

# Flecks of Soul in Madison: It Started in 1840

(EDITOR'S NOTE — The following article was written by Mrs. Harry Hamilton, teacher, administrator, wife, mother and active community citizen. It was written in 1971 as a special community report for the Madison Civics Club. Mrs. Hamilton is chairman of general education at the Madison Area Technical College. In 1961 she received the citizen-of-the-year award from the Madison Newspaper Guild and in 1963 she received a service award from the YWCA and the Council of Jewish Women. Her husband, Dr. Harry Hamilton, is managing editor of the American Agronomy Society's Agronomy Journal.

By MRS. HARRY HAMILTON

Groups as well as individuals often wrestle with the problem of identity. No parent or teacher here is unfamiliar with the sometimes agonizing search by young people to develop an awareness of who they are.

Impelled by momentous changes in the world and prodded by the insistent demands of young black militants, Negroes in the U. S. are presently engrossed with the question of who we are, where did we come from and where are we going.

The focus on blackness is commonly referred to as "Soul." Soul brother and sister, soul food, and soul music are

terms that provide a frame of reference and carry emotional overtones as well as memories of a unique past.

Today I use the word "soul" to denote the black experience in the U.S., including our African heritage, the background of slavery, the unhappy sojourn in the South, the broken promise and consequent frustrations of the North, and the continuing struggle to surmount and change a racist society.

This experience may be the core of an emerging ethnic culture, whatever other meanings may be given to the word "soul." This is what unites all blacks in this country, willingly or unwillingly.

The Negro struggle in the U. S. and in Madison is the struggle to live with dignity in a pluralistic society.

In Madison the struggle began in the 1840s.

According to a recent study the first mention of a black in records about Madison was an entry in the 1847 census "listing 'Darky Butch' as not attached to any white family as were the other three blacks then listed."

In the 1850 census there were six Negroes in Madison; in 1950 there were 648 — still less than one percent of the total. In those 100 years many individuals came and went; those of us who stayed worked out psychological adjustments and techniques for coping with the patterns of exclusion here.

Among the earliest settlers were William Anderson, who came from Alabama on the Underground Railroad; William Noland, a cloth dyer who was drafted by the Democratic Party to run for mayor in 1866; Benny Butts, who came soon after the Civil War and later was a special messenger for the State Historical Society; and William Miller, who was a mail clerk for the elder LaFollette and then the Governor's messenger for 19 years.

Some who came later and have continuity to the present were Edwin Hill, Howard Shepard, Harry Allison, Taswell Hines, Thomas Rich, Sam Pierce, Oscar Shivers, and, still more recently, Carson Guley, James Taliaferro, and George Harris.

These men, and we must not forget their wives, were

## C-T Schools Offer Negro History Series

This six-part series of articles marking Negro History Week — Feb. 12 through Feb. 19 — is presented by The Capital Times in co-operation with the Human Relations Department of the Madison Public Schools. Roland Buchanan is director of the department and Marlene Cummings is the consultant in human relations.

## Know Your Antiques

# Valentine's Day--Reminder Of a Roman Pagan Holiday

By RALPH and TERRY KOVEL

Holidays like Valentine's Day are sometimes confused reminders of the superstitions and religions of an earlier time. Valentine was a priest from Rome who was beaten to death because he would not renounce his faith. He was not a lover or a man interested in romance.

The Romans had a feast of Lupercalia in February each year to celebrate fertility rites and love among the young. It was a weird ceremony including the sacrifice of a goat, naked boys running through the streets and women beaten with goatskin thongs. The Church, trying to replace the pagan holidays, named Feb. 14 for St. Valentine. The feast of Lupercalia had been on Feb. 15 each year so the new holiday, St. Valentine's Day, was meant to replace it. The new holiday was a time to remember love and mating.

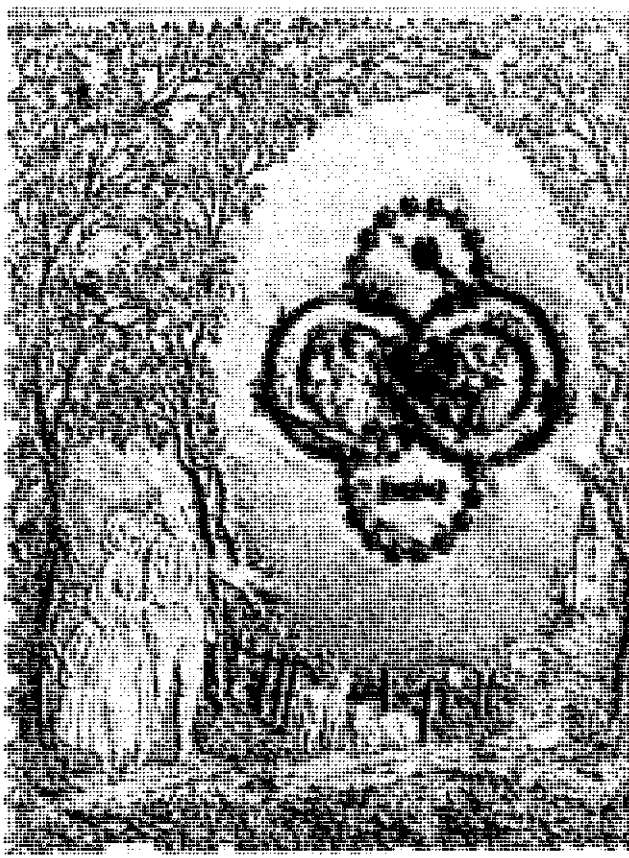
Many different customs are known for St. Valentine's Day in all parts of the world. The first valentines were sent in Europe in the 17th Century.

The first American-made commercial valentines were the creation of a young girl who made a fortune, but never married. In 1848, Esther Howland made a sample valentine after seeing English ones. Her brother offered the home-made valentines for sale and returned to Worcester, Mass., with orders for \$5,000. Esther immediately started a valentine manufacturing business using English and American lace, paper and pictures. Several girls were hired and the cards were made on an assembly line. The business continued until 1881 and attained a volume of \$100,000 annually.

Q. Does the spelling "Pittsburg" date an antique?

A. The spelling of the name of Pittsburg, Penn., is of no help in dating antiques. The name was spelled with a final "h" except during the years 1891 to 1911. The government omitted the "h" for those years, but citizens didn't like it and finally changed the spelling to the old form.

Advertising items have become so popular with collectors that the inevitable forgeries can now be found. There



Embossed paper was used on the lacy valentines made by Esther Howland in Boston in 1848. Miss Howland was the first successful manufacturer of valentines in America. (Hallmark Collection)

are copies of early Coca-Cola pocket mirrors, Hires Root Beer mirrors, Coke knives, and at least one large tin sign. The Paul Jones sign picturing recently killed rabbits, birds and deer has been duplicated. It is smaller than the original, which is 39 inches by 52 inches. Many of the early ads on paper have been reprinted to be used as today's advertising. Unfortunately, some of these items are now appearing in antique shops.

Q. My small milk glass dish, 10 inches by 6 inches, is shaped and looks like a fish including scales, fins and a tail on the bottom. It says "Patented June 4, 1872". What was its use? It is too shallow to serve food.

A. You own a well-known milk glass pickle dish. Pickles were an important part of the Victorian dinner and many types of pickle dishes were used.

Serious collectors should be very careful about cleaning silver. It should be cleaned but the marks must be protected to keep them from being obliterated. A thin layer

hard working people and excellent citizens. In most respects they were like thousands of others who came to Madison to share in its development. And yet, although they differed in their interests, abilities and philosophies, there was something that circumscribed their activities, tempered their ambitions and limited their achievements.

This something was the systematic, though often undefined, barrier of exclusion and discrimination based on race.

It was this group experience that made for a unique identity. The reactions of blacks were not evident in gross confrontations or violence but in selective freedom of association; in the organization of black lodges, churches, social clubs; in the high drop-out rate of young people from school; and in the establishment of civil rights organizations like the NAACP.

Only a tiny black community has existed in Madison. The good life for which the city is noted was shared enough, however, to sustain their faith that things could be better.

Since 1950 the changes have been progressively more noticeable. At first there was simply an increase in numbers; then more insistence, more pressure to change the rigidities that had developed. We now have more open housing, more economic opportunities, more political appointments, more social acceptance.

As we enter the decade of the 70s, the Negro group in Madison is about 2,000 strong. There are about 80 of them in professional positions not held by blacks and not available to them in 1950. There are three black aldermen, and blacks live in all the 22 wards of the city. Blacks have started new businesses and they are employed in all the main industries of the city, such as Oscar Mayer and Gisholt. Some of these improvements have come as a result of sustained efforts of the NAACP, the Urban League, the Equal Opportunities Commission, and church groups.

The focus on black consciousness and black identity mentioned earlier is evident in the creation of an Afro-American Studies department and an Afro-American Cultural Center at the University of Wisconsin as well as in the introduction of black history into the curriculum of the public schools.

It is curious, however, that this focus on ethnicity comes at the time when there is more evidence of inclusion. Yet, a convergence of individual mobility and group consciousness could give us power to transform our community into a unified society made stronger and righter by its diversity.

The present decade will be influenced by the work of new hands on the Madison scene, some of whom you have met today. We also expect much from several young black leaders who are products of this community. If the trends continue, it could be that here in Madison we can work out a model of pluralism and integration which may well be emulated by the rest of the country.



Mrs. Harry Hamilton

## Tell Me Why!



### Why Do We Laugh?

Win the New Book of Knowledge (20 volumes). Send your questions, name, age, address to "Tell Me Why!" Care of The Capital Times. You must include your Zip Code. In case of duplicate questions, the author will decide the winner. Today's winner is: Martha Miles, 11, Lacona, N. Y.

"mechanical" cause of laughter, and that is tickling. But that kind of laughter is a reflex action on the part of our body to a certain kind of stimulation. It has nothing to do with the other kind of laughter we enjoy.

If laughing were a mechanical process in our body, then everybody would do it. Yet we all know some people who never seem to laugh, and there are others who are always smiling or laughing.

So we laugh in order to express our feelings. And these feelings may be amusement, happiness, or just lightness of heart. Of course there is one

When we laugh, we express certain feelings that are brought on by seeing, remembering, imagining, or thinking of something. Why does that "something" make us react by laughter?

Psychologists have studied this and have many theories about it. But no one seems to have the complete answer yet. One idea is that laughing is a kind of social act. When we see something funny on TV and we're alone, we might not laugh. But if there were a group of friends with us, we might all laugh together. We might hear someone tell a joke to a group of people sitting together. They laugh and smile. But since we're not a member of their group, we probably wouldn't laugh.

Sometimes we laugh for another reason. We might see somebody do something awkward. He might drop something or slip and fall. We laugh because we feel superior at the moment, and we are so pleased about it that we express our feeling by laughing.

There are also different kinds of laughter, depending on the cause. Humor creates one kind of laughter, the ridiculous another, and we may even laugh with scorn at someone.

## WORLD ALMANAC FACTS



An editorial entitled "Squandering the Public Domain" appearing in the 1972 World Almanac charged that western railroads received millions of acres of choice land at the expense of homesteaders. To encourage construction of transcontinental railways, railroad companies received free land through grants enacted by Congress. (Newspaper Enterprise Association)

## LOOKING BACKWARD by Frank Custer



### 50 Years Ago

The ice on Madison lakes is too thick this year for good fishing, according to old timers; one fisherman says the ice this winter is 25 to 26 inches thick, difficult to cut; last year the ice was only 11 inches thick . . . Guests at a party for Ruth Evans in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bert Miller, Nakoma, are Florence Bennett, Marion Blanchard, Bernice Messerschmidt, Lotie Carmen, Lois Glasier, Harry Beach, Gilsey Grabbert, Felix and Hugh Sarles, and John Floyd Jones . . . Elvin Elvethus, Stoughton, who served overseas in the European war, has written a song, "Send Over a Bunch of Roses," it is dedicated to the Mothers of Liberty . . . "A young Scandinavian girl" advertises she would like a job doing housework . . . Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Frankie, Mont-

fort, are guests of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Troemmel, Madison.

### 40 Years Ago

The William B. Cairns post of the American Legion here is entering its second phase in the war on unemployment; members are making plans to contact Madison industrialists, bankers, and retail business operators to co-operate in finding a place for an unemployed person; "we don't expect to solve the problem on unemployment by our campaign, but we are going to put an awful dent in it," says Dr. William F. Lorenz, chairman of the drive . . . The Stotzer Granite Co., Portage, will open its plant tomorrow after a two-month lay-off, it is announced . . . Hayes Upton, former sales manager for the National Laundry Owners Association of the United States, has taken a post as sales

manager of the Three F. Laundry and Dry Cleaners here . . . Mrs. H. E. Eschenbach is new president of the Women's Club at Ableman.

### 20 Years Ago

The recent purchasers of the Parkway Theater building are interested in buying the old City Hall, says Merrill Haley, whose real estate firm represented the undisclosed purchasers . . . Sheriff Herman Kerl says that there is standing room only in the Dane County jail, which has 49 beds and 52 prisoners; mattresses are being laid on the floor for the hapless prisoners without beds . . . Judges in an essay contest sponsored by the Madison League of Women Voters are Mrs. E. J. Samp of the Board of Education; Caryl Regan, president, Wisconsin League of Women Voters, and Joe Rothschild, Madison merchant.

## MARMADUKE

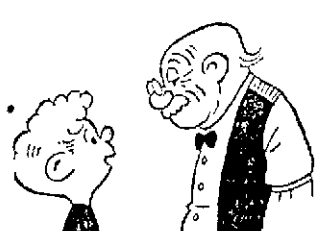


"Should I edge toward the phone and call the police?"

**FUN TIME**  
Director: Have you ever had any experience in acting?  
Novice: I once had my leg in a cast.

Sam: I fell off a 20-foot ladder yesterday.  
John: Were you hurt?  
Sam: No, I fell from the bottom step.

### THE PUZZLE BOX



Billy asked his grandfather how old he was. Grandpa said: "If I would write the year down, then turned the piece of paper upside down, the date would be the same." What was the date? See Tuesday's paper for the answer.

To win the New Books of Knowledge Yearbook, send your riddles or jokes to: Riddles, Jokes, "Tell Me Why!" Give your Zip Code. Today's winner is: Steve Goodwin, 10, Fremont, Calif.