**Green Book Travels**

**Historical Background**
The Negro Travelers’ Green Book, known simply as the Green Book was a travel guide that listed lodgings, tailors, beauty parlors, restaurants, gas station and other businesses that welcomed African American clients during the Jim Crow era.

Author, Victor H. Green was a Harlem, New York, postal worker and community leader. The book became so popular that Green created a publishing office in Harlem and hired a staff to keep up with demand. By the 1940’s 15,000 copies were produced annually, which were sold to both the white marketplace and black-owned businesses. In 1947 Green established a Vacation Reservation Service to book reservations at places listed in the book. His travel bureau operated at offices at 200. W. 135th Street in Harlem, New York.

In his introduction, Green wrote: "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 rights and privileges in the United States."

After passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Green ceased publication.

**South Carolina Standards**
3-5.6 Summarize the key events and effects of the civil rights movement in South Carolina, including the desegregation of schools (Briggs v. Elliott) and other public facilities and the acceptance of African Americans’ right to vote.

8-7.4 Explain the factors that influenced the economic opportunities of African American South Carolinians during the latter twentieth century, including racial discrimination, the Briggs v. Elliott case, the integration of public facilities and the civil rights movement, agricultural decline, and statewide educational improvement.

**Objectives**
- Students will investigate traveling patterns of African Americans during the civil rights era.
- Students will create a travel itinerary through the United States for an African American family using the Green Book as a guide.
- Students will explain the effects of racial discrimination on African Americans as they traveled throughout the United States during the civil rights era.

**Time Required**
3 class periods

**Recommended Grade Level**
Elementary/Middle/High

http://library.sc.edu/blogs/academy
Lesson Materials
- Digital images of *The Negro Traveler’s Green Book*
- Sample Itinerary
- *Green Book Google Map*
- Map of the United States (attached)
- Elementary Question Guide (attached)
- Crayons, pencils or markers for elementary students

Lesson Preparation
- Organize students into pairs. Arrange one class period for students to work in the computer lab.
- Bookmark the Green Book page for younger students.
- Print copies of the United States map, Itinerary, and Question Guide as needed.

Lesson Procedure
- Begin by displaying the front page of the *Green Book* from the Digital Collections site.
- Ask students to connect to the image on the front cover by asking the following questions.
  - Why do you think this image was created?
  - When was it made?
  - What questions can you develop to help you learn more about this book?
- Next give students ten minutes to explore the book on their own. As they search they will need to jot down questions they have and note interesting information.
- Ask students: Why was it necessary to have a guide like this for Blacks traveling throughout the United States? Which states seemed to have more accommodating locations for African Americans? Why do you think this was the case?
- Discuss questions above and student generated questions with class.
- Next explain to students that they will need to create an itinerary for a Black family traveling by car from Chicago, Illinois to Biloxi, Mississippi. Students will need to use the Green Book, a blank map of the United States, the itinerary sheet and guidelines included in this lesson, and the Green Book Google Map. (You can substitute your own destination or starting point.)
- Allow one full class period to plan the itinerary. Students will need to keep track of their notes and questions for discussion afterward.
- Have students trade their itineraries with a different group. Each group will critique itineraries for practicality, ask questions and discuss the idea of traveling for African Americans during the civil rights era.
- Groups will collect their own itineraries and use it to draw a route map (using the blank copy of the United States map) that outlines their travels.
After itineraries have been completed, reconvene to discuss the planning process with students. Ask: What complications did you encounter while planning your trip?

**Assessment**
- Explain why doing something simple like traveling to visit a family member during the civil rights era may have been a complex process for most African Americans.

**Elementary Modifications**
- Check out a copy of the book *Ruth and the Green Book* by Calvin Alexander Ramsey at your school or local library. Read this book aloud to your students.
- Ask students the following questions: How did the Green Book help Ruth and her family? Allow time for student responses.
- Pass out question sheet and U.S. map to students.
- Assist students in using the Green Book Google Map to locate the places listed in the Green Book.
- Have students write one paragraph that explains why the Green Book was an important book for African Americans during the civil rights era.

**Digital Collections Information**
This lesson plan is based on images and/or documents derived from the *Green Book Collection* available from the University of South Carolina’s Digital Collections Library.

To see other collections that may be helpful to your search, visit the *Digital Collections* homepage or visit *SCDL*’s collections.
Green Book Travels

Elementary Question Guide

Active Listening Questions

1. Where did Ruth’s family live? ________________________________

2. Who were they going to visit? ________________________________

3. What was their destination state? ______________________________

4. Who was Jim Crow? ________________________________________

5. Could Ruth’s family stop at any gas station or restaurant? Why? ________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

6. What was the name of the service station chain that allowed Black travelers? __________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

7. What kind of home welcomed Black travelers? _____________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

Green Book Map Directions

1. Use the Green Book Google Map to find the following places that were listed in Ruth and the Green Book. Label these places with a green dot on your map of the United States.
   a. Chicago, Illinois
   b. Tennessee
   c. Georgia
   d. Alabama

2. Connect the green dots on your map to show the route that Ruth’s family took on their visit to Grandmother’s house.

3. Find the Palm Leaf Hotel in the digital copy of the Green Book. Where was it located?
Green Book Travels

Green Book Itinerary

Guidelines

1. Traveling by automobile
2. Starting point: Chicago, Illinois
3. Destination: Biloxi, Mississippi (Aunt Nessie’s house)
4. Safest to travel between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.
5. Must plan for dining, restroom breaks and lodging along the way
6. Can only stop at designated locations in Green Book
7. Speed limit is 55 mph on highways, 25 mph on local roads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Rest Stop/Time</th>
<th>Dinner</th>
<th>Lodging/Time</th>
<th>Total Driving Time</th>
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<td>7:00 a.m. Friday, May 12, 1956</td>
<td>Chicago, Illinois</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Prepared bag lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(List name from Green Book)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

