





JUNE 1986





Since this is the last issue of <u>The Jot'Em Down Journal</u> that will appear before the Convention, here are the plans as they stand now:

Activities will begin at approximately 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 14, in the Pine Ridge Fire Hall, just "up the hill" overlooking the Huddleston Store and Lum & Abner Museum. (If you've never been to Pine Ridge before, believe us, you won't have a lot of trouble finding your way around town.) The general opinion was that we would never be able to top the activities we scheduled at the first convention last year, so, this year we are taking a completely different approach.

Because 1986 is the 50th Anniversary of the town of Pine Ridge, the convention will revolve around the community itself. Scheduled speakers for this year include Kathy Stucker, manager of the museum and the official Pine Ridge historian, and Ethel Huddleston Ball, whose father Dick had more to do with Waters, Arkansas, becoming Pine Ridge than anyone else. (As last year proved, a Lum & Abner Convention can be as unpredictable as the old fellows themselves, so, you never know what other special guests will be dropping in during the weekend.) Plenty of time will be allowed this year to explore the area in and around Pine Ridge...as you can see from the comprehensive historical article in the April issue of the Journal, there is a lot more to this part of the Ouachita Mountains than meets the eye. Also on Saturday, we will present our Second Annual Lum and Abner Memorial Awards.

Sunday's activities will commence between 10:00 and noon, with the annual Pine Ridge Lum and Abner Day festivities. The fire hall will be given over to the showing of Lum and Abner movies, while outside, the music of Ruel Bain and his band will provide appropriate atmosphere. (And don't forget all the food provided by the ladies of Pine Ridge...grand cooks all...with the proceeds going to benefit the Pine Ridge Rural Volunteer Fire Department.) Sometime during the day, there will be more programs further commemorating the town's 50th anniversary, all of which will eventually become another large chapter of Lum & Abner history, so, we know you'll want to be there to enjoy it.

So, I grannies, get your valise packed and hop on the next mail hack to Pine Ridge, Arkansas, for the Second Annual National Lum and Abner Society Convention on June 14 & 15!! Yes mom, we'll see you there!!

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THE NATIONAL LUM AND ABNER SOCIETY

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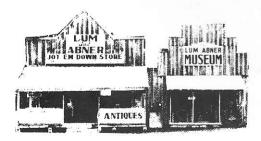
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"Lum and Abner did many great things for show business...well...for one thing, they got out of it."

Pat Buttram, 1966

Cover illustration by Donnie Pitchford.

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## THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

JUNE 1986

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# HOWDY, EVERBODY

ANNOUNCER: And now, let's see what's going on down at the headquarters of the National Lum & Abner Society. Wellll, today is the day of President Uncle Donnie Pitchford's wedding to Aunt Laura Pearson, and we find a large crowd gathered at the church. In a side room, Singin' Sam Brown and Squire Rex Riffle are trying to calm the nervous groom. Mousey Tim Hollis is just entering. Listen.

(SOUND: Door opens & closes)

MOUSEY HOLLIS: Hey, fellows, the guests are all here. Pat Buttram and Phil Harris just came in...they were the last ones.

SQUIRE RIFFLE: It sure is crowded out there. Did they find a seat?

MOUSEY HOLLIS: Yeah, I put them right between Roz Rogers & Clarence Hartzell.

SINGIN' SAM: Say, try to calm down, Uncle Donnie...you're as narvous an' jumpy as a rabbit's nose.

UNCLE DONNIE: Wha-wha-whatever made you th-th-th-think that?!

SQUIRE RIFFLE: Aw, looka there, Uncle Donnie, you've got your necktie tied around your

SINGIN' SAM: Is Mrs. Emerson ready at the organ, Tim?

MOUSEY HOLLIS: Yeah, she's all set; Grandpa Jones and Bashful Harmonica Joe are ready to accompany her with the String Band, and Ruel Bain has his fiddle all tuned up.

UNCLE DONNIE: Say, I was just thinking, fellows...shouldn't we put this off until later? Like, maybe Christmas Eve.....1988?!

SINGIN' SAM: No, now, Uncle Donnie, don't chicken out! I've even got my video camera all set up...and for once, don't be making funny faces at it during the ceremony.

UNCLE DONNIE: At a time like this, who feels like making funny faces?!

MOUSEY HOLLIS: Well, that's a pretty comical one you've got on right now, har har har.

SQUIRE RIFFLE: Hey, the minister just got here; who is he, anyway? I've never seen him.

UNCLE DONNIE: Oh, he's a friend of ours from Longview...Rev. Otis P. Washington.

MOUSEY HOLLIS: Well, we'd better be getting out there.

SINGIN' SAM: Yeah, come on, Uncle Donnie.

UNCLE DONNIE: N-N-Now wait a m-m-minute here, fellows...

(MUSICAL BRIDGE)

MINISTER: (fading in) And by the power vested in me, I now pronounce you man & wife. (SOUND: Bells ringing, crowd cheering)

UNCLE DONNIE: Coff coff, Tim, what's that stuff you're throwing on me?!

MOUSEY HOLLIS: Well, we didn't have any rice, so we thought Quaker Oats would be more appropriate anyway.

AUNT LAURA: (with disdain) Er, Donnie, are these the friends you were telling me about? UNCLE DONNIE: Uh....yeah.

AUNT LAURA: Well, we'll see all of you when we get back from the honeymoon.

UNCLE DONNIE: Uh...Laura...dearie...about that honeymoon...

SINGIN' SAM: Say, Uncle Donnie, I've got the camera loaded into your car. When do we leave?

AUNT LAURA: "We?"

UNCLE DONNIE: Yeah...see...I sort of promised them that...uh...

AUNT LAURA: (becoming threatening) W H A T?

UNCLE DONNIE: Uh, now, honey...sweetie pie...snookums...uh...Laura, put down that candleabra!! No, put me down!!! Help! Help!

(SOUND: Conk conk conk conk conk)

SINGIN' SAM: Well, looks like the beginning of a happy marriage.

SQUIRE RIFFLE: Like that ol' Eddards saying, "A wise man never says bad things to his wife."

MOUSEY HOLLIS: I've got a new observation: if a man's really wise, he won't have a wife. SINGIN' SAM: Well, I guess these two lovebirds want to be alone. Let's wait out in the

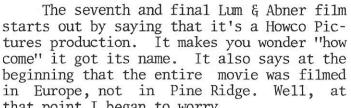
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# and A

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that point I began to worry.

Let me explain that ''Lum & Abner Abroad'' was the ''lost'' Lum and Abner movie; this was the one that no one had seen. To our knowledge, it was never released to theaters. So, I must admit that there was much mystery about it, as far as I was concerned, and I was very anxious to see it. However, I was worried about how it might depict our two old friends. I knew it was filmed in Yugoslavia, and that nation had a Communist government. I was really worried about how the Communists might view Lum and Abner, because "reds," they certainly were not! I was concerned that they might have used them to reveal, in a propaganda manner, that rural America was not as it actually was. I was concerned that our old friends had been misused and humiliated in the film. I had heard that Chet and Tuffy decided to call it quits during the making of this movie. So, in some ways I was not really wanting to see the vehicle that brought an end to Lum & Abner, but I was highly intrigued as well.

So as soon as I heard from Chet Lauck Jr. that the movie was available on video cassette, I ordered it. In fact, I ordered it the same day I found out that I could get it. I most emphatically had to see this

movie!

I was glad that I had a little background about the film before I initially watched it. It was made in late 1954. I had heard, also, that it was supposed to have been three half-hour television shows, which were tied together to make a feature-This bit of information length film. helped to cushion the shocks that were to come later.

The first thing that bothered me was that the music kept changing tempo constant-It was supposed to be mood music, I suppose, but it was having psychotic mood swings, especially in the beginning, as we see a cab drive up to the entrance of a hotel, quite obviously not "down in Pine Ridge." Lum and Abner get out of the cab, and we see that they have no baggage; not even a hand-satchel. I knew they were immediately headed for trouble! In the lobby of the hotel, Lum and Abner try to register at the front desk, but there are members of a girls' dance company in front of them. They are speaking to the desk clerk in English with accents that are so thick that you could cut them with a knife. One girl is wanting to hear from Tommy Ellis, another American.

The boys finally get a room, with an 'upstairs front porch," upon which Abner walks out and says the most classic line in the entire movie: 'How you gonna keep 'em down on the farm after they've seen Zagreb?" At this point one realizes that seeing Lum and Abner in Yugoslavia would be just about like seeing Amos 'n' Andy in Poland.

In the first half-hour segment, the boys get acquainted with one of the girls of the dance troupe, the one who wanted to hear from Tommy Ellis. She takes them to a cafe' for expresso, with which they have no problem. I could just imagine Abner trying



to drink that stuff in the old days; what a field day of a routine they would have made out of that!

The girl, Marianne, invites the boys to her home town to meet her parents. (Her home town, by the way, just happens to be named "Pinevec Ridgeka.") At a meal with the family we learn that Lum and Abner are "Goodwill Ambassadors from the U.S.A., the United States of Arkansas." The boys assure the girl that they know Tommy Ellis is coming to her home in time for their proposed marriage; they give an "Arkansas Guarantee."

There are a few rare moments in the film in which Chet and Tuffy get together and do their characters just like they used to. However, I noticed that they were using terms like "cool" and "square." Anyway, the marriage ceremony is getting underway without Tommy Ellis, the groom. The boys get worried and decide to skip out. They dress in native costumes and try to get away on a tractor. Seeing Lum & Abner in native Yugoslavian dress is something to behold! (It was like seeing Laurel and Hardy in a Chinese kung-fu movie.) But, an overweight and overage Tommy Ellis shows up just in time, and the day is saved.

The second half-hour segment could be titled "Lum and Abner In Paris," I guess. It opens with the boys as guests of honor at a soccer game. Again, I could just imagine Abner in the old days trying to figure out soccer...with Lum explaining it

to him, that is.

The scene shifts to a bar where some



sinister characters are plotting to use our two old friends to smuggle, unwittingly of course, some national art treasures out of the country. The boys are drawn into the trap when they, on returning to their hotel, come to the aid of a girl who is being attacked. The girl is in with the smugglers, and she entices the boys to go with her to a castle on an island in the Seine River.



On that island we hear tropical birds; unusual for France, don't you think? In the castle the boys are menaced by Boris, a Bela Lugosi look-alike, as well as a "Frankenschplein monster." Through a comedy of errors the boys elude monsters and smugglers and are rescued by the local police just in time.

The third half-hour segment could be "Lum and Abner Go To Monte Carlo." (Remember that Yugoslavian sites are doubling for all these exotic European locales.) This section opens with a bankrupt Duchess throwing a social gala, but getting away with not actually paying for anything. This Duchess has a niece she wants to get married off, preferably to someone rich.

Well, our two old friends wind up at one of these parties by mistake. They hear everyone there talking about how rich they are, so the boys decide to join in and discuss their imaginary wealth. They are overheard and the word gets to the Duchess, who figures that she has two "pigeons" from which she can make some money. She gets the boys to start playing roulette. Lum and Abner place a bet. They say that they want five on a particular number. Of course they think it's \$5.00, but in actuality it is \$5,000. But the boys clean house and take home a cool \$14,080,000. They literally "break the bank at Monte Carlo." This throws the entire country into a fit. They don't have the money to pay such a debt. The only way they can raise the money is to tax the people. Lum and Abner finally find out just exactly what they've done, and to save the people, they ask for only \$14.80, and become national heroes as a result.

I do believe that our old friends were to some extent used by the Yugoslavian government to show the world that they were not a backward, noncultural nation. Especially in the first half hour, there was some very thinly disguised propaganda about life in Yugoslavia, especially life on the farm. It was depicted as being very modern, with all the conveniences one could ask for.

Also, remember that this film was made during the McCarthy era. I'm sure that Chet and Tuffy realized that to release a film depicting themselves being friendly to Communists could hvae put them in a very bad light...which it just might have done. I believe Lum and Abner gave us their quality performances just like they did in the six previous movies, but they were greatly handicapped by poor production techniques, and lack of communication with other staff members.

In summation, I was left with a good feeling about this movie. In an unconscious way it revealed to me that no matter what, or where they were, our two friends were the same. Even if the Russians took over the entire nation, Lum & Abner would still be Lum & Abner. Nothing in this world can change those fellows. Nothing at all!!

- Rex Riffle

#### CAST OF CHARACTERS

LUM Chester Lauck
ADAID CHESTEL LAUCK
ABNER Norris Goff
MARIANNE Jill Alis
COLLETTE Lila Audres
PAPA POSSAVETZ Branko Spolvar
NICKY Gene Garv
DUCHESS Vera Mesita
MISCHA Valdo Stephens
FRANKENSCHPLEIN Steven Voyt
LISA Nada Nuchich
GROUPIER Chris Peters
TOMMY ELLIS Jim Kilev
DIGNITARY Joseph Batistich

"LUM AND ABNER ABROAD"
A Howco Pictures Production
Filmed 1954
Never Released

SCREENPLAY by Carl Herzinger

BASED UPON STORIES by Carl Herzinger & James V. Kern

PRODUCED & DIRECTED by James V. Kern



# It Could Have Happened

Among the aborted projects that we examine in this occasional column is one of which it can truthfully be said that it was fortunate for Lum & Abner that it never came off. I am referring to the little-known plans to produce a series of Lum and Abner animated cartoons for television.

Like many other projects of this type, our correspondence relating to it starts in the middle of the story, as it were. Apparently, at some earlier time, the producer of this proposed cartoon series, one Mr. Ace Ochs of the CBS television network, had discussed the possibility of such a program with Chet Lauck. Eventually, Mr. Ochs got an animator to prepare some preliminary sketches of the L & A characters as they might appear in animation, and he sent them to Lauck.

Here is where our batch of material begins. We have the animator's sketches, and they indicate that this project was

doomed from the outset. Quite obviously, the cartoonist hired by Mr. Ochs had heard the L & A radio shows, but had never seen any visual depiction of the characters. Thus, in his drawings, Lum is portrayed as a typical jolly, heavyset grocer, complete with apron and straw hat (no handlebar mustache). Abner, while considerably shorter than Lum as always, bears some resemblance to Snuffy Smith. (He even has a straw in his mouth; AUUUUGGGGH!!) There are numerous sketches using these depictions of the old fellows, but only one each of the other characters. Among them, Squire Skimp is the only one who can be positively identified. Others include a half-witted-looking little runt who may or may not be Cedric; an elderly sheriff who could be Uncle Henry Lunsford; and two female characters whose only likely identification would be Widder Abernathy and Little Pearl. (Grandpappy Spears is nowhere to be seen.)

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When Mr. Ochs packed these sketches off to Chet Lauck, Lauck responded on April 9, 1971, with all the tact of an international diplomat. "I like (the artist's) style very much," he says. 'He is able to get a lot of action, which will be necessary in animation." Then it comes: "However, I feel that we are obliged to conform to the established characters of Lum and Abner because of the movies which we made." He goes on to tell Ochs where he can find 16mm prints of two L&A movies so the cartoonist can see what our old friends were supposed to look like, and states his hopes that Ochs will pursue the project further.

Ochs' reply is not dated, but apparently came sometime later in the spring of 1971. In regard to the outrageous drawings, he says, "These roughs were made back when we first discussed this project with Tuffy." (There is no comment on what Goff's opinion of the renderings was.) 'We are presently examining the cost factors that would be involved in several different animation techniques," he concludes. And that, for some reason or another, was that as far as a L & A cartoon series was concerned.

As usual, there are questions left unanswered. Was the proposed series supposed to be for prime-time(a la "The Flintstones" and "Top Cat" in their initial runs), or Saturday-morning children's show? Who was going to provide the voices? And why was the project dropped? Well, even though we don't know why, if the sketches we have indicate anything, a show like that which was being planned could not have helped the memory of Lum & Abner very much; in fact, it probably would have helped it sink to new depths.

- Tim Hollis

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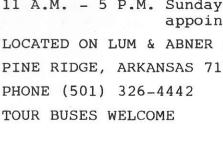
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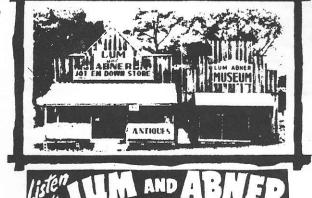
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# REPRINTS OF PAST LUM & ABNER ARTICLES



(The following two articles were written by CHICAGO DAILY NEWS Radio Editor Charles Gilchrest, tracing the switch of the Lum & Abner program from the Mutual Network to NBC in 1935.)

### THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS, June 24, 1935

Lum and Abner, the Ozark philosophers, are already shopping for time on one of the networks prepatory to expanding their network radio doings in the fall. During the summer the boys will be on WGN, Chicago; WLW, Cincinnati; KFRC, San Francisco, and KNX, Hollywood.

But already their work has proven so successful both with the sponsor and the radio public that the network plans are being shaped up.

Whether they'll be heard in the fall over NBC, Columbia, or an independent set of stations depends entirely upon the ability of the networks to offer time they consider suitable for several days a week.

Here is an act which comes as close to being spontaneous as any commercial program can these days. Neither their sponsor nor the advertising agency representing said sponsor even sees the scripts before they are broadcast. And that is really something if you know anything about the troubles some of our radio acts have with what is called "sponsoritis" ...the disease common to commercial radio in which the spon-

sor, who probably successfully manufactures shoes or cars or something, considers himself a showman and tells his radio act what to do and how to do it.

In fact, the Lum and Abner scripts are usually completed in their first draft a few minutes before the broadcast. They don't even bother to have them copied, although the boys' typing is of the hunt and peck system, which calls for X's rather than an eraser to correct errors.

They never plan the evening's episode before writing it. They simply sit down and start talking while one of them pounds the typewriter and gradually the thing takes form.

At one time they did try outlining a series. They laid out the general ideas for a whole week's programs. Then they sat down to write the first one, and even before that was completed they were far, far away from the outline. At another time, they made an outline, but before it could cause them any trouble they threw it away.

Of all the completed scripts that have been submitted by outsiders not a one was usable. Of all the suggestions and ideas they have received only one ever really worked in properly. That one idea came in recently when the boys were trying to find a way of beating their enemy in the show business. A Chicago fan suggested that they might get out a warrant to close him up because an old law, long since forgotten, on the Pine Ridge books might say it is unlawful to run a theater above the ground floor due to fire hazards. That worked in very nicely since their competitor was on the second floor.



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The boys have issued annual passes to their Pine Ridge Planetarium. Sez it: "This lets the above person in our moving pitcher house fer nuthin' pervided the rules on the back is observed." The rules provide:

- (1) No smoking or chewing or dogs allowed.
- (2) Gents must remove hats and ladies
- (3) Children over 12 years old must have tickets even if you're carrying them in your arms.
- (4) You won't get your money back if you sleep through the show. Snoring not allowed.
- (5) Please don't chunk anything at the villain. It'll ruin the screen and won't do no good anyhow.

LUM & ABNER, Props.

(In the following article, please note that Mr. Gilchrest failed to notice the difference between "rural" humor and "hill-billy" humor.)

### THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS, August 31, 1935

Lum and Abner, those Ozark hillbilly philosophers, take their Horlick's radio show from WGN and a few other stations of the Mutual Broadcasting System to a countrywide NBC network beginning Monday (Editor's Note, 1986: September 2, 1935). They'll be heard at 6:30 o'clock nightly save Saturday and Sunday. WENR is the new local outlet.

Now that the boys are going on NBC it's amusing to remember the laconic comment which followed their first audition at NBC early in the summer of 1931. The NBC sales department wrote a memo to the NBC press department thusly:

"There doesn't seem to be very much to say about these boys (Lum and Abner) except that they are a comedy team and impersonate a couple of farmers."

That remark is really amusing, especially when you remember that just recently they offered over perhaps six or eight stations copies of their newspaper, The Pine Ridge News, and received 350,000 replies.

Despite the parts they play, parts of old-time hillbillies with hayseed in their hair and straws in their mouths, the boys who portray the characters are modern young fellows who live with their wives and children in Chicago. But even if they do



dress like modern young businessmen, perhaps there is just a touch of Mena, Ark., still in their makeups.

For, not long ago, had you been on Randolph Street along toward evening, you might have been surprised to see coming down the street Chester (Lum) Lauck with only one-half of his face shaved. On the other side was a heavy growth of whiskers.

It seems Chester had noticed an item in the papers just a few days before that, an item which reported how a barber, nerves unstrung from the constant necessity of displaying no nerve, had suddenly gone berserk and cut a guy's neck.

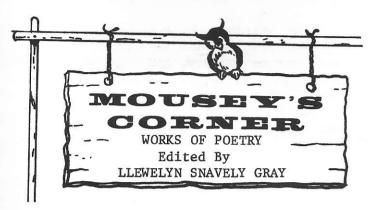
That little item reminded Norris (Abner) Goff of an incident in his childhood. There had been a barber whose nerves had given way back there in Arkansas. He'd cut a man's neck and then collapsed with a bad case of nerves. He was put in an insane asylum for a couple of years. After that he was apparently perfectly normal, both mentally and physically. So they let him out and he went back to his old job of barbering.

Within a week, his nerves cracked badly again and this time he killed a man, cutting his throat completely and definitely.

So came the night when Lum walked down the street half-shaved. He was to meet his wife for dinner and a show after his broadcast that night. He arrived at the meeting place about twenty minutes early. He spied a barber shop across the street and realized he hadn't shaved that day. He thought Mrs. Lauck might like it better if he remedied that situation.

So into the barber shop for a quick shave. Just as the barber poised the razor above his neck he became aware of the great clatter the elevated and street cars made outside the door. He began to wonder what effect that would have on the barber's nerves.

It was natural that he should recall that story in the newspaper. And then quite naturally he remembered what Abner had told him about the barber in Arkansas. Suddenly Lum could stand it no longer. Professing a sudden urgent need for being somewhere else, he quickly made the barber stop and wiped the lather off the unshaven



"THE HORLICK'S SMITHY"
(Published as an ad in "Lum & Abner's
Almanac")

See underneath the chestnut tree Old Caleb Weehunt stand, With might and muscle in his arms... And Horlick's Tablets in his hand.

For like a million other folk
Who must have good physique
Old Caleb knows how Horlick's helps
To keep one at one's peak.

It's the nourishment these tablets hold That really does the trick...
No other food can satisfy
Or pep you up so quick.

So motorists, huntsmen, office folk...
And busy housewives, too...
Don't fail to learn firsthand the good
That Horlick's Tablets do.

A pocket flask that costs a dime And lasts for many days Will prove a faithful friend to you In many, many ways.



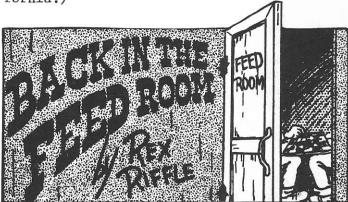




side of his face. Feigning a need for speed he rushed from the shop across the street and there took up his vigil to await Mrs. Lauck.

You can imagine what the barber thought when he watched the man dash across the street and then stop and stand there for many minutes.

(These two rare articles were both unearthed by Mr. Tom Price of Salinas, California.)



In traveling around this great country of ours we can find many geographic reminders of our two old Arkansas friends. For instance, we can find other "Pine Ridges" in Kentucky and South Dakota.

There is, believe it or not, a "Lum" in Michigan, and "Edwards" in California, Colorado, Illinois, Mississippi, Missouri, and New York.

I couldn't find Abner anywhere, but I found "Peabody" in Kansas & Massachusetts. Also, the rest of his family is well represented with "Elizabeth" in Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. There is a little "Pearl" in Illinois and Mississippi, and even an Ol' "Blue" in Arizona.

Old Grandpappy Spears is the best represented with 'Milford' in California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, and Virginia. There is an 'Avery' in California, Idaho, and Texas. Finally, there's a 'Spearsville' in Louisiana. Doggies, that old man sure can get around.

Surprise, surprise, there's a 'Mousie' in Kentucky, along with a 'Gray' in Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee.

## The Secretary's Desk

Time for the latest news from the office of the busy, busy, busy Zekatif Seketerry. Well, first of all, we are releasing four more pages for the Tape Libarary Catalog; these are pages 25-28, and, as always, to get them, just send a self-addressed stamped envelope. (The price for the complete catalog is now \$4.00.)

Preparations are being made now to issue the first National Lum & Abner Society Membership Directory, so that interested members can contact each other if they so desire. It will be sent to all members sometime in July, and all addresses will be included...so, if for some reason you do not want your address included, let us know by JUNE 16. (It will include all members whose dues are paid through the month of June.) The addresses of our Honorary Members will remain unpublished to protect their privacy, unless we are specifically given permission by them to do otherwise. (HONORARY MEMBERS: If you do not mind having your address included, drop us a card and let us know.)

Address any communication dealing with this column to the Executive Secretary, Tim Hollis, Route 3, Box 110, Dora, AL 35062. So long until next



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