chapter, and is a housewife.

John is retired from the Oklahoma City Fire Department, and now semi-retired from the Yukon National Bank. He was the first curator of the Oklahoma State Firefighters' Museum in 1974.

The Knuppels joined the NLAS in 1984, when dues were still \$1.50. They thought it was a little high-priced, but radio personality Joe Riddle of Tulsa told them to join, and it has been well worth it. They have gotten to know Charles "Ulysses" Thurman since joining and attending the conventions.

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