



Green Book of the Carolinas: Community Connections Toolkit

The North Carolina General Assembly created the African American Heritage Commission (AAHC) in 2008 to “assist the Secretary of Cultural Resources in the preservation, interpretation, and promotion of African American history, arts, and culture.” With this legislation the AAHC has identified African American heritage practitioners, such as curators, docents, and museum directors, as priority service populations. The AAHC was recognized as a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources in 2017, after being housed in the Office of Archives and History and the North Carolina Arts Council. The commission works across the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to achieve the mission of preserving, protecting, and promoting North Carolina’s African American history, art, and culture, for all people

Know your History!

The Green Book was established by Victor Green as a compiled list of trusted spaces for Black travelers. Launched in 1936 it was last published in 1967 (after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act).

From recent novels to the silver screen, the Negro Motorist Green Book has been reintroduced as a popculture icon.

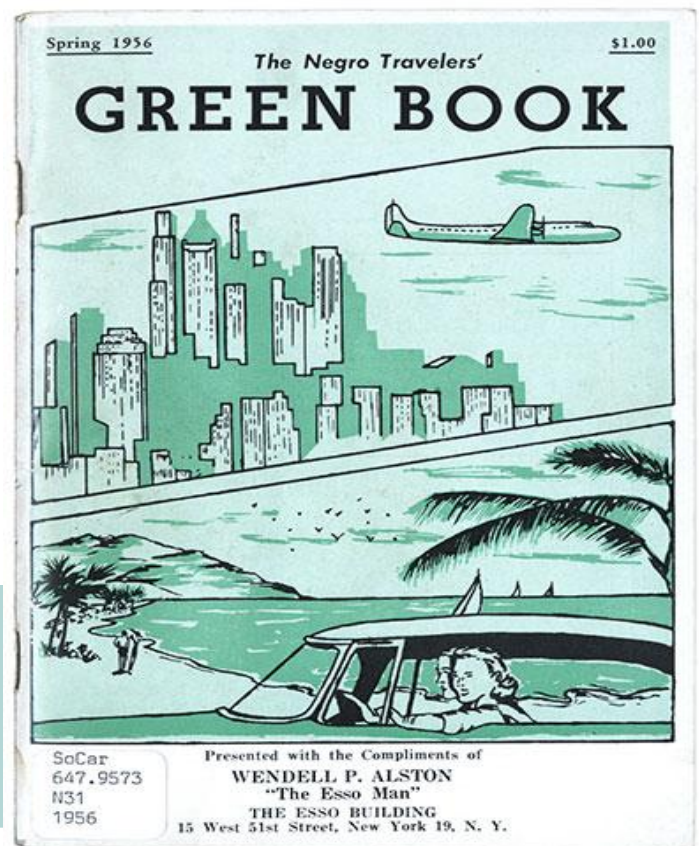
Then, families used its fabled pages to navigate the twists and turns of segregated roadways. Now, communities can understand this message of safety and extend its impact into advocacy work.

This guide will outline the history, message, and potential of the Green Book as a rubric for organizing ourselves to serve each other and uplift our communities.

Come, let's take a drive.

"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."

Victor Green, creator of "The Negro Motorist Green Book"



Colorful History: A Brief Background on the Green Book

Communities of different ethnic backgrounds relied on each other for safe travels. "Green credited Jewish guides for serving as a template for his book, noting that 'the Jewish press' had 'long printed information about places that are restricted.'" Rather than creed, however, this book was organized along the color line. First published in 1936, the *Negro Motorist's Guide* listed amenities that were safe from harassment and discrimination. Barbershops, hotels, and even juke joints (music and dance halls) were featured in between its cover. As the 20th century marched on, it expanded to cover more than the northeast, eventually extending into Canada. The fight for civil rights pushed forward protections for Black families in transit eventually caused the need for the Green Book to shift but it remained in circulation for thirty years.

Today, historians, educators, and folks of all ages explore the legacy of the text as they work to understand movement and safety for Black people then and now.

Victor Green's all-important guide would have sat unused in the dashboard had it not been for community participation. Whether families were seeking service stations after getting a flat tire or looking to dive into a lunch plate they were the guests of people, not just places. Therefore, as we explore the ways its legacy lives on it is important to understand collective histories and not just our own.

We encourage everyone to understand the context of the Green Book's emergence directly relates to the experience of racial profiling, or limiting the accessibility to certain places, resources, or prejudging someone based on their perceived race or ethnicity. Below are some terms related to the Green Book experience that will help you not only make the most of this toolkit, but also connect to the rich and complex history of the Carolinas.



Entertainment: including amusement parks, beaches, bowling alleys and skating rinks, country clubs and golf courses, lakes and ponds, music clubs and nightclubs, regional parks, summer camps, swimming pools, and theaters. [note about entertainers]

Jim Crow: After the American Civil War (1861-1865), most southern states and, later, border states passed laws that denied blacks basic human rights. It is not clear how, but the minstrel character's name "Jim Crow" became a kind of shorthand for the laws, customs and etiquette that segregated and demeaned African Americans primarily from the 1870s to the 1960s.

Racial profiling: "Racial Profiling" refers to the discriminatory practice by law enforcement officials of targeting individuals for suspicion of crime based on the individual's race, ethnicity, religion or national origin.



Foodways: Foodways are eating habits and culinary practices of people, regions, or historical periods.



Lodging and Hospitality: The term lodging describes a wide range of accommodation types (hotels, B&Bs, resorts, hostels, motels etc.) that provide shelter or a place to stay overnight. It is used to describe locations away from home and the quality of the place can vary from a small island hut or a tent to a five star all-inclusive resort.

Shoe Box Lunches: During Jim Crow, black travelers frequently carried shoebox meals as a means of staying safe when a Green Book site was not readily available. Although the Green Book provided safe places to eat, restaurants and safe places to stop could be few and far between.



Service Centers: a store or other place where you can have products, equipment, or vehicles checked and repaired and where you can buy parts; The Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, known today as [ExxonMobil](#), was the only major retail distributor of the Green Book through its network of Esso stations, which welcomed Black travelers and also provided business opportunities for Black franchisees.



Beauty parlors and barber shops: These have been places not only to get hair care services but locations where black people could be vulnerable and talk about issues of importance in the community. These were spaces where customers played games such as chess, cards, and dominoes, while having conversations about local gossip, politics, and community affairs.



Roadways: the part of the road on which vehicles drive. In the Carolinas several roadways were very popular including Route 76, Interstate 77, Interstate 26, Highway 85, and Highway 95.

Site-to-Site Connections

Mapping your Route

The Green Book was a working resource to help travelers. Today we can use the www.greenbookofthecarolinas.gov to help us find our way to multiple sites across the Carolinas.

What does travel look and feel like today?

Ask: How do you travel today? Do you usually travel in a group?

Ask: Where is your favorite place to visit in the Carolinas?

What Makes Us Feel Safe?

Ask: How do you know if you are welcomed in a community (e.g. places of worship, school, work, your neighborhood, or even within your family, etc.)?

Ask: What can we do to help keep the Carolinas a safe place to visit now and in the future?

Try: Planning a visit to some Green Book sites near you. Use the mapping tool at greenbookofthecarolinas.gov to learn more about the sites near your zip code.

Telling Our Stories:

Invite your friends and family to share their stories of experiences with Green Book sites. By sharing and recording our stories we can help create an archive using your voice!

Learning Activity

Take a look at these images. What do you see?



“Black travelers in the South, like this Florida family passing through North Carolina en route to New Jersey for migrant farm work in 1940, knew their passage would be easier — and safer — with help from the Green Book.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY CORBIS HISTORICAL COLLECTION



“Migratory agricultural workers of the 1940s — like these men walking the shoulder of NC Highway 27 — would hitchhike north to follow the potato season. A copy of the *Green Book*, tucked into their luggage, could help them find welcoming places to stay at night.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY THE PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, LC-USF34-040827-D

Discussion Questions: Visualizing History

- What comes alive for you in these photos?
 - How do you think they felt in those moments?
 - What catches your eye?
 - Are you with a group? Use this space to share time, space, and possibly food as you learn more about Green Book history!
 - Share your photos, videos and stories on social media using the hashtag #CarolinasGREENBOOK along with your zip code, on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.
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Each site listed on the www.greenbookofthecarolinas.gov website needs continued support to be a dynamic place to visit. Let's learn more about historic preservation and stewardship in North and South Carolina.

Advocacy and Support

Each of these historic sites reflects a unique and rich history. However some structures need additional support and resources to stabilize their existing buildings and preserve their unique stories.

Connect with local organizations that support these efforts

Reach out to organizations like the [North Carolina African American Heritage Commission](#) who dedicate themselves to preserving and promoting the histories and culture of African Americans in North Carolina. Efforts like the [WeGoJa Foundation](#) illuminate the stories of the African American experience in South Carolina.

Learn site history

Learn more about extant Green Book sites, like [Mack's Barbershop](#) in Fayetteville, North Carolina. This historic barber shop is much more than a place to get your haircut! It served as a safe meeting place for local organizations, and even a small church congregation.

Volunteer to raise awareness

You can help be a conscious steward for historic sites! The Green Book of the Carolinas was launched to help encourage preservation of important sites of Black history. These sites need funding, support, and responsible volunteers to help them remain vibrant places to visit. Contact your local historic preservation agency or museum to find ways to support.

Conclusion

The Negro Motorist's guide was intended to help its users arrive safely at their destination by offering directions to places of rest, care, and joy along their route. As we further its mission there are many ways that we can support efforts of stewardship and care for marginalized folks in the Carolinas and throughout the world. As you use this guide with your friends, families, and community to understand that we are each other's safe place—do what you can to protect the history and wellbeing of those around you.

In this way, we can make sure that Victor Green's mission continues to be realized as we navigate the world around us.

Visit us virtually by visiting our webpage greenbookofthecarolina.gov to understand more about the Green Book and its Carolina histories. You can also set out on your own colorful journey using our mapping tool.

Safe travels!

North Carolina Green Book Hubs

Raleigh

Raleigh's five extant *Green Book* sites are all located in or near the downtown area. [G&M Tailoring](#), [New York Cafe](#), and [Capital Cab Company](#) were all located between Fayetteville and Blount Streets along East Hargett Street. This area was known as Raleigh's "Black Main Street" during the *Green Book* era. Black Main Street was home to numerous *Green Book* businesses. The heart of the business district - The Lightner Arcade Hotel - was also featured in the *Green Book* but is no longer standing.

[Peter & Mike Grill](#), owned by Greek immigrants, was located on Dawson Street. [Hall's Beauty Parlor](#) was located across the street from St. Augustine's University, a private HBCU.

Rocky Mount

Rocky Mount's extant *Green Book* sites are not located in a central area. The sites are spread along a three-mile stretch that begins at the Lincoln Park Historic District and ends at the modern-day Wright's Center, adjacent to Buck Leonard Park.

The [Lincoln Park Restaurant and Hotel](#), located in the Lincoln Park Historic District (listed on the National Register of Historic Place), was built to provide lodging for African American tourists in Rocky Mount and to provide a restaurant and event facility for the Lincoln Park neighborhood. The [Wright's Center](#) was Wright's Chick-Shack Motel during the *Green Book* era, owned by the prominent Bryant-Parker family. In between these two sites were [John Wimberly Tailor](#), [City Barber Shop](#), and [Shaw's Service Station](#). A quick drive connected African American visitors to Rocky Mount to food, lodging, a haircut, gasoline, and a place to get their dry cleaning done.

Wilmington

Wilmington is home to fifteen extant *Green Book* sites. These include six beauty parlors, two barber shops, a hotel, a tourist home, three restaurants, a service station, and a taxi business. Two hubs were identified within Wilmington among these extant sites.

Murphy Hotel Hub

The Murphy Hotel was owned and operated by Robert Murphy. Murphy opened the hotel in a residential building that previously served as his personal residence and a billiards hall. He operated the hotel from the mid-1940s until his death in the mid-1980s. The hotel building frequently housed other businesses, including a dry cleaner, seafood restaurant, and radio and television repair service.

Other businesses in this hub included [Greyhound Taxi](#) (owned by prominent local physician, civil rights activist, and Jamaican immigrant Dr. Samuel James Gray), [Gertrude's Beauty Parlor](#), [La Mae Beauty Parlor](#), [Johnson's Barber Shop](#), and [Ollie's Restaurant](#).

Payne's Tourist Home Hub

Payne's Tourist Home, owned by Charles and Annie Payne, was located in downtown Wilmington and was popular with musicians on the Chitlin' Circuit. The tourist home was in operation from the 1930s until the late 1960s. Payne's Tourist Home is now an apartment building.

Five extant *Green Book* businesses were within a mile of the tourist home. These included three beauty parlors ([Germany's](#), [Beth's](#), and [Lezora's](#)) and two restaurants ([Hill's Restaurant](#) and [Johnson's Restaurant](#)). Frank and Lulu Freeman Hill opened Hill's Restaurant after their oceanfront resort for African Americans at nearby Freeman Beach, "Monte Carlo By-the-Sea," was destroyed by the effects of environmental racism and natural disasters.

[Fayetteville](#)

Fayetteville was home to over two dozen *Green Book* sites. Only five of those sites are still standing. The building that housed [Gregory's Tailor](#), a white-owned business, is located on Fort Bragg Road. The other four businesses were located in the Fayetteville Downtown Historic District on Gillespie and Person Streets: [Modiste Beauty Parlor](#), [Royal Beauty Parlor](#), [Silver Grill](#), and [Big Buster Tavern](#). These businesses were minutes away from lodging, service stations, barber shops, and additional dining options during the *Green Book* era.

[Modiste](#) (130 ½ Person Street) and [Royal](#) (127 ½ Person Street) beauty parlors were owned by local businesswoman Ethel Brown Harvey, who also owned [Brown's Beauty Parlor](#). The three beauty parlors, all located on Person Street, were known as "[The Harvey Beauty Salons](#)."

[Silver Grill](#) and [Big Buster Tavern](#) were both located at 115 Gillespie Street. [Big Buster Tavern](#) was open from the mid-1930s through the mid-1940s; [Silver Grill](#) operated at this location from the mid-1940s until 1957. 114-115 Gillespie Street, also known as the Williston-Henderson building, was established in 1885.

[Greensboro](#)

Greensboro's three extant *Green Book* sites are located within a mile of one another. The [Historic Magnolia House](#) has been renovated and reopened as a hotel, dining, and entertainment facility that pays homage to its historical roots. The house is located near the campuses of Bennett College and NC A&T University, a historically Black women's college and a historically Black university, respectively. The [Plaza Manor Hotel](#), a three-minute walk away, currently operates as the Plaza Manor Boarding House.

[Harris East End Gulf Service Station](#) was a quick two-to-three minute drive from both hotels.

[Asheville](#)

"The Block" is an African American commercial district at the intersection of Market and Eagle Streets in Asheville, NC. Seven *Green Book* businesses were located in The Block, including a beauty salon, two barber shops, a restaurant, a tavern, a garage, and a hotel. Of those sites, [Wilson's Tavern](#), [Palace Grille Restaurant](#) and [Wilson's Barber Shop](#) are still standing. The Block was a true "one-stop shop" for African American travelers and Ashevilleans alike. The heart of the neighborhood was – and is – the [YMI Cultural Center](#), which stands at 39 S. Market Street. The Block has experienced a renaissance in the past few years and is again home to many thriving African American businesses.

South Carolina Green Book Hubs

Charleston

The Negro Motorist Green Book was not the only literary prize of Charleston, South Carolina. In the 20th century, the [Dart Hall Library](#) on Kracke street served the Black population for nearly forty years, offering a home to copies of the Green Book for local patrons to peruse. In fact, the institution still houses a few copies to this day. This public institution was not the only site of safety in Charleston; the city offered between four and five tourist homes, taverns, and hotels. Many of these offerings were just family homes willing to open their doors to those in need.

Cheraw

Much like its native son Dizzy Gillespie, Cheraw, South Carolina was quite the show-stopper. Indeed, folks frequented the small-but-mighty stopover for its fourteen Green Book entries, including the [College Inn Restaurant](#), where Gillespie himself once grabbed a bite. Cheraw was featured more often than even the South Carolina capital, demonstrating how communities rally together regardless of size. From 1947 until the Green Book stopped circulating in 1966, Cheraw was fully present and accounted for.

Columbia

While few of Columbia's original Green Book sites still stand, the city is still imbued with the legacy of community care offered by generations of residents. Today, visitors can still see a few pieces of history including the [Cornwell Tourist Home](#). The boarding house opened its doors to Black travelers in need of lodging for nearly thirty years, aiding countless souls in need of safe harbor. There are a few opportunities in Columbia to view Green Book entries from a formerly thriving Black business sector and currently, the city persists in preserving its history for future engagements.

Florence

Florence's North Dragan St. was home to pharmacies, eateries, and other institutions that thrived under Black ownership. This area boasts a historical marker that shares the impact of the historic district. One such institution was [Ebony Guest House](#), operated by Mrs. Mary Holmes, named to speak directly to its Black American audience. Travelers were drawn to this safe haven during the Jim Crow era, but as the only extant site in Florence, South Carolina it still carries present impact.

Additional Resources

[Tour of Green Book Hotel: Magnolia House](#)

"The Historic Magnolia House was a popular destination and safe haven for African American travelers who had trouble securing accommodations during segregation in America in the mid-twentieth century. It was one of the few hotels between Atlanta, Georgia and Richmond, Virginia that allowed Black travelers to stay overnight due to lodging restrictions under Jim Crow."

[Black Joy x Reckon](#)

"Remembering: The Negro Travelers' Green Book. The Green Book leaves us with its legacy of exploration and adventure. We feel it in the stories of Black travel woven through #blackhistory, and through the preservation of Hugo-Green's work by historians, photographers and geographers today."

[Modern Green Book](#)

"Using the Green Book as a foundation, The Modern Green Book wants to ground its community in history, while building a legacy for future generations. TheMGB is a source for communities to learn about and locate Black owned businesses and organizations, as well as a resource to those entities providing them with the tools they need for growth and success. We believe in creating a space where Black Owned businesses are respected and thriving because we know when they thrive Black Communities do as well."