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ing and struggling together.

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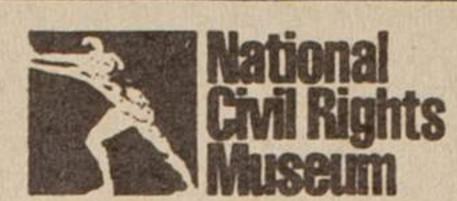
Lollar, Wayne Risher, Wil-

PICTURE EDITOR:

before and after the

death of Dr. Martin

gallery



Museum is fruition of dreams of motel owner, many others Evolution of Bailey idea

took years

By Wayne Risher The Commercial Appeal

n assassin's bullet transformed the \$13-a-night Lorraine Motel into a historic site on April 4, 1968.

But it wasn't until 14 years after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was murdered that a small group of Memphians launched the first sustained effort to preserve the site on Mulberry.

This week, members of that group will help dedicate the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine. The \$9.25 million museum, owned by the State of Tennessee, tells the story of the American civil rights movement through pictures, interactive exhibits and audiovisual presentations.

Like Dr. King, the people who saved the Lorraine for posterity had a dream: To take a source of civic shame, a decaying symbol of the city's racial divisions, and turn it into a memorial.

Like many watershed events, their efforts were born of crisis and gradually gained support.

The project ultimately involved hundreds, perhaps thousands of volunteers. But many who were part of the struggle say the names that loom largest in the preservation are D'Army Bailey, Charles A. 'Chuck' Scruggs and the late A. W. Willis Jr.

Before the civil rights era, the Lorraine was a favorite with black entertainers, including Count Basie, Lionel Hampton and Aretha Franklin.

After King's death, the motel seemed suspended in time. Its owner, the late Walter Lane Bailey, (no relation to Circuit Judge D'Army Bailey or his brother, County Commissioner Walter Bailey) turned a couple of rooms into a shrine to Dr. King and to Bailey's wife and business partner, Lorraine, who died of a brain hemorrhage two hours after King was shot.

Within a few months of King's death, visitors were filing through the rooms or driving down Mulberry for a glimpse of the wreath-draped balcony. Motel business was bad, though, and Walter Bailey struggled to keep going.

In the late 1970s, he started working with those who wanted to convert the motel into a shrine to Dr. King.

"He knew he was sitting on a crown jewel," recalled D'Army Bailey, 49, a Circuit Court judge and president of the nonprofit Lorraine Civil Rights Museum Foundation, which will operate the National Civil Rights Museum.

"He (Walter Bailey) knew that that site had a destiny, and he in his own simple, limited way was The Library Staff of The trying to meet that by trying to Commercial Appeal, the find somebody to come in there with some money, some Public Library and Inforleadership, to turn that decaying old site into what it

needed to be," said D'Army Bailey, who was involved in early efforts to save the Lorraine. In a guest editorial in The Commercial Appeal on May 21,

1979, D'Army Bailey concluded: "At present the Lorraine stands in spite of the neglectful attitude which Memphis has shown toward it. But the facility is standing on borrowed time, fighting the ravages of physical and environmental decay and a surrounding neighborhood of crime. It is time for something to be done. Memphis is the keeper of a heritage which is not only local, but it is national and international as well."

But nothing was done about the once-thriving motel that had become a haven for prostitutes and down-on-their-luck boarders. By early 1982, Walter Bailey faced bankruptcy.

He was behind on mortgage payments on the motel building.



A photograph made April 6, 1968, shows the view out the window from which police said James Earl Ray fired, killing Dr. King. Several officers stand where Dr. King stood when he was shot.

Charles A. 'Chuck' Scruggs, founding chairman of the Martin Luther King Memphis Memorial Foundation, recalled bow children emptied their piggybanks and people of modest means willingly donated --to the cause. "Everywhere we

The motel owner turned to Chuck Scruggs, station manager at WDIA-AM 1070, a blackoriented radio station that had recently raised more than \$200,000 for the bankrupt Delta town of Mound Bayou, Miss.

"All of us agreed in the end that we shouldn't touch it," said decision, however, Scruggs held but Scruggs decided to proceed.

"I felt that 'Hey, nobody has done anything up till now. If we those who are yet to come ...'"

approached, Scruggs called Jesse Turner, chief executive State Bank, and obtained a personal loan of \$10,000.

the legal side of the effort

because he knew of the lawyer's officials had reason to be interest in the Lorraine. encouraged, Scruggs said.

people said, 'It's about time.' "

With the property's future

turned to building a community

consensus about what to do with

"We were concentrating on

how to save the property. What

thought," said Williams, 74, who

retired from WDIA shortly after

Organizers knew what they

didn't want, Williams said. "We

shrine to be neglected, to allow

somebody to buy it and put up a

In early 1983, the foundation

requested by The Martin Luther

foundation spent 1983 and much

Please see MOTEL, Page G3

King Jr. Center for Nonviolent

Social Change Inc. in Atlanta,

formed by Dr. King's widow,

D'Army Bailey said the

knew it was too important a

hot dog stand or a furniture

changed its title to drop Dr.

King's name. The change was

factory or whatever."

Coretta Scott King.

left the foundation board and

happened later was an after-

assured, foundation officials

the motel. No easy task.

the motel was acquired.

The late William B. Leffler, a "Ultimately, what we did was U.S. Bankruptcy Court judge, raise the level of consciousness postponed the foreclosure while beyond any point it had ever the WDIA group made arrangebeen in a 15-year period. We got people talking about it, people ments to buy the Lorraine for \$240,000. The \$10,000 loan to acting about it. While it started Scruggs was earnest money to in the black community, it was not confined to the black comhold the property until the balance was raised. munity."

He recalled how children D'Army Bailey and Turner joined the WDIA employees as emptied piggybanks and people incorporators of the Martin of modest means donated to the cause. "Everywhere we went,

Luther King Memphis Memorial Foundation. Scruggs was founding chairman. Turner was secretarytreasurer.

'Chuck' Scruggs

In the next

seven months the foundation raised only about \$90,000.

"I talked to the head of one of the banks and the head of one of the local companies. They both told me flat out they just weren't interested," D'Army Bailey said.

"It was hard because nobody believed it would work. Nobody could share the vision and the confidence. If I could have looked at it from a distance, I would have shared the vision. but not the confidence."

A foreclosure auction was held Dec. 13, 1982, on the steps of the Shelby County Courthouse.

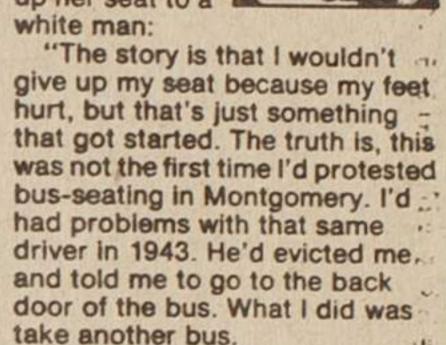
Tri-State Bank's Turner agreed to additional loans of \$50,000, underwritten by James Smith, executive director of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and Paul Shapiro, owner of Lucky Hearts cosmetics. The union already had contributed \$25,000 to the effort, and Shapiro, whose business adjoins the Lorraine, had given \$10,000. The foundation bought the

Lorraine for \$144,000. Although the campaign fell short of the goal, foundation

WITNESS: ROSA PARKS

Mrs. Parks. 78, often called the mother of the civil rights movement because she started the bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala., by refusing to give up her seat to a white man:

By Robert Williams



"What bothered me was seeing little children hurt by not being able to take a seat in the front of the bus. The children didn't know anything about segregation, so they would just sit down anywhere. Then, whoever was with them would jerk them out of their seats, and that experience would hurt them. So when I refused to give up my seat, it wasn't that my feet hurt; it was my act of civil disobedience."

WITNESS:

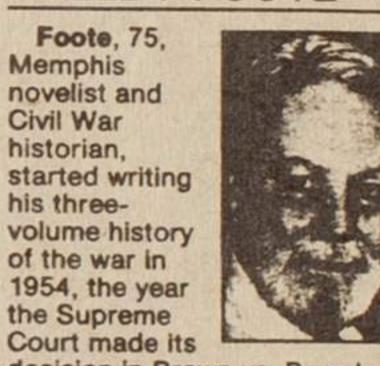
Foote, 75, Memphis novelist and Civil War historian, started writing his threevolume history of the war in 1954, the year the Supreme

decision in Brown vs. Board of Education. Thus began the modern civil rights era, and Foote says the timing gave him a marvelous opportunity to watch three Southern governors -Orval Faubus, George Wallace and Ross Barnett - as they took their defiant stands:

governors of my native state (Mississippi) and the adjoining states of Arkansas and Alabama for helping to lessen my sectional bias by reproducing, in their actions during several of the years that went into the writing of this volume, much that was least admirable in the position my forebears occupied when they stood up to Lincoln. I suppose, or in any case fervently hope, it is true that history never repeats itself, but I know from watching these three gentlemen that it can be terrifying in its approximations, even when the

does, its scale from the

SHELBY FOOTE



"I am obligated to the

reproduction - deriving, as it performers — is in miniature."

Jim Chisum, Terry Keeter, Jim Terrell COORDINATOR

THE LOGO

The logo for the National Civil Rights Museum (see cover page) represents the human struggle for civil rights. The figure is both black and white, symbolizing the worldwide struggle for equality. Depicted in a "struggle" position, the figure is attempting to break free from the confinement of prejudice and oppression. The figure is "everyman," representing all races, sexes and religions while emphasizing the struggle by African-Americans in

the 1950s and 1960s. The logo colors - black, white and red - represent the races and the passion and emotion of

the struggle for equality. The logo was designed by Eddie Tucker, vice president, creative director of Archer/Malmo advertising agency.

which he had added to the property three years before the King shooting. An April 26, 1982, foreclosure hearing was set.

went, people said,

'It's about time.

Scruggs said in a recent interview that back in 1982, WDIA employees were unanimous in their belief that the station shouldn't try to save the Lorraine so soon after the Mound Bayou effort.

Scruggs said he met with WDIA employees A. C. Williams, community relations officer; Carl Conner, program director; and Bill Adkins, then the top morning disc jockey.

Scruggs. "The public wasn't going to respond positively . . . Before he would allow a final another meeting a few days later. Opinions hadn't changed,

don't act, yes, it may become a parking lot, much to our disgrace, much to the dismay of

As the foreclosure hearing officer of the black-owned Tri-

Scruggs said he called D'Army Bailey and asked him to handle