

By Joan Hanauer
UPI Television Writer

Can "Roots" do it again? That's the question that audiences are answering this week as "Roots: The Next Generations," presents its 14-hour continuation of Alex Haley's saga of an Afro-American family.

ABC put the show in the 8-10 p.m. time slot Monday through Friday, then will skip the next day (Saturday night audiences are traditionally the smallest in the television week) to conclude Sunday.

There are substantial differences in "Roots 2" and the original "Roots." For one thing, according to executive producer David Wolper, "Roots" cost \$6 million, while "Roots 2" came in at \$4 million.

If money is the most obvious difference, there are others.

"The first 'Roots' was basically about slavery, which was the experience of most blacks who came to America during that period," Wolper said in an interview. "Roots: The Next Generations" is about Alex Haley's family, not the story of every black family in America.

"It's about a black soldier's experience in World War I, about black colleges and Alex Haley's life in the Coast Guard and as a writer.

"It's not the typical black story that's been told before, it's not another ghetto story or about black exploitation or peddling dope. It's a new view of black America that's not been seen to date, about the black middle class, and nobody's done that story yet. In the third episode there's a

picnic and hayride — how many stories show black people on a hayride?"

The reception the original "Roots" received took the industry — and some say ABC — by surprise. ABC estimates that a total of 130 million people — representing 85 percent of all U.S. television-owning homes — saw all or part of "Roots."

The concluding two-hour episode of "Roots," shown on Jan. 30, 1977, earned a 71 percent share of the viewing audience, according to the A.C. Nielsen Co., reaching 36,380,000 homes to become the most watched program in the history of American television.

This time the competing networks weren't willing to let ABC slip a second "Roots" past them without counter-programming. CBS showed "All in the Family" and "Alice" in their accustomed time slots on Sunday, and then showed the big movie, "The Marathon Man," from 8-10 p.m. NBC showed its own big movie, "American Graffiti," at 8 p.m.

An ABC official said the network expects "Roots: The Second Generation" to pull an even bigger audience than its predecessor.

The story begins in Henning, Tenn., in 1882, a dozen years after Chicken George took his newly freed family to the tiny town. George's son, played by Georg Stanford Brown, the local blacksmith, brings a young black teacher to Henning. She borrows books from the town's leading citizen and political overlord, Henry Fonda, and meets his son, Richard Thomas.

They marry, to be totally cut off from his family — except that he keeps in touch with his mother, Olivia de Havilland. Wolper says Haley remembers that man as "Uncle Jim" — and as a small boy never realized Uncle Jim was white.

One of Tom's daughters marries Will Palmer, who becomes a successful lumber merchant in Henning, and their daughter winds up marrying Simon Haley. Their son is Alex.

The terrific cast is too long to list. Some of the better known members include James Broderick, James Daley, Diahann Carroll, Michael Constantine, Robert Culp, Andy Griffith, Rosie Grier, Rafer Johnson, James Earl Jones as Haley, Greg Morris, Debbi Morgan, Harry Morgan, Dina Merrill, Della Reese and Paul Winfield. Not to mention Marlon Brando as American Nazi George Lincoln Rockwell.


The story of rural Tennessee, of the frightening return to power of the haters, the burning of a cross and the re-emergence of the Ku Klux Klan, provide a counterpoint to the quiet flow of small town life.

There are moments of fear and of dignity, moments when you despair of humanity and others that make you proud. There are the insights into universality — even of prejudice, as when Tom refuses to let his older daughter marry a man who looks too much like white.

The story was taken from the last 30 or 40 pages of Haley's book, "Roots," his "Search" and from extensive added material supplied by Haley.

"This 'Roots' was easier than the first, which took place mostly on the plantation, except for the crossing from Africa," Wolper said. "This show takes place in so many places, but we built the town of Henning on the Disney ranch, then we had to age the town from the 1880s right through the 1960s.

"You know, sometimes people expect sequels to be ripoffs, but I think the second 'Roots' is every bit as good, or better, than the first."



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OUTDOORS

Students help band birds

By Mark Hancock
Battalion Reporter

A group of Texas A&M University wildlife students lent their help Feb. 10 to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's waterfowl banding project by joining in the live trapping and banding of 519 snow and blue geese.

The 14 students were filling a field trip requirement for WFS 407, a wildlife habitat management lab taught by Dr. Wendell G. Swank. He was assisted by biologist David Lobpries, area manager of the 8,400 acre J.D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area near Port Arthur.

Lobpries and his co-workers spent a few months prior to the waterfowl's northern migration banding and counting waterfowl throughout many of Texas' wetlands.

"We try to band 2,000 snow and blue geese and a comparable number of ducks, mostly pintails and teal, every year on the Murphree area," Lobpries said. "Our individual banding projects usually last for five years so we can get a good return of the bands from the hunters' harvest."

He said that approximately 30 percent of the bands are returned by hunters, who should advise the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's bird band service whenever they kill a banded duck or goose. The wildlife service relays the information to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

"Through the band returns we receive valuable information about the waterfowl migration routes from Canada and Alaska throughout the Central Flyway states (including Texas). Also, we can tell chronologically how the birds migrate by knowing when and where they were harvested," Lobpries said.

For example, he said, the majority of the 20,000 geese presently wintering on the Murphree area migrate through Missouri and are late arrivals compared to geese that migrate through other mid-western states and arrive to winter on other areas in Texas as early as October.

The Texas coast is currently wintering a goose population of one million, comprised mainly of the more numerous snow and blue geese, along with white-fronted and Canada geese.

"We are studying the possibility of managing the waterfowl with respect to their movements within the state," Lobpries said.

At present there are few variations in hunting seasons or bag limits in Texas, but banding research may provide concrete evidence that would allow recommendations to be made for seasonal and limit changes in the varying segments of the state, he said.

Besides banding geese, the students toured the fresh water marsh in airboats and outboards while inspecting water control devices that manipulate water levels in the marsh and help provide a quality waterfowl habitat.

"The water level is seasonally varied to promote the growth of desirable waterfowl foods such as pondweeds and widgeon grass," he said.

Lobpries said the students could have helped band ducks on Saturday, but the water level in the marsh was too high and the ducks were not concentrated in any given area to make them susceptible to trapping.

"When the water lowers and the ducks get concentrated we'll pre-bait an area, and after two or three days use our swim-in traps (a funnel trap where ducks can swim in, but not out)," Lobpries said. "We've never banded this many geese in so short a time. Usually it takes two or three of us several hours to do the job."

THE HAND AT THE PIANO



The hand at the piano — be careful, it will steal you away. The moods are tranquilizing.

One night two in the morning, chords from a piano drew me into the MSC, and in the middle of a large hall, alone, Eugene Smith played tunes with simple perfection. Since that night, I've heard Eugene play the piano and guitar several times.

Taking songs from a variety of eras that match his experiences, he sings with the feelings of his experiences. You might call it rock, or blues, or even soul, but I prefer to call it moods. And just to sit and listen to his moods, whatever they are at the time, sends my thoughts back to familiar highs and lows, and in-betweens.

If you are in a reminiscing mood, you might check by the MSC lounge some evening, and with luck, catch a tour through life. Don't applaud, for Eugene prefers to play than to listen to claps. Just nod your head in approval when he turns to ask you if you liked the last song. He's a professional performer who plays for professional listeners.

And when it comes to life's moods, we are all professionals.

—Larry Chandler

Look for a feature on Eugene Smith in the March 8 focus.

TEXAS EVENTS

Austin

AUSTIN SYMPHONY: The symphony will perform tonight and tomorrow at 8 p.m. in the Municipal Auditorium, South 1st at West Riverside. Music to be performed includes: Weber — Overture to Der Freischutz; Schoenberg — Pelleas and Melisande; Brahms — Concerto in D Major for Violin; Schubert — Rosamunde. Tickets are from \$3.50 to \$7.50. Call 512-476-5461.

TEXAS CAPITOL: The Texas Legislature is now in session. Tours of the capitol are given every quarter hour, seven days a week, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

ICE SHOW: Holiday On Ice will be performed at the Summit through Sunday. Shows will begin at 8 p.m. Call 713-627-9550.

RAY PRICE: Ray Price will perform at the Celebrity Circle, 7326 Southwest Freeway, tomorrow and Saturday. Call 713-960-8934.

RODEO: The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo begins tomorrow at the Astrodome, 9100 Kirby Drive. Performances extend through March 4. They include:

- Feb. 23: K. C. and the Sunshine Band
- Feb. 24: The Osmonds
- Feb. 25: Leif Garrett, Crystal Gayle
- Feb. 26: Conway Twitty
- Feb. 27: Pat and Debby Boone
- Feb. 28: The Oak Ridge Boys, Eddie Rabbitt
- March 1: Loretta Lynn
- March 2: Loretta Lynn
- March 3: Kenny Rogers, Dottie West
- March 4: Charlie Pride

Corpus Christi

RUSH: Rush comes to the Memorial Coliseum Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

Dallas

AFRICAN AWARENESS: The African Awareness Festival is being held this Saturday at 3 p.m. This is the last day. The location is the Walnut Hills Branch of the Dallas Public Library, 9495 Marsh Lane. Call 214-357-8434.

Elsewhere

JAZZ: The Southwest Jazz Festival will be held tomorrow in Kingsville. Performances will be held in Jones Auditorium on the Texas A&I University campus. The festival will feature high school and college jazz band competition during the day, and a concert by Count Basie and his band at 8 p.m.

Houston

OPERA: The Houston Grand Opera will perform "Der Rosenkavalier," an opera by Strauss, tomorrow through March 2, in Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Performances are at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, 7:30 p.m. on Monday and at 8 p.m. all other days. Call 713-227-5277.

JAZZ: The Matrix 9 Jazz Fusion will take place Friday and Saturday in Waco Hall on the Baylor University campus. Performances will begin at 8 p.m. Friday night. The jazz festival features North Texas State's famed One O'clock Lab Band at 3 p.m. Saturday. Reserved seat tickets are \$3.50. For more information call 817-755-3211.

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