

LI'L ABNER

The Stars and Stripes by **AL CAPP**
For Never -



GASP!! -- THESE OLD RECORDS INDICATE DOGPATCH IS...

-THE MOST IMPORTANT SQUARE MILE ON EARTH!!



?!!- THE U.S. GOVERNMENT NEVER REACHED A FINAL AGREEMENT WITH THE ORIGINAL YOKUM TO BUY DOGPATCH!!



THE YOKUM FAMILY STILL OWNS IT!! -- IT'S A TINY INDEPENDENT NATION-LIKE MONACO!!



-AND LIKE PRINCE RAINIER'S FAMILY, THE YOKUM FAMILY ARE THE HEREDITARY RULERS!!

THOSE @!& HILL-BILLIES ARE ROYALTY!!



NEXT MORNING

DOGPATCH CHILLUN!! -- YOU NOW STARTS YORE LI'L DAY, AS USUAL, BY PLEDGIN' ALLEGIANCE TO TH' FLAG O' TH' U.S.A.!!

HOLD IT!!



NOBODY TAKES OUR FLAG AWAY!!

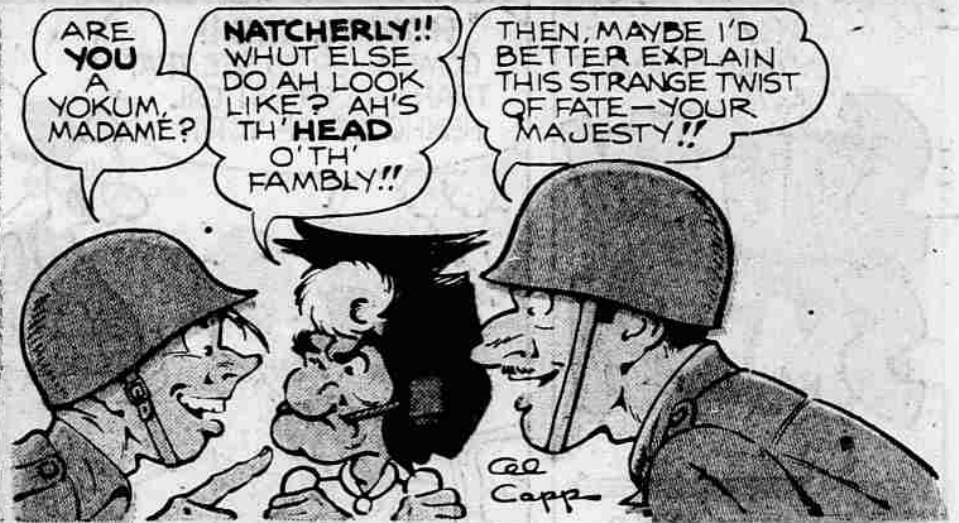
YOUR FLAG? DON'T BE SILLY!!



WE'VE JUST FOUND OUT THAT DOGPATCH IS NOT NOW, NOR HAS IT EVER BEEN PART OF THE U.S.A.

-AND PLEASE, MADAM - DON'T CROSS THAT LINE!! YOU HAVE NO PASSPORT!!

BUT THASS MERELY PINEAPPLE JUNCTION AN' US YOKUMS HAS ALLUS--



ARE YOU A YOKUM, MADAME?

NATCHERLY!! WHUT ELSE DO AH LOOK LIKE? AH'S TH' HEAD O' TH' FAMBLY!!

THEN, MAYBE I'D BETTER EXPLAIN THIS STRANGE TWIST OF FATE - YOUR MAJESTY!!



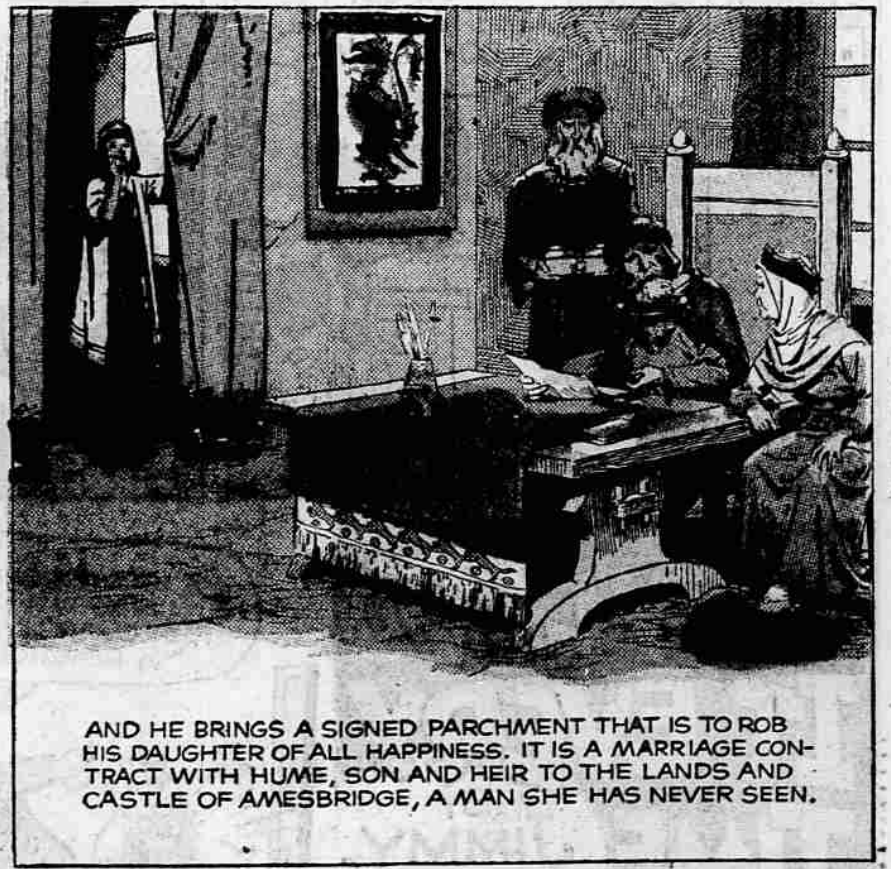
ON THIS: THE TWO SWEETHEARTS NOTICE THEY ARE BEING WATCHED. "GOOD MORROW, PRINCE VALIANT," CALLS THE YOUNG SQUIRE. "COME JOIN ME IN A ROUND AT THE TARGET."



JOAN, ONLY CHILD OF THE COUNT OF RATHFORD, WATCHES WITH PROUDLY BEATING HEART AS HER LOVER CONTENDS ON EQUAL TERMS WITH THE FAMOUS KNIGHT.



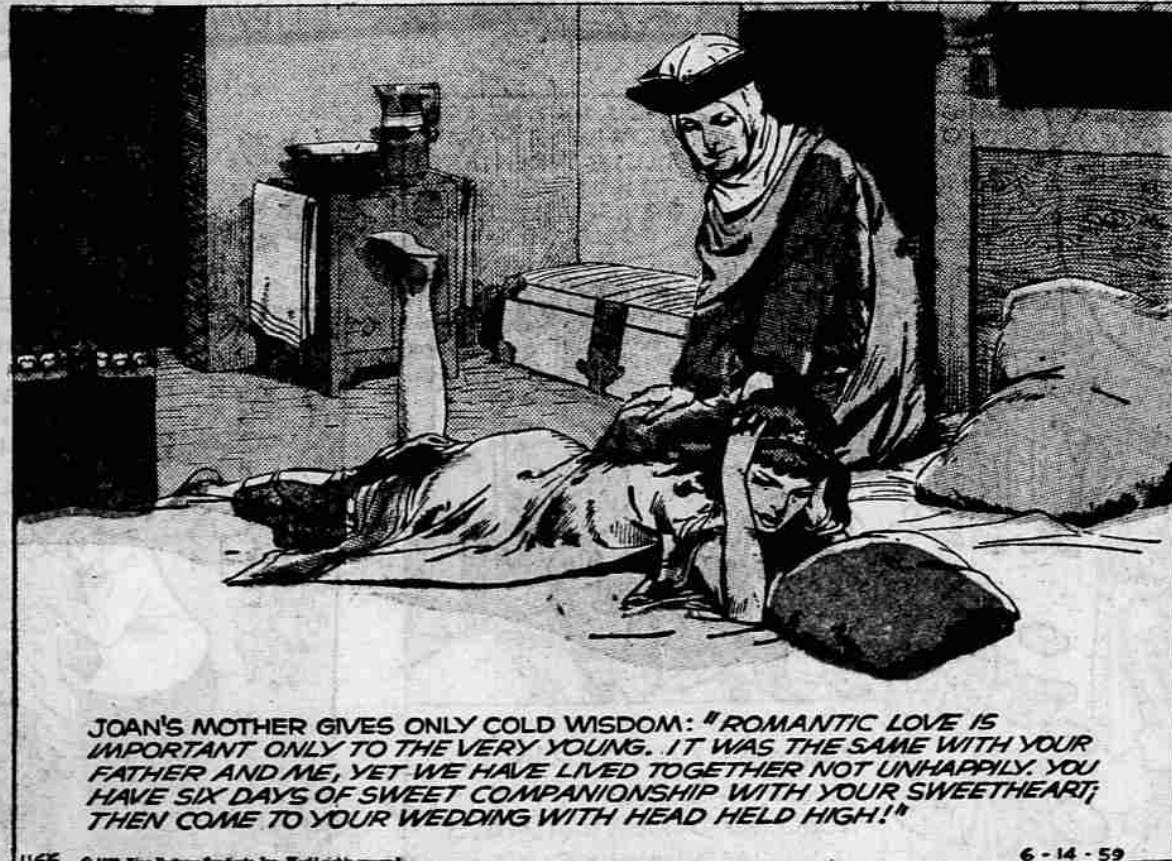
THEN JOAN GIVES A CRY OF DELIGHT AND RUNS TO GREET HER FATHER RETURNING HOME IN STATE FROM A VISIT TO A NEIGHBORING FIEF.



AND HE BRINGS A SIGNED PARCHMENT THAT IS TO ROB HIS DAUGHTER OF ALL HAPPINESS. IT IS A MARRIAGE CONTRACT WITH HUME, SON AND HEIR TO THE LANDS AND CASTLE OF AMESBRIDGE, A MAN SHE HAS NEVER SEEN.



LATER HE SAYS: "THE HOUSES OF RATHFORD AND AMESBRIDGE MUST BE BOUND TOGETHER BY MARRIAGE THAT WE MAY PRESENT A UNITED FRONT TO THE ENEMIES OF KING ARTHUR; OTHERWISE HUNDREDS WILL DIE IN WARFARE. WE OF NOBLE BLOOD MUST CONSIDER ONLY OUR DUTY TO OUR PEOPLE."



JOAN'S MOTHER GIVES ONLY COLD WISDOM: "ROMANTIC LOVE IS IMPORTANT ONLY TO THE VERY YOUNG. IT WAS THE SAME WITH YOUR FATHER AND ME, YET WE HAVE LIVED TOGETHER NOT UNHAPPILY. YOU HAVE SIX DAYS OF SWEET COMPANIONSHIP WITH YOUR SWEETHEART; THEN COME TO YOUR WEDDING WITH HEAD HELD HIGH!"



SO FOR FIVE SHORT DAYS TWO DESPERATE YOUNG LOVERS CLING TO EACH OTHER AND MAKE EXTRAVAGANT PROMISES. THEY ARE VERY YOUNG.
NEXT WEEK - The Sixth Day.