

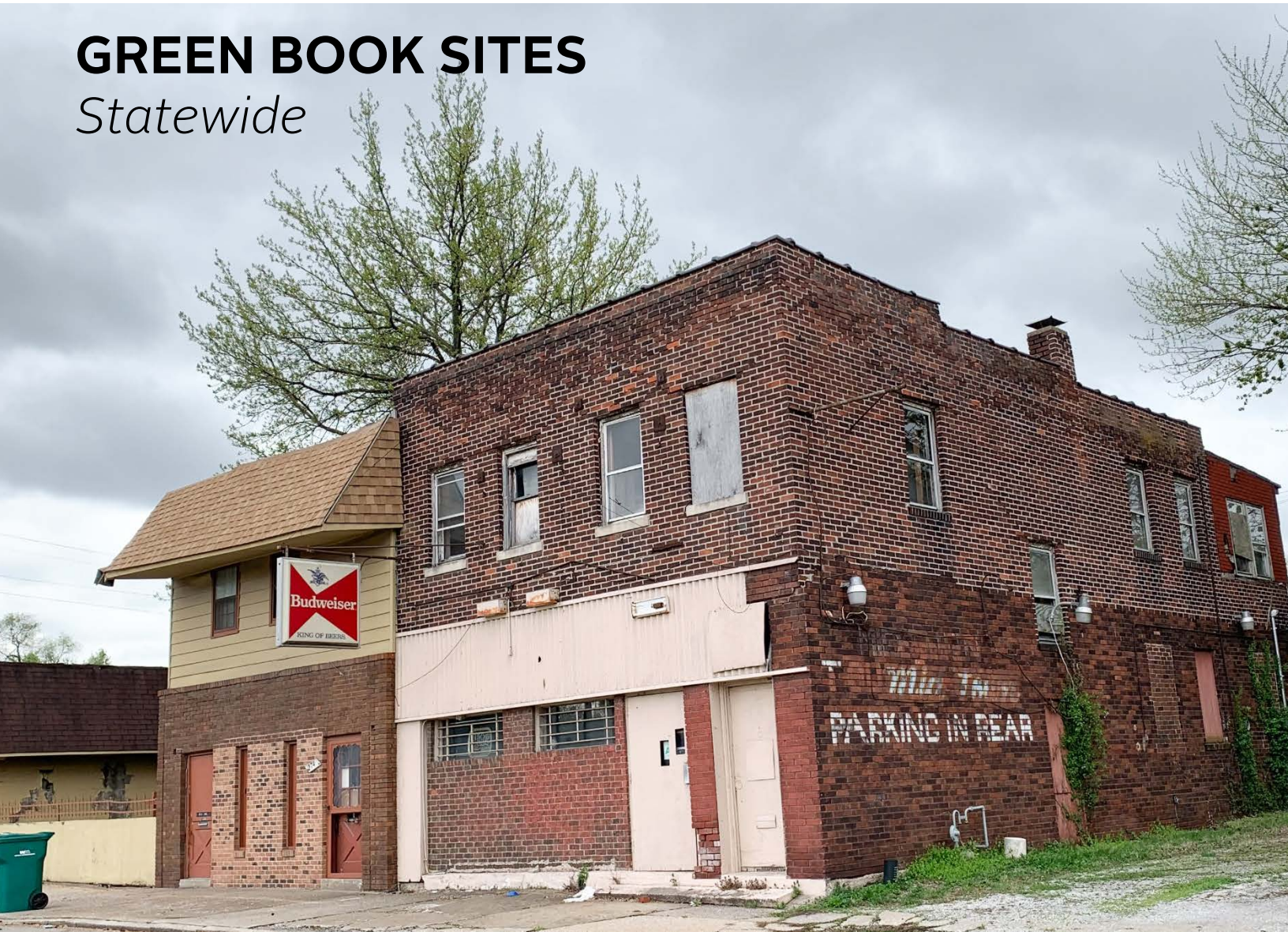


LANDMARKS
ILLINOIS

Landmarks Illinois 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

GREEN BOOK SITES

Statewide



“The Green Book saved many lives and was a road map for Black people to travel safely and ultimately have a better quality of life in the face of racism and discrimination. It is all of our responsibility to preserve and tell the untold stories of those Green Book sites so that future generations, especially Black children, understand the rich legacy that they come from.”

DR. STACY GRUNDY

VICE PRESIDENT, ROUTE HISTORY



Green Book house in East St. Louis

LOCATION

Statewide

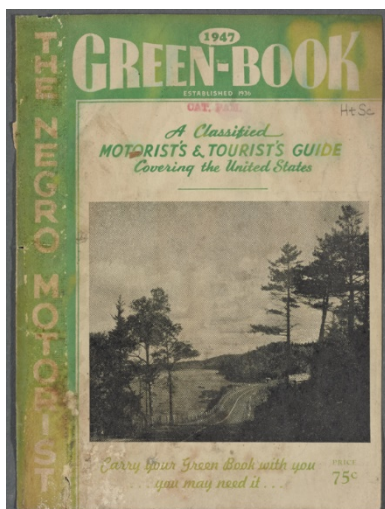
WHY IT'S ENDANGERED

Dozens of sites in Illinois were included in the [Negro Motorist Green Book](#), published by Victor H. Green from 1936 to 1967 to provide Black people with options for safe travel in the face of discrimination and the threat of sundown towns across the United States.

Since the final printing of the Green Book in 1967, many of the Illinois sites featured in the publication have been demolished. For those that remain, often their cultural significance is not widely known, and thus they lack the protections and prioritization that they deserve. If this trend continues, we will lose more of the places and stories of African American communities that hosted Green Book sites and the role they played in the struggle for Civil Rights.

Illinois is in need of a survey of Green Book sites along with collaborative approaches to share the stories of the people who owned and operated the businesses

highlighted as well as the travelers who used the guide. Preservation of the remaining Illinois Green Book sites is an opportunity to honor the legacy of the people and communities the Green Book served and to better understand the critical role they played in the struggle for civil rights and equality, as well as travel culture in America.



Credit: New York Public Library

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE & BACKGROUND

The [Negro Motorist Green Book](#), commonly referred to as the “Green Book,” directed Black motorists and vacationers, who commonly faced threats and refusals of service, to lodging, dining, barbershops, salons, taverns and more where they would be welcomed.

The first print of the Green Book featured only locations in New York City, but it became such a useful resource that the following year it expanded to serve national travelers. Victor Green published the guide yearly to ensure up-to-date listings of safe locations. Largely filled with the Black-owned businesses, the Green Book also offered the option of stopping at “tourist homes,” where private homeowners provided travelers a safe place to spend the night.



Many Green Book resources are now available online, including the digitization of several of the Green Book publications by [the New York Public Library](#). The National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program created a [list](#) and [map](#) of Green Book sites along Route 66 in Joliet, Bloomington, Springfield and East St. Louis. Other Illinois Green Book cities yet to be surveyed include Brooklyn, Carbondale, Carthage, Centralia, Chicago, Danville, Fulton, Ottawa, Peoria, Rockford, Sparta, Vienna and Waukegan.



Green Book Tourist Home, 1616 E. Jackson St., Springfield

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Landmarks Illinois is compiling information on Illinois Green Book sites with the goal of completing a statewide survey. Currently, we are in need of survey information and additional research for sites in the Chicagoland area. If you are able to help in this work, please contact Landmarks Illinois Springfield Office Director Frank Butterfield.

[Route History](#), a space to experience and learn about the tragedy, resilience and excellence of Black people along Route 66 and in the City of Springfield, is working to elevate the stories of Green Book sites in Illinois in preparation for the centennial of Route 66 in 2026. Follow [Route History](#) and support its work.



The Dudley Hotel in Springfield, now demolished. Courtesy: Sangamon Valley Collection

FURTHER READING

- [National Trust for Historic Preservation: Green Book Sites](#)
- National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program: [Route 66 and the Negro Motorist Green Book](#)
- New York Public Library: [The Green Book](#)