

The Green Book- 6th grade lesson plan

“In the system of slavery, blacks had utterly no rights whatsoever and were locked into a closed system of exploitation. It was race-based and not eradicated until the Civil War. It was characterized by extreme and arbitrary violence. Jim Crow laws were passed in Southern states after slavery was eradicated in order to reduce former enslave peoples - who were theoretically equal citizens now - to a place of subordination. These laws regarding segregation limited almost all civil liberties and political and economic equality. Jim Crow was overturned due to the efforts of the mid-20th-century Civil Rights Movement.”

Here are links to the two articles. We will also have them printed out for students to read along with.
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/history-green-book-african-american-travelers-180958506/>

<https://www.history.com/news/the-green-book-the-black-travelers-guide-to-jim-crow-america>

After reading one or both of the articles with the class consider these discussion topics:

-Victor H. Green, creator of the Green Book, was a mailman. Why would he be a great resource to “give the Negro traveler information to keep him from running into difficulties”?

-Since the Green Book listed “safe ports of call for African American travelers” how did the African American’s create their own “rights” to protection and safety while traveling among Jim Crow laws that legally allowed discrimination against them?

-“The Negro is only demanding what everyone else wants, what is guaranteed all citizens by the Constitution of the United States.” Are all citizens guaranteed the same rights today? Why or why not?

Activity Ideas:

Have the class split into groups and use one of the Green Books provided. Have their group look up the places listed in Salt Lake City. Notice if there were many places listed or not compared to other cities. List ideas about why or why not.

In groups using the Green Books, have students plan out a day in a random city. Where would they eat, go shopping, repair their car, go for entertainment, sleep for the night, etc? Have them share their day with the class.

***Consider having your class write an essay about the power of the Green Book and the role it played for African American people living during the Jim Crow era in America.*