



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Claude McKay collection : additions

1912 - 1953

Sc MG 623

Summary

Creator: McKay, Claude, 1890-1948

Title: Claude McKay collection : additions

Date: 1912 - 1953

Size: .15 linear feet (1/2 archival box)

Source: Gift, various sources, various dates.

Abstract: Claude McKay, born in Jamaica, is known as one of the major artists of the Harlem Renaissance, and authored several published and unpublished poems and novels. The Claude McKay collection (additions) consists of correspondence, manuscripts, a galley, and related printed material.

Access: Some collections held by the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. To request access to materials in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, please visit: http://archives.nypl.org/scm/request_access

Preferred citation: [Item], Claude McKay collection : additions, Sc MG 623, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Creator History

Claude McKay was born in Jamaica, West Indies, on September 15, 1889. He grew up and attended high school in Jamaica. In 1912, he came to the United States as a student and attended both the Tuskegee Institute and Kansas State Agricultural College, where he studied agriculture. McKay began his writing career as he travelled about the United States working as a Pullman porter and dock hand.

Known as one of the major artists of the Harlem Renaissance, McKay was the author of many published and unpublished novels, manuscripts, and poems. He counted among his works: *Banana*

Bottom, Banjo, Harlem Glory, and Note to Harlem. After many years as a self-identified Communist, McKay became a practicing Catholic in 1942.

Scope and Content Note

The Claude McKay collection (additions) consists of correspondence, manuscripts, a galley, and related printed material. The correspondence includes letters from McKay to Simon Williamson, which trace the development of their friendship and its dissolution; and letters to Ruth Raphael, which discuss McKay's health, writings, and conversion to Catholicism. The general correspondence folder contains letters about "Bambara" magazine, a literary endeavor proposed during the Harlem Renaissance. McKay was to be the editor of the publication, with A. A. Schomburg as sponsor and Harold Jackman as treasurer. Manuscripts include a poem by McKay, with editorial notes, entitled *Note to Harlem*; a corrected typescript of *My Greenhills of Jamaica*; and the galley for the book, *Selected Poems of Claude McKay*, which was published after his death. The introduction of this last work was written by John Dewey, with a biographical sketch by Max Eastman. The news clippings are mostly obituaries and matters relating to the distribution of his literary papers. Finally, there are McKay's signed contracts for *Banana Bottom*, with Harper and Brothers, 1931, and "Personal Recollections and Autobiography", with Lee Furman, Inc., 1936, which was later published as *A Long Way from Home*.

Key Terms

Subjects

Authors, Black -- New York (State) -- New York -- 20th century
Authors, Caribbean -- Jamaica -- 20th century
Authors, Jamaican -- 20th century
Black author
Blacks -- Poetry
Harlem Renaissance
Jamaica -- Poetry
Jamaican Americans
Jamaican poetry -- 21st century

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Caribbean poetry (English)
Galley proofs
Manuscripts (documents)
Poems

Geographic Names

Harlem (New York, N.Y.) -- Intellectual life -- 20th century
Harlem (New York, N.Y.) -- Poetry

Names

McKay, Claude, 1890-1948
McKay, Claude, 1890-1948. *My Greenhills of Jamaica*
Raphael, Ruth
Williamson, Simon

Container List

Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 1 General 1924 - 1944
- b. 1 f. 2 Williamson, Simon 1941 - 1945
- b. 1 f. 3 Raphael, Ruth 1942 - 1945
- b. 1 f. 4 *My Green Hills of Jamaica (corrected transcript)*
- b. 1 f. 5 *Selected Poems of Claude McKay (galley)*
- b. 1 f. 6 Bibliography, reviews, transcript, and writings
- b. 1 f. 7 "Russian Reactions"
- b. 1 f. 8 Clippings and news articles 1945 - 1953
- b. 1 f. 9 Contracts