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VISIT

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The Jot 'Em Down Journal,
 Volume 15, Number 5 (Whole
 Number 89), April 1999.
 Published bi-monthly by the
 National Lum and Abner Society.
 Membership, including a
 subscription to the *Journal*, is
 \$10.00 per year. Send editorial and
 subscription correspondence to the
 Executive Secretary, Tim Hollis,
 #81 Sharon Boulevard, Dora, AL
 35062.

THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

APRIL 1999

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Cover: Lum and Abner mug for
 the CBS microphone in this 1939
 publicity shot. See the L&A news
 items from 60 years ago on page 8
 of this issue! (Photo courtesy of
The Nashville Tennessean)

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*Take a look in your own mirror! Are you ready for the 1999
 NLAS Convention? See page 12 for details!*

LUM & ABNER: MARCH/APRIL 1949

In this issue, we are continuing with our analysis of the series of half-hour *Lum and Abner* episodes, but from this point on we will be unable to give as much complete information as we have in the past. You see, from the time the 30-minute shows began in October 1948 through the end of February 1949, all of the episodes have been discovered and documented. Beginning in March 1949, however, the recordings become much spottier. They most likely exist somewhere, but as of this writing many of them have yet to surface. With that thought in mind, onward we go:

MARCH 6, 1949: As we mentioned last time, by this point in the series Abner's personality had undergone some prodigious changes since the 15-minute days. Instead of seeming like Lum's closest friend, Mr. Peabody now comes across more like a fledgling Don Rickles. This unfortunate personality disorder manifests itself once again in the opening lines of the show, which also serve to set the premise for the episode:

LUM: *I've just been give the importance job o' writin' the Pine Ridge colyum fer the county paper. Ain't that a lucky break?*

ABNER: *It shore is, my subscription run out yistidy.*

LUM: *You know, the paper's been wantin' to git a good, smart Pine Ridge correspondent fer a long time.*

ABNER: *They just plain flat give up and had to take you, huh?*

Lum gets down to work with his typewriter, grinding out "hot flashes" for the Pine Ridge news column. The only problem is that the only news item he can come up with is "Mr. E. L. Frawley and wife went to Hatfield yesterday." He spends the rest of the show trying to add details to this story, while the other characters constantly interrupt him with non-important news, to wit:

LUM: *Well, I'll just have to wait a while to find out if they's anything innerestin' about their Hatfield trip. Miz Frawley's outside with a lantern, diggin' around under the house. Seems their dog buried some dynamite under ther and they cain't find it.*

ABNER: *Wher's Mr. Frawley?*

LUM: *Oh, she's got him tied up out in the barn. Said he got mad and bit the dog. Let's see, now... Ther ort to be somethin' innerestin' about the Frawleys....*

Ben Withers (Clarence Hartzell) drops by on his way to Osbert Stackpool's wedding. The wedding has been kept a secret because Osbert is marrying a celebrity who was recently employed by the Barnum & Bailey Circus: Chartreuse Muff, the bearded lady. The wedding will be held in a hot air balloon. Lum tries to call the Frawley house again, but the party line is tied up:

ABNER: *What're they talkin' about?*

LUM: *Oh, I dunno.. sompin' about Miz Goshen havin' quintuplets. (Pause)*

ABNER: *Again?*

BEN: *Say, Lum, I was just thinkin' that Miz Goshen's quintuplets might be worth a line in your column, inasmuch as this is her birthday. She's 61.*



Clarence Hartzell made his final appearance as Ben Withers in March 1949.

Ben hurries off, as he is anxious to hear the governor of Arkansas speak at the town hall. It seems the state is considering putting a big new highway through Pine Ridge. (They must not have ever gotten it built.) Sister Simpson (Vivian Lasswell) enters in a huff because she caught a prowler at her boarding house. Maude Toops has him trapped in the closet: "I'm skeerd to death she's goin' to keep him, an' I saw him first!!" (During one gag in this sequence, we get one of our very few clues as to just what Ben Withers is supposed to look like. Ben describes himself as "slight of build, scraggly hair, rather eccentric looking.")

It seems the governor's speech had to be called off because the town hall is on fire. The Stackpool wedding was postponed because the balloon exploded. The Frawleys never went to Hatfield yesterday, as they are going tomorrow instead. Wendell Niles drops by to see if anyone else felt the earthquake, but his only worthwhile suggestion for Lum's column turns out to be a Frigidaire commercial. Opie Cates, who was introduced on the previous week's show, comes in to use the phone because his uncle Luke Spears is battling a leaky faucet that has the house waterlogged. (Opie wants to call an old friend in his home town of Clinton, Arkansas: Earl Bidbault. In future shows, the Bidbaults of Clinton will eventually come to replace Ben Withers' friends, the Zincafooses of Mt. Idy.) Dink Trout again appears as cranky Luke Spears.

While everyone else is out watching the police chase an escaped convict through town, Mose Moots (Andy Devine, who also debuted on the previous show) reports on the town hall fire ("the finest fire Pine Ridge has ever had"). The show's closing gag is yet another example of the brand of "morbid" humor that somehow became so common in the half-hour *Lum and Abner*:

LUM: I wanna call the Frawleys once more and verify the facts. Hello, Miz Frawley? Now, about that Hatfield trip... Huh?... Oh?... I see... All right, goodbye. Dad blame it... (TEARS UP PAPER)

ABNER: Hey, wait a minit, what're you tearin' it up fer, Lum?

LUM: Oh, my whole colyum's shot. The trip's off.

ABNER: What happened?

LUM: Oh, old man Frawley cain't make it.

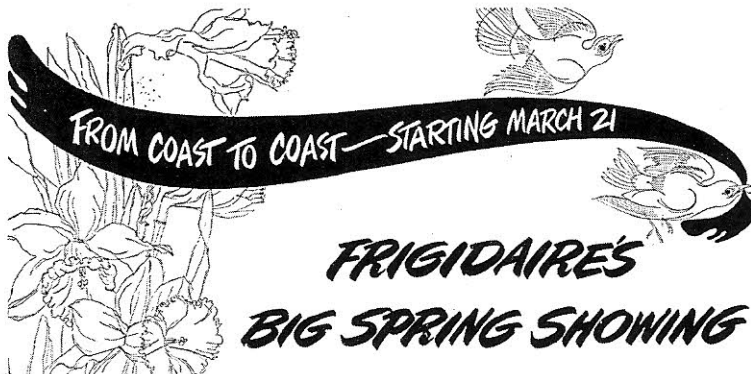
ABNER: Why?

LUM: He died.

If anyone is so inclined, compare this ending with the famous June 1942 episode in which L&A learn that local boy Robert Blevins has been killed in service. See which one is more appropriate to L&A's established characterizations.

MARCH 13, 1949: This episode is missing, and we have no information as to what it involved.

MARCH 20, 1949: A talent scout from Hollywood arrives in Pine Ridge, looking for a hillbilly character. Of course, no one in Pine Ridge knows anyone who fits his description of a hillbilly. One extremely unusual thing about this show is that the script was NOT written by L&A's usual team of Roswell Rogers and Betty Boyle, but by two other legendary radio scribes, Hugh Wedlock Jr. and Howard Snyder.



L&A fiddle around with their own recent history as they reminisce about people who have settled in Pine Ridge permanently. They mention that Ben Withers came to town in 1941 (not 1946, as was the actual case). They also mention that Snag Werris arrived in 1937; this seems to have been their first mention of this name. Werris was a real person, a well-known writer for the Bing Crosby radio show, among others, and undoubtedly an acquaintance of Wedlock and Snyder.

The talent scout, Mr. Rockford, is played by L&A veteran Frank (Diogenes Smith) Graham, using the fast-talking voice he employed as film company president D. Hempstead Dwyer in November 1943. In a rare whiff of reality for these half-hour shows, Abner tells Rockford about all the other (actual!) small towns surrounding Pine Ridge: Board Camp, Big Fork, Ink, Acorn, Oden, and Mt. Idy. Opie Cates thinks the search is in vain: "They ain't no hillbillies left around here... They're all in the big cities, workin' on the radio." Wendell Niles comes in to promote the Frigidaire Spring Showing, which begins at all Frigidaire dealers' tomorrow (March 21). He also leaves them a copy of *LIFE* magazine with an ad promoting the

sale, portions of which you will see on this page.

Lum decides that the best thing to do is make Abner into a hillbilly, and Abner jumps into the role with glee, loudly singing Dorothy Shay's hill country hit, *Feudin' Fussin' and a-Fightin'*. Lum makes Abner a shirt out of a potato sack and combs his hair down over his ears. This costume doesn't fool Ben Withers or Luke Spears, but they all go over to see Mr. Rockford anyway:

ROCKFORD: Well, he seems a little seedy... To tell you the truth, Mr. Edwards, I wasn't looking for someone quite that far gone.

BEN: Don't look at me, that's the hillbilly over there!!

Rockford takes a picture of Abner (with Lum caring for him) and sends it to Hollywood. Predictably, when the response comes, the movie studio thinks Lum is the rube in question and offers him the job.

(Incidentally, this program includes some CBS cross-promotion, when Lum gives "this week's clue" to the Phantom Voice from the *Sing It Again* program. Clues will be given each week until the contest ends, a good example of the way game shows were seeming to take over the radio networks at this time.)

MARCH 27, 1949: Again, this episode is missing, but from statements made the following week, we can infer that some historic events took place during its storyline. It obviously featured the debut of ZaSu Pitts as a representative of the County Home Economics Bureau, a role she would play until the 30-minute shows ended. Of course, Pitts was no stranger to L&A, having worked with them in their 1942 film *The Bashful Bachelor*. Another character introduced this week is the oh-so-cultured Lady Britton, played by the distinguished British actress Edna Best. How she ended up on *Lum and Abner* is an unknown story at this time, but the fact that she was among the celebrities who surprised Lauck and Goff by barging in during their 16th anniversary show on April 24, 1947, indicates that she had known them for some time prior to her debut on the show.

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With all of these new arrivals, there was a sad departure as well. Clarence Hartzell had never been comfortable with performing as Ben Withers in front of a live audience (according to Norris Goff, Clarence refused to even face the audience, performing with his back to them). By mutual agreement, he left the show and went back to his old home base of Chicago. Either the March 20 or March 27 show was his final appearance as Ben, but since we do not have the March 27 episode to refer to, we do not know which one actually marked his farewell performance.



ZaSu Pitts joined the L&A cast on March 27, 1949.

APRIL 3, 1949: Lum decides to start his own insurance company, convinced that he will make millions:

LUM: *Who do you think owns all them tall buildin's you see in the big cities? Who do you think owns that big Rock of Gibraltar out ther in the ocean?*

ABNER: *Jack Benny?*

As might be expected in a show dealing with insurance, the morbid jokes come back for this episode:

LUM: *Earl Scudder over at Hatfield had one of these policies, and when he got sick he collected fer three months.*

ABNER: *Earl Scudder's dead.*

LUM: *Yeah, but he ain't broke.*

ABNER: *That lucky stiff.*

When ZaSu Pitts enters, Abner refers to her as "that lady from the county seat that was here last week," letting us know that she did indeed make her debut on the missing March 27 show. Miss Pitts buys a can of crab meat for a luncheon she is giving for the Pine Ridge housewives. Lum sells policies to Abner, Opie Cates, Luke Spears, Charlie Redfield, Corny Stroube (Chet's old oil company tycoon buddy from Texas), Snag Werris, the Widder Frawley (whose husband died at the end of the March 6 show), and Mose Moots. This episode marks a change in Andy Devine's portrayal of Mose. Up to this point, Mose's main characteristic had been his belt-busting belly laugh punctuating his jolly jokes. With this show, Mose becomes a more melancholy character, constantly weeping over some "tragic" story he finds in a newspaper or advertisement (or, in this case, Lum's insurance brochure). These routines always have a humorous punchline, but they do serve to bring a whole different characterization to Mose Moots.

A Mr. Johnson of the First Casualty Insurance Co. of Little Rock arrives, played by bass-voiced Ken Christy. The company has heard of Lum's success in selling policies in Pine Ridge, and they want to hire him as an agent. Lum pooh-poohs the idea... then things start popping. Charlie Redfield gets pneumonia, Mose falls off the front porch of the store, Opie comes in on crutches, Luke slips on a banana peel, the bus to Hatfield wrecks

and injures only two passengers (Corny Stroube and the Widder Frawley), and Snag Werris was driving the car that hit the bus. Lady Brilton enters with no explanation of who she is (further indicating that she was introduced the week before), and buys a policy, immediately becoming ill from eating Miss Pitts' crab meat salad. Lum's hide is saved only when Mr. Johnson's company agrees to absorb the Eddards Insurance Co. and pay off all its claims. (During the show's "tag," Lum gives another clue for the *Sing It Again* program.)

APRIL 10, 1949: Again, the recording of this week's show is missing, yet we still know what the program was about. How do we know? This week's script was among the group that announcer Wendell Niles donated to the NLAS archives back in 1989, complete with his own markings and notations during his commercial messages.

The plot of the show involves Lum's search for a famous author to speak at the new literary discussion group he has started (the name Golden Era Discussion Club is not used). If this sounds familiar, it is because this script (along with others) was done as a "remake" during the second season of half-hour L&A shows... in fact, this gained the dubious distinction of being the very last 30-minute show ever broadcast by L&A, on April 26, 1950 (coincidentally the 19th anniversary of their first broadcast in Hot Springs!).

The script indicates that only a few cast changes were made between the April 1949 and April 1950 renditions. Lady Brilton is a guiding force behind the 1949 version, but had been dropped from the cast a year later. The scene remains the same in which Abner practices his reading with what appears to be a parody of the famous "Dick & Jane" schoolbooks: "Oh see Ned. Ned throws the ball to Tom. Tom throws the ball to Ned. Will Ned catch the ball? Oh see the dog." Mose Moots has another melancholy story about a man he reads about in a nerve pill advertisement. When Lum asks if Mose knows any famous authors such as Hemingway, Mose claims that he knows Hemingway personally, and he is in Mena right now. After hanging up the phone, Mose wonders "why Lum wants Lady Brilton to meet Joe Hemingway, the new plumber at the county seat."

After Wendell Niles reads the Frigidaire commercial he plans



At the time Andy Devine began playing Mose Moots, he had just finished a string of Westerns with Roy Rogers and was between picture commitments.

to present at the meeting, everyone gathers at Lum's house. According to Niles' notes on the back page of the script, plumber Joe Hemingway was played by Herb Vigran, who would perform the part again in the 1950 version. Oddly, Lum appears to be developing a romance with Lady Brilton, whereas in her previous appearances he did not seem to be particularly enamored with her. (Maybe it took some time for him to get over his recent failed romance with Miss Rowena.) ZaSu Pitts does not appear in this week's episode, but she was included in the 1950 rendition.

Another notable change appears in the opening credits of this program: Now Opie Cates is designated as being musical director for the show, rather than original orchestra leader Felix Mills.

APRIL 17, 1949: The content of this week's program is unknown.

APRIL 24, 1949: Lum decides to campaign for the office of mayor of Pine Ridge. No mention is made that Abner was elected mayor in late 1935; our last word from the 15-minute shows was that Dick Huddleston became mayor in early 1946. Lum wants a cause to build his campaign around, and he gets one when the candy machine in front of Luke Spears' lunch room takes Abner's money but does not give him a Marshmallow Big Boy (presumably a type of candy bar, not a hamburger!).

LUM: *Hey, Luke, Abner put a nickel in that machine of yours out front and he never got no candy!*

LUKE: *Well, whaddaya want me to do, stir him up a batch o' fudge?!*

It turns out that Luke does not own the candy machine at all; it belongs to a man named Sweeney from the county seat. Abner confers with Mose Moots (who has yet another sad story to tell). It seems that when Sweeney opens the machine, as the high point of Lum's mayoral campaign, it will be revealed to all that Abner put a slug in the machine instead of a nickel!

Abner gives Wendell Niles a "Lum for Mayor" campaign button, and Niles responds by giving Abner a button that has a whole Frigidaire commercial written on it. ("I wrote small.") Lady Brilton helps Lum write a campaign speech. Opie Cates describes how he started playing the clarinet. Political jokes pop up again:

ABNER: *Did you ever play in any band concerts down in Clinton, Opie?*

OPIE: *No, but I played durin' all the Republican rallies durin' the last election.*

ABNER: *Did the Republicans hire you to do that?*

OPIE: *No, the Democrats did.*

This gives Abner an idea; he hires Opie to break up Lum's rally around the candy machine. Opie's dreadful attempts to play "Glow Worm" on the clarinet will be a running gag for the next several

shows. In all honesty, Opie Cates had the true reputation of being one of the greatest clarinetists in the music business, but he was not above parodying himself for laughs.

Sweeney is played by Ken Christy with a tough gangster accent, and despite Opie's squeaking rendition of "Glow Worm," he opens the candy machine and reveals Abner's slug: a "Vote for Honest Lum" campaign button! This week, Abner gives the clue to the Phantom Voice on the *Sing It Again* program. We never learn just who Lum was running against for mayor.

In our next issue we will look at the programs from May and June 1949, which will bring us to end of the first half-hour season. Join us then!

- Tim Hollis

ANDY DEVINE ON LUM & ABNER®

While the Arkansas Educational TV Network (AETN) was producing its first documentary on the history of *Lum and Abner*, the 1973 special *Two Boys From Mena*, Andy Devine happened to make a personal appearance in Little Rock, and made the following comments about his L&A work during that documentary:

I actually worked with the boys for a couple or three years when they went to a half-hour show, and we had been friends even long before that. When they went to the 30-minute show they asked me if I would play the part of Mose Moots, the barber... I enjoyed that. ZaSu Pitts worked in it, and Cliff Arquette (Charley Weaver)... in fact, the whole Mount Idy thing came from that. Mount Idy was a thing we used in LUM AND ABNER all the time, and Charley just picked up on it. Another Arkansas boy, Opie Cates, who lives up around Fort Smith, had charge of the music and also played Opie Cates, one of the characters. I spent so much time with Lum & Abner that I almost felt like a native Arkansan for a good number of years. I still have hanging on my wall, presented to me I don't know how many years ago, a commission in the Arkansas Navy that was given to me by Lum & Abner, and that was before I ever worked with them.



Andy Devine and Chet Lauck had a reunion in the early 1970s; we have been unable to learn the identity of the lady in this photo.



Opie Cates, out of character.

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 sixty years ago, during the first half of 1939. Thanks to our access to THE MENA STAR, we are able to bring you these L&A news highlights. Some are major news stories while others were simply statements buried in the "Personals" column, but all of them fit together into that huge jigsaw puzzle known as the history of LUM AND ABNER.

January 5, 1939

(Personals)

According to word received by Mena banks from the American Bankers' Association, Lum and Abner have called on the organization for data on banking, and the series of broadcasts starting January 9 are expected to be of interest to the financiers. The ABA urges all of its members to listen in on the program.

January 7, 1939

IT WAS PROBABLY JUST AN "OLD ED'ARDS SAYIN'"

Those who heard Vic and Sade on the Crisco hour broadcast Friday afternoon heard a familiar name mentioned when Vic spoke of an old superstition of "Chester Lauck of Mena, Ark."

The superstition was that if you "kicked your grandpa in the head before breakfast you would find a dollar and six bits before the day was over."

While credit for the "superstition" was given to Lauck, it's entirely probable that that was just another "old Ed'ards sayin'."

Among those who heard the program locally was Mrs. Stuart Smith, who made the report of the incident.

January 12, 1939

(Personals)

A Lum and Abner program being heard at Big Fork on Monday night was interrupted by a genuine fire alarm that didn't come over the "party line." The fire was in the upper part of the building occupied by J. B. Liles' store while he was at a neighbor's, listening to the Mena radio stars. A boy discovered a light in the store and notified the owner. A blaze had been started in the upper story, used as the Masonic hall, but was checked before any damage was done. What caused the fire is the mysterious part of the affair, according to the report brought to Mena on Wednesday.

January 19, 1939

DICK HUDDLESTON NEADS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Dick Huddleston, Pine Ridge, was elected president of the Arkansas Wildlife Federation on Sunday at a meeting attended by 500 sportsmen. E. Charles Eichenbaum, Little Rock, was named vice-president, and William A. (Bill) Wilson, North Little Rock, Secretary-

Treasurer. A bench show for hunting dogs was a feature of the meeting.

January 26, 1939

ARKANSAS HOUSE HONORS LUM AND ABNER

Resolution No. 14 by Riales of Polk Records Admiration and Praise for Mena's Favorite Radio Stars

Lum and Abner have been honored by the house of representatives of the 52nd General Assembly of Arkansas, according to reports received from Little Rock. This latest honor for the former Mena boys is in the form of House Resolution No. 14 by Rep. Roy Riales of Polk county, which was passed recently and a copy of which bearing the seal of the state of Arkansas, will be sent to the popular radio team.

(Personals)

Dick Huddleston and his Pine Ridge Pea Pickers made a real record when they appeared recently at a charity benefit in Kilgore, Texas. Reports brought back to Mena indicate there was a paid attendance of 2500 when the Pine Ridge attraction appeared. The benefit was given to provide milk for undernourished children in the Texas oil town.

February 2, 1939

DICK HUDDLESTON'S MOCKING BIRDS AT FARM BUREAU MEET

An added attraction for the Farm Bureau meeting to be held in Mena Saturday afternoon will be the appearance of Dick Huddleston's Mocking Birds from Pine Ridge. These entertainers are mostly of the fair sex, and they provide a program of instrumental and vocal music that is worth hearing. The Farm Bureau meeting will begin at 2 pm and will be held at Star Hall. All those interested



in farming are invited to attend and hear the 1939 conservation program explained.

(Pine Ridge News)

It is no novelty now to see so many strangers driving up to our neighbor Dick Huddleston's store, and say, "Hello, Dick, I told you I would come to Pine Ridge, didn't I?" There are lots of visitors coming here every day from various states. Last week, visitors from the following states were noticed: Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Ohio, Oregon, Louisiana, Georgia, North Carolina, and Alabama.

February 8, 1939

LUM AND ABNER ACKNOWLEDGE RECOGNITION

Radio Stars Write Representative Riales in Appreciation of House's Resolution...

Unexpected Surprise

Recently the Arkansas house of representatives passed a resolution by Rep. Roy L. Riales of Polk County, honoring Lum and Abner for their radio work in advertising Arkansas. A copy of the resolution bearing the state seal and all fixed up in proper style was sent to "Chet" and "Tuffy" out at Hollywood, and resulted in the following letter being received by Riales from the famous radio entertainers:

February 1, 1939

Mr. Roy L. Riales
House of Representatives
State of Arkansas
Little Rock, Arkansas
Dear Roy:

We are in receipt of your letter and the resolution adopted by the House of Representatives, and wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation to you and the good people of Arkansas for this recognition.

This was a most unexpected surprise and means more to us than words can express. We sincerely hope we will always be able to live up to the high standard you all have set for us.

Our sincerest thanks to you and all others who are responsible for this honor.

Kindest personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

CHESTER "LUM" LAUCK
NORRIS "ABNER" GOFF

February 9, 1939

PINE RIDGE U. TO CONFER HONORARY DEGREE FRIDAY

Andy Devine to Receive Honors From Hand of President Lum Edwards; Ceremony to Be Broadcast

Lum & Abner add a distinguished alumnus to their Pine Ridge University on Friday night, February 10. During their broadcast that evening, the first of their personal awards for "outstanding service" will be made. The honor goes to Andy Devine, gravel-voiced comic of radio and movies.

President Lum Edwards of the University, who isn't quite sure what his visitor is noted for, has decided that he is safe in conferring the degree of "Doctor of Articulation" in the field of "Public Speaking." Andy will make a personal appearance on the program to receive his diploma.

Other well-known guests will visit the two old fellows on future programs to be awarded diplomas.

February 15, 1939

LUM AND ABNER AND FARM PROGRAM

Lum and Abner, Arkansas' famous radio team, will dedicate one of their "Jot 'Em Down Store" programs to the American Farm Bureau Federation this month, Executive Secretary Waldo Frasier of the Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation has notified G. A. Liles, president of the Polk County Farm Bureau.

The program will be heard over the Columbia Broadcasting System on either Monday night, February 20, or Friday night, February 24, originating from Station KNX, Hollywood, Calif., at 6:15 o'clock (Arkansas time).

"The importance of farm organization will be the theme of the program, which will be the feature of one of the famous radio team's regularly scheduled broadcasts," Mr. Frasier notified G. A. Liles.

"Lum" (Chester Lauck) and "Abner" (Norris Goff), who have been radio headliners since 1931 and originally from Mena, are members of the Farm Bureau.

"Comin' right down to it," says Lum, "seein' that the farmer gets a fair price for his products is the surest way of makin' a success out of our store here in Pine Ridge... and in the other stores over the country. There just wouldn't be any Jot 'Em Down Store or any Pine Ridge if it wasn't for the farmers."

February 16, 1939

(Pine Ridge News)

We are still having plenty of sightseers in Pine Ridge. There was one group of people from Kentucky who made two trips over here



from Hot Springs last week before they were satisfied to go home. The following states were represented here the past week: Georgia, Indiana, Alabama, Missouri, Tennessee, North Carolina, Minnesota, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Texas, Kansas, and Louisiana.

February 23, 1939

HORSE FROM L&A STABLES WINS AT SANTA ANITA

Racing results at the Santa Anita track in California Tuesday had special interest for more than one Mena resident because of the fact that entries included horses from the L&A Stables. This combination stands for the partnership of Chester H. Lauck and Don Ameche in ownership of race horses. Their stable of racers had entries in two races on the Tuesday program, and according to a message received from Santa Anita by W. J. Lauck, one of the pair finished first. This was in the fourth race, when "Alice Faye" galloped home ahead of all the rest. In the seventh race, "Playback," another of the horses owned by the radio stars, was evidently just an also-ran, for it wasn't listed among the money winners.

March 2, 1939

HOT SPRINGS PUBLISHER MADE VISIT TO MENA

Dewey Lewis, publisher of *The Sportsman's Guide* in Hot Springs, was a Mena visitor Friday, the first he had made in 17 years, he explained. The trip to the county seat was made with Dick Huddleston of Pine Ridge fame as a guide. The Hot Springs man had gone first to Pine Ridge to see about travel conditions between the hot water resort and the place made famous by Lum and Abner. The reason for that was because many of Hot Springs' visitors want to see Pine Ridge when not busy taking the baths. Being as close as he was to Mena, publisher Lewis concluded he had better go and see what the county seat was like after all these years. He found it changed quite a bit, and a lively place even though the day was a wet one.

April 3, 1939

LUM AND ABNER SIGN FOR ANOTHER YEAR

Friends of Chet Lauck and Norris Goff will be pleased to learn that "Lum and Abner" have signed a contract for another year with General Foods, their present sponsor. The boys just recently returned to their home in California after being in New York for two weeks, broadcasting from that city. The new contract begins April 28.

CEDRIC WILL JOIN EZRA BUZZINGTON ON SUMMER TOUR

Ed L. Goble, the original "Cedric" of the Lum and Abner programs, has announced he will be trouping this summer, having signed a contract to appear with Ezra Buzzington's Pine Ridge Silver Cornet Band. The tour, which starts July 1, will include the big fairs in northern and eastern states. The Mena entertainer will join the troupe at Winchester, Indiana, winter headquarters for the owner and manager.

April 13, 1939

(Personals)

Pictures of Mena's noted radio stars Lum and Abner adorn the front page of the latest issue of *The Sportsman's Guide*, published at Hot Springs. The picture shows the Pine Ridge pair with divergent equipment for fishing, and adds to the pleasure of seeing them still interested in a sport that is bringing many visitors to the Ouachita lakes and streams.

April 20, 1939

CEDRIC LEAVES ON TOUR WITH VAUDEVILLE BAND

A spring and early summer tour arranged by the Pine Ridge Silver Cornet Band has taken Ed L. Goble, the original "Cedric" of the Lum and Abner program, away from the county seat sooner than he had planned. The Mena entertainer received travel orders to leave Wednesday for Wichita, Kansas, where he will join other members of the troupe on a longer trip to Seattle, Washington, to begin a tour of



Ed Goble in costume as Cedric
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the Pacific Coast theatres. Cedric had earlier signed up for a tour of northern and eastern states that is scheduled to start in July from an Indiana point.

April 20, 1939

LUM AND ABNER SAW THE LOUIS-ROPER FIGHT

In the radio mention of the Louis-Roper fight Monday night, and which ended after two minutes twenty seconds of fighting, with Louis the winner, Lum and Abner were mentioned by the broadcaster as being among the celebrities present. Bob Burns was also among those present for the short fracas, giving at least three Arkansans who witnessed the fight.

April 27, 1939

(Personals)

Ed L. Goble, the "Cedric" of Lum and Abner's programs, didn't forget Mena friends while heading westward to tour the Pacific Coast with the Pine Ridge Silver Cornet Band. At Cannon City, Colorado, he crossed the world's highest bridge, the one over the Royal Gorge, and more than a mile above sea level. In sending greetings to Olin R. Wood, Cedric sent a postcard view of this high-up structure, with this laconic explanation: "Just thinking of you."

April 29, 1939

LUM AND ABNER TO TALK ABOUT ELKS TONIGHT

Chester Lauck and Norris Goff, who had considerable to do with the Elks lodge while they were residents of Mena, are going to talk about the Elks and their national program during the Lum & Abner broadcast tonight over Columbia Broadcasting Systems at 6:15.

The two radio stars from Mena should know what they are talking about when it comes to the Elks. Chester Lauck was Exalted Ruler of the Mena lodge some years ago and helped promote a number of Elks projects around town, among them organization of the Elks baseball team that hung up quite a record for itself. Norris Goff was a member of the same lodge.

During their program tonight the two, as Lum & Abner, will pay a tribute to the work of the Elks all over the country, their civic improvement projects and their promotion of



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real Americanism.

Gathering material for their Elks program, Lauck and Goff spent several hours with Hon. Michael Shannon of Los Angeles, past Grand Exalted Ruler of the BPOE, and were supplied information by the present Grand Exalted Ruler, Dr. Edwards McCormick.

The special broadcast is the latest in a series dealing with large organizations over the country, their aims and purposes in helping to make America a better country to live in.

May 4, 1939

STATE SHOULD KEEP PROMISE TO BRIDGE 88

Dick Huddleston, the sage of Pine Ridge, was in Mena Monday. One of his principal activities was to impress local residents with the importance of improving No. 88 east of Mena. The five unbridged streams between Mena and the Montgomery County line are a great drawback to traffic, and Dick believes the state highway department should make good its promise to build these bridges. While in Mena, the famed Lum & Abner character had a conference with Fred Duke of the state highway maintenance division regarding the need for improving No. 88.

May 11, 1939

LUM AND ABNER TO TALK ABOUT OUR HOSPITAL

According to the following letter, Mena General Hospital will get a lot of publicity on National Hospital Day. Lum and Abner are going to see to that. Mrs. Don Blackwood, head nurse at the hospital, had written to the Mena radio stars asking them to make mention of the local institution. Here is their reply:

May 4, 1939

Mrs. Don Blackwood, R.N.
Mena General Hospital
Mena, Arkansas

Dear Mrs. Blackwood:

We are in receipt of your letter of April 19, and wish to say we will be more than pleased to mention the Mena General Hospital in our broadcast of May 12. May we suggest that you inform the Parke-Davis Company that we will talk about the hospital on that day, and ask them to listen in?

It might be well also to call their attention to the fact that our program is broadcast over 50 stations of the Columbia Broadcasting System, which means it reaches every corner of the United States. We would like mighty well to see the Mena hospital get this award and are only too glad to cooperate in any way we can. After the broadcast, we will send you a copy of the script and a letter. We wish you the best of luck and hope you win the \$1000.

Sincerely yours,
LUM AND ABNER

(The Parke-Davis Company has an offer of \$1000 to the hospital getting the most publicity.)

(Personals)

Dick Huddleston of Pine Ridge fame is as thoughtful in real life as he is shown to be in Lum and Abner's broadcasts. The real Dick is sending personal invitations to friends in Mena and other places, requesting their presence at Pine Ridge on May 14, when the 25th annual Mother's Day program will be given at this famous community. As an added appeal to those special invitations, Dick promises a chance to eat lunch at an old-time Arkansas spread.

May 18, 1939

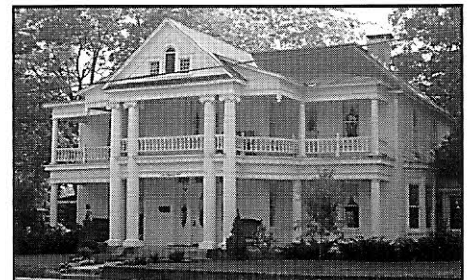
MANY SHOWED THEIR INTEREST IN MENA GENERAL HOSPITAL ON NATIONAL HOSPITAL DAY

While Mena's radio stars Lum and Abner were broadcasting their commendation of National Hospital Day in their Friday evening program, the hospital in their home town nearly 2000 miles away was reviewing the finale of its first public recognition as a highly valuable public institution.

Within the room of the hospital these radio headliners have helped equip, one of which bears the loved names of Lum and Abner, there was gathered a loyal group, happy over the success that had marked the local observance of a nationwide event. This group, which included some of the patients as well as hospital workers and guests, found their happiness increased when they heard over the radio Alan Bradley had so thoughtfully provided, the loved voices of Lum and Abner.

While the radio comedians did not devote a lot of time to the local hospital, they did mention the institution and remarked at the great good it was doing in the community. The plug for Mena General Hospital was worked in when Abner told Lum he was going into the county seat with Cedric, to visit the latter's mother who was a patient at the hospital.

Mena General Hospital may never rank as one of the nation's largest or finest, but on Friday, May 12, it was accorded an honor none other attained, through the tribute paid it by these famed entertainers.



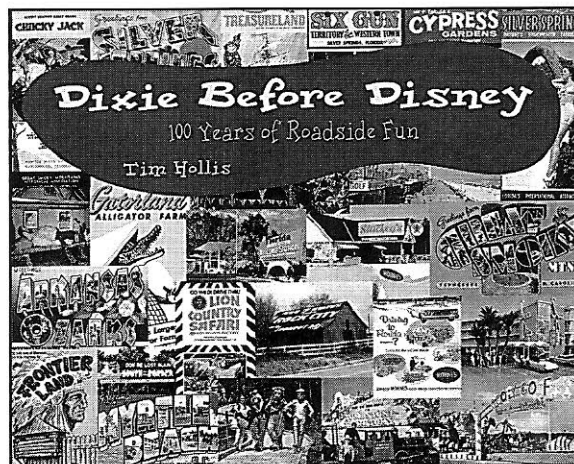
This beautiful Mena residence was serving as the local hospital in 1939.



Judging from the mail response we have received, one of the most popular features the *Journal* has ever had is the series detailing the way Lum and Abner have turned up in America's roadside attractions and other highway businesses. It is primarily for this reason that we are announcing here the publication of a new book by NLAS Executive Secretary Tim Hollis.

DIXIE BEFORE DISNEY: 100 YEARS OF ROADSIDE FUN has just been released by the University Press of Mississippi. This book is a lavishly illustrated nostalgic history of roadside tourism in the South. Now, the NLAS is a national organization, and probably many of our members have never even been to the South... but many others have, and if you remember the days before gargantuan theme parks were the vacation craze, this book is definitely for you.

In *DIXIE BEFORE DISNEY*, you will revisit the histories of such legendary Southern locales as Rock City Gardens (of the legendary SEE ROCK CITY barn roofs), Florida's Silver Springs and its glass bottom boats, Cypress Gardens and its famous water ski show, the wacky attractions that were found along the South's beaches and in its mountain country, the various story-book and dinosaur parks aimed at the travelers' children, the jungle-themed attractions, the Wild West parks, and on and on. There is also a chapter examining the other types of businesses that existed to serve tourists, such as the well-known Stuckey's pecan candy



shops. Also falling into this category are the many mom-and-pop motels, restaurants, and souvenir stores that lined major tourist routes to the South, including (yes, it had to be in there, considering who wrote the book) a certain general store in a place called Pine Ridge, Arkansas, operated by a chap known as Dick Huddleston (you have probably heard of him somewhere). Our old pals Lum

and Abner also pop up in some other unexpected places in the volume.

You already know Zec Sec Hollis's writing style from the issues of the *Journal* that have been published to these many years, so we can just say that if you like the way he writes about L&A, you will enjoy his humor-laden but informative treatment of Southern tourism in this book.

DIXIE BEFORE DISNEY may be available in your local bookstore, depending upon where you live. If it is not actually on the shelf, any bookstore can certainly order it for you. It is also available through such Internet services as Amazon.com and Barnesandnoble.com. Or, you can cut out all that huskin' shuckin's by ordering it yourself from the University Press of Mississippi. Call 1-800-737-7788 for pricing and other such info.

(Of course, the NLAS does not receive anything out of the sales of this book; we just thought you'd like to know about it.)

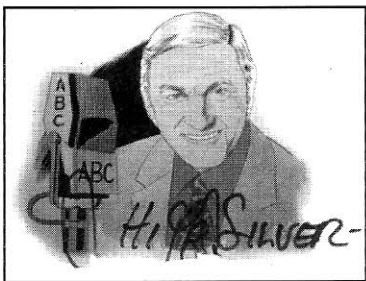
GET READY, BECAUSE HERE COMES THE 1999 NLAS CONVENTION

**Lime Tree Inn - Mena, Arkansas
JUNE 25 & 26, 1999**

Having somewhat eased at least some of the financial difficulties we mentioned in the February issue of the *Journal*, thanks to some incredible generosity on the part of some of our members, we have proceeded with plans for the 1999 Convention. And what a collection of special programs we have compiled for this year...

FRED FOY GUESTS!

Lum and Abner Meet the Lone Ranger



Fred Foy

FRED FOY is a legend in the old-time radio world by virtue of his longstanding position as announcer on *THE LONE RANGER*. While he was not directly connected with the *Lum and Abner* program, he still has a lot

to tell about that era of broadcasting history... and believe it or not, there are some amazing "crossover" elements between these two classic shows. Come and hear Mr. Foy's story, and you will see what we mean!

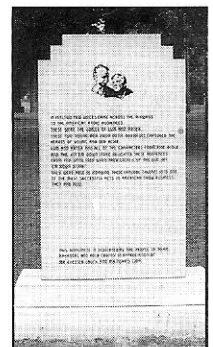
A Tribute to OPIE CATES Musician and Comedian

Most people remember **OPIE CATES** as the orchestra leader (and comic character) on the half-hour version of *Lum and Abner* in 1949-50. Sadly, Opie passed away in 1987 after a long illness, but in observance of the **50th anniversary** of his L&A debut this

year, we are presenting a salute to this man of many talents. Several of Opie's immediate family members plan to be with us to help us learn more about this amazing fellow and his music and comedy career.

LUM AND ABNER MONUMENT 20th Anniversary

Twenty years ago this summer, an event of great historical significance was held in Mena when the granite monument to **Lum and Abner** was unveiled in Janssen Park. In observation of that anniversary, one of our convention programs this year will feature the rarely-seen video coverage of that ceremony, at which **Chet Lauck** himself made one of his last major public appearances. Hopefully there will be other surprises as well!



Make Your Reservations NOW!

Mena is a quite busy tourist town during the summer months, so it would be wise for you to make your reservations right now by calling the Lime Tree Inn at **(501) 394-6350**. Occasionally the Lime Tree fills all of its rooms during NLAS Convention weekend due to family reunions that are being held concurrently, so if there is no vacancy, you should call the motel across the street, the Sun Country Inn, at **(501) 394-7477**.