Watching *Roots*, January 26, 1977

*Roots* was one of the most popular and influential programs in American television history. Millions of Americans (60% of the population or more) watched at least part of the miniseries in 1977, and seven of the eight episodes were among the ten highest rated programs ever broadcast to that date. (The last episode was so popular that it is unlikely ever to be bumped from the top-ten list.) The show was significant by other measures, too. Pollsters found that half of the people watching *Roots* thought it was “one of the best” shows they’d ever seen, and it was a topic of conversation wherever people gathered.

Episode Four

Episode Four begins four years later (1780), as Kunta Kinte (Toby) carries a lantern through the slave quarters toward his darkened cabin; it runs for 50 minutes. About 44% of American households watched this episode.

The cast includes
- John Amos (Kunta Kinte/Toby)
- Louis Gossett Jr. (Fiddler)
- Robert Reed (Dr. William Reynolds)
- Madge Sinclair (Bell Reynolds)


The following pages give you a taste of life at Hanover in 1977. Included are articles, television listings, and cartoons from the local paper and the student newspaper. With schools closed and thermostats turned down, many in this area must have been thinking about cold weather clothes and games like the ones reproduced here from the Sears catalog of that year. Clippings from the *Madison Courier* are reproduced by permission (http://madisoncourier.com/).
Suggestions from public invited

Madison school board hears ways to make up missed days

By STEVE WHITE

Do you have a suggestion how some of the missed school days can be made up? If so, the Madison Consolidated Schools administration would like to hear from you.

Superintendent Dr. Harlan Stickwisch, at last night’s school board meeting, listed several possibilities the administration is considering to try and make up the lost days. These are only under consideration, Dr. Stickwisch said, and no decisions have been made yet. The possibilities are:
- Ccanceling the parent-teacher conferences in the elementary schools, which would mean a loss of 3 1/2 days.
- Keep elementary physical education classes that have been going to the Brown Gym in their own school to cut down on travel time.
- Lengthening the school day by a half hour. If there are 30 days left in the school year when school is re-opened, it could mean a loss of six or more days. School would start at the same time, but dismissals would be later.
- Making the records and report cards at the end of the year a student day.
- Not having any vacations or field trips.
- Continue to have the elementary track and field day, but have it on a Saturday.
- Removal of senior week.
- Cutting the activity schedule in half at the high school.
- Eliminate the traditional test schedule.

“We hope this list can be lengthened. Then we can go through and discard the ideas that are not feasible,” Dr. Stickwisch told the board. “We’ll be happy to hear ideas from the public.”

He added that the administration hasn’t decided yet whether spring break will be canceled and students make up lost days then.

Mrs. Joe Breitweiser, a member of the school board, told Dr. Stickwisch that as a parent she is very eager for the students to make up the lost days.

At the last school board meeting Dr. Stickwisch had proposed that the five first days of school when students finally return be the first semester and the sixth day be the beginning of the second semester.

That was suggested when everyone thought school would be in session before now. Dr. Stickwisch said last night that “at this point if we get in soon, use only the first three days for the first semester and the fourth day as the beginning of the second semester. If we don’t get back pretty soon, then maybe we’ll only have one day for ending the first semester. We’ll have to play it by ear.”

He also said that when schools are re-opened the last situation may be “precarious.” Maintenance men are maintaining 50 degrees in the buildings during the day and 55-60 degrees at night.

There have been some freezing problems at the Dupont Elementary School and the Junior high, but they have been repaired and “most are functioning pretty decently.”

In other business, the board and administration heard an instructional program presentation by C. W. Chism, program leader for science at the junior high school.

Chism told the board that junior high science has been broken down into life science and physical science for seventh graders.

See back page, column 7

We asked for letters.

And our readers write about snow, schools

How many times have you heard, “When I was a kid, we never missed a day of school because of the snow, and we had to walk all the way?”

It’s been repeated time after time, especially since Courterses schools have been closed every day except one since classes were dismissed Dec. 17 for the Christmas vacation. When schools were closed today in Madison it marked the 17th day that pupils have missed classes in January because of snow and hazardous roads.

The Madison Courier asked Monday that readers “40 years of age or older” to write a letter on the subject of how the so-called “old-timers” managed to get to school even in the deepest of snows.

The letters started to arrive this morning and a couple of them are reprinted today:

Mrs. Cora Bell Wyne

Mrs. Cora Bell Wyne, route one Hamerow writes:

“When I was a child we had to walk to school about two miles. I went eight years and never missed a single day. I went to Jefferson School the first five years and to Cassan the last part. We used to have a commencement when you went from the 8th grade to Junior High School, so I graduated when I was 14. I didn’t go to high school because the bus didn’t come out where I lived. I went to West Fork. I went to school when I had chicken pox and the mumps. My mother wanted to see if I could go through school without missing a day and I made it. We went through snow—deep snow, rain and all kinds of weather and never missed.”

Mrs. Georgia Corn

Mrs. Geneva Corn, route six writes:

“Ah, the good old school days! I can remember back in the past to the times in the winter and summer that we walked 21/2 miles to and from school. In the winter, our dad or mom would make the trip to school with us of a morning and walk back at evening to see that we didn’t play around and freeze on the way home. This was in the city of Connersville, Ind. and we were too poor to ever have a car, too ‘city-died’ for a horse and buggy, and too ‘country-died’ for a school bus. But we never missed a day of school because of weather ‘back then’ in 1933-1944.”

Mrs. Thelma Tomlinson

Another letter was received from Mrs. Thelma Gray Tomlinson, 110 East St.

“Who went home or lunch? We lived at the lower end of Pleasant Ridge and for the first three years of my schooling I attended Bellview School situated on the side of the road just before you come to the Pleasant Ridge Church. My father bought a used mail wagon, and my two older sisters and myself along with several others drove the mile and a half to school. My older sister drove a horse named Daisy. Daisy didn’t go fast and she didn’t go slow. She just went. Our lunch was packed in half gallon Korn Syrup buckets. The buck was easier to carry. A typical lunch consisted of possibly smoked ham and home made bread, a jar of home canned fruit or an apple or pear that was saved in huck baskets for the winter. Once in a while we had cheese (Mother made her own). I don’t remember anything wrapped in waxed paper wasn’t a thing I remember. At school there was a red hot stove in the middle of the room and a bucket of fresh water and outside facilities to care for other needs. That was in 1918-1920. Cold? I suppose it was, but it was worth it. We always felt real elegant. Most of the children walked. This is the way it was back then.”

Television Programs

Wednesday Night January 26
PTA group protests alleged excessive TV violence

CHICAGO (AP) — Diane Blackmore says she never worried much about television violence until her 4-year-old foster son tried to smother the family dog after watching a violent program.

Mrs. Blackmore, a nurse from suburban Northbrook, was one of nearly 50 persons, including television executives and state and city leaders, who presented views on TV violence at a 12-hour hearing Tuesday at a 12-hour hearing conducted by the national Parent-Teacher Association.

Officials of the 6.6 million member PTA say they have been holding similar hearings around the nation in hopes of stirring up enough public concern to challenge local television licenses and maybe even boycott advertisers who peddle products on programs featuring gunshots, karate chops, beatings, robberies and rapes.

But many witnesses testified that no connection has been established between violence on television and in real life.

Mrs. Blackmore said the incident with her foster son happened "after Sunday dinner about two years ago. We were watching the Sunday night mystery movie. He tried to smother our dog with a pillow after he saw a corrupt policeman try to murder a victim."

Henry W. Levinson, an executive with the New York-based Television Information Office, defended television programming and complained that "everybody's yelling at each other and nobody's listening. I'm learning that television is a very easy target." His organization is funded by the three commercial networks, the National Association of Broadcasters and several major studios.

He said the networks have tried to eliminate "gratuitous violence" in programming and stick to a "family-viewing hour" policy, even though a California court ruled the family-hour unconstitutional.

Herminio Traveras, vice president of NBC, said his network will report its findings on TV violence later this year.

"It is prudent for us all to be concerned about violence on television," he said. "Even though a conclusive case for a cause-and-effect relationship has not been made."

In other testimony, Mrs. Blackmore told of a science class experiment conducted by her 12-year-old daughter, Karen. "She said Karen used closed-circuit TV to show a class of parochial school fourth graders a film about street gang fighting. The next day, she showed a similar class a film describing the way chairs have changed from kings' thrones to kitchen straightbacks."

After the films, she led each class member, about 30 in all, into a room. She showed each pupil a doll and told him to imagine that it was his baby sister who had been bad while their mother was out. She said the children had permission to punish her with a paddle.

"The class that had seen the violent show were very violent, making comments such as, 'I'm going to kill it,'" she said.

She said they struck the dolls a total of 322 times. Viewers of the film about chairs, Karen said, struck their dolls 54 times.
Rick’s Picks of Flicks

Rick Karcashett

I am stepping out of my role of ace music critic into that of another cultural medium—cinema. No, I’m not going to talk about some German or Italian movie that no one’s ever heard of. Luckily, I live in a city that shows fairly current movies; otherwise, thanks to the Ohio Theatre, I’d be reviewing “Benji,” “Benji Revisited,” and “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs - Part III.” Despite this, I have had the opportunity to see some good movies this year.

Two of the better ones I saw this summer were “The Sailor Who Fell From Grace with the Sea” and “Obsession.” “The Sailor Who Fell From Grace with the Sea” was a classic, picture of both beauty and horror, love and betrayal, with an incredible performance. Sarah Miles an actress who is as convincing as she is expressive. “Obsession” ranks a notch below the former, yet is still heads and shoulders above most movie “entertainment.” A Hitchcockian plot, along with fine performances from Cliff Robertson and Genevieve Bujold, and some dazzling photography all make “Obsession” worth the admission price.

“The Enforcer” is the third in the series of Dirty Harry movies. This one has less of a plot than the first two, but Clint Eastwood still plays the character who stands for all that is incorruptible in man. He refuses to give in and takes action, though in a much too violent fashion. However, you have to like a guy who has the guts to tell the mayor, when in resigning and handing over his badge, “here’s a seven point suppository for you.”

Peter Sellers returns in his role as Inspector Clouseau in “The Pink Panther Strikes Again.” This film has its spectacular funny moments, but with its unrealistic plot, about the only thing this movie has going for it is the way Clouseau says “room” and “clue” in his very own special way.

The supernatural thrillers “The Omen” and “Carrie,” were rather disappointing, thought “The Omen” did have its ecstatic moments. “Carrie” could have been so much better; its final degradation occurs at the end, which can only be termed as shocks for shocks sake, which, I’m afraid is all too common in the cinema...

The final two movies I’d like to comment on “The Front” and “Network.” Woody Allen has encountered countless criticism for his involvement with Martin Ritt, who along with stars Zero Mostel and Herschall Bernardi, was blacklisted in the early 1950’s for suspected Communist leanings. The film is funny, as all Allen films are, but it does not stop there. It transcends the humorous and depicts the social condition, as prejudiced as it was, during the McCarthy period. “Network” is a Paddy Chayefsky creation and consists of much more than entertainment. Quite similar to Robert Altman’s “Nashville,” it is a biting satire on TV, love and obsession with money and success. Believable performances by Peter Finch, William Holden, Faye Dunaway, and Robert DuVall add to the movies realism; it is everything a movie should be. If there is one movie that should be seen sometime that movie would be “Network.”
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[Image: Women wearing sweaters and accessories]