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Cher Thomas Cook et fils

2 Place de la Madeleine

Paris, France: Jan 14, 1927

My dear Jackman,

It was very charming of you to write. It does me good to be remembered like that unexpectedly. Also your little cheque was warmly welcomed as I am always in a state of chronic indigence, but I value more your fine sentiments that prompted it. Oh yes, I hear from time to time that the big color wave is breaking in New York and I am excited and curious...
in a thousand varying ways. I want to come back for a time at least, but it’s no good taking a ship and working a hard way once to be stripped from entering. I have so many things to count against me—alien and Bolshevik and a name that gets quite embarrassing at times. However, I hope to get in in the regular way some day.

I am glad you like Devolate. Everybody that read it in me loved it. I was disappointed that it did not take the "Opportunity" prize. However, I have devoted pretty altogether for prose. Poetry is too limited a range for all I’ve got to do. I have been working on
I'm afraid that I couldn't finish it last summer. But I had no machine to type it and no money to pay. So I've just been right up an insance when I am completed and I've had all clothes and all personal things at Marseilles. I am down here to deliver and get a job as a valet. So here I am— for a while.

May I ask you a very important favor? And depend on your help? I want to know if there is any book or pamphlet about the enlistment and service of American Negro soldiers in France during the war. If there is, could you possibly get me one. If there is not, could you get me this information when did the Fifteenth Regiment arrive?
December 14, to Harold Jackman, p. 4

in France?
where did it return to New York?
how long were ex-soldiers allowed in
foreign universities at government expense?
did the ex-soldiers receive any pay
after demobilization? if so, for how long?
how is the bonus being distributed?
does it apply in totality without
treatment as to white ex-soldiers?
what good does the American Legion
or war veterans (I mean economic good)
accomplish for the ex-soldiers?
is there a colored branch of these
organizations?

I want the facts to clear up
certain points in my novel. There
is an ex-service man in Harlem named
William Daniel Bell who might help
you with the information if you mention
In addition I should like to know how many Negro regiments were organised and sent over. Were all the officers of the different Regiments removed from their positions? And any other facts you can find up. I hope it won't be an unduly

delay to you.

Again, many thanks. I hope we shall meet if you come over next summer or if not - if I manage to get back to New York!

Sincerely yours,
1927 January 14, to Harold Jackman, envelope verso
March 11, 1927.

Mr. Harold Denzil Jackman,
7 West 134th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

In response to your letter of recent date, in which you request to be advised whether there is any pamphlet or booklet dealing with the enlistment, service or war record of negro soldiers of the World War, I am directed by the Secretary of War to advise you as follows:

No attempt has ever been made in the War Department to compile, for publication purposes, data relating exclusively to the participation of negro soldiers in the United States Army during any period whatsoever. The Department is therefore not in a position to furnish an official document or publication concerning the part played solely by colored soldiers during the World War.

According to the most reliable relevant statistics available, 402,581 colored individuals, of whom 1,533 were commissioned officers and 402,248 were enlisted men, served in the Army of the United States during the World War. Of the total number of these colored troops, 943 officers and 194,489 enlisted men served in the American Expeditionary Forces. These figures are still subject to revision, but it is believed that no material change will be made.

Deaths from all causes among the total number of colored troops during the period of the World War approximate 9,800. In a recent compilation of World War battle casualty statistics, it appears that in the 92nd and 93rd Divisions there were 778 either killed in action or died of wounds received in action, and that 4,408 others were wounded, not mortally. These figures include, however, 40 deaths and 184 woundings, respectively, among commissioned officers, both white and colored. Separate statistics according to color are not yet available in this connection.

You would doubtless be interested in an unofficial publication which contains a variety of information on the general subject of negro participation in the War, entitled "The American Negro in the World War", by Dr. Emmett J. Scott, Secretary, Howard University, Washington, D. C.
If this volume is not accessible in one of your local public libraries, a copy can no doubt be purchased from Dr. Scott.

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

Major General,
The Adjutant General.

By:
West 134th St. New York City, U.S.A.
March 27, 1927.

My dear Mr. McKay,

I'm ashamed of myself for not having written sooner than this. The truth of the matter is that I have been having a difficult time getting answers to your questions. And I've had illness at home—my mother's health is very poor and I've been worried.

I hope the information which I got will be of some service to you. By the way, Service Bell gave me some of it. Here goes:

The Fifteenth landed at Brest on Dec. 27, 1917.
They returned to New York on Feb. 13, 1919.

At the time of demobilization, $100 bonus and a month's pay were given to each soldier. The bonus was distributed through government—insurance. The insurance applied to all alike.

The American Legion established a post—in Harlem known as the Col. Young Post (it is inactive at present) which operated from 1917 to 1925. There was another post known as the Floyd Barnum Post, but that didn't amount to anything. In 1925, Service Bell, as was secretary of the Col. Young Post, was in touch with about 45 posts throughout the country.

The American Legion was very effective...
through its power & strength. It hasn't proved any economic good always in case of getting for ex-soldiers the preference in government positions. That's about all I could get. I hunted all over for information but both in the Negro Battalion in the boots' war are so poor and so unorganized that it is appalling when one reads Emmett Scott's book to find how meagre much of the data is. I enclosed a letter I received from the War Department in response to a letter I wrote asking for information.

It is good to hear how you feel about yourself. You know, your poems don't make me feel that you had given up completely. It seems to me so futile; it really stings me to the quick. But I am so glad I know you are doing better work.

Did you get 'Jim' yet? Wallace Thurman the editor told me he sent you a copy. Have you submitted anything to Opportunity this year?

Have you heard about Walter White's good fortune? He has received a fellowship to go abroad and he is planning to come to France in June with his family.

Could you get me a copy of 'Negroes and sand' if you? You'll have to use a decoy cover. Let me know how much it is and I'll send you the money. I do hope this information will be of some use to you. I'll see from you soon. With love,

Frank Vashon
1927 March 27, to Claude McKay, [Envelope]
Chez Thomas Cook & fils
11 bis rue Noailles
Marseille (B-du-Rhone)
April 28, 1927

My dear Jackman

I thank you very much for your letter and the information.

It was just those skeleton facts that I wanted. Scott's book would be of very little use to me, thanks. The American administration is welcome to it. Have you heard anything of a book or pamphlet called: Two colored women with the A. E. F. I think it was written by one Hunton.

I have seen no copies of Ulysses in the book stores here at Nice. I came down specially to see. But I did see some at Marseille. And as I am going back there in a few days I shall no doubt manage to get one for you. The price in France is 50 francs, about two dollars just. I would buy it myself but I am living a very precarious existence in the pecuniary sense. I have found a publisher and am on the point of signing a contract. But the agent who managed it has not yet touched any money for me. You will have to tell me how to get the book past the customs. It is big and bulky and I am sure it will be opened.

I was very ill when I wrote that poem "Desolate". And as the essence of good writing is to put over your thoughts and feelings in a vivid way, I suppose "Desolate" must be well-written indeed. I am glad you like it. Countee Cullen writes that he likes it too. But it was written in 1924. When you wrote to me on your trip over here I was very much better. And I am still looking as
well as when you saw me in New York, except that I don’t feel physically so fit and I have periodical fits of depression. But some money and a little change of air and that will disappear in a short while. When are you coming back over again? Please thank Service Bell and tell him that I hope to drink his health some day with bootleg. And you too. You have been so splendid about this matter. You shall have one of the first copies of the novel, but I am afraid it won’t be signed as I am away over here. Are you thinking of travelling again soon?

I did not get Fire. Yes, I sent Opportunity a story and a poem. But I have no faith in competitions. It all depends on one doing something more spectacular than inherently fine. Also the humor of the judges decides much. No harm trying, however. I hope your mother is better. By the way, forgive my asking, are you Southern or Northern or West Indian or a mixture of all? How is Locke and Hughes and Van Vechten and his Nigger Heaven and the group of Young Negro Intellectuals? Wont you give me some news? I should have written to Langston and I must soon. He sent me both his books and he is a charming correspondent, but I have been too inquiet of late to write……. Why did Jessie Fauset leave the Crisis and what has become of Jean Toomer? And is Gwendolyn Bennett pretty? Amazing questions, but all of the hours thoughts. Thanks again for your kindness.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Claude McKay
1927 April 28, to Harold Jackman, [Envelope]
West 134th Street,
New York City, U.S.A.
3 June, 1927.

My dear Mr. McKay,

I am glad that the notes which I sent were of some use. This book of Newton's which you mention is one which I used to get the material. I tried to get a copy of the book to send you but was unable to.

About your own book, I am pleased to learn that you have found a publisher. Did you know that--a colored artist--(Aaron Douglas) has already done the jacket? Yes, and it is delivered to the editor. So that is a healthy sign that your novel will be out soon. In the fall I suppose. I hope it sells when it comes out.

I'll tell you how to send "Idylls" in two of the first three pages, that is the cover and the following two pages so that there is no title. Send these in an envelope, as a letter, under separate cover. Get some sort of dummy cover--a cover of another book will do in and place it around "Idylls" itself. Gwendolyn Bennett tried this stunt--when she was in Paris and it worked beautifully. Try and see if it works out with you. Of course the luck is mine but the stunt is yours. By the
way I enclose a money order to pay for the book and to cover postage. Many thanks for going to so much trouble to get it for me.

Speaking of Countee Cullen, do you remember just before you left for Europe in '22 my writing you a note telling you I wanted you to meet a friend of mine, a young poet? That friend was Cullen. At that time he was hardly known and to-day his name as a poet has spread all over the country. What do you think of his stuff? And the other younger "New Negro" poets?

You want to know something about me you say. Well, (a typical American beginning priestess?) I was born in London of a West Indian mother (from Barbados). My father was Danish (white). I came here when I was three. Three years ago I received a degree from New York University of this city, and at the end of this summer I hope to have an M. D. from Columbia. Of course I consider myself an American (I am a citizen but I mean as one born here) but Eric Wegner likes to think of me as English - the connection? None, just that some other people like to consider me foreign. At present I am teaching in a public school in Harlem. So, I don't expect to do that - always, yet Lord knows (and I am twenty-five and getting gray fast) I don't know what I want to do.
I am still groaning. Is it all right? I hope I can't come here one of these days.

Do you want to know what I am interested in? I am interested in art. Because not so long ago, I received a damned letter which made me angry. It was from an individual who was desirous of forming an acquaintanceship with me. Believe me, the letter was a regular questionnaire. It made me angry when I read it because it was so personal for a first letter. I'll give you an idea, it follows this order: What objects are you interested in? What do you think of so and so? Do you like this? Why? etc. etc. that sort of thing. I tore it up.

I'll tell you voluntarily, that - I am passionately fond of music, especially modern music, and literature is second nature with me. I am not particularly fond of sports - probably due to the fact that too much effort is required. I am never surprised when I hear the results of a baseball game or anything like that. There are negative as far as I am concerned.

I don't know why Jamie Janet left the "Crisis." All of us here have been wondering. This may be a clue you know since "Up from Slavery" - which is my thinking is a superior magazine, came to the fore. The circulation of the "Crisis" has diminished considerably. Miss Janet is now teaching French in a junior
High school in the city. Jean Toomer, as you undoubtedly know, is bent and come in the Sundjoff cult. He has been in Chicago all winter forming classes there. Many people seem to think that his writing has been affected by this interest. Zwendlyn Bennett, Judge for yourself whether she is pretty or not. I also send a reproduction of a drawing of myself, by Enoch Lewis, which was in the "Survey Graphic" two years ago. Maybe you have already seen it — I was called the college lad.

I wanted to come abroad this year but my mother's health has been so poor, and is not improving by any means, that I decided to remain in the city and take a few courses at Columbia.

Did you ask me about Van Vesdler? I had dinner with him on Monday. Dorothy Peterson of Brooklyn had him over to her house for dinner and I was one of the guests. The book has been through some twelve or thirteen editions. Needless to say you know it: I have stored a lot of comment. Some like it — I am me who likes it, although I don't think the writing is as brilliant as in his other books — I continue to say that that particular phase of Negro life in Harlem is done well and I happen to know because frequently I travel in those spots a good deal and others breathe it — Washingtonians can't see it.

Do write me soon and tell me a lot—
what you have been doing, why you can't get back here (outside of pecuniary reasons which I judge are the chief ones) and your feeling for America now.

Very sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Harriet Vasconez.
1927 June 3, to Claude McKay, 

Claude M. Kay, Esq.
chez Thomas Cook et fils
11 bis rue Noailles
Marseille (B. du Rêve)
France.
Chez Thomas Cook & fils
67 rue Cannebiere
Marseille (Bouches-du-Rhône)
France.... June 4, 1927

My dear Jackman,
I hope you got my letter. I am now in Marseille and have finished my novel and sent it to New York. You will get a copy, of course, as soon as it is out. There are a few other things I want to ask you which I can straighten out in proofs. Namely: What universities and colleges graduate doctors in New York and New England. And, please find out from Bell if he could give exact information on what company or regiment the colored boys who stevedored at Brest during the war belonged to. Also, if the big building at the foot of the rue Siam overlooking the bridge and the port was a Y. M. C. A. canteen or some other organisation. How were the colored boys treated at the Y.M.C.A. recreation rooms etc. Ask Bell why the Col. Young Post was abandoned and if colored legionn-
aires are invited to the annual conventions of the American Legion. And anything else of importance you might think of will be welcome. These facts are not fundamental issues, but I want to be sure before I even hint at them.

I never got "Fire". Yes, I tried Opportunity again with a story and a poem but I don't think I won this time, either. Of course, I do not take the results of literary competitions seriously -- intellectually they never mean much -- but I think a great deal of the money awards. That is my only object for entering. If I do get a chance this time of putting my novel over, then I would be free to continue writing for my publisher only and leave competitions to those who have not yet had their chance.

Hoping you will write to me soon and not keep me waiting so long this time as I have only a month before the book must be placed in the hands of the publisher.

Ever Sincerely Yours

[Signature: Claude McKay]
1927 June 4, to Harold Jackman, [Envelope]

Mr. Harold Jackman
7 West 134th Street
New York City, USA

Etats-Unis

June 4, 1927 (2)
1927 June 22, to Claude McKay, p. [1]

441 Manhattan Avenue
New York City, N. Y.
22 June, 1927.

My dear Mr. McKay:

This is to answer your question.

1. Concerning the Col. Young Post: It was never wholly abandoned; it was inactive that’s all. It is still functioning. Colored legionnaires are invited to the annual conventions of the American Legion. The Col. Young Post will have representatives in Paris this summer at the American Legion convention there. While the post is not able to send a delegation, certain individuals belonging to the chapter are going over to represent that group. I understand that as many as seven are going.

This next statement is from the present commander of the Col. Young Post (Hayes Paige) and William Service Bell says:}
true — "The American Legion is the most important of all national organizations of its kind." And Bell says further that it will do things for the colored post that it won't do for the white posts. Notices of all meetings of the Legion are sent to the Young Post. The Legion is extremely courteous.

2. There are so many colleges and universities in New England and New York which graduate doctors (physicians, I judge) that I'll only name a few.

The University of Vermont.
Harvard University — Cambridge, Mass.
College of Physicians and Surgeons.
Columbia University — New York.
Bellevue Hospital connected with New York University.

The University of North Carolina.
Long Island Medical School.
Jeff's Medical School outside of Boston somewhere.


"Upon our arrival in Paris we met Mr. Matthew Bullock and his staff of it.* Addie W. Huntington and Kathryn M. Johnson.
secretaries, including the first colored woman who had been ordered home as personne non gratis to the army; this was done on recommendation of army officials in Bordeaux, who had brought from our southland their full measure of sectional prejudice."

"This incident resulted in the detention of many secretaries, both men and women, from failing for quite a period of time, and no more women came for nearly 10 months, thus leaving 3 colored women to spread their influence as best they could among 150,000 men."

"Remarkable things were accomplished, however, through the limited number of colored secretaries, the sum total of whom finally became 78 men and 19 women, the rank of all of whom were splendid, giving splendid service in whatever portion of the A. F. T. to which they happened to be assigned."

"Our soldiers often told us of signs on g.m. c. a huts which read, "no negroes allowed," and sometimes other signs would designate the hours when colored men could be served; we remember seeing such instructions written in crayon.
on a bulletin board at one of the huts at Camp I, St. Vague; signs prohibiting the entrance of colored men were frequently seen during the beginning of the work in that section, but always, when the matter was brought to the attention of Mr. W. S. Wallace, the regional secretary, he would immediately see that they were removed."

"Sometimes, even, when there were no such signs, services to colored soldiers would be refused. One such soldier came to the leave area, and one day, while on a hike to Hannibal's Pass, he confided to the writer that he was beginning to see the Y. M. C. A. from a different - viewpoint, since he had been where there were colored secretaries. That at one time, up at the front, he had been marching for 2 days, was muddy to the waist, cold and starving, because he had had nothing to eat during the entire journey. He came across a Y. M. C. A. tent, went in, and asked them to sell him a package of cakes. They refused to sell it to him under the plea that they did not serve negroes."
One secretary had a colored band come to his hut to entertain his men. Several colored privates followed the band into the hut. The secretary got up and announced that no colored men would be admitted. The leader of the band, a white man, by the way, immediately informed his men that they need not play; whereupon all deserted and there was no entertainment. Some huts would permit colored men to come in to purchase supplies at the canteen; but would not let them sit down to write while others received them without any discrimination whatever.

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"One secretary in charge of a party, sailing from Bordeaux, attempted to put all the colored men in the storage. They rebelled and left the ship, whereupon arrangements were made to give them the same accommodations as the others."

"But M. C. A. secretaries were not always responsible for discrimination that occurred in M. C. A. huts. In some places, commanding officers would order signs put up."

"But there were splendid men among
both secretaries & army officials; who honestly & actively opposed discrimination.

"It was just — of the duties of colored & women to visit the hospitals. Here the colored soldiers placed indiscriminately in wards with white soldiers — — —. However, we learned that in some places, colored officers could be placed in wards with general soldiers, instead of being given general rooms, as was their military right — — ."

"As a rule, only words of praise were heard for the Salvation Army, whose field of service was very small but very excellent."

"Lewis- M. C. was built at Camp Lusitania St. Naguir, for the use of colored soldiers. It was the first — hut — built for our boys — — — .

It did service for 9,000 men, & has, in addition to the dry canteen, a library of 1,500 volumes, a money order department, which sometimes sent out as much as $2,000 a day to home folks; a school room where 1,100 illiterate were taught to read & write; a large lobby for writing letters & playing games; & towards the close of the
work, a wet canteen which served hot chocolate, lemonade + cakes to the soldiers.

To this hut was assigned + served there for nearly 9 months. The work was pleasant & profitable to all concerned, + no woman could have received better treatment — anywhere than was received at the hands of these 9,000 who helped to fight the battle of St. Nazaire by unloading the great ships which came into the harbor. (underlining is mine). Among the duties found there were to assist in religious work, to equip a library with books, chairs, tables, decorations, etc. + establish a system of lending books, to write letters for the soldiers, to report allotments that had not been paid, to establish a money order system, to search for lost relatives at home, to do shopping for the trop whose time was too limited to do it themselves, to teach illiterate to read and write, to spend a social hour with those who wanted to tell her their stories of joy or sorrow.

The last, and perhaps the most...

* From Emmett Scott's "The American Negro in the World War," concerning the 205th (369th) U.S. Infantry. Arrived at Brest, Dec. 27, 1917; from Brest troops transferred to St. Nazaire where troops were put to work constructing huge railroad yards, building roads and unloading ships.
difficult—price of constructive work done by the colored workers, was at Camp Pontanzen, Brest. It has been told in another chapter how one of the workers received Brest as her first appointment—and how she was immediately informed upon her arrival that because of the roughness of the colored men, she would not be allowed to serve them. The woman went away with the determination to return to Brest and serve the colored men there, if there was any way to make an opening; so after finishing her work in the Leave Area, she and her compatriot, who had been relieved from duty at Camp Romagne, were finally permitted to go there, as had been previously explained."

"The last hut for the colored Americans in France was closed at Camp Pontanzen, Brest, on August 3, 1919."

4. About stevedores at Brest— I’ve looked in several books and although they all mention them they do not specify any particular battalion or regiment. Again quoting from the Hinton book: "From the south where Marseille looms out on the blue Mediterranean, to Brest at the entrance of the English Channel, our own stevedores, labor battalions and engineers, have
rebuilt—much of the water front of France, thus making a real effort in the history of French navigation.

Of course, many regiments landed at Brest, and some remained there for quite a while, probably during that time the men worked on the wharves. I list those regiments which arrived at Brest:

The 92nd Division landed at Brest—
June 20, 1918
367th Infantry ("Buffaloes") arrived at
Brest—June 19, 1918
167th Field Artillery landed at Brest—
June 26, 1918
369th (Old 15th New York National Guard)
Infantry landed at Brest—Dec. 27, 1917 and
left for St. Nazaire on Jan. 1, 1918. As I
wrote elsewhere, they remained at St. Nazaire
for 2 months, building railroads, docks,
yards, and working in stone fromes, in
addition to keeping up their military
training exercises.

I couldn't find a soul who knows anything about the building at the foot of the rue tram.

I hope this "material," data, rather,
will help you. Sincerely yours,
Sara Tushman.
Then again, I am going to send you another copy of "Fire".

I hope this reaches you in time (I mean this letter). You see, I only got your letter on Monday and today is Wednesday.
1927 June 22, to Claude McKay, [Envelope]

Claude Dr. Kay, Esq.
Chez Thomas Cook et Fils
67, rue Cannebière
Marseille (Bouches-du-Rhône)
France.
1927 June 27, to Harold Jackman, p. [1]

Cheryl, dear Cheryl,

Marseilles (Bouches-du-Rhône)

June 27, 1927

I have asked my friend in Paris to get you

"Mynar". There at Marseilles they had just a sample copy

in the book that I mentioned and it has been sent.

The book that I mentioned and it has been sent.

I asked you for some facts on certain items in a letter that

and it has been sent.

I asked you for some facts on certain items in a letter that

must have arrived. They are for my novel to go

in the proofs. If I had made mistakes, I shouldn't like

in the proofs. If I had made mistakes, I shouldn't like

to be tripped up on trivial points.

to be tripped up on trivial points.

Oh yes, you did tell me about Countee Cullen when

you came in 7th street. Do you remember?

Have you been corresponding for some time and he has just

sent me a copy of "Color" as a reward for my efforts in

"Opportunity" contest. It is a very beautiful book. I have

also just heard from Langston Hughes. We are old

friends and I love his personality and his work.

The "Crisis" is an entirely different magazine from
"Opportunity." There is so much fallen ground in the Negro field to be plumbed in America that I have never been able to see why the interests of free such discrimination publications should clash. When there is writing in common with their policy, Mr. Jackman, whether one letter him personally or not, is one of the most powerful propagandists in the U.S., and so in reality the Crisis will always make it worth reading. There are many things he might do better of course. But as usual "Opportunity." But everything depends on the editorial and journalism of each editor. Have you ever thought what a great Negro editor with the outlook, "pushfulness," purposefulness, and thrust-hardening of a Jew might do to wake up America? Suppose you had a man with the energy of Samuel who was not ignorant and narrow and headheaded asth as Samuel was!

Thank you for your picture. I saw it in the Survey Graphic. I think, or in "The New Negro" before the volume was stolen here last year. No, I don't think it holds very much till you. As I remember you were by far handsomer your lines were softer and classical something like old Sicilian—and your eyes in the picture was not been rendered at all.
I don't like Bein in any form. I think he is a very weak artist. The curious thing is that American artists never seem to get the real spirit of people I like in their work. None of them ever could get me. Maurice Sterne, I know, has done the best with non-white types. He has real insight and understanding.

On the other hand I have seen splendid things of Negroes (some quite ordinary things were posted) here in France and in Germany. I think European artists do better with Negroes because they feel free and less self-conscious about them.

I like Bein best when he talks about his Negroes as he evidently did in the "New Negro" volume. The Negroes in his earlier work, I think, have the potential for something "higher than" Mexican. She did the jacket for Langston's "Two Cities," in a mood more definite and principled artist.

Thank you for sending Genevieve Buchart's letter. She is "cute" as one says over there. Tell her that Mrs. Robertson asked me about her in New York and gave me a card for her. (I was pretty friendly with a friend of hers there and Mrs. Robertson was rather disgusted) and I was sorry that I couldn't make up any cash to get to Paris on that we could do a little of Montparnasse together. I still hav...
Sherry Flute. It is spry and peppery, and she why
about the first scene of her Paris glimpses and contacts
in The Sherry Flute. That ought to be very interesting to
she ever come back.

Scanning through your letter I find I have misspelled
Hollywood, but he is the one I mean grand wine.

Yes, "Vegee Heaven" was very interesting to me. I was just
said I don't think it is well written. I certainly does not
read as well as Vachter's Blue Night Boy. It is almost
apologetic and plodding in parts. I think it is because
Van Vechten was not sure just how he should write
about his character. It seems to me he missed a wonderful
chance of writing an amazing humorous and vivid book.

Why couldn't he have done with Adams and Ally make
Scare so romantically fascinating and unreal? There he
does not live, but he is at his best with Byron. There he
seemed to find the character that really interested him.

But I don't think he knew what he was worth at the end.
And then you know, I am sure that Van Vechten has been
And then you know, I am sure that Van Vechten has been
And then you know, I am sure that Van Vechten has been.
1927 June 27, to Harold Jackman, [Envelope]

Mr. Harold Jackman
7 West 134 th Street
New York City

Etats-Unis

Jun 27, 1927
1927 August 1, to Harold Jackman, p. [1]

My dear Jackman,

I wanted to reply to your good letter giving me all the precious information I helped you but I was waiting a little bit from Sylamore, and I have not heard about it. I send you her card. You see the cost is much more than I estimated in self the amount you marked me. And I could not order the book at the moment, either. Because I got his, and had to use your money. I had helped it all along, but I could not do otherwise when the small advance I got from Harper in the spring had dwindled down to nothing. I had helped it just then until September when Harper promised, and advanced me something in the new book. Johnson I "meant" promised me a cheque for my story and I was banking on that (we can base the price on here in 50 a month) but the cheque has never arrived. I wrote promising it in the 2nd June. He did the same thing about my poems last year. Write me a nice, kind letter saying it was vital that I keep alive and my voice be heard! and he was appreciating a certain sum to pay me for the poems, although the magazine did not usually.
I write thanking him gratefully. Two months passed and I received nothing. Then I wrote to Washington and to Philadelphia again. And he [Johnson] sent me a ten-dollar note saying that was all he could afford. I was working there in a kitchen in the Cote d'Argue and any relief from that would have been most welcome.

To be frank with you, it is between us and I hope you will forgive me the liberty, I think the colored editors are victims. I feel about them just as DuSable felt about the Negro leaders. Carl Van Vechten certainly said a most foolish thing. But the colored editors are simply holding behind the Negro movement to exploit the Negro artists as much as they can, using fine phrases without giving them any material aid unless they are compelled to. Of course it is an economic problem with the little Negro editors too. Unfortunately we had wealthy Negroes running Negro publications competing for profit, the cream of Negro talent and genius would come to the top. But we have little men with literary ambitions, no incomes, and all write for less afraid of a sort of "art" and posthumous notice or review, dependent as they all are on some sort of white patron. This way, we had the same trouble with DuSable. In the fall of 1925, when I was in Washington, I sent poems to some American magazines telling them I was ill and asking them to help me. Most of them (white) replied promptly and paid me a dollar a line. But DuSable never replied. I thought he did and just the poems waited in the summer of 1926 "I saw me in the rain" and another in February 1927. I immediately wrote to DuSable and got back an answer in March 16, sending me 10 dollars and saying they found me very talented. I wish you were here to see my correspondence with this guardian angel editor of...
my race. you could laugh because it is as funny as tragic. 

Then the doctor wrote. He read poems in "The New Republic" that I had discarded. changed the title of another, for political reason he informed me when I protested and put me in his pamphlet series without even the courtesy of notifying me. I just learned of the pamphlet series from green Kenneth Stearns. 

This ought to be some payment too and I am writing to Kenneth Stearns Co. to take the matter up with Simon Schuster. Finally Walter White whom I really loved and admired as the best of the N.A.A.C.P. gang. He called me Clancy and I called him Walter. I knew he had contact with several white editors as I read him one of my stories (F. Scott Fitzgerald had praised it and thought it very saleable) and asked him to try and do something for me. Walter never replied. I could not understand ever even acknowledged the story I had asked him for personal comment. I was very hurt because he had always been friendly, and just when I returned from Russia and was ill, collected about 100 dollars for me. If he had even written to say he was busy a word a friendly word would have helped me so much for I was broke and sick and longed and very sad. Not a word until during the winter 1926 I met Paul Robson at Nice and he showed me a nice aspirin note from Walter. So I wrote Walter telling him I had seen Robson.
we spoke of him and I was still alive. No reply.

But last Saturday I got a letter telling me he (Walter) had been down at Harper and seen the dummy of my book. It was beautiful etc etc. He had sent a notice about it to 200 negro newspapers and he and his wife were coming to France and would be happy to meet me again. Of course I don't want to meet him. You can imagine my feeling. I have had enough to keep me alive to the end of my days. I am now settled down on the individualistic weapon and I am not going to be used or brushed over for any of the selfish propaganda that goes of the songs.

I hope you are not too weary of these tales of war.

I am sorry for the delay in answering but I shall send it as soon as I get a little extra money. I don't want to strain our friendship over such a little thing and it is the little things that break friendships. I checked up on your notes and found that I was not right and did not have to change the trend of the novel. Thanks again. Hope you scan my first all right. It is not so hard since I started to typewrite. But I had to do it this way because I was compelled to put my typewriter in the municipal furnace for 300 francs.

Sincerely yours,
Clarence
Mr. Harold D. Jackman
441 Manhattan Avenue
New York City, U.S.A.

Aug 1 1917

États-Unis
My dear McKay:

This summer finds me in this city studying psychology. God, I'll be glad when I can take the things that I want to; not that the course I am taking isn't interesting, but I am just tired of working for degrees. Really if my mother weren't so ill I should have chucked the whole thing and come to Europe some way or other. I don't know but I have missed going away this year. You see I had planned all last year to go abroad this year, but every thing just went wrong that's all.

Did you get the facts which I sent you some time ago? I have been wondering whether they reached you in time. I hope they did. The reason I took such a long time in answering your letter was I was getting ready to move and you know what that's like, then I had a difficult time getting the information that you wanted. A man by the name of Boutte, whom I thought would have been able to help me was of no use at all. That made me sore because he was supposed to know so much since he was the only colored member on Pershing's staff.

Quite a number of colored people from the states are abroad this year. Have you met any of them, or don't they come as far as Marseille? Dr. Locke is over this summer, have you seen him? ........ I hope I can finish this because there is such a racket outside called music -- some lady of color is interpreting a song called "Shake that Thing" ... I wish you could hear her; she is really bearing down on
"Shake that Thing"......

Cullen has a new book out which is beautiful. It is called "Copper Sun". I am enclosing a clipping about books about Negroes which are to be published some time this year or early next year. I am very anxious to see your book. I suppose you know that Walter White and his family are in France now. I have got to run out now, I have to make that confounded class at Columbia. Next time I am going to write you a very chatty letter which will not be as choppy and dull as this one.

One other thing before I stop, have you succeeded in getting "Ulysses" yet? Send it as soon as you can will you? because I'll have some free time in a week or so so that I may devote to books I have been intending to read for a long time.

Write me soon and tell me what you are writing.

Very sincerely yours,

Herses Vachman
Mr. Claude McKay
Chez Thomas Cook et Fils
67 rue Cannebière
Marseille (Bouches-du-Rhone)
FRANCE
My dear Claude:

It is a bit of summer here now and unfortunately I am at work more. How I dread it—but it is good that I can easily adjust myself, in spite of the fact that I don’t particularly care to do the sort of thing I am doing. But me in a writing pitch or mind, having a mother and a home to look after, can’t afford to quit a job with an assured income and freelance, although I want to do that some day.

The summer we have this year was certainly a wet one and just as we are beginning to have fine weather I have to be confined to the four walls the best part of the day. Well, no use thinking I suppose.

You know I have become reconciled already if I don’t receive "Wyers". It was just one of those pure strokes of luck which few to it—that my copy got past the post office.
Course, there was a dummy cover and all that, but after all I think the size and bulk of the book gives it away and by this time the P.O. officials are aware of its format. Don’t bother to send it - if you haven’t bought it I shall be disappointed.

What have you been doing all summer?

I suppose there is no summer for you, judging from the way you write - it is a continuous reason. Are you working now?

Yes, "your people" will pay that is vital that a Negro poet like you be kept alive, that it about as much assistance as you’ll get too. Cullen, who is a close friend of mine, and I have often spoken about it. They will go into raptures about your marvelous poetry, but that’s as far as it goes. The same thing about buying your book - they enjoy reading your verse as much, but do they buy your book? Not much! I find that among as many Negros who have "arrived" they are reluctant about pushing the fellow who is planning. They seem to pay to themselves let him get there by himself. A very selfish attitude, but when the obscure "arrives" they flock to him. It’s a great crime! I have been able to notice this particularly in Count’s case because I knew him when
He wants—make him one of the best known younger poets of the country. He often spoke of it in the past, and I still do. By the way, his second book, *Copper Sun*, is beautifully gotten up.

To me it is quite an improvement in technique over his first book. While the two of them break down even, this last book shows a mature grasp and insight. If you get—what I mean—it is finer. And the section of love poems are superb. I suppose you're getting about your book aren't you? or have you passed that stage? I know I am very anxious to see it.

Many colored people will be on Broadway this season. There is a revival of "Abraham's Bosom," the play of Paul Green's which won the Pulitzer prize; it is to go on tour, then on the third of October the Theatre Guild is presenting "Porgy," a dramatization of Du Bois's book. By the way, if you haven't read that book you ought to. It is absolutely one of the best books on Negro life I have ever read. And quite a few Negroes are to be in "Show Boat" and Hammerstein's opera which is to open his new theatre. Then the book is a different story.

I wonder how you would like
New York now. I am crazy about it; I have such a wonderful time here. Sometimes I wonder if New York will always be my love. I think London is the possible exception which could take its place.

Jorner was in. Fontainebleau this year; did he get in touch with you? Eric Henderson is writing a book (not a novel) in Panama which is to be published next year sometime. Langston Hughes is in there now; he is going back to school at Lincoln University. Owen Bennett is there now also. Wallace Thurman and Bruce Nugent are among the cast of "Porgy". Did you get "Fire"? Thurman told me to send it to you. I think I have it for all that would interest you. And anyway this sun is getting hot and won't hold out so I'd better call it an evening and pay us long and let me hear from you real soon.

Harbor Tasker
1927 September 14, to Claude McKay, [Envelope]

Claude McKay, Esq.
Chez Messrs. Cabot et Fils
Marseille (B.-du.-Rhone)
France
Chez Thomas Cook & fils
67 rue Cannebière
Marseille, (B-du-Rhone) France
November 29, 1927

My dear Harold

Thank you so much for sending me your photograph. It is a well-made photograph, but I think it makes you look rather fierce. On the other hand, the reproduction of Reiss' portrait—melancholy—which I have before me also, makes you excessively, but I prefer it as it brings out character or personality, which the photograph does not. None of them has the faintest touch of charm, which as I remember from our slight acquaintance, was the outstanding trait of your features, but that is something very difficult for a photographer or painter to get. You ought to get Maurice Sterne to paint you, but he has grown rich and famous since the time I knew him and I don't think he runs now with the old crowd of Greenwich Village rebels. He used to do charming things of Eastern people, chiefly Indians and Malays I think, and as you run something to those types, I think he would make a real picture of you. I don't think American artists are good at doing colored people, and I believe that that is due to the popular American idea of non-white peoples. Artists are often influenced by the vulgar popular mind without realizing it. These reproductions of the German artist on the covers of "Opportunity" could not be better. And I have seen little amusing caricatures of colored types in French journals that make attempts in "Life" and "Judge" and like publications, look banal and cheap.

I wish you had also dropped me a line about yourself and
Knopf's.

I hear Paul Robeson is in Paris. I did not hear anything of Toomer. We met once, but we have never been friends nor corresponded. When I was on the "Liberator" I think I wrote to him once or twice. Funny Robeson didn't play in "Porgy." No, I have never read the book. Would like to. Was shocked to hear of Florence Mills' death. What has become of Gilpin? I am sending you a couple of photographs that I too for Harpers. Not very good, for they are cheap. You remember you sent me one of Gwen Bennett's, so you can give her one and thank her for hers.

I didn't have much of a summer. I bathed a little, a couple of weeks with an Ecole Normalien who came down from Paris, but otherwise it was nothing but hard work. I am doing a book on Marseille. Its a tough, picturesque old city and I should love to show it to you some day. There are many Negro leisure seamen from all over the world here and I spend my time among them in their haunts.

Ever Yours Sincerely

Claude
1927 November 29, to Harold Jackman, [Envelope]
Chez Thomas Cook & fils
67 La Canebiere
Marseille, (Bouches-du-Rhone)
France, January 20, 1928

My dear Harold

"Home To Harlem" will be out, I think, before you get this and you will undoubtedly see what it looks like in its final shape before me. Write soon and tell me frankly just how you feel about it, the get-up and the story. I like to hear the critical truth, so long as it isn't asinine, when, of course, it cannot be regarded as criticism.

And now as I am not on the spot and you are I must tax your friendship with a few tasks. First, I should like you to subscribe to the Negro Newspapers clipping agency for me and I shall settle with you later. Next, I should like you to go and see Mr. Eugene Saxton of Harpers on my behalf, and ask him if he could arrange that one of the New York Agencies should mail me the clippings of "Home To Harlem." I am sure they have an agency and all that need be done is to give in my name and address and charge to me. I would write to Saxton, but in this case I think it will be better if you go and talk to him about it.

Do you know of a rag-time song called The West India Blues (about Garvey, I think) and a Jelly Roll Blues called Shaking That Thing? The last-named has been very popular among the seamen here and I should like to get the words of both if you can get hold of them. I am referring to them in my new novel and I should like to get hold of the exact words. Could you find out for me whether Aldous Huxley published a travel book on India? I
know that he wrote a series of articles, but have never heard of
their being published.

I shall send you your copy of "Home To Harlem"
some
from here. Soon as I get the first one I sign shall be
yours. I wish you would write to me oftener. I get only business
letters from America. So I am cut off from all sources of news,
general or Negroid. I believe you are the only friend I have over
there now, at any rate you are the only one that does write, and
so I cannot help thinking so, as the proof of the contrary is al-
ways lacking. Do tell Langston, when you see him that I should
appreciate a line from him. I liked his "I thought it was Tan-
giers? It is certainly the best poem of his, in my opinion, and
the most beautiful fusing of atmosphere and feeling that I have
felt for a long time.---Could you also get me Eric Walrond's
present address?

I am still here at Marseille. It has been very
cold and I have been rather uncomfortable. I have good fun how-
ever meeting the seamen arriving here, especially the colored
American and West Indian chaps. If it wasn't for them, life
would be rather drab here.

With my best regards

Ever Yours Sincerely

Claude

P.S. Please also ask Mr. Saxton to send me twelve more copies
of "Home To Harlem", which will make twenty-four as I have al-
ready asked him to send me twelve. Try to remember this and let
hear from you about it as I shall not write to Saxton personally
about it. --C. McK.
Mr Harold Jackman

441 Manhattan Avenue

New York City, U. S. A.

Jan 20, 1928

Etats-Unis
My dear Claude:

I have been wanting to write you for a long time but I have been terribly upset. Mother had to be operated on for an operation on the eye which caused me a great deal of worry and I haven't been feeling so well. As a result, I had a thorough physical examination and my doctor confirmed my opinion that I am not so well. I have had to have me treatment after another for this and that. I guess and a rest, rest, rest. I will be my old self again very soon I hope.

Especially I am so sorry you lost Callen's comment that way. Why the chap never meant to be bitter, he wanted nothing whatsoever about the public significance of the word in the word be announced in a way to be well but it had a court meaning. So far as I know this use of the word was the middle that is really and something more. It was so surprising to hear that you felt that way because Cullen is so keen that you feel that way because he would be the last to say anything that would hurt you. As a fact he doesn't feel the way you think he does any way.

I suppose you know that an actress is still at London University in I'd like to think; I taught a group of them at a party during the Christmas holiday. I learned only yesterday that Eric Walmsley has been awarded some five hundred scholarships and is going to the University of Birmingham for a year or two. I understand it is a creative scholarship. Don't that splendid? And I suppose from there about his getting the second award for literature in the Harlem Bureau award of Negroes. James Johnson won first prize. Wallace Thurman has just sold a play called "Black Belt." It is a play about a Carolina family that came up north. He collaborated with a white man—W.E.B. DuBois. Repp. And this play is
scheduled for production sometime this Spring or early next fall. Shaw is making copy of Boni now. Kansas is now.

Colored people are playing quite a part in the theatre here in New York. What with “Porgy” which has attracted colored cast and the adoption of me or two, and new “Helena Dawson” an opera in which your friend, who is also in need of his regards, William W. Davis, Bessie, and three or four other colored music, orchestras, or witnesses (“The Trial of Mary Logan” a colored witness). Even “Richard III” the summer night’s dream was represented with a page. I am just right about the Kintzle productions. I was fortunate in seeing three of his plays. New York has gone in for Broadway (by New York, I mean the Theatre Guild). The two plays “Mase Williams” and “Strange White Lady” are current productions on Broadway. The Bois has written another novel and Rudolph Boston is back in this country; his trip, tell me he is going to Nigeria.

Why don’t you try for one of the Shaw’s awards this year? After all, even though prizes aren’t significant—do I can use the money. I am going to write you a long, long letter next time. Thanks for the photographs! You have changed so fast as I remember. There is a reminder for the New Year. May with peace.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
March 10, 1928

Mr. Claude McKay
67, rue Cannebière
Marseille, (B. du Rhone)
France

Chez Thomas Cook et Fils

[Envelope]
441 Manhattan Avenue
New York City, U. S. A.
21 February, 1928.

Dear Claude:

This is going to be brief as I have to hurry down-town to The
New School of Social Research where I am taking a lecture course
in individual psychology under Dr. Alfred Adler of Vienna. Every-
thing that he has to say is so important that I can't afford to
miss any of it. So to the point and answer your questions.

There is no Negro Clipping Bureau. I will try to send you the
reviews of the Negro press as soon as I see them, so you needn't
worry about that.

In a travel book by Aldous Huxley called Jesting Pilate, published
in 1926 by Doran, there is a section on India and Burma; the other
parts deal with Malaya, the Pacific and America. I suppose this is
the book you mean. I couldn't find any other which answered your
question.

Didn't I tell you in my last letter that Eric Walrond was given
some sort of scholarship known as the Zona Gale Scholarship? Well,
he is now at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Wisconsin. If
you write him there I think he will receive the letter.

Saw Mr. Saxton of Harpers yesterday afternoon. He is a very affable
person. By the way in which he spoke Home to Harlem will have a bang
of a send-off. Sixty copies have already been distributed to various
people and review copies have also been sent out. The publication date is March first. He told me that he would welcome any suggestions from me in the way of publicity or otherwise. So you see a great deal of interest is being shown. Of course I realize that it means a lot to them also but it is very rare, I think, that a publishing house, especially one as old and established as the house of Harper, asks or wants to follow the ideas of an outsider. About the other twelve books, Mr. Saxton told me that he would see that they were sent to you right away. And you will receive the clippings of the book. Saxton presented me with a copy of the book. The format is very good looking .... I am terribly eager to get in the inside. I shall do so presently and write you what I think of the whole affair in detail. At present this damn psychology keeps me so busy that I hardly have time for anything else. However by the end of the week I hope to have completed your opus.

Oh, by the way, did you ever have a book or pamphlet of dialect poems printed in Jamaica? Do you know where I could get hold of a copy?

Good luck for you success.

Very sincerely yours,

[Signature]
1928 February 21, to Claude McKay, [Envelope]

Harold Jackman,
441 Manhattan Ave.,
New York City, U.S.A.

Mr. Claude McKay
Chez Thomas Cook et Fils
67 La Cannebière
Marseille, (Bouches-du-Rhône)
France
Chez Thomas Cook et fils
67 La Canebière
Marseille (B-du-Rhone)
France... March 10, 1928

My dear Harold

It was so charming of you to put that little gift in your letter of Feb. 2. It was one of those little gestures that are very big to me because they always remain to convince one in moments of bitter reflection that there is a kind of friendship that is more than an empty name. What you did, after my letter, is so beautiful, that I am constrained, (in spite of my pecuniary state and the fact of my poetic inability, although I am by no means spendthrift, to keep any money in my hands) to practise a little self-denial and feel a little finer for it, by using the order to procure "Ulysses" for you.

Herewith the covers and I do hope that as I have sent it Joyce's splendid heavyweight will reach you camouflaged under the light-weight protection of Monsieur Paul Morand whose facile cleverness may be innocuous enough to make his name acceptable to
American puritan imbecility.

I regret to hear you are not well, but if I may be allowed to say it, you should not take little ailments over seriously. Just go on living healthily as much as you are physically and psychically able and don’t worry. I have had so many real illnesses that I would be a perfect ruin I think if it were not for the vigorous optimistic state of my mind that just holds my body strong together. So much for advice that is easy.

Of all things to give.

When I published “Harlem Shadows” I did have a letter from a Negro Clipping business, somewhere out Chicago way asking me to subscribe, but it may have gone out of existence since. You might find out from some official of the N.A.A.C. P. By that way too, I have recently had a cordial letter from Weldon Johnson inviting me to come back home and enjoy some of the benefits that Negro artists are obtaining through the general public interest awakened now to the Negro Literary Renaissance. You also hint at something of that in mentioning the Harmon Awards. I have no objection in the world
to receiving money, which I can always use.

But I cannot write to please a body of charitably disposed people. My work must be judged as it is written and if I am awarded something other than public favour for it, all the better, but personally, I could not lift a finger to further my own cause along those lines. About going back, I should love to look in on the States again. All these laws and rulings since the war, are very irritating to the vagabond soul, especially an outlaw soul, that cannot reconcile itself to the fact of limitation to any one country, or allegiance to any one nation. But maybe those are the factual forces, irksome though they may be, that help to make an artist of a vagabond.

I am much obliged for the two songs.

"Shake That Thing" is fine. Is it popular in the cabarets? I had the two last verses and have already written a riotous thing about it. It won't be necessary to remove anything but only to add something. Why don't you shift your machine to give the black type? Do you like the red? I hate it.
And you know, I don't like the idea of your showing my private letters to your acquaintance. Thurman, in a nice clever, smart-alecky letter to me, said you showed him two! Now what have you, my dear friend, to say about that? Of course, I'm not dictating what you should do with my correspondence, but if I mention any small thing personally to you (like my note on Cullen, for example) and you show it to the Harlem gents, eventually and inevitably it will be all over Nigger Heaven as Mr. Carl Van Vechten might say, or Nigger Hell as Sin Head Susy would say; And by this to remember Young Thurman, please tell him that I shall most surely write to him, but just now I am flooded with more correspondence than ever since the last five years and, as I shall have to invent a special key in replying to the style of his ultra-sophisticated professional handshake across the pond, he must give me a little time. But tell him however that he must be careful when he gets his aching critical claws into "Home To Harlem", as he hopes, that they are not painfully broken off in it!
I had a few copies of "Home To Harlem" the same time I had your last letter. It is a neatly made book. Saxton wrote me he sent out copies to all the names I gave him and as you have yours I shall not send another. You must wait until we get together and can sign it. I wish you could come over this summer. I shall have finished my new novel by then and we could swim and poke around the low quarters of this town together, if you care about those things. I know Langston does. He has sent me a fine cable about "Home To Harlem."

There are a few mistakes to correct in the book, but there is one very important that must be made right away. And I want you to help me again. I cannot find the correct thing in the library here, but I feel sure you will in New York. It's in Chapter 10 p. 135, 1st par. referring to the Kings of Africa. Behanzin of Benin is wrong. Behanzin was the big fighting king of Dahomey that the French defeated and deported. What I want is the names of the Kings of Benin, (there were two outstanding ones in the fifteenth and sixteenth
centuries when the Portuguese traded with West Africa). And there is another very important one when the British conquered the country in eighteen forties. You will find the information in two or three books on Benin in the Forty-second Street library -- one a massive thing with reproductions of sculpture and ivory carvings written by an Englishman. If you send me the names in order of their importance with a little note on each, I shall choose the one I want and forward the correction to Mr. Saxton. I hope this job won’t be too troublesome to you as you tell me you are working so hard at your new lecture course.

I am happy to hear about the creative activity of Negroes in New York. I have never once doubted that recognition and monetary reward would come for the Negro as soon as he produced work of merit and the public was aware of it. I did not take a pessimistic race-conscious view of "Home To Harlem" because it did not sell. Poetry in general is never a selling thing. There are exceptions -- like leap years.

About Cullen’s note on me I must say that
"vituperative" has nothing to do with "raillery". In the peasant atmosphere in which I was born and reared our stock of words were strong words, direct and meaningful. As a boy I loved literature because it spoke the words of life and all my best friends with whom I have loved literature love it with me above all for the realness of words. And I have always been identified with those people who hate looseness in literature, holding that words should mean what they say; Any cub reporter knows that "vituperative" is abuse." Go down to the night court where it is called abusive language! If Mr Cullen doesn't know the common meaning of the word it shows an amazing ignorance. And as a worker in words, I must tell you frankly that I have no love nor sympathy for loose milk-and-water meaningless use of words either in prose or in poetry. Personally I have the friendliest feelings towards the young man, but I am one mean bastard who does not think of personal or racial considerations when I am dealing with artistic wares. Please write soon and give me some news and -- gossip! Thanking you again for everything,

Yours "vituperatively"

Claude McKay
Mr. Harold Jackman,

441 Manhattan Avenue

New York City, U.S.A.

Etats-Unis

March 10, 1928
441 Manhattan Avenue
New York City, U.S.A.
30 March, 1928.

Dear Claude:

I am sorry I am forced to use this red type, but the black type has been used so much that it can't be used any longer, and I haven't had time to buy another ribbon.....so you'll have to bear with it and with me.

Thanks for sending "Ulysses". It was very fine of you to send it; I wasn't in a hurry for it you know and I wouldn't have had you deny yourself to buy the book. I was very happy to receive a copy all the same. Again many thanks.

Lord, but more prizes, awards, scholarships, fellowships, etc. are given in this country than in any other I believe......Eric Walrond and Countee Cullen have just received Guggenheim fellowships for one year. They carry a stipend of $2,500 for the year. Walrond is to go to the West Indies to gather material for stories, and Cullen is coming to Paris to work on a libretto for an opera, and to do a group of narrative poems. Walter White got one of these fellowships last year. Do you hear from him? He is now in France somewhere. About some of these awards, I don't think you have "to write to please" anybody and I don't think any artist should write to please anybody but himself. But I don't see why you can't try for some of these things as well as these other people. If the judges don't like your work, shrug your shoulders and don't give a damn.

I am terribly sorry you didn't send me a copy of your book. I was so sure that you were going to send one that I gave away the one Saxton
gave me. About "Home to Harlem", I hear that it is in its second edition. There is always a lot of vague talk here in Harlem about your not being able to get back to these United States. I have been intending to ask you about it, but each time I write I forget to mention it. You yourself speak of "laws and rulings since the war". The whole thing is so improbable to me that I can hardly believe it to be true. Of course I know so little about government regulations that......well, what's it all about? to use the New Yorkese of the day? I wish you would explain it all to me.

Evidently you haven't read about the collection of books on the Negro which the 135th Street library has accumulated. All the books about Negroes have been transferred from the 42nd Street library to the third floor of the Harlem branch which has been turned over to a Negro Department. In addition, the library has bought Arthur Schomburg's valuable books. This was quite an acquisition as Schomburg had some important books, many of which were very hard to get. It is through Mrs. Katherine Latimer of this department that I have been able to get much of the material for which you have asked. I wish you would write Mrs. Latimer and thank her, because she has really done a great deal of searching for you. You see, so many of the books are badly organized, without indices, chapter headings, etc., and it means that if you want anything, you usually have to guess where it will be. Sometimes the only clue you have is the title of the book. Mrs. Latimer has been patient enough to help me go through many of these books and pamphlets.

Again I tried to find out about a Negro clipping bureau but no one I have asked (these people are newspaper people too) knows of any. I'll get as many notices as I can and send them to you.

"Shake That Thing" is out of date now. It was very popular when it first came out; it was sung everywhere. That's some time ago now. You know how long most of those songs last, for a few months. The only blues song
which has remained, and which is still played (I think it is the classic
of them all) is the "St. Louis Blues".
At the time I showed Thurman the letters I never thought of any conse-
quence. It just happened that your name came up and I said that I hap-
pened to have a couple of letters from you with me; it was the time when I
was looking up some data for you and I travelled around with them to
recall what you wanted. That's all. As a rule I don't do that sort of
thing. I still wish you wouldn't feel the way you do about the comment
in "Caroling Dusk". We won't agree about it I know.
Cullen is marrying Du Bois' daughter the day after Easter. Langston
is one of the ushers and I am to be best man.
Say, did you ever write a book called "Color Schema"? Such a book is
listed under your name in Locke's "New Negro".
I am sending you some more reviews. What do you think of those I sent?
Another novel on the Negro is on the market. It just came out to-day.
It is called "Quicksand" and is written by a colored woman, Nella Lar-
sen Imes. I haven't read it yet.
Shall write again soon.

Ever sincerely yours,

Harvey
Mr. Claude McKay
Chez Thomas Cook & Fils
67, La Canebière
Marseille (B-du-Rhone)
France
Dear Harold,

Thanks for all the cutting, but I wish you would write! Did you get my letter with the covers of "Ulysses" & the book under another cover? I am anxious to know whether the data I asked for about the kings of Benin could be found.

I suppose you are tremendously rushed in a hurry might go pack. I am late. Ever, Claude.

April 12

I wish you again from nice talking turkey, you remind about this.
Mr. Harold Jackman

441 Manhattan Avenue

New York City, U.S.A.

Statz-Usis

April 12, 1928
411 Manhattan Avenue
New York City, U.S.A.
22 April, 1928.

Dear Claude:

I bet you think I am a big hoo for not writing you sooner. Really, I have been sick. I was laid up a week with a severe attack of the grip. When I got out of bed I didn’t feel like doing a thing, and I didn’t.

Your cable was certainly more than any surprise. Why did you do that? Thank you for sending the book; I could have waited you know. It was very nice of you to send it.

I read with interest your explanation of Pals’s feeling toward “browns.” What has always puzzled me is the duality of contradiction which exists in so many colored men, namely, hating white people bitterly but wanting white women, and not only wanting them but propering them above any other women. I have never thought out the psychology of it— but I don’t think it is because of labor alone. It seems to me that by itself labor isn’t enough. My own opinion as to the matter is that there is something in the nature of such a colored man which is a kind of inferiority complex, for he knows so many colored people suffer from it, too.
April 22, to Claude McKay, p. [2-3]

Anonymous, you may be right and I may be the exception. I was only saying that men of that type—like myself—haven't been the authors of the whites. Of course, literature shows that it is—indeed. And I know that—well, it is more believable, which reminds me that there has been a lot of talk and questioning of your description of the blues women fighting дикары. People have said that—well, it is a sham—

...and you don't know your Harlem—...and, all you have been away from here so many years you probably exaggerate upon things—...and this last by an intellectual lady of these regions, what might have your local black (no, I think she said a remeny chance) get writing about Harlem. I know as well as you know this. Can you read it? So these critics are certainly correcting you, as you have read the reviews. I have read—yes, you know what they are saying. You should...that of course—since you are dealing with a nice colored people, these people know—they're in our set, etc., etc.

What is your next book going to be about anyway? Say, since your book has come out that there have been more newspaper accounts of your taking a wife (meaning Cullen, of course) one of the Metropolitan decided actually printed an item to that effect. You have friends at that newspaper, given, for Noble and Oglesby, the theatrical team, and other equally as amusing.

Tell me finely, do you think shows

people just as primitives as so many writers describe them as feeling when they hear jazz?

So, many writers, negroes write, almost this.

Now we are a rhythmical people. It doesn't take much persuasion to see that, but this business of feeling the music so clearly that we almost become intoxicated is beyond me. Now, maybe it's because I don't feel that way that I say this, yet I have always wished I could argue with an experience. That's too much Johnson and myth about the Negro these days (once the Negro Renaissance, as it's called) that if a thinking person doesn't want him—well, it is hard to believe it. This is the Negro's day all right. Almost everything about him and him is taken for granted. He will be a reality when a day of rethinking and rethinking about the mulatto comes. Because, while it is good that he has made a break, I feel to see so much done and said which is only half truth or sometimes half-truth nonsense. While it may be the day of a lot of good, it may also be the time of a lot of harm. When that day of reckoning comes all these things will be considered in their true light.

So Cullen, the Paris nights were great! So you like gastrellas? Well, what! I can anything in the form of a procession or pageant or a grander scale just strikes me, though, and things. I got a big spread out of it. It was a marvelous affair.
1928 April 22, to Claude McKay, p. [4]

I see Walter White is back in New York. The
players said he came back to gather data for his book
on lynching. He is returning to France soon though.
I hear Waller Thurman's play "Black Belt" is
not going to be put on this spring as had been planned,
but is to be played in September. Would you say
it was a bitter disappointment to Thurman. In-
cidentally he showed me a manuscript copy of a novel
"Blind the Berry" he has just completed. It's
very good I think. He doesn't know whether it will
be published or not. "The Bois' "Dark Princess" came
out Friday. Haven't seen it yet. I see your
book is in its fifth edition; that's something to be
proud of. Oh, I hear that Lenox Hill has
married anything that might interest you. Do you
ever hear of Lewis Jones, the man who wrote "From Superman to Man." He has been in Europe sometime,
he travels around. Each week the "Amsterdam News"
carries an article of his bearing on some European
situation or city visited.

Well, you must have gotten the data
I sent you. I hope it helped you. How are you
feeling these days? Write to me soon. I suppose you
are quite busy now that the novel is under
way.

Ever sincerely yours,

Harriett

I sent a few more clippings in another envelope.
May 9, 1928

My dear Harold,

When I was working on the railroad, I went one night with an ex-jockey and a white European to a cabaret in Harlem. The white admired the colored girls and said, quite naturally, that when he was in some part of the South he used to go with a beautiful mulatto girl. The jockey resented this and he spoke about the fine white girl he had when he was in Canada—a girl that was well-bred and well off too—and he produced a photograph of her from his pocket-book. She was a beautiful girl and the white fellow admired her, asking my friend if he wasn’t crazy about her. The white, as I said, was European and did not have the peculiar sex-and-color prejudice of whites. Americans, but the colored jockey was seething with racial antagonism and resented the white man with us and his having had a mulatto girl and boasting about it. To the white’s question he answered: "No I fucked the bitch when I was in Canada and she wanted me to marry her, but what was I going to do with a white bitch?" You can imagine how the white man felt? I am sure the jockey did not hate that girl, but it was his objective hatred for white men that brought out the hatred in him.

Have you read many sex books? Freud, Ellis, Symonds, etc. Do you think Thurman will get her book published? I did not come in the conventional sense, let him know I was interested, and he sent me a copy of "Homage to Harlem." I didn’t know him before I put him on the original list, and I felt it only right to send up the original.
Jung, another German I can’t remember, and any works on the sex
life of Ancient Greece and Rome? If you haven’t you ought to be-
fore you make a sweeping indictment of the sexual attitude of the
Negro male. You don’t mention the female, but I think that the
case you bring up is stronger against her than the male, judging
from the obvious issue of it in the West Indies, Africa and the
United States.

The sexual life is motivated by conflicting emotions: One
man may be agitated to the sexual act through a feeling of hate,
contempt and perversity as much as another may be through natural
love and tenderness. The duality you find in the Negro is not
puzzling to me. All men have it, my dear Harold. The best and
the worst of crackers like their nigger wench, but they do not
make legitimate society wives of them for obvious reasons! So
do the European gentlemen like to bed with their servant wenches,
but do not marry them either. If the Negro shows an illogical
preference for the white woman and is prone to marry her, when he
can, while the cracker would not marry the colored woman it is
simply because the skin of the white woman proclaims to the Negro,
denatured by Civilization, that she belongs to the race that boss-
es the world today. At least that is my opinion. Sex is a prim-
itive, natural, unlawful thing. Marriage is a legal affair regu-
lated by the economic conditions of human beings.

It is quite plain to me why Negroes should “hate white
people and want white woman.” This hate for white people is an
objective and social feeling, the patent result of oppression by
slavery and suppression after emancipation of the Negro’s social
aspirations by the dominant race. It doesn’t have anything to do
with the black man feeling a stiff urge when he sees an attractive white woman anymore than with the cracker getting the same thing for a juicy black gal. On the other hand there is much to say for this: Crackers may run after black and mulatto wenches because they have a contempt for sexuality and feel that they might just as well get the burdensome dirty thing off on the colored animals. I know that a great body of white people, especially Nordic males, are neurotic about sex! And Negroes who make white women feel, I am sure, that they have achieved something wonderful by getting even with the race that holds them down and calls itself superior — just as a vain-thinking man of any race feels that he can revenge himself on another that he holds a grievance against, by seducing his wife. The white man knows this too, even if it is unconscious in his mind and not thought out clearly, and that is why you find the white race everywhere, covertly or overtly objecting to colored men having white women, until it develops into lynching in the Southern states, where the contact and competition between the two races are more acute than anywhere else in the world, except, perhaps, South Africa. For there can be no doubt that many of the lynchings have their roots in sex complications.

To cite comparisons, you know the Irish hating the English did not prevent mixed mating between the two peoples. And many of the Indian nationalists have English wives. And some of these English wives of Indians are the most bitter haters of England and British rule in India. The same thing holds in Egypt. You seem lacking in perception to me when you confuse a very objective and logical attitude with the most primitive and illogical of human emotions. I think too that there may be in
this sex business some pre-historic fundamental antagonism of races. The thing that produced in the beginning of their making the different races and their sub-divisions. It is probable that the outstanding differences (physical) between races are not merely the result of climate and great natural barriers that some liberal anthropologists premise. Natural selection must have played a big part in it, but as there have always been freaks of nature, it seems to me that the off-springs of both, sex attraction and sex antagonism between the races will last as long as human life.

Now that I have defended the average Negro, whose inferiority complex like that of the average white, is quite understandable to me, (because the organisation of modern society draws its life-breath from inferiority complexes and without them there would be no rank and frantic climbing) I will say that the Negro should be helped by his more gifted and clear-thinking brother to overcome his white obsession and become consciously strong and superior in himself and in his race. And so it is the task of Negro artists who can apprehend fine distinctions to give back to the Negro race its heritage, by revealing to it the beauty and wonder and glory, the warmth and color and passion, rhythm and music inherent in itself. The fact in America today is, that whatever hidden yearnings the colored man has, he does marry, live have children and is happy with his woman. An artist who feels the rhythm and tragedy of his race can use the life of the Negro as it is with great effect and leave the suppressed yearnings to the psychologist. The Negro artist can help the race, corrupted by civilization, to see that it has finer than the thing it hankers after in itself. That is one way of salvation, I believe, for the Negro race in the modern civilized world.
Oh yes, without any exaggeration, I feel the primitive carnal, African rhythm in me very strongly and distinctly from the rhythm that white people communicate to me. Good dancing always gets me in an ecstasy that I would call religious, because I never have any practical sex feeling when I am dancing, but many Negroes tell me that they are sexually aroused -- and many whites too. What I feel most when dancing is the desire for a perfect unity of movement with my partner. If you have never been intoxicated by music I am sorry for you. Maybe it is due to the infusion of cold Nordic blood. However, so many white people feel the same intoxication. I had a Jewish friend who could swoon away under syncopated music as he could under a composition of Chopin. If white people didn't have it too, they could not appreciate it in Negroes. I think, however, that white people are having so much of natural rhythm lifted out of them by civilized ways of living that they turn to Negroes, who they feel, quite rightly, have more of primitive rhythm than they.

Tell Thurman I am hoping he will answer my letter. The first one was a real pleasure. If the producers set his play back, perhaps they have done it for reasons that might be remuneratively beneficial to him. I was worrying about my novel too because it did not come out last fall. But Harpers were holding it for the most auspicious time. They were right I think. The white man knows the business end of any artistic work better than the Negro artist who is just breaking in, so if I were you, I would advise Thurman, if he will listen, to be patient and diplomatic.

Say, you mustn't write me another letter that calls for until so much to answer after I have finished my book! But I want you to write often all the same and give me all the news! That
will either make you mad or smile.

Were there no other notices in the Negro papers?

What about the Age and News and Baltimore American and Chicago Defender? Did they have anything? Those you sent were amusing. But the Amsterdam News thing was remarkably good. The analysis of the characters is the best of any review. Rogers came to see me at Antibes when he was going to Paris last year. I have never liked him. He is a mulatto bounder, dull, heavy and over-informed like that encyclopedic Hubert Harrison and having the same nasty, shitty attitude towards sex. I sent him a copy of my book. He had always tried to get intimate with me from my Liberator days. And I shall always remember his saying at a meeting (that is to me privately) that all a radical woman wanted was a stiff dick... However, he sent me thirteen dollars in ’26 when I was broke, for which I was grateful, without liking him any better.

I sent that cablegram because you have been such a disinterested fine friend and correspondent that I hated the thought of causing you the slightest disappointment. A letter would have taken too long. The cable did not cost much -- just a dollar. Yours is the only copy of the book I have sent back to America. There is a white woman who gave me five hundred dollars once and I merely asked Saxton to send her a copy. I am so busy with my new book, but it is a pleasure to stop and talk with you nevertheless. Many of my old correspondents who dropped me when I was in eclipse are coming back again. But I am a busy dog that never goes back to his vomit.

Oh thanks for the Benin stuff. And won’t you thank Mrs Latimer for me? Add anything you think best that will do in
Evidently we have bungled trying to meet each other. I didn't quite understand your last card - your asking in Marseille my private address when you knew I was in Barcelona! Anyway, I replied and they said at the American that you had my letter on Monday. I left Barcelona Monday afternoon, arriving here at 7 am Tuesday morning. I lost two weeks rent paid in advance I worth a month's in Marseille, just to get here. I had asked you express in my letter to leave a message at any of these places: Cote d'Azur, or Hotel Sainte Marguerite. You didn't do so if you had not even left on Monday, I did not know where to find you! I felt naturally, that you were really less keen about seeing me than you made me think by your letter. I turned down exact from wintering, stop the Cote d'Azur, to Paris from whatl's friends, (enthusiastic or not) Paris or Marseille) gave expenses guaranteed. But I felt no interest nor enthusiasm and went up above to Nice. Once, I came back here, only because I was eager to see you, because you have shown much friendliness and a real time when I needed real friendship. I had to think of it. I wanted to show you the scenes here that I am writing about and to take you to Barcelona for a while if you could go. Such a beauty! There! I didn't find my diary but thought my thinking about it will stay here & will be used 2 weeks before returning to Spain. So here, Claude
A Monsieur Harold Jackman
American Express Co
Rue Scribe
Paris

En este lado se escribe solamente la dirección.
1929 May 17, Alex S. Andrews to Harold Jackman

Larkin, Andrews & McNaughton
Counselors at Law
Mutual Life Building
32 Liberty Street, New York

May 17th 1929.

Mr. Harold Jackman
441 Manhattan Avenue
New York City.

Dear Sir:

We represent Harner & Brothers the publishers, who, as you may know, have recently published a book called "Banjo" written by Claude McKay. It appears that in that book the author quoted a few lines from a song "Shake That Thing" and Harner & Brothers have recently been advised by a firm of music publishers in New York called Shapiro, Bernstein & Co. that those published lines violate their copyright on that song. Harner & Brothers communicated about the matter with the author Claude McKay who is now in France and he has referred Harners to you, saying that you supplied the typewritten copy and advised him that the copy was one of many current versions.

The purpose of this letter is to see if we can have a talk with you some time in a place convenient to you and ascertain the facts of the matter, especially whether your typewritten version has some basis other than the copyrighted song.

We will be much obliged if you will let us hear from you at your early convenience. We tried to telephone you at Monument 8716 today but were unable to get any response there.

Yours truly,

Alex S. Andrews

ASA-H
April 30

Dear Harold,

So that your imagination may not mislead you into thinking that I am planning to "put something over" or that I am interested or capable of petty tricks and subterfuge out of mere vanity—this is to inform you that I have written Mendez cancelling that engagement for Wednesday. I am going to Castro for May Day.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
1934 April 29, to Harold Jackman, [Envelope]

Mr Harold Jackman
442 Manhattan Avenue
New York City
June 15

256 West 135
N. Y. City

Dear Harold,

Thanks for your note. You can always get me at the above address by leaving a note there or with Schomburg as usual, who will get in touch with me right away.

I am often at 256 where I do a little typing and other work.

You ask where I live. No place in particular. I live all over Harlem, often sleeping in accidental beds. Where I am supposed to stay does not matter and won’t be of any use to you because I am rarely there.

Will try to get in touch with Zora Hurston.

Sincerely Yours

Clara Mckay
Mr Harold Jackman
442 Manhattan Avenue
New York City
Sunday
19 August, 1934

Dear Claude,
I went to the address you gave my sister last night but nothing was going on there... I was very disappointed.

What happened this morning? I expected to hear from you.

Yardley yesterday that Dargan was "thrown out."

Carmel, I was mentioned in the New Times. See you soon?

Mr. Claude McKay
313 West 137th St.
New York City.
Wednesday
29 August, 1934.

Postcard: Jamaica (Jamaïque)

This space may be used for correspondence

Dear Claude:

I am in town again...

Had a note from W. Thurman
and he expects to see us
sometime this week. Can
you go Friday afternoon?

The writing hours are from
1 to 3. Telephone me in
the morning or drop me a
case.

Hastee

For address

Mr. Claude McKay
313 West 137th Street
New York City
Dear Harold,

I didn’t mind at all, and, in fact, I was happy about that citizenship move for it provided the easiest way of withdrawing. I don’t like those mixed up philosophical-political movements—I prefer the real thing in whatever form.

Say, I wonder if you know or are aware of anybody who might know a fellow with a kitchenette room who wants to lease or would be willing. Type of fellow: Not any of your staid, dour old high hat—just a non-intellectual and with no intellectual pretensions—if not helping to any profession, I should prefer the theatrical. I should like a place right away. Can’t afford much, but would pay in advance.
for a while. Probably it is necessary to have a kitchenette because I want to cook. A good teacher has promised to supply raw food.

Reason: I want to get right out of my present milieu but at the same time I don't want to get mixed up with the art-cultivating crowd. I cannot afford to sit in a corner, no intellectually.

I want to stay with a type who wouldn't think of me as a celebrity and be always wanting to introduce me as such to friends. If you can think of any one among any of your way down-the-ladd acquaintance, please find me in touch.

In the meantime if you don't know of anyone please don't broadcast my request.

I will either drop in or you can telephone to find out about Campbell & the others.

Love to you, sister.

Sincerely,

EMMIE
1935 February 5, to Harold Jackman,

[Envelope]

New York City

442 Manhattan Ave
March 6, 1935

My dear Harold

Glad you wrote. I was a little afraid that you hadn't communicated with me, because you were pressed, but as I couldn't imagine at what, knowing that my heart and mind were wide open to you in all things and innocent of guile, I felt that that was adequate enough in itself and that there should be no cause to worry.

I am sorry nothing came of Campbell's proposal, for I should have liked to meet the editor of "Esquire." So for Brown, after meeting him, I had a different impression from what you gave me. I had a hunch that he was more interested in meeting and entertaining me at his table than in anything else. After all, he is a kind of special reporter-at-large and meeting "personalities" must mean more to him than to me. If anything practicable for me came out of our getting together, I should be surprised (I've had so much out of our getting together, I should be surprised) but all the same, I am not in a way experience along those lines) but all the same, I am not in a way experience along those lines)

If turning away from any signal of a chance.

About Mrs. Judge Watson, I would like to see her and him too in their sitting only—there is Selma. It would be a purely social thing and I would like to have her along, as she might probably get more from it than myself. She is very feminine in the average way in her social outlook. And as she has come attachment for me, removed from Harlem here, leaving apartment and friends (she gave up the interracial group) and is merely interested in my work, thus inspiring me with confidence of the future, at least I can do so show that I appreciate her efforts and take her along when I go places. I am a very difficult person to get
along with intimately anyway (I am quite aware of myself). I am just a thousand words, pervading my thoughts all the time, and although there are no little meanderings in me, very often "artistic" feelings, some profoundly "blue", jet the upper hand of me in my ex-
pression and my behavior, and that is not so pretty for domestic
and practical life, though it may be alright for "art"... So I must
offset any unlovely impression I may create, by sincerely demonstrating
my good intentions, even though they are not always carried out.

Why don't you drop in Friday evening, when going home from
school (is that around 5 or 6) and let's talk about little things. If
you let me know, I'll invite the young author of that naughty book
"The Young And Evil," which was published in Paris (privately or semi-
privately) two years ago. He has just returned from Paris. I knew
him in Morocco, where he was with a very erotic Spanish poet accom-
panied by his novia Cubana - for nearly a year. I shall invite him
anyway, and hope you come. you may partake with us if such as we
have.

There is very little furniture and it is especially irritating to me,
entire rooms, that I haven't a couch for myself to retire to sometime
at night. That's a disadvantage. Mrs. Hensigner did promise me the loan
of a suite, but I'm afraid she wants now, for another woman to use.
Anyhow, I should be happy in these times and under present con-
ditions that I have a place to lay my head and a good table to
write. And I have been busy gathering the material for and
outlining that article I spoke to you about.

Salute for your sister and since the same for yourself.

Claude

Oh, I had dinner with Mary White Ovington last Tuesday evening, she
is a grand old soul! -
1935 March 6, to Harold Jackman, [Envelope]

Mr. Harold Jackman
442 Manhattan Avenue
New York City
Dear Claude:

Are you coming to the tea and reception at the 115th St. Library (203 W. 115) on Sunday from 3:30 to 6:30. Do come and bring Selma. I am on this council (the Southwest Harlem Council) that is giving it....

Sincerely,

era
Dear Hi, I am sorry if I stepped on your corn. But be not overwright, if you were not snobbish you would be so class interest and charming. All human beings are afflicted with some kind of snobbishness—social snobbishness is only one of many forms.

For the divorce the initiative was entirely Selna’s when I am hungry, I want to eat without making it a social event, but she thought your reply was cool and I agreed. And neither of us felt absented against you. I for one could not because it was illustrative of that side of you that furnishes such a fascinating study to me.

But what do you mean, so-called Bohemian? Aren’t you aware that Bohemianism is more a state of existence than a state of mind? And that it has nothing to do with command. Once I think it was irrelevant to raise the issue of friendship, however once you did I might add that it takes little or nothing to maintain “good friendship” and tables left as things to maintain “good friendship” and at home you chiều “social bleeding” your person one of the “social bleeding” your person, is it true? In other words, I care more about the feeling innate courtesy is. I care more about feeling than about social manners.

If my friends than about social manners,

But I want to say that the little thing didn’t bother me at all. It was Selna’s affair and amusing to me, because it revealed something impish. I merely mentioned it for devilment. But sincerely I wish you would read Selna a personal invitation. I think she would prefer that and feel better about it even if she didn’t come. I am sorry myself, but I had promised Mar to spend a month with him, and now I have only 2 weeks before the lease here is due, and to turn to in a few days to get me to. So please try me. My incompensible Harold.
July 2
1935

Dear Harold

Look at your envelope with apt. 33 on it. Just got your letter yesterday (Monday) only a week after it was written. There was also another and I would have taken up the matter with the post office, but I recently had to put them on the spot over a special. And as you did put the wrong apartment number, I can't do it. It is a mystery where the two letters were, probably in someone's box. The Super. cannot account for it. Wonders if someone is tampering with my mail.

Am getting out of this damned God-forsaken hole upon the Hudson any way. Sorry I missed Aldington. Also I did not see Duranty's article, but would like to. Why don't you drop by if passing this way?

C. MCK.

210 West 63
Apt. 32
1935 July 2, to Harold Jackman, [Envelopes]

Mr. Harold Jackman
442 Manhattan Avenue
New York City
Saturday
13 July, 1935

Dear Claude:

Sure I'll help you. It will have to be between one and five o'clock as I expect an important call around twelve o'clock, and I must be home by six to keep an engagement. So will you let me know what time you want to come. Ring me up in the morning.

As ever,

[Signature]
Mr Harold Jackman
442 Manhattan Avenue
New York City

Dear Mr. Jackman,

I am writing to tell you about some important developments in our current project. I know you are a busy person, but I think it would be helpful to discuss these issues in person. I have attached a list of points that we need to address.

Please let me know your availability for a meeting.

Best regards,

[Signature]

95 Church St.
New York City

Postmark: Jan 28, 1936

Note: 1936 January 28, to Claude McKay
Wednesday
29 January, 1936

Dear Claude:

The nearest I could find to:

"Let others make the laws of a country and I will write its songs"

was:

"I knew a very wise man that believed that... if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation."

- Andrew Fletcher...Letter to the Marquis of Montrose, the Earl of Rothes

I hope this is the quotation you want. If it is not, please let me know, and I will look again.

As ever,

[Signature]
Look here! I asked a few friends to drop in and it is most asinine of you to break an engagement at the last moment after voluntarily coming here and interrupting my work to make an appointment a week in advance. Mr Gorer might have come without you although you seem to have cast yourself in the enviable role of cicerone for all things and all people. From now on just hold your ineffectual, stuffed mannikin self from any contact with me and do not try to use a man for your futile social contacts and introductions. You might do better trying to concentrate upon just one thing that was worthwhile to justify your empty existence, instead of chasing around all the time like a brainless ape after people of talent.

C. McK.
Harold Jackman
442 Manhattan Avenue
New York City
Sept 22 1936
55 West 129th St
New York City

Dear Harold Jackman

I am sending you herewith 4 dollars, the balance of that 5 you loaned me and also two books (I gave about three, I think to Dorothy West by your request) and I regret the delay in returning all items.

Thanking You
And my regards
Respectfully

Claude McKay
Mr Harold Jackman
50 Morningside Avenue
New York City

Feb 22, 1936
Dear Harold: Thanks for wire. I hadn't notified Mr. Baker as I was waiting to telephone. He is organizing a group, whose ideas may interest you. And I thought it might be an excellent thing if you could get together and talk about it and your loose group, some of whom may not go with the new set-up. If you are favorable to the idea of a discussion, we may yet get down to it, preferably when Countee returns, if I can get him interested.

I am going to Croton, then Maine, if it turns warm, for a ten days vacation and will take the matter up with you upon my return. I thought I would talk to you about it at Dorothy Peterson's, but at the last moment I was prevented from going.

So when the work season starts, I shall return to the arena. Hasta la vista.

Chuck.
Mr Harold Jackman
50 Morningside Avenue
New York City
Dear Friend and Confrere,

For some weeks a number of creative writers and journalists have been meeting informally in round table conversations pertaining to closer contact between Negro writers. From these conversations there developed one clear and definite idea: we agreed that the time was ripe for Negro writers to draw closer together in mutual fellowship. We felt that as members of a distinct group, we specifically could make a special contribution in the interest of the works and lives of our intellectuals. We thought that the achievements of our writers of the past should receive more appreciation from a social and historical as well as literary perspective, precisely as other groups of people measure their cultural development by the achievements of their talented members.

We agreed that a democratic association of Negro writers was needed. We thought that such an association, properly founded and directed, would be beneficial to all our writers and especially to those younger and potential ones who may look to the older for inspiration.

To the timid and the obstreperous among us who are frightened by the bugbear of segregation and isolation, whenever a matter of special group organization is under consideration, we desire to say that we are not thinking in terms of narrow sectarianism, but rather in the universal aspects of group culture. We think that it is possible, through intellectual fellowship something like a living counterpart of the unparalleled Schomburg Collection of Negro books in the domain of scholarship.

In our conversations we agreed that the Negro's authentic talent in literature and art should be encouraged more, and nurtured and developed, within the group. Friends and sympathizers of other groups may do much to help by way of material encouragement and constructive criticism, but they cannot generate in Negroes that energy which produces real creative expression. Negroes themselves must produce that.

As a result of our conversations it was suggested that I should communicate with the talented creative writers and journalists of our group for the purpose of forming an association. Thereupon I approached a few of our writers, including James Weldon Johnson. Mr. Johnson, who has been aptly called the "dean of Negro letters", was very sympathetic to the idea of an association of the Negro literati and also willing to lend his prestige as a writer and his experience in organizational work to the plan.

I am therefore, inviting you to preliminary meeting which will be held at the above address on Monday, November I, 1937, at 8 p.m.

Yours Sincerely,

Claude McKay
Mr Harold Jackman
50 Morningside Avenue
New York City
11th May, 1944

Dear Claude:

Any material I had on the Negro and the Communist movement I gave either to the James Weldon Johnson Collection at Yale or to my own collection at Atlanta. I have nothing at all here.

At the present time I am so busy with work in school, the East and West Association and the Stage Door Canteen that I have no time to do anything else. And now that my brother is in the hospital I am on the go more than ever.

I suggest that you look through the back numbers of Dr. Du Bois' magazine PHYLON in the section "Books and Race" which lists articles on the Negro which have appeared in magazines, etc. I am sure you will find this magazine in the George Cleveland Hall library there. As you must realize such articles are so scattered it would require much research work and time.

It was interesting to get your fresh impression of Chicago and its people, and I am glad you like them.

I am sorry I can't help you out.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely,
1944 May 11, to Claude McKay, [Envelope]

Mr. Claude McKay  
Catholic Youth Organization  
31 East Congress Street  
Chicago 5, Illinois
ca. 1935, to Harold Jackman

Dear Harold

Sorry I didn't send that poem. you might have to come for it. I have been so busy meeting business-meaning gentlemen and trying to find shelter in Harlem again. Passed your place several times during mid-week. Came up here with a new-found acquaintance which wasn't so hot — didn't stir up much heat in me. but it was a welcome change after living "regular" as the Spanish say for 4 months.

Claude

I don't know if I want to meet La Grinzi — if I am worth it? Remember me to your nice writer.
My dear Harold

I am sorry you had left when I return to greet Zora last Sunday for I wanted a word with you myself. You know you had to take care of young Jackman while you were here.

I hope you won’t mind that I had you in mind, discussing regarding the writers organization. Some persons thought you weren’t eligible as you never wrote, then that you were as a former editor of Challenge. I thought of the opinions then decided to ask you. I hope you can come. And if you are interested, tomorrow (Saturday) night Jame Webb and Johnson is coming here around 9 to discuss plans for the meeting on Monday.

Doctor W. May also attend. There is a letter from Dorothy I should like you to see.

Claude
Bien aimé et bien ami

If you are near West End Subway why not come and get me directly after school?

Tomorrow, I would like to discuss the possibility of coming by 3.30 I shall wait here until 4 and then go to your place.

Last night I forgot to give you a smoke of kiff. I have a little left and one pipe - all the others are broken. That old bastard left immediately after you left last night. Some action!

jusqu'à demain

Vos amicalement Claude
List of names:

Bessye Beardon
Dorothy Peterson
Zladys Wilson
Harold Jackman
Ed Perry
Melville Charlton
Elizabeth Jausser
Homer Tutt
Chauncey Northern
Minta Cato
Alex Newell
Louise Henriques
Darrell Campbell
Charl Campbell
Bernie Austin
237 W 139
Wilhelmina Adams
337 West 138
Virginia Andrews
405 Edgecombe
Mary Sweetwine
2631 West 13th St
Teresa Brooks
713 S1 Mohawk Ave
R. Vereda Pearson
86 W 119th Ave A. D
contemporary people and things in general.

Don't be despairing about "Ulysses." You will get it some day. I regard it as my first obligation to settle when I make a raise. I don't know when my book will be out, some time next year I think. I have not had the proofs yet. Of course, I should like to see it out, simply because it would perhaps help in some way, direct or indirect, to settle my desperate pecuniary problems and give me a chance to concentrate on creative work. Indigence or the fear of it sterilizes all creative activity.

Thanks for sending me Stoddard's ravings. They are at least amusing, yet without spice because Stoddard's Freshman rhetoric is so superannuated. The Nordic cause is in a bad way indeed if it can not produce a more competent and discriminating apologist. If I find my white critics amusing, I cannot say the same of my colored ones. They are often inept to the point of downright pettiness. I do hope that the Voice of the Negro in artistic and literary expression will carry farther and be saved from the brayings of the Negro apologists. I have had the distinguished attachée of the Boston Transcript up and at me in the "Crisis" and the Honourable Oxenien, Docter Locke, and now comes your friend, Mr Cullen, who in the Anthology of Negro Poets cannot find anything more appropriate than the journalistic word "vituperative," synonym of the police court term "abusive," to express his opinion of my hortatory poems. Even the worst of my white critics, the Stoddards and Dixons, have never used such a contemptible word as "vituperative" to show their disapproval of such of my poetry in which a race cries out against murder and
suppression. I have always felt a certain hostility on the part of the Afro-American intellectuals toward me. I don't know why. Maybe it is because when I write, I express the things that they feel so deeply and yet are forced from social and economic reasons to damn up in themselves. Yet I think they might extend to me a certain racial indulgence as I am so far outside of their field. Somehow I am glad I am not in any of the groups, so that I can see them all from a detached standpoint. I want to see Negro artists express themselves to the limit. They should exclude nothing, limit themselves to nothing. They should make their voices as strong, sweet, broad, strange, sad, happy and varied as all Negro life itself is. I don't think they should tie themselves up in movements and groups with their petty artistic quarrels. Negro life has always been an "open-shop", Negro art to be worth-while will have to reflect that, from sweet cabin-door psalmody through irregular rhythms of modern cities to rebel shouts.

I am not expecting any servile praise from any of my critics. I welcome straight, clean criticism at any old time. But I am disappointed in Mr. Cullen's adjective. It speaks volumes and it is interesting and illuminative that it should come from the author of "Heritage."

Of course, I write to you as a friend, giving my personal reaction. If you have any of the writings of Wallace Thurman and can spare them, I wish you would send them to me. I liked his story in "Fire" and his criticism of "Nigger Heaven". I should also like to have any magazines outside of the "Crisis", "New Masses" and "Opportunity" which I get regularly. If you see Langston, ask him if he got the letter I sent to him through
Dear Harold:

I know many Negroes, ordinary Negroes, Africans, Americans, West Indians who prefer their "brown" to any white girl. I myself do! That does not mean that they would not have white girls. All men are curious about women of their races. I know fellows who wanted to get "next" to white women not because they cared for white but because they wanted to break through the taboo. In a way it was because they hated the "nigger" why they wanted to have their women. I cannot go into the matter here - some day I hope we will talk it over. I know there is a strong feeling for white women among American Negroes - but it is because of the taboo. In the West Indies it is because of the taboo. In the West Indies it does not exist. You have a big Church, with a big yaller and a white. Individuals, who are not conformists, make accidents to the inclinations but the big average is conformist.
However, as open miscegenation is a rare thing in America, I think literature should
lead life more as it is than as it would in
the miscegenation of those who want it to be
Merry! Get me!

However you are quite wrong about Joltz.
The young black boy had it all seen it all
in France—in England where he was nearly
killed for white flesh! And that is given in
the very first chapter of the book. After all
an experience is it not natural that that
should be in love and peace it a little
“known” of his own race? It seems to me
he would!

I am convinced by experience that
educated Negroes among themselves are
more about miscegenation than the average
writing Negro. The uneducated Negro never
thinks about the thing. In his daily life and
conversation, he refers to White women in
the casual joking way. If he is a remnant of a
White homes & was a chance of the
stuff be would take it of course without
bellyaching - but the woman he is always angry
amongst meet them, about is "made known,"
the woman of his daily life! That is a simple
enough matter to understand.

For example, the big a dozen colored girls
here in Marseille as a wonderful atenance
among colored women. They have white too, no.
But they are much higher priced than the white girls
of the quarter. - Again I did not think
myself that I had made my character worse.
Perhaps that would have been. However I do not
find them more sly than the character of white
modern authors! Bulley, Joyce, Murrow,
Michael Caine, Cortes & all the Jauers.

Now, my dear boy, is the French vie de femme
in me. If the negro is written, it is all to his
credit. He is no more so than the Italian;
My character arc character & the whole
Negro race. I rather think the they appear
overingly to you because I have so many bullets
in me.
Scene, which is unusual in literature. But I was dejected with a certain milieu I had to use that environment. You will see that is not much different between the Black and White. What will it be when I have finished the Masque. But except that the Black is closer, more human.

I am glad you like the book as a whole. I am getting more nice notices. I did not like Beyond the River. It is the last. I have written in contempt of "all things White." That is not true. There are many white things I appreciate as I do yellow and black. Yes, you will see that in the next book. Glad you like him, the white warrior, don’t. He will be more interesting in the next book. I must stop now. I come down here to see about my identity card. Take a little time. By the way, I am going back in a couple of days.

Sincerely,
Claude
1928 April 1, Claude McKay to Harold Jackman, [Envelope]
Dear Harold:

Here is a draft or rather three of circular for the Ways and Means Committee to work by. I think it should be printed, but I am going to leave it to you as Secretary to get the group together to plan something right now. Mrs Henriques (whom I saw last night and was sorry you were not there) is in an undetermined state of mind, whether she wants to stay here or go back to Jamaica to settle this year! And whatever we are doing should be done NOW. I know if she can see it worthwhile to act as social sponsor of the group, she will stay, at least for a time. But she is shrewd and suspicious and she is right after all, considering what hogs people are about money and social striving, and she has been through a lot getting what little she has. So I beg you please start the ball a-rolling right away. Call her up tonight and see if she will meet you some place. I am enclosing a list of people to approach.

And where did you go Saturday night? A fine way to desert a friend and keep him waiting and for such a type! What a cat you are! And where is my change? I need it. I am working hard upon a report and right after I must do an article, so I hope now you will go straight ahead and relieve me of the routine work for the magazine, without letting it hinder your work. And as soon as I get out from under this junk of work I shall jump in and help.

Sincerely

Claude
WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE FOR NEW NEGRO MAGAZINE

to be edited
by
CLAUDE MCKAY

Tentative title: BAMBARA

Sponsor

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

TREASURER

EDWARD G.

ARTHUR SCHOMBURG

ED. PERRY

HAROLD JACKMAN

LOUISE HENRIQUES

NOTE: The BAMBARA is one of the great tribes of the African Sudan, and celebrated for the unique organization of its community life and its high standard of artistic expression in music, the dance and picturesque ceremonial masks.
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ARTHUR SCHOMBURG ED. FERRY HAROLD JACKMAN LOUISE HENRIQUES

NOTE: The BAMBARA is one of the great tribes of the African Soudan, and celebrated for the unique organization of its community life and its high standard of artistic expression in music, the dance and picturesque ceremonial masks.
Dear Harold,

I quite forgot to answer your question about "Song of Jamaica." I haven't seen a copy of it since I left Jamaica! Some day I shall write to my uncle to see if we can get some copies. I suppose it is a long time out of print—it had met a big sale when it was first published.

Write soon.

Always, Claude.
This strange business which you attribute to me strikes me as being ridiculously amusing. I see your public has spoiled you all right—and do you think because you are Claude M. Kay, a creative person and the "author of two successful novels that I am "acting up" in front of you? That's funny. I have met too many creative people in my young life to start now to adopt an attitude in front of me. You don't know me, my dear fellow. I am going to quit with such
I was sick of everything, especially talk, talk. I am going to have them all and will probably have to have an operation before the end of the year.

I am this way, if I want any one to know about my life and its complications and mysteries, I tell them. So far I haven’t had to make a confidant of anyone. Why should I? I feel I am self-sufficient enough to handle my own problems, and why should I burden someone with my petticoat stories? As a matter of fact, I don’t think it is necessary. And if I have too many
"It is fully obvious to me now — and the form of his head as well as his hair prove it — that he is a descendant of the Negroes who joined Moses's exodus from Egypt (unless his mother or his grand-mother on his father's side mated with a nigger. Well, this connection of Jewish and German traits with the basic Negro substance must needs bring forth a queer product. The importunity (Zudringlichkeit) of the fellow is also nigger-like."

Well
Excerpts from
"Re-Forging America" by Philip Stoddard
October, 1937

"Another factor which plays a part in the role played by foreign-born negroes in the radical movement. Claude M. McKay, known for his poetry and his {Bolivarism}, is a
Jamaican from Jamaica, likewise, came
Marcus Garvey, who --- --- 

"The furious rage at the color-line,
voiced by many negro radicals, is nowhere more strikingly revealed than in the following
stanzas from a poem by Claude M. McKay
entitled "White Houses:" 

"Your door is shut against但仍-----

where boldly shines your shuttered

"Claude McKay is the most notorious member of that group of firebrands who are
to-day busy spreading the sparks of a
racial conflagration. Stigmatizing the
United States as "a cultured hell," McKay
has expressed his wish that the whole
white world might be paralysed by the

"
earth or go up in smoke. Accompanied by a notorious white radical, Earl Eastman, he
has made a pilgrimage to Moscow, where he received a tremendous ovation and, amid
scenes of wild enthusiasm made the
most incendiary speeches against America.

All from a chapter called
The Dilemma of Color
The book which you spoke about, that is written by an Englishman, is "Antique Works of Art from Benin" Collected by Lieutenant-General Pitts-Rivers. Printed Privately in London, 1900. 'The only king of Benin mentioned in this book is "King Duboar, late King of Benin".

I did get some information from a book called "The Curse of Ìburó: A Tragedy of Benin" by John Wyndham. It is a legend in poetic form. Duckworth, Publisher---3 Henrietta Street, London, W.C. 1926

The notes in the back of this book were the best I could find. "Ewa₁, the great warrior-king of Benin reigned about A.D. 1400." "Ewa₁ was the seventeenth king of the thirty-two from Eweka to Okeremi who was deported in 1897. It seems probable he reigned about the end of the fourteenth century. There were other kings, but they reigned for short periods; and I think they left no alters---even if everyone knows their names."

"Ewa₁ was the great warrior-king of Benin, and is said to have captured two hundred and one towns. His invariable method was to en-circle his objective with his nine armies. At the end of his reign he set a curse on any of his successors who might try to equal his number of victories."

"Ozolwa, a 15th century king of Benin"

"Ozolwa (Ewa₁'s son) took two hundred towns; risked his father's curse, and was killed in the assault on his 201st town (Ishan)."

"Faigye (son of Ozolwa). While Faigye was still young, the first white man arrived at Benin."
'The history and customs of Benin passed orally from father to son, but after the Portuguese visited King Esigye at the end of the fifteenth century the kings began to have their deeds and rites recorded in bronze.'

"Akenbuda, king of Benin (reigned about A.D. 1750)."
M. Harold Jackman
442 Manhattan Ave
New York City

Mr Harold Jackman
442 Manhattan Avenue
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