

The Green Book Project: Report

Christina Sinclair Jones, Summer Archival Intern 2021 with

The Library at the A.J. Williams-Myers African Roots Center

Personal Anecdote

In March 2021, I - Christina Jones, a senior at Bard College at the time - reached out to the one and only Troy Ellen Dixon to ask her to kindly take me on as a summer intern with The Library at the A.J. Williams-Myers African Roots Center. As a Bard student, the African Roots Center was always incredibly important to me, a welcoming and warm place of academic solace, a source of community refuge, a beacon of Black art and music in the Greater Kingston Area, and, put simply, a place I could go when I needed to feel inspired and embraced. When thinking about how I wanted to spend my summer as a college graduate and a soon-to-be graduate student, I kept coming back to doing ethnographic research for the African Roots Center. Very fortunately for me, Troy Ellen agreed to take me under her wing as the Summer Archival Intern; what is more, she assigned me quite the special project to tackle: engaging in archival, quasi-ethnographic research on sites along the *Green Book* system in the Hudson Valley. I was immediately intrigued, and agreed faster than Troy Ellen could qualify her research proposition with a, “This sort of work has not been done extensively,” or a, “This might be really hard to do in the current digital, remote moment.”

“The Green Book Project” has afforded me the opportunity to tell stories of Black American Life which very urgently need telling. Black locals need to understand their history, as understanding your ancestry and the places, people, and experiences from which your energy and being descend, is crucial to understanding yourself. History informs place-making decisions and aspirations. Moreover, non-Black locals need to understand the history of the Black people with whom they share space, as learning about people’s history creates space for a more comprehensive, whole understanding of people with whom we interact, as well as for empathy. These stories need to be told; the *Green Book* needs to be understood as a simultaneously national and local system, complex and Black. I’m incredibly grateful to have been able to tell some of these stories this summer.

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I. Background/Historicization

“The Green Book Project” is a hybrid archival-ethnographic research project which seeks to give attention to and construct narratives around the various *Green Book* sites which sustained Black Life and Black Travel in the Hudson Valley of Upstate New York. *The Negro Travelers’ Green Book* was a guide for Black travelers in the U.S., Canada, and the Caribbean which listed over 3,000 businesses - most of which were Black-owned - where Black people could safely/most reliably exist during their travels. Victor Hugo Green founded this guide - first

called “*The Negro Motorist Green Book*” and then “*The Negro Travelers’ Green Book*” - in 1936 with Alma Green, his wife and business confidante, and published new issues of it each and every year up until the publication of the 1966-67 edition. In 1952, Alma Green assumed the role of publisher following Victor Hugo Green’s retirement “from active participation.” Alma Green was given official recognition seven years later, in 1959, when she was featured on the masthead as editor. Leading an entirely non-male staff, Alma continued to publish new issues of *The Negro Travelers’ Green Book* every year until 1966.

The 1948 issue of *The Negro Travelers’ Green Book* included as an introduction the following statement: “There will be a day sometime in the near future when this guide will not have to be published. That is when we as a race will have equal opportunities and privileges in the United States. It will be a great day for us to suspend this publication.” This introduction would preface many issues of the Greens’ travel guides. The passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act seemed to many Americans a step toward the sort of racial integration that the Greens were confident would come about one day in the United States. Perhaps the Greens took the passing of this legislation to mean that there was no longer an urgent need for annually-updated editions of their travel guides. Victor Green often cited “embarrassment” during travels as something against which Black travelers would be protected by following his guide. Racism is undignified; the travel guides were to allow Black travelers to preserve their dignity in the face of the ugly and brutish bigotry to which they could very well be subjected, should they be in the wrong place around the wrong people - or, put bluntly, in the wrong skin.

The aim of the “Green Book Project” is to do the work of telling stories of the *Green Book* system as one which was not only not geographically limited to the South, but one which was incredibly rich and complex right in Kingston, New York and its neighboring towns. Travel was - and still very much is - unsafe for Black people across the United States, and the Greater Kingston Area is no exception to this reality. Engaging in close and sustained archival research to make sense of some of the ways in which Black people safely and vibrantly navigated the Hudson Valley - such as where they dined, where they slept, where they got their hair done, where they spent their leisure time, which highway routes they traveled and to where, and for which ferry rides they might have opted - is the work of “The Green Book Project.”

Keywords to associate with the *Green Book* system:

- **Black community mutualism**
- **Black-owned businesses** serving and being supported financially by Black people
- **Protection** and **patronage**
- **Safety**, as both physical and emotional
- **Dignity** and protection against **embarrassment**

→ A note on “embarrassment”: Introductions to many editions of the *Green Book* read: “Just What You Have Been Looking For!! NOW WE CAN TRAVEL WITHOUT EMBARRASSMENT.” At first, it seemed curious to highlight “embarrassment” as something against which to actively protect Black travelers, as opposed to, say, violence or legal trouble. However, an important realization has been that being able to move through various spaces in a dignified, humanizing manner is incredibly important to a person’s emotional safety and wellbeing, and that being embarrassed and dehumanized poses a serious threat to the wellbeing of Black travelers, just as violence and legal trouble do. A single human is one whole, comprehensive person: to defend against embarrassment is to contribute positively to the effort protecting this single human in a comprehensive manner, for a threat to a person’s emotional or mental safety is a threat to their safety on the whole.

→ A note on leisure: Leisure has direct class implications. Among many other vile things, Jim Crow laws worked to gatekeep leisure so as to keep Black people from enjoying this sort of purely-free time, time unmarked by capitalist labor demands. Within the Black community, not all folks had the economic means with which to afford to claim leisure as their own. The *Green Book* system was meant for Black people who were in a position to travel, either for work purposes (E.G: as touring performers) or for leisure purposes. The sheer concept of Black leisure and Black people claiming time for fun and/or economic self-betterment is a radical one, one worthy of celebration and continued protection.

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II. Project Aims

1. To educate by disrupting the widely-circulated narrative which holds the *Green Book* system to be one which was exclusive to the South and to big urban areas in the North, this project seeks to make it clear that the Hudson Valley *Green Book* system not only existed, but was complex, rich, and colorful.
2. To highlight dignity and humanity as integral to what it means to travel safely as a Black person under Jim Crow segregation. Safety means more than merely being physically alive and unharmed: safety also means feeling comfortable and unthreatened, unprovoked, and welcomed. The purpose of discussing behaviors which became necessary for many Black people to perform during their travels, like putting on a black cap upon being stopped by the police in order to pose as a chauffeur, is to highlight the everyday indignities which came with Black travel, and the ways in which behaviors of moving through and adapting spaces to maximize physical and emotional safety developed around these everyday indignities.
3. To engage folks of the Greater Kingston Area in community thinking. Local historians have been vitally important sources of digital archives, street address tracking, local lore, etc. This project would not be anywhere near as rich or comprehensive as it is without their expertise and generous assistance. Moreover, the African Roots Center has put out

community calls for information through its social media accounts in order to invite people in the Greater Kingston Area to be directly involved with this research, in capacities such as providing the archivists with local information about the *Green Book* system, or engaging in ethnographic interviews.

4. Acknowledging and engaging directly with the ever-upsetting and incredibly inconvenient gaps and unknowns that pop up around all Black American history. Discrepancies, errors, and information which has been omitted altogether and/or blotted out show up in all sorts of historical documents to do with Black people in this country. One comes upon a series of roadblocks - gaps in information - when engaging in this kind of archival research, and this can be disheartening. "The Green Book Project" confronts these gaps and uses them as a part of the fabric of the story of the Hudson Valley *Green Book* system in their own right; that is, not evading, but telling the story of, the reality that one as an archivist faces that many things that one wishes to know about Black people in a certain area simply cannot be known, due to several centuries of systemic gatekeeping of records and narratives which include or center Black people and Black Life.

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III. Methods

Doing this sort of archival research remotely, in what is still very much a global pandemic, is unconventional. It pushes you as an archivist to think and work in a flexible mode. Libraries have proven encouraging and grounding in this moment of quasi-improvisatory research. Collaborating via email with various local historians has been incredibly important in helping to move this project forward in the following ways: figuring out what, if anything, currently stands at the street addresses listed for sites in various *Green Book* guides; learning the history of specific sites, with a particularly close look at sites listed as being located in Kingston; and figuring out which, if any, of the sites remain active today. Moreover, getting in touch with local historians and archivists across the Tri-State Area in order to seek out and order various books, maps, and other physical source materials, in addition to working with The Library at the A.J. Williams-Myers African Roots Center to obtain access to various digital archives through websites like *Newspapers.com*, has been integral to acquiring archival research material. (Note: Two books which have proven particularly generative are *Driving While Black: African American Travel and the Road to Civil Rights* by Gretchen Sorin, and *Overground Railroad: The Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America* by Candacy Taylor.) Making cold calls to all sorts of businesses which are currently in operation and which are found at the same street addresses listed for various sites in *The Negro Travelers' Green Book*, such as a golf club currently in operation in Duanesburg, New York called "Hillcrest Golf Course" - this name is close to the name of the Kingston *Green Book* site listed as "The Hillcrest Golf Club" - has been necessary in working to piece together information about various *Green Book* sites, such as the

sort of character which these sites possessed at their height, and the kinds of people who frequented these sites.

Daily work on “The Green Book Project” has taken forms such as:

1. Reading source materials such as books, newspaper articles, and advertisements, and annotating/taking notes all the while.
2. Writing in a digital notebook document in a stream-of-consciousness manner: unfiltered, unedited, and as mentally uninhibited as possible.
3. Proactively dedicating time most every weekday morning to sending and replying to emails from historians and archivists, mentor at the African Roots Center, etc. It’s important to be a consistent and reliable communicator.
4. Citing source material as it is found. This helps prevent you as the researcher from needing to spend time retracing your steps at the end of your project, and desperately searching for your source materials all over again, in order to be able to provide citations. Citing source material immediately upon identifying a source as helpful and relevant ends up being a saver of energy and time.
5. Tracking gaps in information, and then reaching out to historians and archivists who work in the towns/regions under which various *Green Book* sites are listed with specific questions about these gaps.
6. Making plans with mentor during weekly check-in meetings for work and research goals for upcoming week, with the understanding that these work and research goals can and will shift as they begin to be realized - or deemed unrealizable (gaps and unknowables will show up; allow them to do so.)
7. Writing notes for presentations in a Google Slides format, and then practicing these presentations on your own, or in front of a family member or friend
→ Preparation and practice > Attempts at delivering information and presenting research in a fully-spontaneous manner. (This is not to say that ad libbing is not wonderful; it definitely helps enhance and personalize presentations.)

*Active patience → stepping away from the gaps, working on something else, and then returning to the frustrating unknowns with renewed optimism and a fresh willingness to dig, even if the digging does not result in immediate answers

*Proactive communication with local historians

*Intentionally open-minded creativity → embracing the abnormalities of digital archival research and a remote internship in order to do this work at this time of multiple global pandemics.

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IV. A List of Hudson Valley *Green Book* Sites Identified During Summer of 2021, by Type:

Hotels

1. Hotel Broadway, a hotel listed as being located at 603 Broadway in Albany, New York
 - Phone number listed for Hotel Broadway in the 1956 edition: “For Reservations Write or Phone — Phone 62-9222 Good Accommodations — Moderate Rates”
2. Kenmore Hotel, a hotel listed as being located at 76 Columbia Avenue in Albany, New York
3. Hill’s, a hotel listed as being located in Croton-On-The-Hudson, New York with no street name or building number given
4. The Clefton Hotel, a hotel listed as being located at 516 Broadway in Schenectady, New York
5. Gordon Hotel, a hotel listed as being located at 3 Canal Street in Kingston, New York
 - An excerpt from an email regarding my specific research questions about the Gordon Hotel from Bill Merchant, Deputy Director for Collections, Historian & Curator at the D&H Canal Historical Society: “I just looked at 3 Canal Street on Maps and it is shown as being in the parking lot- the Anchorage Restaurant, which is pictured, is 182 Canal Street. Perhaps the Gordon was west of here- The Beers shows a D&H Company building at where 3 Canal Street might have been....I assume it was the Gordon Hotel in the 20th century- the Canal did operate through 1917 but not with anything like the traffic it had in its heyday.”
6. Foster House Hotel, a hotel listed as being located at 310 Dakota Street in Schenectady, New York.

Motels

1. White Birch Motel, a motel listed as being located on Hwy. 9, 15 miles north of Albany, New York; a more specific street address for the motel is not given.
2. Watergate Motel, listed as being located on Albany Post Road in Croton-on-Hudson, New York with no building number given

Lodges

1. Morgan Hill Lodge: Catskills, a lodge listed with the following location: “Morgan Hill Lodge, R. D. 2 Box 379, Kingston, N.Y.”
 - Advertised in the June 1963 edition of *Ebony* as having “rooms, cabins, tennis, horseback riding, food.” (*Ebony*, June 1963: 132)

Tourist Homes

1. Tourist home listed under “Mrs. Aaron J. Oliver” as being located at 42 Spring Street in Albany, New York
2. Tourist home listed under “Mrs. S. Osterholt” as being located at 16 Crannell Street in Poughkeepsie, New York
3. Tourist home listed under “G. W. Hayes” as being located at 93 North Hamilton in Poughkeepsie, New York
4. Tourist home listed under “R. Rhinehart” as being located at 125 South Church Street in Schenectady, New York
5. Tourist home listed under “S. Kearney” as being located at 857 McDonald Avenue in Schenectady, New York
6. Tourist home listed under “Mrs. M. C. Williams” as being located at 18 Ten Broeck Place in Albany, New York
7. Tourist home listed under “Mrs. I. Dorsey” as being located at 25 Second Street in Albany, New York
8. Tourist home listed under “Mrs. Adams” as being located at 216 Hamilton Street in Albany, New York
9. Tourist home listed under “Mrs. G. Bedell” as being located at 23 Second Street in Albany, New York
10. Tourist home listed under “Mrs. C. Madison” as being located at 391 Orange Street in Albany, New York

11. Tourist home listed under “Mrs. S. Le Fever” as being located at 217 Union Street in Poughkeepsie, New York
12. Tourist home listed under “G. D. Thomas” as being located at 123 South Church Street in Schenectady, New York
13. Tourist home listed under “Mrs. Grant Thomas” as being located at 1024 Albany in Schenectady, New York

Restaurants

1. * Broadway, a restaurant listed as being located at 603 Broadway in Albany, New York
 - *Note: This site is listed as both a hotel and a restaurant, varying between *Green Books*
2. Dorsey’s Restaurant, a restaurant listed as being located on Cor. Van Trumpet & Broadway in Albany, New York with no building number given

Service Stations

1. Capitol, a service station listed as being located at 597 Washington Street in Hasting-On-The-Hudson, New York (not to be confused with Hastings, New York)
2. Ten Eyck service station, located at 137 Lark Street in Albany, New York

Nightclubs

1. Rhythm Club, a nightclub listed as being located on Madison Avenue in Albany, New York with no building number given in the New York Public Library’s digital archives, but a nightclub which some Albany locals contend was located at 61 Madison Avenue in Albany, New York, near the Hudson River.
 - The *New York Age*, a famed newspaper from Harlem, contains the following description of Rhythm Club in its November 8, 1941 publication:
 “You should see the new Rhythm Club. It is really the most beautiful little spot in the city or out of the city for that matter. Dorothy and Ruff should pat themselves on the shoulder for having such a fine piece of work done. Vernon Young who did all of the designing, color schemes and lighting, who is a native of Africa, imported the wallpaper from that country. The place will have the largest ‘Juke box’ in the State. Slots boxes at the tables, no need to go to the box.”
 - Bobby Booker, a famous jazz trumpet player, performed at “the Rhythm Club.”

- The Rhythm Club served “Chinese-American foods.” One learns this from an advertisement for the nightclub in the January 10, 1942 edition of the *Times Union*.
2. The Harlem Grill, which is listed as being located on Hamilton Street in Albany, New York; a possible building number for this nightclub on Hamilton Street is 52 ½.

Barber Shops

1. Martin’s, a barber shop listed as being located at 4 Vantromp Street in Albany, New York
2. Lemon’s, a barber shop listed as being located on Valley Street in North Tarrytown, New York with no building number given
3. J. Brown, a barber shop listed as being located on Valley Street in North Tarrytown, New York with no building number given

Beauty Parlors

1. Beulah Fords, a beauty parlor listed as being located at 96 2nd Street in Albany, New York
 - In a 1923 edition of *The New York Age*, there is an ad for Buelah [sic] Fords which reads: “SWITCHES, TRANSFORMATIONS, CURLS, CLUSTER PUFFS, HAIR NETS, STRAIGHTENING COMBS, AND EVERYTHING IN HAIR GOODS. WIGS MADE TO YOUR MEASURE.” The August 11, 1923 edition of *The New York Age* mentions "B. M. FORD System of Beauty Culture" so as to highlight "day and evening school now open." The advertisement goes on to say, "Don't delay but write today for a free trial and directions for selling. Mme. Beulah M. Ford, 96 2nd St., Albany, N.Y." Now we know conclusively that "B. M. FORD System of Beauty Culture" and "Buelah [sic] Fords" are the same site, home to beauty school; beauty parlor services such as "shampooing, hair dyeing, singeing, [and] hot oil treatments"; and beauty products such as hair growers and pressing oils. (Note: This site is listed with two different spellings across sources, "Buelah" [sic] and "Beulah." The site was listed with the spelling "Buelah" [sic] in the 1947 edition of *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, so that is the spelling that is being used to highlight this site on this website.)
2. J. Prioleau, a beauty parlor listed as being located at 88 Valley Street in North Tarrytown, New York

Ranches

1. Lang's Ranch, a ranch listed with the following location in Kingston, New York: Rte. 4, Morgan Hill Lodge, Tel. Federal 8-9664
 - Taylor Bruck, Ulster County Clerk and Archivist, feels as though the site listed as "Lang's Ranch" might have been referred to as "Oehler's Mountain Lodge" by the general public. In a 1972 letter from the owners of Oehler's Mountain Lodge to their "friends and customers," "Bill & Ingrid Oehler and Family" list the lodge with the following address: "Morgan Hill Road off Route 28A (Just 6 miles from Thruway Circle)" - "Morgan Hill Lodge," which is part of the location with which Lang's Ranch is listed, is quite close to "Morgan Hill Road," the road on which Oehler's Mountain Lodge located itself for customers. Moreover, in the May 14, 1959 edition of *The Kingston Daily Freeman*, "the Rosary Altar Society, Holy Name Society of St. John's Roman Catholic parish" is said to have been planning a group breakfast outing to "Oehler's Mountain Ranch, Morgan Hill." The fact that this "Oehler's" site is described in *The Kingston Daily Freeman* as a "Ranch" feels like a big clue that "Lang's Ranch" and "Oehler's Mountain Lodge" were either the same site, listed under different names in various sources, or that Lang's Ranch and Oehler's Mountain Lodge were located in close proximity to one another.

Golf Clubs

1. Hillcrest Golf Club, a golf club listed as being located in Kingston, New York with no street address given
 - A representative of the Hillcrest Golf *Course* (note: not "*Club*"), a golf course currently in operation which is located in Duanesburg, New York, claims in an email that there is no correlation between the Hillcrest Golf *Course* in Duanesburg and the Hillcrest Golf *Club* in Kingston.
 - It is possible that this golf club was listed under the name "Hillcrest Golf Club" for safety reasons, so as to remain as under-the-radar as possible, and was referred to by guests by a different name. One can imagine the danger that might easily have come with being a Black guest at a golf club under Jim Crow segregation; golf clubs have long been associated with a kind of economic sovereignty, and even affluence - racists would surely not have liked to have seen Black people enjoying golfing as a luxurious form of leisure, as this would be an indication of a level of Black economic freedom and agency. "Hillcrest" was the name of an estate in Kingston, New York, "located at Twaalfskill," a creek in Kingston, New York. The golf club listed under the name "Hillcrest," a name "well known

[among people in the Kingston, New York area] as the estate of Dr. James Mason,” as a pseudonym.

Infrastructure

1. The Kingston-Rhinebeck Ferry: The “Kingston - Rhinebeck Ferry... the direct connection between the Catskill Mountain region and routes to New York City and New England points,” is listed in *The Automobile Green Book, Volume 1*, published in 1925. In this listing, “fifty cents” is listed as the cost per ferry ride. (286, 459)

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V. Images

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|---|--|--|
| Peg-leg Bates Country Club Kerkonkson | Cottages with private bath, swimming pool, dancing. | Peg-leg Bates Rt. 2, 1 Box 366 Kerkonkson, N. Y. |
| Morgan Hill Lodge Catskills | Rooms, cabins, tennis, horseback riding, food. | Morgan Hill Lodge R. D. 2 Box 379 Kingston, N. Y. |
| Maple Valley Farm Pine Bush | Comfortable quarters. | Mrs. Edna Campbell Maple Valley Farm, R. D. 1 Pine Bush, N. Y. |
| Coleman's Lodge | Accommodations, | Coleman's Lodge |

1.

Image Description: Advertisement in the June 1963 edition of *Ebony* for Morgan Hill

Lodge Catskills, highlighting lodge attractions such as “rooms, cabins, tennis, horseback riding, food.” (*Ebony*, June 1963: 132)

Image Source: Johnson Publishing. “Ebony.” Google Books, Google, June 1963,

books.google.com/books?id=riksVFZN9XsC&pg=PA132&dq=route%2B4%2Bmorgan%2Bhill%2Blodge&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwii5KiGqoHyAhXQl-AKHQ1ZDHIQ6AEwAXo

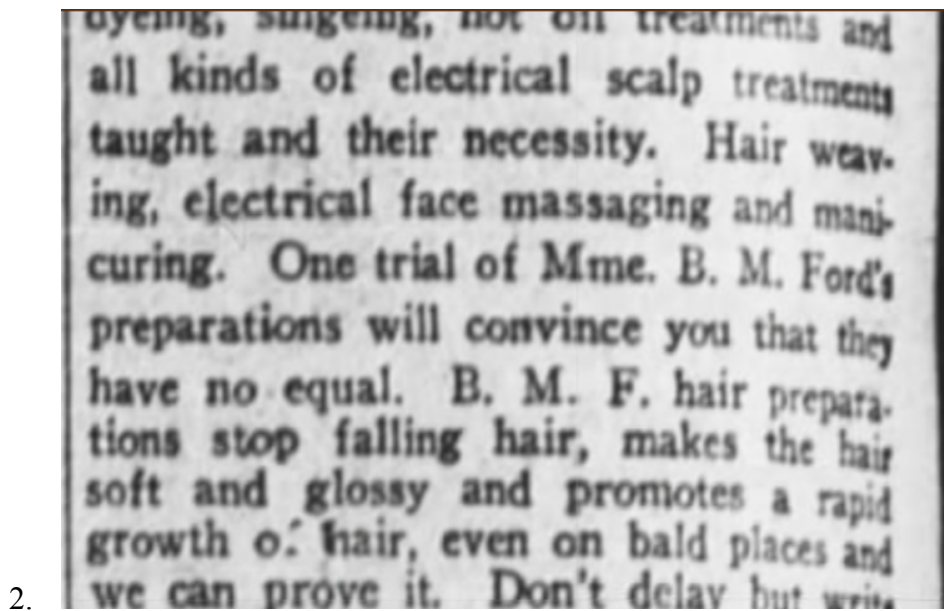


Image Description: Advertisement in the 1923 edition of *The New York Age* for Buelah [sic]

Fords, which reads: “SWITCHES, TRANSFORMATIONS, CURLS, CLUSTER PUFFS, HAIR NETS, STRAIGHTENING COMBS, AND EVERYTHING IN HAIR GOODS. WIGS MADE TO YOUR MEASURE.”

Image Source: “11 Aug 1923, Page 2 - the New York Age At Newspapers.com.”

Newspapers.com,

www.newspapers.com/image/39624770/?terms=the+new+york+age+%22day+and+evening+school+now+open%22&match=1.



Image Description: 1976 postcard from Oehler's Mountain Lodge

Image Source: "Oehler's Mountain Lodge." *CardCow.com*,

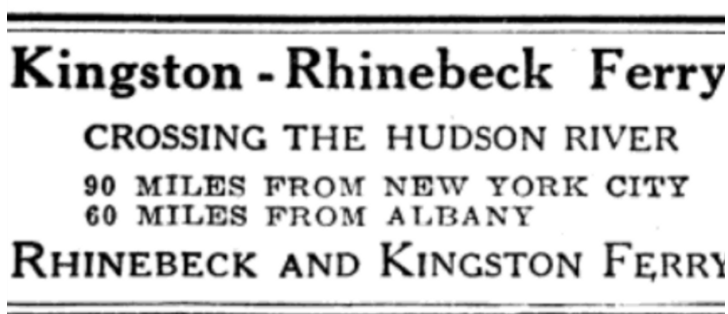
www.cardcow.com/595045/oehlers-mountain-lodge-kingston-new-york/.



4.

Image Description: Article from the July 22, 1911 edition of the *Kingston Daily Freeman*, detailing the sale of the "Hillcrest" estate by Dr. James Mason to the Wright brothers.

Image Source: "Kingston Daily Freeman 22 July 1911." Kingston Daily Freeman 22 July 1911 - HRVH Historical Newspapers, news.hrvh.org/veridian/?a=d&d=kingstondaily19110722.2.12&srpos=1&e=-----en-20-kingston-daily-1--txt-txIN-hillcrest-----.



5.

Image Description: Details on ferry rides crossing the Hudson River, taken from the Scarborough Motor Company Guide of 1925.

Image Source: Company, Scarborough Motor Guide. "The Automobile Green Book, Volume 1."

Google Books, Scarborough Motor Guide Company, 1925,

books.google.com/books?id=jB83jFIUSi0C&dq=green%2Bbook%2Bsites%2Bin%2Bkingston%2Bny&source=gbs_navlinks_s.

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VI. Challenges/Points of Confusion

Mystery sites & records of correspondences with local experts

- 1) Capitol Service Station in Hastings-on-the-Hudson
Listed as being located at 252 Washington Street

Hi, Christina -

You asked about 597 Washington Street in Hastings-on-Hudson. We don't have a Washington Street, only a Washington Avenue, and the numbering is all off for that roadway. Washington Avenue in Hastings only goes up to #130.

I took a look at Warburton Avenue, which is a busy street that intersects Washington Avenue. 597 Warburton is currently the home of Overseas Auto (an automobile repair shop) and they did have two (I believe) gas pumps in front of their shop years ago. When I looked at a database of old newspapers, several articles indicated that there was a Merit Motors at 595 and 597 Warburton Avenue from 1959 to about 1973 located at that address.

We had other service stations in the general vicinity. Bob's Service Station, which I mentioned to you, has been around since the 1920s. We had a Main Street Service Station, a Parkway Service Station on the Saw Mill Parkway, and a Hastings Tire & Service Station at 577 Warburton back in the 1930s. In the 1950s, we had a Hastings Service Station on Broadway.

I could find no mention of a Capitol or Capital Service Station in Hastings, however. Are you sure it was Hastings-on-Hudson that was its location? I could be missing something, but I'm mystified as to where this service station might have been.

Natalie Barry
President

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HASTINGS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Observatory Cottage in Draper Park
407 Broadway | Hastings-on-Hudson | New York | 10706
914.478.2249
hhsccottage@gmail.com

Visit our website:
www.hastingshistoricalsociety.org

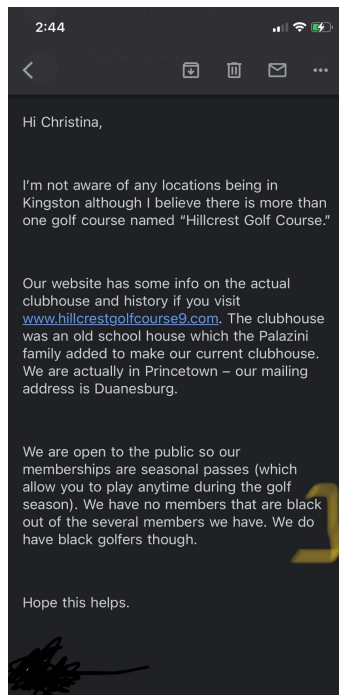
Email from Natalie Barry, President of the Hastings Historical Society

→ I then reached out to Heather Stevens, the Town Historian for the town of *Hastings*, NY (not to be confused with *Hastings-on-Hudson*, NY) to see if we could gain any more momentum! She wrote back with the following:

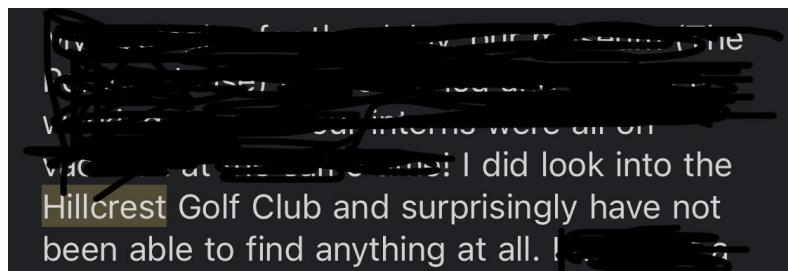
2) Asian presence in the Hudson Valley Green Book system?

→ E.G: “Chinese-American Foods” advertised as an attraction of the Rhythm Club in Albany: who was cooking this Chinese-American food?

3) Hillcrest Golf Club in Kingston, NY → no address listed.



Email from a representative of the Hillcrest Golf Course (note: not “Club”) located in Duaneburg, NY



Excerpt of an email from Taylor Bruck, the Ulster County archivist and City of Kingston historian

4) Gordon Hotel in Kingston, NY

Listed as being located at 3 Canal Street → completely unknown.
It seems as though all that stands in the hotel's place today is a parking lot.

Email from Bill Merchant, Deputy Director for Collections, Historian & Curator at the D&H Canal Historical Society

Hi Christina

The lore has it that that building in this image was a mule barn- this is the last stop before the canal boats were pulled by steam instead of mules...I am not sure that that was a D&H canal Company Office- they had a collector's office next to Lock #1 so that would be redundant. If I am reading it right, the 1875 Beers Atlas says that a Mrs. G. Diamond owned it then. It is possible that some canawlers stayed there but on the other hand they usually had berths on their boat, so why pay for a room? There is no mention of a Gordon's Hotel in any of the secondary sources on the D&H. The Green book was of course in the 20th century.

I just looked at 3 Canal Street on Maps and it is shown as being in the parking lot- the Anchorage Restaurant, which is pictured, is 182 Canal Street. Perhaps the Gordon was west of here- The Beers shows a D&H Company building at where 3 Canal Street might have been....

I assume it was the Gordon Hotel in the 20th century- the Canal did operate through 1917 but not with anything like the traffic it had in its heyday.

I don't know the person who took the image...

5) Hill's hotel in Croton-on-the-Hudson → no address listed.

Marc Cheshire

2:16 PM (50 minutes ago)



to me ▾

A quick search of our files and phone directories turned up nothing so far but I'm doing some digging.

Marc

Marc Cheshire

Village Historian, Croton-on-Hudson

- 6) Lang's Ranch: It's listed with the location: "Rte. 4, Morgan Hill Lodge, Tel. Federal 8-9664" in Kingston, NY, but it's been incredibly difficult to track down "Route 4." I reached out to Laurie Hancock, to ask for guidance on how to search for Highway Route 4, and Laurie came up with a question mark as well. Thus far, Highway Route 4 has proven unlocatable.

Christina Jones <cj1923@bard.edu> Tue, Jul 20, 9:29 PM (9 days ago) ☆ ↩ ⋮
to Hancock ▾

Good evening Laurie,

I hope that this email finds you safe and well.~

I'm writing to you with a question about a specific *Green Book* site that I've come across: Lang's Ranch, listed with the following location: "Rte. 4, Morgan Hill Lodge, Tel. Federal 8-9664" in Kingston, New York. My source is the following: "Travelers' Green Book: 1966-67 International Edition: For Vacation Without Aggravation" → Source URL: <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/27516920-8308-0132-5063-58d385a7bbd0>

My question for you is, how can I find out if Route 4 still exists in Kingston, New York today? The aforementioned address is all of the information that I have for Lang's Ranch, and I'd very much like to track down the ranch and/or what currently stands in its place (if anything). Is it possible that this highway route could have been renamed? Might you point me in the direction of someone who might know something about the history of local highway routes in Kingston, New York if you're unsure?

I'm really grateful to be able to connect with you about my research, and to have access to you as a source of guidance throughout this internship. Thank you kindly for your support!

I look forward to hearing from and learning from you.

Best,

Christina

Laurie Hancock 11:51 AM (48 minutes ago) ☆ ↩ ⋮
to Taylor, me ▾

Hi Christina,

I have worked on finding this Route and I have not been able to make any progress.

I spoke with the County's Rural Transportation department and they are not familiar with this Route.

I also looked in Former City Historian Ed Ford's book titled "Street Whys" and it is not listed.

Please let me know if there is anything else that I can do to assist you with this Project.

Thank you.

Laurie

...

[Message clipped] [View entire message](#)

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VII. Exciting "Aha!" Moments

Getting to share this summer's findings with the staff at the Kingston YMCA Farm Project was deeply rewarding. Making human contact - with young people from the Kingston community, no less - with and around this historical research made all of the remote and solitary

work that has gone into this project make sense: the narratives that have been taking form, and the information and data that have been uncovered, came to life in a way that felt both powerful and lasting. Engaging in a conversation with Erica Brown, live on the air with *Let's Talk, Kingston*, around this archival research, and about the *Green Book* system as a beacon of Black excellence and Black community support, was also deeply enriching. It has become a memory that continues to be cherished.

Submitting a proposal for a live presentation of “The Green Book Project” at the Conference on Black History in October 2021 has also been formative, both as an opportunity to learn about the logistics of proposing presentations, and as an opportunity to highlight some of the most exciting and rich discoveries that have come out of this work thus far.

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VIII. Questions to Consider

1. Why did the Greens stop publishing annually-updated editions of their travel guides following the publication of the 1966-1967 edition?

→ One thought might be that with the passage of both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Greens felt that Black Americans no longer needed these travel guides with the same sort of life-or-death urgency as before (Jim Crow segregation had been done away with *de facto*.)

2. In what ways might Black Americans benefit from travel guides made for Black travelers, highlighting and celebrating Black-owned businesses, today?

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IX. Takeaways for the Researcher

1. **Fluidity of mind is key.** Work does not always have to have a clearly-defined, unchanging starting point and ending point. To work effectively and sufficiently does not mean that the researcher has to reach a certain point in the research process in order to be able to experience feelings of pride or accomplishment. When doing this sort of archival research, particularly within the African diaspora, you as the researcher must come to terms with the fact that many unknowns will remain unknowable long past your own personal involvement with the project, for systemically, there has been such widespread willful erasure of information about our history that you simply cannot gain access to *all* of the details that you're after. Moreover, as time goes on and current happenings become history, things like street names, building numbers, and highway routes change - renumbering and making changes to nomenclature make it difficult to, say, pinpoint the exact location in the current moment of sites listed under street addresses that are over sixty years old. Accepting a degree of unknowability and discrepancies, gaps, or changes in documents and source material as fact liberates you as the researcher, and affords you mental space with which to focus your attention on digging for new bits of information, as opposed to being constricted by the frustrations of the roadblock moments.
2. What it means to **“work hard”** on the project at hand takes all kinds of forms, including doing the work of structuring and organizing notes, emailing back and forth with local historians and archivists, visiting libraries and gallery exhibits in search of new insight, etc. To “do work” on the research project, and to “work hard” as the researcher, takes many forms and is anything but ubiquitous. Different days of work call for different labor.

3. Doing the work of self-preservation as the researcher is both efficient and necessary.

Thinking, reading, writing, speaking, and feeling about other people's lives - and oftentimes, when engaging in archival/ethnographic research on Black American Life, thinking, reading, writing, speaking, and feeling about tragedy and loss; theft of dreams and lives; the inhumane as a general classifier; etc. - calls upon you as the researcher to access and draw upon your own inner supply of humanity and empathy. You must be sensitive and attentive to the experiences around which you are writing narratives. It can be difficult as a social scientist to separate yourself and your own wealth of emotions entirely from the people and stories with which you are engaging. In order to preserve yourself emotionally - with the protection of your own wellbeing being the primary goal, and the protection of your human capacities and resources for the sake of your work being secondary - you must step away from a particular question when you're finding it to be all too consuming; take breathers and healing breaks when grappling with information that inflicts violence upon your mental; ask for support from colleagues; and share with your boss/mentor what exactly it is about the material with which you are engaging which troubles you. Seek support and community and give yourself time, even "at work."

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X. Looking to the Future of "The Green Book Project"

The summer of 2021 has been but the first of what the African Roots Center hopes will be several contiguous internship summers in which archival interns will work on "The Green Book Project." This work calls for long-term, sustained research efforts. What is more, with each

new intern working on “The Green Book Project,” some gaps in information will be replaced with new insight, and in turn, new gaps in information will be uncovered for the next intern to tackle. This sort of ongoing collaborative effort is exciting, in that this archival-ethnographic research engagement with the *Green Book* sites of the Hudson Valley will continue to be renewed; each research will bring their respective perspectives, research goals, and experience to the work, which will enrich this project and deepen its scope. Each person who works on this project will bring to it their own humanity; this is nothing but positive.

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XII. Crediting Historians and Archivists for their Incredible Collaborative Research Efforts

1. Taylor Bruck, the Ulster County archivist and City of Kingston historian: The Hillcrest Golf Club; the Kingston-Rhinebeck Ferry; the Gordon Hotel; Lang's Ranch (which might very well have shared space with, been located very close to, or been the very same business under a different name as Oehler's Mountain Lodge).
2. Natalie Barry, President of the Hastings Historical Society: Service station site "Capitol" which is listed in the 1951 Railroad edition of *The Negro Motorist Green Book* as being located at 597 Washington Street in Hasting-On-The-Hudson, NY
3. Laurie Hancock, Deputy County Clerk at the Ulster County Clerk's Office: Highway Route 4 in Kingston, as listed in tandem with Lang's Ranch in the 1966-67 edition of the travel guide → Laurie was able to track Route 4 to Morgan Hill Lodge.
4. Sarah Wassberg Johnson, Director of Exhibits and Outreach at the Hudson River Maritime Museum: fruitful source suggestions, such as the New York Heritage's .org website, and Dr. Gretchen Sorin's wonderful book *Driving While Black: African American Travel and the Road to Civil Rights*.

5. Dr. Carla R. Lesh, Collections Manager and Digital Archivist at the Hudson River Maritime Museum, also recommended Dr. Sorin's book..
6. Dr. Gretchen Sorin, author of *Driving While Black: African American Travel and the Road to Civil Rights* → this book has been tremendously helpful, as well as sometimes jarringly eye-open, in doing this work and thinking about Black travel as an issue of safety, leisure, dignity, economic agency, community protection, and community investment.
7. Candancy Taylor, author of *Overground Railroad: The Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America* → key new insights into the micro scale of how Black travel looked under Jim Crow. (E.G: Black men keeping black drivers' hats in the backseats of their cars, and putting them on to pose as chauffeurs upon being stopped by police officers or harassed by non-Black folks in the towns through which they were driving.)
8. Aaron Robinson, Historic Site Manager at the Senate House State Historic Site in Kingston, NY: recommendation to read the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.
9. Marietta Carr, Librarian at the Schenectady County Historical Society: the Clefton Hotel
10. Tony Opalka, the Official Historian of the City of Albany: The Rhythm Club, the Kenmore Hotel, the Watergate Motel, and several tourist homes.
11. Bill Merchant, Deputy Director for Collections, Historian & Curator at the D&H Canal Historical Society: investigated the listed street address, 3 Canal Street in Kingston, NY, for the Gordon Hotel.