



Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Hon. D'Army Bailey

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hon. D'Army Bailey
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey,
Dates:	June 24, 2003, July 29, 2010
Bulk Dates:	2003, 2010
Physical Description:	14 Betacam SP videocassettes (6:28:09).
Abstract:	Circuit court judge and museum director Hon. D'Army Bailey (1941 -) founded the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. Bailey is a Circuit Court Judge in Tennessee's 30th Judicial District and wrote the book "Mine Eyes Have Seen: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Final Journey." Bailey has also made appearances as an actor in movies such as "Mystery Train" and "The People Vs. Larry Flint." Bailey was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 24, 2003, July 29, 2010, in Memphis, Tennessee, Memphis, Tennessee. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_141
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Activist, politician, attorney, writer, columnist, public servant and jurist D'Army Bailey was born on November 11, 1941 in Memphis, Tennessee. He attended Booker T. Washington High School in Memphis, but was expelled from Southern University in Baton Rouge in the early 1960s for participating in anti-segregation demonstrations. He went on to receive his B.A. from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, and graduated from Yale Law School in 1967.

After graduation, Bailey served as national director of the Law Students Civil Rights Research Council in New York from 1967 to 1968 and then as staff attorney to the San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation from 1968 to 1970. From 1970 to 1971, he was program adviser to the Field Foundation in New York. Elected to the City Council in Berkeley, California, in 1971, he was ousted in a recall election after two years because of his controversial black nationalist politics. Bailey returned to his hometown of Memphis and practiced law from 1974 to 1990. In 1983, he began his fight to preserve the Lorraine Motel, the site of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination. Finally, after years of fundraising, Bailey's vision was realized in 1991 when the Lorraine Motel building was restored and transformed into the National Civil Rights Museum.

Bailey became a jurist in 1990, when he was elected Circuit Court Judge in Tennessee's 30th Judicial District. Reelected in 1998, Judge Bailey continues to devote himself to fight for civil rights. Bailey is an author, guest speaker for universities and civic organizations, and has been seen in the films "The People vs. Larry Flynt," "How Stella Got Her Groove Back" and "Mystery Train." Judge D'Army Bailey lives in Memphis with his wife,

Adrienne, and two sons, Justin and Merritt.

Judge D'Army Bailey was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 24, 2003 and July 29, 2010.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 24, 2003 and July 29, 2010, in Memphis, Tennessee. Memphis, Tennessee, and was recorded on 14 Betacam SP videocassettes. Circuit court judge and museum director Hon. D'Army Bailey (1941 -) founded the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. Bailey is a Circuit Court Judge in Tennessee's 30th Judicial District and wrote the book "Mine Eyes Have Seen: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Final Journey." Bailey has also made appearances as an actor in movies such as "Mystery Train" and "The People Vs. Larry Flint."

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Bailey, D'Army

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hon. D'Army Bailey--Interviews

Museum directors--Tennessee--Memphis--Interviews

African American judges--Tennessee--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Tennessee

National Civil Rights Museum

HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers

EducationMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, June 24, 2003, July 29, 2010. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/24/2011 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage, June 24, 2003, July 29, 2010

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_001_001, TRT: 0:28:50 2003/06/24

D'Army Bailey describes his job as a judge, explaining that he oversees divorce, malpractice, and other civil suits in Memphis, Tennessee. He discusses his family background. Though he has been to many family reunions, he does not know much about his mother's history. Bailey describes his earliest memory of a bus coming through South Memphis to take workers to the cotton fields. He emphasized that people did not talk much about the past and were mainly focused on the surviving. Bailey talks about his parents. His mother, Will Ella Bailey, was born around 1945 and attended Booker T. Washington High School, as did his father, Walter Bailey Sr. They dropped out of school after they married. Will Ella returned to school to earn her G.E.D. and attended barber school becoming one of the first female/black female barbers. She continued her education and received her nursing license. Bailey discusses his school experiences at a private school in Memphis, Tennessee.

African American families--Tennessee--Memphis

Education (Secondary)--Tennessee--Memphis

African Americans--Employment--Tennessee--Memphis

Private schools--Tennessee--Memphis

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

African American judges--Tennessee--Memphis

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_001_002, TRT: 0:29:45 2003/06/24

D'Army Bailey discusses his paternal history and his father, Walter Lee Bailey Sr., who was raised in Memphis, Tennessee. Walter worked as a Pullman Porter for the Illinois Central Railroad and died at age sixty-nine in 1989. Bailey realizes he has not inquired enough about his maternal history and noted the lack of a tradition in passing on family histories in his family. He talks about his childhood and attending games at the African American stadium where he saw Roy Campanella and Jackie Robinson play. His father also took he and his brother to baseball games in Chicago and Detroit. Bailey discusses growing up in LeMoyne Gardens, the biggest housing project in Memphis, Tennessee, and talks about the diversity in class and income levels. Though Memphis was completely segregated, he did not feel oppressed because the community serviced their basic needs. Bailey discusses his school background and describes himself as a good student.

African American fathers--Tennessee--Memphis

Illinois Central Railroad Company

Campanella, Roy, 1921-1993

Robinson, Jackie, 1919-1972

African Americans--Housing--Tennessee--Memphis

African Americans Segregation--Tennessee--Memphis

Memphis (Tenn.)--Race relations

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_001_003, TRT:
0:29:10 2003/06/24

D'Army Bailey talks about his experiences at Booker T. Washington High School and recalls his most influential teacher, Mrs. Annette Rulac. He describes his interactions with various successful African American professionals and the supportiveness of his parents. Bailey remembers watching news stories about the Civil Rights Movement, which heightened his awareness of racism. Bailey talks about the voters' registration drives and his introduction to successful African American lawyers working in Memphis for the Civil Rights Movement. Meeting these lawyers was influential for Bailey, as it presented him with a model of educated resistance. He discusses his experiences at Southern University and A & M College and becoming a campus leader. He was expelled for participating in a sit-in in Greensboro, North Carolina where he was arrested.

Education (Secondary)--Tennessee--Memphis

Civil right movements--Tennessee--Memphis

Southern University and A & M College

Voter registration--Tennessee--Memphis

African American lawyers--Tennessee--Memphis

African American college students--political activity--North Carolina--
Greensboro

Civil rights demonstrations--North Carolina--Greensboro

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_001_004, TRT:
0:30:30 2003/06/24

D'Army Bailey discusses his experiences at Southern University and A & M College and talks about students who were expelled for staging sit-ins. He describes how he became involved with the Civil Rights Movement on campus. Bailey, his brother, and a preacher, named Ronald Cox, led a march in protest of arrested students. He recalls being tear-gassed in front of the jail and describes the violence they endured. The police arrested Cox and Bailey led a march on the president's house demanding that the students not be expelled. This propelled Bailey to the forefront of his campus' Civil Rights Movement. He describes being harassed and eventually expelled by Southern University and A & M College and the University's closing in response to the protests. Bailey talks about his scholarship to attend Clark College in Worcester, Massachusetts and his experience at Clark College.

Southern University and A & M College

Civil right movements--Louisiana--Baton Rouge

African American college students--political activity--Louisiana--Baton Rouge

Civil rights demonstrations----Louisiana--Baton Rouge

Education (Higher)--Worcester--Massachusetts

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_001_005, TRT:
0:29:40 2003/06/24

D'Army Bailey talks about the court case Cox vs. Louisiana, which established the rights of demonstrators, and his experiences at Clark College. Bailey talks about his involvement in the local civil rights protests and getting Malcolm X to give a speech at Clark College. After graduating from Clark College, Bailey

attended Yale Law School. During his summers, Bailey worked for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in New Orleans, Louisiana and for the Law Students Research Civil Rights Council, where he worked organizing Title VII cases. Bailey describes his move to San Francisco, to work for a San Francisco Legal Defense Fund, and working with Abbie Hoffman. Bailey recalls being promised latitude, and Saul Alinsky was hired instead. In response, he organized other unsatisfied employees forcing the Director to resign, but he too was fired. He went on to become Chairman of Berkeley Legal Services.

African American lawyers--California--San Francisco

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

Constitutional law--United States--Cases

Education (Higher)--Worcester--Massachusetts

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund

X, Malcolm, 1925-1965

Hoffman, Abbie

Alinsky, Saul David, 1909-1972

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_001_006, TRT: 0:29:45 2003/06/24

D'Army Bailey talks about the African American community in Berkeley, California emphasizing the housing discrimination. He describes his own living accommodations, the first African American elected to city council and running for the City Council as a result of his attendance at the Black Caucus and becoming more involved in politics. Bailey describes the formulation of the April Coalition and for the Black Caucus his run for the Berkeley City Council. He then describes the hostility he faced. Bailey also explains the City Council election system in Berkeley and the process of registering for candidacy. Bailey talks about attempting to pass an affirmative action program and his campaign manager, Eugene Snyder. He discusses hiring a talented and large staff for the campaign.

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

Berkeley (Calif.)

Discrimination in housing--California--Berkeley

April Coalition

City council members--California--Berkeley

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_001_007, TRT: 0:29:45 2003/06/24

D'Army Bailey talks about the Black Caucus, the criticism he received for having a large staff, his platform and the conflict between the African American community and the women's movement. Bailey talks about the things he achieved while on the council including the affirmative action program. He then describes a strike of African American garbage workers and white artisans in the city, and the city's attempts to negotiate with them. Bailey eventually attended the negotiations himself and offered to give the garbage workers better wages and the garbage workers convinced the others to end the strike. He also discusses his struggles with the first African American council member, who often voted conservatively and opposed Bailey's measures. Bailey talks about being recalled from the council and the general phenomenon of radicals trying to work within the system and being separated from their politics.

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

Berkeley (Calif.)

City council members--California--Berkeley

African Americans--Politics and government--California--Berkeley

Sanitation workers--California--Berkeley

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_002_008, TRT:
0:26:17 2010/07/29

D'Army Bailey slates his interview and gives an overview of his occupation. He was born on November 29, 1941, in Memphis, Tennessee. He describes his civil rights activities at Southern University, which led to his expulsion during his junior year. During the 1960s, Bailey served as an activist politician in the Bay Area, California, before moving back to Memphis to join his brother-in-law practice from 1974 to 1990. Bailey recalls debating whether to remain in California, given the volatility of its political climate, and ongoing confrontations with Huey P. Newton. He discusses his weekly column in Memphis' Commercial Appeal and his work as an assistant public defender. He was later appointed to the capital defense team of the Public Defender's Office, and served as a Circuit Court Judge in Memphis, Tennessee. After retiring from the bench, he joined the law practice Wilkes and McHugh, P.A.

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

African American judges--Tennessee--Memphis

African American families--Tennessee--Memphis

African American children--Tennessee--Memphis

Southern University and A & M College

Civil right movements--Louisiana--Baton Rouge

Newton, Huey P.

Commercial appeal (Memphis, Tenn.)

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_002_009, TRT:
0:30:00 2010/07/29

D'Army Bailey describes the demographics of Memphis, Tennessee, which were approximately 48% African American in 1974. He discusses attorney-client privilege, and the importance of open communication between he and his clients. Bailey talks about his views on the death penalty, and his opposition. He goes on to describe his past capital murder cases, and explain the importance of having African Americans serve on capital juries. Bailey was involved in over 100 first degree murder cases during his tenure as a capital defense attorney. He talks about the dilapidated condition of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, upon his return to Memphis in 1974. Bailey was paid to assist in setting up a non-profit fundraising entity to transform the motel into a shrine of Dr. King. Out of this, the Lorraine-King Shrine Foundation was created.

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

Memphis (Tenn.)

Confidential communications--Lawyers--United States

Capital punishment--United States

Discrimination in criminal justice administration--United States

Museums--Tennessee--Memphis

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968

National Civil Rights Museum

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_002_010, TRT:

0:30:13 2010/07/29

D'Army Bailey discusses his involvement in the construction of the Lorraine Civil Rights Museum. At the point of Bailey's involvement, the owner of the motel, Walter L. Bailey, preserved the room in its original condition. The motel was in foreclosure while Bailey sought private buyers for the location. Bailey discusses the efforts of WDIA Radio to help raise money to save the motel, which proved unsuccessful. Bailey decided to take over fundraising efforts, and was able to raise close to \$65,000 through donations. When the Lorraine was put up for auction, Bailey was able to raise an additional \$79,000 in loans from a local black-owned bank and donations from a sanitation union, allowing him to purchase the motel for \$144,000. City leaders committed \$50,000 to the development, \$4.4 million was allocated in the state budget, and the mayor and County Executive matched the state budget for the development.

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

National Civil Rights Museum

Museums--Tennessee--Memphis

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_002_011, TRT: 0:24:44 2010/07/29

D'Army Bailey discusses the renovation of the Lorraine Motel. Bailey received a cease and desist order from the King family, causing him to change the name from the Martin Luther King Memphis Memorial Foundation to the Lorraine Civil Rights Museum Foundation. Bailey remarks that the design of the museum was perfect because it captured the essence of the Movement experience. The state agreed to take over the museum property, handle funding and build the museum to the specifications set forth by the organization. Bailey describes having to remove one remaining weekly tenant, Jacqueline Smith, from the property. He talks about the dissension on the board of directors, which led to his eventual removal from the board. The museum was dedicated July 4, 1991. Bailey mentions that his original vision for the museum was that it would be progressive, and promote public programs, but under current leadership, the museum is static.

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

National Civil Rights Museum

Museums--Tennessee--Memphis

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968

Civil right movements--Tennessee--Memphis

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_002_012, TRT: 0:31:56 2010/07/29

D'Army Bailey discusses his career as a judge on the bench of the Tennessee Circuit Court, and his brief stint as an actor. He talks about his decisions to run for State Civil and Supreme Court judgeships before he was elected to the State Circuit Court. As a judge, Bailey presided over divorce cases and other monetary disputes. He describes the nature of divorce proceedings. Bailey talks about his longest trial, which involved Philip Morris, R.J. Reynolds, and Brown & Williamson. The case was consolidated into one trial, which lasted four months. Bailey discusses the particulars of the case. The trial ended in favor of the tobacco companies. Bailey explains his judicial philosophy of ensuring fairness in all cases. In September of 2009, Bailey retired from the Circuit Court. He remarks that his side hobby is film, and begins to describe shooting amateur films with his brother Walter during his childhood.

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

African American judges--Tennessee--Memphis

African Americans--Employment--Tennessee--Memphis

African American children--Amateur films--Tennessee--Memphis

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_002_013, TRT:
0:26:44 2010/07/29

D'Army Bailey discusses acting. Bailey played a role in the film, "Mystery Train," by Jim Jarmusch. He describes the shooting process and mentions that the movie, "A Family Thing," was shot at his courthouse. Bailey met Director Michael Hausman, and was later cast by Director Milos Forman in "The People Versus Larry Flint." Bailey also played the role of "minister" in the film, "How Stella Got Her Groove Back," directed by Kevin Sullivan. Bailey discusses his book, *The Education of a Black Radical*, and a forthcoming work about his activities in California. Bailey wants his legacy to be that he has tried to be honest and fair. He talks about his wife, Adrienne Lesley Bailey, and two sons, Justin and Merritt. He also mentions his brief case of lung cancer, but it was treated successfully. Bailey would like to be remembered as a man who cared and who fought.

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-

African Americans--Employment

African American actors--United States

African American families--Tennessee--Memphis

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. D'Army Bailey, Section A2003_141_002_014, TRT:
0:10:50 2010/07/29

Judge D'Army Bailey share and narrates personal photographs.

Bailey, D'Army, 1941-