

Proposed Core Literature Titles

The following Summary is provided by the California Department of Education's "Recommended Literature List". And the top three Google searches of the book title and author name (e.g., title by author) that produced a description of the title.

<u>Overground Railroad</u> Proposed Grade Level: 11	
	Title: The Overground Railroad Author: Taylor, Candacy First Published: 2022 Proposed Grade Level: 11 Lexile Measurement: Unassigned
California Department of Education, Recommended Literature List: https://www3.cde.ca.gov/reclitlist/search.aspx	
For years, it was dangerous for African Americans to travel in the United States. Because of segregation, Black travelers couldn't eat, sleep, or even get gas at most white-owned businesses. The Green Book listed hotels, restaurants, department stores, gas stations, recreational destinations, and other businesses that were safe for Black travelers. It was a resourceful and innovative solution to a horrific problem. It took courage to be listed in the Green Book, and the stories from those who took a stand against racial segregation are recorded and celebrated. This young reader's edition of Candacy Taylor's critically acclaimed adult book <i>Overground Railroad</i> includes her own photographs of Green Book sites, as well as archival photographs and interviews with people who owned and used these facilities.	
Descriptions From Top 3 Google Searches:	
Amazon.com/Overground-Railroad-Green-Travel-America	
A <i>New York Times</i> Notable Book, <i>Overground Railroad</i> is the first book to explore the historical role and residual impact of the <i>Green Book</i>, a travel guide for black motorists used for decades when traveling through segregated America.	
Published from 1936 to 1966, the <i>Green Book</i> was hailed as the "black travel guide to America." At that time, it was both dangerous and difficult for African	

Americans to travel, because black travelers couldn't eat, sleep, or buy gas at most white-owned businesses. The *Green Book* listed hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and other businesses that were safe for black travelers. It was a resourceful and innovative solution to a horrific problem.

Candacy Taylor writes in her introduction, "The *Green Book* was published during a time when car travel symbolized freedom in America, but since racial segregation was in full force throughout the country, the open road wasn't open to all. When black motorists picked up a copy of the *Green Book*, they were greeted by the words 'Just What You Have Been Looking For!! NOW WE CAN TRAVEL WITHOUT EMBARRASSMENT.'" Chapters include:

- **Driving While Black**
- **The Business of the *Green Book***
- **Vacation**
- **Music Venues**
- **The Roots of Route 66**
- **Women and the *Green Book***
- **And more!**

It took courage to be listed in the *Green Book*, and *Overground Railroad* celebrates the stories of those who put their names in the book and stood up against segregation. It shows the history of the *Green Book*, how we arrived at our present historical moment, and how far we still have to go when it comes to race relations and systemic racism in America.

<https://www.bookpage.com/reviews/24713-candacy-taylor-overground-railroad-history/>

In ***Overground Railroad: The Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America***, Taylor follows the chronology of the *Green Book's* development and, more importantly, provides fascinating and often disturbing context. The first guide, for example, focused mostly on Harlem, so Taylor presents riveting stories about the Apollo Theater and the Lafayette Theater, where Orson Welles produced "Voodoo Macbeth," a retelling of the Shakespeare play with an all-black cast. In the section that recommends a few golf courses open to black players, we learn that a black dentist named George Grant invented the golf tee, and that in Louisiana, a black man named Joseph Bartholomew designed public golf courses that he wasn't allowed to play on. We also learn that the automobile freed black travelers from the constant indignities visited upon them when they took trains and buses; that Cadillac ordered its dealers not to sell to black people because it would damage the brand; and that, since black GIs returning from World War II had difficulty using the GI Bill for college, Green's postwar editions included a list of black colleges and universities.

Overground Railroad is an eye-opening, deeply moving social history of American segregation and black migration during the middle years of the 20th century.

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/books/story/2020-01-10/overground-railroad-candacy-taylor-green-book>

Taylor assiduously retraces the “Green Book’s” history, from 1936 to 1967, and the Denver-based writer and photographer embarked on her own cross-country road trip seeking what remains. This was a grueling, faith-testing journey of loss and heartbreak that enlarges and shapes her book’s vision. After three years of scouting nearly 5,000 locations named in the guide, she learned that fewer than 5% are still in operation. Many of the early buildings in black communities have vanished, about 75%, she reports, “destroyed in the name of urban renewal.” In scope and tone, “Overground Railroad” recalls Isabel Wilkerson’s “The Warmth of Other Suns,” which explored the waves of the Great Migration as many African Americans moved during the 1900s from the rural South to Northeastern, Midwestern and Western cities.

Taylor creates a vivid, multi-voiced travelogue, drawing on interviews, archival documents, and newspaper accounts. Historic photographs provide context. Her contemporary images drawn from her travels — landscapes of boarded-up or graffiti-laced wastelands, empty vistas where sites once stood — also play a dynamic, before-and-after role in storytelling. At its center, the book is a nuanced commentary of how black bodies have been monitored, censored, or violated, and it compellingly pulls readers into the current news cycle.

While “Overground Railroad” honors Green’s prescience within the context of the country’s cycles of racism, Taylor asserts that the “Green Book” was never overtly political. It did, however, provide an alternative approach to creating a resilient social network. In this, Green’s dream provided a way to work within the system, to manifest one’s own aspirations.