

Festus Claudius McKay

Festus Claudius McKay was born in Jamaica on 15th September, 1890. He began writing poetry as a schoolboy. He worked as a policeman in Spanish Town and when he was twenty-two had his first volume of poems, Songs of Jamaica (1912) published.

In 1912 McKay moved to the United States where he attended Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and Kansas State University. In 1919 McKay travelled to England where he was introduced to influential left-wing figures in journalism. This included Sylvia Pankhurst, who recruited him to write for her trade union journal, Workers' Dreadnought. While in London, McKay read the works of Karl Marx and becomes a committed socialist.



In 1921 McKay returned to New York aboard the S.S. *Adriatic*, pictured above. He described his arrival in New York: “The feeling of the dirty steerage passage across the Atlantic was swept away in the

immense wonder of clean, vertical heaven-challenging lines, glory to the grandeur of space.”

Reflecting back on the arrival after having lived in New York for some time McKay added: “Oh, I wished that it were possible to know New York in that way only- as a masterpiece wrought for the illumination of the sight, a splendor lifting aloft and shedding its radiance like a searchlight, making one big and great with feeling. Oh, that I should never draw nearer to descend into its precipitous gorges, where visions are broken and shattered and one becomes one of a million, average, ordinary, insignificant.”



Claude McKay

14
List

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES

ALL ALIENS arriving at a port of continental United States from a foreign port or a port of the insular possessions of the United States, and all aliens arriving at a port of said insular possessions from a foreign port, a port of continental United States or a port of the insular possessions of the United States. This (white) sheet is for the listing of 4

S. S. "ADRIATIC" Passengers sailing from SOUTHAMPTON, JANUARY 29th, 1921

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		12	13		
		No. on List	HEAD-TAX STATUS (This column for use of Collector of Customs)								Family name	Given name		Tr.	Ma.	Sex
2	X 36448	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	X 36449	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	X 36450	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	X 36451	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	X 36452	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	X 36453	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	X 36454	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	X 36455	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	X 36456	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	X 36457	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	X 36458	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	X 36459	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	X 36460	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	X 36461	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	X 36462	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
17	X 36463	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	X 36464	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	X 36465	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	X 36466	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	X 36467	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	X 36468	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	X 36469	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	X 36470	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	X 36471	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	X 36472	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	X 36473	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
28	X 36474	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
29	X 36475	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
30	X 36476	Swedish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Total passengers . . . 26
U. S. citizens . . . 0
Aliens . . . 26

*Permanent residence within the meaning of this manifest shall be actual or intended residence of one year or more.
†List of names will be found on the back of this sheet.

The S.S. Adriatic's manifest shows McKay's information, on line 26. Notice his occupation is recorded as waiter, not writer.

STATES IMMIGRATION OFFICER AT PORT OF ARRIVAL

List **13**
The entries on
to be typewritten

States, or a part of another insular possession, in whatsoever class they travel, MUST be fully listed and the master or commanding officer of each vessel carrying such passengers must upon arrival deliver lists thereof to the immigration officer.
STORAGE PASSENGERS ONLY

Arriving at Port of NEW YORK, JANUARY JAN 15 1921, 1921 184

No. on List	By whom	Whether having ticket or passage paid?	Whether ever before in the United States; and if so, when and where?	Whether going to join a relative or friend; and if so, what relative or friend, and his name and complete address.	Purpose of entry in United States										Condition of health, mental and physical.	Deformed or crippled. Nature, length of time, and cause.	Height. Feet. Inches.	Complexion.	Color of—		Marks of identification.	Place of birth.	
					16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25					26	27		28	29
1	you	no	no	Uncle Mr. Sudek, 262 Ward St., Detroit, Mich.	no	yes	no	good	no	5	5	fair	blue	nil	Poland	Bursk							
2	you	do	no	do	no	yes	no	good	no	5	6	fair	blue	nil	do	do							
3	you	brother	no	Brother Mr. Radetki, 80 Madison St., Detroit, Mich.	no	yes	no	good	no	5	7	fair	blue	nil	do	Obolny							
4	you	male	no	Uncle Mr. Gosh, 7115 Evelyn Ave., Chicago, Ill.	no	yes	no	good	no	5	6	fair	blue	nil	do	Warsaw							
5	you	brother	no	Brother Mr. Korandorsky, 452 St. 12th St., Washington, D.C.	no	yes	no	good	no	5	4	dark	blue	nil	do	Poland							
6	you	count	no	Count Mr. Dikandorsky, 14008 Indian Ave., Washington, D.C.	no	yes	no	good	no	5	5	fair	blue	nil	do	Poland							
7	you	brother	no	Brother Mr. Kuznecov, 3101 N. 70th St., Cleveland, Ohio.	no	yes	no	good	no	5	5	fair	blue	nil	do	Poland							
8	you	brother	no	Brother Mr. Kuznecov, 18 1/2 West St., Chicago, Ill.	no	yes	no	good	no	5	8	fair	blue	nil	do	Poland							
9	you	brother	no	Brother Mr. Kuznecov, 40 1/2 West St., Chicago, Ill.	no	yes	no	good	no	5	8	fair	blue	nil	do	Poland							
10	you	husband	no	Huband Mr. Gint, 1207 Belmont St., Detroit, Mich.	no	yes	no	good	no	5	8	dark	blue	nil	do	Poland							
11	you	mother	no	Sister Mrs. Sudek, 408 Hudson St., Redwood, Ill.	no	yes	no	good	no	5	9	fair	blue	nil	do	Poland							
12	you	do	no	do	no	yes	no	good	no	5	9	fair	blue	nil	do	do							
13	you	father	no	Father Mr. Adamec, 78 Main St., Windsor, Vt.	no	yes	no	good	no	4	6	fair	blue	nil	Czechoslovakia	Havranek							
14	you	sister in law	no	Sister in law Mr. Ondrejovics, 1023 Franklin Ave., Youngstown, Ohio.	no	yes	no	good	no	4	3	dark	blue	nil	do	Poland							
15	you	father	no	Father Mr. Gint, 100 Spring St., Alton, Mass.	no	yes	no	good	no	4	8	dark	blue	nil	do	Poland							
16	you	brother	no	Father in law, do	no	yes	no	good	no	4	3	fair	blue	nil	do	do							
17	you	father	no	Father, do	no	yes	no	good	no	4	0	fair	blue	nil	do	do							
18	you	sister in law	no	Brother Mr. Korutic, 174 Coal St., Johnston, R.I.	yes	yes	no	good	no	4	0	fair	blue	nil	do	Poland							
19	you	brother	no	Sister in law Mr. Korutic, 216 Kensington St., Johnston, R.I.	yes	yes	no	good	no	4	10	dark	blue	nil	do	do							
20	you	brother	no	Brother in law Mr. Gint, 100 Spring St., Alton, Mass.	no	yes	no	good	no	4	7	fair	blue	nil	do	Poland							
21	you	brother	no	Brother Mr. Fowler, 182 Hudson St., Rochester, N.Y.	no	yes	no	good	no	4	8	dark	blue	nil	Poland	Poland							
22	you	do	no	do	no	yes	no	good	no	4	0	fair	blue	nil	do	do							
23	you	mother	no	Mother, Mrs. Vasovics, 24 P. 10th St., Brooklyn, N.Y.	no	yes	no	good	no	4	7	fair	blue	nil	Ukraine	Berdychiv							
24	you	do	no	do	no	yes	no	good	no	4	0	fair	blue	nil	do	do							
25	you	brother	no	Brother Mr. Goldwater, 81 Providence St., Worcester, Mass.	no	yes	no	good	no	4	5	dark	blue	nil	Poland	Poland							
26	you	brother	no	Uncle Mr. Ruch, 814 E. 24th St., New York, N.Y.	no	yes	no	good	no	4	11	dark	blue	nil	do	Poland							
27	you	brother	no	Conrad Mr. Kuznecov, 700 Washington Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y.	no	yes	no	good	no	4	5	fair	blue	nil	Poland	Poland							
28	you	brother	no	do	no	yes	no	good	no	4	0	fair	blue	nil	do	do							
29	you	brother	no	Friend Mr. Vasovics, 200 10th St., Brooklyn, N.Y.	no	yes	no	good	no	4	10	fair	blue	nil	do	Poland							
30	you	brother	no	Father Mr. Ruch, Myron Rd., Arlington, N.Y.	no	yes	no	good	no	4	0	fair	blue	nil	Poland	Poland							

Note.—Full text of question 24 is as follows: Whether a person who believes in or advocates the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United States or of any State, or who disbelieves in or opposes to organized government, or who advocates or teaches the unlawful destruction of property, or is a member of or affiliated with any organization entertaining and teaching disbeliefs or opposition to organized government or which teaches the unlawful destruction of property, or who advises or teaches the duty, necessity, or propriety of the unlawful overthrow or killing of any officer or officers, either of specific individuals or of officers generally, of the Government of the United States or of any other organized government because of his or their official character.

The second page of the *Adriatic's* manifest contains more information provided by McKay, on line 26

Shortly after settling in New York in 1921, Claude McKay became associate editor of The Liberator, a monthly magazine supported by

the Communist Party of America which included art, poetry, and fiction along with political reporting and commentary. Over the next year the journal published articles by McKay such as "How Black Sees Green" and "Red and He Who Gets Slapped." He also published his best known volume of verse, Harlem Shadows in 1922. McKay emerged as one of the first and most militant voices of the Harlem Renaissance, the flowering of African American cultural and intellectual life during the 1920s and 1930s centered in Harlem.

In 1922 McKay represented the American Workers Party at the fourth congress of the Communist International in Moscow. He stayed in Europe where he wrote Trial by Lynching: Stories About Negro Life in America (1925) and Home to Harlem (1928), a novel about a disillusioned black soldier in the US Army who returns from the Western Front to live in a black ghetto. Losing faith in Communism, McKay moved back to Harlem and turned his attention to the teachings of various spiritual and political leaders, eventually converting to Catholicism. McKay's published work during this period included his autobiography, A Long Way From Home (1937) and Harlem: Negro Metropolis (1940). In his later years, Claude McKay was unable to make a living from writing, so he found work in a shipbuilding yard. He died from a heart attack at the age of 59 in 1948.