

“Road Tripping Through Black Routes and Resistance: Teaching Diaspora, Migration, and Survival”

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2025 National History Teacher Of The Year
2025 NC History Teacher Of The Year



Introduction

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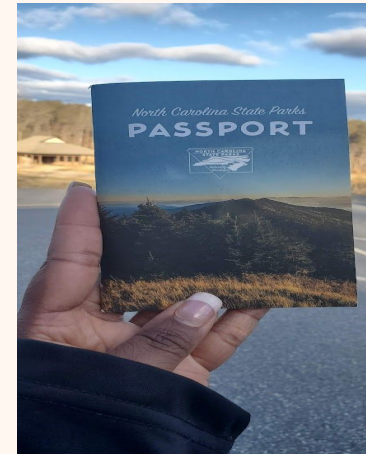
Professional Overview

2025 North Carolina History Teacher of the
Year

[2025 National History Teacher of the Year](#)

Over two decades of experience in middle
and secondary social studies education
Post Baccalaureate Certificate-African
American Studies @UNCG

Curriculum designer focused on African
American history, local history, and civic
education and Founder & Lead Scholar of
the community project: [The Civil Rights
Movement Beyond 1968- Griggs vs. Duke
Power Company](#)



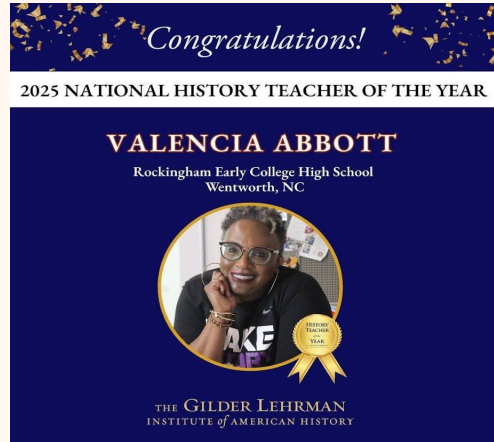
“...we must disrupt the continuous of hard history.”

Where I started: Effective, actionable teacher Professional Development (PD) that feeds into the classroom by Monday is relevant, practical, and immediately usable. It focuses on one actionable topic, offers choice, provides tangible resources (like templates or strategies), and includes time during the session to plan for Monday implementation, minimizing unnecessary jargon and focusing on “what I can do Monday”.



“Good teaching delivers lessons. Mature teaching builds frameworks.”

Instead of focusing on what students needed to remember, I began focusing on the questions that would lead them to discover history for themselves. Lessons became investigations where students analyze sources, recognize patterns, and ask better questions about the past. The goal shifted from simply covering material to cultivating curiosity, critical thinking, and a deeper relationship with history.



"Moving Freedom

Forward"

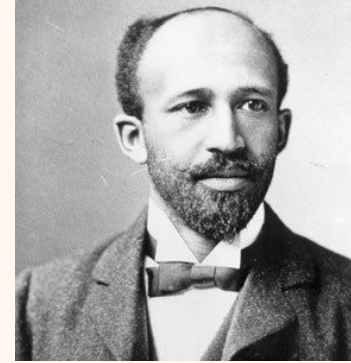
National History Day (NHD) launched a 2024-2025 webinar series focusing on teaching African American history, aligned with their new "Moving Freedom Forward" series. These sessions, supported by the 400 Years of African American History Commission, offer educators, particularly grades 4-12, professional development on topics like labor contracts, using proper terminology, and incorporating diverse narratives into the curriculum.



2026 NCHE Conference

Diasporas:
Histories of Movement and Cultural Exchange

Road Trips are often framed as American, But for Black Americans the road carried promise and danger.



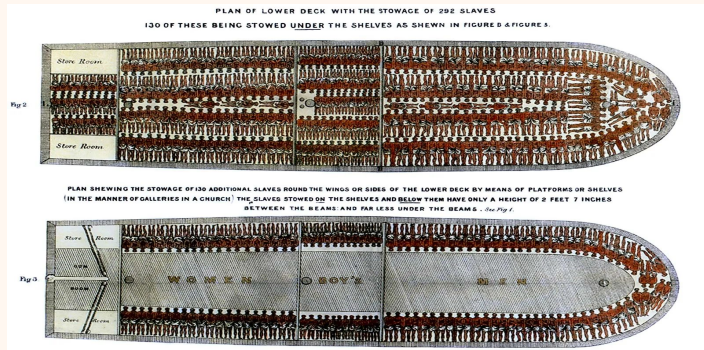
"It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity." – W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)

The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line.

Diaspora is a large group of people with a shared heritage or homeland who have moved to and live in various locations all over the world. It refers to the scattering or spreading out of a population from their original land, often maintaining cultural, emotional, or economic ties to their home country.

Planes, Trains and Automobiles

The Middle Passage was a forced migration that violently scattered African people across the Atlantic world. It was the first corridor of the Black diaspora—one defined not by choice, but by captivity and survival.



Thinking of highways as diaspora corridors, the conversation moves beyond transportation and into the story of movement itself. The road becomes a place where migration, culture, survival, and state power meet reminding us that mobility has always been central to the story of Black life in America.



"If you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it." - Zora Neale Hurston

In Seattle, a twelve-foot grinning figure at Coon Chicken Inn stood along a Bothell Highway marking the landscape with a clear racial message.

As Black migration increased in the early 20th century, many white residents responded by reinforcing segregation through space—most notably through racially restrictive housing covenants that limited where Black families could live.

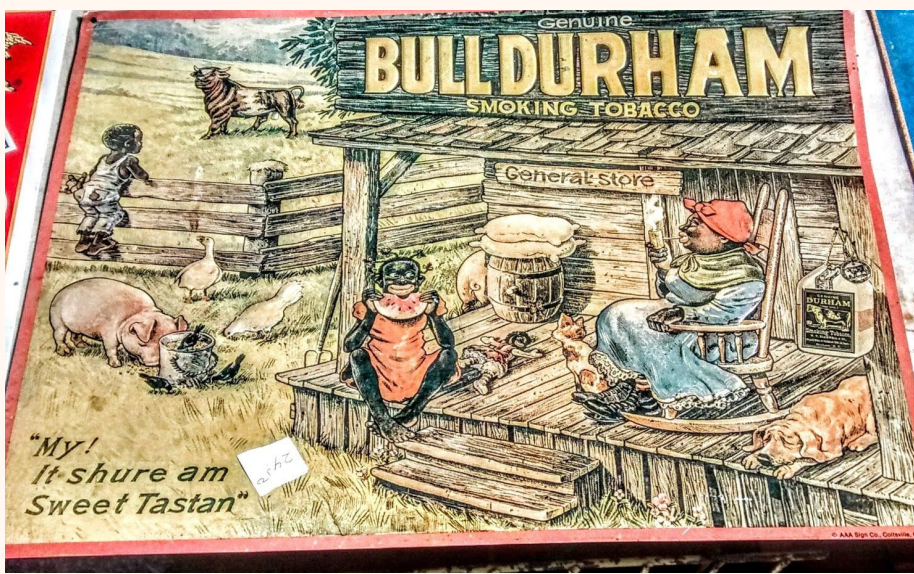
Together, these visible and structural barriers made clear that even in new places, familiar racial boundaries remained.



"Coon Car"-delivery vehicle carried its chicken and its racist imagery and name to every part of the city



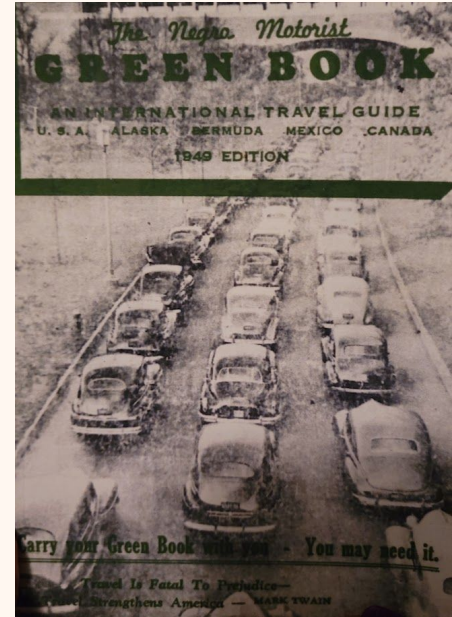
Question: Were the cooks African Americans



Produced in Durham, North Carolina, Bull Durham Tobacco became one of the best-known trademarks in the world by 1900.



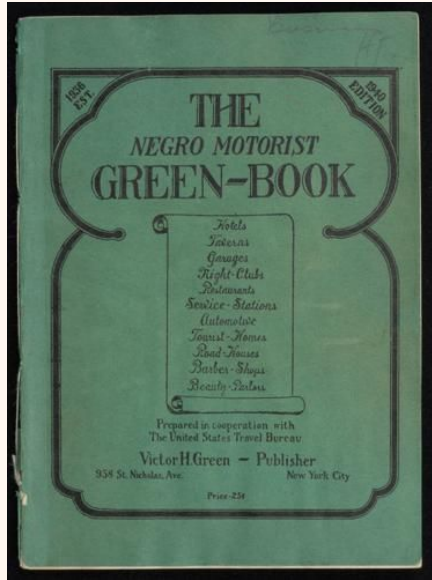
They were still encountering familiar structures in unfamiliar locations.



Nearly 200 years after Nat Turner's Rebellion, community works to change some road names

“They gave us food scraps and we created gourmet meals.”

Response and Resistance:
If space can exclude, mobility requires strategy.



Aretha Franklin -
Freeway Of Love
(Official Music
Video)o

The Negro Motorist Green Book (also, The Negro Travelers' Green Book, or Green-Book) was a guidebook for African American roadtrippers. It was founded by Victor Hugo Green, an African American postal worker from New York City, and was published annually from 1936 to 1966.



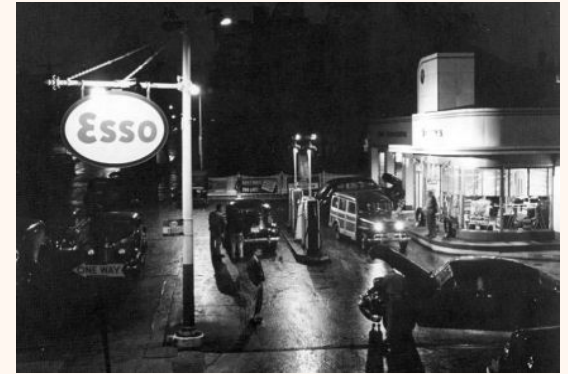
Rest Stop: Pause & Process Slide



- Reflect on the places where you feel safe stopping while traveling. What factors influence your sense of safety (location, time of day, environment, people, etc.)?
- Consider how you learned to identify those “safe” spaces. Who or what shaped your understanding of where you can and cannot go?
- Analyze whose experiences differ from your own. Who may not have needed to learn these strategies—and why?

Quick write or think-pair-share

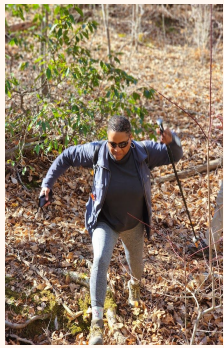
“A lot of the gasoline chains didn’t serve African Americans; Esso was one of the only ones who went out of their way to help them.”
– JOE SONDERMAN
Route 66 researcher,
Missouri, 2015



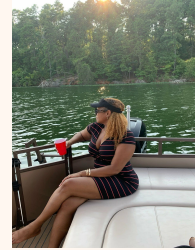
“[Esso has] given every reason for the Negro to look upon the Company and its affiliates with favor.” - E. Frederic Morrow, Branch Coordinator at the NAACP

Smitty’s Esso Service Station,
Courtesy of Anthony M. Smith, Sr.

Black Joy In Traveling



Outdoor Afro

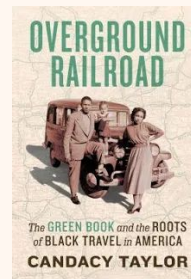
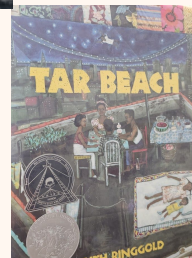
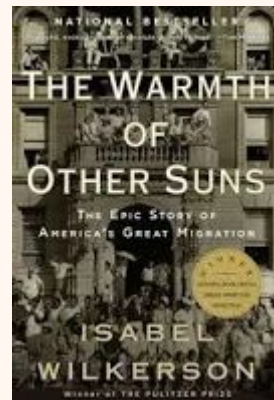
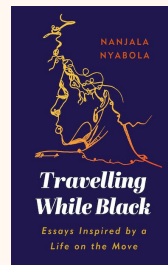
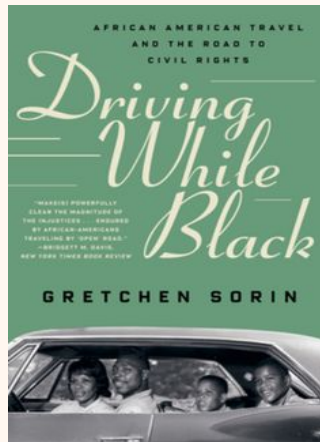
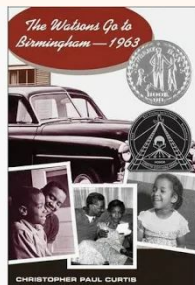
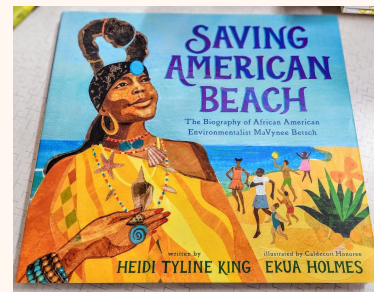
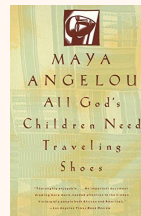
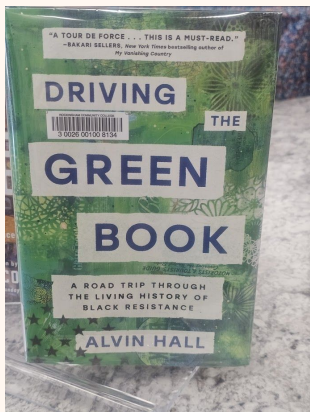


Approximately 34% of Black Americans held a valid U.S. passport as of 2023, making them less likely to have one compared to Hispanic (55%) or white Americans (42%). This indicates that about two-thirds of Black Americans do not currently hold a passport.



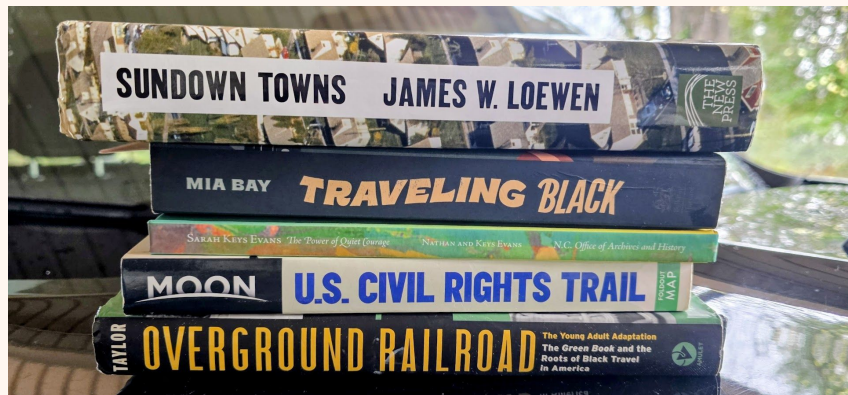
As of 2023, U.S. Black leisure travelers accounted for 184.12 million, spending \$145 billion annually on travel, marking a high rate of engagement in both domestic and international vacations

Application



Start in the books

“So the question becomes—what do we do with this in our classrooms?”



When students learn to map history, they learn to see how people lived it .

“There will be a day sometime in the near future when this guide will not have to be published ... when we as a race will have equal opportunities and privileges in the United States. It will be a great day for us to suspend this publication for then we can go wherever we please, and without embarrassment.” - Victor Green

“What does it mean to teach freedom in a country where movement has never been equal? ”

Thankyou!

Please add to
my
roadtripping
playlist

