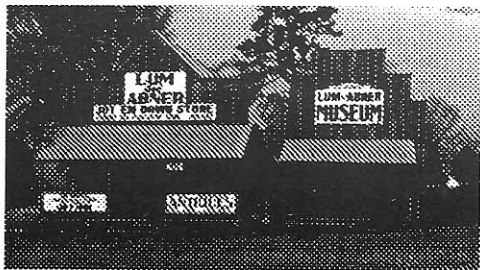


June 1995

VISIT

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COMMENTARY:

CEDRIC WEEHUNT, PINBALL WIZARD

Recently I came across an article telling the history of the pinball machine. It was interesting, and I have been trying to figure out what type of pinball machine Cedric played on.

The first pinball machine was a desktop gadget called "Baffle Ball." The player got seven balls for one penny. This was the mechanical equivalent to the cheap plastic pinball games you sometimes see kids play with. It had a plunger on the lower right hand corner, and it shot the ball to the top, where it fell down, bouncing off various metal pins before entering a slot at the bottom for scoring. This machine came out in 1931, and the overwhelming reaction to it spurred development and supply. Within a year or so, mechanical arches and gates were added. One day in 1932, a manufacturer saw someone cheating at the game by hitting the bottom of the machine. This so enraged him that he took the machine and drove nails through the bottom, to make sure no one would do that again... or try after the first time, anyway. That was temporary, of course, and he next made the "tilt" mechanism, which consisted of a ball sitting on a pedestal. If it fell off, the game was over. In 1933, the first machine to use electricity came out. This added lights, automatic scoring, sound, and a new tilt mechanism that consisted on a pendulum through a metal hole. If it touched the side of the hole, electrical contact was made.

So, during the mid-1930's a typical machine had a plunger, which would shoot the ball to the top. The player could only stand

there and watch as it fell back through pins, arches, gates, etc., watching the pretty lights on the backboard and listening to the sounds as it scored. This would be the type of machine Cedric played on. In 1937, a new game called "Bumper" introduced electrically operated wire and spring bumpers. Cedric may well have played with a "Bumper" machine, depending on how up-to-date Luke Spears' lunch room was.

The flipper we see on modern machines was not invented until 1947, long after Cedric had become a pinball veteran. This startled me at first, but then I recalled the time Cedric thought over ways to improve his pinball game. His solution? He had been pulling the plunger back too far, and it shot the ball up too hard. At the time I thought that was foolish, since more would depend on Cedric's skill with the flippers after it got down. Now we know that the plunger was the only thing he COULD control at that time... unless he wanted to risk the "tilt" mechanism!

- James McMurrin

(Many thanks to James for this enlightening research. If you have a particular area of interest that might have some bearing on the world of L&A, feel free to send in your thoughts and observations. Here's one to think about: Read our "Lum and Abner In the News" installment on page 6 of this issue, and then wonder... on the radio show, did or did not Pine Ridge have electricity?)

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LUM AND ABNER SOCIETY**

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Cover: Dick Huddleston welcomes one and all to Pine Ridge, Arkansas, circa 1941. You will have YOUR chance to visit Pine Ridge as it is today if you attend the 11th Annual NLAS Convention in Mena on June 24! (Photo courtesy Ethel Huddleston Ball)

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THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

June 1995

In This Issue:

Lum and Abner Go To War 2

This series draws to a close, and so does the war.

Lum and Abner In the News 6

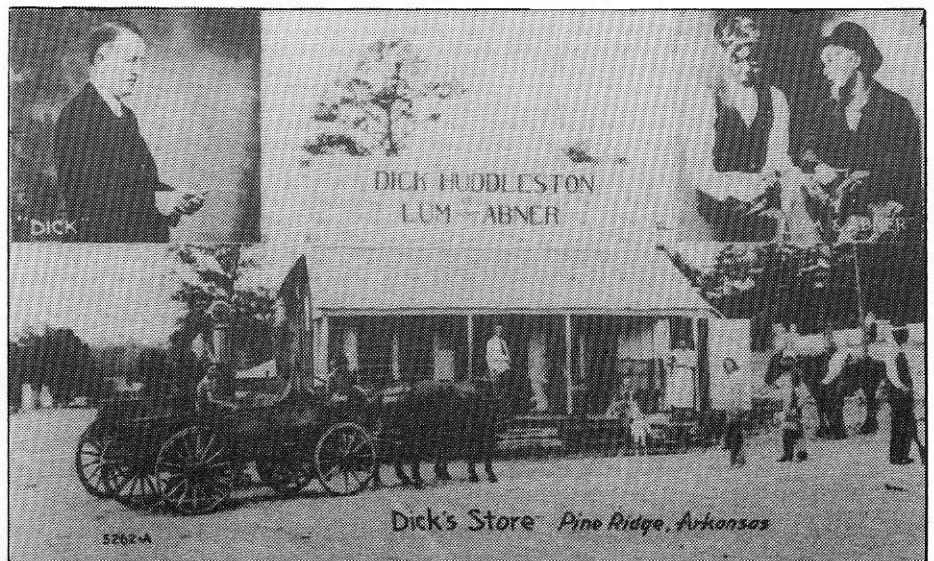
Pine Ridge finally gets electricity in 1945!

Lum and Abner Meet With Fowl Play 7

A bizarre Hollywood cartoon from 1940 seems to be based on L&A and their friends.

And Now 9

What's happening L&A-wise around the country.





LUM AND ABNER®

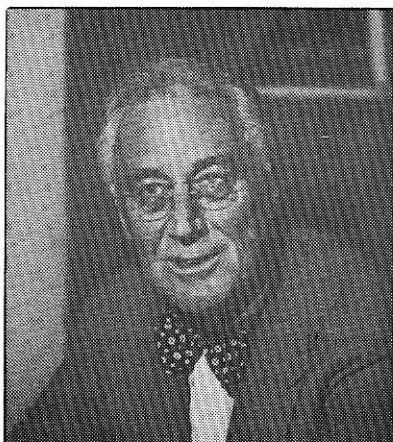
GO TO WAR



FLY IT PROUDLY
July 4th & 5th

Welcome to chapter 21 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. In our last issue, we revisited the eventful months of April and May 1945. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had begun an unprecedented fourth term that January, but was in poor health. He stated in his brief inaugural address, "we cannot live alone at peace, ...our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of nations far away."

Shortly thereafter, the "Big Three" - Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin - met at Yalta, a Russian resort, to lay the foundations for the final assault on Germany, the postwar occupation of that country, the historic meeting in San Francisco to establish the United Nations (see our last issue), and other world-shaping agreements. Haggard, the President returned to the United States, harboring doubts as to the good will of the Russians. During a much-needed rest period, Roosevelt succumbed to a cerebral hemorrhage and passed away on April 12.



Franklin D. Roosevelt

Suddenly, Vice-President Harry S Truman found himself thrust into the position of being Commander-in-Chief during the climactic months of World War II. As discussed last issue, "V-E Day" (May 8) was declared to celebrate the official "Victory in Europe," brought about by the surrender of Germany to the Allies the previous day.

But what kept good old Lum and Abner busy during all this? Well, in May they came into possession of "Robert the Robot," a huge mechanical man created by one Professor Fontaine Grill. Abner, against Lum's wishes, decides to put Robert to work as a "dee-liver boy," operating him via Professor Grill's radio remote-control box! Inspired by the fictitious *Smiling Captain Stalwart* comic books, Abner and Cedric become "Smilin' Cap'n Peabody" and "Lt. Corporal Cedric!" Abner receives telephone reports from Cedric, who runs from house-to-house, instructing Abner as to which way to turn the robot's controls! As May 1945 concludes, disaster strikes: Robert becomes lost! He is finally located in the vicinity of Ira Hodgekins' dead prize bull, and is suspected of "murder!!" Hodgekins is quick to "law-sue" Abner for \$500!

As June 1945 gets underway, L&A plan Abner's defense, but become a bit too explicit in discussing their strategy with Squire Skimp; unbeknownst to them, he is Ira's lawyer!! Before realizing it, they've outlined their entire defense, plus Abner has admitted he feels guilty of the charges!

During his "command" of the robot, Abner's ego became inflated, and he started referring to himself as "Abner the Master!"

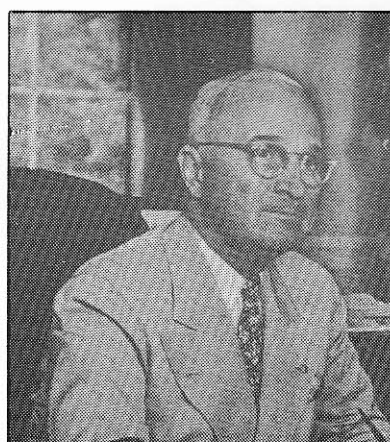
He even wrote up a "gittin' even with" list, naming folks around town over which he wanted revenge for past deeds.

Cedric interrupts as a "Vikatory Volun-teer," encouraging L&A to buy extra war bonds for the 7th War Loan:

ABNER: We'd like ta buy some extry ones, Cedric, but I don't see how we kin afford it right now.

CEDRIC: Don't you wanna see Ernest MAC-Millan?

ABNER: Ernest? Why, shore I do, but I don't



Harry S Truman

see...

CEDRIC: Well, that's what yer practical sayin', if you don't buy extry bonds, yer keepin' Ernest out thar in th' Pacifics jist that much longer! Don'cha want yer daughter Pearl ta git home quick as she kin?

ABNER: Why, shore I do, Cedric!

CEDRIC: Well, buyin' bonds'll help do it! Them things'll help us hurry up an' git this doggone thing over with, an' I ain't gonna let nobody on my list back down, neither!!

Cedric makes good; both Abner and Lum agree to buy an extra bond, and the lad goes happily on his way. Resuming their inspection of Abner's "gittin' even with" list, L&A discover Cedric has accidentally swapped his war bond list with Abner's! Cedric's next bond customer? Squire Skimp!

The trial finally gets underway on Thursday, June 7, and lawyer/judge Edwards gets Abner into further hot water with numerous slips of the tongue. Ira (portrayed by B-Western movie actor Horace Murphy) produces Robert's metal kneecap as evidence that the robot killed his bull. Before long, Squire has Abner accused of more offenses (leaving a motor vehicle - Robert, that is - unattended, etc.). In the following days, Squire pounces on every opportunity to



"Smilin' Jack," a 1933-73 newspaper comic strip feature created by Zack Mosley, was the inspiration for "Smilin' Captain Stalwart."

put his "spin" on the testimony of character witnesses. An account of Abner's unselfish assistance to an ailing Cedric brings out the fact that Abner "hepped hisself" to absent pharmacist Ed Beckley's supply of medications - BINGO! Another charge! Abner is accused of dispensing medicine without a license!

Lum hopes to turn the tables by claiming it was the bull's fault, since Robert has no brain! He will attempt to prove "justifiable homeycide," which he soon amends to "justifiable bullicide!" But OOPS! Squire has a "s'prize" witness: **Dr. Grill**!

Lum quickly adjourns the trial, and hides out for a few days. We soon learn that Dr. Grill had journeyed to Washington D.C. to offer his robot design to the "givermint," to be the prototype for an army of mechanical military men, but the War Department declined his offer. Meanwhile, over at the jailhouse, Town Marshall Uncle Henry Lunsford presses prisoner Abner into being his assistant in practicing the martial arts technique "joo jitsy," which results in the lawman sprawled "unconscientious" on the cell floor! Running to fetch Ol' Doc Miller, Abner is intercepted by nemesis Skimp, who now has the charge of violent jail-breaking to slap on him!

All that is left in the mind of Lawyer Lum is to have Abner pretend to be "IN-sane!" Squire insists a doctor from the "state hospital" examine "Napoleon" (Abner's new identity), but Dr. Francis X. Bushman (the silent screen actor himself) observes Lum in Abner's cell instead. Lum, who has been helping "Napoleon" cut out paper dolls, appears "crazy as a bessie bug" himself, leading the good doctor to conclude that Lum should be committed for treatment! Following this misunderstanding, Abner is finally examined, and found to be normal (if you can imagine that)!

Just as the situation looks impossible, Ira receives a mysterious note from Squire, and demands the trial be recessed. Ira visits L&A

on June 21, which prompts Lum to convince him to settle out-of-court for \$250, which sounds like a great deal, until Grandpappy Spears later informs them of the truth: Squire Skimp has deserted Ira, to leave on a six-month carnival tour with Dr. Grill and Robert the Robot - and Ira would have settled with Abner for a mere \$100!!

Monday, June 27 finds Abner heckling the heck out of poor old Lum, until interrupted by the wholesale house truck driver (our old pal Jerry Hausner), who asks Lum for some legal advice. It seems the young man's truck was damaged while a substitute driver was piloting the vehicle, and now Jerry is being held accountable. His feedroom conversation with Lum is somewhat "mysa-teerous," as is Lum's sudden departure from Pine Ridge. He returns a day later, bringing Abner a handful of cash!

Former "Lawyer Eddards," now billing himself "Deteckatiff Lum," explains his discovery to Abner: Robert the Robot did not kill Ira's bull! It was the substitute truck driver! Lum has arranged a settlement with the company, and Abner and Ira's situation is settled.

To prepare for what Lum calls the "Post-War Area" (Era), the Jot 'Em Down Store will become a "dee-partmint store" during the month of July 1945! "Lum Eddards, the Eagle o' th' Mercantile Bizness" is his new title.

Spending \$45 at a Mena printing shop, Lum has stock certificates produced, and plans to "corporate" the store. Attempting to sell Grandpap and Cedric stock, L&A treat them so royally, they scare them away! To develop an atmosphere of legitimacy for their stock, Lum creates the "Pine Ridge Stock EX-change," using Little Pearl's chalkboard and a telegraph outfit. Operating the gadget himself, Lum pretends to receive the latest stock reports via Morse Code, and tries to explain the "bears and bulls" to literal-minded



Abner ("huh?").

Abner, certain that Lum is referring to "bears and bulls" as being sold for meat, jumps into a wild tangent involving wartime rationing...

ABNER: Git fokes ta start eatin' bear-burgers, them'd be good! Fokes'll pay anything fer meat nowadays! Won't hafta charge' em no red points, neither! Doggies, we'll do th' biggest binness we've ever did...

LUM: Awright, now, wait right thar!

ABNER: Fried bear steaks!!

LUM: One thing we ain't doin' is runnin' a black market!

ABNER: Black market?

LUM: That's zackly what we'd be doin' if we sold meat fer high

prices, and not charge no red points! That's th' worst one thing we could possible do!

ABNER: Well, they's a meat shortage!

LUM: Yeah, an' th' black market is one reason they is a shortage! That's whur too much of our meat is goin' right now! Then all them unpatriotics fokes who's willin' ta pay them high prices gits more'n their share. An' when they do that, they ain't enough left ta go aroun' fer ever'body. If ever'body'd play square, we'd have a lot better chance o' whippin' this meat shortage!what we got ta do is stamp out them dad-blame black markets!! ...jist re-collect these two rules: Don't never pay more'n ceilin' price fer eny meat ya buy! An' allus give full ration points fer it!

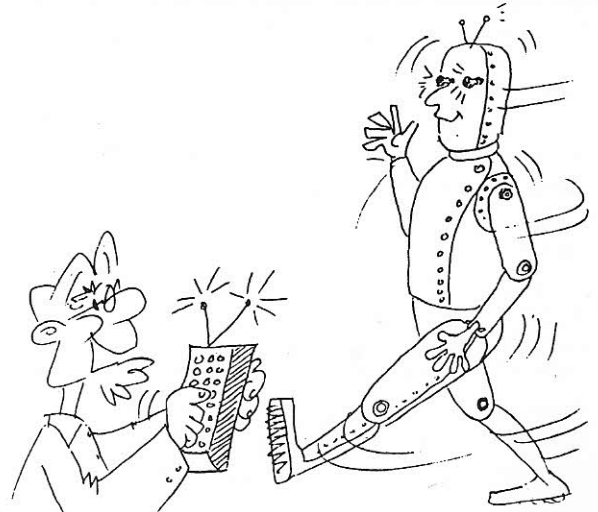
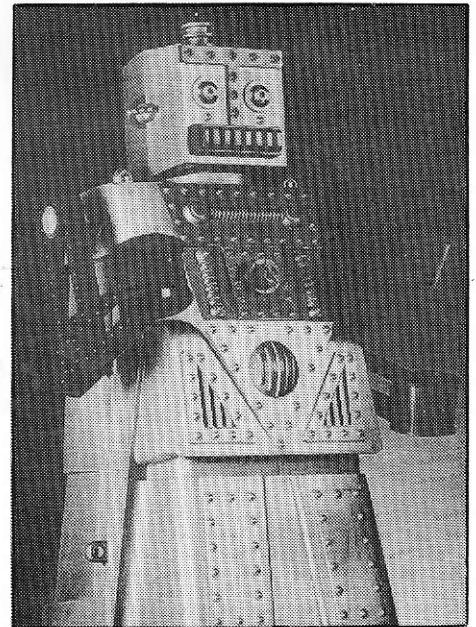
L&A take a break to celebrate the 4th of July, and find it difficult

THE MANY
FACES OF

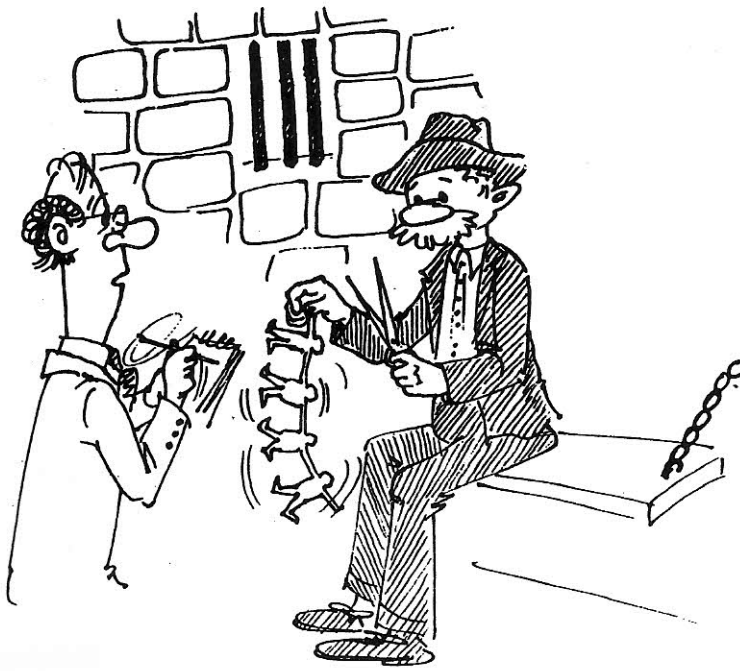


ROBERT the ROBOT

How do you visualize Robert the Robot? We've combed our archives to present these possible images! E. C. Segar's Popeye faced a remote-control robot in a 1932 *Thimble Theatre* strip, a character named "Robert Robot" appeared in *Ding Dong* comic books in 1946, and Ideal produced its "Robert the Robot" toy in 1954.



"Robert the Robot" was the title of a story in a 1953 *Donald Duck* comic book, while our own Harold Petersen offers his version of Robert:



Just who is crazy? The doctor (portrayed by Francis X. Bushman) catches "Lawyer / Jedge Eddards" in the act of coaching Abner in the fine points of being "tetched" in another cartoon by Harold Petersen.

to travel to the annual picnic in Cherry Hill. Wartime tire and gasoline rationing forces the Pine Ridge residents to "share the ride," and Cedric's old car soon becomes quite crowded!

Won't anybody buy a share of Jot 'Em Down Store stock? Cedric Weehunt is just such a plunger, sinking \$20 into two shares on July 5. Lum, acting as Mose Moots' broker, pretends to get reports on the stock rising in value to \$20 each, and an observant Cedric declares he is ready to sell his stocks back at a profit! They stall him off for the weekend, but are threatened by Papa Weehunt, and reluctantly purchase the stocks. In trying to convince Cedric of his folly, L&A pretend their telegraph is receiving reports of escalating value, inflating their stock to over \$1,000 per share! Unfortunately, Mose Moots has been sitting "on hold" on the telephone, and has heard everything! He owns one share, and wants to sell it back for a cool grand!!

To further confuse matters, Grandpap demands to buy some "Consolidated Bananer" stock - \$200 worth! For fear that Grandpap will think he is a phony stock broker, Lum accepts the cash, but is uncertain as to what to do with it! The following day (July 11), Grandpap is elated to learn via the telephone that Consolidated Banana stock "has leaped up like a spaven-legged kangaroo" overnight! Unfortunately, Lum never purchased a single share!! How can he explain this to "Milford Spears the Banana King?" Just as quickly as it had risen in value, the stock comes crashing down to rock-bottom, leaving Grandpap and Abner depressed - they had ordered Broker Lum to sink all their funds into Consolidated! Luckily, Lum was unable to do so, and returns their money, claiming some sort of amazing financial wizardry!

The real-life daughter of Dick Huddleston, Ethel Ball, has often stated that her dad's character appeared less frequently in the *Lum and Abner* programs of the 1940s for plot reasons. Dick, being so level-headed and intelligent, would have quickly talked L&A out of their schemes, ending many a storyline before it got started. The "radio" Dick Huddleston does just that when he finds out about the Pine Ridge Stock Exchange, asking L&A if they have the necessary permits to incorporate and sell stock. Naturally, they do not, and have broken the law!

Realizing they have committed a federal offense, L&A panic, and call their one shareholder, Mose Moots. To their horror, Mose sold his share of stock to a stranger! Luckily, the stranger sold it to Ulysses S. Quincy for a profit! Ulysses refuses to sell the share back to Lum, and a desperate L&A hatch a plot to break into the Quincy home, take the stock, and leave money in its place!! Since Abner is "Deputy Town Marshal" (during Uncle Henry's absence), he fears he will have to "e-rest hisself" for this deed, but decides to "appint" Cedric to that post for one day only. With Cedric working the night shift at the war plant, L&A feel certain they will not be apprehended!

The Quincy family leaves for a party the evening of July 17, and L&A, masked like bandits, make their move! Mousey Gray, making a rare appearance, is a witness to the break-in, as well as being Cedric's newly-appointed deputy town marshal!! As we tune in the next day, we find our old friends inside the "arn bars an' stone walls" of the Pine Ridge Jail!

The incarcerated L&A cannot "study up" a way to gain their freedom. Even if Abner (now "deputy town marshal" again since Cedric's time has elapsed) were to dismiss their own charges (since they actually did not get the stock certificate), he reasons he will still have to hold them in jail for breaking and entering. Ulysses himself arrives on the scene, asking the men if they broke Mrs. Quincy's favorite lamp during their robbery attempt. Indeed they did, and to L&A's surprise, Ulysses gives them their stock back! It seems he is grateful to them - he hated that lamp - and feels they deserve the stock as a reward!! Ulysses skips off to see a man about painting his barn, and L&A are free to leave the jail; that is, until they discover that they have locked themselves back into the cell, beyond reach of the key!

Finally, on Thursday, July 19, 1945, Lum and Abner get back to the business of their store, and discover they've been losing money each month! Perhaps the best idea is to close the store and take a vacation - they won't make any money, but they won't lose any either - that's breaking even, they figure! Abner plans to skip off to "Floridy" to "raise Everglades," while Lum creates a sign with "Crayolies" which reads, "Jot 'Em Down Store, Eddards and Peabody, props., closed fer re-modelin' - back in six weeks!" With that, the *Lum and Abner* program went on a six-week hiatus, the first lapse in broadcasting since they resumed in September 1941. Comedians Pic and Pat filled in on the Alka-Seltzer time slot, and by the time *Lum and Abner* resumed broadcasting on September 3, the war was over! We will take a peek at the end of World War II, and how L&A deal with a few post-war situations, in our next issue!

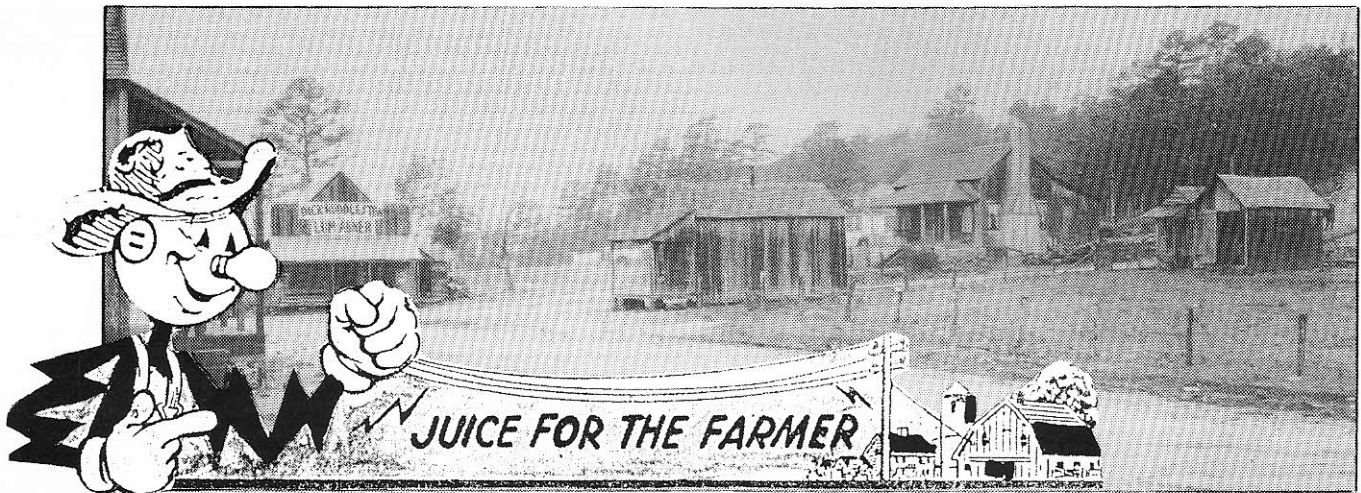
The programs discussed this time around are available on NLAS Cassette Library Tapes #175 - 179. All of us "Zeckatiff Ossifers" of the NLAS hope to see you at our Convention!!

- "Uncle Donnie" Pitchford

Lum and Abner® In The News

Reprints of Past Lum and Abner Articles

(It was fifty years ago this summer that the real-life Pine Ridge, Arkansas, got electrical service for the first time! Listeners of the Lum and Abner shows will recall that the radio episodes were usually rather vague as to whether the community had electricity or not. The following article appeared in *The Exciter*, the publication of the Arkansas Power & Light Company, in October 1945. Hosted by Reddy Kilowatt, it explains how electricity finally came to Pine Ridge, and gives some of the usual background information on the town. From the collection of the Lum & Abner Museum.)



REDDY KILOWATT

Going to Pine Ridge

It won't be long now until Dick Huddleston's store, Mose Moots' barber shop, Kalup Weehunt's blacksmith shop, Sister Simpson's home, and a lot of other places in the famous Pine Ridge of Lum and Abner fame will be getting electric service from the Arkansas Power & Light Company.

Permission for our company to build a rural electrification line to this nationally known community was granted last month by the Arkansas Public Service Commission.

There was no doubt about it; the folks there wanted service from our company in preference to that from a co-operative.

"There's too much give-er-mint in business now," said Dick Huddleston, the merchant prince of Pine Ridge. "We want the power company so we can get their taxes for our schools, and if something goes wrong we can sue 'em."

Our company will build a line from Oden into Pine Ridge. Manager Bill Allen of the Glenwood office, out of which Pine Ridge will be served, testified that work was to start at once. He said that he planned to let the folks along the line dig the holes and set the

poles in order to speed up construction.

Dick Huddleston cleared up a long-standing misunderstanding about Pine Ridge when he was on the stand. The Jot 'Em Down Store of Pine Ridge radio fame is only a mythical something, he said. It is the store of Lum and Abner, and is not the existing Dick Huddleston store.

"They're in competition to me," Dick said. "When things are going good they keep prices high and don't bother me. But let times get hard and they cut prices and give me some real competition."

Dick Huddleston sells everything in his store... that is he did until commodities got scarce because of the war. But he's gradually getting his stock built up again.

The folks are looking forward with real enthusiasm to the day there'll be 'lectricity in Pine Ridge.

"This little Reddy Kilowatt fellow we see and hear so much about better be good," says Dick Huddleston.

It might be pointed out that Pine Ridge today is far from the place that Lum and Abner depict on their radio programs. Filling

stations have replaced hitching racks, new white buildings crowd out old weather-beaten stores and homes. But the travelers still come through. The register at Dick Huddleston's store averages about 300 a week... or did until gasoline and tire rationing came in. And it's beginning to pick up again, Dick says.

The pioneer trading post of Pine Ridge was originally named Waters, after the man on whose farm the first post office was located. But after Lum and Abner had become national radio characters and had publicized Pine Ridge so much, the town formally changed its name.

Says Dick Huddleston: "We sent a petition to our congressman, signed by all the characters used in the Lum and Abner programs, and 50 others around here, asking the Post Office Department to change our town's name to Pine Ridge; telling them to inform Mr. Farley that if our request was refused he would be e-rested by Gran'pappy Spears for neglect of duty and that Lum, as justice of the peace, would pour it on him in court. That apparently had its effect for the change of name was granted."

So this is the Pine Ridge where Reddy Kilowatt soon will be serving.



LUM and ABNER[®]



meet with **FOWL PLAY**



During the 1930's and 1940's, it was common practice for animated cartoons to feature caricatures or parodies of famous radio programs and celebrities. Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Baby Snooks, Red Skelton, Fred Allen, *Duffy's Tavern*, Eddie Cantor, and countless others made cartoon appearances this way... but for some reason, Lum and Abner were never directly included in this trend. Why was this? No one seems to have a very good theory about it. Amos 'n' Andy had much the same problem, but there were at least a few cartoons of the early 1930's that caricatured them (two were even voiced by Gosden and Correll themselves). So why not Lum and Abner?

In the mid-1940's there was an attempt at a series of cartoons based on the *Li'l Abner* comic strip, and one of these gives us one of our only glimpses of a possible L&A reference. In the cartoon, *Kickapoo Juice*, famous Dogpatch derelicts Hairless Joe and Lonesome Polecat are getting soused, and Hairless Joe drunkenly slurs out "Wonderful world!!" To our knowledge, this appears to be the only time a Lum & Abner catchphrase made it into a cartoon.

However, there is ONE entire cartoon that seems to have been modeled on *Lum and Abner*, even though there are no direct references to the show or its format. Since we will be running this cartoon to accompany our showing of *Lum & Abner Abroad* at this year's Convention on June 24, we thought it would be appropriate to give you a preview of it here.

The cartoon in question is titled *Tom Turkey and his Harmonica*

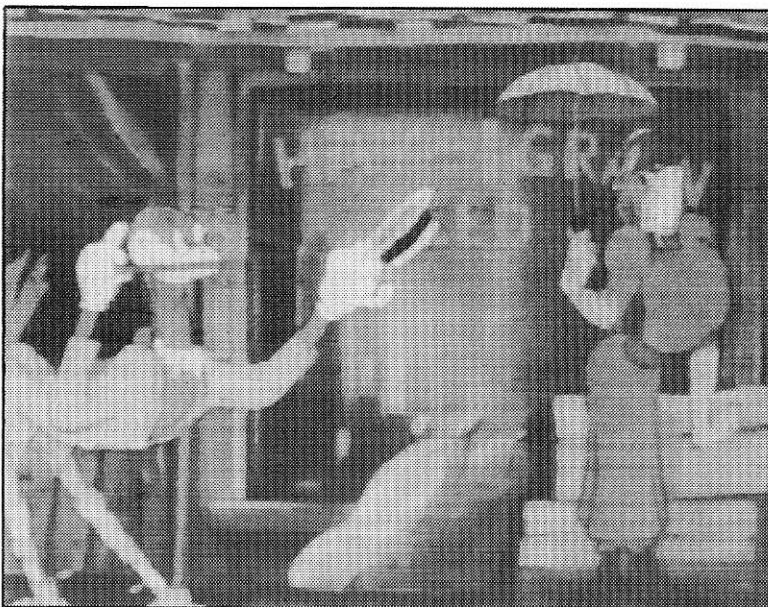


Abner Peabody loafs in front of the Jot 'Em Down Store.

Humdingers, and was released by the MGM studios on June 8, 1940. Therefore, it predates the first Lum & Abner feature film by some three months (according to information at our disposal, *Dreaming Out Loud* was still in production at the time of this cartoon's release; given the time necessary to complete a seven-minute cartoon short in those days, *Tom Turkey* would have gone into production at least during 1939, and possibly in 1938). This makes the cartoon's resemblance to the later L&A movies even more curious. It should be mentioned that it features an all-poultry cast of turkeys and chickens.

The cartoon opens with the hero, Tom Turkey (a dead ringer for Cedric Weehunt) strolling down the streets of Pine Ridge (or a reasonable facsimile), belting out *Turkey In The Straw* on his harmonica. The ne'er-do-well's carefree nature seems to irritate a prissy Sister Simpson type, who haughtily turns up her beak at such proceedings. Cedric/Tom continues on his merry way until he reaches the local general store, which only needs a "Jot 'Em Down Store" sign to be complete. Loafing in front of the store is an old character whose goatee and tobacco-chewing habit make him the closest resemblance to Abner Peabody ever seen in cartoon land.

Our hero promptly makes himself at home in the store, propping his feet up on the potbellied stove and whipping out his trusty harmonica for a quick jam session.



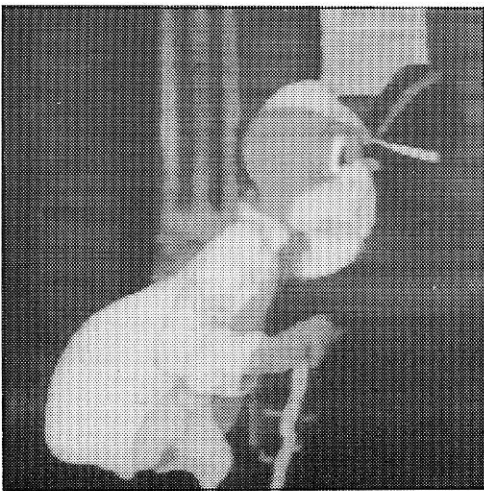
Sister Simpson is not amused by the antics of Tom (Cedric Weehunt) Turkey.



***A hot checker game in progress
at the Jot 'Em Down Store.***

Soon Abner joins in, as do a pair of unidentified checker players. The quartet strikes up a stirring harmonica rendition of *Darktown Strutter's Ball*. Outside the store, an old geezer in a Confederate uniform, who could not be anyone else but Grandpappy Spears, hears the ruckus through his ear trumpet. Whipped into action, he produces a fife from his uniform and begins playing *Dixie* in counterpoint to the others' tune. They quickly join in, and the music becomes deafening.

Now we see Lum, who becomes alarmed when the store's merchandise begins falling off the shelves due to the vibrations from the loud music. He gets no help at all from the town marshal, who spends the whole cartoon eating handful after handful of crackers out of the store's cracker barrel. (In L&A terms, this would be Uncle



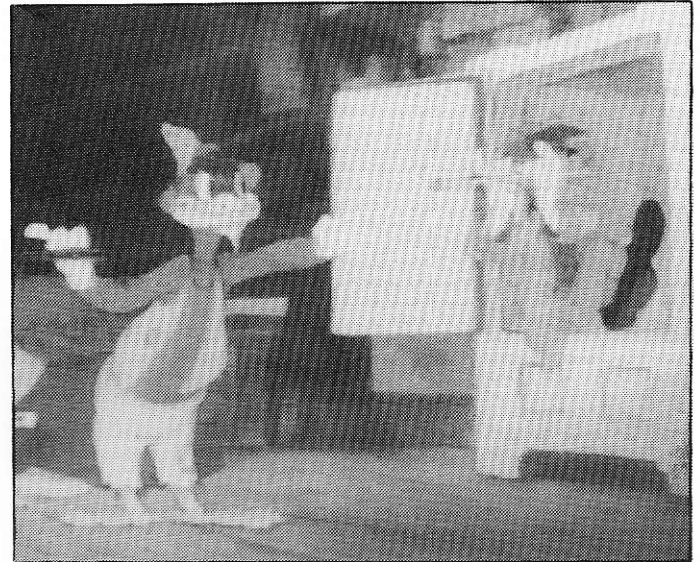
***Grandpappy Spears joins
the cast.***

was being made.)

Soon, the harmonica and fife quintet manages to wreck the whole grocery department. Cedric picks up a fallen ladle and uses it as a radio microphone (!). With a voice provided by Mel Blanc (not an imitation of Cedric), he announces, "Hello, Ma!...

Henry Lunsford, but that character would not be introduced as the town marshal on the radio shows until 1942. He actually physically resembles actor Robert McKenzie's portrayal of town marshal Caleb Weehunt in *Dreaming Out Loud*, but as stated above, that movie had not even gone into production when this cartoon

Hello, Pa! Our next number will be entitled 'Mother, You've Worked For Me All Your Life, Now Go Out and Work for Yourself.'" He directs the other three harmonica players in the operatic aria *Lucia*, but Grandpap is still stuck on *Dixie* and refuses to play any other tune. This causes some friction between Grandpap and Abner (surprised?).



***Abner and Grandpap have a slight
musical disagreement.***

Once that number is finished, the group goes into *Strolling Through the Park One Day*, with vocal by Cedric. As Lum protests apoplectically, the carefree rascal begins dancing with a female mannequin in the store's display window, while his friends launch into a reprise of *Darktown Strutter's Ball*. Lum is distraught over the destruction being wrought, and in desperation he pulls down the display window's shade to keep the local citizenry from seeing the goings-on in his store.

At that moment, who should be passing the store but Sister Simpson, and one look at the silhouette of the dancing going on in the window is enough to galvanize her into action. Moments later, we see her leading the entire Ladies' Uplift League of Pine Ridge, armed to the teeth with brooms, rolling pins, and other implements of war. The scandalized females storm into the store, and sounds of a battle are heard on the soundtrack. Suddenly, the music changes to *There Is A Tavern In The Town*, as the ladies march their errant husbands off into the distance. Watching them go, Sister Simpson accidentally steps on a loose board in the store's front porch, and receives a resounding whack on her posterior. This finally gets a rise out of the town marshal, who guffaws uncontrollably. The cartoon ends with Sister Simpson pounding him with her umbrella.

As you can see, this cartoon was rather short on plot, being instead a showcase for the harmonica music. Were these characters indeed intended to resemble Lum & Abner and their friends? If not, why did they look and act so much like them? Is this any indication of the direction a Lum & Abner cartoon series would have taken? Well, if you have not seen the cartoon to judge for yourself, you may do so at this year's NLAS Convention in Mena, Arkansas, on June 24. We'll see you then!

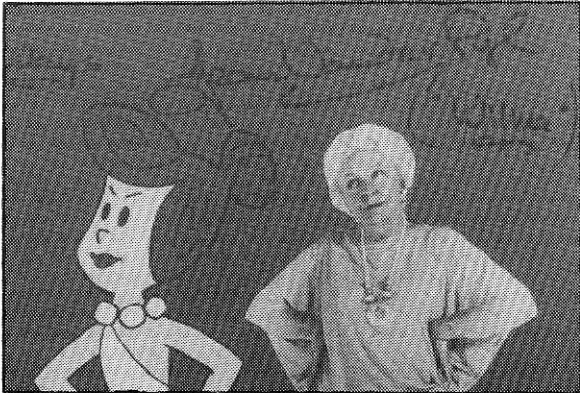
- Tim Hollis

“AND NOW...”

...let's see what's going on around the country in the WONDERFUL WORLD of *Lum and Abner*!

* * *

There has been a change in plans for the 1995 NLAS Convention coming up in Mena on June 24. NLAS Honorary Member **Jean Vander Pyl**, who worked in commercials on *Lum and Abner* from 1938 to 1940, and who gained greater fame in the TV era as the voice of Wilma Flintstone and



Jean Vander Pyl with her famous alter ego, Wilma Flintstone.

other cartoon characters, was originally scheduled to be a guest at the Convention. However, we recently received a letter from her, which explains:

I'm sorry to be so late in answering, but I kept hoping! I will be in Orlando, Florida, until June 17, on the first "leg" of a gallery tour all over the U.S. (and one city in Canada) for "cel" signings. Sooooo, I'm so sorry to say I can't attend the Convention this year. I'm afraid I'm just not up to a "side" trip... in fact, I'm really wondering now if I'm up to the tour itself!

Thanks again for all your kind attention and interest, and HI to all "the gang" for me!

We are sorry that Vander Pyl will be unable to be with us, but we are happy that she is continuing to be recognized for her major contributions to American animated cartoons. We hope to schedule her for a future NLAS Convention.

* * *

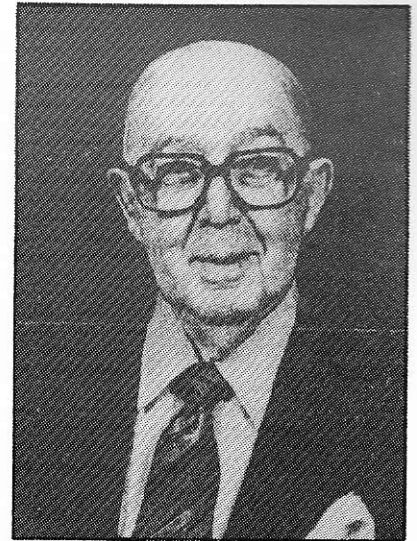
Just before this issue of the *Journal* went to press, we learned that another of our scheduled Convention guests, **Shirley Lauck Babcock**, would also be unable to attend this year's event. We are sorry to report this, but hope she can be with us another time.

* * *

We recently learned of the death of a figure from the early history of *Lum and Abner*. While it is sad enough that this link to the past has been broken, we are even more regretful that we never learned he was still alive in the first place. His name was **Thomas K. Nobles**, and he had the incredible distinction of being the announcer on the very first *Lum and*

Abner broadcasts from station KTHS in Hot Springs in 1931! According to the book *Arkansas Airwaves* by Ray Poindexter, Nobles was "the son of early KTHS booster Milton Nobles. He had joined the station as an announcer after graduating from high school. There was some talk about his going to Chicago to serve as *Lum and Abner's* announcer, but the arrangement did not materialize." Nobles died in Little Rock on March 7, at the age of 84. We at the NLAS sincerely regret that we never had an opportunity to contact him and learn more about his association with L&A during their earliest days on the air.

* * *



Thomas K. Nobles

In the February issue of the *Journal*, we published an article detailing the proposed restoration of the old Pine Ridge post office building. Kathy Stucker of the Lum & Abner Museum fills us in on progress that has been made so far:

The post office displays in the Lum & Abner Museum are complete, and repairs on the old post office building began in April, in hopes that a new business will be ready for the summer travel season... and especially for the NLAS Convention. Bob Palmer, a "mountain man" craftsman who lives on the banks of Hole-In-The-Ground Creek about two miles north of Pine Ridge, is restoring the building and will sell his wood crafts along with those of other artists and craftsmen.

Bob turned a tar-paper shack into a picturesque wood-hewn home for himself, and does similar work for others, so we have high hopes for the old post office building.

The great-granddaughter of A.A. McKenzie (original owner of the store building that now houses the Museum) and her husband have bought Ora "Mose Moots" Garrett's old house, and are fixing it up to rent. It will be a real show piece and another possible business site for 1996. "Downtown" Pine Ridge is seeing a real renewal, so we look forward to seeing all of you in June!

And, may we add that during the Convention, ample time will be provided for our visitors to travel out to Pine Ridge and see all these sights for themselves. See the Convention schedule on the back page of this issue for full details.

- Tim Hollis

The 11th Annual



CONVENTION

*Mena, Arkansas * June 24, 1995*

This will be the last issue of *The Jot 'Em Down Journal* before this year's Convention in Mena on June 24, so here are the plans as they stand now. It is always possible that there may be a change or two before the event itself.

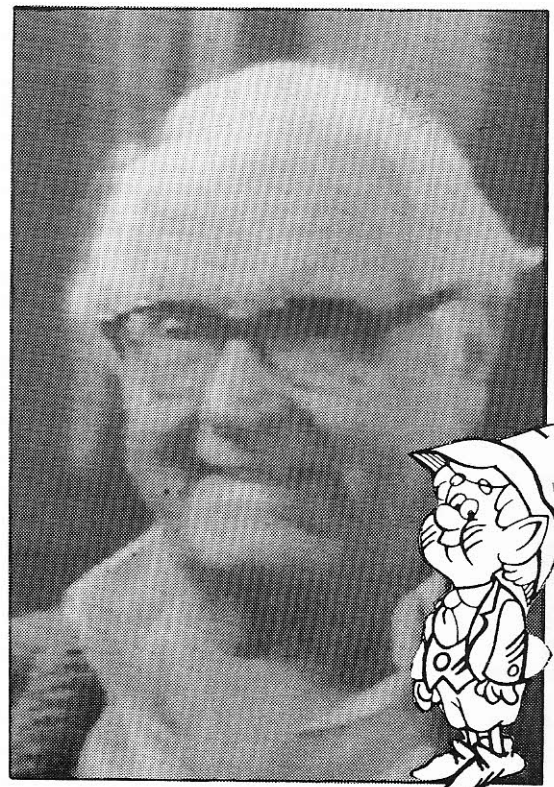
Our scheduled guest for this year is truly a legend in old-time radio. **PARLEY BAER** played various supporting roles on the half-hour version of *Lum and Abner* in 1948-50, and is a familiar face at radio conventions across the country. Besides his L&A work, Mr. Baer has worked on practically every radio show and a good many TV series over the years. On radio, he won fame as the original voice of "Chester" on *Gunsmoke*. His TV appearances are too numerous to list here, but range from a continuing role as "Mayor Stoner" on *The Andy Griffith Show* to guest appearances on everything from *The Lucy Show* to *Quantum Leap* to *The Young and the Restless*. He is currently heard regularly as the friendly voice of Ernie Keebler, the cartoon elf of cookie commercial fame.

Activities will begin in the meeting room of the Best Western Lime Tree Inn at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 24. At that time we will salute the 40th anniversary of the 1955 release of L&A's final motion picture, *Lum and Abner Abroad*. Accompanying a showing of the Yugoslavian-produced film will be "selected short subjects," including a 1960's travelogue about Hot Springs (narrated by Chet "Lum" Lauck himself), and the 1940 MGM cartoon *Tom Turkey and his Harmonica Humdingers*, discussed in this issue of the Journal.

On Saturday afternoon, we encourage everyone to visit the Dick Huddleston Store and Lum & Abner Museum in Pine Ridge, approximately a half hour's drive from Mena. There will be many new displays to be seen, and hopefully the old Pine Ridge post office building will be reopened by that time (see this issue's "And Now" column for details on that). Back at the Lime Tree Inn at 7:00 Saturday evening, we will present Parley Baer for a discussion of his incredible career. We will also be featuring Mr. Baer in a brand-new script in which Lum and Abner meet Chester and Marshal Dillon on the dusty streets of Dodge City. How can that happen, you say? You will have to be there and hear it to believe it!

If you have not yet made your reservations, you should do so now. The Lime Tree Inn number is (501) 394-6350. If they should fill all their rooms for that weekend, they have assured us that they will direct our members to the closest comparable motel, so do not hesitate to ask about that. Hope to see you in Mena on June 24!

Special Guest:



Parley Baer