



ABHM Book Club Discussion Guide
October 6th, 2022
***Overground Railroad* by Candacy Taylor (2020)**

How to Use this Guide:

[America's Black Holocaust Museum](#) staff created this guide to assist in reading and discussion of *Overground Railroad* (2020). Please feel free to print a copy and keep it with your book as you lend to friends and others who are interested. Do not expect to get through all of the questions during the upcoming meeting nor in one sitting. Perhaps consider them as conversation starters or an invitation to reflect more deeply about this book.

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. Where do you think the title of this book comes from? How does the history of the *Green Book* and Black people traveling relate to the Underground Railroad/escaping enslavement?
2. Candacy intertwines the history of the *Green Book* with her own family's story. How did writing this book change her perspective on her family? If you want to share, did you see your history or your family reflected in these stories of travel?
3. Besides listing safe places for Black travelers to fill up on gas, stay the night, and eat, what other purposes did the *Green Book* serve according to Candacy? Why is it important to recognize the aims of Victor and the role of the *Green Book* throughout history?
4. According to this book, what specific challenges and forms of racism did Black travelers and migrants face in Northern states? How about out West? How do sundown towns, de facto segregation, and redlining in these states complicate our understanding of racism as a uniquely Southern problem?
5. What photograph(s) stood out to you the most in *Overground Railroad*? If you were able to visit the *Ghosts of Segregation* exhibit at Charles Allis, which photograph(s) stood out to you most there? How are the two visual platforms similar and/or different?

6. Although Milwaukee is not featured heavily in *Overground Railroad*, it is important that we unpack how this book relates to ABHM's local context. How does the history of Milwaukee's Bronzeville relate to Candacy's discussion of the Fair Housing Act, integration, redlining, and "urban renewal"?
7. Throughout the book, Candacy considers the question of whether we still need a *Green Book* or something like it today. On page 295, why does she conclude that a new *Green Book* will not make things better? What do you think?
8. Have you ever visited a *Green Book* site? Are there any in your home state/vacation sites that you plan to visit using the Green Book Site Tour Candacy includes?
9. At the end of the book, Candacy asks us to consider why our society so freely accepted slavery, convict leasing, Jim Crow segregation, and now mass incarceration. How would you answer this question? What are some of the things she suggests we can do to fight back against these systems?
10. What did you think about Candacy's style of writing and how she describes Black people? At Charles Allis, language for the exhibition *Ghosts of Segregation* was intentionally changed to avoid the term "Blacks," and the term is also found in *Overground Railroad*. How do you feel about the terminology and larger discussions in literary/journalism world about identity terms

Additional resources:

<https://www.sites.si.edu/s/topic/0TO3600000U032GAC/the-negro-motorist-green-book>

<https://negromotoristgreenbook.si.edu/>

<https://www.charlesallis.org/exhibitions/current/?eid=16>

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/the-green-book#/?tab=navigation>