

The Jot 'Em Down Journal  
Official Publication of the  
National Lum & Abner® Society

December 1997



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# Ouachita Christmas

(Originally published in *The Mena Star*,  
December 21, 1933)

When snowflakes are falling outside,  
Geraniums are blooming within;  
Leaves that were yellow and red  
Lie asleep where roses have been.

Holly berries are bright on the way,  
The brook sings a song soft and low;  
Apples are russet and red,  
Bright home fires sparkle and glow.

Cedar and pine trees are green,  
Laden with soft fallen snow;  
Extend their protecting arms,  
Winter birds their shelter might know.

The spirit of Christmas time lives  
In homes where love reigns supreme;  
Charity gives and is kind,  
And mistletoe hangs from the beam.

Christmas is the happiest time  
for children of all the year,  
All seem young again  
Enjoying yuletide cheer.

In home fires we picture the flowers  
The soon coming Spring will give birth;  
We will sing praises to Him whose great love  
Gives Christmas time joy to the earth.

— Grace Etchison, Hatton, Ark.



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# THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

DECEMBER 1997

## *In This Issue:*

- The Fright Before Christmas ..... 4**  
L&A spend a hectic Christmas Eve in this 1946 routine.
- L&A & the Great American Roadside ..... 7**  
More on the famous L&A lodge in British Columbia.
- Give a Cheer for Lum & Abner ..... 8**  
A rare item from the 1998 Rose Bowl game.
- L&A In the News ..... 9**  
News items from the autumn of 1937.

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LUM AND ABNER SOCIETY**

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**Cover:** Chet "Lum" Lauck catches Norris "Abner" Goff in the act in a Yuletide publicity photo, circa 1947. (Photo courtesy of Chuck Schaden)

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## *In Memory Of* **RED SKELTON**



The whole radio world was saddened by the loss of Red Skelton in September, but he did have only the slightest connection with Lum & Abner. He is seen above with the boys, along with Hedda Hopper and Margaret Whiting, at the CBS broadcast given to welcome L&A's new 30-minute show to the prime time schedule on September 28, 1948. NLAS Vice-Prez Singin' Sam Brown had an opportunity to meet Skelton in person a few years ago; Skelton remembered his broadcast with L&A, but had no further information or stories to share.

# LUM AND ABNER. IN THE FRIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

*On December 24, 1946, the ABC radio network presented a special Christmas production that featured many of their current stars. Among those included were Lum & Abner. Through the courtesy of radio historian Chuck Schaden, we are pleased to present this little-known L&A Christmas routine, which they performed on that special broadcast. A recording of the program has not yet been released into the NLAS Tape Library.*

**(MUSIC: "Down On The Old Party Line")**

**ABNER:** (singing) "Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way..."

**LUM:** Abner, wait a minit... would you simmer down fer a minit?

**ABNER:** HUH?

**LUM:** I want you to lissen while I run through this poem I'm goin' to ree-cite at the younguns' Christmas party tonite.

**ABNER:** You goin' to ree-cite a poem?

**LUM:** Yeah...

**ABNER:** Law me, I love to hear a piece spoke. Love it.

**LUM:** They wanted somebody with a good speakin' voice an' lots o' personality...

**ABNER:** Natural.... but you'll do jes' as well, Lum. What poem air you goin' to ree-cite?

**LUM:** Hit's a Christmas poem.

**ABNER:** Well now, you chose a good topics fer this time o' year. Shore did.

**LUM:** I thought hit'd sorter fit in good. But you stand ther an' lissen...

**ABNER:** Yeah, go ahead.. I

jes' love Christmas... Happy yuletide, jes' love it!

**LUM:** 'Twas the night before Christmas...

**ABNER:** Huh? What wuz it now, Lum?

**LUM:** I said, 'Twas the night before Christmas...

**ABNER:** Oh, I en-joy Christmas, my favorite holiday! Well, go ahead, Lum... start yer poem, I'm dyin' to hear it.

**LUM:** Well, keep still then. 'Twas the night before Christmas...

**ABNER:** Oh, that's sweet. I jes' love it.

**LUM:** An' all through the house...

**ABNER:** All through WHOSE house?

**LUM:** Any house. An' all through the house, not a creature...

**ABNER:** Oh, a vacant house, huh?

**LUM:** No, they's a family livin' in it. Got some younguns.

**ABNER:** The Bateses place?

**LUM:** Not necessarily.

**ABNER:** Well, they got younguns... little Doody and Dulcy.

**LUM:** All right, make it the Bateses then.

**ABNER:** Yea (L) Cain't understand why hit's so quiet around ther, though... That's the two noisiest little brats I ever knowed. Well, go ahead, Lum.

**LUM:** 'Twas the night before Christmas, an' all through the house...

**ABNER:** Ah-ah-ah-ah...

**LUM:** What's the matter now?

**ABNER:** All through the Bateses house.

**LUM:** Alright... 'Twas the night before Christmas, an' all through the Bateses house, not a creature wa stirrin', not even a mouse.

**ABNER:** He might be caught in a trap.





LUM: Keep quiet. *The stockings...*  
 ABNER: The mouse's stockings?!  
 LUM: No, silly...  
 ABNER: Well, I was gonna say, no wonder they couldn't hear the mice if they was runnin' around in their stockin' feet. Go ahead, go ahead...  
 LUM: *The stockings was hung by the chimney with care...*  
 ABNER: Aw, that's sweet.  
 LUM: *In hopes that St. Nich'las soon would be there...*  
 ABNER: Who in the world is Nick Lasoon?  
 LUM: Who?  
 ABNER: That Nick Lasoon, you said you hoped he'd be there.  
 LUM: I said, *In the hopes that St. Nich'las soon would be there.*  
 ABNER: Yeah.  
 LUM: That's Santy Claus.  
 ABNER: Oh, I see... that's the first time I ever heard him called Nick Lasoon... but hit's yore poem, go ahead and do it any way you want.  
 LUM: I'm tryin to. *The childern were nestled all snug in their beds...*  
 ABNER: Yeah, that's Doody and Dulcy. Bless their hearts.  
 LUM: *While visions of sugar plums danced through their heads...*  
 ABNER: BA-LESS their LIT-TUL..... VISIONS?! Well, no wonder they're quiet... them younguns is sick!!  
 LUM: Stop inneruptin', will you? Let's see, wher was I at?  
 ABNER: Them pore littl varmint.  
 LUM: Oh yeah... *An' mamma in her kerchief...*  
 ABNER: MIZ BATES, dancin' at that time of the night?!  
 LUM: *An' I in my cap...*  
 ABNER: YOU? Was you over ther dancin' with Miz Bates, Lum?  
 LUM: Oh, fer pity sakes...  
 ABNER: Well, Lum, you ort to of took yer cap off... Hit ain't perlite to dance with yer cap on.  
 LUM: I wern't over ther dancin' with Miz Bates!  
 ABNER: Who was it then?  
 LUM: I don't know.  
 ABNER: Well, I bound you I can guess purty close who it

was.  
 LUM: Who?  
 ABNER: That Nick Lasoon.  
 LUM: Abner, will you jes' hesh up and lissen? I'm so mixed up, I fergot wher I was in this poem.  
 ABNER: Nick an' Miz Bates was dancin'.  
 LUM: Yeah... er, NO!  
 ABNER: They're gonna wake up the kids too, if they ain't keerful.  
 LUM: *An' mamma in her kerchief...*  
 ABNER: Her WHAT?  
 LUM: KERCHIEF!  
 ABNER: Geshundheit!  
 LUM: *An' I in my cap...*  
 ABNER: Yeah, you better keep yer cap on, Lum, long as you're ketchin' cold, sneezin' thataway. Go ahead.  
 LUM: *When out on the lawn ther arose sich a clatter...*  
 ABNER: (L) Old man Bates comin' home, huh?  
 LUM: Jes' lissen to the poem an' you'll find out what it was.  
 ABNER: Yeah, go ahead... I'd love to find out what that racket is. I still think old man Bates is mixed up in it sommers.  
 LUM: *I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter...*  
 ABNER: Doggies, could you hear it clean over to yer place?!  
 LUM: Abner, will you keep quiet?  
 ABNER: That's more'n likely how you caught that cold, runnin' around in yer nightshirt thataway. Go ahead...  
 LUM: *Away to the winder I flew like a flash...*  
 ABNER: Good fer you!  
 LUM: *Tore open the shutters an' threw up the sash.*  
 ABNER: Jes' barely made it, huh?  
 LUM: *The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow gave a luster of midday to objects below...*  
 ABNER: Lum, now don't change the subject! What wuz that racket goin' on out ther?!  
 LUM: I was comin' to that. *When what to my wonderin' eyes should appear, but a miniature sleigh an' eight tiny reindeer.*  
 ABNER: Eight ti— Lum Eddards, do you actual claim you seen a herd o' midget reindeers runnin' around in the Bateses yard?



**LUM:** I told you to keep quiet. *More rapid than eagles...*

**ABNER:** Now rabbits an' eagles has got into it.

**LUM:** *He whistled an' shouted an' called 'em by name...*

**ABNER:** Lum, you better lay down.. that cold's give you a fever.

**LUM:** Git away from me, Abner... *Now, Dasher; now, Dancer; now...*

**ABNER:** Now Lum, calm down now...

**LUM:** *On, Comet; on, Cupid; on, Donder an' Blitzen...*

**ABNER:** Lum, watch yer language!!

**(SOUND: Door)**

**GRPAP:** Well, hidy hidy hidy... Merry Christmas!

**ABNER:** Well hidy, Grandpap... doggies, I'm glad you're here.

**GRPAP:** Hit's time to go on over to the Christmas party, air you fellers ready?

**LUM:** I grannies I am... I'm gettin' outa here right now.

**ABNER:** Hey, wait a minit now, Lum... come back here... HEY, LUM!



**(SOUND: Door)**

**ABNER:** Oh me, Grandpap, this is the worst one Christmas I ever seen.

**GRPAP:** Why? What's the trouble?

**ABNER:** Well, ain't you heard?

**GRPAP:** No...

**ABNER:** Why, Lum's got to go over ther an' ree-cite a poem when he's so sick he's got the lucinations! The little Bates younguns is laid up with the visions! Their mamma's downstairs dancin'

with Mr. Lasoon! Old man Bates is out in the yard raisin' a ruckus you can hear all over town! You better go on over to the party, Grandpap, by yersef...

**GRPAP:** Well, ain't you comin'?

**ABNER:** No, I think I better stay here an' wait fer the call.

**GRPAP:** What call?

**ABNER:** Why, the one from the coroner! If old man Bates ever ketches them two in ther dancin' an' carryin' on, that Nick Lasoon's a dead goose!

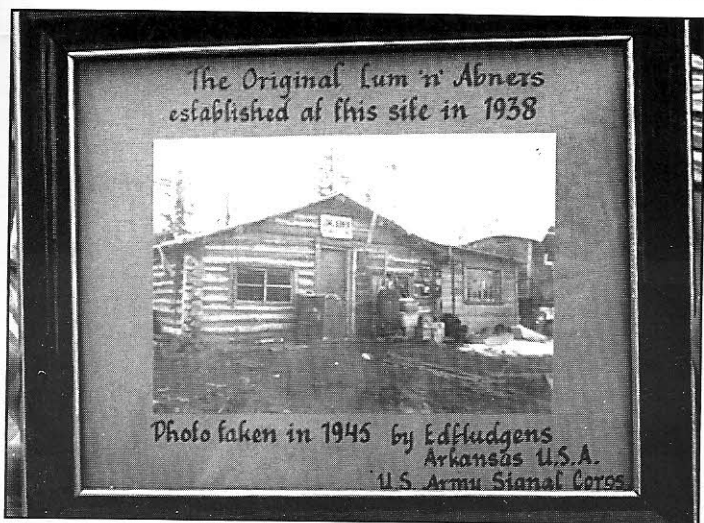
**(MUSIC: "Down On The Old Party Line")**



**Happy Holidays!**



This past summer, NLAS member James Raper made a trip to Alaska, and en route he took time to stop over at the legendary Lum & Abner tourist camp along the Alaska Highway in British Columbia. You will recall that this veteran establishment was mentioned in an earlier installment of this column, but there were very few illustrations to go along with it. Thanks to James, we can now rectify that situation!



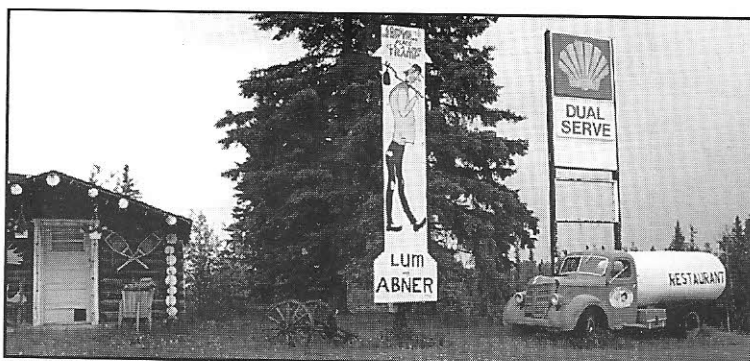
The owners were kind enough to bring this framed photo outside so James could make a shot of it for our purposes. As you can see, there has been a "Lum & Abner's" camp on the Alaska Highway since 1938.



The present-day Lum & Abner's Restaurant sits on the same spot as the original structure.



Notice that the sign features some most oddball caricatures of Lum & Abner. We do not know whether the sign painter had ever seen a photo of the real L&A in makeup.



The tall sign in the middle has been a feature of the camp since its early days. It reads, "60 miles to the next eating place... It's a LONG TRAMP," accompanied by a picture of a 10-foot-tall hobo.

# GIVE A CHEER FOR LUM & ABNER!





# Lum and Abner® In The News

## Reprints of Past Lum & Abner Articles

There was a lot going on in the world of *Lum and Abner* 60 years ago this fall! Apparently Lauck and Goff had recently hired a new press agent, because during the autumn months of 1937, their hometown newspaper, *The Mena Star*, was suddenly loaded with articles about them. (The fact that earlier that year they had joined the ranks of Hollywood radio stars may also have accounted for the increase in publicity.) Here we present many of those 1937 clippings, reprinted courtesy of the Lum & Abner Museum in Pine Ridge.

August 10, 1937:

### Abner's Mother Spills Several Family Secrets

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. - Mrs. Dora Goff, 62-year-old mother of the Abner half of the NBC Lum and Abner team, brought the Goff family skeleton with her to Hollywood when she came to visit the comedian.

"Tuffy," she discoursed, as Abner (Tuffy to his friends) sat and bit his lower lip, "was an awfully poor grocery salesman back in Mena. He would just stand around and talk to people instead of selling groceries.

"The whole family can act as silly as Tuffy. The only difference is that he

gets paid for it."

Certainly Abner's face was red. And right now, he's being told by his mother to fix a broadcast (for which he gets a fortune a year) "so we folks in Mena would feel more at home when we listen."

September 21, 1937:

### Now 100 "Jot 'Em Down" Stores

Mrs. W. J. Lauck handed *The Star* a clipping given below, showing the popularity of the "Jot 'Em Down" store name made famous by Lum and Abner in their radio sketch.

"Three years ago the 'Jot 'Em Down Store' didn't exist anywhere except in the mythical town of Pine Ridge, Ark. This week, Lum and Abner, the famous rustic comedians, were asked by Mr. and Mrs. LaVirne Cox of Moline, Ill., for permission to open



what will be the 100th real grocery store in America bearing the name coined by the comics."

October 5, 1937:

### Lum and Abner Two Busiest Men in Radio

They write a complete radio show every day. They put their show on the air twice daily. They take the parts of all fourteen characters in the story themselves, and they do all their own sound effects. On top of that, they have a show on the road in the middle west, and are preparing another show for the road in the near future.

These two busy gents are Lum and Abner. They are busy now, but not as busy as they are going to be. Starting September 27, Lum and Abner are



Norris Goff and his mother, Mrs. Dora Goff of Mena.

**FACING PAGE:** This photo ran in newspapers on December 30, 1937. The accompanying caption read: "Alabama's Crimson Tide ought to have plenty of fans rooting in their favor Saturday in the Rose Bowl shindig with the California Bears, what with such a cute gal as Miss Martha Witt Burleson being the chief instigator of yells. The cute Bama cheerleader, who invaded the NBC studios yesterday, is shown signing comedians Lum and Abner on the school's official megaphone."

doing three identical shows daily, five days a week, for three different listening audiences.

October 8, 1937:

## Lum and Abner Shorts.....

Lum, accompanied by Andy Devine, went fishing in the High Sierras recently ... nothing was caught but a good time was had by all ... Abner and party went to Ensenada and spent the weekend ... they were greeted by a burning flour mill, and the natives all flocked to the fire .... Abner and party were first on the spot ... both boys attended the reception of Andy (of Amos and Andy). The two teams, though rivals on the air, are good friends ... Negotiations may jell which will syndicate a comic strip for Lum and Abner ... Plans for the "Pine Ridge Review" are practically completed and the road show is expected to get under way in another month or two.

October 12, 1937

## The Lum and Abner Line

Lum and Abner have used the old-fashioned cigar-box type of telephone so consistently in their scripts that telephone line men and engineers throughout the country have come to designate that particular type of party line telephone as the "Lum and Abner

line."

As jealous guardians of the old-fashioned side-winding wall phone, Lum and Abner have perpetuated for modern generations the old sweet days when telephoning was an art and good exercise, and every subscriber to a party line broadcast over his own network for the amusement of his own little circle of rabid fans.

October 13, 1937:

## Some Facts About Lum and Abner

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Lum and Abner are the only radio stars doing three a day ... their fans demand it ... That they actually changed the name of an Arkansas town from Waters to Pine Ridge ... That over 100 "Jot 'Em Down" stores have been granted permission to use the name ... That Lum and Abner are not only Kentucky colonels, but Arkansas colonels as well ... and in case of riot or insurrection will have to go to Arkansas to command a company of militia ... When Lum and Abner made personal appearances in Texas, there were so many SRO signs out that people thought that SRO was another member of the team ... That Lum and Abner were once a great success as a black face team ... That several of the characters in the Lum and Abner show actually exist in Arkansas ... Dick Huddleston runs a variety store in Pine Ridge ... That Lum and Abner are so adept at changing their voices for different characters in the show that many of their oldest fans still think that there are ten different people in the cast instead of just two ... That when Arkansas people come to the coast, the first thing they ask to see isn't the movie stars or the Pacific Ocean, but Lum and Abner ... And Lum and Abner welcome Arkansas visitors

because it helps them to keep their accent in perfect condition.

October 27, 1937:

## Lum and Abner Kidnap Threat Investigated

HOLLYWOOD, Oct. 27 (UP) - A threat to kidnap Chester Lauck and Norris Goff, the "Lum and Abner" of radio programs, was investigated by federal authorities today.

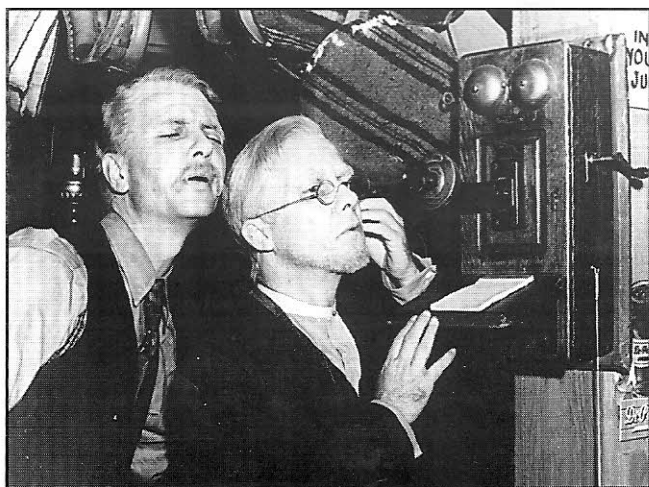
"You're next" was written on the margin of a newspaper clipping of a recent \$10,000 extortion attempt on Wallace Beery. The clipping was left at the studio where the two men broadcast.

Agents of the FBI said they were uncertain whether the note was a joke or not.

November 11, 1937:

## Betty Grable Enrolls Lum & Abner

Lum and Abner, top-notch radio stars, have joined the Pine Ridge chapter of the American Red Cross.



"Yeah, and I reckon them folks and neighbors o' ours back at Pine Ridge air jest about th' smartest people anywhere around," chuckled Lum as he signed his name to a check.



"Yes, sir!" agreed Abner. "Why, I'll be jiggered if I don't think they could talk Crosby into bettin' on one of his own horses. Smart folks back there in Arkansas. Stead o' writin' us a letter, they jest got that cute little trick Betty Grable to come right up to us, slick as a button, and tell us about the Red Cross."

"Heh-Heh," giggled Abner. "Lum, you shore war a fidgetin' thar when you was a tryin' to tell Miss Grable how you knowed what a wonderful and worthy cause the Red Cross be. I jest had to laugh. I knowed you jest couldn't resist a purty little gal like that."

"Yeah," retorted Lum. "Well, purty gal or not, I see you got yore membership in the Red Cross paid."

Lum and Abner, the two "old gentlemen," are in real life Chester Lauck and Norris Goff, formerly of Mena. Miss Betty Grable, Paramount's newest star, was special representative of the American Red Cross in obtaining the two memberships from the former Arkansans.

November 17, 1937:

## Lum and Abner to Appear on Jolson Program

Mena's two radio entertainers, Lum and Abner, will break in on a new program next week... but only for one evening... when they appear as guest

artists on Al Jolson's program Tuesday evening.

This is not the first time the hill country philosophers have appeared as special entertainers on other programs, as it will be remembered they were featured several years ago on the

RCA Magic Key program from Radio City, New York.

November 22, 1937:

## Lum and Abner To Make Guest Appearance

Lum and Abner, whose characterizations of the "folks down home in Pine Ridge" have put them on top of the comedy team class in radio, will make a guest appearance with Al Jolson on November 23. This is the first time that the boys from Arkansas have made a guest appearance in Hollywood, and requests for tickets are exceeding the seating capacity of the studio. The program promises to be a highlight on the Tuesday radio calendar.

The program will be heard in Mena at 7:30 p.m.

November 26, 1937:

## Lum and Abner Change Schedule to Three a Week on November 29

In order to clear time and facilitate the addition of stations not now carrying their program, Lum and Abner

will change their schedule to three broadcasts a week on November 29.

The boys, whose program ranks tops with the listeners, will be heard on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 6:30 p.m. SCT, on the Eastern stations; on KFI, Los Angeles, at 8:00 p.m. CST, and over the Pacific Coast at 10:30 p.m. CST.

Despite the fact that this change will mean less work for Lum and Abner, who write their own script, their sponsor has made a substantial increase in their salary effective immediately.

The change is being made to accommodate the many listeners who have hitherto been unable to hear Lum and Abner. The thrice weekly program will enlarge the listening audience, and will add several stations that do not now appear on the Lum and Abner schedule.

YES SIR ABNER THAT'S IT  
RIGHT THERE!  
**HORLICK'S**  
THE ORIGINAL

# NLAS CONVENTION VIDEOS: NEW RELEASE!

After much work, we now have the latest release ready in our ongoing series of NLAS Convention video tapes. **The 1990 NLAS Convention** was the most elaborate production the Society had ever attempted up to that time.

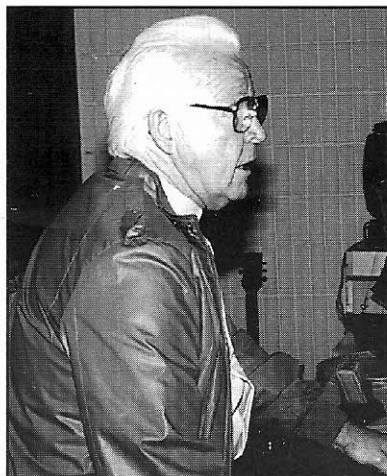
The main focus that year was on the 50th anniversary of L&A's first motion picture, *Dreaming Out Loud*.

To that effect, the Convention guest was one of the original cast members from that film, former child star **BOBS WATSON**. During all the previous years, the Convention program had been limited to one program, usually on Saturday evening. In 1990, however, the activities grew and grew until they occupied most of the day!

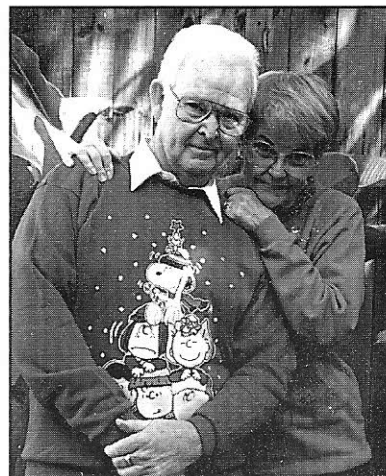
This video kicks off with a feat that has been unparalleled at any of the subsequent conventions. "Welcome Home, Brother Jimmy" was a newly-written L&A story in which our old Pine Ridge friends make preparations for the return of little Jimmy King (Bobs' character from *Dreaming Out Loud*) as he returns to the little community after 50 years to become the town's new pastor. The difference was that, because of Bobs Watson's background in movies rather than radio, this skit was performed in front of the audience in



**Bobs Watson (left) is reunited with his old friends from Pine Ridge: Mousey Gray, Abner Peabody, and Lum Edwards.**



**Bobs shares show biz stories with 1990 Convention attendees.**



**Bobs & Jaye Watson, Christmas 1996.**

full makeup and costumes. The Zekatif Ossifers (and some talented members) present their renditions of Lum, Abner, Cedric, Grandpap, Ulysses S. Quincy, and Mousey Gray, all on hand to give their returning friend a royal reception.

Once the play was over, Rev Watson (who actually became a Methodist minister in his adult life) narrated

a selection of clips from his various movies and television appearances. This served as a prelude to that evening's event, the grand "re-premiere" of *Dreaming Out Loud*.

No, you won't see the complete feature here (it has a video tape of its own; see the Lum & Abner Associates ad on our inside front cover), but you will see all the paraphernalia that went into recreating a typical 1940 night at the movies. There was even an audience singalong to some famous tunes from Lum & Abner history.

As with previous volumes in this series, **The 1990 NLAS Convention** is \$9.95. In case you came in late, previous entries covering the years 1985 through 1989 (five volumes) are available for \$9.95 each as well. Orders should be sent to the NLAS Executive Secretary at 81 Sharon Boulevard, Dora, AL 35062.