

APRIL 1998

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- F. 1990, with special guest **Bobs Watson**

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- D. THE MUSIC OF LUM & ABNER
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PINBACK BUTTONS with NLAS logo, \$1.75 each

BACK ISSUES of *THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL*, many issues available from 1985-98 (write for complete listing), \$2.00 each

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VISIT

The Jot 'Em Down Store & Lum & Abner® Museum



Located on Highway 88
(the "Lum & Abner Highway")

PINE RIDGE, ARKANSAS

For further information, contact
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THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

APRIL 1998

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Better start makin' yer plans now!	

**THE NATIONAL
 LUM AND ABNER SOCIETY**

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PRESIDENT
 Donnie Pitchford

VICE-PRESIDENT
 Sam Brown

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
 Tim Hollis

Cover: Lum & Abner in a 1938
 publicity pose. This "generic" shot
 was made during the same photo
 session as the series of shots taken
 to promote Chet Lauck's upcoming
 trip to Europe. (Photo courtesy of
 Mandy Lauck)

LUM AND ABNER is a registered
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 Chester Lauck, Jr.

THEY GOT THEIR BACKS UP DEPT.

NLAS member Charles Callahan of Baltimore, MD, reports: "A local Washington DC radio station, WAMU, has an old-time radio show every Sunday. I've listened to it for years. Well, they decided to discontinue the LUM AND ABNER program on December 29, 1997. There was such an uproar, with people cancelling their memberships, etc., that the station had to start them again on February 3, 1998!"
MORAL: Don't ever mess with fans who are addicted to L&A!!



In Memory Of Betty Boyle

Betty Boyle, who spent approximately eight years as a writer on the *Lum and Abner* show, passed away in Las Vegas, Nevada, on January 18, 1998. The funeral home handling her arrangements gave her date of birth as 1925, but some of her friends maintain that she had shaved about ten years off her age... a subject on which she adamantly remained silent.

Betty began working at the NBC Studios in Hollywood in the early 1940s. Because World War II had produced a manpower shortage, she was assigned to the sound effects department, and it was in this capacity that she first became acquainted with Chet Lauck and Norris Goff. In a rare interview, conducted for the 1986 documentary *Lum and Abner: Laughter Never Dies*, she recalled their meeting:

"I had to go down to the *Lum and Abner* show every day to check on the timing and the sound effects, and Chet and Tuffy would be down there half reading through the script. There would be three or four of us, and we'd all be chiming in with suggestions... Well, one day Tuffy took me aside and said, 'Have you ever thought about writing?' I said, 'Writing WHAT?' He said, 'Writing a script for us.' I said, 'Me? Write? I've never even written home for money; how could I write a script?' But I remember thinking that I didn't have anything to lose, because the sound effects department certainly wasn't going to make me independently wealthy..."

Roswell (Roz) Rogers, who began writing for L&A late in 1941, was still the head writer on the show, and Betty related: "Roz was working with either one or two other men at that time... and it wasn't long before they let the other two fellows go, and Roz and I finished out the term." Betty usually downplayed her contributions to the scripts, maintaining that Roz was always the guiding force behind them. She once said, "We worked at Roz's house, and had to be at the studio by 4:00... and many are the times we drove down that freeway with the typewriter in my lap, still writing the last page!"

It has never been very clear as to just what year Betty joined the L&A staff, but they were making on-air jokes about her by the summer of 1943. The next year, she made her only on-screen appearance in an L&A movie when she had a cameo role as a hatcheck girl in the nightclub sequence of *Goin' To Town*.

Roz and Betty remained L&A's writing team through the first season of the weekly half-hour format. For the 1949-50 season, Rogers bowed out of his regular writing slot (although he did contribute scripts periodically during that time). In his place, Betty was teamed with veteran gagster Jay Sommers, who would later put his experience with rural humor to good use by creating the 1960s TV series *Green Acres*.

When the 30-minute *Lum and Abner* bit the dust in April 1950,

Betty Boyle retired from the comedy writing field. She moved to Las Vegas, where she wrote for the local newspaper for a few years, but more importantly entered a second career by opening an upscale fashion shop in the Desert Inn Hotel. Her clientele included such notables as Betty Grable, Jane Powell, Elizabeth Taylor, Judy Garland, and the like.

During this period she had occasional reunions with her *Lum and Abner* cohorts. She contributed material to their disastrous 1955 movie *Lum and Abner Abroad*, which was filmed entirely in Yugoslavia. In the late 1950s, after Chet Lauck had left radio for the corporate world of the Continental Oil Company, Betty penned some of the Conoco TV commercials featuring Lum.

In 1965, her fashion shop closed and she became Social Director of the Las Vegas Country Club, a position she held well into the 1980s. She became an Honorary Member of the NLAS in 1984, but fragile health prevented her from ever attending the annual Convention. Never having married, Betty Boyle has left no known survivors.

In the 1986 interview, Betty became a bit choked up when asked her present-day view of L&A as characters. She replied, "I think of it as if Lum and Abner will always be there. To me, even though Chet and Tuffy are gone, Lum and Abner will always be down there in that little store in Pine Ridge." And don't we all like to think of it that way?

(Many thanks to Karen Rennick of Spring Mountain Ranch State Park for helping us secure the information for this article. The NLAS lost yet another Honorary Member when country music legend Grandpa Jones passed away on February 19. A fitting tribute will be forthcoming in the next issue of the *Journal*.)



Betty Boyle in 1986

Europe or Bust, 1938

The Lauck Tour of Europe

The summer of 1998 marks 60 years since an event that, at the time, generated much publicity for *Lum and Abner*: Chet & Harriet Lauck's trip to Europe. Why did this play such an important part in L&A history? Well, there were several reasons. From a broadcasting standpoint, it was the first time the show had taken a vacation from the airwaves since 1934. L&A worked the impending journey into their radio storyline in a most ingenious way... this will be examined in-depth in an article in our June issue. While the Laucks were overseas, Chet participated in what proved to be an historic occasion when a special L&A skit was aired with Lauck reading his lines from London via short-wave, and Tuffy Goff responding as Abner from Chicago. That "transatlantic" broadcast, as it came to be known, will also be discussed in our June issue.

On a more personal level, this European tour seemed to prove that the Laucks and Goffs had finally achieved success in the

entertainment world. Chet and Harriet Lauck were accompanied on this trip by their good friends Mr. and Mrs. Don Ameche, and the whole party sailed out of New York harbor aboard the *Queen Mary*. It would not be long after this that such pleasure cruises would be sharply curtailed by the escalating war in Europe, and in fact, the Laucks and the Ameches got to visit some of these sites barely in time to see them before the ravages of war changed them forever.

To give a rough overview of the timeline as it unfolded, we present here the news coverage of the trip as it appeared in *The Mena Star*. Beginning with the announcement of the trip and concluding with the Laucks' return to the old home town for a visit, these newspaper articles give an accurate picture of the events of that long-ago summer. Oddly missing are any references to the transatlantic broadcast, which apparently gained its historic significance only in hindsight.

July 4, 1938

VACATION TIME IS COMING FOR "LUM AND ABNER"

A trip to Europe will utilize only part of the vacation time that "Lum & Abner" will have this summer. The Mena radio stars will be off the air starting July 1, and according to word received in the home town, "Lum" will go abroad, while "Abner" keeps the home fires burning.

To tell it another way, Mr. and Mrs. Chester H. Lauck will go abroad while Mr. and Mrs. Norris Goff will remain at Hollywood. "Lum" and his wife have announced they expect to be in New York City early in July, and sail on the "Queen Mary" for their tour of England, Holland, Switzerland, Italy and possibly other points of interest. Mrs. John S. Wood, mother of Mrs. Lauck, and the grandchildren will visit in the home in Hot Springs. Mr. and Mrs. Lauck plan to return via Mena and will reach here sometime in August for a visit before returning to Hollywood. A letter from the one we knew as "Chet" was received in Mena Saturday by the young man's parents, Mr.

and Mrs. W. J. Lauck, explaining the vacation plans.

July 7, 1938

MR. AND MRS. C. H. LAUCK SAILED ON "QUEEN MARY"

Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Lauck of Mena and Hollywood are off on their first voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. According to a message received in Mena by Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Lauck, parents of "Lum" of "Lum & Abner," they sailed from New York City Wednesday on the "Queen Mary," and by now should be way out on the briny deep.

July 8, 1938

"ABNER" PICTURE IN POPULAR MECHANICS

Friends of "Lum & Abner" who'd care to see "Abner" with his mouth open, can find his picture on Page 250 of the August issue of Popular Mechanics. The publication carries a photographic view of the



Even though this photo supposedly shows Tuffy Goff doing Abner's voice, the NLAS Ossifers have long believed that he is instead doing Squire Skimp's voice.

popular radio star in the act of broadcasting. "Abner" was evidently doing the talking when the picture was taken.

Another picture directly connected with Mena's pair of entertainers, but which



Sybil Chism, the L&A show organist, enjoys a vacation at the beach while the boys are off the air during the summer of 1938.

shows neither, is shown in Radio Guide this week. It's a good photo of Mrs. Chester Lauck, who was one of the wives of celebrities attending the birthday party of Joan Benny, daughter of the famous Jack. Mrs. Lauck is shown with Mrs. Andy Devine at what is said to have been the gayest children's party in Hollywood. The caption under the pictures of the better halves of these screen and radio celebrities explains: "They had almost as much fun as did the children." There are two pages of party pictures shown in the Radio Guide.

July 19, 1938

"LUM AND ABNER" WILL BE IN GUARD ANNUAL

When the Arkansas National Guard annual is published this year, it will be featured by pictures of Mena's radio stars "Lum & Abner," former members of the state's military organization. This was arranged Monday night when R. H. Hawthorn and L. N. Thomas, photograph-

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ic experts from San Diego, California, came to take official pictures of Battery D, 142nd F.A., at the state armory.

After getting views of officers and men a separate picture was made which will include Norris Goff and Chester Lauck, who in days gone by were members of the Howitzer Company, predecessor of the present unit. Ken Bransetter and Louis Waters, the tall and short members of Battery D, were used as impersonators in the "Lum & Abner" views taken.

[NLAS member Oscar Russell of the Arkansas National Guard has located a copy of the 1938 Arkansas National Guard annual. While it does make mention of Lauck and Goff's membership in their local Guard unit, it does not contain their photos, nor any of the photos mentioned in which

Bransetter and Waters impersonated L&A. Apparently that material was shot, but not used.]

August 18, 1938

[The following piece had no heading]

Tomorrow is Mena's birthday, it's 42nd according to Father Time, and while the important event won't be publicly observed, the day and date will be notable because of the presence of one of its most famous citizens.

The one the home folks have known for years as Chester H. Lauck, to friends "Chet," and to the radio world as the first half of "Lum & Abner," will be in the old home town once

more.

This noted young man, fresh from a tour in Europe, was in Little Rock on Wednesday, in Hot Springs on Thursday, and on Friday is scheduled for Mena.

With him will be Mrs. Lauck, who made the trip across the water, and the youngsters of this famous father, who have been with Grandmother Wood at Hot Springs.

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Lauck motored to Hot Springs Wednesday to be on hand to greet their noted son, and to escort him and family to Mena for the visit at home. Jess Lauck Jr. went over Thursday, and the time of the party's return either Thursday or Friday, hasn't been announced.

Yet there'll be a welcome for "Lum" whichever day and what ever hour he comes home, for the home folks of Mena will be glad to greet him. Some months ago, it was planned that Don Ameche would be with the Laucks, but an appendicitis operation caused the movie-radio star to delay his return from Europe. Whether the Californian will yet pay Mena a visit is not definitely known.

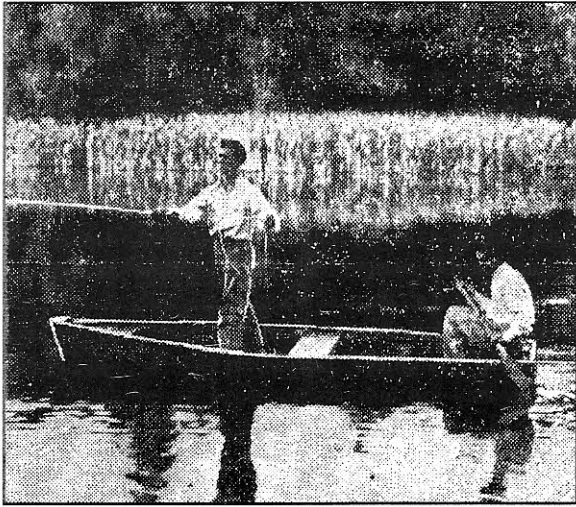
August 19, 1938

CHESTER LAUCK AND FAMILY VISITING IN THE HOME TOWN

Although there was no blaring brass band or official welcoming committee waiting at the city limits, still Mena's wel-



While visiting in Mena, Chet and Harriet Lauck share the Sunday comics with daughters Nancy and Shirley, August 1938.



Chet Lauck and L.E. Gwaltney, manager of the Lyric Theatre in Mena, do some fishin' during Chet's 1938 summer vacation.

come to one of her famous sons, Chester H. Lauck, "Lum" of the radio team "Lum and Abner," was as warm and hearty as if it had been accompanied with pomp and ceremony, when "Chet" put in his appearance in the downtown section Friday forenoon.

The popular young radio entertainer with wife and their children, Shirley Mae and Nancy Jane, arrived Thursday evening from Hot Springs in company with "Lum's" parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Lauck, who met them in Hot Springs where a short visit had been made with relatives of Mrs. Lauck.

While it had been expected earlier that Mr. and Mrs. Don Ameche would be here with "Lum" and family, due to an unexpected illness while the family was abroad, Ameche had to change his plans. It was said Friday morning that there was a possibility that the Ameches would join the Laucks here sometime during the next ten days, but it was not definitely known whether this would happen.

The arrival of "Lum" and family on the eve of Mena's 42nd birthday marked their first visit here in several years. Mr. and Mrs. Lauck arrived in New York Friday, following a month's tour of Europe, and came directly on to Mena where they expect to spend a week or ten days before continuing on to Hollywood to prepare to "get back in the harness" with the popular radio programs.

Chet said he was looking forward to some good fishing again in Polk County

streams, and Friday morning had already made arrangements for a foursome at golf during the afternoon at the Lions links.

This is the longest vacation Lum and Abner have taken since starting their career of scheduled broadcasts. While the Laucks vacationed in Europe, Norris "Tuffy" Goff, the "Abner" of the team, with his family supervised the building of a new home in California and made a brief fishing excursion to the Columbia river valley.

Discussing their trip abroad, "Lum" said they had a wonderful time but were certainly glad to be back home. "Europe's all right," Lauck was quoted as saying, "and I suppose that every-

one who can, should go over and see the Old World countries, but I'm sure glad to be back in Arkansas at last."

Before leaving for the west coast, a trip is planned to Pine Ridge, locale of the broadcast skits, where possibly new "inspirations" and material may be obtained for use in the winter series of programs.

Heralding the homecoming of Mena's famous young man was a large banner across the street at the Union Bank corner, which bore this inscription: "Welcome Home 'Lum.'" Several social events are planned honoring Mr. and Mrs. Lauck while here, which includes an informal reception dance at the Elks, sponsored by the fraternity of which Chet is a member, a special Lions Club meeting which it is understood will be broadcast over KTHS by remote control, and other activities.

August 22, 1938

"LUM AND ABNER'S" PRIVATE SECRETARY IN THE OUACHITAS

Miss Velma McCall, private secretary to "Lum and Abner," who has been making her initial visit to Arkansas during the past week with friends at Little Rock, came on to Mena Sunday afternoon to become acquainted and learn "first handed" of the home town of the two radio performers for whom she works. She was accompanied

here by Harlan Hobbs, columnist and feature writer of the Arkansas Democrat, who returned to Little Rock Sunday night leaving Miss McCall for a longer visit with the Laucks.

August 23, 1938

'LUM' HONORED AT LIONS LUNCH TUESDAY NOON

It was a regular weekly noonday luncheon of the Mena Lions club Tuesday, but it turned out to be an extra special occasion because of the honor guest, Chester H. Lauck, "Lum" of Lum and Abner, who is visiting relatives here this week.

The luncheon was held in the dining room of the Antlers hotel, and practically a full attendance of Lions was had, with a number of the members bringing guests.

After the opening exercises presided over by President Ernest W. St. John, and sumptuous meal had been taken care of, the gavel of authority was handed to "Lum," a former Lion president, and he officiated for the remainder of the session.

Will S. MacLafferty, with a few brief



Chet hobnobs with some of his Mena friends during one of the many events held in honor of his visit.

remarks prior to turning the gavel over to Lauck, recounted some of the activities of the club some seven or eight years ago when Lauck was located here and active in the organization, and Norris Goff, "Lum's" partner "Abner," was tail-twister. Most of it was in the humorous vein, however the "welcome home" for Mena's illustrious son was most warm and sincere.

Assuming the presiding officer's mantle, "Lum" expressed his appreciation of the honors bestowed upon him by his home club of Lions and declaring that he was not going to "make a speech," seated himself and spent the next ten or fifteen minutes reminiscing and telling stories on himself and "Tuffy," his partner, which kept the room full of Lions and guests in an uproar.

Following the meeting the Lions and their guests grouped on the steps in front of the hotel, where several pictures were taken.



September 3, 1938

"LUM AND ABNER" ON COVER PAGE OF RADIO MAG.

"Lum & Abner" have made the cover page of the current issue of Radio Guide, on the newsstands this week. The Mena radio stars are shown in character, gazing intently at a globe, possibly figuring out the route of "Lum's" recently completed tour of a part of Europe. Further over in Radio Guide are two more pages of pictures, showing how Chester H. Lauck and Norris Goff are skillfully made up by artists and transformed from good looking young men into aged philosophers. This is good publicity in advance of the opening of the "Lum & Abner" programs sponsored by General Foods, and scheduled to start on the air waves over CBS on Monday, September 5.

Lum's Letters From Europe

While *Lum and Abner* was off the air during July and August 1938, everyone concerned wanted to be sure the public didn't forget about the show during its absence. This undoubtedly accounts for the massive L&A publicity that was released during those two months.

During the spring of 1938, Chet Lauck & Tuffy Goff donned their old-age L&A makeup for a marathon photo session that would produce many shots that could be used for publicity for some time to come. Among these were ones specifically tied to Lum's upcoming trip to Europe. Of this batch, so far only three have been donated to the NLAS archives.

We know so much about this photo session because someone very thoughtfully had a 16mm movie camera running at the time, so we have some excellent silent (color) footage of Lauck and Goff posing for several of these photos. The one you see here showing L&A studying an ocean liner brochure is one of those shots. Others depict Lum wearing a smock and beret, probably to tie in with his visit to Paris. The excellent character study portrait on the cover of this issue of the *Journal* also came from that session. Of the simulated "Europe" shots, one depicts Lum being overwhelmed by friendly hunting dogs in England, while the other shows him suffering foot pain after trying out wooden shoes in Holland. (Of course, these shots were actually made before he ever left the United States.)

In addition to photos, before Chet left the country he and Tuffy wrote up a series of eight letters, purportedly sent from

Lum describing his various European adventures. According to a cover letter from their secretary, Velma McCall, these letters were "distributed to various radio editors throughout the country by the publicity department of Young & Rubicam, the agency handling the Lum and Abner account." The letters were published in *The Mena Star*, but there are only seven of them instead of the specified eight.

Most likely this is because the *Mena Star* clippings may be incomplete, and the missing letter simply escaped preservation. Inasmuch as one of the publicity photos shows Lum in Holland, and none of the existing letters mention Holland at all, it is probably safe to assume that the missing letter dealt with Lum's experiences there. (We know the Laucks visited that Dutch country because it shows up in their home movies of the trip.)

In this issue, we are presenting the first four of the "Lum Writes From Europe" letters; the remainder of the set will appear in the June issue of the *Journal*.

July 11

some where in england
dear abner:

I take my pin in hand to drop you a few lions to let you know how i am getting along. The boat docked



L&A study ocean liner brochures as Lum plans his epic journey to Europe.

(thats some kind of a ferign word meaning it got here) yisterday. We had a fine time on the boat. They said i was seesick the first three days but i still think i was pizened—jist a boat rocking never wood make nobody as sick as i was. I wish you could of seen that boat it outcaps anything i ever seen and is a heap bigger than any house in pine ridge, and they was more people road over on it then they is at the county seat. Everybody walking around on the deck reminded me of the picnic grounds at the fourth of july picnic. They had a regular dance floor and a orchestry to make music, which reminds me when i get home i want you to give a dance over at your place and i will show everybody how to do the big apple, thats the name of a dance, everybody said i done good it it ... facts is everytime i got out on the dance floor they all laughed twised as much as arry other time. They was a awful ignernt bunch of dancers we had fer they wernt a one of em that had ever saw the square dance till i showed em how, and after that they had one ever night and i done the callin fer em. They all seem to take right up with me and they started callin me uncle, i reckon i must of reminded some of em of some of their relates. On the third day after we left new york one of them sailor fellers come up to me and asked me if i would except a invite to eat at the captains table but i told him i was payin full fair the same as anybody else and i wernt goin to eat with the hired hands. Everbody laughed at that, i reckon they seen i had him. They do some awful funny things on them ships, fer insidence they tell the time of day by a feller ringing a bell but i never did find out how to tell time by em. I'd hear the thing ring and then i'd ask the feller what time it was and he'd say didn't you jist hear the bell, and i'd have to admit i had fer i was standing not two feet from him and then he'd say well its four bells and according to my watch it

was two o'clock, but it might of been that my watch was wrong fer when i got here i found my watch was six hours slow, i dont know what happened to it fer its kept good time ever since i got it. There's a heap more i want to tell you bout the trip over but i got to go out now and see what kind of a town this is. I'll write another letter soon

your friend across the see
lum

July 13

still somewhere in england
dear abner:

You notice i been putting somewhere in england at the top of my letters. I did that cause i dont think you are supposed to let fokes know where you are at over here fer i recollect the soldiers during the war allus put somewhere in france ... but i'm goin to tell you fer i know you wont say anything about it ... i'm in london, facts is thats where i've been ever since i got over here cept when i been out on them sight-seeing tours. I never finished tellin you bout that boat we come over on. Well one day they had a drill on the boat to show everbody what to do in case the boat sunk. They give us all a life presarver, thats sort of a jacket you put on that they said had cork in it and would keep you from drowning. After i lernt that i wore mine all the time. Then they showed us where to stand in case the boat sunk ... we could get in one of these little boats that was hung along the sides, i dont know who brung them along but i never figured they'd do much good fer them being fastened on to the boat the way they was i knowed it would pull them under if it ever went down, facts is i stayed pretty close to the captain fer i heerd him tell a worman that he kept the ships log



in his room and i figgered if thats what he was goin to use if anything happened it ort to be long enough to hold both of us and i knowed a log would float. As if they wernt enough water all around us they had to have a swimmin pool right on the ship. I never seen no sence in it fer like i told em if they was bound and determined to swim why didn't they jist jump over board. I reckon the feller that made the boat fergot that it was goin to be out in the water all the time to where they wouldn't need no pool. I told the captain a bunch of different things they could put on them ships that'd help a lot—like make them winders square instead of round sos they'd be big enough to get out of if they was a fire and he said i ort to be buildin boats so i think i might make a few when i get all that money fer i learnt all about em on my way over here ... well i must close. Next time i write i'll tell you all about london they got lots of interestin things to see here and by that time i'll have saw all there is to see and will describe everything to you.

yore friend of foreign lands
lum edwards

dear abner:

Well i've been in London two days and i think i've saw mite nigh purty near ever thing they is to see. We was sorter mixed up on the way these fokes talk over here fer i aint seen nobody yet that i couldnt understand, they talk jist about like we do sept i think they must be a awful epidemic of hayfever goin on, cause everbody i've heerd talk sound like they are gettin ready to sneeze. Either us or them one is turrible mixed up in one thing though fer cordin to my way of thinkin everbody is goin in the wrong direction er that is they are all drivin on the wrong side of the street ... this almost caused me to get run over the first day i was here cause i seen a car that i thought was goin away from me and i started to cross the street and be dad blamed if it wernt comin right toward me. I tried to argue with a policeman, bobby i think he said his name was, that they was drivin wrong but he still insisted that we are the ones that is wrong and it dont do no good



to argue with these fokes cause they are the stubbornest bunch of people i ever seen, facts is they're so stubborn about it that everybody has even had the stearin wheels moved over on the other side of the car. The first day we got here we all went out to see the changin of the guard ... all it amounted to was that the king was changin the guard around his palace. I reckon the old bunch got to where they wasn't guardin things like they ort to and he decided to get a new bunch ... if i had of knowed he was aimin on hirin some new ones i grannies i'd of tried to get a job myself fer i never seen sich purty get ups as they was wearin in my life. While i was out to buckingham palace, thats what they

call the house the king lives in, i tried to get in to see him fer i know we are bound to be relates of one another, both of us being named edwards, but they was one of them guards standin by there with a gun in his hand with a knife on the end of it and he wouldnt even let me go in the front yard. I wrote the king a letter yesterday and told him i was over here and asked him if he would please come out to the front gate and tell that guard feller to let me come in, fer he's worse about lettin somebody come on the place than that bull dog of uncle henry lunsford. If i ever get to see king george i might jist stay ther at his place fer that palace looks like it's got enough rooms in it fer all of his relates to visit him at the same time ... i never seen sich a house it's bigger than the hotel there at the county seat ... some of the fokes in this tour i'm on went out to the house of commons yesterday but i never went fer i figgered if i was aimin on gettin to see the king i'd better be sorter pertickler what kinds of people i run around with and i was afeard if he heered i was runnin around with them common fokes he might not want to admit he was related to me. Then yisterday evening we all went out to see the home where william shakespeare used to live, he's a feller that wrote a book of some kind once they said, everbody but me seem to enjoy the trip a lot but personal i think the house the king lives in has it beat ten to one. Well i must close as we are fixin to go see west minster abbey, i never heerd of him before but i thought i might as well go as i aint been to church since i left pine ridge, i jist hope he's as good a out

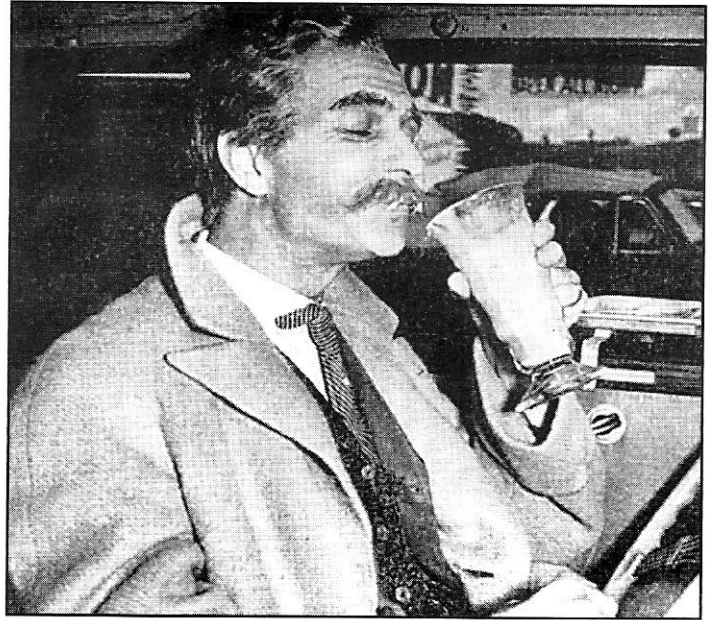
loud talker as brother terry the circuit rider is. I still say he does as good a job of preachin as i ever set under ... i'll let you know if i see the king.

your wanderin friend
lum

July 20

somewhere in paris france
dear abner:

I grannies i give up ... i've tried my best but after two days i still aint been able to make any of these fokes here in france understand a word i'm sayin. Cordin to my way of thinkin they dont say nuthin right over here i jist wish you could here some of the words they use, fer insidence stid of sayin—hidy do sir—they say—bon jur monseer—and—aw revor fer good bye, sich talk. Sometimes i think maybe hits jist me fer this mornin i seen a little girl, she couldnt of been a day over six year old, talkin this language jist as good as anybody you ever seen and here i am a full growed man and i cant seem to catch on to it atall, but it must be eazy after you get the hang of it fer a little youngin jist six year old to do so good at it. I figger maybe i jist aint talented along them lines and as soon as i see all the sights around here i'm goin to get out of this country as fast as i can. I will say one thing fer em though they do have a uncommonly purty place here and some awful interesting things to see. What you would call the main street of the town i reckon is called .. wait jist a minit i've fergot myself ... i grannies i'm wore to a fraz .. zal .. i started out to tell you about this purty street and i couldnt think of what they called it so i had to walk clean down there and copy down the name of it before i could finish this letter. I jist got back after walkin about a mile and a half in this hot sun but i got it .. hits called—Champs Elysses .. er that is the way its spelled on the street sign. I dont know how you would say it, anyway its awful purty and they have cafes right out on the side walk. You can set ther and eat with fokes walking all around you. I thought you might tell luke spears about this sos he can put some tables out in the street ther in pine ridge on saturdays when theys so many people in town that he cant feed em all there in his restaurant. Last night i went to what they call an opera, its what we call a show and out does anything i ever seen. They have actors on the stage jist like we do in our country only stid of sayin the words they sing everthing .. er that is they call it singin—personal i never heerd none of em that sounded as good as your daughter pearl. They might can sing as loud as she does but it aint nigh as pretty and if you and lizabeth and pearl ever come over here i believe she might get a job on the stage if you



The May 1938 issue of *RADIO NEWS* ran this candid shot of Chet Lauck enjoying a milkshake at a southern California drive-in. The clothes he is wearing, combined with the date of publication, indicate that this photo was probably taken on his way home from the aforementioned photography session that produced the "Lum in Europe" poses.

would let her do sich work .. they even sing jist like they talk so i never knowed what the show was about after it was over. You might tell this to sister simpson fer well as she likes to sing and act both this idea ort to be jist what she has been lookin fer. They is a lot of other things i've saw but i dont know how to spell the names and cant even recollect half of em. Tell your worman that when i get home i want her to fix me up a good meal .. i never was so hungry in my life. I couldnt tell you to save my life what i've been eatin over here some of the outlandishest vittals i ever seen .. i dont know how to read their writin and they dont understand my talkin and i've jist been havin to pint at things on the bill of fair .. yesterday i pinte at a word and shook my head like i wanted that and they brung the manager out to me .. how was i to know it was his name i was pintin at .. they use the american alphabet al-right but they can get them letters in some of the dad blamedest mix ups i ever seen in my life .. i guess the best thing fer me to do is get into some other place fore i starve to death .. the trouble with this country is they's too many feriners over here ... i'll right you and let you know wher i go.

your homesick friend
lum

TO BE CONTINUED....

Hit's A-Gittin' Closeter!

THE 14TH ANNUAL NLAS

CONVENTION

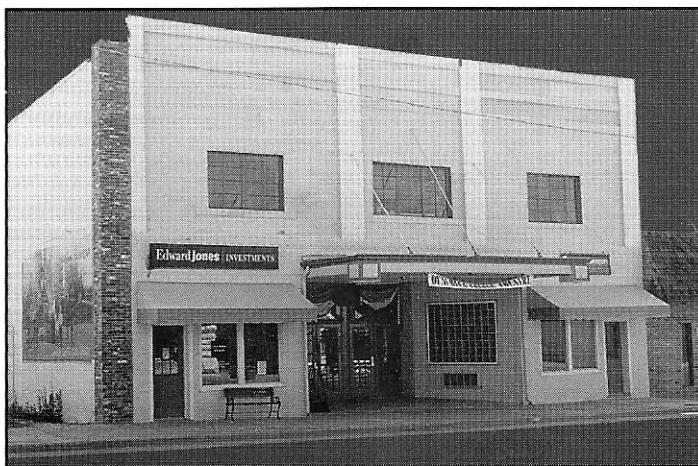
JUNE 26 & 27, 1998

MENA, ARKANSAS

If you haven't already started making your plans for attending the 1998 NLAS Convention, you would do well to remember that old Eddards sayin', "Don't never put off till today what you shoulda done yesterday..." Er, "Don't never put off till tomorrow what you ain't got time to do today..." Uh... well, you get the idea...

We have not yet finalized our special guests for this year's event... but then again, for the last few years we have announced certain guests and then had to change them at the last minute, so perhaps that is for the best. Hopefully we will have our guest speakers lined up by the time the next issue of the *Journal* reaches you.

In addition to our (unscheduled) guests, this year's Convention will boast another unique feature. On Friday evening, NLAS members and interested Mena



Mena's historic Lyric Theatre.

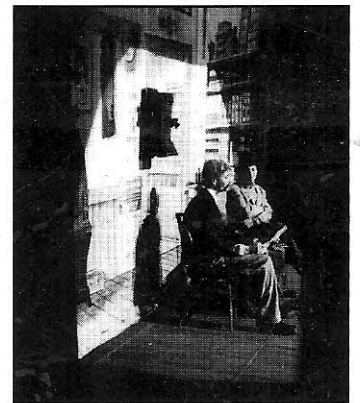
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locals will gather at the historic Lyric Theatre in downtown Mena for a production that will attempt to recreate Lum and Abner's little-known STAGE act of the 1930s. Yes, before their move to California in 1937, our old friends often toured theatres of the Midwest with a vaudeville act! With a little luck and a LOT of makeup, we plan to attempt the same thing, using their original scripts.

(To give the proper aura, this recreation will be placed into an evening of resurrected vaudeville, so if any of you members who plan on attending have a particular talent... such as singing, dancing, doing magic tricks, or playing the musical saw... let us know so we can put you on the bill!)

Hopefully the schedule of events will be a little more concrete by the time the June issue of the *Journal* is published, but meanwhile, you should call the Best Western Lime Tree Inn in Mena to make your room reservations. The number to call is (501) 394-6350. As always, there is no registration fee or any other charge for the Convention activities.

See you in June, I doggies!



L&A on stage, ca. 1936