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(U) Cryptologic Almanac 50th Anniversary Series

(U) Uncle Ned

(U) Once upon a time, a man named Ned Clark worked for the National Security Agency. And while he had an ordinary job at the Agency like everyone else, that's not how he left his mark here: he gained his NSA fame through clowning.

(U) Ned Clark was born in Hartford, Connecticut. He served with the Marine Corps during World War II and the Korean War. Clark joined NSA, probably in the 1950s, as a typewriter repairman in the Installation and Logistics organization.

(U) Always involved with children and charity work, Clark began clowning in the late 1950s. In a 1966 interview, he told the NSA Newsletter that: "I had always seen the enjoyment children get from clowns at circuses, the expressions on their faces. I thought maybe being as nutty as I am - and so many people say I'm a clown anyway - that maybe I could do it." Thus, he created his clown character, "Uncle Ned," patterned after an Emmett Kelley doll he had received as part of a holiday toy drive he was running for local children.

(U) As well as clowning at children's institutions, homes for the elderly, and local fairs, Clark shared his talents with his NSA family. As "Uncle Ned," he could always be counted on to entertain at the NSA Christmas Party or any other NSA family party. Already well known around the Agency because of his typewriter repair work, he made his greatest impression on NSA personnel during the Christmas season. Each year he would go from office to office, with his accordion, playing and singing Christmas carols to the delight of many fellow employees. Clark was president of the NSA Clown Club, * and at least once he lectured about clowning in the Friedman Auditorium.

(U) Clark retired from NSA in 1980 and died in October 1992 at the age of 67. For those who knew him or even just knew of him, the Agency and the local area were a lot less fun with his departure.

[(U//~~FOUO~~) David P. Mowry and Jill Frahm, Center for Cryptologic History, 972-2893s]

*(U) The NSA Clown Club, known as the Clarkwheel Clowns," existed in the 1970s. The purpose of the club, according to its charter, was to "promote and develop among the membership interest, knowledge, and skill in being a clown." The club was disbanded at some unknown date. One of its members, "Snaggs," is still employed by the Agency.

Almanac 50th Anniversary Series

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