

Passing: Impossible Race Pride: Harmful

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The term "passing" has been the subject matter of innumerable magazine and newspaper feature articles. It has caused anguished outcries of denunciation and quiet acceptance, gone unnoticed. The Challenger, in keeping in line with its policy to keep abreast with the complex problems facing man today and keeping its news columns open as a challenge to the reader, presents this invigorating—and to some sensitive or controversial—article by Mr. Hamilton. The author holds an AB degree from Stanford university and attended the University of Portland. He recently finished law school at Northwestern School of Law. He is presently waiting the outcome of his efforts put forth in the Oregon State bar examination.

In recent years no other facet of race relations has received so much undeserved attention in American periodicals as that of so-called Negroes "passing" for Caucasians. So frequent have articles appeared on this subject that the alert reader is presumed to be familiar with minute details of this social phenomenon. For that reason no attempt is made here to restate or summarize what has been written on the subject. This discourse purports only to interpret and evaluate certain attitudes with respect to this phenomenon. The scope of this discussion is limited to what is thought to be the three most important elements of the subject in question.

Do Negroes Really "Pass" for Caucasians?

From any collection of writings on the subject of "passing" three things may be inferred, namely, (1) That the term "Negro" refers to a black race of people, (2) that the term "Caucasian" refers to a white race of people and, (3) that while in the presence of Caucasians some Negroes give the impression that they, too, are Caucasians. This does not make sense. Unless "white people" are color blind it is ridiculous to assume that, under proper lighting conditions, they mistake black (or even brown) men for white men. It follows that "Negroes" do not pass for "white." Actually, the so-called passers are persons whose Negroid features are overshadowed by Caucasoid features. From a point of origin they are more European than African; from a point of racial characteristics they are more Caucasian than Negro; and, as a matter of color they are not black, but "white"! Such persons do not "pass" for white—they are "white." It is more logical to consider them passing when they claim to be Negroes.

The term "Negro," as commonly misused in the United States, does not refer to a single race—but to versions of many races. The "Negro race," as it is known in the United States, is a flexible fiction by reference to which the social status of miscellaneous persons may be proscribed. The fiction of a Negro race in this country is not subject to a precise definition. As a general rule, it may be said that the term "Negro," as understood in the United States, includes two distinct classes of persons, namely, (1) those whose physical characteristics leads one to believe that some of such persons' ancestors were African natives or (2) those who admit some of their ancestors were African natives.

In the sense that it involves the movement of a person out of one race to another, there is no such thing as "passing." In the sense that it involves the movement of a person from a restricted social caste to an unrestricted one, "passing" is probably practiced with remarkable frequency.

What Is the Current Attitude Toward "Passing"?

It is unsound to single out an attitude with respect to this phenomenon and label it the prevailing one. Individual attitudes differ widely. He who "passes" apparently feels himself justified in doing so. He who does not "pass" adopts one of three views. He approves, he is indifferent or he disapproves.

There are those among us who sympathize with any movement which tends to destroy the notion of a superior (or even a pure) race. To them the fact and publicity of "passing" represents a clever trick played on the so-called superiors by their so-called inferiors and, at the same time, challenges their claim of race purity. Others sympathize with this movement because it permits a member of an underprivileged caste to raise his standard of living. Still others approve of this movement for reasons personal to themselves. It is believed that the bulk of present-day intellectuals maintain an attitude of indifference to the subject. On the whole, except for disapproving readers, individual attitudes remain unexpressed.

The reaction of the disapproving observer is traceable to divergent reasons. If the observer is a Caucasian, he may disapprove of "passing" simply because it gives him an unwelcomed sense of ancestral uncertainty. If he be a person of African native ancestry, his reaction is frequently one of jealousy. It is sometimes a feeling that this lack of group consciousness threatens his economic interest and hurts his sense of "race pride."

Certain politicians, professional and businessmen, feel inadequately prepared to compete in an open market with other men in their field. The only market for their inferior goods and services is among the "race prides." To protect their vested interests they foster "race pride." Some disapprovers have no interest to protect except their false sense of race pride. Since the term "Negro," as understood in the United States, refers to a social caste of many races, there can be no true race pride among Negroes. If Negroes are to be proud of their races, they can be proud only that they are human beings. In other words, they are so mixed that race pride to them would mean pride for all the races of mankind. Further, this is not pride but a defense for a crippled ego. Certain Americans sometimes say they are proud to be Negroes. This statement is simply asinine. It is recognized the world over that it is a handicap in the United States to be a Negro. He who claims he likes to be handicapped or punished is either a liar, a masochist or an ordinary fool. As confusing as it seems, these are some of the attitudes against "passing."

What Is the Proper Attitude with Respect to Passing?

If there is a proper attitude toward this phenomenon, it must be one of enlightened indifference. Here are a few suggestions to augment this general attitude:

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Three Denied Food Service

Rutherford's XXX Scene of Refusal

Three persons were refused service at a drive-in restaurant on the east side recently. The refusal came after the state's civil rights bill had gone into effect, prohibiting discrimination in public eating, lodging and amusement places because of religion or race.

The three persons, Mr. and Mrs. Felder Pace and Idee Stephens, were told they couldn't be served "on the inside" of Rutherford's XXX restaurant, 6120 N. E. Sandy boulevard.

Pace says that the three were not permitted to take a table on the inside, but were met by Charles Rutherford, manager of the restaurant, and told "we can't serve you on the inside."

The Challenger contacted Rutherford and he readily admitted the incident but blamed bad "seating arrangements" for the refusal. He said his establishment does not refuse service to Negroes but neither does it encourage it. He doesn't think the situation will ever come up again.

Patrons Don't Complain

Rutherford said that his patrons have never complained of Negroes eating in his place because they have never had the chance to. He feels that the state's civil rights law is wrong and doesn't believe it will stay in effect for a long period of time.

Rutherford refused to say whether he allows his waitresses to refuse service to Negroes on the "inside." He also refused to say whether or not his restaurant had refused service to Negroes before July 21 (when the civil rights bill went into effect). However, Rutherford did make it clear that his place of business did not discourage patrons of other colored races other than the Negro.

The Challenger has received numerous complaints on the Rutherford restaurant within the past two years. Negroes making these complaints say that they have been refused service on the "outside" and that the reasons given were always "we don't serve Negroes."

Draft Calls Four From Community

Uncle Sam's draft arms reached deep and came up with Lonnie Harris in a recent draft board call. Harris, the smooth-fielding infielder-catcher for the Produce Merchants, is slated to report to Fort Lewis August 20.

The 26-year-old Harris is married and the father of a girl. He was called to Fort Lewis once before but was later rejected because of a recurring leg injury.

Scheduled to go with Harris are Pat Nelson and Chili Baines.

PM Jockey Gets Pointers



Hal Duncan (left), chief clocker at Portland Meadows, gives a few pointers to Martin Simon, jockey. Duncan is selector for the Oregon Journal. Simon later rode Comet Francis in the featured quarter horse event, and clipped a fifth of a second from the 330-yard record.

Martin Simon Makes Railbirds Take Note In Top Jockey Performances at Meadows

BY W. CARRINGTON
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Portland Meadows

Martin Simon, popular young jockey from Lake Charles, Louisiana, who makes a specialty of riding the jet-propelled quarter horses at Portland Meadows, scored his first winner aboard Comet Francis in the featured quarter horse event, at a distance of 330 yards, and set a new record for the Portland oval in the fast time of 17.4 seconds, clipping a fifth of a second off the mark established by Miss Capri on July 25.

Simon, who has been riding for less than three years, has already established himself as a top-notch reinsman in this field.

Riding in the Futurity stakes at Pomona, California, last year he was conceded little chance of winning the \$5,000 classic, but

caused a surprise when he piloted his mount, Bardella, home to the wire, setting a new record for the track course.

Few Negro Jockeys

Although the absence of Negro jockeys is conspicuous at the major tracks throughout the country, William P. Kyne, general manager of Portland Meadows, and the California Jockey club at San Mateo, invited the young Negro to visit Portland Meadows and demonstrate his ability. Already Simon has won a large following due to his skill in handling his charges.

Baker Confined To Hospital Bed

Herman C. Baker, 1278 NE Wheeler avenue, is still confined to Providence hospital where he was taken recently with an internal hemorrhage. Baker's condition is reported poor.

He has had several blood transfusions but his condition remains weak, according to relatives.

Medical Doctor To Open Office

Dr. Walter Reynolds, son of Mr. and Mrs. Phil Reynolds, 1326 N. Benton avenue, will soon open a medical office in the Professional building on N. Williams avenue and McMillen street.

Dr. Reynolds will occupy the space now rented to Chick and Pat's, a card room. Proprietors of Chick and Pat's plan to suspend business for the remainder of the summer and open up this fall at a new location on N. Russell street.

Reared in Portland, a graduate of Jefferson high school and the University of Oregon Medical school, Dr. Reynolds will fill in for Dr. DeNorval Unthank, 1631 N. Williams avenue, while Dr. Unthank goes to the hospital for minor surgery sometime this month.

Upon the return of Dr. Unthank to his office, Reynolds will open his medical offices in the Professional building.

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