

Official Publication of the National Lum and Abner® Society



Chester Quick (Lum)

Morris Goff (Abner)

N. E. C. LUM AND ABNER

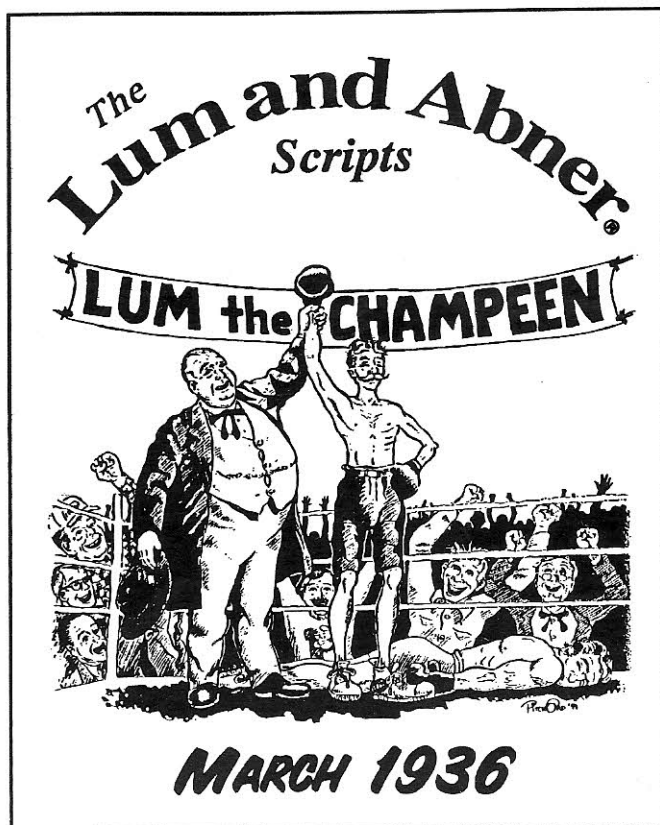
February 1995

NEW LUM & ABNER® SCRIPT VOLUME AVAILABLE

Yes, it's true! We have now released the fourth volume in our ongoing series of books reprinting the unrecorded scripts of *Lum and Abner* from the 1930's. Our newest volume, *The Lum & Abner Scripts - March 1936*, is subtitled *Lum the Champeen!* In it, you will discover what happens when Lum gets himself roped into the boxing ring with Cyclone Gordon, the heavy-weight champion of Montana! Also, learn how the Spring 1936 edition of the *Pine Ridge News* and the Walkin' Weather Prophet Badge came to be offered!

The price for this volume is \$5.00. Most previous volumes are already out of print, but we do have a few copies of the last one, *The Lum & Abner Scripts - February 1936: Lum & Abner In New York*, also for \$5.00. Send orders to the Executive Secretary at #81 Sharon Blvd., Dora, AL 35062.

2-20



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THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

February 1995

In This Issue:

**THE NATIONAL
LUM AND ABNER SOCIETY**

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PRESIDENT

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VICE-PRESIDENT

Sam Brown

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Tim Hollis

Cover: One of the strangest publicity photos ever produced for *Lum and Abner*. Not only does this post-card sport "autographs" that are not Lauck and Goff's handwriting, but notice that Tuffy's name is misspelled as "Morris" rather than "Norris." The photo itself is a publicity pose for *The Bashful Bachelor* (1942), but the story behind this weird item is unknown.

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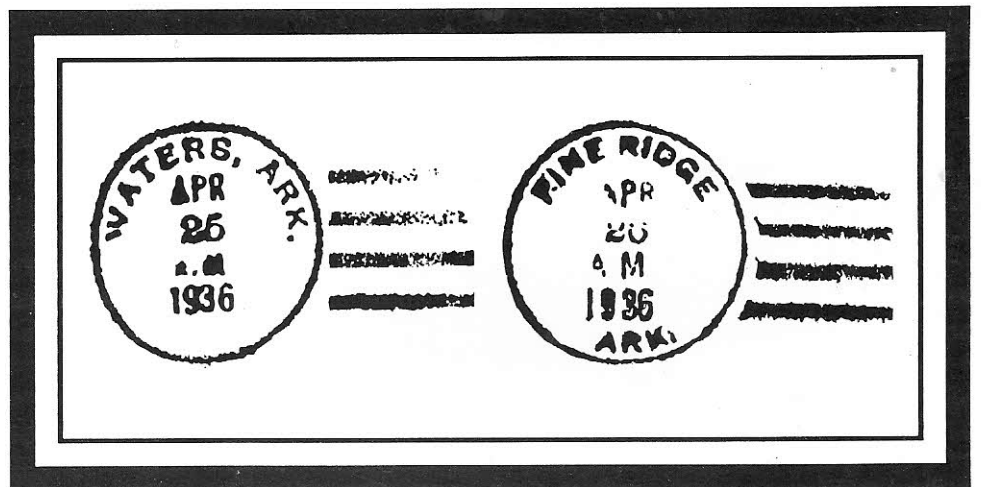
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In February and March 1945, L&A have more than a war to worry about.

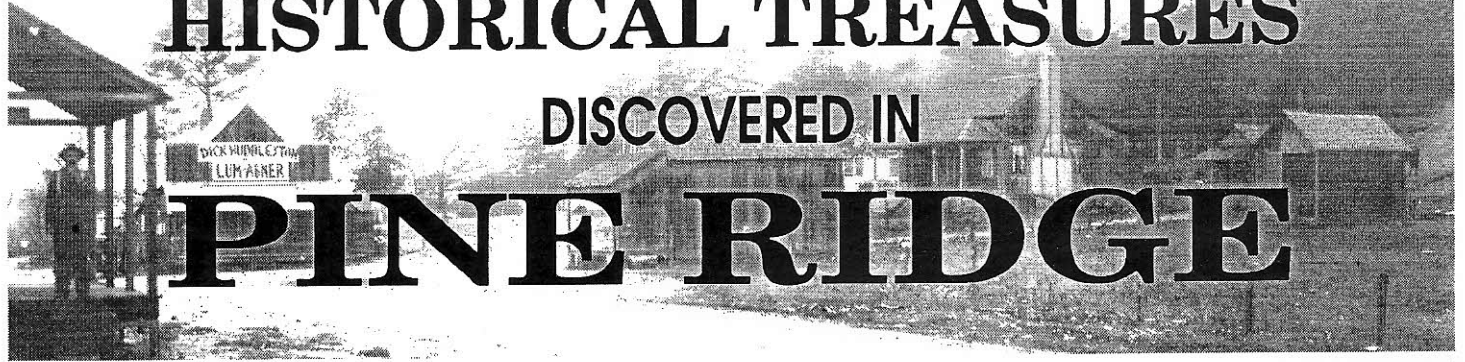
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News and comments from members like YOU.



Above: Among the historic artifacts discovered in the former Pine Ridge post office building are these two deteriorating rubber cancellation stamps. The one on the left is from the last day of existence of Waters, Arkansas (April 25, 1936), while the one on the right is from the first day of existence of Pine Ridge, Arkansas (April 26, 1936). Postmarks courtesy of Kathy Stucker.

HISTORICAL TREASURES DISCOVERED IN PINE RIDGE



The following report on the state of things in the REAL Pine Ridge, Arkansas, was sent in by community historian Kathy Stucker, co-owner and manager of the Jot 'Em Down Store and Lum & Abner Museum.

Frequent visitors to Pine Ridge may know that we have been trying to acquire the little white post office building for many years. It stands near the Lum & Abner Museum, and was the Waters/Pine Ridge post office from before 1900 to 1984, with a move and

rebuilding in the 1950's. The structure has been empty and decaying for several years, and it had become a race with time if we were to save it. We had almost given up when we finally got to buy it and the two acres it sits on, which include part of our parking lot, the land the fire station and pole-barn are on, and the hill of pine trees behind the buildings.

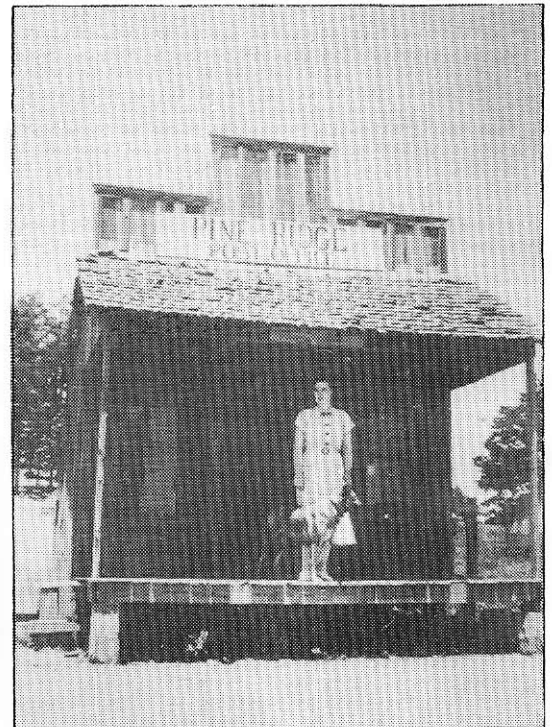
We had hoped to restore the building and set up post office displays in it, behind glass so it could be open without supervision. As it turned out, buying the building and land cost more than



E. BALL

Over the years, the Pine Ridge post office building underwent a few changes. Here, in 1932 (before the "Jot 'Em Down Store" was introduced into the radio show), it served as the photographic representation of Lum & Abner's combination Justice of the Peace and Constable office.

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Longtime Pine Ridge postmaster Ms. Eddie Williams is seen on the post office porch in this 1940's postcard.

expected so we have no money for repairs. Now the hope is that we can exchange repairs for rent, giving someone who wants to have a business in Pine Ridge enough credit for the repairs they do to pay rent for whatever time is fair. The inside is in good shape. The outside looks worse than it is, but needs work: roof, porch, paint.

The post office boxes and window unit that we



H. POINDEXTER

By the time of this 1959 photo, the post office's rough-hewn exterior had received a coat of white paint and looked very much as it does today.

have been using in the present Pine Ridge post office came from the little building, and are probably from the 1930's. The box and window unit still in the old post office is much older and more primitive. It will be moved into the Jot 'Em Down Store for exhibit only. The other shelf units and tables will be left to be used by the new business.

After taking care of practical matters, we started looking for pieces of history that we prayed had not been destroyed by time, bugs, mice, humidity, etc. In the attic we found many wonderful treasures: boxes and boxes of postal records, publications, forms, and equipment. It has taken two months to sort, label, and file it all. We will now decide how to rearrange things in the store and museum so that the most interesting things can be put on display. Very little was damaged.

One of the most exciting finds was the equipment for the last Waters cancellation (April 25, 1936) and the first Pine Ridge cancellation (April 26, 1936)... the daters used for canceling stamps, daily postmarks stamped in a booklet on those days, official post office publications announcing the change, and letters about the name change. One long letter urges the Postmaster to have a special commemorative postmark like we had in June 1994... there is no record of one in 1936.

Although a few older things were found, most of the records saved were from the 1923-1957 tenure of postmaster Eddie Williams, a woman. Much material concerns post-World War I recovery, the Depression era, World War II, and the advent of 1950's technology. Then, as

now, all sorts of government publications were distributed through the post office: savings bonds and stamps, armed forces recruitment literature, unemployment census and alien registration forms, and war effort appeals of many kinds. Perhaps no more than one or two of a particular form was needed, so the remainder of the box was stored to be discovered in 1994.

There are many boxes of magazines from the three different national organizations of postmasters, Arkansas postmasters organization literature, plus boxes of official bulletins and guides, and volumes of post office rules and regulations.

On a more local level, there are new Arkansas maps from the 1920's and 1930's. Pine Ridge history is documented by post office Oath of Office forms (including Dick Huddleston's), and many boxes of receipts and window ledgers for money orders, C.O.D. packages, and registered letters received in Waters/Pine Ridge. One ledger begins in 1908, during the tenure of A.J. Risenhoover, our postmaster from 1895 to 1922, and includes all postmasters from him to Ora Garrett, so only the first (Henry Waters) and the last (me) are missing!

Of special interest to NLAS members are the things about Lum and Abner. There are a few letters about promotions Dick Huddleston held, and several notations of the new addresses of Chet & Tuffy's



J. KNUPPEL

After the post office was moved into the Dick Huddleston store in 1984, the former post office building briefly operated as "Mose Moots' Grocery Store." This photo was taken during the first NLAS Convention in June 1985.

office as they went from Mena to Chicago to Hollywood. One letter is a reply from the Arkansas State Postmaster, thanking Mrs. Williams for the information that Lum and Abner mailings accounted for \$268.00 in postal sales for one month... when stamps cost three cents!

All of this is just a very general sketch of what we found. Even the wooden boxes things were stored in are of interest: a "Harter's Family Medicine" box, fruit boxes with paper labels, and a homemade box using hardwood siding from the building, pieces of a baking soda case, and two door hinges. We bought a large file cabinet to put the most important things in, and handling the old paper has made my arthritis and allergies flare up, but it is worth it.

This will be a busy winter in Pine Ridge. Several people have voiced an interest in the building, but the field is still wide open. Any of you who may be ready to move to Pine Ridge are welcome to inquire. The building is NOT for sale. We hope to see you all during the annual NLAS Convention on June 24, if not before!

- Kathy Stucker

Right: Three Generations at Pine Ridge

There is an interesting footnote to this issue's story about the L&A Museum's recent acquisition of the original Waters/Pine Ridge post office building. Several months ago, the NLAS received a photo and the following comments from professional photographer Thomas R. Finson of Washington, Illinois. Mr. Finson said:

"My grandfather was an avid fan of Lum & Abner, and would turn on his old battery set to get them tuned in, sometimes 20 minutes before the show started. I remember one time the storage battery on the radio went down. My grandfather had the hired man take the battery out of his 1947 Packard and bring it into the house so he could listen to the radio. I was a young lad in those days...

"When my grandfather went to Hot Springs, he visited Pine Ridge and met Dick Huddleston. I was there also; I was perhaps six or seven at the time. My mother shot some pictures of that event, and I still have the negatives in my collection. That was over 47 years ago, and I can still remember it..."

We herewith reprint Mr. Finson's photo of himself and his family in front of the Pine Ridge Post Office. According to Mr. Finson, the individuals are his mother (Hazel Finson), himself (age 8), and his grandfather, Charles Schafer.

Did you or anyone in your family visit Pine Ridge during L&A's time on the air? If so, did anyone take pictures of the event? We'd love to hear from you!



LUM AND ABNER®

GO TO WAR



Welcome to chapter 19 of this series, designed to chronicle the parallel histories of the *Lum and Abner* radio program and the World War of a half-century ago. The months of February and March 1945 will be our focus for this issue. The Allies were intensely fighting the war, and several new nations joined us: Ecuador (February 2), Paraguay (February 7), Peru (February 12), Uruguay and Venezuela (February 15), Turkey (February 23), Egypt (February 24), Lebanon (February 27), Saudi Arabia (March 1), and Argentina (March 27). (There had been no new Axis nations since December 7, 1941!) The United States was at its military height, with 6,000,000 troops in the army, 3,400,000 in the navy, 2,400,000 in the army air forces, 484,000 in the marines, and 170,000 in the coast guard. The combined military had grown from 356,100 troops in 1939 to 12,454,000! Likewise, the U.S. had an increase from 2,500 airplanes and 760 warships to 80,000 and 2,500 respectively! (All those war bonds L&A sold must have worked!)

To recap *Lum and Abner*, Lum has become smitten "like a big dog" with pretty school teacher Emaline Platt, and has gone to great lengths to impress her. Ordering "the works" from Pine Ridge barber Mose Moots, Lum has hair dye applied to enable him to appear more youthful. Unfortunately, instead of "a soft golden-brown with auburn highlights," Lum's hair becomes a stiff coal-black with green highlights!! Mortified, Lum attempts to stage an "accident," which will provide him an honest reason to cover his hair with bandages. A large washtub is elected to "whop" Lum on the head, but strikes Abner instead!

As we look in on the little community on Thursday, February 1, 1945, we find insurance man Skimp investigating Abner's "accident." "If this accident had only happened to ya while you were travelin' on a train, you'd be all set Abner," the Squire informs his client, "but, of course, ya cain't travel nowadays, so that's out." Abner offers to take a train trip, if doing such will increase his payment! Squire explains, "that's unpatriotic, Abner. No one should travel unless it is absolutely necessary and essential, y'know! All pleasure travel must wait until victory has been won."

Lum, who has been considering a trip to visit his Aunt Minnie (intending to stay away until his natural hair color grows out), asks, "you mean a feller cain't even go up ta Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin?"

Replies Squire, "not unless it's a trip that will in some way help win th' war, Lum. See, every time a civilian gits on th' train or bus, he may be preventing a soldier from gitting home ta see his family b'fore he goes overseas - perhaps keeping a wounded sailor from visitin' his folks durin' a furlough! That's something every American should think about quite seriously, Lum!" In the meantime, Squire manages to dodge Abner's claim, and sells him a "better" (more expensive) policy to boot!

The following week brings a solution to Lum's hair problems: a new beauty shop has opened in Pine Ridge! Abner arranges a "secret," late appointment with the beautician, "Yvonne la France," who does a fabulous bleaching and waving job on Lum's hair, finishing in the wee hours of the morning! Ecstatic, lover Lum phones Miss Emaline, who suddenly reacts coldly. She reneges on a dance date, blaming a "headache" (doesn't that only happen after you're married?)! Wha' happon? Wouldn't you know it! Sister Simpson found out about Lum's moonlight rendezvous with Miss la France, and has spread nasty rumors all over town! To add insult to injury, Frank Foster is observed escorting Miss Platt to the dance.

\$24.50 the poorer following his beauty treatment, lovelorn Lum is ready to "hermit hisself" in the hills. By February 8, he is gone, and Abner begins to worry. A stranger (Mr. Sutton) enters the store (voiced by Frank "Diogenes" Graham), claiming he has been searching for Lum. Abner immediately imagines that Lum has been found dead by Mr. Sutton, who is actually interested in doing business with L&A. Abner, nearly in tears, is surprised when Lum himself strolls into the store, singing happily! Instead of becoming a hermit, Lum has had a long talk with Miss Emaline, and all is patched up! What of Mr. Sutton? He wants to purchase some hill property owned by L&A for a substantial price: \$2,500! Much to Abner's dismay, Lum refuses the offer!

After a weekend to think it over, Lum drags Abner into the hills (February 12) to inspect their newly valuable piece of land, deter-



*Jerry Hausner returns in March 1945
as "the short feller with th' black hat."*

mined to discover why Mr. Sutton was so interested - perhaps it is worth even more than he offered! Erecting a Jiffy Junior Ranger Tent proves as difficult as their attempts to assemble a folding cot back in September of 1942!

(War Report: Tuesday, February 13, 1945: Russian forces occupied Budapest.)

Finding nothing Monday evening, Lum shares his theory with Abner the following day. He feels certain Mr. Sutton has discovered a new vein of silver in an old, abandoned mine on their land! The possibility of riches ignites their imaginations.

Valentine's Day 1945 offers a humorous break as Cedric, still firmly ensconced in the Fourth Reader in school, must buy a Valentine for Verbena Saxon, a nine-year old whose name he has drawn. As the only "scholar" with a "soshul se-curity card," Cedric feels he must have a deluxe 20¢ Valentine, heavily "dee-corated" with lace, doilies and the like. Due to the wartime paper shortage, the large, fancy cards are quite rare, but one is located. This is all fine and dandy, until we realize that Lum has picked this one out for Miss Emaline, but is too shy to admit it!



Cedric happily VARNISHES each dish for the "boo-fay" supper - or did Lum say GARNISH?

Back to their acreage the following evening, L&A are making a secret trip to investigate the silver mine. "Afeared" to enter the tunnel, Abner insists he must dash back to town to send a V-Mail letter to his daughter Pearl! "Everbody ort ta write ta th' soldiers and sailors jist as often as they kin," explains Abner, making a wartime pitch to encourage the listeners to support the troops. "Write a lotta short, cheerful letters... they love ta hear from their families an' friends." Reluctantly following his partner into the tunnel entrance, Abner continues his discussion of V-Mail: "Lum, you know they take them V-Mail letters that ya write an' photy-graph 'em down ta whur they ain't no bigger'n a postage stamp. Y'know, they kin pack 18 hunnerd o' them V-Mail letters into a littler space than a cigarette package! That's why it's sich a good idie ta use V-Mail when yer writin' ta somebody overseas, see! It lightens th' mail load an' don't take up space that's needed fer guns, an' food, an' all sich as that fer th' soldiers!" In light of the 1995 increase in postal rates from 29¢ to 32¢, Abner's statement of "they don't cost much neither; you kin send one of 'em clean overseas fer jist three cents" sounds

incredible!

Finally inside the mine, one of Lum and Abner's most memorable adventures begins. It is one almost devoid of humor, in which our old friends face the possibility of death! Reprised from 1936 scripts, L&A become trapped underground, as the wooden supports for the mine tunnel ceiling collapse! (We are thankful Chet Lauck and Tuffy Goff chose to reenact this series; recordings of the original have never been discovered!)

Listening to this series in chronological order, as well as the way they are played in syndication, can be frustrating and confusing, due to the practices of the Keystone transcription network. Tim Hollis explains this in the *NLAS Tape Library Catalog*: "A strange thing began happening to the *Lum and Abner* shows during the month of February 1945... occasionally there would be two programs for the same date. One would carry the regular storyline, while the other would be a special holiday show recorded months ahead of time for the Keystone Network, a separate group of radio stations." The NLAS Tape Library offers these programs in date order, while the syndicated tapes run them much earlier, possibly in the order the discs were recorded. Either way, their insertion can be somewhat jarring.

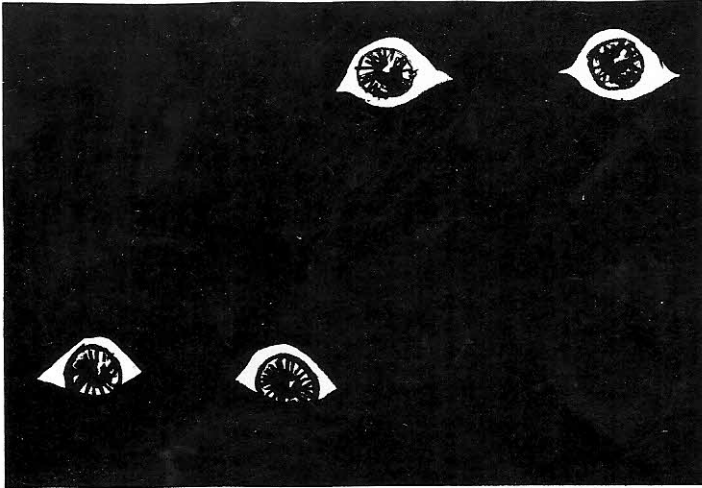
(War Report: On Monday, February 19, U.S. Marines stormed Iwo Jima Island, located halfway between Guam and Japan, within 750 miles of Tokyo. The island had been under air and naval attack for some seven months prior to being invaded by 60,000 marines, who met brutal opposition for nearly a month.)

After a stirring Thursday "cliffhanger," we rejoin L&A on Monday, painfully trying to dig their way out of the mine. An encounter with a trapped wildcat adds to their pain. As the week progresses, the pair fights hunger, thirst and fatigue, experiencing occasional delirium. To listeners accustomed to light-hearted comedy in *Lum and Abner*, these dramatic and masterfully acted scenes may come as a shock. The team of Lauck and Goff showcased their immense talents as both writers and performers in this series of programs. What a film this story could have inspired! (Perhaps it did inspire an episode of Andy Griffith - see Kurt Jensen's article "Lum and Abner Meet Andy Griffith" in the February 1989 issue of *The Jot 'Em Down Journal*.)

Ol' Blue, Abner's faithful dog, had refused to enter the mine. His return to Abner's home alarms his already worried wife. Blue is in poor condition, and his paws are covered with red clay. Dick Huddleston is convinced the pair are lost in the clay-covered mountains, and organizes a searching party!

Surprise! It is a holiday on February 21, and the Keystone Network interrupts the life-threatening situation of L&A! (In syndication, the April Fools Day program is inserted in this spot, while the February "holiday" shows are sprinkled into the programs originally aired in January, where they do not intrude that much.) Cedric has become an actor, performing in a "George Warshington's Birthday Paygeant" at school. Proud of Cedric's acting ability, L&A quiz him about his role, feeling certain he is portraying "George Warshington" himself! They labor over a costume for him, flouring his hair and bedecking him in lace doilies and painted buckles, only to discover that his main function is to open and close the stage curtain!

The "live" February 21 program makes no mention of Washington's birthday, but resumes the tense situation in the silver mine. In a touching scene, Abner, imagining he is talking to his beloved "Lizabeth," hopes their daughter Pearl (serving as a nurse



The story of Lum and Abner's entrapment in the abandoned silver mine was enacted twice; first in October 1936 (as described in Lum and Abner's 1937 Family Almanac) and again in February 1945.

in France) "grows up ta be as fine a womern as her mama is." Realizing Abner has fever, a weakened Lum crawls down the dark tunnel, carefully avoiding the wildcat, to fetch a hat-full of water from an underground spring. Their only sustenance has been a small supply of sardines and crackers, which disappears quickly.

(War Report: February 23, 1945: The marines planted the American flag on Mount Suribachi, as the fighting continued on Iwo Jima.)

The efforts of the searching parties prove unsuccessful as the days drag on. Many Pine Ridgers doubt the boys are anywhere near the area. Grandpap believes they are in jail, and relates some disturbing dreams Lizabeth has had, in which Abner is ill, hungry, and unable to escape. Dick and Cedric, following Abner's faithful hound dog, finally happen upon the blocked silver mine, and soon direct a group of men in an all-out effort to open the tunnel with picks and shovels. (In addition to his remarkable portrayal of an old hound, Tuffy Goff brings back Mousey Gray for a welcome "cameo.") Delirious from their 13-day ordeal, Lum attacks his partner, thinking he is a fried chicken! (Head writer Roz Rogers once told us this was "one of Chet's favorite dramatic scenes.") Suddenly, they hear digging... or do they? Most of the men have given up the following day (February 27), but faithful Dick and Cedric finally break into the mine! We've not heard L&A at all in this episode, and the suspense is great, especially when Dick finally spots L&A. Listen to this ending for yourself! (Had this been a Thursday show, the "cliffhanger" aspect would have been tremendous!)

Of course, our heroes survive, but are severely weakened. Recovering at Abner's home as February ends and March begins, Lum attempts to resume negotiations with Mr. Sutton. A newspaper article details the silver mine adventure of L&A, and also reports "a long, bitter fight predicted for Pacific War. Authorities estimate two years after Germany's defeat will be required to beat Japan!" "We jist gittin' started in that war," Lum explains to Abner, "we still got a lotta fightin' ta do there!" Fortunately, the end was much closer!

A Mr. W. J. Chancellor rushes to Pine Ridge in response to the article on L&A, arriving Monday, March 5. (We are uncertain of the actor who portrays Chancellor.) Unfortunately, recordings of the programs from March 6 - 13 are missing from our library, but we are

eternally grateful to Roz Rogers, who generously supplied us with his typed "Resume of Story-Lines" (taken from his personal scripts) some ten years ago. I quote directly from Mr. Rogers:

"Mar. 5 & 6. Lum and Abner are back in the store awaiting the mysterious Mr. Chancellor. He turns out to be a magazine writer who wants to do a magazine story on L&A's experience in the caved-in mine. Lum starts making elaborate notes for the article all about his boyhood, walking barefoot thru the snow, etc. But Chancellor isn't much interested in Lum's notes... he seems more interested in the role the dog played in the rescue.

"Mar. 7. A little confusion here. This script is marked 'Make-up script, no transcription.' Except for a new opening and ending which fit in with the Chancellor story-line, it is essentially the same as the Washington birthday script of February 21.

"Mar. 8. Evidently Chancellor has given L&A \$300 advance royalties. Lum is trying to find some pictures of himself to go into the article. He wishes he had a picture of himself and his new bride, Miss Emaline. Abner suggests he hurry up and get married so there could be such a picture. He pressures Lum into trying this, but in his nervousness Lum proposes but too late realizes it wasn't Miss Emaline of the phone. SO who has he proposed to??

"Mar. 12, 13. Missing scripts. Lum evidently gets out of his wrong-person proposal dilemma and is free to resume his courting of Miss Emaline. He gets some advice from Mr. Chancellor who suggests that Lum should put on a nice buffet social honoring Miss Emaline.

"Lum plows ahead with this idea, thinking that at a social buffet everyone eats off a buffet."

Now we return to the recorded programs. By now, Mr. Chancellor (probably portrayed by Frank Graham) is planning a full-fledged book about the mine adventure. A confident Lum is certain he and Abner will be quite wealthy from the book's royalties, and sets out to (once again) become a member of "high society." He plans to "pop the question" to Miss Emaline at his elaborate "boofay" supper. The event is to be "R.S.M.F.T.," Lum's version of "R.S.V.P.," mixed with the then-famous "LS/MFT" ("Lucky Strike Means Fine Tobacco") slogan made so famous on Jack Benny's program. Lum has rented a number of buffets, thinking his guests should be seated at them while eating! Plans are interrupted briefly on March 15 by a discussion of the effects of the U.S. Army on the new career of Eli White's son:

ABNER: B'fore th' war, 'bout all he ever done wuz hang aroun' Dad Crockett's pool hall down there. I know his papa wuz always worried an' dissapinted in him.

LUM: Yeah, well, he's changed now, though.

ABNER: Well, good fer him.

LUM: Army's done him a awful lotta good. See, they put 'im in th' engineerin' corpse, an' he learned enough engineerin' stuff ta git this job.

ABNER: Well, I do know!

LUM: Y'know, that's gonna be th' case with a lotta boys that went into th' service. They'll learn 'em things that'll give 'em a trade ta foller when they git out. They'll be good men fer em-employers ta hire, too... 'count o' their trainin' an' all.

ABNER: Oh, yeah, shore. Wellsir, I'm jist glad ta hear that about Eli's boy.

(War Report: Iwo Jima fell to the Allies on Thursday, March 16, 1945. Okinawa is selected by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the next step on the road to Tokyo.)

Lum's buffet preparations are assisted by Cedric, who has been instructed to garnish each dish with parsley. Parsley is replaced with celery, and Cedric substitutes the word varnish for garnish! Ah well, a little paint remover takes care of everything, but adds an unusual flavor to Lum's "gor-met" cuisine (fried rabbit and hotcakes)! (In Lum's March 20 discussion of the odd taste, Chet Lauck gets a bit tickled as he reads his lines, stuttering on "h- h- hotcakes!") The "question" to Miss Emaline still "unpopped," Lum proceeds nonetheless with his plans to buy a "diamont EN-gagement ring."

The alternate Keystone program for March 20 concerns the first day of spring, a holiday ignored by mother nature, who has chilled Pine Ridge with an icy blast of winter weather. Cedric is undaunted, and "springs" into the store with his white "ice cream pants" and his "tinny" shoes! In an amazing and hilarious bit of memory work, Cedric states, "Spring is when a little elf with pointed green shoes comes tip-toein' outa th' forest an' touches all th' leafy plants an' trees with a magics wand an' they lift up their little heads to th' warm sun an' bust forth in a symphony of color!" Following Lum's lead (he explained the vernal equinox), Abner attempts to explain a certain Mr. Vern L. Quinox to Cedric... perhaps it is Vern who wears the "green pointed shoes?" Maybe you'd better listen to this one yourself; doggies, I'm CON-fused, MIX up...

As for the "live" L&A program for March 21, Roz Rogers explained, "this is the same First Day of Spring script but with a beginning and end that carry on the story line. Lum wants to ask Chancellor how soon the royalties will start rolling in from the sale of the book because he has found out that a diamond ring costs a good deal more than he had imagined. Script ends with the deflating news that Chancellor has abandoned the idea of writing the book." (What a shame... Abner wanted to title it *Forever Abner!*)

Borrowing a "Wimpy" line from Elzie Segar's *Thimble Theatre* comic strip (starring Popeye), Abner suggests to Lum "let's you an' him fight!" as they argue with Mr. Chancellor. No need to scuffle; Chancellor has set his sights on Broadway, and offers L&A a whopping \$10,000 check as an advance!

The following Monday (March 26), the old fellows head for the county seat, where Lum hopes to buy a ring to make Miss Platt "the future Miz Eddards!" (For you trivia buffs, her telephone ring is two shorts, a long and a short. Area code, 501. I tried it; she wasn't home.) The bank must wait for clearance to cash such a sizable check, so Lum craftily arranges yet another mortgage of their store (\$950), and proceeds to the local jeweler. Here we meet some old friends, both familiar and not so! The late Jerry Hausner is back as "the short man in the black hat," and his personal pal Frank Martin portrays the jeweler. Mr. Martin, a native of Oklahoma, worked his way through law school playing parts on radio, and today is a retired attorney living in California. Dissatisfied with the "small" baubles at the jewelry store, Lum is approached by "the short feller" on the sidewalk, who eagerly pushes him to buy a monstrous diamond for exactly the cash Lum has on hand! Lum shows it to the jeweler a bit later, who gasps, "this is the most perfect blue-white diamond I've ever seen! ...it must weigh at least 20 carats! This can't be... unless... unless... well, if it's what I think it is, you'll find out in due time!"

Meanwhile, back in Pine Ridge, store-minding Grandpappy Spears is approached by a strange character with a Peter Lorre-style voice (we have not yet identified this actor - have you?) who obviously thinks Grandpap is Lum. He demands the "Kunlun Diamond," warning the elderly gent of its deadly curse!! (Boy howdy, do we have a nifty plot developing!)

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Back in Pine Ridge on March 28, L&A reprise one of their time-tested bits, as Lum decides he needs to order a new suit! The "Suit Measuring Routine" was used for years in personal appearances, and Jerry Hausner remembered it fondly from the time he exceeded their show at the Palace Theatre in Cleveland in 1936. We are brought back to the 1945 wartime present, however, as Grandpap explains how he dealt with the point rationing system during the absence of L&A: "...had a little trouble figgerin' out them red an' blue points... final, worked out a system, though; I jist made 'em a flat rate o' one stamp fer ever ar-tickle they bought!" An alarmed Lum says, "now we'll hafta check up on ever'body that bought stuff an' straighten that out, or we'll git in trouble with th' O. P. an' A!"



Lum and Abner perform their "Suit-Measuring Routine," photographed 1933 in Ohio, published in the first issue of *The Pine Ridge News*.

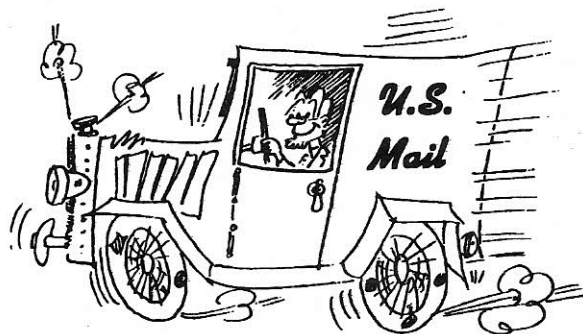
In remembering those customers, "Miz Barton," relates Grandpap, "had a letter from her boy Ernest. He's over in th' Philippines now. One o' them V-Mail letters." In another pitch to the audience for V-Mail, Grandpap suggests, "write 'em often, an' make 'em cheerful." Finally recalling another "outa town feller" who visited the store, Grandpap discusses the mysterious visitor who demanded the Kunlun Diamond. "The little man in the black hat," it seems, is dead, according to the stranger, that being the fate of all who unrightly possess the stone!! Suit-measuring is forgotten; after all, how can Abner measure Lum after he's fallen to the floor unconscious?

As the month of March 1945 concludes, Lum's engagement plans continue. Abner is more concerned about the "curse" than Lum, who busies himself with securing more funds, while waiting for the \$10,000 check to clear. Confident of that, he arranges yet another mortgage on his house with our "good friend" Squire Skimp. (I can imagine members of the radio audience shouting, "don't do it, Lum!!") Abner, on the other hand, is intensely worried about the curse - suddenly, they discover their safe is standing wide open! How did that happen? Has the diamond been stolen? We'll find out next time!

The programs discussed this issue are available on NLAS Cassette Library Tapes #164 - 169.

- "Uncle Donnie" Pitchford
and Roswell B. Rogers

STRAIGHT FROM THE MAIL HACK



Over the past several months, we have received some interesting letters from members. Well actually, the Executive Secretary's office is FLOODED with mail all the time, which explains why a personal response is usually not practical. However, from time to time we like to let the rest of the membership know what folks are thinking, so we are going to take a few moments right now to do just that.

Back during the summer, David B. Horrocks of Bridgewater, Massachusetts, had this to say: "Although I am fairly new to the NLAS and to old time radio in general, I enjoy the Journal and the articles you publish. Having missed most of the era of OTR (by birth, not by choice), I still remember listening to the radio with my father and mother in the mid- to late-1950's. The humor or mystery or drama of these shows is so enjoyable. Every show seemed to have an object lesson that kids (and adults) do not get from television today. And it's nice to share humor with my own children without resorting to the four-letter variety of comedy seen on television. They may call it 'comy' at first, but put a tape on, and they end up laughing louder than me."

Mel Froli of Palo Alto, California, heard an interesting reference on the radio this past November. "As you may know," he says, "John Madden is a football commentator on NFL telecasts over the Fox Network. Recently I heard him on his morning radio show in San Francisco mention how he and his TV partner Pat Summerall, were as a pair likened to Lum and Abner. Mr. Madden talked of how he listened to L&A when he was a kid, so he knew what was meant by the comparison. Mr. Frank Dill, who hosts the radio show, also remembered L&A fondly." Mr. Froli suggested that we try to get NLAS information to John Madden; we have given that assignment to our combination Vice-Prez and Publicity Director Singin' Sam Brown, and he is pursuing it even as we speak.



One of our younger members is Janet McMurrin of Harrison, Arkansas. She has been an NLAS member since she was a young teenager, and has faithfully kept us up to date on her L&A activities as her life has progressed. At Christmas time, she reported: "Unfortunately, one of the two stations I heard L&A on dropped the show. They had been having problems playing the program. My other station has added a sponsor to their program. The DJ who

plays it seems to enjoy it a lot. He usually comments on each day's program afterwards.

Right now we're hearing about Bon Mot, and



Abner wants a five foot long veil made of canvas if he's to be a model.

"This year I started making L&A tapes for another friend. She really loves them, but her husband doesn't like them for some reason. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Why, that low down snake in the weeds...) I sent her some tapes for Christmas, and she's going to listen to them when her husband is gone. I made her a tape about Sgt. Hartford, and she got hooked wanting to know how they got rid of her.

"I like reading the programs you print in the Journal. Also, I like reading the storyline programs following the war. It's fun sharing Lum and Abner!"

Thanks to ALL of our members who take the time to write! You can rest assured that whether you hear from us or not, your comments and suggestions are always valued, and help us make the NLAS what we all want it to be.

- Tim Hollis

It's Coming!
The Eleventh Annual



CONVENTION

Saturday,
JUNE 24, 1995

Best Western Lime Tree
Inn, Mena, Arkansas

Observing the 40th
Anniversary of L&A's
final motion picture!

Guests and special
events to be
announced later...

