

By Michael Lollar
The Commercial Appeal
Graphics by Deborah D. Young



The strongest force in America's civil rights movement was gunned down on the balcony of what is now the National Civil Rights Museum.

Identifying the museum with the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. inspires deep feelings and strong emotions. Exhibit designer Gerard Eisterhold said the museum will be a "powerful thing." To protester Jacqueline Smith, it will be a "Disneyland of fear" that turns the plight of blacks and the poor into entertainment.

For foundation president D'Army Bailey, the museum won't be "the hate or hostility or brutality found inside. It's there to convey the beauty of man's idealism, the ultimate victory of goodness over meanness and evil."

A laser exhibit at the museum entrance will trace the path of the bullet as it crossed Mulberry Street to the balcony where Dr. King was shot. Reflected from a wreath on the motel window, the laser will be a "beacon in the sky" for a struggle that visitors first will see depicted in a bronze sculpture in the lobby.

The sculpture, *Movement to Overcome* by Michael Pavlovsky, depicts masses of people "existing and struggling together," the artist said. The museum recounts the major events in that struggle. Exhibits to be complete when the museum opens later this summer include:

The National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel

450 Mulberry Street
Memphis, Tenn. 38103
Phone (901) 521-9699

Admission Prices

\$5 adults
\$4 seniors and students with identification
\$3 children 6-12
Age 5 and under free
Free admission 3-5 p.m. Mondays

Hours:

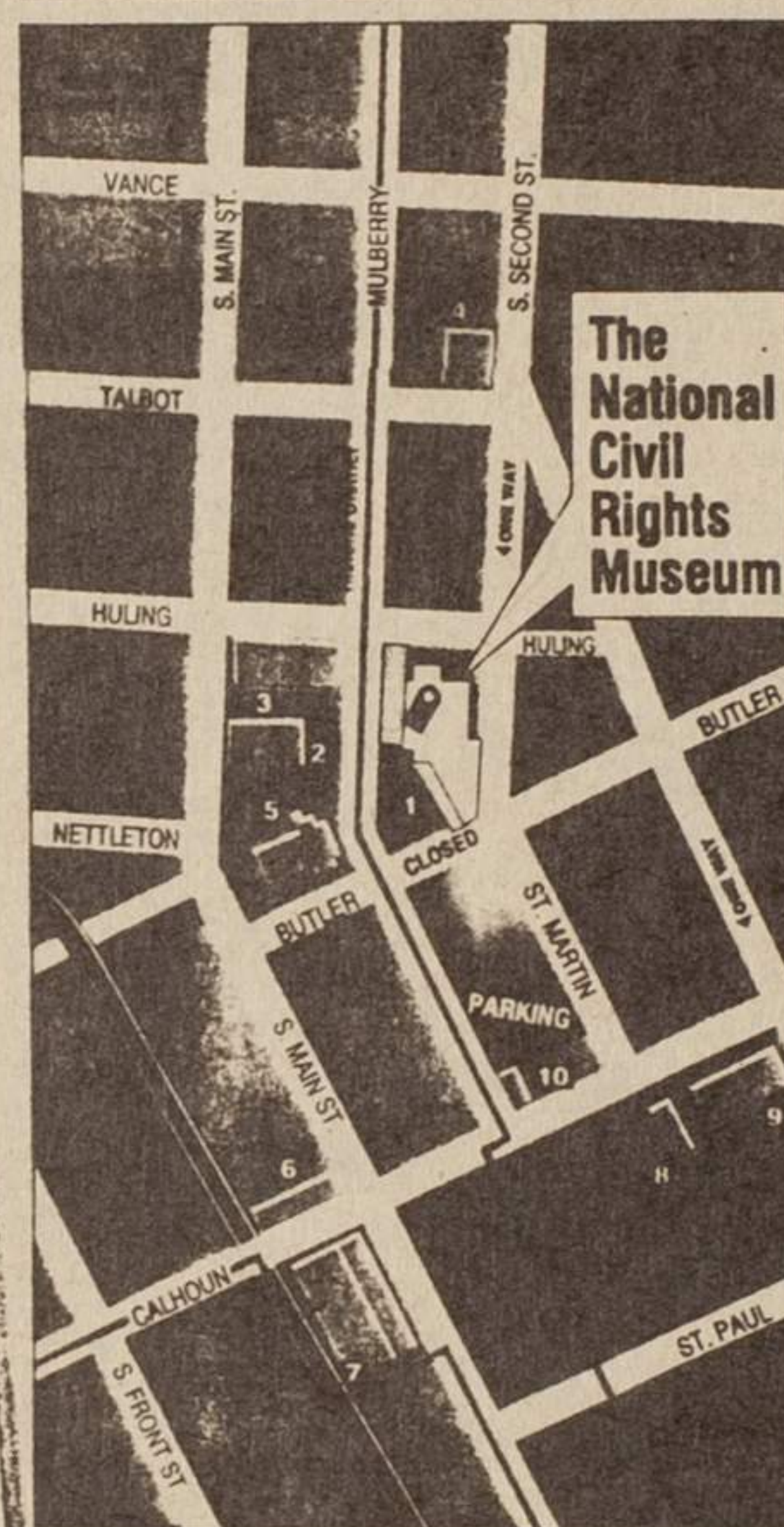
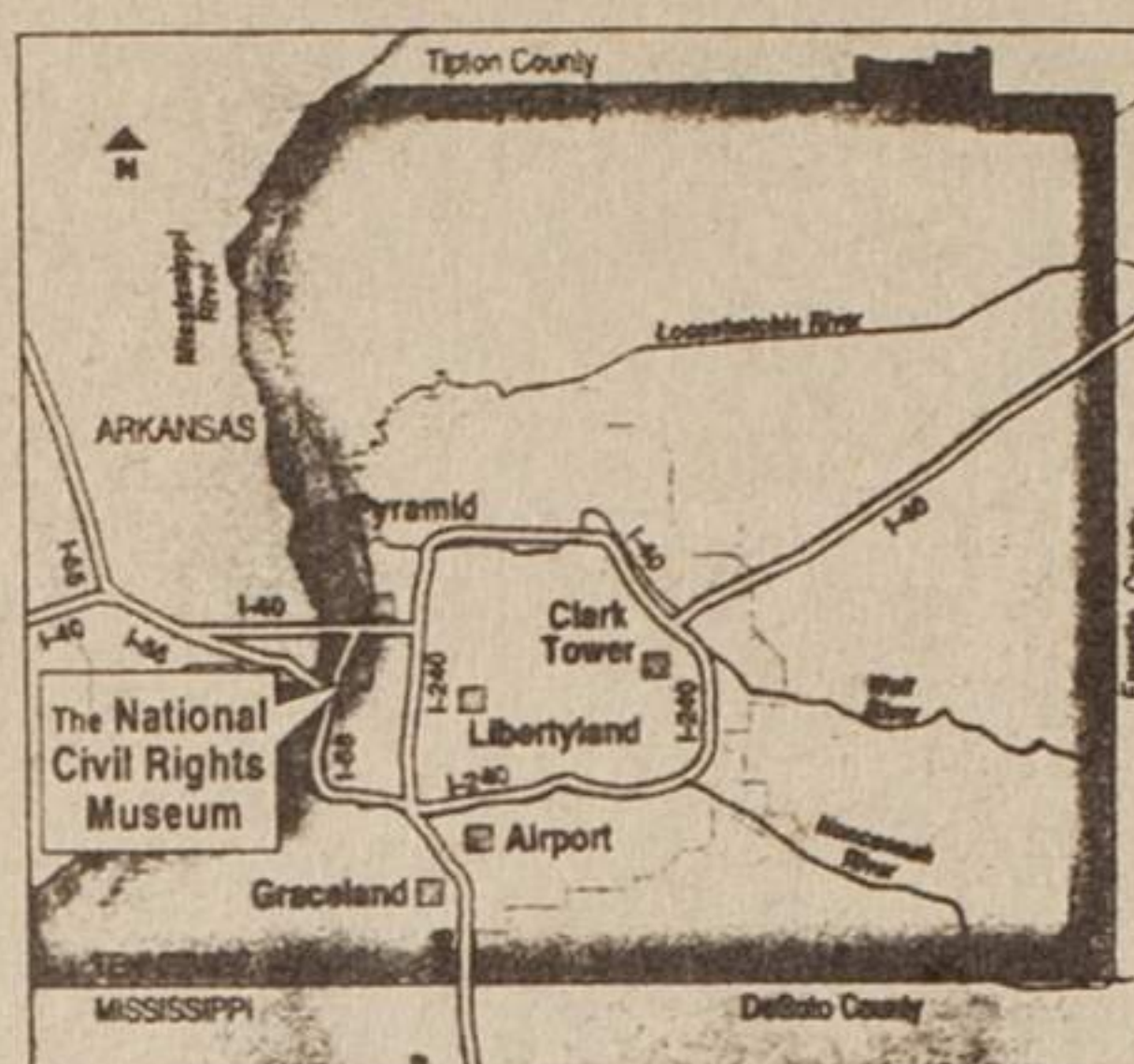
Official dedication ceremony Thursday, 11 a.m. to noon. Museum will be open noon to 5 p.m., Friday, Saturday and next Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. for free public preview tours of construction to date. The museum will close July 8 for construction completion. Grand opening is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 31, at 10 a.m.

Hours (Once the museum officially opens)

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday and Wednesday-Saturday
1-5 p.m. Sunday (September through May)
1-6 p.m. Sunday (June through August)
Closed Tuesday

The museum is operated by the nonprofit National Civil Rights Museum. It was built with money provided by the State of Tennessee, the City of Memphis, Shelby County, with additional support from these private sponsors: AutoZone Inc., Dunavant Enterprises, Federal Express Corp., First Tennessee National Corp., Hyde Foundation, Malone & Hyde, Plough Foundation and Promus Companies.

LORRAINE



KEY

South Main Historic District Border

1. The National Civil Rights Museum (Lorraine Motel, 1925) (450 Mulberry) The Lorraine Motel has accommodated famous guests such as Cab Calloway, Count Basie, Nat King Cole and Aretha Franklin. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel April 4, 1968.
2. 418 S. Main St. (1912, renovated 1982) Private condominium, owner Robert McGowan. The building where James Earl Ray shot Dr. King from a small bathroom window in the rear of the former rooming house.
3. Theatre Works (renovated 1987) (414 S. Main) Available for theater and dance performances.
4. WLOK (1977) (933 S. Second) Locally and minority owned commercial radio station.
5. Fire Station No. 2 (1952) (474 S. Main) Its design was influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright.
6. Ernestine's and Hazel's Sundry (1967) (531 S. Main) Restaurant served some civil rights march participants.
7. Central Station (1914) (545 S. Main) Amtrak train depot, former site of the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Depot.
8. Marmalade restaurant (1982) (153 E. Calhoun) Live jazz, blues and rhythm & blues performances.
9. Former site of the Post Office (1928) (161 E. Calhoun) Replaced by the newer center at 555 S. Third.
10. Tri-State Defender (1951) (124 E. Calhoun) Minority-owned newspaper.

Sources: South Main Street Historic District; Who's Who in Memphis Business (1991); Memphis, An Architectural Guide

INTRODUCTORY EXHIBITS

For many Americans, Dr. King, Rosa Parks and John F. Kennedy are ultimate symbols of the civil rights movement.

But more than 350 years earlier, the first Africans in America rattled the chains of slavery.

The first museum gallery is made up primarily of quotes and photographs dedicated to the early years of the struggle. As early as the 1600s, slaves resisted by pretending to be ill. Some escaped, burned crops, broke tools, injured work animals, killed their masters or committed suicide.

Besides those who died in bondage, heroes who emerged include Nat Turner, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and John Brown.

Sojourner Truth, a former slave, refused to give up her seat in the white section of a Washington streetcar during the Civil War.

The gallery ranges from quotes by early heroes to formation of the Ku Klux Klan in Pulaski, Tenn., in 1866, to the role of the church in the movement. Part of the spirit that helped sustain the movement is captured by Sojourner Truth: "I think of the great things of God, not the little things."

BROWN VS. THE TOPEKA BOARD OF EDUCATION

In 1890, Louisiana blacks challenged a law requiring railroads to provide separate but equal cars for blacks and whites.

When Homer A. Plessy, a black, sat in a whites-only coach, he was arrested.

When Plessy vs. Ferguson went to the Supreme Court in 1896, the court upheld "separate but equal" facilities, legally formalizing segregation.

A 1930s film will be a focal point, showing differences between well-funded white schools and bare-bones black schools in the South.

In 1950, Thurgood Marshall, director of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, chose five federal lawsuits as test cases. A Topeka, Kan., suit in the name of 7-year-old Linda Brown challenged separate-but-equal laws as violating the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Supreme Court ruled on May 17, 1954, that separate-but-equal schools are "inherently unequal." It was the first major turning point in the civil rights movement.

LITTLE ROCK

Brown vs. Board of Education gave no guidelines for desegregation.

A few white school systems admitted blacks. Others closed. In Little Rock, the school board planned to integrate Central High School with a few blacks beginning in 1957.

Gov. Orval Faubus surrounded the school with Arkansas National Guardsmen to prevent nine blacks from entering on opening day. Nineteen days later, the blacks entered, but were escorted home when a mob stormed the school. President Dwight Eisenhower sent in members of the 101st Airborne Division, including a bodyguard for each black student. Taped news segments and photographs will capture the drama.

In 1958, Faubus closed the schools and helped set up the Little Rock Private School Corporation. About half the white students enrolled in private schools. A third attended schools outside the city, and 643 white students and most black students did not attend any school.

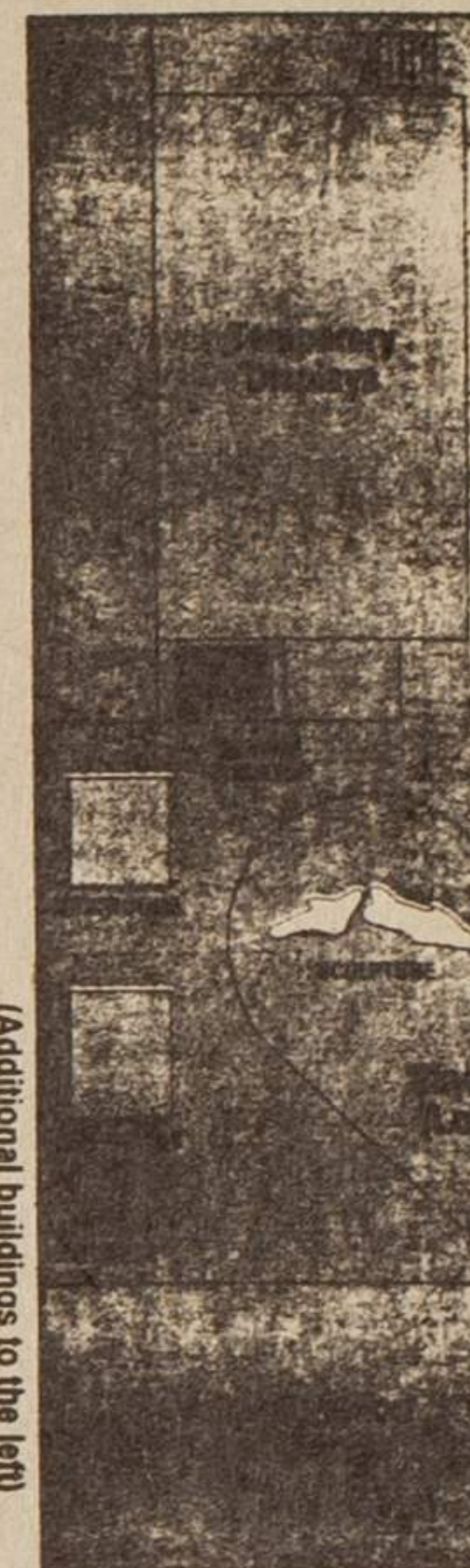
In 1959, a desegregated and public Central High reopened without incident.

MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

A Montgomery, Ala., city bus is the focal point. Visitors who sit on the bus activate audio sequences of statements bus drivers might have made in 1955.

That was the year seamstress Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man.

When Mrs. Parks was arrested, she became the focal point of a citywide bus boycott. Black leaders formed the



(Additional buildings to the left)

Montgomery Improvement Association and voted for newly arrived minister Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to head the group.

After 13 months, the Supreme Court made bus segregation unconstitutional.

With success of the boycott, civil rights leaders formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to plan other mass actions. Dr. King was its president until his death.

SIT-INS

Visitors may sit at a lunch counter, the enduring symbol of sit-in demonstrations against public facilities still segregated in 1960.

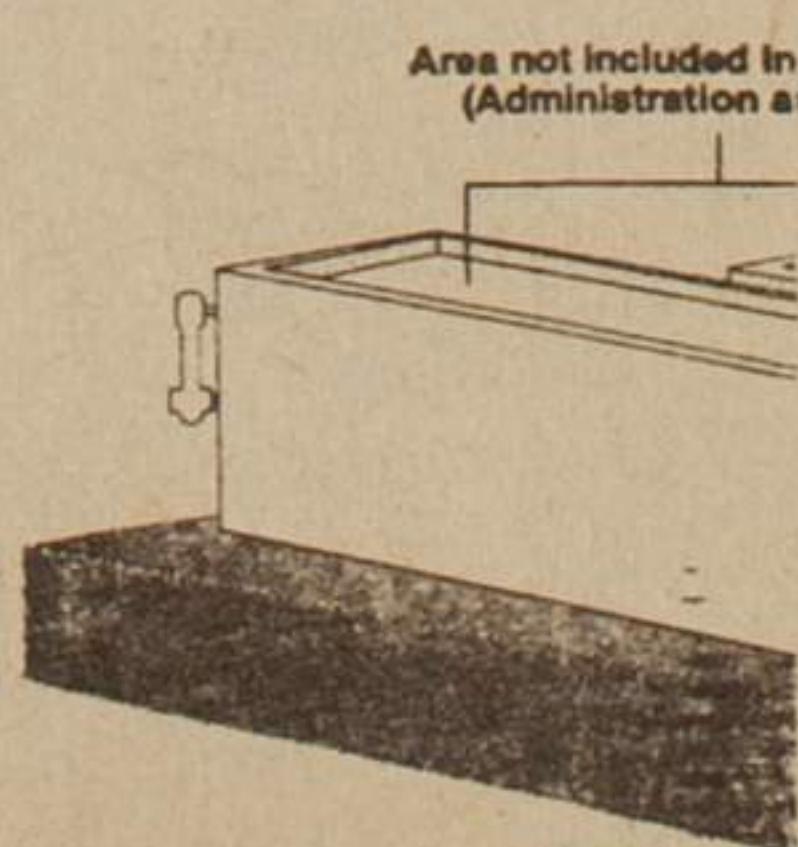
On Feb. 1, 1960, four black college students sat at a segregated lunch counter in a Woolworth's store in Greensboro, N.C. Denied service, they read books until closing time and returned the next day. There had been earlier sit-ins, but this one captured the attention of the press. Protesters sat in at segregated stores in the South and chain-store affiliates in the North.

News footage shows mobs attacking protesters and police using fire hoses and tear gas to break up disturbances.

FREEDOM RIDES

A charred bus is the reminder in this gallery of the 1961 freedom rides organized to expose the South's refusal to comply with desegregation rulings. Segregated interstate transportation was ruled unconstitutional in 1946 and segregated waiting rooms and terminals outlawed in 1960. Yet, the South still had separate terminal facilities, and blacks were often forced to the backs of buses.

Thirteen freedom riders — seven black and six white — left Washington May 4, 1961, on two buses, a Greyhound and a Trailways, planning to use formerly whites-only terminal facilities across the deep South. Three riders were arrested and two beaten in South Carolina. In Anniston, Ala., the Greyhound met a mob which chased the bus out of town, throwing bricks, rocks and a smoke bomb through the windows. As riders



Area not included in Administration area

AERIAL VIEW

The National Civil Rights Museum