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Brown

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wanted to do for the rest of my life because of James Brown."

Aides and relatives say they expect to turn Brown's home to a museum, similar to Graceland, Elvis Presley's former estate in

history: "The Hardest Working Man in Show Business," "Soul Brother Number 1," "Mr. Dynamite," "The Godfather of Soul" and even "The Original Disco Man."

performer Bobby Byrd said: "The dancing y'all seen later on ain't nothing to what he used to do back then. James could stand flat-footed and flip over into a split. He'd tum-

Bobby Byrd, lead singer of a local gospel group. Some accounts say that Brown met Byrd when the latter's group sang at the juvenile correctional facility. But Byrd says they met when Brown's baseball team played against local residents. When Brown was released from reform school, Byrd's family took him in and Brown joined Byrd's group, the Gospel Starlighters.

But gospel would soon give way to rhythm and blues.

Byrd said, "When we saw all the girls screaming for groups like Hank Ballard & The Midnighters, we thought, 'Oh, so this is what we want to do!'"

And they did. James Brown became the lead singer in a group that called themselves the Flames and, later, the Famous Flames. Little Richard would joke, "Y'all are the onliest people who ever made yourself famous before you were famous."

But fame was just around the corner.

In 1956, "Please, Please, Please," was released by Syd Nathan's Federal label, rising to #6 on the R&B charts. Other hits followed: "Try Me" (1958), "Night Train" (1962), "Prisoner of Love" (1963), "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag" (1965), "I Got You - I Feel Good" (1965), "It's a Man's World" (1966), "Cold Sweat" (1967), "I Got that Feeling" (1968), "Say It Loud - I'm Black and I'm Proud" (1968), "The Popcorn" (1969), "Ain't It Funky Now" -Part 1 (1970), "Hot Pants" (1971), "Get On the Good Foot" (1972) and "The Payback" (1974), the only gold-certified album [500,000 copies sold] of his long and successful career.

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