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***The Negro Motorist Green Book: African American
Tourism in the Jim Crow Era and the Guidebook's
Legacy in the Media***

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Introduction

The movie *Green Book* by Peter Farrelly was released in Italy in 2019 and was very well received by the audience. It was praised as a picture, based on a true story, celebrating the friendship between two characters much different from each other – one was Frank “Tony Lip” Vallelonga, an Italian American bouncer whose sharp tongue and manners had people respect him; the other was Don Shirley, a refined African American pianist whose fingers were at ease both while playing classical music and performing some devilish jazz. Despite hailing from backgrounds which basically had nothing in common, they faced Jim Crow together in the Midwest and Deep South and the former bouncer eventually discarded his racist thoughts to embrace brotherhood and the beauty of culture. The ending summed up such benevolence by portraying Don Shirley, living alone in a lush apartment above Carnegie Hall, joining “Tony Lip” and his family at their Christmas dinner. But why was it titled the *Green Book*? The Green Book is mentioned and shown only a couple of times all through the movie and audiences often left the movie theatres with no more knowledge of the book than when they had entered. Why was that text so important as to be chosen as the title for this movie?

The present study traces the history of the Green Book together with other travel directories which helped black Americans travel through Jim Crow lands. My analysis is not limited to the past, though. I also study contemporary material ranging from books to the visual arts in order to see how they deal with the *Green Book* and its legacy. I will show that *The Negro Motorist Green Book* was the longest and most successful publication listing black-run and -friendly places that would cater to and accommodate African Americans in a time when they were turned down by most white establishments. It was created in 1936 by Victor H. Green, a Harlem postal worker; learning that there were travel directories specifically addressed to Jewish people, he thought about developing a similar project dedicated to black travelers who were facing many obstacles while moving through their own country. One of such barriers was represented by sundown towns, which were mostly spread in the Midwest and whose inhabitants persistently tried to push out their black population through violent acts like lynchings and riots, while African Americans passing through them were urged to leave by sunset lest they received the same treatment. Black travellers were even harassed by policemen with no particular reason, just to be questioned and searched. That pushed a number of black Americans to establish their own vacation spots and accommodations where to enjoy their vacation without the specter of racism hanging over them.

The *Green Book* was not the only publication helping black travelers, though: for example, Wisconsin played its part by publishing its *Negro Business Directory of the State of Wisconsin* (1950- 1951), California preceded it with *The Official California Negro Directory and Classified Buyers' Guide* (1942-1943) and jazz singer Billy Butler acted in the name of his fellow musicians mistreated by racism by founding *Travelguide* in 1947. Despite showing some differences in the graphic format and contents, such directories all shared the effort to celebrate the black community and its accomplishments; not only did they provide the addresses of accommodations welcoming black guests, but they also listed all sorts of businesses while stimulating blacks to spend and make money circulate within their community.

The first chapter of the thesis will examine the gradual growth of the black middle class, especially in northern cities, and the way Booker T. Washington and his thought prompted African Americans to earn money through hard work and the establishment of their own businesses. Money resulting from such activities was also employed in traveling, both at national and international level, even though blacks kept facing Jim Crow on the road. In order to enjoy vacation peacefully, African Americans established a handful of resorts and beaches like Idlewild in Michigan, Chicken Bone Beach in Atlantic City and American Beach in Florida; those places became a staple for the black community who could finally enjoy summer by swimming, hunting and taking part in beauty contests free from the hands of Jim Crow. They had various means of transportation to get to the vacation places, but the car was usually the one they most resorted to: it granted them more freedom in terms of breaks and timetable and it was a way to prove their economic status. Those who opted for buses had to give up better seats to white passengers, until marches and protests finally led to integration on board. African Americans did not only practice domestic tourism but also traveled internationally: that was the case with intellectuals like Booker T. Washington, whose journey to Sicily in 1910 prompted him to compare the life on the island with the one led by blacks in the American South, or Richard Wright, whose journeys to Africa did not make him feel closer to his roots but only amplified the feeling of distance. Ordinary citizens were not less adventurous, though, and Mississippian Juanita Harrison was the proof of it: a mysterious figure, she traveled around the world on her own and ended up in Hawaii, where she died in obscurity but leaving behind an interesting memoir. Blacks organized their journeys autonomously but also resorted to travel agencies that sent them abroad, especially in Europe and Africa: among such institutions the most popular one was and still is the Henderson Travel Service, the longest black-run travel agency established in 1955 and still operating today.

The second chapter will analyse travel directories specifically addressed to African Americans and run by blacks, with an exception: white folklorist Stetson Kennedy's *Jim Crow Guide to the USA* (1959), a satirical guide on how to behave in American society and a brief history of white supremacy. What resulted from the study is that such texts were not mere lists of black-friendly motels and hotels, but also advertised businesses run by them and catering to their communities. Key figures in the community, whether they were ordinary citizens or people tied to the Civil Rights Movement, were often celebrated through Who's Who columns where they were portrayed as refined and well-educated people who contributed to the progress of their race. Publications of this sort were spread from California to Wisconsin but the most popular one was still the *Green Book*. When other guides concentrated on businesses and did not linger on accommodation, Green's publication also provided practical tips on how to drive properly and safely across America; such tips even included instructions on how to maintain a car and how to organize a trip properly. The *Green Book* also supported the proliferating trades by listing them and inviting people to become regular customers. An example of successful black business was represented by beauty and barber shops, both of which found space in Green's guide until the mid-Fifties. Salons like Rose Meta's in Harlem became a get-together for black customers, mostly women, who attended them to beautify themselves and support a local enterprise. They were not always deemed frivolous spaces and during the Civil Rights Movement they became an aggregation point where to register people desiring to vote and support the causes.

The third and final chapter will consider how the *Green Book* has been portrayed in contemporary media, especially in movies, literature and the visual arts. The movie *Green Book* (2018) became the object of heated debate between people who appreciated its depicting a true friendship and others, mostly blacks, criticizing its being a "white savior picture". While it did celebrate the power to overcome racism and embrace difference, it also presented a list of stereotypes concerning both "Tony Lip" and Don Shirley and their respective communities. What the movie was also accused of was its shallow portrayal of black travel guides (the actual *Green Book* only appears a couple of times) and their fundamental role in encouraging travel and solidarity within the black community; other media proved better at paying a right tribute to Green and its publication, especially in the literary field. The science-fiction book *Lovecraft Country* (2016) described the relevance of the *Green Book*, even though it changed its name in *Safe Negro Travel Guide*, and the work of volunteers besides comparing the dangers faced by its characters in a fictional world to the ones endured by blacks in Jim Crow territory. *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book* (2017) was a crude examination of racial incidents still plaguing the United States and

represented a mock-version of Green's publication as well as a new version of it; while traveling conditions seem to have improved, there remain severe issues faced by American blacks and listed in the book. The visual arts were not less effective at evoking the *Green Book* and its history: the oil on linen *Green-Book, Orange Balloon* (2016) by artist Tina Mion and Derrick Adams' exhibition *Sanctuary* (2018) reconstructed the black traveling experience visually and stimulated its visitors to put themselves in African Americans' shoes while desperately looking for a safe haven.

Chapter 1.

Black Tourism Across the United States and Abroad

1. The Rise of a Black Middle Class

The turn of the twentieth century saw the emergence of a black bourgeoisie:

a prosperous middle class of teachers, doctors, businessmen, and others of education and grooming. They or their elders had descended from “favored slaves” - privileged blacks who [...] had worked in the house, not in the field. During the decadelong heyday of Reconstruction, they’d used their cachet to start business and gain social standing. Now, in the North, they were helping pave the way for a new Negro image – one that challenged every cliché of black women as household help, black men as shiftless loafers. The Negro aristocracy tended to shun anyone who embodied a past they wanted to bury. “Uppity” became a popular word to describe ambitious blacks. (Gavin 9)

The black middle class and its gradual growth, especially in northern cities, was spurred by the Great Migration which started during World War I and ended in the Seventies approximately. According to journalist and author Isabel Wilkerson, whose bestseller *The Warmth of Other Suns* deals with that very migration, about 6 million African Americans left the South for northern cities like New York, Detroit and Chicago. Smaller cities like Milwaukee and Oakland were popular destinations too (Wilkerson 18). What brought such masses toward the unknown and the hustle and bustle of the city? Some factors include the need to escape Jim Crow’s oppression and the ambition to pursue a better career in cities which were supposed to grant a brighter future. Wilkerson used three terms to define the Great Migration: a “silent pilgrimage” and a “fever” whose symptoms broke out suddenly (17). It is interesting how such words embody the mixed feelings experienced by migrants: the “pilgrimage” reflects the quietness of the travelers and fear of the unknown, while the “fever” stands for the excitement and hope of moving towards something new and stimulating. The Great Migration is thought to have ceased around the Seventies, when the Sunbelt started attracting new businesses and investments, replacing rural areas with dams and towering skyscrapers. Even if they did not vanish altogether, racism and backwardness were gradually abandoned because perceived as obstacles toward investment and the economic progress. Wilkerson considers 1970 to be a watershed in the history of the Great Migration precisely for witnessing a fall-off in the number of people leaving the South and the comeback of Southerners to what looked like a new South (383). Despite ceasing in the Seventies, the Great Migration did leave traces on the

cities of the North with its separation between black and white neighborhoods and the gradual expansion of a refined black middle class (19).

Becoming a middle class and growing as such also implied discarding the racial epithets which labeled black Americans as loafers and backward people. According to Mullins, change in the African Americans' conception of themselves began with the way they defined each other: "Indeed, the construction of new racial labels like "colored" reflected an increasingly adamant African-American attempt to portray themselves as Americans with rights and aspirations" (16). Being defined as "colored" instead of the more offensive "negro" was a step forward self-consciousness and a way black people defined themselves with a name they themselves and not the whites had created. That proved to be a quite long process, though, since travel directories like the *Green Book* employed the word "negro", even if less frequently, in all its issues until the last one in 1966-67. Apart from facing discrimination and much competition from other immigrants, predominantly European, African Americans hailing from the rural South often encountered opposition from refined blacks who openly criticized the former ones' accent and hick manners (Wilkerson 270-274). A 'black rat race' often left immigrants wonder if they had made the right choice by leaving their Southern places which could have been racist, and yet were inhabited by a closer and more hospitable black community.

In a world which often denied them full existence as Americans and citizens, "many African Americans viewed consumption as a significant symbolic and concrete privilege that augured a possible progression in African American labor and civil privileges" (Mullins 18). In other words, consumption for the black middle class was not merely a buying of material objects to show off one's wealth, but rather a proof and condition of blacks' growing self-determination and entrepreneurship in the economic field. It was also a way to react in the face of a racist space which went as far as preventing blacks from window-shopping; despite sounding like a democratic pleasure, since everybody should enjoy the sight of goods displayed in stores amid colors and lights, some white owners had blacks peering into their shop-windows arrested because they thought the very act of looking was a white privilege (41-42).

Blacks were also present in the business world as advertising icons and caricatures of them promoting goods first appeared in the late nineteenth century, when they were employed to promote cigarettes and food. The most popular advertising icon was probably Aunt Jemima, a happy-looking black woman sponsoring the pancake mix by the same name. The image, which was based on a real

woman born into slavery, was heavily criticized for being a stereotyped version of the black mammy – Aunt Jemima was indeed wearing a kerchief on her head, spotted bulging eyes and a flat nose and spoke black dialect. Even the fact of her being addressed as “Aunt” was a reference to the way black people were called in what Loewen defined the Nadir of race relations (1890s-1930s, a period when race relations worsened), when they were addressed as “aunt” or “uncle” instead of the more formal “madam” and “mister” (25). According to Mullins, the pancake mix’s icon and others were reassuring for whites in that they reproduced a labor system where blacks worked and whites were consumers of their labors (44); it also evoked values such as hard work and faithfulness, as much as the popular icon of Quaker Oats evoked virtue and deftness (171). Due to much protest the Aunt Jemima icon was finally modernized in the Sixties and the new image portrayed (and still does) a more refined lady wearing light makeup, her hair permed and her ears adorned with earrings. It took a while though before African Americans, who had been pictured as cooks and maids, were finally considered consumers as well.

Even when they did become consumers, black Americans’ perceived hedonism was often criticized because “most White writers were apprehensive that African American consumption heralded a disastrous erosion of Black moral, labor, and racial discipline [...] they saw the concession of symbolic and utilitarian privileges that were central to consumer citizenship [...]” (155-156). In other words, they thought that black people’s desire to acquire material objects as simple as silk shirts and jewelry, which were perceived as useless, would pose a threat to white identity and its privileges. It was also believed that an increasing consumption would distract African Americans from hard work and thus disrupting the racial social order; whites “[...] were concerned that conceding ambition to African Americans was tantamount to suggesting genuine equity” (159). That did not prevent blacks from pursuing material wealth, though: indeed “commodities were not simply evidence of African Americans’ penetration into White space; they also demonstrated how African Americans could “consume” dominant social ambitions and subjectivity [...]” (160). Creating their own businesses and buying from them thus became a way for blacks to slowly erode white privileges and aspire to their wealth.

According to Branchik and Davis, the history of black affluence and of its elite market segment can be divided into five phases, starting from the antebellum years to contemporaneity. Their study “Black Gold: A History of the African-American Elite Market Segment” describes five phases of the black market, each one of them provided with an historical background and the various activities carried out by African Americans. The period when an important travel directory

like the *Green Book* started being published, for example, was the second one according to the authors and is defined as a period of urbanization lasting from 1915 to 1945 approximately; the reference to urbanization might be due to the fact of growing masses of blacks reaching the North from the South looking for better opportunities. Among the key elements of that period, the authors list the “expansion of black-targeted commercial enterprises, especially in urban areas”, “early targeting of black consumers through black newspapers and radio” and “professional, entrepreneurial occupations”(38). A new elite which included professionals was born and constituted a new affluent elite which differed from the previous one “[...] in that it depended on the black community for its livelihood rather than wealthy whites” (41). The role provided by the press in supporting the black economy was not secondary; by listing African Americans businesses and exhorting blacks to become regular customers it did support the middle class and its wealth as well.

The travel directories went on to be published until the mid-Sixties, entering thus in a period of “awakening” following the end of World War II and the impact of the Civil Rights Movement and lasting until the mid-Sixties. The adjective “awakening” might refer to the fact that African Americans put their efforts toward the pursuit of their rights in concrete actions like the Movement itself and various marches in the United States; they even started reacting more violently by following the principles of groups such as the Black Panthers, which were founded precisely in the mid-Sixties. Among its features Branchik and Davis list the desire to buy expensive automobiles, clothes, beverages along with the publication of “guides for black shoppers” - including the *Green Book* itself, which for example advertised the luxurious Studebaker in its 1950 issue. *Ebony* confirmed its role as a guide for the expanding black middle-class taste (39).

Indeed *Ebony* publisher John Johnson “[...] suggested that middle-class blacks purchased expensive clothes, furniture and cars to compensate for discrimination (43)”. The items listed by Branchik and Davis as representative of the “awakening” period are confirmed through a quick look at some pages taken from *Ebony*, as one can remark by examining the December 1959 issue (Vol. XV, No. 2). Emphasis was stressed upon the need for African Americans to be clad elegantly: therefore the magazine advertised fashionable Burts shoes, hats and clothes for men (4) and stylish gowns for women made by Italian designers (151). The models wearing those dresses were rather light-skinned, nevertheless one should not rush to the conclusion that only fair-skinned ladies were given a place in the magazine: *Ebony*'s models included dark-skinned women as well, for example jazz singer Sarah Vaughan (133). Another advertisement promoted cars like a new Chevrolet model

which combined “elegance with economy” and a Lark one (17). Much space was given to personal care and beauty through the promotion of bleaching creams (25) and face powder (136).

The need to start black businesses and provide a practical education to African Americans with which to establish them actually started much earlier than the “urban phase” and can be traced back to the thought and teaching of a man born into slavery who then became educator and author of several speeches and books: Booker T. Washington.

1.1.1. Booker T. Washington and the Emphasis on Economic Emancipation

Booker T. Washington (1858?-1915) was born into slavery in Virginia between 1858 or 1859, even though the exact place and time are not clear. As music writer Chris Albertson wrote in his Bessie Smith biography, such mystery surrounding the lives of many black people in that period was not uncommon: “It was a time when Southern bureaucracy made little distinction between its black population and its dogs, so official records, such as a birth certificate, were not always deemed necessary. African-American people often recorded such events themselves, in the family Bible” (Albertson 7). That must have happened with the future orator’s life as well. Neither did he know much about his roots: he did not learn much about the ancestors of his mother, who was the plantation cook, and never met his father who was supposedly white.

His work ethics can be grounded in his early life as a slave, when he observed the different attitude towards labor in whites and blacks. The plantation owner and his family never really mastered a trade because everything was carried out by blacks, from house chores to the cultivation of fields. When freedom came, slave owners and their sons found themselves in a difficult position since “they unconsciously had imbibed the feeling that manual labor was not the proper thing for them. On the other hand, the slaves, in many cases, had mastered some handicraft, and none were ashamed, and few unwilling, to labor” (*Up from Slavery* 18). Black therefore already possessed the promise of a new life they had to build with their own hands and efforts; freedom was seen as a

great opportunity but a scary one as well. It finally allowed blacks to live on their own, even though that implied the taking on of new responsibilities and independence after years spent in a relatively “safe” and enclosed environment like the plantation. Washington himself started working at an early age at the salt-furnaces in the state of West Virginia, where his family moved after the proclamation of freedom. That is where he developed his yearning for education; despite not being able to attend the new school established by the community because of his working at the furnace, he managed to learn how to spell by teaching himself and having the teacher instruct him at night. Only after was he able to divide his time between working and going to classes.

After hearing two fellow miners talking about the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia, he resolved to go there to earn an education and learn a trade: “by walking, begging rides both in wagons and in the cars, [...] completely out of money” (48) he was able to reach Richmond first and Hampton then. His formative years spent at the Hampton Institute were influential in shaping his attitude and labor, since Washington “[...] learned to love labor, not alone for its financial value, but for labor’s own sake and for the independence and self-reliance which the ability to do something which the world wants done brings” (73-74).

In his 1899 book *The Future of the American Negro* Washington provided a summary of the history of blacks in the United States, pointing out how, from the fourteen slaves originally brought to Virginia in 1619, millions of descendants had populated the South of the country and established themselves mostly in rural communities. In his words, “too much stress was placed upon the mere voting and holding political office rather than upon the preparation for highest citizenship” (12). Washington believed that black people needed to receive both an academic training and an industrial one in order to lay the foundations of their progress. Their education was not to be casual, though: being a predominantly rural community, African Americans were to be instructed in practical activities, like building houses, bridges and developing their own business, so as to provide “service to our brother” (14). Washington expressed his dismay at seeing his fellows able to converse in foreign languages, but unable to look after themselves and the need of their community: he blamed such state to “[...] the lack of practical training in the ways of life” (17). Earning a knowledge had to be a complete sensory experience according to Washington, an experience which had to involve the whole of a learner even for the future of the race because “mental development tied to hand and heart training will be the salvation of the Negro” (25).

One of Washington's greatest accomplishments was the foundation of a school for blacks in 1881 in Tuskegee, Alabama. While working at the project he sought to create the same environment he experienced at Hampton: providing students, who flocked to the new institution, with a practical as well as a theoretical knowledge which was supposed to earn them a place in the world. Years after its establishment, the Institute was still popular among blacks and was among the private colleges for which the 1947 *Green Book* wished to collect funds to foster the education of veterans returning from World War II. It was thought in fact that they had the right to resume their education after interrupting it to join the Army. The Hampton Institute, where Washington studied and taught, was included as well.

Life for African Americans, as for the members of other ethnic groups, could not be all work and no play: many of them started using their money to establish their own vacation spots and traveling both at national and international levels.

1.2. The Rise of a Black Tourist Industry

Vacation, whether being a one-day excursion or a few weeks long, has always appealed to people wishing to take a break from routine. Black Americans were and are no exception: despite facing racial discrimination throughout the past century (and still today) they have always fought for the right to travel and simply have fun. Back in the early twentieth century, vacations were no longer a privilege only white people could enjoy, but also something that working-class families, immigrants and middle-class African Americans could pursue (Aron 208). Yet only 10 percent of the black community were made of so-called "aristocrats of color" (Armstead 137) and Jim Crow laws made no exception for "uppity" colored people. In order to enjoy themselves and be sheltered from discrimination, "it is hardly surprising that successful blacks did all they could to *insulate* themselves, and particularly their children, from unpleasant confrontations with whites. They often entertained lavishly in their own homes rather than in public" (Foster 131). Rent parties in neighborhoods such as Harlem (New York City) were a means for black people to enjoy the finer things in life without being bothered and artists like blues singer Dinah Washington were known for throwing wild parties attended by plenty of people. Despite urban ghettos providing a shelter for

African Americans, they were not totally exempted from racism as proved by the Hotel Theresa in Harlem: what is now considered a symbol of black culture was “[...] a segregated establishment closed to African Americans until 1940” (Armstead 140). Only afterwards did it start to welcome black people, especially from the entertainment world.

Nevertheless, vacations for wealthy African Americans often meant leaving their homes and setting off on adventures across the United States. Since they were not welcomed by the majority of white resorts, many black people started “[...] building their own hotels, boarding houses, and bathing establishments” (Aron 207). The disparity between blacks and whites when coming to summer vacations was well described by *The Crisis* in its August 1912 issue:

“When they have the money and the time to take a vacation, our correspondents show us that the choice of a summer resort is limited. The white New Yorker, for instance, may choose from a thousand different places the one to which he will go with his family. [...] He has but to choose and pay his board. But you, if you are colored, will knock in vain at the farmhouse door for board and lodging. The beautiful, inexpensive, out-of-the-way places are out of your way, indeed [...] the colored people are providing summer resorts for themselves, running hotels and acquiring pleasant cottage sites”. (186)

Black Americans started building their own havens where they could forget Jim Crow, even if just for a short period of time. Such establishments were mainly located on the East Coast, where places like Sag Harbor, NY, Oak Bluffs, MA, and Highland Beach, MD, became safe harbors for the black community (Picture 1). In such places African Americans could swim, fish, take part in beauty contests and enjoy shows by the likes of jazz trumpeter and singer Louis Armstrong or “the Godfather of Soul”, James Brown. Highland Beach, MD, the first American-American beach resort, was founded in 1893 by Frederick Douglass’s son Charles after his family was prevented from entering a Chesapeake Bay restaurant due to the color of their skin¹.

1 Hopkins, Anna. “Black beaches that broke barriers: From Obama’s favorite resort town to land cultivated by Frederick Douglass’s son, the African American owned vacation spots that made history”. *dailymail.co.uk*, 4 Spetember 2017. <http://theweeklychallenger.com/black-beaches-that-broke-barriers-african-american-owned-vacation-spots-that-made-history/>.

1.2.1. Black Resorts and Beaches

Nevertheless, what came to be defined as “The Black Eden” was actually in the Midwest, more specifically in northern Michigan: it was Idlewild, a small resort town founded in 1912 on lots of land sold by white people to blacks. Just like the East Coast counterparts it hosted many events and attracted plenty of affluent African Americans, including the Harlem Renaissance writers W. E. B. DuBois and Nella Larsen. The former intellectual described “The Black Eden” enthusiastically in a letter published in *The Crisis*, NAACP’s official magazine, in August 1921. According to DuBois, no other black resort could compete with the beauty of Idlewild:

“[...] can you imagine a more marvelous thing than Idlewild? I know the cost and prejudice and intriguing ugliness of Atlantic City. [...] I have heard of Arundel and Oak Bluffs [...]. Beside Idlewild they are nothing. Not for one moment in fine joy of life, absolute freedom from the desperate cruelty of the color line and for the wooing of the great silence which is Peace and deep Contentment - not for one little minute can they rival or catch the bounding pulse of Idlewild”. (160)

DuBois also urged black people to take full control of the Michigan resort and felt that is was their “[...] duty to develop, beautify and govern it. It must be a center of Negro art, conference and recreation” (160). Larsen briefly mentioned Idlewild in her novel *Passing* (1929); that is where one of the main characters, Irene Redfield, is heading to for her weekend². Idlewild and other black-owned resorts enjoyed great popularity until the early Sixties, when the passing of the Civil Rights Act (1964) by President Lyndon B. Johnson disclosed more possibilities for black Americans and what had been fashionable places up to that moment simply lost their attraction. Black vacationers began flocking to places from which they had previously been banned while beaches and hotels closed down or were turned into luxury resorts with white people exploiting the land once belonging to blacks. This even led to protests for environmental damages and claims for reparations for those African Americans stripped of land inherited by their ancestors³.

Florida and its warm climate cannot be left out from the list of places hosting black-owned resorts. Its American Beach on Amelia Island was built in the 1930s by the state’s first black millionaire, Abraham Lincoln Lewis⁴. Like the above-mentioned resorts it provided a place where

2 “And the next day’s Friday when I’ll be going away for the week-end, *Idlewild*, you know. It’s quite the thing now” (Larsen, 34). Italics mine.

3 Mock, Brentin. “How black land became white sand: The racial erosion of the U.S. coasts”, *grist.org*, 30 May 2014. <https://grist.org/living/how-african-americans-lost-the-coasts-and-how-we-could-make-that-right/>

4 Rymer, Russ, “Beach Lady”, *smithsonianmag.com*, June 2003. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/beach-lady-84237022/>

every black – from the working-class man to the most famous writers – could enjoy a nice vacation on the shore of the Atlantic. As in the case with Idlewild, American Beach went on a downward spiral after a hurricane in 1954 destroyed a great deal of buildings and the Acts passed by the Johnson administration the following decade encouraged African Americans to explore other shores. Thanks to the effort of Lewis’ great-granddaughter, the now-deceased former opera singer MaVynee Betsch, some work has been done to preserve the Florida beach and its place in black history – including its role in welcoming African slaves before they were brought down to Georgia to be sold⁵.

The West Coast cannot be omitted, either. Thanks to its climate and variety of landscapes it has attracted many tourists and new residents hailing from different backgrounds. That was the case with Val Verde, a community founded near Valencia in the 1920s (de Graaf 7). Black Americans were not the first to live there, though; before World War II the area was occupied by a Japanese fishing village and a resort created specially for that community, which was made of fishermen as well as businessmen dwelling in near-by cities. After the Pearl Harbor incident such businesses were destroyed and many Japanese-Americans were interned in prison camps⁶. The next communities which established themselves in Val Verde were Jewish and African American, the latter looking for an escape from both discrimination and the fast pace of work and life in big cities. What came to be renamed “the Black Springs” offered plenty of diversions through a formula used in the other resorts too: blacks could relax in swimming pools, eat fresh food and entertain themselves in music clubs or take part in beauty contests.

Back to the East Coast Chicken Bone Beach, the segregated section of Atlantic City Beach, earned its name from the chicken remnants which were regularly found buried in the sand (Picture 2). It experienced its heyday in the Sixties, when it attracted plenty of ordinary people along with celebrities, and is now still a quaint place whose only businesses remaining from the golden days are a barber shop, a beautician, a funeral parlor and the black church⁷.

It is interesting to remark that recreational spaces for African Americans sometimes reflected the stratification within the community itself. If certain places were open to blacks from every walk

5 “an AMERICAN BEACH”. *YouTube*, uploaded by femmefilmmaker, 28 January 2007. <https://youtu.be/-D2IPKbDliY>.

6 “A Look Back at Val Verde, with Ralph Story”, uploaded by SCV History, scv tv.com, 1 July 1996. <https://scv tv.com/1996/07/01/a-look-back-at-val-verde-with-ralph-story/>

7 “The Other Atlantic City”, pbs.org, 23 September 2014. <https://www.pbs.org/video/friday-arts-other-atlantic-city/>

of life, others were either conceived for the wealthy and well-educated (that was the case with Highland Beach, welcoming the Howard University Staff) or for working-class families only.

What can be found today is only a pale image of what these resorts used to be in their heyday. Sag Harbor, NY, is now a fashionable gentrified place hosting “[...] more traffic, fancier shops, higher housing prices and bigger, showier homes”⁸ while still retaining some of its quaintness. It even became the setting of *Sag Harbor* (2009), a semi-autobiographical novel by African American writer Colson Whitehead⁹. Highland Beach, MD, hosts the Frederick Douglass Museum and Cultural Center which still operates today and is open by appointment. Idlewild, MI, seems to have suffered the most. After being deserted by the black community it fell into oblivion and “soon, as with many towns in America, drugs and crime moved in¹⁰”. It is only in recent years that Idlewild has began reliving thanks to the efforts of a handful of people who have been trying to revitalize the former resort by creating new businesses and events. They felt the urge to restore what had been a milestone in African American history and simply refused to let it be swallowed by negligence and forgetfulness. Val Verde in California has followed in these resorts’ wake. It was abandoned in the 1960s when “the economic pursuits of these communities’ black residents and their transition to multi-ethnic towns reflected the fallacy of the idea that a race could completely separate its activities from the broader world around it” (de Graaf 8). African Americans could not completely cut themselves off from the outside world if they were to prosper and uplift their race.

Historic places such as the ones mentioned above are still chosen by black Americans to spend their vacation. In 2018 the monthly magazine *Essence* published a list of must-see destinations for those wanting to spend funny as well as educational vacations. Among the places featured there is Greenville, SC, whose offers range from an African American museum to public art, and Maryland’s Eastern Shore where both Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass were born¹¹.

A great deal of vacationers sojourning in those East Coast and Midwest resorts hailed from the South and often had to endure long journeys freight with obstacles. “Driving While Black” and

8 Benzel, Jan. “Sag Harbor, N. Y.: Celebrities and Small-Town Aura”, nytimes.com, 12 July 2017.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/12/realestate/sag-harbor-ny-celebrities-and-small-town-aura.html>

9 Touré, “Visible Young Men”, nytimes.com, 1 may 2009.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/03/books/review/Toure-t.html>

10 Carlisle, John. “Once a paradise, Idlewild hopes to rise again”, eu.freep.com, 30 November 2014.

<https://eu.freep.com/story/news/columnists/john-carlisle/2014/11/30/idlewild-michigan-hard-times/19668773/>.

11 Natasha, K. “7 Fun-Filled Black History Vacations To Take With Your Family”, essence.com, 13 February 2018.

<https://www.essence.com/lifestyle/travel/black-history-family-vacations/>

having one's car searched by the police became ordinary events for most black Americans on the road. Nevertheless, they kept and keep going, thus defying segregation on the road.



Picture 1: a few African American beaches on the East Coast
Pinterest



Picture 2: Women at Chicken Bone Beach

John W. Mosley Collection, the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Library, Temple University.

1.2.2. Means of Transportation

American historian Loewen claims that “after 1940, walking from town to town became uncommon, as most Americans had enough money for public transportation or automobiles” (230). Whether they were traveling by bus, plane or car, African Americans were well aware of the dangers lying around the corner during Jim Crow era. If they chose to board on a plane and did manage to buy a ticket, they were usually given a seat away from white people who might not have accepted sitting near them. Job opportunities were mainly as porters and the race ceiling was particularly oppressive for women. As Stetson Kennedy pointed out in 1959, even if blacks were then able to take any seat in a plane, “[...] the moment the plane touch(ed) the ground you (were) apt to come up against segregated waiting rooms, restaurants, and rest-rooms in Southern airports”¹². A few of them wanting to apply for a post as stewardess managed the breach the color barrier in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Barry 114). The first African American flight attendant was hired in 1957 and at last “by the mid-1960s the perseverance of White and like-minded African American women, and their increasingly powerful allies, forced the entire airline industry at least to begin integrating cabin crews” (117).

Buses became a battle ground for African Americans since such means of transportation embodied the separation of races visually: blacks were to sit in the back and leave the first rows of seats to white passengers. That was not enough: even if the bus was not full, African Americans were to take a seat in the back without placing themselves on those designed for whites. Perhaps the most widely known boycott is the one which took place in 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, sparked by Rosa Parks’ refusal to leave her seat to a white man. The efforts of the black community led to a remarkable step forward in their fight since the abolition of segregation on public transportation was ruled in 1956 (King 97). Nevertheless, the seed of protest was sown in 1953 in Louisiana’s capital, Baton Rouge, where a boycott was staged which ended with a compromise: while the right for the back and front seat was left unchanged, the places in-between could be taken by every passenger on a ‘first-come-first-served’ basis¹³.

12 Kennedy, Stetson, “Jim Crow Guide to the USA”, 1959, http://www.stetsonkenedy.com/jim_crow_guide/chapter12.htm .

13 Deloatch, Daniella, “Ride to Liberation: A Brief History of Buses in Activism”. gogocharters.com, 19 November 2018. <https://gogocharters.com/blog/a-brief-history-of-buses-in-activism/>

Marcus Garvey went so far as to establish a steamship by the name of Black Star Line in 1919. His aim was clear: shipping goods to other countries, especially African ones, in order to improve the economic conditions of blacks around the globe and create mutual bonds. Not only: passengers were also supposed to be taken to Africa to start living in that continent. Despite the good intentions the enterprise did not pull off and Garvey was arrested for fraud before being sent back to his homeland Jamaica¹⁴. Nevertheless, what remains is the effort to establish a bond between countries in different continents and facilitate communication.

Traveling by car was actually preferred by travelers because they thought they would have more freedom in terms of schedules and breaks. Not only; for middle-class and wealthy blacks owning a car was also a way to display their wealth and social status. When the automobile culture broke out, African Americans hit the road and embarked on journeys whose outcome was difficult to foresee since “in the South, Jim Crow etiquette could extend even to the rules of road” (Bay 22) and blacks could face trouble if they decided to just take a break. While “purchasing gasoline was a brief, impersonal transaction (because) most white service station operators willingly accepted cash from black motorists, securing decent food and lodging on the road was more problematical” (Foster 141). In addition to that, black drivers had to be careful which cities they passed through or stopped at; they could come across the infamous sundown towns, settlements whose population was almost entirely white. Such towns “[...] passed ordinances or informally agreed that African Americans were not to be allowed after sundown” (Loewen 49). Sometimes even other groups such as Jews or Mexicans were expelled or kept out in the attempt to build a community which had to be almost entirely white (4). The only black people to be allowed in sundown towns were usually live-in maids and their families, while those crossing the towns to get provisions or book a hotel room had better leave before sunset lest they were attacked. No wonder that ““Keep moving” was the refrain, no matter why African Americans stopped”(233). Even residential areas did not allow the presence of blacks since their aim was to create a safe place away from the big cities by “[...] leaving the dirt, vice, pollution- and African Americans -behind (79). American suburbs, whose landmark is usually considered Levittown in Long Island, NY, began to represent a haven for many WASP families with similar incomes and ways of life (Henderson 26).

Route 66 connects urban and rural America and it stands for the American dream and its values of freedom and adventure. Despite echoing such ideas, African Americans did not find

14 Foster, Hannah, “Black Star Line (1919-1923)”, blackpast.org, 9 March 2014. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/black-star-line-1919-1923/>

equality in traveling through it; neither does Route 66's imaginary evoke those values since we are used to seeing photos of white middle-class families hitting the road in order to admire Americana landmarks¹⁵. A young African American photographer, Ashley E. Osborne, recently created a photo series reconstructing the black traveling experience in the Jim Crow era on the very Route 66, with a particular focus on women. The project is named "Reclaiming the Mother Road" and portrays two young women posing in the nature and landmarks of Route 66, finally "reclaiming" a space they have long been denied. As Osborne affirmed in a brief email interview, she found the inspiration while setting up a photoshoot along the desert roads in California. While doing some research for the project she remarked how no "desert photo shoots" portrayed blacks, but only employed Caucasians; that prompted her to develop a project focusing on blacks and learn more about the relationship between them and Route 66, eventually resulting in "Reclaiming the Mother Road". Her research had her stumble upon the *Green Book*, of which she had never heard before; thus she created a photo album which both helped fill a void in terms of representation of blacks and brought more awareness to the condition of "traveling while black"¹⁶.

Owning a car and traveling in it came to represent a symbol of wealth and economic possibilities for many black Americans. The music of the Fifties and Sixties reflected the freedom embodied by the car and sang about it in tracks like Chuck Berry's *No Particular Place to Go* (1964). The lyrics describe the aimless journey of a couple that does not have any special place to visit, but just wants to taste the freedom provided by owning their own means of transportation. The bond between music and the car industry is not casual if one thinks of the prestigious Detroit-based Motown record label, whose name comes from Motortown, as the Michigan city was known. The founder of the label himself, Berry Gordy, had indeed worked in the Ford industry before venturing into the music business and used the assembly line method to create songs as well (Assante, Castaldo). Both Motown music – the "Sound of Young America"- and the car came to represent new possibilities opening up for African Americans.

15 "The Negro Motorist Green Book and Route 66", *YouTube*, uploaded by Candacy Taylor, 31 May 2015.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6V0Wxr37N70>

16 Email interview with photographer and creative director Ashley E. Osborne, July-August 2019.

1.2.3. International Black Tourism

Black Americans did not always content themselves with visiting their own country: they also embarked on journeys which led them abroad, primarily in Europe but also in other continents. Some of them traveled to the old continent in order to study its history or examine the life of its classes like Booker T. Washington did in 1910. The author visited Europe during a six-week tour with sociologist Robert E. Park in order to examine “[...] Europe’s lower classes, their circumstances of living, and their possible processes of uplift”, then channeling the results of his research into *The Man Farthest Down* (Huyseune 173). Washington lingered on the description of the island and its people, for whom it envisioned a process of improvement through education and a collective action like the one which was taking place in other European countries. His observation on the islanders did not exclude a comparison with the black community and the link among the two continents: if Europe, especially Sicily, rose herself up from poverty, oversea immigration would no longer be necessary – and African Americans would not have too many competitors in the job market (175).

Paris in the nineteenth century became a center of attraction for black Americans, especially in the fields of music and literature. Jazz musicians were much drawn to the city, which they saw as a safe harbor where they could live and play freely. After touring in countries like the United Kingdom, Spain and Germany, jazz clarinetist and saxophonist Sidney Bechet established himself in Paris where he spent much of his later life and eventually died (Polillo 337-338). Clubs like those in the Rive Gauche became meeting places for intellectuals hailing from different backgrounds: French jazz musicians could play with their American counterparts in a frantic atmosphere like the one people breathed after the end of World War II. In the 1940s and 1950s black musicians like Miles Davis were at home in Paris and some of them even opened small clubs, especially in Montmartre. Other figures involved in the Harlem Renaissance either studied in Paris or visited it briefly while making comparisons like Washington did about his traveling to Sicily. For example, Countee Cullen expressed a positive judgment on Parisian customs and manner, considering them more refined than those in America: he “conclude(d) that Paris (was) a humanizing experience for African Americans accustomed to America’s brusque social rebuffs to them” (Smith 207).

Even enterprising black women left the United States, even if temporarily, in order to explore the world and taste other cultures. That was the case with another Harlem Renaissance writer, Nella Larsen; she was born in Chicago by parents of different lineages –her mother was white, her father mixed-race- and was raised in both the United States and Europe, more specifically in Denmark, where she presumably studied at the university as well (Fabi 182). In the music field, jazz multi-instrumentalist Valaida Snow ventured even further and made her debut abroad in Asia, more specifically in Shanghai, Singapore, Calcutta and Jakarta (Cerchiari 83). She then toured Europe and rivaled Josephine Baker in the French entertainment world.

African American women proved that they could also travel by themselves: that is the case with an obscure Mississippian by the name of Juanita Harrison, whose life is unknown except for the adventures she described in her only book, the autobiographical *My Great, Wide, Beautiful World* (1939). Despite lacking formal education, she was multilingual (she is supposed to have been fluent in French and Spanish) and her passport stamps proved that she was able to visit and live in twenty-two countries (Morris X). Her impressions on Italy seem to confirm certain stereotypes about cities like Milan and Venice: the first she did not like for being “[...] to(o) big and (having) no river nor mountain [...]” (Harrison 31) while the latter fascinated her with its dreamy beauty despite being expensive: “Venice is so beautiful I could have spent two weeks there but went on as the living are very high there” (32). The supposedly charm of the Italian man was evoked as well when Harrison encountered a black woman in Rome and “she thought that the men are the most delightful of all men. She said it seem like a dream To her to have a Hansom (sic) Italian kissing Her hand” (36). The Italians were generally perceived to be kind and welcoming, so much so that the American traveler could admit “I hate to think of leaving Italy the people are the kind you can live very close to” (38).

Africa was a continent which inspired many feelings in African Americans: some of them felt closer to nature and their roots upon visiting it, while other simply could not bridge the gap between different ways of perceiving even simple matters like time. Richard Wright, author of many travelogues, was among the latter since he did not feel fully at home in the African soil and did not linger in describing the customs of Ghana, one of the countries he visited, but rather explored the feelings such journey inspired: he “[...] represent(ed) himself not as a native son returning home but as an outsider, an African American disconnected from his roots” (Smith 205).

Already Booker T. Washington in *The Future of the American Negro* had expressed his reserves on moving to Africa, seen by someone as the solution to the race problem in America: he answered by claiming that Africa could not give black Americans more opportunities for self-development than they already had back in the United States. Apart from that, the continent was already being divided into spheres of influences by European countries engaged in the “scramble for Africa”. There being no place for African Americans to settle down, Washington concluded that “the adjustment of the relations of the two races must take place here (in the United States); and it is taking place slowly, but surely” (43). Black Americans continued traveling to Africa though and the “dark continent” became a popular destination around the 1960s along with the Caribbean, especially Jamaica and the Bahamas (Butler et al. 1029).

Central and South America were other places which African American often visited in the first half of the last century. Among the favorite destinations were Brazil and Cuba, the last one visited with “[...] very specific motivations, which included the desire to visit their “own people” abroad, to be in a place where they could escape racial segregation, to see Cuban Negroes in high positions of power, and to partake in the African cultural survivals” (de Santana Pinho 25). Black Americans made a comparison between their conditions in North America and the way they were treated abroad, remarking how they were considered simply ‘Americans’ instead of ‘black Americans’ outside the United States. Brazil in particular was seen as a ‘racial paradise’ which could offer plenty of economic possibilities to blacks, prompting then African Americans to ponder their moving into the country. Nevertheless, starting from the 1940s they realized that South American countries and Brazil more specifically had their own color line, too, and were not explicitly favorable at welcoming blacks. African Americans then focused on their renewed sense of racial pride triggered by the Civil Rights Movement and yet kept visiting Brazil, this time with a more critical eye and without idealizing its racial structure (27).

African Americans also traveled abroad in packaged tours organized by travel agencies. The famous Henderson Travel Service, founded in Atlanta, has been active for more than fifty years and still keeps sending tourists to Africa. It is among the oldest African American travel agencies and has pioneered travels to the African continent for all those people wanting to ‘embrace’ their roots¹⁷. Other associations like the National Council of Negro Women set off on a trip to Europe in 1959 so as to talk about problems affecting women and “see(ing) how other people of the world live”

17 Cottman, Michael, “After six decades, black travel agency continues to help tourists ‘embrace’ Africa”, nbcnews.com, 27 February 2018. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/after-six-decades-black-travel-agency-helps-tourists-embrace-africa-n848726>

(*Ebony Magazine* 107). It was a chance for them to talk the matters over with women of other nationalities and test how their blackness would be perceived by them; apparently there were neither problems nor misunderstandings and they all got along well. Among the places visited there was Venice as can be seen in the picture below (Picture 3).



Picture 3: Illinois women of the National Council of Negro Women enjoying a gondola ride in Venice

Ebony Magazine, November 1959, Google Books.

Black-owned travel agencies were not that many before the Sixties and that very decade brought along many changes, including those “[...] in terms of customer base, destinations served, distances traveled, barriers to entry, and new modes of transportation and communication” (Butler et al. 1028). Black customers often deserted businesses run by their peers because they were perceived to be less reliable and expert at handling travel matters, thus fostering the white economy. A rising number of African Americans started traveling individually, though, especially “[...] the generation of African American tourists raised after the 60s” (1029). If in times of segregation it was safer for them to travel in group and “local chartered and church buses were the favorite public

modes” (1029), a successive wave of black travelers opted for journeying by themselves, in couple of with a handful of friends.

Chapter 2.

Travel and Business Directories for African Americans

In Jim Crow era African Americans met segregation on the road as well. Finding an accommodation or even taking a short break during a journey was often tough, therefore something had to be done to protect travelers along the way. Black magazines became rich in advertisements suggesting motels, inns and gas stations which would accept guests regardless of the color of their skin. Some enterprising African Americans went even further by publishing travel directories specifically targeted at them: among them, *Travelguide* (1947-1957), *The Official California Negro Directory and Classified Buyers' Guide* (1942-1943), *The Negro Business Directory of the State of Wisconsin* (1950-1951), *The Directory of Negro Hotels and Guest Houses in the United States* (1939), *Go Guide to Pleasant Motoring* (1952-1965), the *Travel Guide of Negro Hotels and Guest Houses* (1942) and more importantly *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (1936-1966). Even white authors gave their contributions like Stetson Kennedy, for instance, a folklorist whose *Jim Crow Guide to the USA* (1959) provided an ironic portrayal of American society and a way to survive in it.

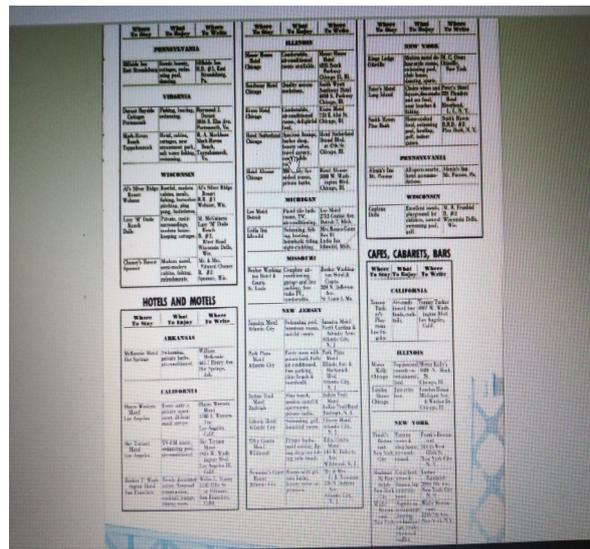
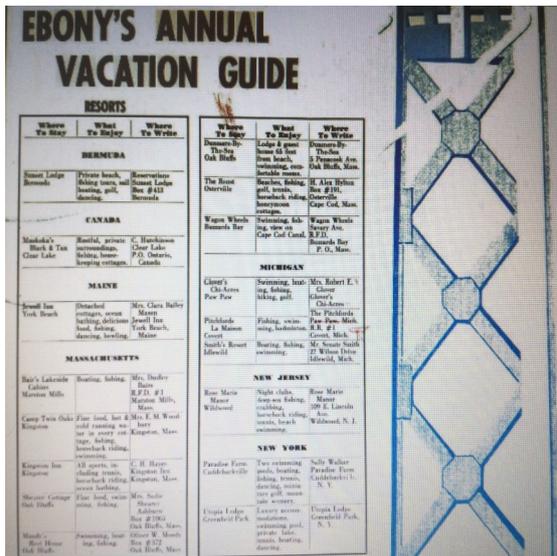
Often such books were more than mere travel guides and actually provided addresses of businesses mostly run by and for African Americans, thus stimulating black consumption and the growth of a black middle class. The *Negro Motorist Green Book* (1936-1966) was particularly important in such task for being the longest publication and for expanding its contents each decade, turning from a local guide into one covering the whole world.

2.1. Ads in Magazines (*Ebony*)

Travel directories were not the only means to promote vacations and provide their users with a list of useful addresses. Among the most popular releases one cannot forget the already-mentioned *The Crisis*, the NAACP magazine founded in 1910 by a group of black intellectuals, among whom W. E. B. DuBois. Even if it primarily addressed issues affecting the black community and the ways to “uplift the race”, it also offered lighter articles about travel and vacation. The August 1912 issue was indeed titled ‘Vacation Number’ and its cover portrayed a young black girl holding a tennis racket and wearing a sport uniform. After pointing out the discrepancy between whites and blacks in the choice of summer resorts, the article titled “Vacation Days” described how people in the North profited from the summer break to visit their families in the South and could afford a long journey after working and saving hard. The journey was made the other way around as well, since many Southerners visited the North as ordinary tourists (187-188). Many black migrants living in the North used to send their children South for their summer vacation so that they could learn about their roots and Southern traditions (Wilkerson 369).

It took a few years to have a magazine targeted at the black middle class and less political than *The Crisis* and other papers founded during the Harlem Renaissance, like *Fire!!* (1926). *Ebony Magazine* was founded in Chicago in 1945 and is still released in monthly issues mainly targeting the African American community, of which it remains one of its most popular magazines to this day. Its articles tackle a wide array of topics, ranging from health to education, from fashion to politics, and its covers generally portray successful blacks working in politics or show business. If one should take a look at an ordinary *Ebony* issue from the twentieth century, they might remark the huge quantity of ads filling up its pages, including ones encouraging smoking by promoting the best cigarette marks.

Some numbers were specifically dedicated to summer vacations and advertised places where *Ebony* readers could spend their days off. The June 1960 issue offered an Annual Vacation Guide (pictures 4-5) which recalled other African American travel directories in providing a list of resorts, restaurants and cafes along with their addresses and main draws.



Pictures 4-5: 1960 Annual Vacation Guide
Ebony Magazine, June 1960, Google Books.

The vacation guide above-listed provided places in the United States and other countries like Bermuda and Canada as well. Idlewild was listed among the Michigan resorts and offered “housing, fishing and swimming” as main activities.

The small vacation guide covered all the steps involved in organizing a trip, starting with the choice of places of accommodation and entertainment and providing commentaries on certain places. For example the 1960 issue included a ‘Vacation in San Francisco’ column detailing the main draws of the Bay City. Other travel directories were not forgotten and the *Go Guide to Pleasant Motoring*, “a directory of superior accommodations for all travelers”, was promoted through an ad inviting the readers to subscribe to it. Before finally going on a vacation, it was important to have the right look and the ‘Smart Style for Travel’ column suggested women what they should wear while on a journey (Picture 6). A quick look at that column shows light-skinned women neatly clad, in the fashion of contemporary Hollywood stars, and one of them is holding a purse displaying the Pan Am logo. Presumably they are at an airport and have just left their baggage at the check-in, this leaving them time to consult a guide of the city they are about to travel to. The women might be relatives or friends journeying together, expressing thus a wish for autonomy and independence. The overall feeling is that of middle-class people displaying their wealth through clothing and investing their money in exploring the world and broaden their horizons.



Picture 6: Women fashion
 Ebony Magazine, June 1960, Google Books

Magazines often listed fashionable places owned by African Americans that catered to travelers and tourists wishing a comfortable vacation. One of the most famous places in this sense was A. G. Gaston Motel in Birmingham, Alabama (Picture 7). On the ad published in the 1962 *Ebony* issue it promised rooms with such features as air conditioning, piped-in music, private bathroom and a deluxe room service (113). The motel went down in history not only for being founded by one of the first black millionaires owning many businesses, but also for playing a significant role in the battle for the Civil Rights. Being situated in Alabama certainly made the task easier for the Southeastern state being the theater of historical events like the Montgomery Bus Boycott starting in 1955 and the marches from Selma to Montgomery. Gaston Motel was indeed the place where some of the main protagonists of the Civil Rights Movement like Martin Luther King

Jr. used to meet, discuss the progress of their work and strategies. After a period of neglect the motel started being restored to become a part of the Freedom Center, an institution focusing on the Civil Rights Movement for educational purposes¹⁸.



Picture 7: ad promoting A. G. Gaston Motel in Birmingham, Alabama
Ebony Magazine, June 1962, Google Books

18 Birmingham Times, “Exterior renovation of historic A. G. Gaston Motel could begin in June”, birminghamtimes.com, 28 March 2019, <https://www.birminghamtimes.com/2019/03/exterior-renovation-of-historic-a-g-gaston-motel-could-begin-in-june/>.

2.2. Stetson Kennedy's *Jim Crow Guide to the USA* (1959)

Even if it was not specifically addressed to African Americans and did not provide a list of places open to them, it is worth taking a look at *Jim Crow Guide to the USA* (1959). Its author was Stetson Kennedy (1916-2011), a white folklorist and champion of human rights who wrote many books denouncing American racism and challenged its notions of supremacy. He even infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan in order to disclose and trivialize its rituals and beliefs, exposing them in *The Klan Unmasked* (1954). The 1959 book was described as a guide different from the ones which could be found elsewhere: instead of listing places and accommodations it actually was a sort of “survival guide” which told you “everything you need[ed] to know about getting along in America, according to the category in which you [found] yourself¹⁹”. Stetson started by claiming that white people had been trying to impose their race by excluding minorities, from African Americans to Mexicans. The means employed included discrimination, segregation and extermination as in the case with Native Americans – who were otherwise secluded in reservations. The *Jim Crow Guide to the USA* represented a means to learn something about American racist history in order to understand it and act accordingly.

The introduction to the book defined it as a “guide to racial discrimination” and saw such problem as the greatest evil. Jim Crow was described as being octopus-like, its tentacles stretching in every direction and aspect of life including education and etiquette. It was not the first time that something evil had been described as having the features of an octopus: Portuguese preacher Padre António Vieira in a sermon written back in 1654 had defined greedy people as octopuses stretching their tentacles everywhere and not to be trust despite they peaceful appearance (Vieira 26).

The second chapter, “White Man’s Country”, tackled the notion of white supremacy as supported by the Klan and the way Jim Crow rules were introduced and maintained in the South: “It seems that it found currency toward the end of the last century, after a black-face (burnt cork) minstrel popularized a stage dance ditty²⁰”. Its origin were thus traced back to that form of entertainment which laid the foundations for vaudeville theater first and the blues after: white men used to take off blacks by darkening their faces with coal and representing various black characters, including the servile, good-humored Sambo and the refined “Negro dandy” living as a free man and

19 Stetson, Kennedy. “Jim Crow Guide to the U.S.A”. stetsonkenedy.com, http://www.stetsonkenedy.com/jim_crow_guide/index.html.

20 Ibid, http://www.stetsonkenedy.com/jim_crow_guide/chapter2.htm.

imitating white manners, especially in clothing (Polillo 58-62). Stetson drew from that tradition and provided a sort of identity card for Jim Crow by saying that his “[...] middle names are Segregation and Discrimination²¹”. Such character was then depicted as being still alive and hovering around, threatening black people.

“Who Is Colored Where”, the fourth chapter, debunked the idea that a concept such as race was a fixed one. Stetson affirmed that “you will find there are intrastate as well as interstate variations on the legal definitions of what constitutes a colored person, and conversely who may qualify as white²²”. He might have been alluding to the practice of passing, so that light-skinned blacks could enjoy the same rights as whites. The author’s words about the notion of color changing from one state to the other recall the ones written by Charles W. Chesnutt in his 1901 novel *The House behind the Cedars*. One of his main characters, light-skinned John Warwick, pursues his childhood dream of becoming a lawyer by leaving his family and moving from North Carolina to South Carolina upon following Judge Straight’s advice. While the law in the North is stricter in terms of race, South Carolina seems more open-minded since it does not necessarily identify a mulatto as a black man: “[...] even where color or feature are doubtful, it is a question for the jury to decide by reputation, by reception into society, and by their exercise of the privileges of the white man, as well as by admixture of blood” (Chesnutt 172). Yet passing was prohibited in certain states when “[...] such passing entails violation of the segregation or anti-miscegenation laws²³”.

Chapter twelve is the one which dealt specifically with the matter of traveling, being titled “Who May Travel Where”. It opened by highlighting the difference between what had been stated in laws and what was being enacted: despite relevant Supreme Court resolutions, segregation in public transportation was still carried out at the time when the *Guide* was published. Despite legislative intervention, “the plain truth (was) that the great majority of conductors, policemen, judges, and white passengers in that part of the country go right on acting as though the Supreme Court has no jurisdiction over them²⁴”. The segregation on public transportation was supposed to have ended in 1956 after the impact of the Montgomery bus boycott, but Stetson proved it was not the case everywhere.

21 Ibid, http://www.stetsonkennedy.com/jim_crow_guide/chapter2.htm.

22 Ibid, http://www.stetsonkennedy.com/jim_crow_guide/chapter4.htm.

23 Ibid, http://www.stetsonkennedy.com/jim_crow_guide/chapter4.htm.

24 Ibid, http://www.stetsonkennedy.com/jim_crow_guide/chapter12.htm.

Chapter thirteen, “Open To All (Whites)”, lingered on the way facilities were often forbidden to African Americans. As one of the previous chapters it debunked a long-held belief: “If you think any law-abiding orderly person can enter any restaurant, hotel, cinema, auditorium, park [...] or other such place of public accommodation in the USA regardless of race, you’ve got another thing coming²⁵”. Stetson provided a list of laws prohibiting access for blacks and concluded by saying that no place in America allowed meetings of black and whites without them being pointed as an interracial group. It would take time before they could enjoy each other’s company without being pointed at.

2.3. *Travelguide* (1947-1957)

Jazz musician Andy Kirk (1898-1992), known to have played with giants like Mary Lou Williams (1910-1981), briefly mentioned the travel directory *Travelguide* in his autobiography:

“[...] we were still making tours around the country and at the same time amassing information about places where Blacks could stay for *Travelguide*, a New York company [...]. I told *Travelguide* about all the little black hotels and homes where we stayed, and that way Blacks traveling in different parts of the country had a reference book to guide them out of embarrassing situations. Billy Butler, the head of *Travelguide*, could confidently proclaim “vacation, recreation, without humiliation”” (Kirk 114).

Billy Butler himself was an accomplished singer and musician and must have known the troublesome journeys across the States very well, at a time when famed musicians were hired to perform before a white audience but were denied a room in a hotel. Celebrities indeed were not always immune to Jim Crow, especially in the South, where they were to enter the club where they were about to perform through the kitchen door and use the freight elevator. In order to alleviate the ordeal, Butler founded *Travelguide* in 1947 and became its publisher as well, but he was not alone in his mission. Once again we can find an example of the solidarity bonding the black community;

25 Ibid, http://www.stetsonkennedy.com/jim_crow_guide/chapter13.htm.

the musician's directory was supported by *The Crisis* through advertisements and was sold in the NAACP's magazine's book shop in Manhattan (Seiler 117-118).

Historian and professor Cotten Seiler claimed that guides such as *The Green Book* and *Travelguide* helped create the image of a black middle class that enjoyed the finer things in life and openly defied the stereotypes attached by the white community: "These guides depicted [...] African Americans as upwardly and outwardly vacationers, habitually mobile business travelers, and blithely gallivanting consumers [...]" (118). Just as their white counterparts, African Americans were now a class comprising intellectuals, athletes, musicians and professionals who could afford vacations and could take part in the consumerist society by then blossoming in American society.

2.4. The *Official California Negro Directory and Classified Buyers' Guide* (1942-1943) and *The Negro Business Directory of the State of Wisconsin* (1950-51)

The *Official California Negro Directory and Classified Buyers' Guide* was published in the Golden State starting from 1939 and provided a list of black – and white-owned businesses which welcomed black trade. The 1942-1943 directory's cover celebrated the United States and the principle of freedom by affirming "God Bless America the land of freedom". Each of the four corners of the page featured an American flag along with different types of liberty: freedom of speech in the upper-left corner, freedom of worship in the upper-right corner, freedom of assemblage in the bottom-right corner and freedom of press in the bottom-left corner. At the center of the cover was a list of contents and the cities where the businesses were located: Los Angeles, Bakersfield, the East Bay (Oakland, San Francisco and Berkeley), Long Beach, El Centro, Fresno, Pasadena, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Monica, Venice and Vallejo. A little section was dedicated to Oregon and Washington D.C.

Upon taking a first look at the index, what stands out immediately is the huge number of businesses listed: they are arranged in alphabetical order and cover a wide array of fields. They could be summed up in the following categories (Table 1):

Accommodation	Beauty	D.I.Y	Entertainment	Food	Transportation
Hotels	Barber shop	Gardener	Billiard Parlors	Bakeries	Auto Laundry
Room for rent	Beautician	Hardware	Book shops	Barbecue	Auto for Hire
Apartments	Beauty Shop	Key & Lock Shop	Bowling	Beer & Eggs	Auto Wrecking
	Beauty equipment	Shoe repairing	Theaters	Cafés	Garages
	Beauty supplies	Plumbing	Dance hall	Ice Cream	Gasoline Service
	Cosmetics	Carpenters	Music records	Sweet Shop	
		Electrical repairing	Night clubs	Liquor	
			Phonograph records		

Table 1: some of the businesses listed in the *Official California Negro Directory and Classified Buyers' Guide* (1942-1943 edition)

If *Travelguide* appeared to be more focused on traveling and accommodations, the *California Directory* concentrated on local businesses providing African Americans with the finer things in life. It did offer instructions on how to find hotels, rooms for rent and apartments, and yet it was primarily aimed at helping black Americans locate services for their everyday needs.

The 1942-1943 *California Directory* featured a brief statement by the Golden State's Governor, Culbert L. Olson: he described America as being contested by "the brutal forces of darkness, of aggression, of intolerance and inhumanity" on the one hand, and "the forces of democracy, tolerance, understanding and human brotherhood" on the other (6). Such contrasting forces stood as enemy armies ready to fight each other over the control of the nation. California, said Governor Olson, must not lose sight of democracy and should promote it not only abroad, but also and especially at home; despite progress having been made, "even further efforts to erase intolerance and to promote mutual understanding among all peoples within our state must be ever continued"

(6). Another statement followed, this time coming from the Mayor of Los Angeles, Fletcher Bowron. His words were encouraging, too, and acknowledged the presence and budding economic power of the black district, which was mainly concentrated on the Central Avenue Area.

Praising words from white authorities were then followed by a statement written by two black people responsible for the *California Directory* publication, Anita Grant (Secretary-Treasurer) and Warren C. Vinston. They both highlighted how African Americans had made big strides in the process of uplift: they underlined the sense of community and the collective effort made by people and declared they were “[...] pleased with OUR achievement. This is not an achievement of the compilers but of the Race” (7). Grant and Vinston went on to say they wished the *California Directory* would become a constant presence in black people’s lives, almost like the Bible: “Next to Your Bible use it most” (7).

Before listing the services and trades open to “Negro Patronage”, there was one final column summing up the foundation of Los Angeles. African Americans were acknowledged in their pioneering role as they were among the original settlers who laid the city’s foundations (8). Even though they were made to work hard to participate in the making of Los Angeles, they had by then taken their revenge since “there are no individuals among the County’s three million people more revered, nor more successful, than such celebrities as Bill Robinson, Ethel Waters [...] nor any citizens with more solid backgrounds of day-by-day achievement than William Grant Still [...]” (8).

Each entry offered a list of addresses and ads often displaying small portraits of the businesses’ proprietors. They were pictured as refined, successful people and introduced their activity as the best one in a certain field. The *California Directory*’s compilers declared, among the other things, the willingness to introduce “[...] the people who are making contributions to the growth, progress and betterment of our race” (7). Not only could the guide promote certain trades, but it could also acknowledge the work of certain enterprising blacks who were working to improve their own lives and that of the overall community as well.

As for the “food” category, much emphasis was put on traditional cuisine; many trades offered Southern specialties and a Southern touch in their dishes. That might be due to the number of African Americans moving to California as part of the Great Migration and wanting to feel the taste of home even at thousands of miles away. Southern chicken was not the only offer though: some ads also promoted international food like Chinese cuisine, Spanish dishes and Waffle Houses.

Cities had both a residential directory and a buyers' guide and the *California Directory* closed with sections honoring African Americans that had distinguished themselves in the task of uplifting their race. Each of them was introduced with a portrait and a few sentences summing up their life and career. Despite coming from all walks of life and different places, they all contributed to the progress of black Americans on both local and national levels: some of them were ordinary citizens involved in religious and political activities, others were known personalities like singer and musician Clarence Muse or civil rights activist A. Phillip Randolph.

All in all, The *Official California Negro Directory and Classified Buyers' Guide* was a minutely compiled guide which sought to celebrate the African American community and its increasing economic power. Differently from other guides it did not focus on traveling and the issues faced by blacks on the road, but tried to encourage the growth of their businesses and racial pride in the Golden State. A directory like the *Green Book* instead placed more emphasis upon traveling tips, including how to have a car serviced and where to find good garages, and only afterwards expanded its contents to businesses. Another aspect emerging from my analysis is the lack of hatred or resentment towards the white community; the guide actually listed some white-owned stores as well and was endorsed by white authorities. Such attitude was pointed out by the "Who's who" column dedicated to A. Phillip Randolph when describing his March-on-Washington movement:

"[...] it is NOT ANTI-WHITE. It emphasizes that the main and basic responsibility for effecting the solution of the Negro problem rests upon Negroes themselves, that they should supply the money and pay the price, make the sacrifices and endure the suffering to break down the barriers to a realization of a FULL CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS IN AMERICA NOW. (The *Official California Negro Directory and Classified Buyers' Guide*, 1942-43 edition, 213).

California was not the only state to have issued a directory of black businesses since Wisconsin released its own version in 1950, the *Negro Business Directory of the State of Wisconsin*. It was similar to its West Coast counterpart in terms of contents, yet it offered more services like the ones listed in the table that are missing in the Californian guide (Table 2):

Food	Pass-time
Chili parlors	Disc jockies (sic)
Frozen custard	Pool hall

Ice cream parlors	Smoke shop
Milk deliveries	Sport shop

Table 2: some services boasted by the *Negro Business Directory of the State of Wisconsin* (1950-1951)

Other services offered by the Wisconsin directory and not by the Californian one were detectives, mimeographing and ash removers, that is people whose job was to collect ashes from both private houses and enterprises. Other service were similar to the ones listed in other directories and mainly focused on restaurants, beauty shops and churches: the ads were often accompanied by studio portraits of their owners and eye-catching sentences celebrating their businesses.

The Wisconsin directory's cover was dark green and portrayed a young man using a compass to draw the plan of a city. He was rather muscular and oozed strength with which to build that very city which already boasted factories, tall buildings and modern means of transportation. Even though the cover's protagonist was a man, the directory was edited by a woman who declared the two aims of her publication: 1) create a bond between customers and merchants and 2) invite potential customers to get acquainted with local businesses, so that the black community and its wealth might grow.

As the title suggested the guide was primarily concentrated on Wisconsinite trades in the cities of Beloit, Kenosha, Madison, Racine and Waukesha; nevertheless, other American states were listed together with hotels run by African Americans and catering to their community. Before the actual directory there was a series of reviews concerning churches, each of them complete with address, history and the name of the pastor, and one praising African American societies, including the NAACP. A motto was included in brackets which exhorted blacks to spend their vacation happily and without humiliation. Some historical places were included as well: the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama (the institution even put guests up), two hotels in Idlewild, Michigan and two others at Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts. Other accommodations were available at local YMCAs as well.

The Wisconsin directory was similar to *The Official California Negro Directory and Classified Buyers' Guide* since they both furnished a list of trades almost entirely run by African

Americans and prompted future customers to promote those businesses by word of mouth and the distribution of copies. Both dedicated many pages to distinguished citizens, especially professionals like attorneys and doctors, thus praising their contributions to society and stimulating other people to follow their example. Similarly to the West Coast guide and differently from its East Coast counterpart, it did not offer practical tips on how to drive safely in Jim Crow land but rather concentrated on the commercial aspect of the black community and the evolution of its demographics – for example through statistics announcing the number of births, deaths and their causes and marriages within the community. It even gave people a list of useful tips to prevent diseases, especially tuberculosis, and first aid instructions.

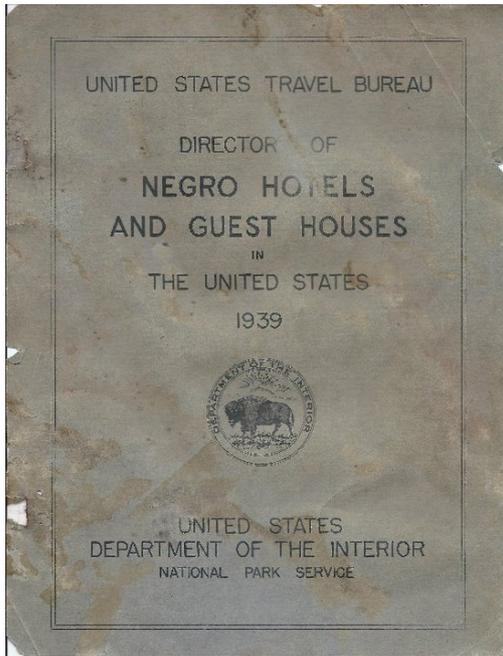
2.5. Directory of Negro Hotels and Guest Houses in the United States (1939)

The United States Travel Bureau released a brief travel directory covering places all over the United States (Picture 8). If the other guides pointed out the Jim Crow system operating on the road and sought to make sure that African Americans traveled safely, the *Directory of Negro Hotels and Guest Houses* did not and actually concentrated on the economic factor by claiming to “[...] encourage travel to a point where it may become a contributing factor in the economic and social activities of the country” (preface).

The directory was much shorter than the *Green Book* or the *Official California Negro Directory and Buyers' Guide* and was much simpler in its graphic format too: none of the pages had images or advertisements and the text had a more basic font. It was also impersonal in that it did not include the names of its compilers and no address to use in case of need. The addresses listed referred not only to hotels and private houses, but also to the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations that were willing to accommodate travelers when there were no vacant rooms in hotels.

The overall impression is that it did merely list a series of places of accommodations without providing advice on how to reach them safely or the main attractions of the cities listed. Black travelers would have to wait for the publication of *The Negro Motorist Green Book* to have advice on how to get ready to face a journey – both mentally and with the right equipment.

Nevertheless, the *Directory of Negro Hotels and Guest Houses in the United States* remained an effort to encourage the movement of African Americans and their contribution to the domestic economy of the United States.

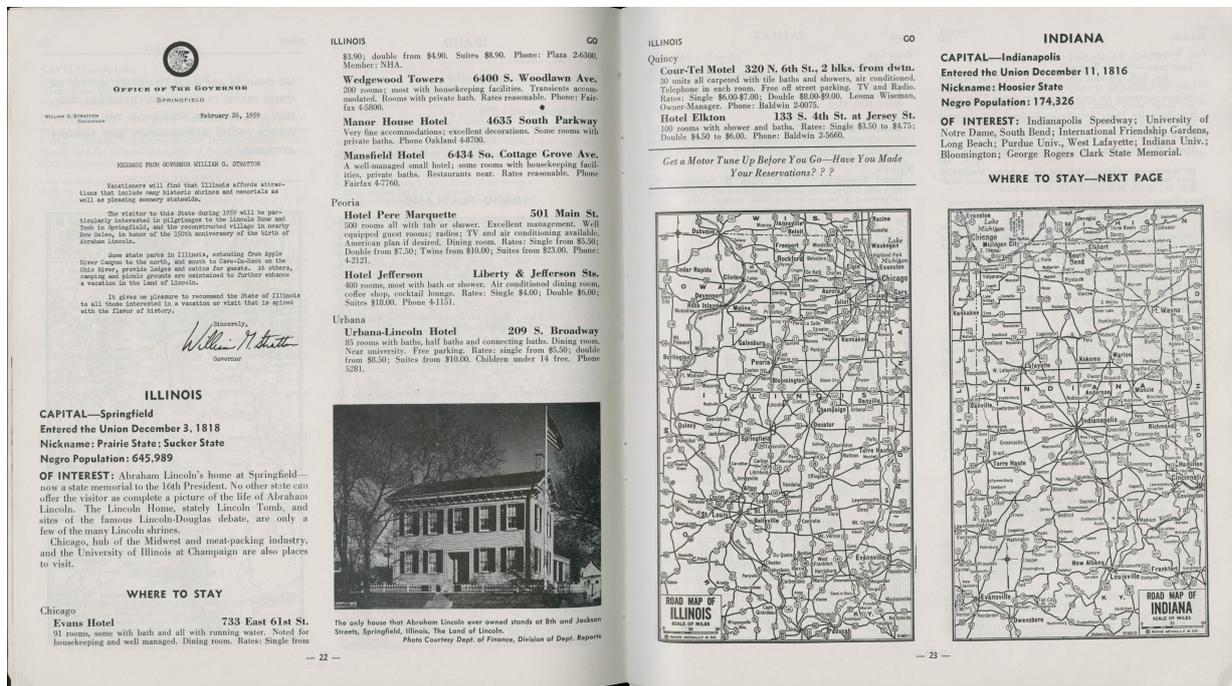


Picture 8: the cover of the *Directory of Negro Hotels and Guest Houses in the United States*, 1939 edition
United States Travel Bureau

2.6. Go Guide to Pleasant Motoring (1952-1965) and Travel Guide of Negro Hotels and Guest Houses (1942)

The *Go Guide to Pleasant Motoring* listed accommodations in places spread in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Caribbean and its aim was to grant people a nice traveling experience through first-class service (Picture 9). Differently from the previous travel directories, it was not specifically targeted at African Americans as its name suggested: it was addressed to *all* travelers and vacationers and claimed that everybody was accepted into the hotels and places listed, no matter their background and race. The pages taken from the March 1959 issue introduced Illinois and a few data about such state, including its capital and “negro population”. Apart from listing Illinois’ landmarks and addresses the *Go Guide* offered something more than the previous travel

directories: a road map of each state which was to help travelers on their way to a certain destination. The cover of the March 1959 issue featured a mountain landscape, more specifically a little waterfall and two travelers walking towards it. One cannot make out their ethnic background because we only see their backs, but might deduce that they are African Americans. The bottom of the cover mentioned the Amoco gas station; like the *Green Book*, which relied on Esso stations for support, the *Go Guide* found an ally in Amoco, whose task was to distribute the directory.



Picture 9: *Go Guide* section dedicated to Illinois and Indiana
 dcc.newberry.or

The brochure titled *Travel Guide of Negro Hotels and Guest Houses* was published in 1942 by the Afro Travel Bureau, a part of the Afro-American Newspapers chain. Its cover featured a marine landscape and the following pages listed a series of hotels and ‘nite spots’ disseminated in the States east of the Mississippi river, but with a special emphasis on New York City and New Jersey cities. The purpose of the brochure was to help black people find places where to rest and enjoy the break not only to improve their health, but also to go back to work with more energy to face the ever-growing tensions and responsibilities.

The brochure's back can be divided in three sections: the right and left columns were dedicated to hotels and guest houses accommodating black people, while the central section was basically the drawing of a map of the states east of the Mississippi (figure 10).

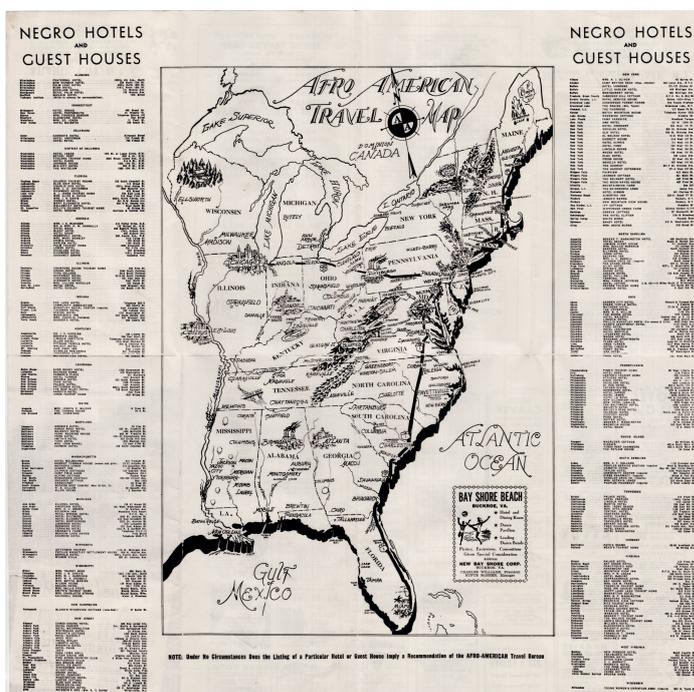


Figure 10: the Afro American Travel Map included in *Travel Guide of Negro Hotels and Guest Houses*.
Bostonraremaps.com

The area represented in the map went from Maine to Florida, from Wisconsin to Louisiana: despite crossing different regions and climates, the guide listed something these states had in common, that is accommodations for African Americans despite the surrounding racial landscape. Each state was painted with its capital city and main towns, without forgetting some black institutions like the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and the Fisk University in Tennessee. Some cities were also represented with their symbols, like Philadelphia and its Liberty Bell and Washington, D. C. with its Capitol Building. By providing such historical places the authors of *Travel Guide of Negro Hotels and Guest Houses* might have wanted to encourage domestic tourism, especially places and landmarks related to the history of the United States.

The brochure was much shorter than the previously examined travel guides and the places it provided were listed with no particular details; if they are compared to the ads in *The Official California Negro Directory and Classified Buyers' Guide* (1942-1943) one might remark how they lack photos, both of the actual trades and their owners, and the service offered. Nevertheless, it might have resulted useful and pleasant to consult for its drawings, especially the map.

2.7. A Shelter from Jim Crow: An Introduction to *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (1936-1966) and the Promotion of Black Business

In order to provide black travelers with a list of safe places where to stop and refresh themselves, a Harlem postal worker by the name of Victor Hugo Green decided to create a guide which he called, quite simply, *The Negro Motorist Green Book*. He drew inspiration from travel guides for Jewish travelers and decided to start a version specifically made for African Americans moving in Jim Crow America. The first edition was released in 1936 and even if it was limited to New York City and New York State at first, it quickly expanded and eventually covered the whole of the United States as well as some foreign countries including Canada and the Caribbean and then other continents. The guide became a sensation and restored a sense of community which might be linked to the one inspired by the Underground Railroad, a group of black and white people who helped slaves escape from the South to reach the free Northern States. It was not a real railroad but a network of people and dwellings ready to help fugitive slaves (Petry 97). In both cases a leader (Victor H. Green in this case, Harriet Tubman in the other) fought to improve their community's well-being by creating a network of people who were willing to face risks for a better future. Film director Yoruba Richen defined the community encouraged by the *Green Book* the original Crowdsourcing, since many people contributed to the project and invested their time and energy to improve the life of their community. Hugo himself was also seen as a skillful marketing man who knew his readers well and was aware that they were looking for safety as well as pleasure: the places he listed and the services they provided were indeed advertised as granting pleasurable vacations²⁶. The feeling of living in an extended community was highlighted by the fact that some of the addresses listed were not only indicating hotels and motels, but also private homes whose dwellers were willing to put up both ordinary people and celebrities when they were not able to find other accommodations²⁷.

Even author and journalist Isabel Wilkerson compared the network created by the *Green Book* to a new version of the Underground Railroad because of the black travel directories and accommodations being suggested through word of mouth. Sometimes the places listed were not all up-to-date and travelers had to contend with the whims of the landlords who denied them a place

26 "The Negro Motorist Green Book | A Guide to Freedom". *YouTube*, uploaded by Yung Judah, 6 June 2019, <https://youtu.be/CpassQCeW78>.

27 "Traveling with "The Green Book" during the Jim Crow Era". *YouTube*, uploaded by CBS Sunday Morning, 13 January 2019. https://youtu.be/B_CaKSIInTfl.

when they were supposed to actually welcome them. That is the reason why being on the road often implied unpredictable journeys whose length could never be determined beforehand (194).

The first edition of *The Negro Motorist Green Book* came out in 1936 and was published by Victor H. Green & George L. Smith, whose office was at first located at 2370 Seventh Avenue in Harlem. The cover was rather basic in that it only featured a green frame bordering the text; on top of such frame there was a piece of advice stating “For extra service...mention “The Green Book””. Green and Smith suggested that what they provided with the travel guide was just a part of the services black travelers could profit from when on the road: all they needed to do was mention the travel book as if it were a magic word and they would be taken to other black-friendly places. The *Green Book* was not the only guide to suggest black people that they carry it with them and mention it: the *California Directory* expressed the same wish in the statement of its compilers when saying “Always mention the California Negro Directory when you phone or buy” (7).

The guide started with a list of the editors’ aims at publishing it. *The Negro Motorist Green Book* was not a mere listing of places where black travelers could head to, it was also a guide fostering a sense of community and mutual help - “Let’s all get together and make Motoring Better” said the text’s final sentence. Travelers were not to be passive: should they not be satisfied with a service offered by one of the advertisers, they had to fill the editors in on it so that they could improve the service.

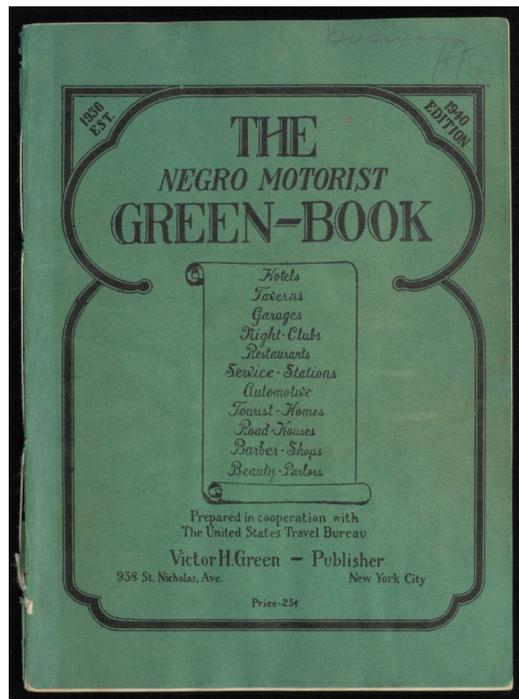
The third page, titled “PREPARDNESS” (sic), opened with a saying coming from medicine: “An Ounce of Prevention is worth more than a Pound of Cure”. Before setting off on a journey, black travelers should have their cars fixed because “minor faults remain unnoticed through months of ordinary driving, but when the car is called upon to work at maximum power over long periods of time and distance, these small and minor faults [...] detract the fun and enjoyment from motoring”. Black motorists had to make sure the following car parts worked properly: brakes, steering apparatus, tires, lighting, windshield wipers, carburetor and lubrication.

Once the vehicles had been checked and fixed the journey could start. *The Negro Motorist Green Book*’s following pages listed some of the main points of interest in New York City, including classic landmarks such as the Empire State Building and the Theatrical District. Each of them was introduced by a brief description and history, while ads promoted the finer things in life offered by restaurants, beauty salons, golf courses and state parks.

The overall impression given by the first edition of Green and Smith's guide is that of a work being still limited in both contents and destinations. Apart from the initial advice on how to get ready for a car trip, it did not linger on other types of dangers one was likely to find on the road—police harassment above all. It actually focused on services where travelers could restore and refresh themselves and was mainly limited to a restricted area – New York City, Yonkers (N. Y.), Pleasantville (N. Y.), Westchester (N. Y.), White Plains (N. Y.), Englewood Cliffs (N. J.), New Rochelle (N. Y.), Eatontown (N. J.), Larchmont (N. Y.), Elmsford (N. Y.), Tuckahoe (N. Y.), Portchester (N. Y.), Mt. Vernon (N. Y.), Nepperhan, Yonkers, (N. Y.), Long Island.

It suffices to take a look at one of the following editions (1940) to remark how Green improved and expanded his guide. The first change was visible on the cover, which became entirely green, and in its contents which were written in an elegant italic font (Picture 11). A parchment in the middle of the cover announced the topics dealt with in the guide and listed not only businesses related to traveling – hotels, garages, service stations – but also those providing a way to relax after a long journey – barber shops, beauty parlors. Black people could actually profit from such services even when they were not traveling; it was just a way to improve one's own appearance and keep healthy. The price of 25 cents remained the same while the headquarters moved from Adam Clayton Powell Jr Blvd to 938 St. Nicholas Avenue, in Washington Heights. The vacationers were asked to keep the guide in their car for “ready reference” so as to be able to face any impeding trouble.

The 1940 edition's introduction offered a list of practical advice on how to drive safely not only in terms of being protected against odds and hatred on the road, but also making sure the person at the wheel was aware of what they were doing and what driving meant: hence the need to “watch the driver ahead – you can't be sure whether or not he'll signal when he turns” and remember “at night look out for pedestrains (sic) walking on your side of the highway”.



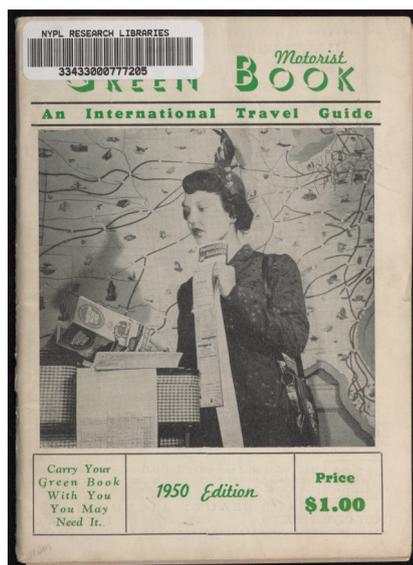
Picture 11: the 1940 issue's cover
New York Public Library Digital Collections

When compared to a guide like *The California Negro Directory*, the *Green Book* looked slightly different in that it was much shorter. Despite listing places from all over the United States, in certain cases even foreign countries, it did not linger on the description of each service and the ads accompanying the addresses were not frequent: perhaps the editor preferred dedicating more space to tips on how to drive safely than to additional information about businesses. Green's guide also lacked the small endorsements made by the white authorities in the West Coast counterparts; it had instead introductions made by the editor and practical rules on how to drive across North America. The lack of white support might have been due to the fact that the *Green Book* was more of a 'subterranean' publication, being spread by word of mouth and Esso stations, and members outside the black community might have not known the presence and relevance of Green's guide; or even if they were aware of the travel directory, they might have wanted to avoid supporting something they felt did not regard them.

A decade after, the *Green Book* showed yet another graphic format. The 1950 issue's cover was white and its captions were in green ink (Picture 12). A subtitle was added: the guide was not only the *Negro Motorist Green Book*, but also "An International Travel Guide" whose entries this time covered countries like Mexico, Canada and Bermuda. At the center of the page a light-skinned woman stood with a puzzled look on her face while holding many guides and maps, supposedly making her feel confused on where to go. From the Forties indeed the *Green Book* had started decorating its covers with images evoking the practice of traveling: some of them, like the one being examined, portrayed people smiling while carrying their luggage, others instead showed urban landscape or means of transportation carrying travelers to many different destinations. The price changed as well, reaching \$1; the rising up seemed justifiable, though, as the 1950 issue was made of a bigger number of pages than the previous editions. On the lower left corner there was a motto with which the *Green Book* became associated: "Carry your Green Book with You: You May Need It". The sentence sounded like a mild warning suggesting that the travel directory should always be kept in the car, no matter if drivers were traveling on a safe road; it did not say "you *will* need it", thus implying more certainty, but "you *may* need it". The use of the latter modal suggested possibility, and precisely because it was something that could happen unpredictably one should not lower their guard by leaving the *Green Book* home.

The introduction provided a small summary of the book's story by stating that it had been growing exponentially since its establishment in the Thirties. Green's publication went from being a local guide in 1936– limited, as we have seen, to New York City and State – to a national one just the following year. The 1950 issue was 80-page long and also included white-owned businesses that catered to blacks. The statement always closed on a positive note with Green hoping for a brighter future when his people would enjoy the same rights as whites and would not need a guide to travel safely any longer.

Before listing the businesses and trades, the 1950 *Green Book* issue offered a guide within a guide as it promoted national tourism in American cities and their main draws: Denver, Atlantic City, Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, Boston, Niagara Falls, New Orleans, Mt. Ranier National Park and Philadelphia.

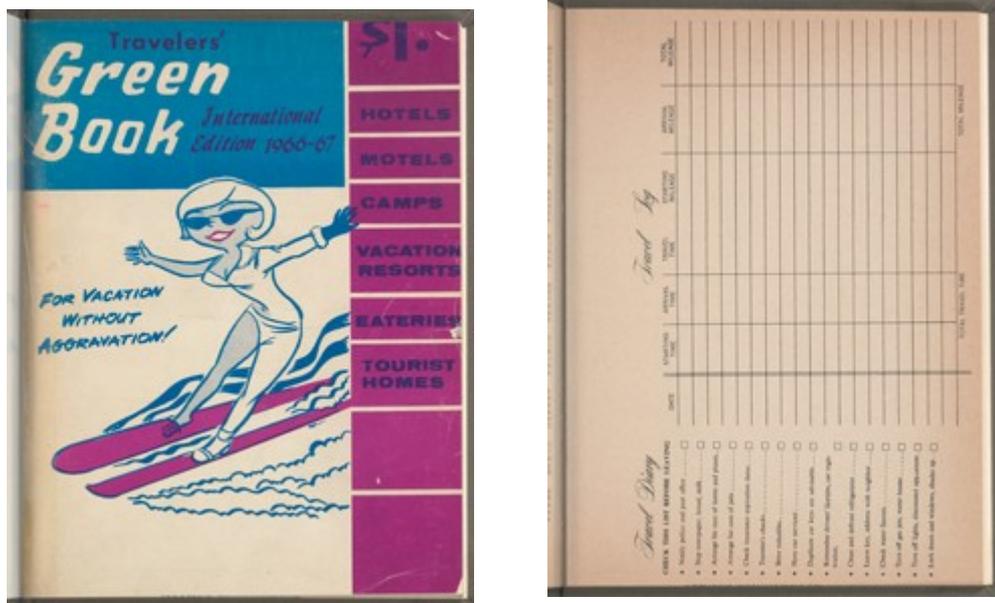


Picture 12: the 1950 *Green Book* issue
New York Public Library Digital Collection

As for the last issue of the travel directory, the 1966-1967 edition, it provided a longer list of services and a great deal of places where African Americans were heading for their vacations. Once again, the graphic format changed over the years: the cover was in various colors and featured a white woman surfing (Picture 13). The title changed from the *Negro Motorist* to a more generic *Travelers' Green Book* and so did the motto: the aim was now *for vacation without aggravation* (it used to be “humiliation”). Nevertheless, black Americans were still the main target of the guide as one of the first pages declared to provide “Assured Protection for the Negro Traveler”. By the time the *Green Book's* last issue came out, Victor H. Green had been dead for five years, therefore the guide was being edited by other people. By then the issue covered almost the whole of the continents, only Asia and Oceania were missing. Apart from a list of recreational places and activities the *Travelers' Green Book* also dedicated some of its columns to contemporary political facts, like the Civil Rights Movement. Each state's entry included updates on the progress made by the laws in terms of desegregation following the Civil Rights Act: it told which “anti-jimicro (sic) laws” were effectively applied and the punishment for all those breaking it.

The 1966 issues turned the guide into a personalized one when giving travelers a “Travel Log” to fill in with information like the total mileage driven and a list of tasks to be done before leaving: among those “have car serviced”, “remember drivers' licenses, car registration” and “lock doors and windows, shades up”. Each activity was followed by a box to tick when it was done

(Picture 14), thus creating a sort of diary listing all the activities done before embarking on a journey.



Pictures 13-14: the 1966 issue’s cover and the “Travel Log”
 New York Public Library Digital Collections

Italy was of course included in the “Europe” section and had many cities listed, proving thus a destination attracting growing numbers of black Americans. Some places are rather small and not much popular even among Italians; others like Florence and Rome are pretty known and used to be legs of the classic Grand Tour. The hotels suggested were rather sophisticated and are still known to host famous guests and be the set of movies; among the most popular ones, one can find Venice’s Danieli and Cortina d’Ampezzo’s Cristallo.

The 1966-1967 *Travelers’ Green Book* ended with “the baseball circuit” (stadium names, seating capacity, address) and a greeting from the guide’s mascot, a cartoon by the name of Gee Bee, and a column focused on the currency exchange. The last edition of the *Green Book* proved how far the publication had gone: from a regional travel directory aimed at African Americans to a thick volume comprising other countries and addressed to a more general community of travelers. Apart from listing accommodations and leisure places it also dwelt upon topics like the political situation and practical tips to make the traveling experience more

pleasurable. The *Green Book* never produced an atmosphere of terror and did not report racial incidents on the road or elsewhere, and yet it did not feature a distorted or filtered reality; it did list a number of rules to travel safely and suggested that travelers carry the book with them just in case, but never affected their journeys through negative images.

One might wonder what happened to all the places listed in the *Green Book* when the guide stopped being published. Some of them are still standing, as is the case with the Threatt filling station in Oklahoma, the first one owned by African Americans on Route 66; it is not running anymore and time has left its traces on it, nevertheless it remained untouched for its important role of safe haven for many black travelers along the Mother Road²⁸. Many hotels have either disappeared due to neglect or turned into something else like the once-popular Dunbar Hotel in Central Avenue in Los Angeles: it went from being a place hosting jazz legends to a low-income senior building²⁹. Even though their function has changed, they still remain the testimonies to a bygone era: a last good example is Harlem's towering Hotel Theresa which, despite now hosting various offices, still spots its original name on one facade and greets locals and tourists with its elegance.

As seen from the previous paragraphs, *The Negro Motorist Green Book* made a remarkable evolution during the thirty years of its publication. It went from being a regional guide to an actual book listing not only hotels, motels and other types of accommodation but also black-owned businesses. That provided the basis for the development and strengthening of the black community and middle class in many American cities, together with the masses moving from the South during the Great Migration. As for black businesses, the *Green Book* and the other travel directories shared the effort to promote trades run by and for African Americans, especially beauty shops and barber shops.

In his autobiography *Up from Slavery* Booker Washington confessed how important his formative years spent at Hampton had been for his personal growth and that of his race afterwards. Such improvement was not merely centered on the learning of a theoretical knowledge, but also on the cultivation of a good image starting from the basis: the hygiene and personal care. He wrote "I sometimes feel that almost the most valuable lesson I got at the Hampton Institute was in the use

28 Mitchell, Jessi, "Historic Route 66 Gas Station Has Ties To Oscar-Nominated Film". *YouTube.com*, 24 January 2019, <https://youtu.be/uYJrj7Mq9Ow>.

29 Clifford, Marissa, "Mapped: LA's last remaining Green Book locations", *la.curbed.com*, 25 February 2019, <https://la.curbed.com/maps/green-book-movie-history-map>.

and value of bath. I learned there for the first time some of its value, not only in keeping the body healthy, but in inspiring self-respect and promoting virtue” (58). He listed other activities he had learned there in order to improve his personal care, including the regular use of the toothbrush and using the proper equipment – tablecloth, napkin, flatware- when having a meal. Washington passed such knowledge on to his pupils and acquaintances, thus preparing them for life in the city and their uplift. Those very purposes were put in practice in Tuskegee as well, as declared by the educator: “We wanted to teach the students how to bathe; how to care for their teeth and clothing. [...] we wanted to give them a practical knowledge [...] that they would be sure of knowing how to make a living after they had left us” (126). The aim was to provide African Americans with the means to lead an autonomous life and create their own businesses after leaving institutions such as the one in Tuskegee.

Personal care and beauty, especially hair treatment, was not something new for the black community since women back in slavery days would concoct special products to take care of their hair; those products were often created by using herbs and roots. One might say that Washington’s teachings about personal care and beauty had been followed literally since many African Americans living in the countryside and studying at black colleges learned and acknowledged the importance of looking after oneself and one’s hygiene. A great deal of African Americans constituting the class above-mentioned started making their living in the beauty world by working as hairdressers or beauticians and catering to their community. While those professions were predominantly practiced by women, men opted for running barber shops. Those businesses were attended by blacks wishing to look good without sticking to beauty standards established by whites and represented in magazines and motion pictures; African Americans had been following those beauty tips by resorting to bleaching creams and hair straighteners. Indeed, “[...] if Black skin and hair could be minimized, masked, or effaced, African Americans’ genteel discipline would provide the platform for social advance” (Mullins 57). Mullins himself though argued that black people straightening their hair with heating combs was not always a mere response to beauty canons established by whites; even though African Americans reproduced a ‘white look’ by taming their curls they actually saw the action of straightening their hair as a precious moment to share with friends and family members in salons or private houses rather than a mere following whites’ ideas (61). With the rise of conscious consumerism and the spreading of black-owned businesses, blacks could indeed find places where to look after themselves by following their own principles and not whites’: such places were relevant in shaping the black middle class and directories made a contribution to their popularity by listing them. *The Official California Negro Directory and Classified Buyers’*

Guide (1942-1943) and the *Negro Business Directory of the state of Wisconsin* (1950-1951) dedicated many ads to beauty shops and barber shops, the latter to a lesser extent. What those businesses had in common was their being mostly run by women, whose accurate studio portraits always pictured them as classy and refined; they were neatly made up and boasted long and soft hair, that same head of hair that customers could obtain by purchasing the right products. Many beauty salons owners did not limit themselves to styling hair but also concocted their own products and sold them while promising miraculous results. The *Green Book* too became a way to make beauty places more popular and attract a wide clientele ready to improve their outward appearance by helping the community as well.

The first *Green Book* edition only mentioned three beauty businesses: La Ritz Beauty Salon at 130th Street, the Shahana Beauty Salon in Tuckahoe, NY and Orchid Beauty Shoppe and School of Beauty Culture in New Rochelle, NY. The latter business exemplified even better what Booker T. Washington had said about black progress in his *The Future of the American Negro*: “We have spent much time in the South in educating men and women in letters alone, too, and must now turn our attention more than ever toward educating them so as to supply their wants and needs” (24). The Orchid School might be considered an example of Washington’s thought in that it did not content itself with beautifying women, but also gave them the chance to learn the tricks of the trade to open their own businesses or take care of themselves better. Nevertheless, the beauty world did not find much space in that original *Green Book* since the majority of advertisements promoted the activities of auto repairing and restaurants: the travel directory was still local and mainly aimed at providing tips to travel better and enjoy a break in a nice place.

The 1939 issue’s cover listed barber shops and beauty parlors among the trades featured in it. The majority of such businesses were located in Harlem, which proved to be the “capital” of black barbers and beauticians. Not all the states listed included beauty shops: they were missing in a few states on the East Coast (Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts), in the Middle West (Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska), in the South (Mississippi) and in the Northwest (Idaho, Montana). Yet the 1939 *Green Book* is incomplete, the pages preserved being only twenty-five out of almost fifty; perhaps other states did not host black-friendly beauty shops, or those existing were not recorded.

The 1940 *Green Book* issue and its New York City section boasted a great deal of beauty institutions, precisely 29 beauty parlors, 21 barber shops and 2 beauty schools (Madam C. J.

Walker's and Sarah Spencer Washington's Apex). The majority of such trades were located on St Nicholas Avenue in Harlem.

The 1953 edition presented a different scene in that only two states of the ones listed above kept not having beauty shops listed in the *Green Book*, Idaho and Maine. Other states included Alabama in the South, Nevada in the West, Utah in the Midwest, Alaska and New Hampshire and Vermont in New England. New York's lists were divided into its five boroughs and all of them featured barber shops and beauty parlors, with Brooklyn having even a beauty culture school. Harlem boasted the by-then world famous Rose Meta House of Beauty, a hair salon founded by the Mississippian Rose Meta Morgan, better known as Rose Morgan, back in 1947 (Picture 15).

Such was the importance of the trade that it was listed in bold characters and stood out from the rest of the beauty parlors. Born in a rural town in 1912 – once again, the exact birth date is unknown – Rose Meta Morgan started doing hair when she moved with her family to Chicago as part of the Great Migration. She then relocated to New York City upon an invitation by singer and actress Ethel Waters, who had appreciated Morgan's skill at styling her hair (Kranz 200). Once in the big city, Morgan opened her House of Beauty with biologist Olivia Clark in Sugar Hill, the Harlem section where many black celebrities used to live at the time. While Morgan dedicated her time to styling hair, other employees provided skin care treatments and massages. It is interesting to remark the formal atmosphere reigning in the salon: no space was left for small talks and gossip one usually expects to find at a hairdresser's, only respect for clients was due. No customer could be addressed by their first name and employees were not to engage in conversation with them, lest they be rebuked by Morgan herself³⁰. As other African American trailblazing entrepreneurs before her, Rose Morgan created and sold a cosmetics line aimed at her customers, whose wishes and beauty she had always had at heart.

30 Gainer, Nichelle. "Overlooked No More: Rose Morgan, a Pioneer in Hairdressing and Harlem". 10 April 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/10/obituaries/rose-morgan-overlooked.html>

Picture 15: Rose Morgan working
passionately in her salon
Pinterest



A research into the Harlem beauty world was carried out by a mysterious woman named Vivian Morris who interviewed many Harlemites with the intent of drawing a portrait of that neighborhood. She was part of a Federal Writers Project whose task was to record the folklore and history of every American State. She dedicated her time and effort to cover aspects of daily life in Harlem, thus documenting laundry workers and women working in the beauty field. The latter was explored through interviews, now preserved at the Library of Congress, conducted in 1939 with women attending beauty parlors. Morris began her short reportage by claiming that the beauty culture was beneficial to both women and men: the first were employed at a rate of more than fifty per cent while the second were sometimes employed as salesmen or even beauticians.

Morris went on to describe how the beauty shops in Harlem were divided according to their clienteles. The section where a skilled hairdresser like Rose Morgan operated was located in the “Elite” section in Sugar Hill which catered to the black elite. The largest part of the neighborhood was actually targeted at average customers, while a small section took care of the hair of the theatrical clientele³¹.

The author recorded a conversation which took place among customers and staff in a beauty shop and it showed how people often used slang and spoke frankly. One of the women working

31 Morris, Vivian, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/wpalh2.22041807/?sp=3>

there complained about the activity being “no be of roses”; while being free from the whites’ control and not having to clean their houses up, they still had to earn their living by “scrubbing people’s scalps, straightening, and curling their hair with a hot iron all day and smelling frying hair”³². One of the customers gave a portrait of the life an average Harlemitte would lead: beautify themselves before meeting their partner, going to the Apollo Theater to enjoy a show and then off to the Savoy Ballroom– both places were listed in the *Green Book* – to dance until the wee hours of the morning before resuming their jobs.

Beauty shops were not only dedicated to beauty and personal care, but were sometimes frequented by petty criminals who sold stolen items. In the interview done by Morris, a man suddenly entered the shop announcing “hot stuff”, that is stolen goods, and attracted everybody’s attention³³. Apart from Rose Meta’s, where as has been said the small talk between staff and customers was not encouraged, many beauty shops were also places where black women could meet each other and even set the stage for political action to improve their working conditions. An example of that was provided by The National Beauty Culturists’ League, simply known as NBCL, which was created in the 1940s in order to regulate the situation of people working in the beauty industry and give them the assistance which the government would not always grant them (Gill 184).

Beauty shops were also fundamental in supporting the fight for civil rights despite first being considered a frivolous space where women could only beautify themselves while engaging in chit-chat. When civil rights organizations started being attacked or criticized for their activities, they came to consider salons as places where political activism could be carried out away from whites’ look. What probably allowed their involvement in political causes was the fact that beauticians operated within the black community, earned money from it and were self-made businesswomen; they enjoyed more freedom than maids working under whites’ surveillance, for example. Therefore, beauticians began taking part in marches and sit-ins; they also “distributed NAACP literature, registered voters, collected donations, and made the civil rights movement a topic of conversation on their shop floors” (McAndrew 289). According to historian Tiffany M. Gill, beauty shops and beauticians’ involvement in communal activities did not stop after the fight for civil rights but went

32 Morris, Vivian, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/wpalh2.22041807/?sp=4>

33 Morris, Vivian, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/wpalh2.22041807/?sp=7>.

on in the following decades, when such places stimulated women to take care of their health by educating them to have regular screens and follow a healthy lifestyle³⁴.

Prior to Rose Meta's there had been other beauty businesses run by African American women who had proved that entrepreneurship was not a quality only man possessed. Two ladies in particular made a fortune through a hair care empire whose products were designed to take care of black women's hair and scalp without damaging them. Annie Turnbo Malone and her disciple, the better known Madam C. J. Walker, elaborated hair straighteners much less aggressive than those used in the past and both created their own institutes, which were listed in the *Green Book*. Malone's Poro College was especially important in promoting the relevance of scalp health and hygiene at a higher level³⁵. The two ladies' collaboration was actually shadowed by controversy, since Walker allegedly stole her former protector's formulas and passed them off as hers. Despite Walker's popularity, Malone's life and importance are gradually being rediscovered, thus acknowledging her and her famous disciple's roles in demonstrating that blacks could attain important goals through determination and entrepreneurship, paving the way for other black businessmen and businesswomen to come, including Sarah Spencer Washington. She can be considered a disciple of Booker T. Washington in that she did attend cosmetology and chemistry schools before embarking on a career as owner of a salon and founder of the Apex Manufacturing Company. As Walker and Malone, Spencer proved to be quite a talented businesswoman and did not just work in her salon, but also sold her products door-to-door. Following a philanthropic path similar to Washington's, she also established beauty and barber schools for black people, in order to prepare them for a "depression-proof career", and proceeds of her activity were allocated to the black community (Sherrow 395).

Apart from beauty shops, which were mainly dedicated to women's personal care, American cities also boasted barber shops catering to black men. They actually started operating back in the late nineteenth century and even catered to whites, before the competition of European immigrants prompted them to cultivate a faithful African American clientele (Mullins 62). Such change in clientele mirrors the already-mentioned Branchik and Davis' study and what they called the "urbanized phase", according to which urban areas saw a growing number of black-targeted trades. Movies have often depicted such places as meeting point for African Americans, both the young and

34 "Tiffany Gill on Beauty Shops in the Civil Rights Movement". *YouTube*, uploaded by notevenpast, 6 July 2011, <https://youtu.be/g2qxtJuv44>.

35 Nittle, Nadra, "Meet Annie Turnbo Malone, the hair care entrepreneur Trump shouted out in his Black History Month proclamation", *vox.com*, 15 February 2019, <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2019/2/15/18226396/annie-turnbo-malone-hair-entrepreneur-trump-black-history>.

the elderly. The movie *Malcolm X* (Spike Lee, 1992) offered a significant example of the role barber shops played in those communities the last century, perhaps even today: one of its most famous scenes depicted a young Malcolm X entering a barber shop in Boston to have his hair straightened. The place was infused with jazz music and two elderly customers were reading a newspaper while talking with the owner. Such image can often be found in movies, both old and new, that wish to evoke the sense of camaraderie and closeness experienced in the black community.

As mentioned above, Harlem was the place where a good number of barber shops and beauty shops were established, without that meaning that other states did not have them. In Fort Myers in Florida the first beauty salon was founded by Ella Mae Piper, a Georgian who had graduated at the Rohrer's Institute of Beauty Culture in New York City once again practicing Washington's ideal: book knowledge added to manual skills. The extraordinary fact about Piper, who also devoted part of her activity to chiropody, is that her business catered to a well-off white clientele, thus breaching the race barriers in Fort Myers³⁶.

The fortune of Harlem and other places' beauty parlors seems to have known a pause around the mid-Fifties, when the *Green Book* ceased listing beauty parlors and barber shops and focused instead on accommodation (hotels, motels, tourist homes) and food (restaurants). The reason for such change might be found in the supposed obsolescence of beauty treatments and in the fickle nature of beauty and look; what might have been a fashionable haircut or style in the Forties and early Fifties was not more so the following decades. If one should think about the 'natural look' adopted by many African Americans in the Sixties, when they claimed black pride even in their hair style, one should not wonder at the fall-off of many old-fashioned salons. Or it might be thought that Green and its followers were interested in more "serious" matters like accommodation and food. Beauty shops and barber shops though are still an integral part of America, both black and white, and played an important role in generating black wealth and fostering community. As Mullins affirms, "not simply market venues in which consumers obtained a service, barber shops and hairdressing salons were community social spaces removed from the direct gaze of White surveillance" (63).

36 "Ella Piper – Women Who Made Southwest Florida", *YouTube*, uploaded by TheDrPiperCenter, 19 June 2013, <https://youtu.be/gQTY5haQmd0>.

With the establishment of beauty and barber shops and other trades, African Americans sought and managed to create a niche of black market within a wider American economy. Black people actually played a role which had been evoked by W. E. B. DuBois and his theory on black consciousness, according to which individuals of African descent possessed both a peculiar African experience and an American identity earned by living in the United States (Mullins 186). Such duplicity was reflected in their economic status as well, since “African American stood at the heart of consumer space as laborers, marketers, and consumers, but African America’s centrality to consumption and impression on White subjectivity was evaded or ignored by White America” (185). In other words, black Americans found themselves in the ambivalent position of playing a leading role in guiding the American economy while being denied the privileges granted to whites. Works like the *Green Book* were instrumental in promoting black consumption and businesses in the face of racial obstacles; the fact of the *Green Book* being not merely a travel directory has been pointed out also by Yoruba Richen, an African American director whose movies deal with LGTB themes and explore issues faced by blacks in pictures like *The New Black* (2013). One of her latest releases was about the *Green Book* indeed, being titled *The Green Book: Guide to Freedom* (2019), and confirmed how “black people were supportive of our own businesses and (that) helped to build wealth in our community”³⁷. Once again the importance of communal work is underlined as Richen referred to the supportive job played by Esso gas stations, which not only distributed copies of the *Green Book* but also hired black marketers who had the task of designing advertisements specifically aimed at the black community. Esso was owned by Standard Oil, which in turn was owned by John D. Rockefeller; the man was married to Laura Spelman, a woman hailing from an abolitionist family, thus continuing their politics of activism³⁸.

37 Devega, Chauncey, “You needed the Negro Motorist Green Book more in the North and the West”, salon.com, 13 March 2019, <https://www.salon.com/2019/03/13/you-needed-the-negro-motorist-green-book-more-in-the-north-and-the-west/>.

38 “A Deeper Look at the Green Book with Yoruba Richen | Black America”, *YouTube*, uploaded by cunytv75, 16 March 2019, <https://youtu.be/cfb4sN02dc8>.

Chapter 3.

Contemporary Representations of the *Green Book* and Its Legacy

The *Green Book* became a useful tool to promote the emergence of a black middle class through the establishment of businesses and traveling at national and international levels. In order to improve the life of African Americans and stimulate their consumption, trades were established that catered to their needs. A special emphasis was placed on the beauty business, where beauty parlors and barber shops became places where to beautify oneself and to establish, once again, a sense of community and familiarity.

The disappearance of the *Green Book* in the late Sixties and the fact of its having been almost forgotten has not completely eclipsed Green's legacy, though. This travel directory has regained fame nationally and became popular worldwide thanks to some material recently released: the children's book *Ruth and the Green Book* (2010) by Alexander Ramsey Calvin, the novel *Lovecraft Country* (2016) by Matt Ruff, the movie *Green Book* (2018) by Peter Farrelly and the non-fiction book *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book* (2017) by Jan Miles. Green's directory and its legacy was also the subject of various works of art, including *Green-Book, Orange Balloon* (2016) by painter Tina Mion and the exhibition *Sanctuary* (2018) by visual and performance artist Derrick Adams. This chapter will examine the representation of the *Green Book* and its legacy in these works.

3.1. *Ruth and the Green Book* (2010)

Ruth and the Green Book is a children's book written by playwright and writer Alexander Ramsey Calvin with author Gwen Strauss and published in 2010. It is a first-person narration telling the story of a young African American girl, Ruth, who embarks on a journey to Alabama to visit her grandmother. The girl and her family live in Chicago, but her father was born in the Heart of Dixie and then moved to the Windy City, probably as part of the Great Migration.

The family must have been aware of Jim Crow ruling on the road because Ruth's mother packed their meals before leaving for fear they might be turned down at restaurants; her intuition proves right since the places they pass by all display the "white only" sign. Refusal comes from service stations as well, causing Ruth to feel embarrassed by what she thought was going to be a peaceful journey.

The family does not always encounter dangers, though. In Tennessee they find Eddy, an old friend of Ruth's father's who puts them up for the night and warns them against the perils they are likely to stumble upon when proceeding down south. He also suggests that his friends look for an Esso station as a source of support; it will play the role of an oasis in the midst of the desert of racism besides being the place where the *Green Book* is handed out.

Eddy's advice proves valuable because Ruth and her parents do find an Esso station and are met with a kind welcome together with a copy of the *Green Book*, which they buy for 75 cents. Ruth's task is to browse through the directory to find black-friendly places and she suggests a tourist home from the places listed. The landlady whose place they choose puts them up for the night and is especially appreciated by Ruth, who declares her intention to follow the lady's example one day by supporting her community. Thanks to the help they get along the road, Ruth and her family reach Alabama safe and sound and finally reunite with the old lady.

Ruth and the Green Book proves to be an accurate depiction of the travel directory and the traveling conditions of African Americans. It reconstructs the discrimination faced in public spaces such as hotels and service stations, but also the spontaneous network of help provided by blacks at Esso stations and tourist homes. It does not linger on the cruelty of racism, maybe because it is a book for a young audience, and yet manages to provide a clear understanding of why the *Green Book* was fundamental for African Americans in Jim Crow era. *Ruth and the Green Book* is also historically accurate since it provides true information about it, such as the fact of it being distributed at Esso stations and costing 75 cents (the issues did have that price from 1947 to 1949).

3.2. The *Green Book* in *Lovecraft Country* (2016)

American author Matt Ruff – famous for works such as *Set This House in Order: A Romance of Souls* (2003) and *The Mirage* (2012) – wrote a dark fantasy book that features *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, there renamed *The Safe Negro Travel Guide*. It came out in 2016 and is titled *Lovecraft Country*, thus establishing a bond with the New England writer – according to Keith Herber, the country is the fictional place where Lovecraft set much of his fiction³⁹. *Lovecraft Country* mixes the real horrors African Americans had to contend with in Jim Crow era together with supernatural forces which seem to come straight out of a book by Lovecraft. Ruff indeed stated the following in an interview: “It occurred to me that the dread a Lovecraft character might feel exploring R’lyeh isn’t all that different from the dread of a black motorist passing through a sundown town after dark”⁴⁰. What a character might fear in a work of fiction was not dissimilar to people in flesh and bone stumbling upon racism in real Jim Crow America.

Lovecraft Country is made of seven chapters, each working as a single episode featuring the whole ‘cast’, yet focusing on a certain character. The first chapter, “Lovecraft Country”, begins with a definition of the ‘Jim Crow Mile’, a fictional “unit of measurement, peculiar to colored motorists, comprising both physical distance and random helpings of fear, paranoia, frustration, and outrage” (Ruff 1). As can be deduced by such explanation, the ‘Jim Crow Mile’ does not encompass a mere geographical space but also those feelings lived during the ‘Driving while Black’ experience, ranging from paranoia at being chased for trivial matters to outrage for not being free to move as you please. African American travelers are never at rest, as the book’s characters prove throughout the story, and go through “random helpings” of terror and anxiety when driving in the United States. Theirs is not a peaceful journey but one where they face not only actual patrol men, but also mysterious creatures one is likely to find in a horror story. And yet such creatures are not always against African Americans, as proved by an episode in which the main characters Atticus, Letitia and George are pulled over by a patrol car and taken to near-by woods to be executed. Right when policemen are about to shoot them dead, an obscure entity emerges that causes the authorities to run away and discover that their car has been set on fire by Letitia (52-54). Despite such entity not being identified, one might deduce it was one protecting blacks somehow and saving them when

39 Bortnick, Justin, “Shoggoths in a Segregated America”, 1 March 2016, lareviewofbooks.org.

40 The Barnes and Noble Review, “Shadows Over America: Matt Ruff and Victor LaValle Take on Lovecraft and Race”, barnesandnoble.com, 29 March 2016.

they were at gunpoint. *Lovecraft Country* being a fantasy novel, that entity might be considered a sort of spirit, perhaps a spirit representing black Americans and their ancestors slowly revenging themselves on whites; or it might be a “wind of change” and the impending desegregation slowly making its way and acting in everyday life, including traveling on American roads.

Other monsters are actually people in flesh and bone who wish to perform a ritual by using Atticus, the last known descendant of a powerful white man, Titus, who belonged to the Braithwhite family and was the owner of slaves, including one of Atticus’ ancestors (67). Apart from facing dangers on the road, the veteran and his family are also to fight against such figures who dog them and try to involve them in their rituals.

The plot of *Lovecraft Country* revolves around the life of a middle-class black family dwelling in Chicago. The main character is Atticus, a 22-year-old Korean War veteran whose passion is reading science-fiction books despite his father Montrose’s attempts to foil it. The man constantly tries to warn his son of the racism implicit in the works of authors such as Lovecraft – he even takes a book out from the library which features a poem titled “On the Creation of Niggers” to show him the New England author’s thought about blacks (15). Montrose’s half-brother George Berry might be seen as a sort of reincarnation of Victor Hugo Green since he runs a small travel agency in Chicago’s South Side and regularly issues *The Safe Negro Travel Guide*, whose aim is “[...] helping middle-class Negroes negotiate with a travel industry that was at best reluctant to accept their patronage” (19). Chicago in fact was and is a city with a significant black community, a huge part of it the result of the Great Migration, as sections like the South Side itself and its neighborhood Bronzeville are known to host a good portion of African Americans and be the setting of many books by black authors, including Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959).

Atticus embodies an ordinary African American driver whose journey from the South (Florida) to his hometown Chicago is freight with obstacles and racist symbols, including Confederate flags waving in private gardens. Nevertheless, he knows how to cope with Jim Crow and acts clever: he takes a copy of the *Safe Negro Travel Guide* with him and consults it when choosing a motel and selecting a black-owned garage to have a flat tire fixed (3). The actual *Negro Motorist Green Book* too listed a great deal of ads offering car service and garages open to black motorists. In the novel the mechanic takes much time to come help Atticus and eventually invites the young man to his house, perhaps to make up for his being late. The mechanic’s place plays the same role as other private houses which put up black travelers in real life. The *Guide* – and the

original *Green Book* – was in fact fundamental in promoting the sense of a black community and fostering mutual help among African Americans, as has been proved in the previous chapters. Despite meeting friendly people on the road, Atticus does not escape police harassment when he is pulled over by a patrolman badgering him with all sorts of questions. The man starts searching the veteran's Cadillac Coupe and comes across a copy of the *Guide*, whose existence he had ignored until that very moment: ““These addresses”, he said. “These are all places that serve colored people?”. Atticus nodded. “Well,” said the trooper, “if that doesn't beat everything...””(9). Not only does he mock the book's aim but he also keeps it while assuring Atticus that he will not need the *Guide* since ““[...] between here and there, there's *no* place that you want to stop”” (9). The man's words are enough to prompt Atticus to gear up and leave the hideous place behind.

The travel guide never reaches a final form but is a work-in-progress whose contents are always checked and updated. Advice from travelers is always appreciated as stated in *The Green Book's* introduction (“We are appealing to the Motorist and Business places for their whole-hearted co-operation to help us in our endeavor, by contributing ideas, suggestions, Travel information and articles of interest”, 1937 edition) and the *Safe Negro Travel Guide* plays the same role by having some volunteers explore the country in order to confirm or deny the black-friendliness of certain places. Hippolyta, Atticus' aunt, is one of the family members who devoted much time to expand the *Guide's* contents: “early in their marriage, Hippolyta had volunteered herself as a scout for *The Safe Negro Travel Guide*, specializing in vacation resorts” (Ruff 10). Interestingly, her complete name is Hippolyta Green and she hails from Harlem; by giving her the same surname and birthplace as Victor H. Green, one might deduce that Ruff wanted once again to recall the postal worker and his role in helping blacks travel safely, just as Hippolyta helped by touring the country and looking for new black-friendly places. She is also engrossed in astronomy and contributed to the naming of a newly-discovered planet, though without earning credits which were given to an English girl, whose family had been working in astronomy for generations (180). Even though it is a work of fiction, Ruff might have wanted to prove how contributions to science and other fields were also carried out by blacks but were either overlooked or were attributed to whites: when writing about them he acknowledged their effort in a way not too dissimilar to the book and movie *Hidden Figures*. Interestingly, both *Lovecraft Country* and the movie *Hidden Figures* were released in 2016.

Another volunteer, Victor Franklin (the same first name as Green) set off for the same purpose and traveled to Devon County, Massachusetts, to “[...] check out some new listings for the *Guide*” (20). While taking a break along the road and ignoring the fact that the sun was setting, he

was approached by the local sheriff who informed him that he was *still* in a sundown town when he was supposed to have left the county. “[...] you’re in Devon, which is a sundown *county*. If I’d caught you here after dark, it’d be my sworn duty to hang you from one of these trees” (22). Ruff cited James W. Loewen’s *Sundown Towns* as source of inspiration behind the creation of *Lovecraft Country*, especially the character of “[...] a field researcher for a Jim Crow-era guidebook, someone whose job was to drive around the country, looking for hotels and restaurants that would serve him” (4). Black travelers who were caught in sundown cities at night risked their life together with the African American residents who were forced to leave or were victims of lynchings at the hands of whites (Loewen 92-96).

Atticus himself, along with his uncle George and friend Letitia, experiences the meaning of “traveling while black” once again. The three are heading to Ardham, a Massachusetts county where the boy’s father is supposed to be held captive and the group is awaited by a certain Braithwhite family. Atticus and his friends kill two birds with one stone since their aim is not only to rescue Montrose, but also to check some items listed in the *Guide*. The first test is positive: when in Erie, Pennsylvania, “they had a hot breakfast at Egg Benedict’s, a cafe recommended by the *Guide* – a recommendation George reaffirmed, jotting an entry in a pocket notebook” (31). The second break takes place at Simmonsville, where George suggests that the three of them have lunch at a restaurant named Lydia’s. He is the only one wanting to check that business out since Atticus and Letitia sense that they are not hitting a safe place. The restaurant is practically at the end of town and the few people they encounter are whites who look down on them. Yet George is stubborn and manages to take the group to Lydia’s, whose real name turns out to be Simmonsville Dinette.

They are met with everything but a kind welcome: the only customer leaves the counter where he has been eating as soon as he spots the black travelers while “the teenaged boy behind the counter had the opposite reaction, his eyes going wide as if George, Atticus, and Letitia were Green Martians who’d teleported in from Barsoom” (34). While waiting to be served, Atticus remarks that both the exterior and the interior bricks are covered with white paint, which rings a bell. As Loewen affirms, “[...] African Americans who know about sundown towns concoct various rules to predict and avoid them. [...] Across the United States, African Americans are still understandably wary of towns with “white” in their name [...]” (12). Simmonsville Dinette is not a town, and yet the white paint might suggest that the place is not conceived to host black guests. Atticus’ deduction proves right since the customer comes back with other men wanting to launch an attack on the veteran,

George and Letitia. The three of them manage to escape safe and sound and they soon cross Simmonsville Dinette out from the businesses listed in the *Guide*.

Lovecraft Country thus is a science-fiction book deeply rooted in history, as the author proved by choosing *Sundown Towns* and the *Green Book* itself as main sources of inspiration. Even though he is white, Ruff seems to sympathize with the black characters and reconstruct a part of history when many African Americans suffered discrimination; as he himself stated in a lecture, he has always been fascinated by the thought of being in the shoes of people different from him, in this case blacks⁴¹, experiencing the same context and traveling conditions. He played a good part in defending the *Green Book*'s legacy; despite renaming it in *Safe Negro Travel Guide* he underscored its relevance for the black community and acknowledged the huge and often risky job carried out by volunteers. His efforts at re-popularizing the *Green Book* have been paid off by having a famed director, Jordan Peele, working on a television series based on *Lovecraft Country* which is thought to be released in 2020.

Ruff is not the only author to tackle racism in America by creating a creepy atmosphere. The above-mentioned film director Jordan Peele wrote and directed the horror *Get Out* (2017) which went on to win an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay. The film, like *Lovecraft Country* before, joins a realist plan with a magic one peopled by pseudo-scientists wanting to possess blacks and their minds in order to live longer. They did so by hypnotizing African Americans and removing their brains to have them implanted into white bodies; the soul of blacks was then confined in the unconscious, from which it could be brought back to life through a shock like a camera flash. What is frightening is the way white people behave towards the movie's protagonist and other blacks: they pretend to be open-minded towards other ethnic groups, and yet their narrow-mindedness acts subtly. Peele's aim was to disclose how racism still crept under a politically correct surface and "[...] set out to make a movie that exposed "the lie" of a post-racial America, one that grew after the election of Mr. Obama"⁴². The enemies in this case are not that explicit because "the villains here aren't southern rednecks or neo-Nazi skinheads, or the so-called "alt-right". They're middle-class white liberals"⁴³. The post-racial America which was supposed to come along with the Obama administration failed to impose itself and did not erase racism and racial incidents, as

41 "Matt Ruff introduces Lovecraft Country at University Book Store – Seattle". *YouTube*, uploaded by ubookstore, 10 March 2016, <https://youtu.be/tk2-iigpj8Q>.

42 Zinoman, Jason, "Jordan Peele on a Truly Terrifying Monster: Racism", *nytimes.com*, 16 February 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/16/movies/jordan-peeel-interview-get-out.html>.

43 Bakare, Lanre, "Get Out: the film that dares to reveal the horror of liberal racism in America", *theguardian.com*, 28 February 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/feb/28/get-out-box-office-jordan-peeel>.

proved in the mock-version of Green's guide, *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book* (2017) by Jan Miles.

3.3. *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book* (2017): A Mock-version of the *Green Book*

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, "post-racial" is an adjective which means "having overcome or moved beyond racism: having reached a stage or time at which racial prejudice no longer exists or is no longer a major social problem"⁴⁴. The nation that Barack Obama was supposed to create as the first black president of the United States did not completely pull off, since racial incidents and violence are still frequent occurrences in today's America and are even mentioned in artistic works such as Kendrick Lamar's 2015 album *To Pimp a Butterfly* and Roberto Minervini's documentary *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?* (2018). According to an FBI study, hate crimes are on the rise and a great portion of them are carried out for racial motives: most of them are actually perpetrated against African Americans as stated in 2017⁴⁵.

Such bleak thoughts are the ones sustained also by Jan Miles, a New-Orleans based writer and author of *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book* (2017). The woman is among those who criticized the movie *Green Book* for lacking a correct portrayal of the travel guide's importance and depicting racism as a fact belonging uniquely to the past. As she affirmed on a *Washington Post* article, "Movies like the *Green Book* are a danger. [...] In a based-on-a-true-story 'Green Book' world, cops no longer harass black motorists and dyed-in-the-wool racists acquiesce, with an insouciant shrug, to the changing of the times"⁴⁶. Miles found a proof of America's still difficult race relations through images and texts continually uploaded to Facebook and other social media, thus exposing

44 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/post-racial>.

45 FBI, 2017 Hate Crime Statistics: 2013 incidents out of 4131 were against African-Americans, 2458 victims out of 5060 were blacks. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017/tables/table-1.xls>.

46 Miles, Jan, "Racism isn't dead. Black Americans still need a 'Green Book'", *washingtonpost.com*, 13 February 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/02/23/racism-isnt-dead-black-americans-still-need-greenbook/>.

the high rates of violence tormenting black Americans; that was the inspiration behind the writing of her book which came out in 2017.

The title *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book* is misleading: one might think that Victor H. Green's publication is still alive and well, and yet a closer inspection reveals that one is before a different work. The similarities stop at a graphic level and the color of the cover; it is green, as the travel directory's first issues, and uses the same font as the original work. Miles resumed the *Green Book*'s graphic through other details, like the edition number on the upper right corner, the establishing date on the upper west corner and the publisher's name.

And yet something is clearly different: the headquarter is no longer in New York City but in New Orleans and the familiar parchment in the middle of the cover announces different topics, none of which has to do with accommodation or black businesses. What the book is going to tackle is everyday issues endured by the black community including "police brutality", "racial profiling" and "microaggressions". It is sufficient to move further in the reading of the book to remark that *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book* is a sort of mock-version of Green's directory which condemns the optimism surrounding Obama's so-called post-racial America: despite being considered a peaceful, hate-free nation after his election there is still much work to be done toward a just life in common.

One of the book's very first pages makes a comparison between two sentences uttered almost seventy years apart: the first one was written in the 1949 *Green Book* and the second one was spoken by Derrick Johnson, a member of the NAACP, while reflecting on the traveling conditions for blacks in Missouri in recent years. The *Green Book*'s sentence is infused with hope and promise of a better future, referring to a time when blacks will have earned the same rights as their white fellows, thus making its publication obsolete. The answer it gets though is a clash with real life where, despite the *Green Book* not being published anymore, a new version would be useful. Incidents reported in the Midwestern state have confirmed how blacks are not yet completely safe when driving, thus shattering Green's hope and optimism with the data that are provided throughout the book. The author remarks how the information given is not accompanied by comments, leaving them to readers and their own judgments.

The introduction to *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book* states the aim of such publication: it is "[...] a collection of occurrences, information, and data that document a pattern of racial bias against Black people in the 21st century. The events included took place between the years 2013 and

2016” (Miles 3). Two points stand out immediately from such declaration: not only will the book list racial incidents instead of being a travel directory and a collection of accommodations, but it will also focus on a very recent and limited time frame. There is still something in common with its predecessor, though: “[...] like the original *Green Book*, this book documents a United States that does not welcome Black people as equal citizens” (4). Miles’ introduction is rather aggressive and such energy is employed to debunk the idea of “post-racial” America with practical facts.

Practical facts concerning matters such as education and the prison system are indeed provided in *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book*’s introductory pages. As psychologists had proved the bad effects of segregated schooling upon black children at the time of the Brown vs Board of Education decision (1954), so Miles proves that the black and white communities react differently according to the resources given. African Americans are usually the ones provided with less services, such as education, and more likely to end up in jail for petty or serious crimes. Miles sees such inequality in basic needs as one of racism and violence’s causes. But she does not exculpate whites: both ordinary citizens and patrolmen are still guided by racist thoughts when interacting with blacks or other non-whites.

Instead of listing advice on how to have one’s car fixed or guide safely on the road, Miles writes a “What You Can Do” paragraph to sensitize people to the specter of racism still hovering over America. She suggests that people start acting on a personal level first, condemning their relatives or friends’ racial comments and surrounding themselves with like-minded people with whom to create a group. If such groups do not already exist, activists should create their own and involve more and more people through word of mouth and social media; when a local group has been shaped, the next step to take is act on a national level. Jan Miles acts like Victor Hugo Green when she strongly invites the book’s readers to share it and spread it around – act like the Esso gas stations operators, in a nutshell. Should all her instructions fail, she gives one final piece of advice: “consider relocating to Hawaii” (13). The state is the last resort since it is away from the continent and offers the chance to start a new life living racism behind; but it is also a destination whose tolerance is proven by data. *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book* lists Hawaii as a state with no active hate group and one of the lowest percentages of black victims – 1 out of 20 involved in racial incidents. The only negative percentage is the one regarding the imprisonment ratio, where blacks are more numerous than whites (59).

As the *Green Book* before, Miles' work lists all the American states; differently from it though, it provides a percentage of the black population residing in each one of them, data like the poverty and unemployment rates, the active hate groups, the 2016 election results and the toll of racial incidents. The "identikit" is almost always enriched with a number of "notable incidents" where African Americans were either wounded, killed or harassed by individuals or the police.

Once again, a comparison between the two versions of the *Green Book* is necessary. Green's issues never attacked inequality directly and did not portray the race relations in scary terms: it used softer terms like aggravation and humiliation to identify racism but did not describe expressions of it like murders or verbal violence. What it actually cared for was the support of the black middle class and helping them travel safely in Jim Crow land. Miles' text is more matter-of-fact and does not filter reality but portrays it as it actually is, forcing a reality check upon those people who believe racism has vanished from the United States.

According to Miles' book Illinois, Louisiana and Maryland are the most vicious states in terms of percentage of black victims of police attacks, despite having less active hate groups than other regions (13, 7 and 11 groups respectively). As for such groups, they are mostly present in California, Florida, Tennessee and Texas (they all have 26 hate groups) and Alabama (21). Such results underline the concentration of most racial incidents in the South – Wilkerson affirms that Florida still has a reputation for having a racist background (66), with interesting points on the East and West Coasts too. The most virtuous states in terms of race relations seem to be Hawaii, as written above, and Alaska – the latter having no active hate groups and two black victims out of 18 (Miles 24).

The new version of the *Green Book* is a sign of the times because many offenses are committed through social media, like the application Snapchat and posts on Facebook and Twitter. Miles seems to point out the fact that racism nowadays is active not only in real life, but also in media which are often beyond our control and where people find it easier to get away from punishment.

A book spurred by the need to voice the victims of racial attacks and the great deal of incidents, *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book* proves to be a valid alternative to the original *Green Book*. While traveling conditions seem to have improved in the last decades and more black travelers resort to applications and describe their journeys in blogs, one of the major, enduring

aftermath of racism is hate carried out daily and with no particular reason. Therefore the new version of the *Green Book* might be useful as eye-opener on a number of questions which Green's directories themselves were not able to solve, including harassment and mass incarceration as denounced in Ava DuVernay's 2016 documentary *13th* about the continuation of slavery through Jim Crow first and mass incarceration then. One of the people interviewed by Wilkerson for her book *The Warmth of Other Suns* (2010) had expressed the same thought twenty years earlier by criticizing the North, especially Los Angeles, and claiming that it was not that different from the South in certain aspects: one of this was the prison system, where black people serving time outnumbered whites (438).

The Post-Racial Negro Green Book is not the only book that replaced Green's directory with contemporary data. Miles herself mentioned the *New Orleans BlackBook*, an online directory listing black businesses in the Crescent City and guiding African Americans towards the opening of their own trades⁴⁷. The directory not only argues that there is a wide gap in terms of wealth between blacks and whites, but also how African Americans themselves spend little within their community. In order to bring about a change and spread more money, black Americans should start spending their resources in black-owned businesses and benefit their own community.

3.4. *Green Book* (2018)

In recent years quite a number of directors have tackled the issue of racism by setting their movies in the American Fifties and Sixties. A good example of that is provided by *The Help*, the 2011 movie based on the same-title novel by Kathryn Stockett describing the lives of housekeepers dwelling in the South; or *The Butler*, a 2013 picture telling the life of a butler at the White House. The *Green Book* did find space in narrative, for example in the already-mentioned *Lovecraft Country* and in Toni Morrison's *Home* (2012); the latter only mentions Green's directory though, while Ruff describes the book more thoroughly despite changing its name in *Safe Negro Travel*

47 "The New Orleans BlackBook". <http://www.theneworleansblackbook.com/main/>.

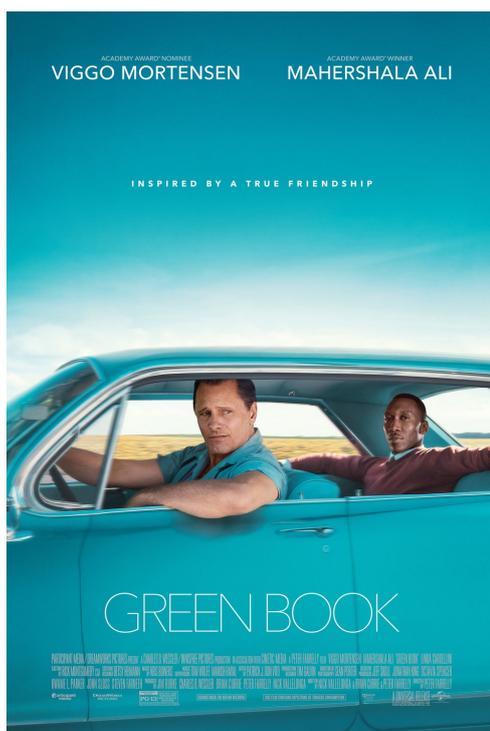
Guide. There are a couple of similarities between the two books: both feature a main character who is a Korean War veteran and are set in the American Fifties.

Literature is not the only medium where the *Green Book* has been portrayed. In 2018 *Green Book*, a movie directed by Peter Farrelly came out worldwide and was much appreciated by audiences. It won a total of three Academy Awards, including the one for Best Picture, where it beat movie giants like Spike Lee and his *BlacKkKlansman*. Despite earning relevant awards and being appreciated by the average public, it encountered severe backlash from quite a number of viewers, especially black Americans. And what about the actual *Green Book*? Did it find an accurate portrayal in the movie or was it just mentioned *en passant*, thus trivializing its relevance for the black community?

Based on a true story, the *Green Book*'s plot starts back in the early Sixties in New York City where the Italian American bouncer Frank Vallelonga (Viggo Mortensen), nicknamed "Tony Lip" for his often talking much and enticing people into doing what he wants, is looking for a new job after being fired from a nightclub. He has a family to support and is too proud not to be the breadwinner anymore; after carrying out a few odd jobs he decides it is time he found a more serious occupation and answers the announcement of a pianist needing a driver to accompany him on his tour. Little does Tony know that the musician is black.

Vallelonga, who lives in the Bronx, is introduced as the typical Italian American wearing a white singlet when at home, eating much and mixing Italian words in his otherwise fluent English. He does not have much consideration for black Americans and differently from his wife he believes they are loafers. That is the reason why he is rather shocked when he discovers that the man he is maybe going to work for is black, and yet a "special" one: he lives alone in a lush apartment above Carnegie Hall, his manners are refined and his language is haughty. He is no average artist but Don Shirley (Mahersala Ali), a fine jazz musician and composer whose albums include the masterpiece *Orpheus in the Underworld* (1956). Vallelonga and Shirley are pretty different: one often peppers his language with swear words and is rather braggart, the other sits on a pedestal and is completely absorbed in his art. The former bouncer needs to earn some money though, therefore he accepts the new job which implies accompanying the musician on his concerts scattered in the United States (picture 16).

Before the two leave, Tony Lip shows his wife Dolores (Linda Cardellini) a travel guide the musician and him will need on the road, especially in the West and South: the *Negro Motorist Green Book*, a slender book which is supposed to help black travelers find accommodation and restaurants in Jim Crow America. After the initial embarrassment, partly due to the men's different background and story, Tony Lip and Don Shirley slowly become friends and face various incidents along the road, including a quarrel with the police which has them arrested and then released thanks to the intervention of Robert Kennedy. Life on the road is also characterized by some light episodes, like the one which sees Shirley teach Tony how to write love letters to his wife. The musician slowly comes out of his shell and proves to be a nice companion.



Picture 16: the *Green Book*'s theatrical poster. As can be clearly seen, there is no trace of the travel directory but only Tony Lip and Don Shirley.
IMbd

As discrimination is still something black Americans have to contend with, Don Shirley has to put up with whites trying to ruin his career with every means, not only on the road: when he has to perform in the South they provide him with a piano different from the one he usually plays on and let him rehearse in a litter-covered stage. The last straw is during a dinner when Shirley is refused a seat because of the color of his skin: Vallelonga proves his friendship and care by getting angry and having the musician eat in another place. The discrimination that the musician faces is not only based on his complexion, but also on his sexual orientation: being black and homosexual puts him in trouble on the road and pushes him to find a shelter in his art.

The movie's ending could not be more reassuring: Don Shirley and his new friend go back to New York for the Christmas break and are made to pull over by a passing patrol car. The two believe they hit a sundown town late at night, as they had done previously, but this time is different: the policeman just wants to make sure they are traveling safe despite the copious snow. They do arrive safe and sound and Don Shirley is accompanied to his luxurious place above Carnegie Hall, but Tony does not want to leave his new friend alone on Christmas night: he thus invites him home and proves how his whole family is finally willing to accept African Americans.

There has been a time in America when Italian Americans and African Americans were considered quite at the same level. The first ones were sometimes perceived as blacks due to their complexion and were thought to be equally loafers and dangerous to the WASP majority. That did not prevent the two groups from competing for jobs, especially in Northern cities. According to Wilkerson, ethnic groups such as Eastern and Southern Europeans and African Americans shared something like working the land they did not own and moving to other countries in order to look for more and better opportunities; they were made fun of because of their accents and traditions and were deemed loafers. Caucasian immigrants had an advantage over blacks, though: they could hide their roots by changing their old surnames into Anglo-Saxon ones. Being light-skinned, there was not much difference from the long-time American residents, while African Americans had more trouble in hiding their ethnicity provided they were light-skinned (386). The fear towards the two ethnic groups was shaped into stereotypes which crystallized the perception of them and still endure in certain cases, as the *Green Book* movie proved.

Italian Americans must have resented their representation as braggart, loud-mouthed individuals living in big families as the case with Tony Lip. He dwells in the Bronx, a borough which welcomed a wide Italian community in the early decades of the twentieth century after it left its Harlem sections to African Americans (Wilkerson 236). Traces of the former Italian presence in a now predominantly Latin American borough can be found in restaurants displaying Italian names and in the oldest cemetery sections, where the majority of the deceased bore an Italian surname. Tony Lip does not live alone but with his wife Dolores and their two children Frankie and Nick, apart from being joined by their large families on festivities such as Christmas; spending time together and eating large quantities of food, with visible results on the weight, are still associated with Italianness. Despite having been in the United States for a few generations, they still speak some Italian and underline their speeches by gesticulating pretty frequently. Not only is Tony Lip

rather chubby because of all the food he swallows, usually Italian food like spaghetti and meatballs, but he is also braggart and rather reckless when risking his life in fights at the club where he works.

Vallelonga proves a difficult surname to pronounce, therefore the musician suggests that the bouncer shorten it to Valle. Tony Lip does not accept such proposal happily though, maybe because he sees that as an outer intervention upon his family name, therefore his identity:

DON SHIRLEY: *“As guest of honor, I will be announced when I enter these intimate events. You will be announced as well. Vallelonga may be difficult to pronounce. I was thinking ‘Valle’ would be more appropriate. Tony Valle, it’s short and simple”*.

TONY LIP: *“My last name is Vallelonga and I ain’t changing it for nobody. They don’t like it, they can shove it up their ass, I’ll just wait outside”*.

Tony Lip’s refusal might be seen as an attempt to resist the Americanization often imposed upon immigrants, when they were forced to leave their former names and languages behind once entering the United States (Testi 114). The Italian American bouncer seems proud of his Italian ancestry as he often employs Italian words in his speech (including quite a great deal of expletives) and lives in a family following Italian traditions.

Stereotypes are applied to African Americans as well, even to a refined character like Don Shirley. When he is first introduced he is shown as a sophisticated and well-mannered man differently from the clumsy and spontaneous Italian American bouncer; and yet he is victim of close-mindedness as well. The movie features a now popular scene where the two friends are driving through Kentucky while heading to a concert: what better place to have the famous Kentucky Fried Chicken? While Tony Lip seems pretty familiar with the food and enjoys it, Don Shirley is rather reluctant at greasing his precious fingers with that oily food. When disdainfully admitting not to know the taste of fried chicken, Tony Lip is rather surprised because he expected his friend to binge-eat that food usually associated with African America: *“[...] You people love the fried chicken, the grits, the colored greens...I love it, too. The negro cooks used to make it when I was in the army”*, as if he was expecting Don Shirley to act as an ordinary African American. A crystallized impression of black Americans regards music tastes as well. While the two friends keep driving down South the radio is on and pours music from great r&b artists whom Shirley, trained as a classical musician, ignores and disapproves of:

TONY LIP: “*You never heard a Chubby Checker?*”.

DON SHIRLEY: “*Of course I’ve heard of him, I just never heard his music!*”.

It is enough to startle the former bouncer once again:

TONY LIP: “*How could you not know this music? Chubby Checker, Lil’ Richard, Sam Cooke, Aretha – these are your people!*”.

Shirley proves able to react and argues that not everybody fits into stereotypes by claiming:

“*I’m saying, just because other negro people listen to a certain kind of music doesn’t mean I have to. Nor do we all have to eat the same food*”.

Another stereotype usually attached to African Americans is their supposedly innate talents, especially at singing and playing music. As a consequence of that, black Americans that study hard to acquire a technique and the time they devote to practicing are often overlooked. According to the anthropologist Cristiana Natali, who examined the history of dance and the role played by black dancers, the latter have been denied opportunities given to their white colleagues because they were thought to already possess a gift and a quality that deemed exercise not necessary (43-45). That sometimes meant excluding them from scholarship and taking their ability for granted, while praising white counterparts for mastering complex techniques. The *Green Book* partly follows this tradition by painting blacks as musically gifted and always expecting excellent performances from them, despite mistreating them with Jim Crow laws; that is the case with Don Shirley but other musicians as well, like jazz wonder Fats Waller⁴⁸ in the Thirties and Forties.

Speaking of music, the soundtrack to the *Green Book* is made of both classic soul tracks and original songs specifically composed by a young African American musician, Kris Bowers. When asked to create the music for Farrelly’s movie, he tried to reproduce the atmosphere that listeners back in the Fifties and Sixties were familiar with when turning on the radio or going to clubs. Among the already-known tracks there are some jazz standards, including Arden and Mercer’s *That Old Black Magic* and Irving Berlin’s *Blue Skies*, both included in the repertoire of most jazz musicians. As for Bowers’ compositions, one of them is named after the *Green Book*’s motto, ‘Vacation without Aggravation’. The musical piece can be divided into two parts since the tempo changes and the feelings it arises are different: the piano sets the tone for the first section, which is

48 Jazz aficionados were crazy about Thomas “Fats” Waller’s excellence at stride piano, a piano style created in Harlem in the Twenties. Little did they know that he was also a fine classical pianist who had spent his formative years studying Bach and other European composers; they were merely interested in seeing him “playing the fool”, often without considering his mastering complex music (Polillo, 399-407).

rather dream-like and soft until the break and crescendo rise tension. *Vacation without Aggravation* slowly fades out and does not seem to end altogether. The track might reproduce through sounds what an average black traveler might have felt when driving in Jim Crow America: first relaxation and excitement at the thought of vacation, then tension and anxiety when encountering the police or going through a sundown town. The fact of *Vacation without Aggravation* fading out and not fully closing might suggest an interval from the harassment experienced on the road before it starts again or a moment of quiet when resting at a black-friendly place.

Since the movie is titled *Green Book*, many viewers expected the travel guide to be thoroughly examined in Farrelly's work and be its main feature. Actually it might have had another name, for example "Two Friends on the Road" or "Black and White Friendship", since the *Green Book* basically mentions and shows the directory only a couple of times all through the movie. Already the official trailer was misleading: in its 2'30 length it never takes into account the travel directory but only focuses on the two friends and their experience on the road.

Many viewers have blamed such misrepresentation on the fact of Farrelly and screenwriter Vallelonga (the son of the actual Tony Lip) being white and thus not fully realizing the relevance of the *Green Book* back in the Jim Crow Era. The point of view represented is probably the one of the white man proving that not everyone was racist towards African Americans, but actually helped the community the way Tony Lip did. As a matter of fact, a great deal of viewers must have left the movie theaters feeling satisfied with the happy ending and thinking that maybe traveling while black was not always dangerous. Books like *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book* have argued that racism is still alive and well, though. Even if the *Green Book* does paint many white characters, especially Tony Lip, as "white saviors", that does not mean that they discarded racism completely.

Don Shirley's own family panned the movie by claiming that it was a "symphony of lies" that did not celebrate the musician's life and legacy properly. One might say they are partially right since the focus seems to be on Tony Lip's transformation from a braggart, rather racist man to a kind and protective friend. The change is quite evident: one of the *Green Book*'s first scene depicts the Italian American bouncer dropping the glasses from which two black men had been drinking in the garbage. The distrust towards Don Shirley himself gradually vanishes and is replaced by warm friendship, the same that united the actual characters in real life. Being based on a real story, the movie stimulated curiosity towards the musician and his friend and somehow gave Don Shirley his

due by telling his story, even if partially, and spreading his music as proven by many musical videos uploaded to YouTube after the movie came out⁴⁹.

Criticism also came from director Spike Lee who was running in the Best Picture category too with his *BlacKkKlansman*. When the Academy Award was won by Farrelly's movie, Lee did not react well and was seen turning his back at the stage while the winners delivered their acceptance speech. He also expressed his frustration at being nominated for an award with a traveling movie and losing once again⁵⁰. He made a clear reference to *Driving Miss Daisy*, Bruce Beresford's 1989 comedy about a black chauffeur driving around an elderly white woman from Georgia; it won in the best Picture category while Lee's *Do the Right Thing* was nominated for Best Supporting Actor and Best Original Screenplay but lost. Lee's thought about the *Green Book* being merely a rewriting of *Driving Miss Daisy* is not completely incorrect because the stories told are not that different: even if the former's driver is white while the latter is black, they both describe the friendship that slowly blossoms between blacks and whites in the face of racism.

What about the *Green Book* itself? As seen in the previous chapters, it was not a mere travel directory of the likes of *Go Guide to Pleasant Motoring* or *Travelguide* but something more: a promotion of black businesses and a list of accommodations spread around the world which proved that African Americans were increasingly traveling outside the United States. Farrelly's movie does not seem to celebrate such legacy, since only few minutes out of the total 130 feature the travel directory and the picture does not even mention the history and background that inspired the creation of black travel directories.

The first time the *Green Book* is mentioned is when Tony Lip is ready to leave in order to accompany Don Shirley on his tour. He is approached by a music executive who hands him a copy of Green's directory and mysteriously adds "You are going to need this. It's the book I told you about. Sometimes you're staying in the same hotels, and sometimes you're not". Tony Lip merely looks at the book, without fully realizing its purpose (picture 17). He is then approached by Dolores who wonders what that little book, whose cover is green, really is. Her husband dispels her doubt:

49 <https://youtu.be/pc61C8ji1yk> offers a Greatest Hits, while <https://youtu.be/EQdUlj4tLc> is a rare footage of a live performance.

50 "Oscars 2019 Spike Lee says Green Book 'not my cup of tea'". *YouTube*, uploaded by NEWS channel, 25 February 2019. <https://youtu.be/QXd8vSbAFak>.

TONY LIP: “Lists all the places coloreds can stay down south. Like if you’re traveling while black”.

DOLORES: “Traveling while black?”.

TONY LIP: “Yeah, like if you’re black but you gotta travel for some reason”.

DOLORES: “They got a special book for that?”

TONY LIP: “I guess”.



Picture 17: the *Green Book* as shown in the movie. Its cover is the same as the actual guide from 1959.

Green Book.

The dialogue between the couple proves how both of them ignore the existence and purpose of the travel directory. Dolores proves even more surprised when hearing about traveling by black and wondering if African Americans really need a book like the one her husband is holding to travel around the country. Either she does not know the perils faced by black drivers, or she has heard of them but does not believe they should need a guide to drive around their own country. Whites are not completely unaware of the *Green Book's* existence, though: the record company executive is aware of it and presumably cares about his customer's safety, therefore he hands it to the Italian American driver.

The next time the *Green Book* is shown is when Tony Lip and the musician are already on the road and venturing down south. The driver carelessly looks at the guide after stopping at a Louisville Motel which is supposed to welcome black guests generously: it is quite run-down though and the other guests do not seem happy to meet that haughty musician that cuts himself off from their games and amusements. After being badgered by the other black customers, Don Shirley finally leaves and ventures into the city.

Tony Lip is staying at another hotel in the meantime, this reflecting a condition lived by actual musicians that were put up in black motels while their white collaborators and friends found accommodations in separate venues. The former bouncer is seen in bed while browsing through the *Green Book* trying to learn more about it, without much success (picture 18). He observes the ads and reads aloud the guide's motto which goes "vacation without aggravation": nevertheless, his reading is interrupted by a man knocking on his door and warning him about Don Shirley's drunken incident at a near-by bar.



Picture 18: Tony Lip holding the *Green Book* in his hotel room
Green Book.

The *Green Book* was especially useful to avoid the infamous sundown towns and being caught there after sunset. As proven by Loewen, such towns were predominantly scattered in the Midwest where states like Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky hosted quite a great deal of them. Even if the South did have some sundown cities they were not as numerous as those in the West: as a matter of fact, Tony Lip and Don Shirley do not pass through them, despite traveling through and performing in states such as Georgia and Mississippi. The movie shows Louisville, KY, Macon, GA, Memphis, TN, Mayersville, MS, and Birmingham, AL, as the two friends' destinations, but

neither of them is a sundown town⁵¹ according to Loewen's research. That did not mean that their journey was danger-free, though.

3.5. The *Green Book* in the visual arts: *Green-Book, Orange Balloon* (2016) by Tina Mion and *Sanctuary* (2018) by Derrick Adams



Picture 19: *Green-Book, Orange Balloon*

by Tina Mion

Oil on linen

tinamion.com

The *Negro Motorist Green Book* was mainly represented in literature and pictures as seen from the previous paragraphs, but it has also found a small place in the visual art. Contemporary artist Tina Mion released an oil on linen in 2016, titled *Green-Book, Orange Balloon*, which is now preserved at her house/ gallery La Posada in Arizona (picture 19). It depicts an African American couple in what looks like a mountain landscape, posing before their car and bearing a dignified

51 James Loewen's website lists sundown towns, both certain and suspected. The cities above mentioned are not included in his list that can be consulted at <https://sundown.tougaloo.edu/content.php?file=sundowntowns-whitemap.html>.

look; they also look quite severe, either because they are posing before the artist and want to convey a regal expression or because they are trying to conceal their worries by exuding determination and composure. There are no official descriptions of the work of art, therefore one can only make deductions based on their own sensitivity and knowledge.

Despite being elderly the lady holds a balloon, an object which is usually associated with childhood and amusements. Mion might have wanted to say that the orange balloon stands for the lady's youthful energy with which she faces the journey on the road; with its lightness the balloon might also represent the need to leave one's burdens behind and "traveling light", as the popular jazz standard says. The *Green Book* is not directly present in the work of art but only in its title, even though its story is strongly evoked by the couple's expressions and their car adventure across Jim Crow America.

Another work of art, this time an exhibition, took place in New York City's Museum of Arts and Design in 2018 and was set up by visual artist Derrick Adams, known for reflecting on black issues and translating them into works of art. *Sanctuary* was dedicated to the *Green Book* and the African American traveling experience through an exhibition which sought to literally involve its visitors in what meant to leave a safe environment behind to venture into the open road.



Picture 20: the miniature highway and the wooden panels of *Sanctuary*
wallpaper.com

The project consisted in visual representations of travel and what is associated with it, from the means of transportation to luggage. The exhibition room featured a suspended, wooden miniature highway on which automobiles ran; or better, miniature automobiles made from flat caps to which four wheels were added (picture 20). That type of hat was usually worn by black chauffeurs, as seen in *Driving Miss Daisy*, therefore it represented African American drivers. The cars were seen enter a tunnel carved on wooden panels showing pages from the actual *Green Book*: despite moving towards a black hole, they were also driving towards those safe places embodied by the addresses listed in the travel guide. Being waist-high, the miniature highway might have stood for the obstacles, both physical and moral, endured by travelers on the road.

On the corner of the wooden panels and spread out in the rooms were also miniature representations of houses and motels which recreated those that did welcome African American guests. They were made out of milk cartons and were lit from within, once again conveying a feeling of domesticity and warmth. The fact of their being created from an object like a milk carton, which is usually present in the average household, enhanced that feeling. The very title of the exhibition, *Sanctuary*, already conveyed a feeling of coziness and protection.

Sanctuary also presented doors that stood for the boundary between an interior, usually domestic space and an exterior one, and each visitor decided to go through them or not according to their own will. Other panels were adorned with material other than wood, like the checked cloth which evoked both the urban environment where many blacks used to dwell or migrate, and the outer surface of a purse or other accessories. The room was also decorated by accessories like combs and mirrors and Adams himself declared that he was impressed by the *Green Book* mentioning a great deal of beauty shops and schools as main businesses in black neighborhoods⁵².

Derrick Adams' 2018 project proved to be quite a sensory experience for visitors for letting them literally immerse in the 'traveling world' lived by African Americans. As with the *Green Book* before it provided a feeling of safety, in this case recreated with the milk cartons/ miniature houses, and evoked the urban experience and black businesses through the material on the panels. It was an accurate representation of both the traveling experience and the importance of finding a shelter with

52 Mathew, Theresa. "An Art Show Inspired by The Green Book". citylab.com, 13 February 2018, <https://www.citylab.com/design/2018/02/new-art-inspired-by-an-old-travel-guide/553070/>.

which to protect oneself from outer dangers. By creating the exhibition, Derrick Adams showed to know and care about the *Green Book* and its relevance for the black community.

Conclusion

My research has shown that the *Green Book* was not any other travel directory, but one helping African Americans move safely through Jim Crow America and find a safe place in which to rest and enjoy their time off. The fact of its having been published for thirty years proves that black Americans did need its guidance until the acts passed by the Johnson administration outlawed discrimination and allowed them to stay in places other than their vacation spots like Idlewild. The *Green Book* also stood out from previous and coeval guides by providing practical advice such as fixing one's car and arrange one's journey with care: Green presumably thought that the key to facing a journey well was to prepare the car beforehand and make sure one was properly equipped before hitting the road. The guide also celebrated the black middle class' growth through the list of businesses run by them and the expansion of places to visit: when the publication ceased in the mid-Sixties, the directory had boasted more than one hundred pages and the places listed covered almost the entire world, Asia and Oceania being excluded for perhaps not being popular destinations yet. As for its legacy, books seem the media which best portrayed the guide and respected the role it played in the black community: all the literary works examined described the risks on the road accurately, especially policemen harassing drivers, and the relevant role played by volunteers who put their own lives at risk while looking for black-friendly places. Books even proved that times have changed and old publications should be updated in order not to look obsolete: *The Post-Racial Negro Green Book* (2017) was inspired by the older directory but transformed its topics into issues still faced by the black community in contemporary society, including racism on social media and racial profiling. Its author Jan Miles might have thought that instead of listing black-friendly places, her work should be a compendium of issues faced by African Americans in ordinary life and on social media. It should help shed a light on the hate-filled atmosphere still hanging over post-racial America and stimulate collective action to improve society.

Even the visual arts proved valuable at spreading the *Green Book*'s legacy, especially the *Sanctuary* exhibition (2018) by Derrick Adams: by creating a space where visitors could live the traveling experience firsthand, it reconstructed the way black travelers must have felt back in the Jim Crow era. The fact of installing doors, which prompted a reflection on the difference between interior and exterior places, and a high-waist miniature highway which restricted the movement was significant for the fact of involving people and their senses. The only medium which seems to have partly failed to pay a right tribute to the *Green Book* was the movie by the same title (2018). As seen

before, it did not linger on the background leading to the directory's publication, but mostly focused on the slowly-blossoming friendship between "Tony Lip" and Don Shirley. Why could it be so? Perhaps Farrelly's *Green Book* was conceived as a light movie which only wanted to entertain people, therefore an in-depth analysis of racism on the road could have prevented its commercial success. The movie's authors might have thought that serious topics like discrimination on the road should be examined by documentaries or other "niche" products; if they did think so, though, they should have chosen another title replacing the misleading *Green Book*. Another explanation might be that the actual Vallelonga's son Nick, who was among the screenwriters, mainly wanted to remember his father's life and career without providing too much historical context. Despite the flaws, *Green Book* did manage to arouse interest around the travel directory and contributed to inspire my work.

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