A CASE FOR EXPANDING HERITAGE TOURISM IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA

BY EXPLORING SITES FROM THE NEGRO MOTORIST GREEN BOOK

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INTRODUCTION

The leisure and hospitality industry is vital to local economies. Tourism is a popular tool to promote economic development. Within the tourism industry, heritage tourism is a rapidly growing form of tourism. During the Jim Crow Era (1876-1965), African Americans established businesses to supply the demand in the leisure and hospitality industry. Traveling as an African American was a risk due to legal and geographic constraints and the threat of racial violence. Despite the danger, African Americans traveled by ensuring their accommodations were safe by utilizing a travel guide, *The Negro Motorist Green Book*. Desegregation dismantled the utilization of the guide and the demand for African American businesses.

The impact of the disinvestment in African American businesses and communities is seen throughout urban areas. Atlanta, Georgia housed one of the most prominent African American business districts in the 1940s and 1950s. Due to the rich African American history in Atlanta, Georgia, heritage tourism sites were established during the 1980s to promote the heritage and history of African Americans in relation to the Civil Rights Movement and financial and religious institutions. There is an opportunity for the city and state to expand the current heritage tourism framework by exploring the history of the leisure and accommodation businesses established during the Jim Crow Era. The existence of a large African American population, successful commercial districts, and higher education institutions fostered the development of these businesses, which contributed to the development of capital, employment opportunities, and camaraderie within the African American community.

Thirty-seven leisure and accommodations businesses were identified in the Green Book for the City of Atlanta, and 35 locations are discussed in this document. While many of these businesses no longer exist, many of the structures, built by African American architects and

construction workers, remain despite the city's reputation of destroying historic buildings. Expanding the African American heritage tourism framework by collaborating with existing tourism and historic preservation organizations will bring awareness of the historic significance of *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, the leisure and accommodation businesses, and the structures leading to the prevention of the future demolition. Several projects, with similar objectives, have begun across the United States. As a city with a large tourism sector and African American population, this initiative would present a unique and valuable perspective to Atlanta's history.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review defines heritage tourism and examines the benefits and challenges of the industry. After reviewing the current trends of the tourism industry, a brief history of Atlanta tourism industry highlights how African American travelers navigated racialized landscapes. Finally, the role of small tourism businesses in the tourism industry is discussed and suggested as a method to promote heritage tourism.

Heritage Tourism

Tourism is a prominent tool implemented to promote economic development in local and regional economies. The array of interests sought to be fulfilled by tourism prompted the creation of various types of tourism including sports tourism, sex tourism, cultural tourism, and ecotourism. Scholars debate the definitions and conceptualizations of heritage and cultural tourism due to the complexity of defining culture and heritage. The International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism (1997) defines cultural tourism as an activity that enables people to experience different ways of life gaining a first-hand understanding of customs, traditions, physical environment, intellectual ideas, and places of architectural, historical, or archeological

significance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) simply defines heritage tourism as a form of tourism presenting human legacy from the past (UNESCO). Timothy and Boyd (2008) describe heritage tourism as a form of travel that involves visits to sites of historical importance, locations where historical events occurred, and places where interesting and significant cultures stand out. Within heritage and cultural tourism literature, the terms are used interchangeably. Since the concepts are similar, the document will reference heritage tourism.

In general, heritage tourism is a personal experience involving history, tradition, and culture. Heritage tourism is a rapidly growing market directed toward authentically experiencing local customs, traditions, art, history, and culture (GDECD 2010). The Dahlonega Gold Museum, Etowah Indian Mounds, Chickamauga Battlefield, and the Fox Theatre are heritage tourism sites in Georgia that attract thousands of visitors every year. Research suggests that heritage tourism travelers differ from other travelers because of their desire to understand or appreciate an unfamiliar site (Pop 2016). Literature reveals heritage tourists are well educated, older, generous spenders, desire high-quality services, more inclined to stay overnight, more likely to visit a diversity of sites and cities, want quality travel experiences, and interested in authenticity (GDECD 2010).

Benefits of Heritage Tourism

Developing and investing in heritage tourism offers many benefits to communities. Through exposure and involvement, residents become more informed of their history (GDECD 2010). It increases the visitor's knowledge of preservation and the importance of preserving historic resources. As a result, residents protect the community's historic resources, support the sites, and develop pride in their communities. The economic benefits of heritage tourism are job

creation at cultural attractions, increased revenues and taxes, economic diversification in the service and manufacturing industry, investment in historic properties, and an increase in financial return from heritage tourism. Also, heritage tourism encourages entrepreneurship and local ownership of small businesses. Unlike other forms of tourism, heritage tourism supports and embraces the local character of a community. Many small tourist businesses reflect the local character and present authenticity.

Challenges of Heritage Tourism

Commercialization

As a business, heritage tourism requires catering to a market desire to experience the past in an entertaining manner. Heritage tourism can be perceived as the commodification of culture, heritage, and history by adopting a commercial focus (Hughes and Carlsen 2010). Successful heritage tourism sites require a management shift from preservation or conservation to product management that caters to market demands and is commercially feasible. Heritage conservationists view the commercialization of historic resources as undermining the integrity of the heritage presented by replacing conservation-based management with profit-driven management.

Authenticity is a critical aspect in producing truth and value in tourism, which Hughes and Carlson (2010) consider a critical factor influencing the success of the site. Altering the management focus from heritage conservation to profit-generating provokes concerns of authenticity, such as the degradation of authenticity, value, and integrity of the heritage presented. Balancing the tasks of satisfying consumers' expectations and managing their impact without compromising the authenticity of the experience is a dilemma those in the industry

experience. Heritage conservationists support management strategies mitigate the dilemma and uphold the authenticity of the heritage site.

Preservation and Conservation

Human impact can potentially alter historical sites. Sites with large numbers of visitation throughout the year can experience deterioration. Graffiti, litter, and pollutions are other potential threats (Timothy and Boyd 2006). In urban areas, dilapidated historic resources are vulnerable to demolition. Historically, Atlanta, Georgia has been notoriously known for demolishing historic structures for the sake of redevelopment. Cities encourage the development of heritage sites because the sites contribute to quality of life factors that attract firms, visitors, and residents (Inwood 2010).

To avoid the negative impacts of human contact, conservationists and preservationists advocate for limited human contact with historic resources. The Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm, located in Jefferson, Georgia, does not permit indoor access to some of the farm structures. While limiting human contact with historic resources can prevent degradation, it does not completely prevent dilapidation or modification. Unfortunately, the increased awareness of the heritage site led to vandalism on the Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm ("Preacher's Riley's Place"). The concerns of deterioration and demolition are valid and must be addressed when developing a heritage tourism site and attracting more visitors.

Funding

Obtaining funds for heritage tourism destinations is critical for the success of the site. The lack of funding contributes to the lack of protection, interpretation, management, and branding of the site (Timothy and Boyd 2006). Site administrators have thought of different

means to acquire funds, such as special events, retail, sponsorships, donations, and user fees. Some local governments have limited funding for investing in local heritage tourism sites. Hughes and Carlsen (2010) observe that heritage tourism sites owned by local governments are not more successful than privately-owned sites.

Additionally, commercially successful heritage tourism sites have a considerable amount of tourism-based revenue supporting day-to-day operations. These businesses can combine their revenue with grants for more funding to complete capital and other major work. Grants are available for heritage tourism sites to alleviate financial strain.

Whose History?

One may perceive heritage as a story to be told. Historically, narrators suppressed the stories of oppressed minority groups leaving their experiences unpublicized. Timothy and Boyd (2006, 3) refer to this phenomenon as "social/collective amnesia" denoting the selective memory or purposefully ignoring of certain events and people. There is tension between depicting the actual history of a place and creating an authentic experience (Inwood 2010). Often the production of an authentic experience depends on the physical artifacts a tourist can see and touch. In Southern states, this could be controversial due to the limited tangible artifacts, including structures, writings, and signs, collected from African American communities. Demolition and displacement through Urban Renewal, the illegality of possessing certain items, and the need for the resource dismantled after desegregation are reasons explaining the limited physical, historical assets in African American communities (Weyeneth 2005). Inwood (2010) states efforts to develop heritage tourist sites must navigate these causes and confront painful memories.

Many cities in the United States with significant populations of African Americans developed heritage tourism sites contesting the discriminatory practices that segregated citizens. More specifically, cities established sites dedicated to the Civil Rights Movement comprising of museums, memorials, churches, monuments, and trails.

Numerous heritage attraction sites are associated with royalty, elites, or nobility and not the heritage of the ordinary (Timothy and Boyd 2006). Only focusing on experiences of the privileged is an unrepresentative imbalance in the heritage tourism industry. Most physical remnants of the past are more aligned with ordinary people. As more people demand more authentic and accurate information, many are correcting these mistakes.

Tourism Trends

Tourism is a significant industry in Georgia's economy. The leisure and hospitality sector is a service providing sector that encompasses the arts, entertainment, and recreation and accommodation and food services sectors. Therefore, tourism and the leisure and hospitality sectors are synonymous. Georgia tourism generated $63.1 billion in total output including direct, indirect, and induced impact in 2017, which increased by 3.8% from 2016 (GDECD 2017). About 460,000 jobs, directly and indirectly, supported the industry (GDECD 2017). Travel and tourism directly produced almost $3.3 billion in state and local tax revenue (GDECD 2017). Every household in Georgia would need to pay an additional $900.00 per year in taxes to replace the taxes generated by tourism (GDECD 2017). In 2017, Georgia had 107.7 million visitors that spent an average of $119.30 per person per day and stayed an average of 2.11 days (GDECD 2017). Seventy-nine percent of travelers visited Georgia for leisure. About 60% of visitors were not originally from Georgia (GDECD 2017).

Similarly, the economic impact of tourism for the City of Atlanta is substantial. In 2017, 53 million visitors generated $15 billion in spending (ACVB 2018). Of the $15 billion, 23% accounted for dining, 14% on retail, and 9% on entertainment/recreation (ACVB 2018). The City of Atlanta collected an estimate of $74 million in hotel/motel taxes (ACVB 2018). Travel and tourism industry is successful because of the Hartsfield-Jackson International Atlanta Airport, known as the busiest airport in the world, Georgia World Congress Center, tourist attractions, and educational institutions. The industry's success is the legacy of the forward-thinking city leaders taking advantage of the transportation network and travelers.

A research study conducted by Mandala Research indicated approximately 78% of all leisure travelers in the United States participate in heritage activities while traveling (GDECD 2010, 9). There is limited research, quantitatively and qualitatively, differentiating heritage tourism from other types of tourism. Tourism organizations typically do not make a distinction between cultural tourism and other types (Noonan and Rizzo 2017). Additionally, Statistics do not necessarily reflect the distinction.

Becoming Atlanta, Georgia, the Tourism Hub

Today, the City of Atlanta is a major hub for travel and tourism. Since the mid-19th century, the transportation infrastructure in Atlanta, GA brought a steady stream of visitors to the city (Newman 2002). Local leaders recognized the potential profits the city could generate from travelers and tourism. Efforts to create the city as a host for conventions began in 1895. A partnership among businesses and political leaders hosted a national convention and three expositions designed to promote the city. In 1909, a municipal auditorium-armory building opened serving as an event and convention venue. The city prepared for the conventions by offering the venue and illuminating the sidewalks along Peachtree Street, previously known as

"The Great White Way" (Newman 2002, 305). The "Great White Way" was a public space for upper-class White, excluding others from utilizing the amenities.

Newman (2002) asserts African American conventions were held but followed the Jim Crow laws enforcing segregation. In 1906, the city hosted a three-day convention for the National Negro Business League. African American hotels, restaurants, bars, and amusements welcomed visitors. African American and White businesses supported the meeting due to the expected financial gain from more than 1,000 visitors. While Peachtree Street became a tourist hub for Whites, segregation caused African American tourists to frequent Auburn Avenue and Decatur Street. Even though racial tensions were conjuring, African Americans encouraged other organizations and tourists to travel to Atlanta. The segregated sections of the city were promoted as safe spaces for African American travelers.

Towards the end of the 1940s, the lack of growth downtown and the "Negro" problem concerned city leaders (Newman 2002, 306). To resolve the concerns, an expressway was constructed to curve around Downtown, which provide Whites with easy and less congested access to the central business district. The expressway acted as a buffer between Downtown and African American neighborhoods on the east. The expressway was an Urban Renewal Program, which supported the displacement of African American residents and businesses. The Butler Street Urban Renewal District provided space for 1,300 new hotel rooms (Newman 2002, 306). The initial proposal would have demolished the commercial district along Auburn Avenue. African American leaders successfully protested the proposal and protected the commercial district to a certain extent. The accepted proposal permitted the development of the Downtown Marriott, currently the Sheraton, which opened in 1966. The development of the hotel demonstrates national hospitality firms entering the leisure and hospitality industry in Atlanta

and the initiation of competition with local businesses. While tourists could enjoy the 1,300 new hotel rooms, the Civic Center, and the Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, businesses along Auburn Avenue were left to deteriorate (Newman 2002, 306). Literature suggests that a combination of desegregation, change in neighborhood demographics, and different consumer preferences contributed to the decline of African American commercial districts (Newman 2002 and Inwood 2010). There is a lack of literature exploring the quality of African American goods and services as a determinant in the decline of these commercial districts.

Navigating a Racialized Landscape as an African American Traveler

During the Jim Crow Era, traveling as an African American was a potentially dangerous and daunting task. Jim Crow laws permeated various aspects of social life. The laws made it difficult for African Americans to travel due to the legal and geographic constraints. As a response, Victor Green and Alma Green established *The Negro Motorist Green Book*. *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, for short *The Green Book*, served as a guide for African American travelers protecting them from discrimination and racial violence by listing accommodations that welcomed, "safe," for them (Hall 2015, 308). *The Green Book* targeted leisure travelers seeking rest, relaxation, and recreation. It highlighted demographic profiles, heritage attractions, and non-discriminatory hospitality and services throughout the United States.

The guide was essential in Southern cities where African Americans experienced harsher effects of Jim Crow. Hall (2015, 307) declares it was not only a guide to geographical spaces and places but it "mobilized race discourse" and emphasized sites that were African American friendly. Hall illustrates the danger they faced when travelling by describing the beating and arrest of Hugh Gloster, an English Professor at Morehouse College. Gloster requested a seat in an adjacent train car with two White passengers due to overcrowding in the "Colored" car.

Incidents similar to Gloster's experience were not rare. The experience reflects the system of racial violence and discrimination that control the mobility of African Americans. The guide explicitly indicated safe places in communities with large African American populations, welcoming African American owned business, and friendly White-owned businesses. African Americans wrote letters to Victor Green recommending businesses and attractions that should be included in the guide. The guide was a tool to challenge and avoid racial discrimination in the 20th-century leisure and hospitality sector.

Additionally, the guide acted as a marketing and advertisement tool for businesses. In the 1956 edition, Hall discusses a strategy to advance African American business owners by encouraging them to advertise and be listed in the book. Green's strategy was forwarding thinking to advance businesses and build consumer interest through branding. The guide advertised and received support from Esso Gas Station, currently Exxon Mobil Company, which was the only gas station that serviced gas and provided restrooms to African Americans. More brands related to the leisure and hospitality industry began to recognize the purchasing power of African Americans and began advertising their businesses in the guides.

Today, *The Green Book* is an artifact and an unknown series of documents reflecting the United States and African American history. The guide remained published from 1936 to 1966 (Hall 2015). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination and segregation in the industry. Once African Americans no longer lived by the statute "separate but equal," the need for the guide declined. The guides are important references illustrating the relationship between race, businesses advertising, and the leisure and hospitality industry.

An Effort to Expand Heritage Tourism in Atlanta

Atlanta, Georgia has a rich African American history. There are several heritage tourism sites related to African American culture The Center for Civil and Human Rights, Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, Sweet Auburn District, APEX Museum, The Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, and Hammonds House Galleries. Yet, there is room for more untraditional sites, such as the local businesses highlighted in *The Green Book*. There was an effort made by Central Atlanta Progress to construct Auburn Avenue as a heritage tourism destination, with the discussion of local businesses being a central component of the plan, in the early 1990s (Inwood 2010). Focusing on Auburn Avenue's heritage potential, the city hoped to appeal to those interested in public history and redevelop an area viewed as disinvested. The Butler-Auburn Plan Update envisioned Auburn Avenue as a "culturetainment venue" with mixed-use residential and retail (Inwood 2010, 581). The plan was to be completed before the 1996 Olympic Games. The plan entailed an intensive stakeholder engagement process including 1900 responses to a survey, community meetings, and interviews.

Unfortunately, the plan was not brought to fruition. Hall concluded the project was not successful due to the symbolic capital and symbolic resistance of the stakeholders (Inwood 2010, 577). Symbolic capital refers to the way culture is translated into economic capital. The City desired to create a product that will facilitate the creation of a saleable past by designing a heritage tourism landscape on Auburn Avenue. Symbolic resistance focuses on the way marginalized groups resist cultural symbols that marginalize or abbreviate their historical experiences. An interview with a local business owner exemplifies the diverging desires of the stakeholders. The Sweet Auburn Curb Market was redeveloped initiating the efforts to create Auburn Avenue as a heritage tourism destination. The business owner stated that African Americans could not go inside of the market; African American were served curbside, hence the

name (Inwood 589). However, the branding of the Sweet Auburn Curb Market does not address the "authentic" history of residents. Residents and business owners were afraid a similar branding tactic would change the true identity of Auburn Avenue. Understanding the plights of a previous effort to create a heritage tourism district suggests that an innovative approach to develop and foster heritage is needed.

Tourism and Local Businesses

Prominent literature regarding tourism and local businesses details that local businesses benefit from the booming industry. Little research exists describing how local businesses attract visitors and are endorsed as destinations. Since the local businesses benefit from successful leisure and hospitality sectors, local governments, economic developers, and other stakeholders should consider the potential of small local businesses as tourism generators.

Discourse involving tourism and small business mentions the positive impacts tourism generated for local businesses. Large competitive firms tend to dominate the leisure and hospitality industry overshadowing small, local companies. Many travelers seek unique, authentic experiences, which requires more depth than generic sites, restaurants, and retail (Cecil 2006). Travelers seeking heritage destinations usually search and visit small local businesses. Small and medium local businesses offer diverse products and services facilitating increased revenues for local economies (Bastakis, Buhalis, and Butler 2004). Products of local businesses present local character among homogenous tourism products. These establishments are recognized as critical assets in a community (Simmons 1994).

Small tourism businesses include galleries, independent restaurants, theatres, local retail, bed and breakfasts, and art studios. These businesses have difficulty competing in large firm and

chain establishment markets. Due to the challenges of competition, it is essential that tourism organizations, local tourism bureaus, and local governments support local businesses (Cecil 2006). These businesses also contribute to the quality of life factors firms consider when expanding or relocating businesses. Local businesses must be included in the strategic tourism planning process because the businesses provide diversity in local tourism sectors, increase revenue, create opportunities for partnerships, and presents marketing opportunities. Based on local businesses' participation in the strategic tourism planning process, the policies created from the planning process should reflect the needs of the businesses and establish an improved local economy.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

As a city with a rich African American history, there is an opportunity to expand heritage tourism efforts in Atlanta, Georgia. With a resurgence of interest in the *Negro Motorist Green Book*, a heritage tourism initiative can be created to demonstrate the challenges of travelling as an African American during the Jim Crow Era while highlight the strides of African American businesses leaders that established leisure and accommodation businesses. Due to Atlanta's history of demolishing dated structures and disinvestment in African American neighborhoods, the existence of the structures must be determined. After desegregation, African American businesses did not survive the impacts of consumer preferences. The existence of the leisure and accommodation businesses listed in the *Green Book* must be determined. The capacity to establish and implement the *Green Book* Heritage Tourism Initiative must be examined. The following sections offers the foundation for the *Green Book* Heritage Tourism Initiative by revealing the current status of the businesses and structures that housed the businesses. Historical

context is provided regarding the businesses, owners, and architects. In addition, the types of organizations to be involved in the development of the initiative will be discussed.

METHODOLOGY

The Negro Motorist Green Book was the source for extracting the names and addresses of leisure and accommodation businesses. The New York Public Library offers a digital collection of several editions of the Green Book for public viewing. Victor Green organized the guide based on state, city, and type of business. Over 100 businesses were listed for the State of Georgia. After reviewing several editions of the guide, 27 leisure and accommodation businesses were identified. Since the guide was published from 1936 to 1966 indicating the historical significance of the businesses and structures.

Over the years, historic buildings were demolished throughout the city. Names of streets and addresses have changed over the years making it difficult to identify the exact locations of the businesses. The City of Atlanta House Numbering Map (1926) documents the numerical address system and original street names. Reviewing the map aided the process of determining the locations of businesses and structures. The Fulton County Assessor Database provided building construction dates, which helped determine the existence of the structures and proper addresses. After confirming the addresses, fieldwork was conducted.

The City of Atlanta 1954 Negro Occupied Areas Map, published by the Georgia University Library, was imported into ArcMap to identify the African American residential patterns. Viewing this map helps illustrate the distribution of the *Green Book* sites throughout the City of Atlanta. The National Register of Historic Places distributes shapefiles displaying all of the historic districts. This data help illustrate the current foundation of the historic tourism landscape in the city.

ANALYSIS

Thirty-seven leisure and accommodation businesses were recorded in *The Negro Motorist Green Book* as Atlanta's safe travel destinations for African American travelers during the Jim Crow Era (Green 1937-1962). The Map of *The Negro Motorist Green Book Sites* displays 35 businesses, see Figure 1 and

2. Two sites, Hall's Service Station and Smitty's Restaurant, were not identified due to vague addresses indicated in the guide. The guide did indicate the businesses were located on Auburn Avenue. Due to the segregated residential patterns of the period, the businesses are clustered in the "Negro Occupied Areas" outlined in red. Consequently, businesses were established near their customers. Auburn Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive were significant commercial districts for African Americans. The success of businesses in the commercial districts encouraged more entrepreneurs to establish business in these areas. The other *Green Book* sites, Hotel Mack, Oliver's Grocery and Lodging, Forrest Arms Hotel, Mrs. E.B. Jackson Tourist Home, Stratton's Tea Room, Waluhaje Hotel, and Butler's Tavern, are dispersed throughout the city. Six sites reform to segregated residential patterns and exist in African American neighborhoods. Stratton's Tea Room is the only business that does not follow the residential patterns, as it was located in North Atlanta outside of the "Negro Occupied" area. This indicates that the establishment may not be an African American owned business, but a business that welcomed African American patrons.

Insert Map

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Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Corridor

The Map of *The Negro Motorist Green Book* Sites, Figure 3, displays the clusters of businesses around the Martin Luther King Jr. Drive corridor. The proximity to the Historically Black Universities and African American neighborhood contributed to the success of these business. The existence of numerous business along the corridor fostered an environment for entrepreneurship and camaraderie. The Martin Luther King Jr. Drive corridor is not a well-known commercial district for African American entrepreneurship unlike the "Sweet Auburn Avenue" commercial district. Plaques along the Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, see Figure 4, corridor present information about the historic district and businesses. A few plaques feature information about businesses that were listed in the *Green Book*. The presence of the plaques reveals the groundwork for the development of a heritage tourism plan emphasizing the *Green Book* sites. The Martin Luther King Jr. Drive corridor is the only location in Atlanta, Georgia that acknowledges specific small African American businesses in the leisure and accommodation industry.

FIGURE 4: *The Harden Family Plaque, Author's Creation, 2019*

The structures that housed the Ashly Theater, Harden's Service Station, and Paramount Grille are intact. Currently, the Ashly Theater and Harden's Service Station are vacant commercial spaces, see Figure 5 and 6. The Busy Bee Café, see Figure 7, operates where Paramount Grille once operated. The Connally Tourist Home was built in 1920 (Fulton County Assessor Database 2019). The structure remains sound and serves as a two-

story duplex. The structures for the University Motel, Sunset Casino, Blackaret, Paschal Bros Restaurant, and Dew Drop Inn no longer exist.

FIGURE 5: *The Ashly Theater, Author's Creation, 2019*

FIGURE 6: *Harden's Service Statin, Author's Creation, 2019*

FIGURE 7: *The Paramount Grille, Author's Creation, 2019*

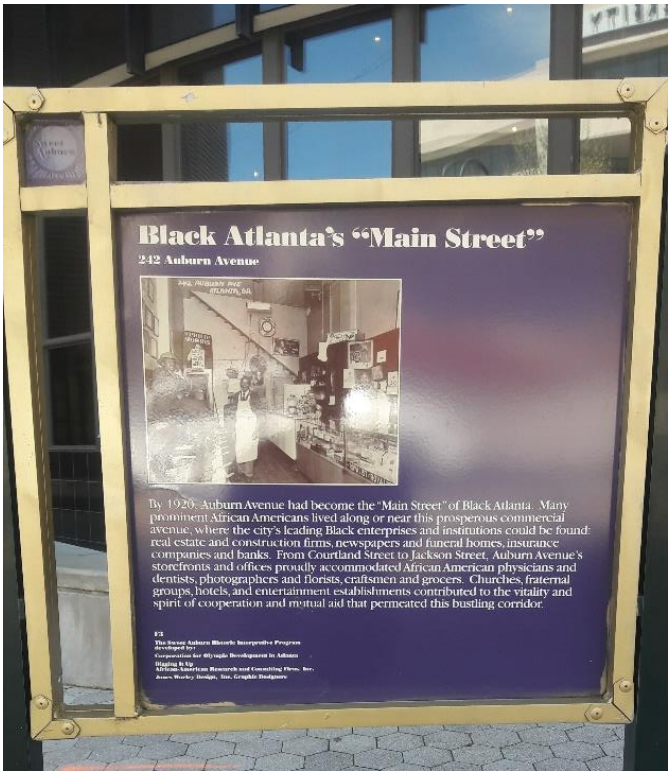

FIGURE 9: *"Black Atlanta's 'Main Street,'" Author's Creation, 2019*

Auburn Avenue Corridor

The Auburn Avenue corridor is known as the most prominent black business district in the nation (Inwood 2010). While many African Americans lived throughout the city, more affluent African Americans lived the Old Fourth Ward in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Calloway 1988, 2). With proximity to Atlanta's central business district and African American neighborhoods, Auburn Avenue offered an efficient location for African

American businesses, see Figure 8. The establishment of African American financial institutions, such as Atlanta Life Insurance Company, Citizens Trust Bank, State Saving Bank, and Mutual Federal Savings, solidified the environment for African American business development along the corridor. Prominent African American business leaders constructed several buildings, for example Herndon Building and Rucker Building. These buildings housed many of the businesses listed in The Negro Motorist *Green Book*. Due to the historical significance of Auburn Avenue, there are several markers accentuating the financial, religious, and real estate institutions. One plaque (Figure 9) mentions the variety of businesses, such as restaurants and hotels, along the corridor, but it does not state the specific locations of the establishments.

Seventeen of the *Green Book* sites are along the Auburn Avenue corridor. Of the 16 sites, six of the structure are intact. Three of the sites, Henry's Night Club (Figure 10), Mrs. Suttons Restaurant (Figure 11), and Joe's Coffee Bar, are vacant commercial spaces. The previous locations of Henry's Grill and Lounge (Figure 12), The Top Hat (Figure 13), and Sportsman's Smoke Shop Tavern are occupied commercial spaces. Seven structures no longer exist. The Fulton County Assessor Database reveals that two sites, McKay Hotel (Figure 14) and Hawk's Restaurant, were demolished and reconstructed in the 1970s.

Insert Map

FIGURE 10: *Henry's Night Club, Author's Creation, 2019*

FIGURE 11: *Mrs. Sutton's Restaurant, Author's Creation, 2019*

FIGURE 12: *Henry's Grill and Lounge, Author's Creation, 2019*

FIGURE 13: *The Top Hat, Author's Creation, 2019*

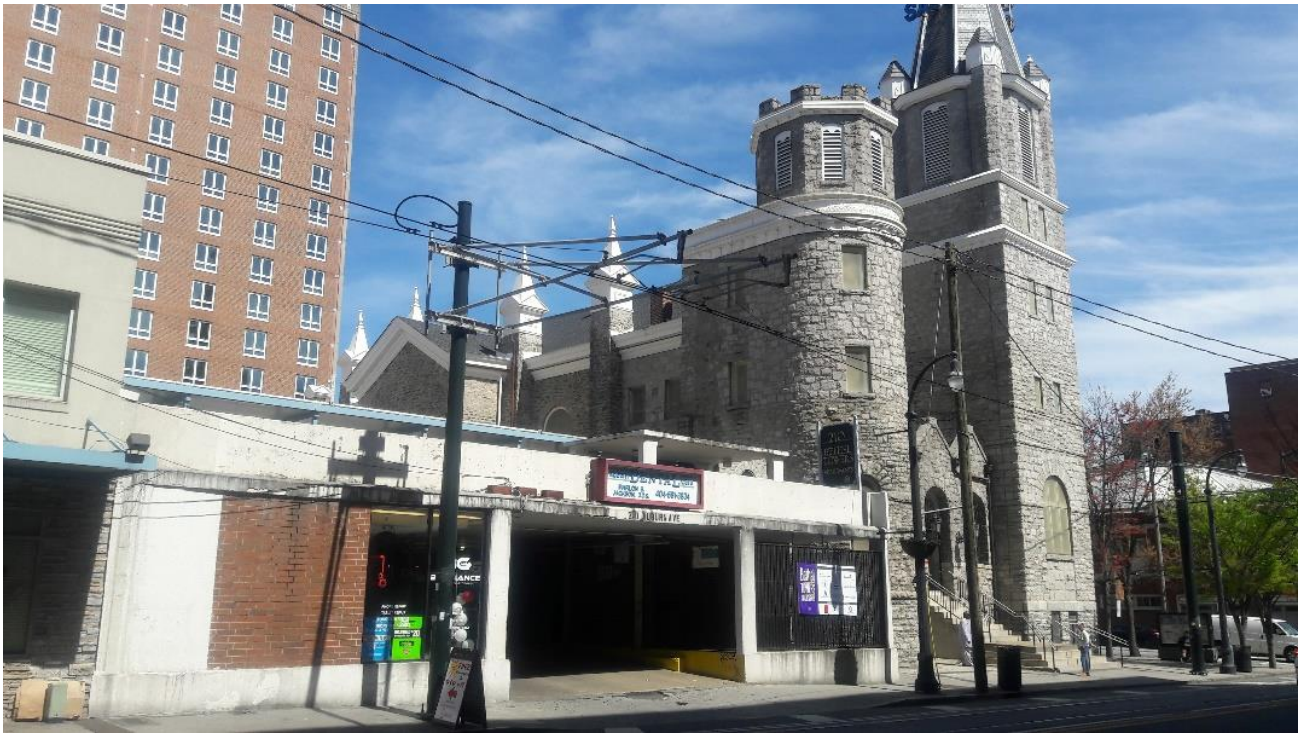

FIGURE 14: *McKay Hotel, Author's Creation, 2019*

The remainder of the sites, Stratton's Tea Room, Mack Hotel, Mrs. E.B. Jackson, Oliver's Grocery and Lodging, Forrest Arms Hotel, Butler's Tavern, and Waluhaje Hotel, are dispersed throughout the city illustrated in Figure 2. Of these seven sites, only one structure remains, see Figure 15. The Waluhaje Hotel was developed by Walter "Chief Aiken," an African American architect and engineer, in 1952 (Walter Aiken 1923-1949). The name of the hotel was developed from Aiken combining the first two letters of the names his wife Lucy and her siblings. Aiken owned a construction company that rented office space in the Rucker Building on Auburn Avenue (Calloway 1988, 6). The Waluhaje Hotel offered guests a barbershop/salon, restaurant, and lounge. Other developments by Aiken include West Lake Court Apartments, a Morris Brown College Dormitory, and houses in the Hunter Street-Washington Park and Simpson Road subdivisions (Walter Aiken 1923-1949). Unfortunately, no markers indicate the historical significance of the structure.

Similarly to other African American businesses that served a specific population, the hotel ceased operation soon after the integration of leisure and accommodation businesses. In 1969, the property became the Atlanta Job Corps headquarters. The building failed inspection in 2017 causing the firm to vacate the building (Fortner 2018). Recently, New Columbia Residential and Quest Community Development Organization purchased the property to redevelop the site into affordable senior housing. The redevelopment is expected to bring the property "back to life" (Fortner 2018, 1).

FIGURE 15: *Waluhaje Hotel, Author's Creation, 2019*

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The Green Book Sites in Historic Districts

The National Register of Historic Places, managed by the National Park Service, is a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources (National Register of Historic Places). The National Register of Historic Places contributes to the identification and preservation of cultural landscapes. Local governments utilize the historic sites, resources, and districts publicized by National Register for Historic Places to develop heritage tourism plans and programs.

Currently, there are 70 sites listed as historic places and districts in Atlanta, Georgia (National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary: Atlanta, GA 2016). Twenty *Green Book*s sites are in historic districts designated by the National Register for Historic Places, see Table 1. The majority of the sites are in the Sweet Auburn Historic District. The Sweet Auburn Historic District Nomination Form (1973) for the district highlights significant historical places, such as the locations of the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, Butler Street YMCA, Herndon Building, Municipal Market, Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium and Big Bethel AME Church.

Due to the existence of the Sweet Auburn Historic District, many of the structures are incorporated into the African American heritage tourism framework in Atlanta, GA, see Figure 16. However, the narrative regarding the influence of the *Green Book* to the historic commercial district has not been explored or publicized. The Butler Street YMCA, Herndon Building, and Atlanta Life Insurance Company Building were sites that provided lodging for travelers, but they are promoted as historic African American financial institutions, sites contributing to the Civil Rights Movement, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, the discourse regarding the businesses along Auburn Avenue entails prominent financial, real estate, and religious institutions owned and operated by African Americans. The dialogue does not acknowledge the significance of leisure and accommodation businesses to the commercial district. These businesses provided capital, employment opportunities, and solidarity among

the African American community. Furthermore, these businesses offer safe places to access entertainment and relaxation.

Insert map

The Atlanta University Historic District encompasses the campuses of Morehouse College, Clark Atlanta University, Morris Brown College, and Spelman College. While the boundary of the district extends toward Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, the district does not include the businesses along the corridor, see Figure 17. A portion of the Martin Luther King Jr. Drive commercial district was incorporated into the Washington Park Historic District, which includes the Ashly Theater.

African Americans had a vital role in shaping the architectural and cultural history, but this history has been disproportionately preserved and documented. The data collected regarding the existence of the historic structures reflects the city's infamous reputation of demolishing of historic structures. Additionally, the data reveals the impact of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on African American businesses. The abolishment of segregation offered more residential and commercial options for African Americans. The elimination of a guaranteed and underserved market of consumers lead to the closure of businesses, including the identified businesses and distribution of *The Negro Motorist Green Book*. The legacy of the Civil Rights Movement and the significance of the financial and religious institutions on Auburn Avenue provided the foundation to develop an African American heritage tourism framework.

Since many of the sites are associated with well-known historic resources, landmarks, and districts, there are opportunities for local governments, tourism organizations, and historic preservation organizations to promote the legacy of the small businesses in the leisure and accommodation industry. There is an opportunity to expand the discourse on African American entrepreneurship in Atlanta, Georgia by exploring the sites listed in the *Green Book.* Telling the story of these small businesses owners would provide a new, unique perspective on history in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Business that Survived: Paschal Brother's Restaurant

Many of the leisure and accommodation businesses listed in *The Negro Motorist Green Book* are no longer in operation. The Paschal brothers sustained their restaurant through the beginning and end of the Jim Crow Era. James and Robert Paschal opened their first shore selling cold cut sandwiches and soft

drinks, but fried chicken became their specialty (Paschal 2007). They saved $2,000 and received a $3,000 loan to invest in a restaurant, on West Hunter Street, currently known as Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Robert Paschal stated West Hunt Street was an excellent location for their first restaurant because it was "becoming a bustling strip of black-focused activities" (Paschal 2007, 102). In 1951, the restaurant was first listed in the *Green Book* in 1951 at 837 West Hunter Street (Green 1951, 23). By 1959, the Paschal Brothers invested in a larger location, which was across the street from the original location. Atlanta Life Insurance Company and Citizens Trust Company provided loans for the development of the La Carrousel Lounge in 1960 and Paschal's Motor Hotel in 1965, see Figure 18. These establishments were not listed in the *Green Book.*

Robert Paschal sold the Paschal's Motor Hotel in 1996 to Clark Atlanta University and opened a new restaurant the following year on Northside Drive. The University closed the restaurant citing $500,000 in losses a year (Henry 2006). The university proposed to demolish the hotel, restaurant, and lounge and build a new dormitory. The proposal received major pushback. Students were housed in the hotel until 2004. In 2002, the final location of the Paschal's Restaurant opened as a portion of Herman J. Russell's development on Northside Drive, which included a hotel, office building, and lounge (Paschal 2007). The former hotel and restaurant complex remain vacant.

FIGURE 18: *Paschal's Motor Hotel and Restaurant, Author's Creation, 2019*

NATIONAL STRIDES TO PRESERVE *GREEN BOOK* SITES

The resurgence of interest in *The Negro Motorist Green Book* prompted historic preservation organizations to examine the sites listed in the guide. Two organizations are leading the efforts of exploring the local significance of the *Green Book* sites in different jurisdictions. The following projects were initiated to preserve and promote the sites. Due to the existing African American heritage tourism landscape in Atlanta, Georgia, these projects can serve as examples of initiatives for local organizations.

National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, an organization seeking to preserve places important to American history, leads the efforts to protect sites listed in *The Negro Motorist Green Book* through the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund (Kafer 2019). Due to

the lack of recognition of African Americans in history and society, the African American Heritage Action Fund, which is the largest preservation campaign for African American history, committed $25 million fund to publicize histories of African American activism and achievement. The National Trust highlights several *Green Book* sites from across the nation, including the A.G Gaston Motel and Shearer Cottage.

A.G Gaston Motel in Birmingham, Alabama

The A.G. Gatson Motel (2017) in Birmingham, Alabama was constructed as a place of luxury for African Americans during segregation. Also, the motel had a critical role in the Civil Rights Movement as a site for civil rights protests and demonstrations. After being vacant for more than 20 years, the Gatson was classified as a contributing structure in the Birmingham Civil Rights National Register of Historic District. The site will be rehabilitated with funds from the city and National Park Service. The motel will become Freedom Center focusing on the civil rights movement. The goals of the project are to protect the site from continued deterioration and vacancy, conduct perseveration-based planning, identify a sustainable reuse that revitalizes the Civil Rights district, and increase awareness of a partnership with a developer to preserve the site. Currently, the National Trust and the City of Birmingham, Alabama continue working on achieving these goals (Edgemon 2018).

Shearer Cottage in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts

The Shearer Cottage is the oldest African American owned inn in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts (Som 2019). Elaine Cawley Weintraub, historian, developed an African American Heritage Trail of Martha's Vineyard as a tour that focuses on the area's rich history. African American families owned many plots in the area for generations. The Shearers built a 12-room

cottage on their property, which continues to be owned and preserved by the Shearer family. The resurgence of interest in the *Green Book* spurred publicity for the cottage. In contrast to the majority of historic African American businesses, the Shearer Cottage remains open and welcomes all travelers.

Moulin Rouge in Las Vegas, Nevada

The growing African American population in Las Vegas, Nevada at the beginning of the 20th of century prompted the creation of black-owned businesses on the west side of the city (Bear 2019). In 1955, the Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino was built encompassing 110 rooms and a swimming pool. The establishment was primarily White owned, though a small portion of the property was owned by Joe Louis, an African American boxer. The Moulin Rouge was integrated and offered diverse performances. The hotel hosted meetings that contributed to the end of segregation in the city.

The ownership of the business changed several times, and the business declined (Bear 2019). The first change in ownership resulted in discrimination by charging higher prices for African Americans patrons, which damaged the business's relationship with customers. In 2009, the structure was burned down. In 2018, Spec Builders USA Inc. bidded to build a revived Moulin Rouge and a civil rights museum on the site. Spec Builders USA Inc. had trouble securing financing for the purchase (Johnson 2018). Unfortunately, the developers did not meet the deadline to provide a $200,000 deposit to close the $9.5 million purchase.

The Northside in Atlantic City, New Jersey

Many African Americans moved to Atlantic City, New Jersey during the Great Migration (Bear 2019). Due to discriminatory real estate practices, African Americans resided in the Northside neighborhood. Missouri Avenue Beach was the only beach open to African

Americans. Hotels did exist to accommodate African American travelers, but the majority of travelers resided in tourist homes owned by African Americans. Based on the listings in the *Green Book*, approximately 20-50 homes were classified as tourist homes. After the Civil Rights Act, many historic buildings were demolished, and businesses ceased operation. The Founder of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey, Ralph Hunter, stated that 37 African American owned bars served the Northside neighborhood. Today, these businesses are closed.

North Carolina African American Heritage Commission

The North Carolina African American Heritage Commission of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources initiated the "*'Green Book'* 'Oasis Spaces' Project" (2018) researching over 300 businesses that were listed *in The Negro Motorist Green Book* from 1936 to 1966. The project will produce an interactive website for visitors to explore each *Green Book* site through historical vignettes, stories, and photographs. Traveling exhibitions and programming will be created to highlight the experiences of African American travelers during the Jim Crow Era. The researchers are asking assistance from residents to share oral histories and local historical information related to African-American communities and business districts, stories of traveling in North Carolina during segregation, archival materials, and physical artifacts related to African-American travel or businesses.

ESTABLISHING THE A *GREEN BOOK* HERITAGE TOURISM INITIATIVE

In 2010, the Historic Preservation Division of Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the Tourism Division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development established the Heritage Tourism Handbook to "assist communities in leveraging their historic assets to achieve

economic and cultural goals" and "develop heritage programs" (3). The Handbook identified five principles of an effective tourism plan (16):

- Find the right fit: Define Your Purpose
- Tell your own story: Focus on Authenticity and Quality
- Preserve and protect your resources: foster a preservation ethic
- Make tourism sites come alive: Tell a story
- Collaborate with partners: form alliances

As previously stated, tourism is a significant industry in Georgia and the City of Atlanta. Currently, the state and city have an African American heritage tourism framework concentrating on the Civil Rights Movement. The most recent initiative implemented by the state was the "Georgia's Footsteps of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Trail" (2018), which entails 28 sites throughout the state that contributed to the Civil Rights Movement. Many of the *Green Book* sites are near the locations of the project, which cluster around the Auburn Avenue corridor and Martin Luther King Jr. corridor.

The Atlanta African American heritage tourism framework predominantly focuses on the Civil Rights Movement through the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, APEX Museum, Center for Civil and Human Rights, Atlanta History Center, Auburn Avenue Research Library, and various signage and monuments. A heritage tourism initiative promoting the significance of the *Green Book* Sites is a unique, authentic story of African American businesses development that relates to the current heritage tourism themes of the Civil Rights Movement, historic preservation, architecture, and social history. The heritage tourism initiative can be established as a guide, exhibit, tour, or program. There are various businesses and organizations

to contribute and host the initiative, such as Phoenix Flies, Civil Bikes, Atlanta History Center, Auburn Avenue Research Library, APEX Museum, and the Center for Civil and Human Rights.

Increasing awareness of the existing historic structures will help protect and preserve the resources. Since the city has an infamous history of demolishing historic buildings, rallying support to protect the businesses will discourage future proposals that may threaten the sites. Acknowledging and protecting the existing structures will help mend the city's reputation of removing historic structures and overlooking the history of African Americans.

Many organizations throughout Georgia and the City of Atlanta provide assistance to preserve and promote historic resources. These are networks that could contribute to the development of the initiative. It is unfortunate that an organization does not comprehensively address African American historic resources in Atlanta, Georgia. There are opportunities for the development of an organization that focuses on preserving and promoting African American historic resources by collaborating existing preservation efforts and expanding the network to local African American institutions, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Auburn Avenue Research Library.

Historic Preservation Organizations	
National Organizations	• National Park Services, United States Department of the Interior • National Trust for Historic Preservation • Preservation Action
State Agencies	• Georgia Council for the Arts • Georgia Department of Community Affairs • Georgia Department of Economic Development • Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Statewide Cultural Nonprofits	• Georgia Humanities Council • Georgia Historical Society

Georgia Preservation Nonprofits	• Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation • Atlanta Preservation Center • Historic Atlanta

Through collaboration, organizations, business owners, residents, and other stakeholders can establish an initiative that acknowledges the historic significance of African American business development in the leisure and accommodation industry.

CONCLUSION

Tourism is a major industry in Georgia and the City of Atlanta. Both justifications have developed an African American heritage tourism that highlight the Civil Rights Movement and financial and religious institutions. Due to the existing heritage tourism landscape and outcomes of previous efforts to redevelop the landscape, an innovative strategy must be considered that avoids many of the pitfalls. Increasing the heritage tourism framework to integrate the historical importance of *The Negro Motorist Green Book* would provide a distinct, new, and authentic perspective on African American history in Atlanta, Georgia.

Small local businesses are essential to local economies; however, many of the small businesses that existed during the Jim Crow Era are no longer in operation except for Paschal Brother's Restaurant. Many of the structures that housed the businesses have been demolished. Consequently, simply creating an initiative that only supports historic African American businesses and current businesses in the existing structures may not be feasible. Developing a comprehensive effort involving existing heritage tourism themes, such as Civil Rights Movement, African American entrepreneurship, historic preservation, architecture, and social

history, with the support of local tourism and historic preservation organization would be a valuable resource with the potential to be presented in different mediums.

The Negro Motorist Green Book was produced approximately 30 years ago. Since the 1960s, neighborhood change, redevelopment, and disinvestment greatly impacted African American businesses. Low-income African American communities continue to be vulnerable to change. The heritage tourism project can spur public support and help to protect against future threats of development. Many of the buildings did not withstand the threats or recover from years of disinvestment. The project presents the opportunity to preserve the existing structures, highlight the achievements of African Americans, and ensure history does not reoccur.

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