

# Opinions

## Jason Riley interviews Tom Sowell

Jason L. Riley, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and columnist for the Wall Street Journal, and economist Thomas Sowell have long been two of my favorite people writing on politics and culture. Now Riley has written a book, "Maverick: A Biography of Thomas Sowell" and recently published a column ("The Soul of Black Conservatism") in the Journal's weekend edition for May 29-30, 2021, interviewing Sowell.

Sowell stands in sharp contrast to individuals such as Ta-Nehisi Coates and organizations like Black Lives Matter (BLM). Whereas the more recent focus of young black intellectuals has been on the failures of white people, Sowell offers that, "The moral regeneration of white people might be an interesting project but, I am not sure we have quite that much time to spare."

Sowell prefers the examples of people like Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington. Sowell has written examining other ethnic groups in America and he claims that, "If the history of American ethnic groups shows anything, it is how large a role has been played by attitudes of self-reliance." (Race and Economics, 1975). Sowell argued that the Irish-Americans, despite

their advantages, did poorly against the Italian-Americans, the "free persons of color" after the Civil War compared to blacks who moved north later were much more successful, and the Japanese-Americans recovered from the persecutions they suffered during World War Two.

Self-reliance was the hallmark of the settlers of the American West. Whatever other sins with which they may be charged, it is difficult to deny the courage and willingness to sacrifice in a people who were moved to load up a wagon with all their earthly goods and head out from St. Louis for an uncertain dream beyond the Rocky Mountains.

I can't help but wonder how much white liberal intellectuals have discouraged black Americans from taking responsibility for the future because those liberals are themselves unacquainted with sacrifice. Working in the library stacks researching for a PhD doesn't really rise to the same level as fighting off starvation and hostile natives in some wintry mountain pass.

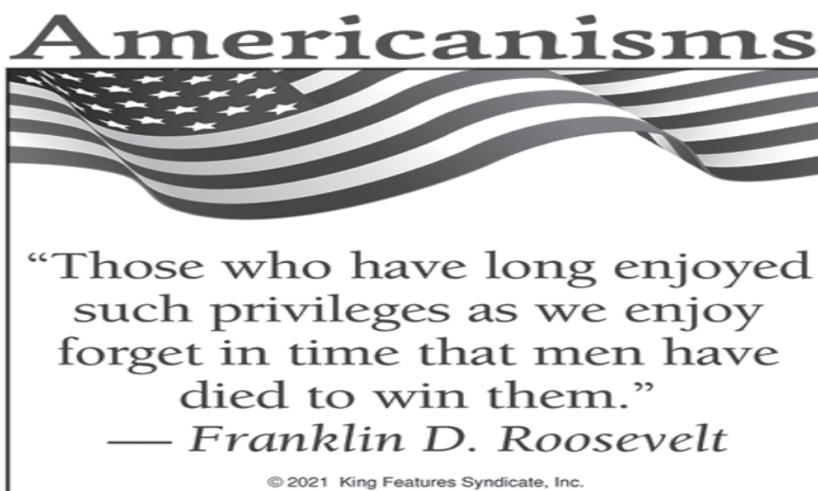
Reading Mr. Riley's commentary on Sowell and the snippets from Sowell's own writings, however, I am tempted nonetheless to agree

in a certain respect with the contemporary critics of "whiteness" in America. Not perhaps for the same offenses that BLM or Coates have criticized white culture, but for another white project gone wrong. No, not the "Great Society" of President Lyndon Johnson in the 1970s that literally subsidized and encouraged unwed motherhood by paying women who had children in the home but stopped the money when a man was present.

The complaint is with intellectuals, both white and black, who encourage a mindset that promotes the notion among blacks of a "collective identity". Embracing and flaunting a racial or ethnic identity rather than focusing on personal achievement for success is a drag on anyone's personal career path.

Sowell's encouragement of self-reliance makes sense for more than inspiring economic growth in just the black community. Business growth accomplished by anyone showing personal initiative works to the good of us all. When a successful business raises the value of the tax base and gives people disposable income in the community, we all gain no matter what the ethnicity of the business owner is.

By: Leo Chappelle



## JEB Tales

### Happy Days Cafés and Music of the Fifties Part II

1958 saw more changes in rock and roll. The top songs were by Chuck Berry, The Elegants, The Impressions, Buddy Holly, Little Richard, The Chantells, The Coasters and Jackie Wilson.

There were nineteen members of the H.H.S. Senior class and nineteen members of the Junior Class. There were twenty-nine members of the Sophomore class of 1958. About eight of those students had enrolled from Manifest Elementary School. Most of them were pretty girls. That was also the year Harley Corie joined our class. The freshman class of 1958 had thirty-six students. Exactly half of which were pretty girls.

1959 saw several changes in rock and roll and country music. Many young people had started listening to country music because of singers like Johnny Horton, Johnny Cash, Jim Reeves, George Jones, Stonewell Jackson and the Browns. However, rock and roll was still alive with Ray Charles, The Flamingos, Bobby Darin, Wilbert Harrison, The Coasters, Pat Boone and of course Elvis.

In 1960 the top rock and roll songs were "Will You Love Me Tomorrow", "Georgia on My Mind" "Let's Go, Let's Go", "Only You". "Stay", "Chain Gang", "Save the Last Dance for me", "Shop Around", "The Twist", and "Cathy's Clown". That pretty much is a sampling of the music played on the radio and on Juke Boxes in the "Happy Days Cafes" in Catahoula Parish.

Now I would like to mention some of the "Happy Days Cafes" in Jena. If you have read this before, you saw where I mentioned the new students from Manifest joining our class in 1957. I also mentioned that most of them were pretty girls. It is also true that some of those pretty girls were from Aimwell which is closer to Jena than Harrisonburg. Therefore, one of the pretty girls spent more time in Jena's "Happy Day Café" than she did in Harrisonburg or Jonesville. I did not know this so I put that cute little hillbilly on the back burner.

As a freshman, basketball became a very important part of my life. I did not get to play very much, but I loved the bus trips to the away games. I especially loved the trips back from the away games. All the girls had to sit together and the boys had to sit together on the way to the games. But, Hallelujah, the boys and girls could sit together on the way back to Harrisonburg. Since I did not get to play much, I could usually

get one of the seats toward the back of the bus. It's surprising how friendly some of the older girls can be on the way home from a game.

By my sophomore year I was getting to play more and getting to meet more and more girls. I also learned that girls from other teams could be very friendly. One of my first experiences of meeting a girl was at Monterey High School. Monterey had a brand-new gym, and we were playing them for their very first time in that new gym. There was a very long line waiting to get into that gym. I got in line behind a very pretty redhead. My mean brother George was in line behind me. That no account rascal reached around me and pinched that redhead on the behind. She slapped the fire out of me!

Well, we won the first boys basketball game ever played in the brand-new Monterey gym but the highlight of that game was when the cute redhead came by our bench and handed me a piece of paper with her name and phone number on it. Thank you George!

My junior year I was really into basketball. I was now a starter and we were winning most of our games. I still loved the trips home from the away games and meeting new girls at other schools. Before I knew it I was a senior. I was the Captain of the basketball team and that pretty little hillbilly and I had become good friends. Not yet boyfriend and girlfriend but good friends. Stupid me. I still did not want to give up those bus trips back from games. I actually thought, "She'll wait." I almost waited too long!

Eventually I decided I was going to go see the cute hillbilly. Since my good friend, Larry Wayne Evans lived in Aimwell, I went to his house to ask directions to her house. His response was, "I have someone I want you to meet." He took me across the parish line into Lasalle parish and introduced me to his very pretty cousin. We dated for a couple of months until she found an older fellow from Nebo. My ego hurt, but I lived over it.

Basketball season ended. The senior play was coming up and my cute hillbilly and I were both in the play. Since she lived in Aimwell she would spend the night with Carolyn Berry or Delinda Maroney to stay for play practice. We started dating. When I got my first kiss, I thought, "Wow! I don't think that was her first kiss!"

I was smitten, so I put on a full court press. I also went to Atlanta in Winn parish and got my class ring. I called a redhead in another town

and broke our date.

On our first date I was introduced to some of the cool "Happy Days" places in Jena. We went to a movie at the Strand Theater. I noticed that the ticket taker, a not so young boy, really smiled at my new girlfriend.

After the movie we went to one of the "Happy Days" places called, Nick's Café. I was a long narrow café with a long counter and bar stools. As we walked past the counter to get our table this full grown cowboy spun around and said, "Hey Shirley Faye, how have you been?" Shirley Faye! Shirley Faye! I did not even know her middle name until I had known her for two years!

On our next date we went to a movie and this time I was not about to take her to Nick's Café so we went to the A&W drive in. Guess what? Every teenager there knew my girlfriend.

On our third date I took her to Cliff's Café. Same old story every teenage boy there seemed to know the little hillbilly.

Enough is enough! I made up my mind, I'm never taking miss popular cute hillbilly to a "Happy Days" Café in Jena again. So we went to Pop's drive in theater. When she said she knew a good place to park, I realized I was the one who had been put on back burner.

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