

# Chittenden County Historical Society



# Bulletin

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Courtesy of Paulette Daubenspeck, Alfred King's step-daughter

The Pates' sprawling house on Archibald Street

## The Pates and Kings of Archibald Street

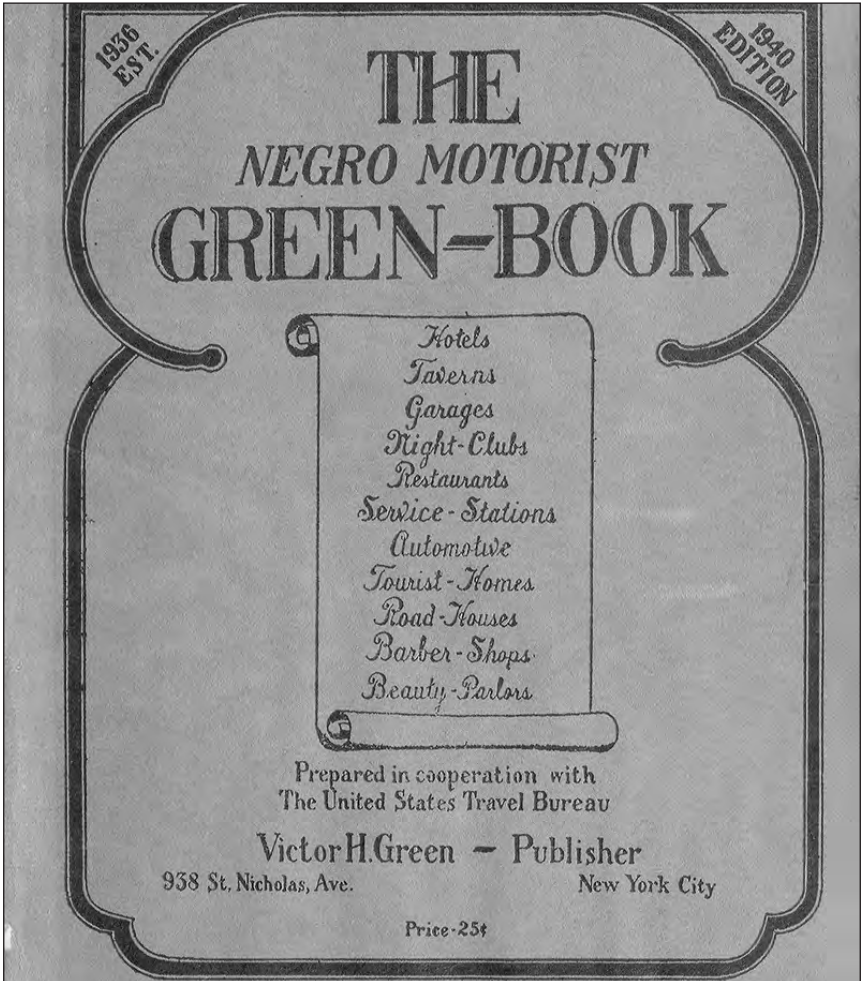
An African American and Filipino family

By **Rebekah Mortensen and Elise A. Guyette**

**H**ow did the paths of Frank Pate (1872-1950) from Nashville, Tenn., and Clelati Harrison (1874-1957) from the Philippines cross? And what brought them to Archibald Street in Burlington, Vt., to run the Pates Hotel that was in travelers' books for people of color, including the

Green Book, for 36 years?

The answer to the first question is related to the 1898 Spanish American War. Under the command of Adm. George Dewey from Montpelier, Vt., the U.S. Navy won the first major battle of the war in the Philippines at Manila Bay, leading the way to



Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library.  
 "The Negro Motorist Green-Book: 1940" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1940. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/dc858e50-83d3-0132-2266-58d385a7b928>

### 1940 Green Book cover

eventual victory. Afterwards the U.S. instituted military rule over the islands and fought the ensuing "Philippine Insurrection" in which Filipino rebels were seeking independence from the United States. From 1907 to 1909 the U.S. 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, known as Buf-

falo Soldiers, was stationed in the Philippines and, as a trained combat unit, helped defeat the rebels.<sup>1</sup> Frank Pate, having enlisted in the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in 1904, served in that military action with Troop I.

Clelati (later Cleta) Harrison

lived through war and insurrection on her native Filipino islands. There is no evidence that she met Frank, her future (and second) husband, while in the Philippines. However, she did meet another Buffalo Soldier, William King from Troop H, and married him. They had three children: Alfred, Mary, and Adele King. In 1909, when the 10<sup>th</sup> Calvary was reassigned to Fort Ethan Allen on Barracks Road in Colchester, the entire King family moved with them.

Apparently, this is where Cleeta and Frank's paths crossed, if not earlier. We know that Frank and Cleeta had a passionate love affair while at the fort. One June day in 1910, William discovered the two together at Frank's home. In a fit of jealous rage, he struck out at the two of them with a pocketknife, inflicting a 2-inch wound to Frank's neck and a "slight wound" to Cleeta's neck.<sup>2</sup> Frank fought back, hurling a piece of wood at William, slightly injuring his hand and breaking a lamp. William was jailed for six months; Frank was arrested for breach of peace and paid a \$5 fine.

In December 1910, William returned home with "his arms filled with Christmas presents



Courtesy of Paulette Daubenspeck,  
Alfred King's step-daughter

### Cleeta's mother in the Philippines

for his family.”<sup>3</sup> He was outraged to again find Cleeta and Frank together. Frank bolted out the back door with William in hot pursuit, and the two men had a violent confrontation in the alley next to the King house. Frank fought him off, assaulting William with a board and fled to a friend's home. Police found him at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Abair, consoling Cleeta in his arms. The police charged him with breach of peace again, and this time Frank served a six-month sentence. The newspapers explained his behavior by saying he was paying attention to William King's wife “who is a Filipi-

no and more or less attractive.<sup>74</sup>

Cleta and William finally divorced. In 1911, after Frank was released from prison, Cleta Harrison King and Frank Pate were married. Her marriage certificate says she was living on Cherry Street at the time. After she left William, Cleta must have found safe lodgings in Burlington for her family. Frank and Cleta never had children together, but she brought her three children into their marriage. Alfred and Adele continued to carry their father's name, but Mary was sometimes known as Mary Pate.

Once out of prison, Frank sold bootleg liquor on the side to make extra money. Vermont had had prohibition since 1853, and there were many illegal bars near the fort and elsewhere. In March of 1913, authorities became suspicious of the amount of traffic around the Pate residence. A police raid discovered that he had on hand seven bags of beer, five bottles of whiskey, three gallons of whiskey, one gallon of gin, and one additional jug of whiskey.<sup>5</sup>

As a result, Frank earned a dishonorable discharge. Frank and Cleta were forced to move away from the fort and lived on East Allen Street in Winooski for a time.



Courtesy of Paulette Daubenspeck,  
Alfred King's step-daughter

### Alfred King as a young man

According to Burlington City Directories, by 1918 the Pates were living at 85 Archibald St., perhaps renting. Frank was a day laborer, but continued to sell liquor on the side. Where they lived before that is not clear, but perhaps at the Montreal House at the corner of King and Battery. In the first quarter of 1917, Frank had taken over the lease of the Montreal House. He assumed \$500 in liability to the Looney Furniture Co. for the existing furniture.

In April, he petitioned the Board of Aldermen for a license to run the Montreal House as a hotel. Frank brought letters of reference from Dr. A.S.C. Hill and H.A. Bailey of Winooski.

Mayor Jackson spoke in favor of granting Frank the license, saying he was “of the opinion that the license might be granted to Pate and then if he did not run a good place it could be withdrawn.”<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, Chief of Police Russell spoke against Frank because of his prior conviction for bootlegging and noted that Frank was currently on probation for yet another breach of peace conviction for a domestic assault incident, which had occurred in October 1916. Frank’s petition for a license was denied.

However, Frank wasn’t one to let the law get in his way. He operated the Montreal House, perhaps as a restaurant if not as a hotel, and was recognized as its proprietor. In June 1917, the police raided the establishment, and Frank was once again arrested for selling liquor illegally. This time, he did not escape with fines or probation but was sentenced to 10 to 12 months at the State House of Corrections.

After his release from prison, Frank returned to the family and continued work as a laborer, specializing in concrete and construction, along with his stepson Alfred King. However, her husband’s run-ins with the law

must have left Clela wondering how she could provide for her family in the eventuality of another lengthy jail sentence. In 1921, she bought what had been Lot 11 on Archibald Street in a private sale from the estate of Patrick Ryan for \$2,200. Patrick Ryan had initially bought Lots 11 and 12 for \$500 in 1889. At that time, they consisted of land and a barn.<sup>7</sup> When Clela bought Lot 11, a two-family house stood on the property. This was 86-90 Archibald St., where the family moved in 1922.

In 1928 she took out a mortgage note to pay for construction to expand the property to three apartments. The mortgage document says, “Clela Pate and Frank Pate, her husband” applied for the mortgage.<sup>8</sup>

Clela most likely kept the house and its mortgages in her name to protect the property from Frank’s ongoing legal troubles. It would not be until 1940, when he was 57, that Frank’s name was officially added to the mortgage note. In the intervening years, he was in trouble with the law again and again for open and gross lewdness, receiving stolen goods, and breach of peace.

At Thanksgiving in 1929, the family must have been in difficult circumstances. Frank was still a



laborer doing odd jobs with his stepson Al working with him. One day he, Alfred, and another accomplice sneaked to a farm at 166 East Ave., which had turkey hens certified by the University of Vermont. They stole some of the hens, killed them, and Frank put their share of the hens in the bathtub at their Archibald Street home. When the law caught up with them, some of the eight hens still had their UVM tags attached.<sup>9</sup>

The 1930 federal census showed that the Pates still lived at 86 Archibald, which they would for the rest of their lives. Frank was listed as a laborer. Two of Cleta's children lived with them: Alfred (a 28-year-old laborer) and Mary (a 23-year-old "helper" at a dye company). Adele had moved to New York City but left her 4½-year-old son, Brigido Larenso Bonhoc, in Cleta's care. By the mid-1930s, Brigido became Cleta's only living grandchild, and the only one to survive to adulthood.

In the meantime, Cleta was successful at running her apartment building, and in 1930 she listed it in a travel book, Hackley & Harrison's *Hotel and Apartment Guide for Colored Travelers*. Sarah D. Harrison, secretary

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1932—BURLINGTON DIRECTORY—1932

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Burlington Vermont City Directory (1932) p. 389.

Frank Pate appeared in the Burlington City Directories as a trucking and cement contractor at 86 Archibald. This page illustrates the diversity in Burlington with Irish, African American, German, and Italian businesses.

of the Negro Welfare Council of New London, Conn., produced the book, and Edwin H. Hackley of Philadelphia published it.

Cars were making travel easier, and many people took to the roads to see the country. However, because of prejudice and discrimination, people of color had a difficult time finding lodgings, restaurants, and gas stations that would serve them. "The Pates"

was the sole Burlington entry in that book with “36 modern rooms.”<sup>10</sup>

John J. Burns, a Burlington baseball promoter, might have turned to such a book to find lodging for a black baseball team. A Burlington Free Press article of July 14, 1930, reported that the “Burlington Colored All Stars” had secured a house on Archibald to live in for the rest of the summer.

This confirms a family story that an African American baseball team had stayed there. Burlington fans had been unimpressed with the local players and were not attending games in large numbers at the South Park baseball field east of Pine Street. Burns, who promoted South Park (now known as Calahan Park), decided to look elsewhere for a team and was successful in signing one from Bridgeport, Conn., to play in Burlington. They practiced at Roosevelt Park on Oak Street in the mornings, played at South Park on Sundays, and “played nearby town and resort teams on week days.”<sup>11</sup> Their opener was in St. Albans. Cleta certainly would have done the lion’s share of the work: cooking and cleaning for the team, although she is never listed in the city directories as anything other than Frank’s wife.

The next year was the first in



Courtesy of Paulette Daubenspeck,  
Alfred King’s step-daughter

### Cleta Pate and son, Alfred King

which Frank appeared in the Burlington City Directories as a trucking and cement contractor at 86 Archibald. Perhaps profits from the hotel had helped him start the business. The City of Burlington would sometimes hire Frank’s trucks for jobs around the city, frequently with Frank or Alfred as the driver. Frank worked at his own company until he retired in 1949. According to family members, Cleta was involved in the business and sold trucks for Frank.

On Nov. 15, 1933, the family experienced heartache when Cleta’s daughter Mary Madeline

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Pate passed away at age 27. Just 11 months earlier, the family had excitedly published her engagement announcement to Dr. Howard R. Sewell. Mary had been employed by Wells & Richardson Co. on College Street for seven years and “died at the Pittsford Sanatorium after a long illness.”<sup>12</sup> With Adele in New York City, Cleta had only her son Alfred still living in Burlington with his wife Maude and their baby boy, Alfred William King Jr.

The family again mourned a death in 1934 when Alfred’s 8-month-old son died after a short illness. He and Maude divorced soon after, and he returned to the Archibald Street home. He was a cement mason and construction worker, like his stepfather, and belonged to the AFL-CIO Masons and Bricklayers Union.<sup>13</sup>

Alfred served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and lived in the Archibald Street house for the rest of his life, often helping his mother, especially after the house appeared in the popular Green Book in 1938.

By 1936, Victor Hugo Green,<sup>14</sup> a postal carrier from New York City, and his wife Alma began production of the Green Book for African American travelers.

At first, the book focused on the New York area, but later began listing establishments throughout the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. There is no doubt such a place was needed in Burlington. In 1957, Joyce Austin of Montclair, N.J., traveled to Burlington to visit her boyfriend, Leroy Williams Jr., a UVM student and captain of the football team. When Williams tried to reserve a hotel room for her, the worker at a motel on Williston Road explained to him that there was an understanding “among hotel operators to take no Negroes.”<sup>15</sup> This incident made the local newspapers only because Williams was a public figure in town. Many incidents such as this never made the news.<sup>16</sup>

Cleta, and maybe Frank, ran The Pates, perhaps with Alfred’s help until she passed away in 1957 at home. She had diabetes, hypertension and “cardiac decomposition.”<sup>17</sup> Seven years earlier, in November 1950, Frank had died of pneumonia at their home. They are both buried in St. Joseph Cemetery on Archibald Street. Cleta’s son Alfred King inherited the property, valued at \$8,404.83. He had married and divorced again, and lived alone at 86½ Archibald after his mother’s death, running The Pates and



the apartment house. By 1962, Alfred had renamed the establishment The Pates Hotel. It was listed in The Green Book every year until Green ended publication in 1966, after passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Meanwhile, Alfred had met Therese Roberge. Sadly, she was in an abusive marriage and needed to escape to a safe place with her three young children. In 1964, Alfred invited them to live in the apartment above him at 86 Archibald St. After the Green Book ceased publication, Al ran the property as rental apartments in addition to his work as a cement mason. It seems that Therese was instrumental in helping him in this venture. Former tenants remember a quiet, kind landlord named “Al Roberge.”

Though they did not marry until 1978, they had developed a close relationship, and Alfred played a father role to Richard, Paulette, and Peter Roberge during their formative years. By all accounts he was a kind and wonderful husband and stepfather.

Therese became a welfare reformer in Burlington. She was the president of the Chittenden League for Adequate Welfare, which promoted dignity for those on welfare, as well as changes in



Courtesy of Paulette Daubenspeck,  
Alfred King's step-daughter

### Therese and Alfred King

benefits, such as an increase for dental or eye care for minors receiving social welfare. Her daughter, Paulette, remembers Peter Diamondstone and future Vermont Supreme Court Justice John Dooley at meetings helping her mother. Therese sued for an increase in housing stipends for welfare recipients in Chittenden County because rents were higher there and, with Dooley, worked on a class action suit charging discrimination in the welfare system against single mothers.

Therese focused on her welfare reform work and on raising her children until they were grown and had moved into their own homes. At that time, she and Al-

fred married, and she moved into the downstairs apartment with him. Unfortunately, they were not able to enjoy married life for long. In 1980, Alfred King died at Fanny Allen hospital of cancer at the age of 79. He is buried at St. Joseph's cemetery.

Therese King inherited the property from the estate of her husband. By that time, it was valued at \$80,000. Therese continued to live on Archibald Street and managed the apartments. As the Pates had done, Therese invited family to live in the building with her. Her daughter Paulette lived above her with her husband and two young children. Therese's son Richard lived in a back apartment with his wife and daughter. She turned the attic, which had once housed the Burlington Colored All Stars, into a craft studio where she sewed, scrapbooked, and turned the tiniest scraps into treasures for her grandchildren. Always interested in porcelain dolls, she began collecting these and learned to make her own.

In 1988 Therese Roberge King decided to retire from managing the apartment house and sold the property to Robert and Danielle Auclair for \$150,500. With the money she made selling the Archibald Street house, Therese purchased a home at the dead end of Crowley Street

from her son Robert. She invested in two kilns and took up porcelain doll making and ceramic painting in her retirement. She passed away in 2007.

The Pate/King family had lived at 86-90 Archibald for 67 years. Cleta's original \$2,200 investment had multiplied many times since her 1921 purchase. Today the building continues as a large apartment house with five units in Burlington's Old North End. It is worth close to a half million dollars.

Oh, and a woman who used to live at the apartment house in the 1960s and 1970s said she used to see a spirit there in the form of a man matching Frank's description. Is he watching over his wife's investment? Stranger things have happened!

*Rebekah Mortensen is Alfred King's step-granddaughter. Once a history major with an interest in historic preservation, she is now a National Board-Certified special educator. Rebekah is her family's historian.*

*Elise Guyette is a Vermont historian and author of *Discovering Black Vermont: African American Farmers in Hinesburgh, 1790-1890* (University Press of New England, 2010). She is the co-founder of the Burlington Edible History Tour along with Gail Rosenberg and has recently been researching the history of the Old North End for Historic New England.*

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 Endnotes
 

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- <sup>1</sup> Despite stories about the Rough Riders arriving first with the flag on top of Kettle Hill, members of the 10th and 3rd Cavalry units had planted their colors before the Rough Riders arrived. hotel and apartment guide for colored travelers,” The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1930. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/173daf10-fc1f-0136-584e-3b945bc8b699>.
- <sup>2</sup> The Burlington (Vt.) Daily News, 10 June 1910, 9.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 December 1910, 8.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 December 1910, 8.
- <sup>5</sup> The Burlington (Vt.) Free Press and Times, 1 March 1913, 7.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 April 1917, 8.
- <sup>7</sup> Burlington Property Records, 4 May 1889.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 May 1928, vol. 89, 504.
- <sup>9</sup> The Burlington Free Press and Times, 27 November 1929, 9.
- <sup>10</sup> Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division, The New York Public Library. “Hackley & Harrison’s
- <sup>11</sup> The Burlington Free Press and Times, 14 July 1930, 13.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 November 1933, 9.
- <sup>13</sup> Burlington Free Press, 13 November 1980, 14.
- <sup>14</sup> He was named after the noted French author, Victor M. Hugo.
- <sup>15</sup> Elise A. Guyette, “The Power of Erasure: Reflections on Civil War, Race, and Growing Up White in Vermont,” *Vermont History*, vol. 84, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2016): 154-170.
- <sup>16</sup> Victor H. Green, *The Negro Motorist Green-Book* (NYC: Victor H. Green, 1936-40).
- <sup>17</sup> State of Vermont Certificate of Death, 16 April 1957.

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## To our valued members

We miss you greatly! CCHS is exploring new ways to engage with you through these unprecedented times. We hope to create new virtual options to discover Chittenden County’s history from home very soon.

Please stay tuned to our website and social media for announcements. And if you have ideas or would like to get involved, please call or email CCHS President Lisa Evans - 802-272-9836. [vt.lisaevans@gmail.com](mailto:vt.lisaevans@gmail.com).

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