

20
JERRY WALD'S
PRODUCTION OF
**Hemingway's
ADVENTURES OF
A YOUNG MAN**

RICHARD BEYMER
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JESSICA TANDY
ELI WALLACH
PAUL NEWMAN
"THE BATTLE"

THREE STORIES

Up in Michigan
Out of Season
My Old Man

& TEN POEMS

HEMINGWAY STILL
**THE TORRENTS
OF SPRING**

ANTIC NOVEL
OF THE PASSING
IDEAT RACE

HEMINGWAY
OUR TIME"

THE HEMINGWAY COLLECTION

AT THE
CLARKE

Of Course It's Here!

THE MAGIC OF BUILDING, MAINTAINING,
AND PROMOTING THE CLARKE HISTORICAL
LIBRARY'S HEMINGWAY COLLECTION

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PREFACE

Of Course It's Here! The Magic of Building, Maintaining, and Promoting The Clarke Historical Library's Hemingway Collection is an exhibit almost twenty years in the making. It celebrates and tells the story of the library's successful development of an internationally recognized collection of material by and about Ernest Hemingway. But more than that, it tells the story of how it happened. People who use libraries rarely consider why what they ask for is waiting for them. But the Hemingway material in the Clarke came to be here not through luck or magic but rather through decades of work. An idea was created, it was nurtured, and it blossomed.

Over many, many years, key decisions were made, and important partnerships were established. These partnerships often grew into friendships. Money, a good deal of money, was raised. An endowment came into existence and continues to grow. But very often, the money was only valuable because partnerships and friendships created unique ways to spend it; opportunities that would not have happened were it not for the library's partners and friends.

Again and again, there was endless outreach—outreach to share news of the Clarke's interest in Hemingway, which included exhibits and exhibit catalogs to spread the word. Grants were sought to do work that otherwise could not be funded. Outreach was the lubricant that kept all the various aspects of the endeavor moving forward.

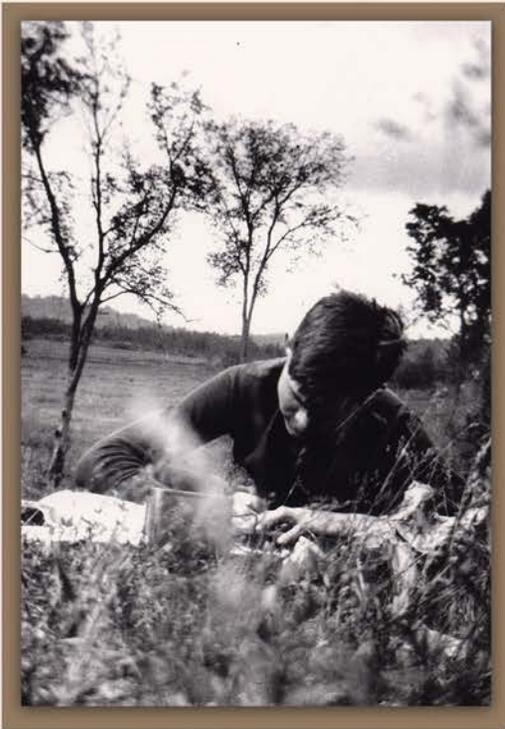
This catalog, in itself, is an example of the kind of collaboration and outreach that made the Hemingway collection grow. While I wrote much of the beginning, Marian Matyn is the primary author of the section on making the material available to researchers. Michael Federspiel described the collection today, and Janet Danek told of the exhibits and other outreach. Each of us wrote about what we knew best.

The exhibit and this catalog tell the story of how the library came to acquire a body of wonderful resources through the help of equally wonderful people.

- **Dr. Frank Boles**, *Director of the Clarke Historical Library*



Ernest Hemingway.



Ernest Hemingway writing, ca. 1909

INTRODUCTION

Researchers who visit the Clarke Historical Library sometimes engage in magical thinking. They will ask a question or say that they've heard "somewhere" that the library has "some material" on their topic. A few minutes later, as if by magic, just what they need will appear. The Clarke staff is often complicit in this, listening to the question, thinking for a few moments and perhaps consulting the online catalog, and then saying, "Well, you know these three books and this manuscript collection would be good places to find that." Researchers anticipate that the library staff will waive their wand (or more likely ask a student assistant to disappear into the stacks with call slips in hand) and the needed resources will appear.

The resources found in, publicized by, and available for use in a special collections library do not magically appear at the library's door. They do not simply arrive and get placed into the stacks ready for use. They do not become known to researchers by some form of osmosis. And although they may look omniscient behind the reference desk, wheels are spinning inside staff members' heads thinking, "how do I answer this one?" The detail and development of a collection about Ernest Hemingway's years in Michigan is a case study in how this magic takes place.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY AND HIS BIOGRAPHERS

In the 1950s, Ernest Hemingway was among the best known authors in the United States. In 1954, he became the fifth American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature "for his mastery in the art of narrative ... and the influence he exerted on contemporary style." His books were widely read and frequently made into movies.

Unsurprisingly, there appeared a large body of literature discussing Hemingway's life and works. But in reviewing the literature, there was an important gap. Ernest Hemingway, the Nobel-winning author, was described and dissected, but the young Ernie Hemingway, the boy who loved living in Michigan, was barely documented. Biographers invariably wrote a chapter that included a nod to Hemingway's family, the summer home on Walloon Lake, and that Ernest Hemingway, world-famous sportsman, found the beginnings of his interest in hunting and fishing in those Michigan haunts.

Everything found in the first chapter of those biographies was true. In 1898, the year before Ernest was born, Clarence and Grace Hall Hemingway bought lakefront property on Bear Lake (today named Walloon Lake) near Petoskey. They constructed a simple cottage where they and their growing family spent every summer. Ernest was the second child in what would eventually be a family of six children. Father Clarence and the children lived for their summer residency in Michigan. Ernest Hemingway embraced life in the outdoors, swimming, camping, fishing, and hunting, all the while absorbing the details of the scenery, the communities, and the people he encountered.



Ernest after returning home from World War I

The first summer Hemingway did not spend in Michigan was 1918, when he left the United States during World War I to serve overseas in the Red Cross. Wounded while distributing comfort items to troops along the front line, he spent an extended period in Italy recovering from his injuries. When he returned home in 1919, he was a young man unsure of his future. College, he decided, was not for him. Agnes von Kurowsky, the woman he had met in Europe and thought he would marry, had unexpectedly ended the relationship. He decided he needed to think, and he could do that best in Michigan. He spent much of 1919 and early 1920 in and around Petoskey. He began to write seriously and eventually left Michigan for Toronto and later Chicago, to try his hand at journalism. Along the way he met Hadley Richardson. The couple were married in Horton Bay, and honeymooned in the Hemingway family cottage on Walloon Lake. Two months after their honeymoon, the couple moved to Paris. In 1923, he published his first book in a privately printed run of only 300 copies. *Three Stories and Ten Poems* spoke to what Hemingway knew best at that time and what was closest to his heart. The first story in the book was entitled, "Up in Michigan."

Although Ernie's youth was somewhat documented, there were people who thought the introductory chapters the biographers had written were incomplete. There were people in Michigan who realized something was missing. They found clues of how important Michigan remained to Hemingway in his later writings. In particular, they attributed considerable importance to Hemingway's memoir, *A Moveable Feast*, published posthumously in 1964. They also recalled the many short stories written by Hemingway over the many years that were largely set in Michigan. The 24 tales and sketches, published in a variety of sources, were collected and republished in 1972 as *The Nick Adams Stories*.

Ernest Hemingway would travel widely and write stories set throughout the world. He would live for extended periods of time in France, Key West, and Cuba, with many lengthy excursions to other locations. But somewhere in the globe-trotting, paparazzi-followed author was an essential essence, formed when he was simply a young fellow named Ernie—later recalled by Hemingway himself as "Nick Adams." That young man inhabited Ernest Hemingway's past and informed his present, wherever he lived or visited and whenever he began to write.

Ernest Hemingway left Michigan in 1921, to return only once and then very briefly. However, he inherited the family cottage and kept it until his death. Michigan lived in the man and Walloon Lake held a place in his heart, influencing his work until his last days.



THE NICK ADAMS STORIES

Illustration from *The Nick Adams Stories*

Although it is sometimes said that *The Nick Adams Stories* were autobiographical, Hemingway himself suggests strongly that this is not true: "All good books are alike in that they are truer than if they had really happened, and after you are finished reading one, you will feel that all that happened to you and afterwards belongs to you: the good and the bad, the ecstasy, the remorse and sorrow, the people and the places and how the weather was. If you can get so that you can give that to people, then you are a writer."

- Ernest Hemingway

THE BEGINNING

If there were printed clues in the 1970s about the importance of Michigan in the life of Ernest Hemingway, there was only one small reference in *The Nick Adams Stories* that went into detail. The people who remembered Ernie and who understood how Ernest drew on that younger iteration of himself eventually gathered together. In 1990, they formed the Michigan Hemingway Society (MHS). The group sponsored an annual conference in Petoskey devoted to Hemingway and had a natural focus on Michigan. Early on, a few members of this group realized that, while meeting once a year had many benefits, it did not create a documentary legacy of Hemingway's years in Michigan. Someone, somewhere should nurture and grow an institutional home for research material about Hemingway in Michigan.



Young Ernest Hemingway fishing, Horton Creek, 1909

The documentary task was really twofold. The first was to document Ernie Hemingway. Finding what existed would be challenging, as unlike the already well-documented, prolific writer, Dr. Clarence's son was not going to have a large body of manuscript material documenting his days on Walloon Lake. Bringing what did exist into a collection would involve persuasion, persistence, and perhaps a good deal of money as literary manuscripts created by Nobel Prize winners command a very high price at auction, even if they were written when the author was only fourteen.

The second challenge was more subtle. Young Ernest Hemingway was not writing about Michigan but rather absorbing experiences, learning how the world worked and how people lived. Thus, to understand Ernie Hemingway, one had to understand the corner of the state that served as his classroom. A thorough documentary heritage of the Little Traverse Bay area was essential to contextualize and explain what the young Hemingway experienced.

One of the members of the MHS who understood the problem and was looking for a place to house a Hemingway collection was Michael Federspiel. Then a teacher in the Midland Public Schools, Federspiel was a Central Michigan University alumnus who had worked in the Clarke Historical Library as an undergraduate student. He wondered if the library might be interested in developing a Hemingway collection. Federspiel brought to the table more than an interest. He also had a hook. He had amassed a substantial personal collection of Hemingway-related material that, if donated, could serve as the basis for a collection documenting Hemingway generally, with an ongoing focus on Hemingway in Michigan.



The Hemingway family on the beach at Walloon Lake, July 1915



A portion of the Hemingway Collection books

Library collections come into being and grow in many ways, but there is always a moment when an idea and an institution find one another. That moment is a hard one to predict and codify. For a year or so, Mike Federspiel and the Clarke Historical Library's director, Frank Boles, talked about why a Michigan Hemingway collection would make sense, how Mike's own collection could be the starting point, and how, over time, a Hemingway collection could continue to grow in the Clarke.

Frank was thinking about how important a collection like this might be to the library, as well as if there really was the time, the staff, and the money to make it happen. Although Mike's collection was a good start, it was only a start. Much of the most important material had to be found, and once found, he knew literary manuscripts sell for high prices. The Clarke had never seriously collected the papers of an award-winning artist, and collecting an artist with the stature of Ernest Hemingway would be learning how to swim by jumping into the deep end of the pool.

Still, Mike was persuasive about the opportunity at hand. He also had become president of the Michigan Hemingway Society. In that role, he knew many people who would be key in successfully developing this project. He was learning what records existed and who owned them. He could also serve as a library ambassador and character reference. Put rather simply, he could confirm that those Clarke people were okay, seriously interested in building a Hemingway collection, and could be trusted while in your home to refrain from stealing any of the silverware.

Mike also put one other enticement on the table. He offered the beginnings of financial support through the creation of an endowment to help underwrite those expensive purchases that likely would have to be made sooner or later. Such an endowment that makes possible continued collection growth is the key to the ongoing success of this kind of collection, and the key, as well, to the heart of a library director.

Frank was interested, but before fully committing, he also engaged in conversations about the project with then Dean of University Libraries, Tom Moore. Opportunity comes with risk. Years might be spent working on a project, but like any collecting project, there was always the possibility that all of that time and energy would lead to naught. Collection development in a special collections library is a gamble. It's a gamble that Frank suggested taking, and Tom later encouraged.

A decision had been made to at least try and develop a Hemingway collection, and in the summer of 2002, Mike Federspiel made his first of what would eventually become many donations to the Clarke. That first gift consisted of approximately 400 items. He also made an initial pledge to start an endowment supporting the ongoing growth of the project. With a gift, an endowment, and great ambitions, the logical decision was to promote the Hemingway collection through an exhibit.

FIRST MAJOR PURCHASE

Just as plans developed for the 2003 Hemingway exhibit, an extraordinary item appeared on the auction market—the Jim Gamble letter. Gamble had been Hemingway's commander in Italy during World War I, where the two had become friends. Gamble had invited Hemingway to spend time in Italy with him, but Hemingway had returned to America. In the spring of 1919, Hemingway wrote Gamble with a similar idea but a significant twist: Gamble, Hemingway suggested, should come to the United States and spend the summer with him around Little Traverse Bay. To persuade his former commander to make the trip, Hemingway wrote several pages describing the delights of Michigan. The letter's glowing descriptions of what Gamble would experience made clear just how much Hemingway loved northern Michigan. For a "Hemingway in Michigan" collection, the letter was a "got to have" item.

The Clarke staff bid on the Gamble letter, but the library was not successful at the auction. Since auction houses do not reveal the identity of the buyer, Frank Boles sent a letter to the auction house and requested that it be forwarded to the buyer. The letter asked if the buyer would loan the document to the Clarke for the upcoming exhibit.

To his surprise, Boles received a prompt reply and learned that the letter had not been bought by a collector but rather by a book dealer. The dealer was not interested in loaning it, but after further communication, he agreed to sell it for a profit. It was a moment in which the future of the enterprise hung in the balance—did the library grow the collection by purchasing a key letter or accept that key documents were beyond its financial reach and the collection that had been dreamed about would never be.

It was time to see if the additional money could be raised, but in the end the Clarke staff came up short. With no likely prospects left, Dean Moore looked at what had been done, thought over the possibilities, and perhaps those conversations with Frank about the project, and made a decision. He called a donor he knew, explained the situation, and asked for the final gift needed to fund the purchase. The donor made the commitment. It was the first of many important purchases to come, all of which were financed with private funds.

The Jim Gamble letter: a letter from Hemingway to Jim Gamble

But this is the idea . Bill has a farm which because he was in the service , Marine Flyer , he has rented out almost entirely . So that leaves him free for the summer . This is a priceless place Jim . Horton's Bay on Pine Lake about twelve miles from Charlevoix . About three hundred miles north of here . It is great northern air . Absolutely the best ~~fishin~~ trout fishing in the country . No exaggeration . Fine country . Good color , good northern atmosphere absolute freedom , no summer resort stuff and lots of paintable stuff . And if you want to do portraits . You shall do them . Bill has a Buick six that we can run into Charlevoix with when we long for the flesh pots . And it is equally good to run over to the Pine Barrens where it is absolutely wild and there are The Big and Little Sturgeon and the Minnehaha and Black Trout Rivers . It's a great place to laze around and swim and fish when you want to . And

The purchase put the Clarke firmly on the Hemingway playing field. It made it clear that the library was very serious about building a Michigan Hemingway collection. If it was necessary, the library would spend a good deal of money to do it. The Gamble letter became the centerpiece of the 2003 exhibit and the library's aspirations.

The 2003 exhibit also forged a relationship between the library and Hemingway family members who still lived in the Petoskey area. Two nephews of Hemingway lived in the area and both owned significant, Michigan-related Hemingway material. Both men agreed to loan important items for the exhibit. It was clear that both men were interested in what the library was doing, but neither was convinced to either donate or sell to the library the items they owned.

Although the Hemingway family reserved judgment, the exhibit helped bring in other new donations of material, as well as gifts to the endowment. Among the most important was establishing a formal relationship with the Michigan Hemingway Society. The Clarke received two gifts of original material. One was eleven diaries written by George R. Hemingway, Sr., Clarence's brother. The other was a group of Horton Bay photographs, gathered together by William Ohle and given to the Society. Collectively, this began a working relationship between the Society and the Clarke. The library had successfully set off on a journey with an important partner, but the road ahead would be measured in years. Persistence is a necessary hallmark in growing the collection.

In 2006, one of the two family members living in Michigan decided to sell his Hemingway material—more than 100 items—in a private sale. It was another great opportunity to grow the collection, but it came with several challenges. The seller wished to sell the collection as a single lot and not divide it up for individual sales. The overall value of the material was far more than the Clarke could afford to pay, and most of the items were not of interest as they were not about Hemingway's life in Michigan. Only four items were thought to be critical for the Clarke's collection:

- An early typed “newsletter” written by “EMH and TH” that talked about the boys’ hunting exploits, believed at the time to be Hemingway’s first “publication.”
- An unpublished, incomplete story written by Ernest while in high school and set in Michigan.
- A four-page letter written in June 1919 by Ernest to his father talking about the cottage and his mother’s plan to buy a second piece of land on the lake and build her own cottage.
- A postcard sent in August 1919 by Ernest to his father while Ernest was on a fishing trip in the Upper Peninsula, a trip that would be the basis for one of his best-known short stories.

Not intimidated by other institutions with considerably greater resources who could possibly purchase the entire body of material, Frank took an offer to the owner that was in the interest of the Clarke, and not necessarily in the interest of the seller. Would he, as a favor to the library, and to help keep Michigan-related Hemingway material in the state, sell the four items in which the Clarke was interested separately, despite already expressing the desire to sell the entire collection to a single buyer?

It was another one of those key moments, much like the effort to buy the Gamble letter. This time, the library had enough money to buy what it wanted, but not enough money to buy the broader collection. The library needed to benefit from the goodwill of a family member. To great relief and lasting gratitude, the owner withdrew the four items of interest from the overall sale, and sold them to the Clarke separately.



■ A postcard from Ernest to his father, August 1919

DOCUMENTING UP NORTH

The Hemingway collection was growing in important ways, but there remained an overall weakness in the library's ability to document Hemingway in Michigan. The library's collections could talk about Hemingway, but they lacked the resources to describe the family's experience as "summer people." Quietly increasing the amount of material on hand documenting the region, the library's holdings nevertheless lacked visual material. But if the library had a gap in its photographic holdings, the staff also knew where the needed resource was located, and that its owner also had a problem—one the Clarke could help fix. The Little Traverse Historical Society had a superb visual collection about Petoskey and the nearby region. Housed in a converted 19th century railroad depot overlooking the Bay, the Society's home lacked air conditioning in the summer and was closed and without heat in the winter. The organization was desperately in need of help preserving their massive photography collection.



The Hemingway children at Walloon Lake, June 1907

In the fall of 2008, Mike Federspiel, who knew both the Society's collection and the organization's staff and leadership, brokered a deal that was a benefit to the Society and the Clarke. The Clarke would scan the Society's extensive photographic collection. The Clarke's copy of the scans vastly enhanced the documentation about Hemingway's experiences in the region found in the library. The Society, in turn, gained a security copy of their images, and importantly, a place where researchers could see the images during the winter months when their building was closed. The first batch of photos scanned numbered approximately 2,000. Eventually, almost 5,000 images were scanned.

For several years, the work of collecting and scanning went on quietly and small additions were made to the collection. Frank visited with the members of the Michigan Hemingway Society each year at their annual meeting to report on the organization's archives and foster relationships with friends and acquaintances. There was a lull in collecting significant new material until March of 2013, when a scrapbook, created by Ernest's mother, Grace Hall Hemingway, went on the auction block. The scrapbook had been created by Grace for her daughter Ursula and included additional family photos.



Hemingway Children in the "Ursula of Windemere," July 1915

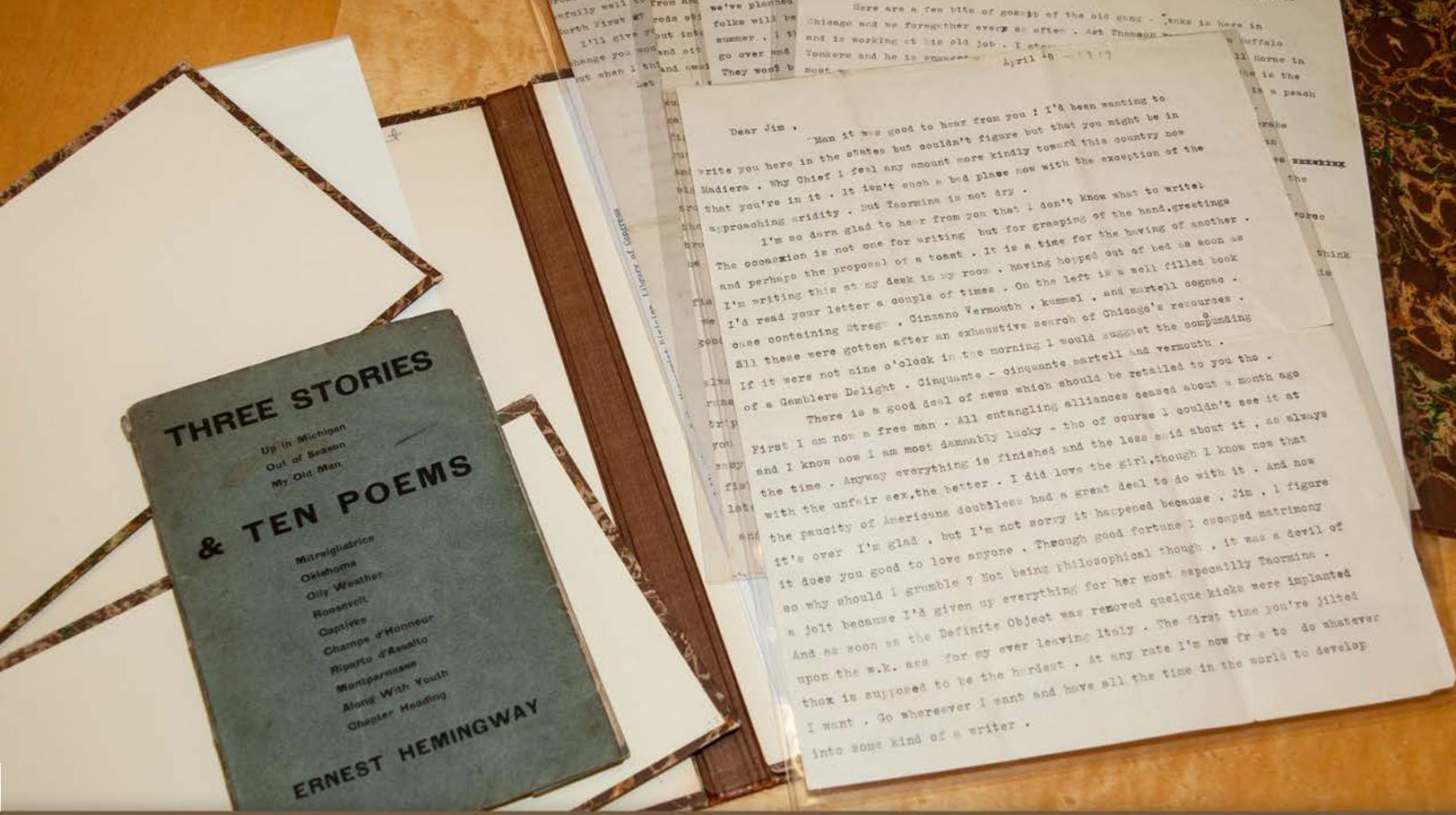
NEW MATERIAL

The news that the Ursula scrapbook was to be auctioned broke suddenly and late. The auction house was not well-known for handling literary manuscripts and the library staff learned about the sale only a few days before the auction was to take place. There was not much time to find the needed funding, but years of building relationships with people interested in Hemingway paid off.

Dean Moore had demonstrated a commitment to help with funding by drawing from *Friends of the Libraries* money when it was needed. Frank contacted the Dean's administrative aide, and said that he needed to talk to Tom "today!" about the auction. The Dean's calendar was booked solid, but they were able to find ten free minutes. The conversation with Tom was not a long one, but after years of working together to develop the collection it was easy to convey both the opportunity and the need in a few words. After a few moments of thought, the Dean once again gave approval for the critical financial support that was needed.

Hemingway family items associated with Ursula Hemingway Jepson and George R. Hemingway





First edition of *Three Stories and Ten Poems* and letter from Hemingway to Jim Gamble

The library was the successful bidder at the auction. The auction was important not just because the scrapbook was added to the Clarke's Hemingway collection. The purchase of the scrapbook also answered a question that, for years, had hung over the even-more-interesting scrapbooks Grace Hall Hemingway had created—scrapbooks that remained in Michigan. When the Ursula scrapbook sold at auction, it established a market value for Hemingway family scrapbooks.

The Jepson purchase, although successful, also made clear that the Hemingway Endowment needed to be substantially increased. Hurried phone calls to likely donors and finding brief moments in Dean Moore's busy schedule made for interesting tales, but it also meant never knowing if there was enough money on hand to make sudden purchases. In July 2013, the library launched a campaign to increase the Hemingway Endowment's principal from \$41,000 to \$100,000. The goal was challenging, but by this point, it was also possible to point to a solid track record of success when asking for donations. Today, the endowment principal stands at \$97,969, with several legacy bequests that will eventually be received.

With a market value for a Grace Hall Hemingway scrapbook established, the staff made the decision to approach the second family member of Ernest who lived in Michigan about the idea of a purchase/gift of the Marcelline Hemingway Sanford scrapbooks and other family material. The library had a long and increasingly close relationship with the relative, actually housing the material in the Clarke for many years, while he retained ownership.

This was, yet again, another crucial moment that depended not only on having money in hand, but having earned the trust and goodwill of a member of the Hemingway family. The scrapbooks, as well as the family papers, were the single greatest treasure that was still in the state. The scrapbooks told, in pictures and captions, the entire story of Ernest Hemingway's Michigan years. After some discussion, a friendly deal was struck for a combination purchase/gift. The scrapbooks, as well as the family papers, became the library's in April 2016.

In April 2018, another extraordinary opportunity to add to the collection appeared. A first edition of Hemingway's first book, *Three Stories and Ten Poems*, was put up for auction. The first short story in the small publication, "Up in Michigan," made it clear what the young Hemingway thought he knew best and could write about. Once again, with the help of the Endowment, the Dean, and a few key friends, the library was able to obtain one of only 300 original copies of the book.



Movie and Hemingway-related posters in the Clarke's archival storage

MAKING THE MATERIAL AVAILABLE TO RESEARCHERS

Bringing Hemingway material into the library was the first step, but there was a great deal of work that needed to be done between the acquisition of material and making it available to researchers. Processing material as diverse as that describing Ernest Hemingway and his family involved much more than simply putting a book on the shelf or handing a Hemingway letter to a researcher. The most challenging materials to deal with are the unique items that were never published.

Manuscripts in all their diverse formats, are very different from published items like books. They require an archivist to devote a great deal of work to preserve them, make them understandable, and ultimately accessible to researchers. Basic archival processing begins with inventorying the collection. The inventory determines who the creator is, the years documented by the papers, the formats in collection, and the size of collection. This work creates basic control of the material and underlies all the work that follows.

PHYSICAL PROCESSING

The physical processing of a collection with as much important material as found in the Clarke regarding Ernest Hemingway, involved many steps. Along the way, careful notetaking was necessary to be sure important details could be recalled later when it became time to describe the collection intellectually. The first goal is always to retain the existing order of the material or, if necessary, impose a new, easy to understand, logical order. Once an order was established, the Hemingway collection received detailed physical examination.

The physical examination accomplished several purposes. It removed any material that was not of research value. Things that are not of long-term importance were removed, such as duplicate items, blank pages, or papers that were illegible. Physical examination also removed things that threatened the long-term preservation of the material. These included pins, rubber bands, and sticky notes, any of which could deteriorate the material. In addition, as a matter of routine, acidic or faded materials that had important information but lacked “associational value,” for example a useful newspaper clipping, were photocopied. The copy was kept in place of the original material. Items with associational value could also be copied if they were acidic or faded, but in those cases the original item was also maintained, for example, an original letter written by Ernest Hemingway to which time has not been kind.

Once the material was preserved, it was placed into non-acidic folders that were systematically organized into similar, non-acidic boxes. Large, oversized items that did not fit into standard-size boxes received special identification labels and were stored in locations designed to hold large material.

When the physical work was over, there still remained the intellectual challenge of describing the material so researchers could learn what is found within the boxes and folders.

INTELLECTUAL DESCRIPTION

Intellectual description is the main way a researcher learns what is in a collection. A finding aid is the basic tool created for this purpose, and in some ways is similar to, although much more complete than, the table of contents of a book. A finding aid includes a box and folder list, a biography or organizational history, and scope and contents notes. The parts of a finding aid describe the collection’s general nature, its highlights, dates, and the formats of the material. Information is also included about languages, copyright, fragile or damaged material that has been kept, and any copies that replaced originals. Additional information about other, related collections is also included.

The written finding aid must also be uploaded to the web and made searchable so Google and various online library tools can retrieve the information. Using the finding aid as a guide, the last step in description is to create an original catalog record that can be found both in the CMU Libraries’ system and in databases nationwide. The catalog record is a highly technical endeavor requiring yet more research and following often complicated and occasionally arcane library cataloging and naming conventions.

Processing the pieces that collectively make up the Hemingway collection was challenging. Because the collection trickled into the library from many people over more than a decade, there are multiple Hemingway-related primary source collections. Even when the pieces fit together into one collection, processing was complicated.



Material related to the movie *Hemingway's Adventures of a Young Man*



Hemingway Family Papers



Items from the Hemingway Family Papers

By way of example, the Ernest Hemingway collection includes material found in many different formats, including material housed in seven standard-sized boxes, oversized material stored in eight large folders, as well as four reels of film and 53 framed items. It slowly grew through 19 separate additions. Each addition required reorganizing material within folders, reordering folders within boxes, adding folders and/or boxes, changing labels, updating the finding aid and catalog record, and revising the digital finding aid and catalog records found online.

The largest single set of documents found among those about Ernest Hemingway is the Hemingway Family Papers. Today housed in 49 boxes, it was substantially unorganized when it arrived at the library. What exactly would be found within the documents was uncertain. Much of the collection consisted of handwritten, multi-page letters, each folded, usually in quarters, inside small envelopes. Many letters were enclosed inside of other letters, and in some instances there were four “layers” of letters in a single envelope. It required careful work to retain these intricate relationships while unfolding all of the letters and storing them in acid-free folders to give them the best possible preservation environment. Because much of the correspondence was with classmates, friends, or distant relatives of the Hemingways—people who were not quickly identifiable—it was also necessary to research these people to understand their relationships with the various Hemingway family members they had written to or received letters from and provide context for researchers.

All this hard work unlocked the contents of the Hemingway papers for researchers, while also ensuring the long-term preservation of these irreplaceable resources.

THE COLLECTION TODAY

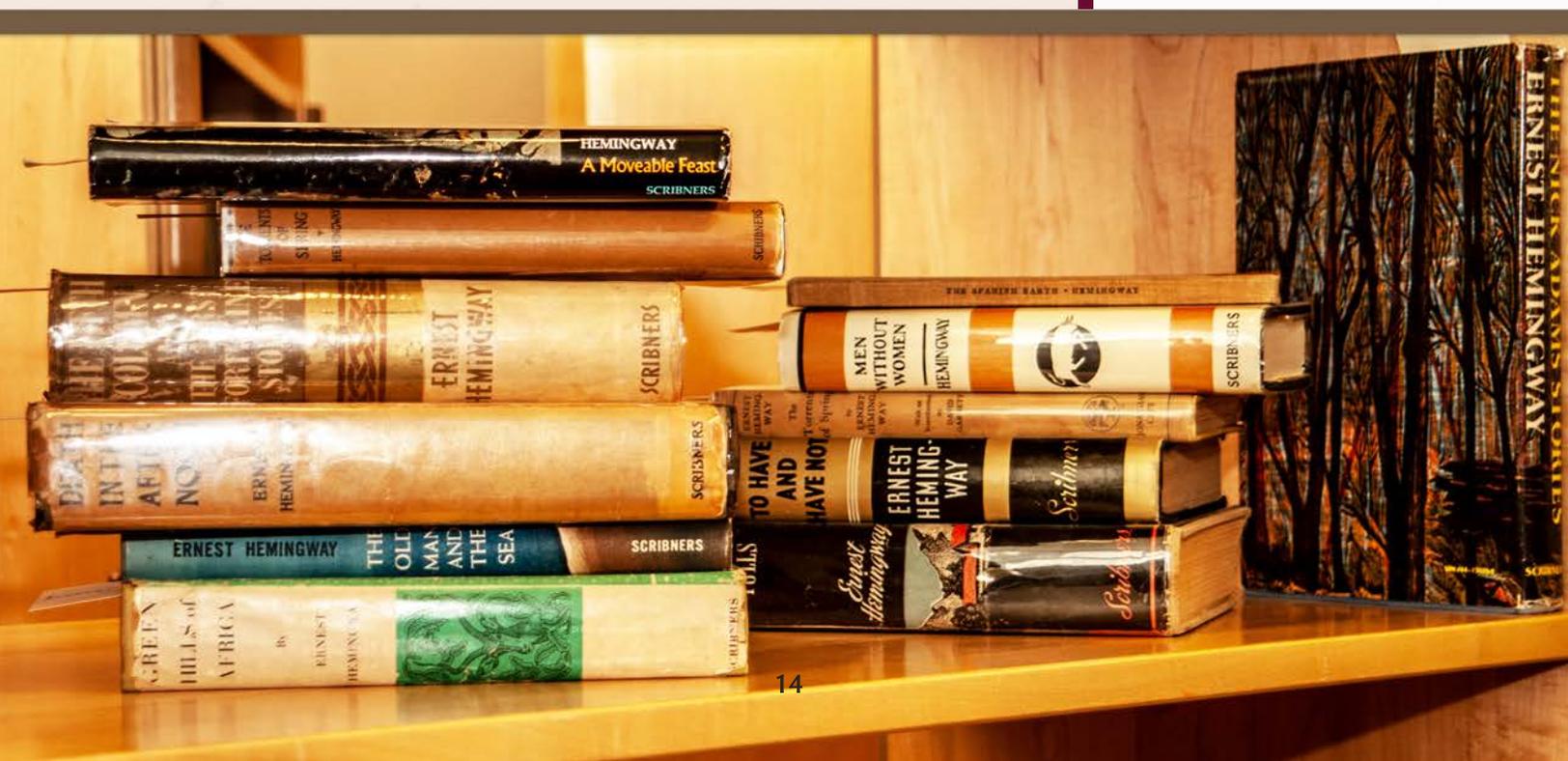
Today the Hemingway collection consists of a wide variety of material.

It concentrates most heavily on Hemingway's personal and literary connections to Michigan, but also has a wide selection of first, international, and rare editions of his works, dozens of biographies and books about the locations in which he lived and about which he wrote, along with various movie and other forms of ephemera. The most significant items are those directly associated with Ernest and his immediate family. These Hemingway items, coupled with the Clarke's vast holdings of materials about northern Michigan in the years the Hemingways called it their summer home, make the Clarke Historical Library a one-of-a-kind Hemingway collection.

As to be expected, the collection is rich in books and articles written by Hemingway himself. He wrote ten novels, twenty story collections, nine works of nonfiction, and dozens of stories published in magazines such as *Life*, *Esquire*, *Look*, *Ken*, and *Cosmopolitan*. The collection has first-edition examples of almost all of these and they range from small, privately printed Paris magazines with his earliest Michigan stories to posthumously published novels edited by others. The crown jewel of the first editions is undoubtedly *Three Stories and Ten Poems*. Printed in a limited edition of 300 copies in Paris in 1923, it begins with his controversial "Up in Michigan" story. Set in fictional "Hortons" Bay, Michigan, the story so graphically described a sexual episode on a Lake Charlevoix dock that it is said Hemingway's own parents refused to have the book in their home. *Three Stories and Ten Poems* was a prelude to a career writing distinguished novels. As his fame increased, his first editions became international bestsellers as foreign publishers joined American printers in making his work available. In Cuba, where he is a national hero, *El Viejo el Mar* (*The Old Man and the Sea*) has been published several times.

Hemingway's most famous short story, *The Big Two Hearted River*, is particularly well represented in the collection. In addition to a copy of *This Quarter*, the Paris based magazine in which it was originally published in 1926, the library has extremely rare copies of fine art print editions. Published in very limited quantities, one version even includes an original watercolor fishing painting. Complementing the published versions of *The Big Two Hearted River* found in the collection is an original postcard Ernest sent his father from Michigan's Upper Peninsula when he was on the fishing trip that inspired the story.

First editions of Hemingway books





Various printings of *The Big Two Hearted River*



Assorted framed Hemingway movie posters kept in the Clarke's archival storage

Perhaps no other American writer has had so much written about him as Ernest Hemingway. The Clarke holds over 250 books and magazine articles chronicling his life, which range from full-length biographies to short feature articles in mainstream and pulp magazines. Especially interesting are the articles in 1950s emerging men's magazines where his larger-than-life macho portrayals sold magazines to people hungry to hear of his alleged exploits. He also inspired books written about the locales where he lived and those about which he wrote. On the Clarke's shelves, one can find volumes associated with his life experiences in Oak Park, Michigan, Paris, Spain, Africa, Cuba, and Idaho.

A particularly interesting subset of the Hemingway collection is the movie-related ephemera. His stories and books resulted in 17 film adaptations beginning with 1932's *A Farewell to Arms* starring Gary Cooper and Helen Hayes. Over the decades, leading stars such as Ingrid Bergman, Spencer Tracy, Ava Gardner, Richard Beymer, and Humphrey Bogart all portrayed Hemingway-created characters. To promote these films, the movie studios launched elaborate publicity campaigns that featured striking posters of various sizes and lobby cards to entice the public into theaters. Campaign manuals filled with clip art, text for advertisements, and marketing suggestions were sent to distributors and theaters urging them to focus as much on the fact that the film was associated with Hemingway as the A-list movie stars the film featured. Supplementing these manuals were publicity photos showing the stars in engaging scenes. The Clarke's collection of these items is colorful and comprehensive. It includes international posters and programs and even movie material not based on any literary work but instead Hemingway himself.

The printed material and movie-related items constitute a strong Hemingway collection, but the personal papers associated with Ernest Hemingway himself and his immediate family found in the Clarke are what make this collection a world-class resource for those looking to better understand Hemingway's formative experiences here in Michigan.

Collectors have caused original manuscripts in Hemingway's own hand to be among the most sought after, selling for thousands of dollars. It is estimated that in his life (a time before tweets, instant messages, and emails) Hemingway composed over six thousand typed and handwritten letters. The Clarke is home to six of them. All but one in the library relate to his Michigan experiences. The six-page, typed letter to his World War I superior, Jim Gamble (1919) gushes with descriptions of Michigan summers. Another letter informs his family of securing a Petoskey boarding house room where he hoped to write; an earlier letter updated his parents on the harvest at their northern Michigan farm. While these were not written to the famous people the established author would come to know, they nevertheless give intriguing insights into how his Michigan experiences influenced him.

The library is also the home of two examples of his unpublished, juvenile fiction. One is *The Sportsman's Hash*, a fishing story written and illustrated when he was 10 years old. The other is a longhand multi-page story set in Michigan lumber camps written when he was in high school. Both of these are examples of the hold Michigan had on the young man's imagination.

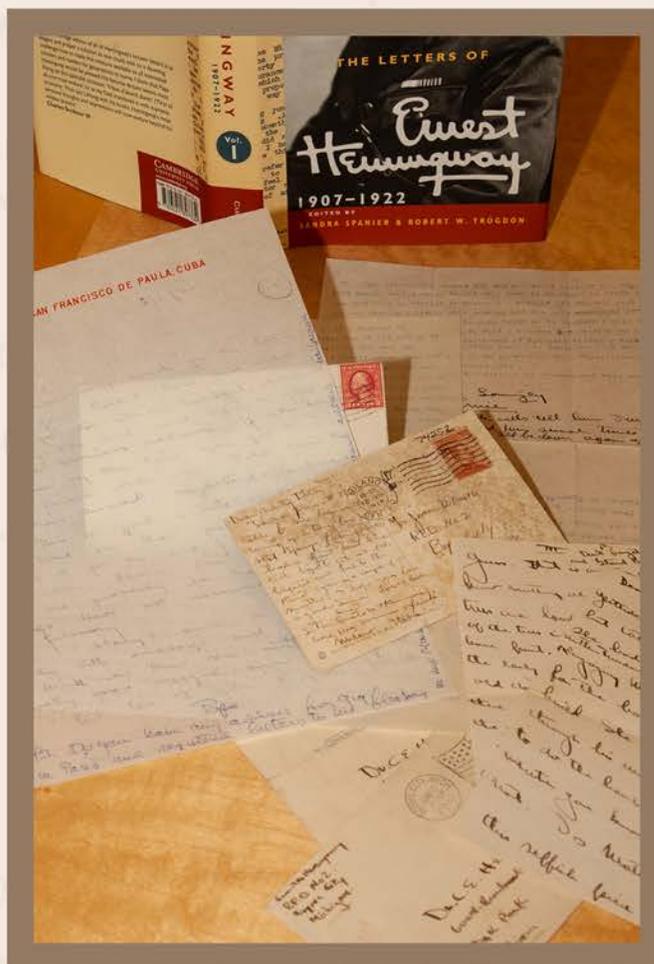
In addition to these Ernest Hemingway items, the library also has an extensive group of personal papers and photo scrapbooks from his sister, Marcelline Hemingway Sanford. The albums, created by Grace Hall Hemingway, the mother of Ernest and his siblings, show that the Hemingway family's Michigan summers were much like summer vacation today. Among other things, photos show the family fishing, entertaining guests, swimming in the lake, and boating. These albums document the Hemingways' first Michigan trip in 1898 through Marcelline and Ernest's high school graduation in 1917. They are particularly interesting in that the images are annotated by Grace Hall Hemingway. This adds greater depth to the stories and personalities of those shown.

The Hemingway Family Papers includes far more than those photo albums. In addition to them, are early family correspondence and numerous items associated with the publication of Marcelline Hemingway Sanford's memoir, *At the Hemingways*, in which she told her version of her relationship with her brother. These papers, along with Marcelline's photo scrapbooks, give fascinating insights into the Hemingway family and its most famous member, Ernest.

The Hemingway Family Papers in the Clarke are complimented by other material directly associated with the Hemingway family. The library houses photos and photo scrapbooks from his younger sister, Ursula, and a number of books given by and to Ernest's siblings and parents. All of these provide interesting insights into family dynamics and Ernest's relationship with his immediate family.

While not a member of the immediate family, "Uncle George" Hemingway was a summer and eventually year-round resident at Lake Charlevoix. His family's guest books and his diaries tell of family guests and visits. Along with the Hemingway Family Papers, they allow us to learn about the family that raised and influenced Ernest.

With the hundreds, if not thousands, of items related to Ernest Hemingway in the Clarke's Hemingway collection, scholarly researchers or those simply curious about his life, particularly his Michigan-related experiences and writing, have no better place to visit than the Clarke Historical Library.



Items written by Ernest Hemingway



Photo scrapbooks created for Marcelline Hemingway Sanford by her mother, Grace Hall Hemingway

EXHIBITS AND OTHER OUTREACH

As with all of the resources held by the Clarke, the Hemingway collection does not fulfill its purpose until it is used. Creating an awareness of what is available in the collection is a continuous challenge. Library descriptive tools are critical, but also limited in their reach. Marketing the collection beyond the library is important to inform researchers and those who can help the collection grow of the treasures found here. In addition, marketing demonstrates to existing donors how their contributions are being used and helps plant a seed within those who might make future donations of material or support the Hemingway endowment.

A particularly effective method in promoting the library's Hemingway collection has been through exhibitions. Exhibits are many things. The public often thinks of them as opportunities for education and entertainment. Through creative interpretation of the materials held by the library, exhibits inform audiences, pique interest, and encourage further exploration. Exhibitions also serve as the foundations upon which the library's future can be strategically built. They can promote programming including speakers, publications, documentaries, events, and collaborations, all of which increase the audience of particularly interested individuals and build new relationships. To take advantage of these opportunities, the library has developed a variety of Hemingway-themed exhibit experiences, each have focused on a unique aspect of the collection.

A Delightful Destination: Little Traverse Bay at the Turn of the Century
2012 exhibit in the Clarke Historical Library galleries



PAST EXHIBITS



Hemingway in Michigan, Michigan in Hemingway, was the initial exhibit created by the library to introduce Hemingway enthusiasts and scholars to the Clarke Historical Library, its holdings, and the library's long-term ambitions. The 2003 show was well attended. Especially welcomed were the many members of the Michigan Hemingway Society. The Gamble letter, loans of rarely seen, family-owned material, and one of only three authenticated fly rods used by Ernest Hemingway were exhibited. Additionally, an exhibit catalog was published. The combination of experiences, collaborations, and print material demonstrated the ways in which the Clarke was becoming Hemingway's Michigan home.

Serendipity offered another important opportunity to publicize the library's Hemingway material. In 2007, the Michigan Humanities Council launched a new program, "The Great Michigan Read." Its purpose was to encourage people across the state to read and discuss a single book. The initial book chosen for the project was Hemingway's, *The Nick Adams Stories*. To promote the program, the Council offered grant funding to agencies and institutions that could develop methods to publicize both the book and Ernest Hemingway.

This was a moment of tremendous opportunity. Mike Federspiel and Frank Boles developed an array of programming to utilize the strengths of the staff and the material in the collection, to capitalize on the resources of partners such as the Michigan Hemingway Society and WCMU Broadcasting, and to draw upon the Clarke's new and established connections within the Hemingway family and greater community. The library forwarded six proposals to the MHC. These included:

- The creation of a traveling exhibit and a published catalog.
- The filming of a 30-minute television documentary, created in cooperation with WCMU-TV and then distributed without charge to every public high school in Michigan.
- A companion study guide.
- Publication, in print format, of *Hemingway's Michigan: A Driving Tour of Emmet and Charlevoix Counties*, researched and compiled by Ken Marek.
- A website to house the driving tour information.
- A capstone project to place a state historical marker at Walloon Lake, celebrating Hemingway's Michigan roots.



Hemingway's Michigan Story exhibit panels

When informed of the Council's decision, the Clarke staff took a very deep breath. The staff had not expected to receive funding for the entire suite of proposals, nor to have three of the most extensive projects done in approximately 90 days. It was, nevertheless, an extraordinary opportunity.

WCMU producer Sarah Adams immersed herself in Hemingway's story, and created the documentary, much of it filmed in the author's boyhood haunts. The Clarke team aided by Mike Federspiel, honed the myriad details to create the exhibit, *Up North with the Hemingways and Nick Adams*. The accompanying published catalog rolled off the presses of CMU's Printing Services just hours before the premier in Petoskey on July 27.

The audience was delighted, as was the Michigan Humanities Council. The Clarke had successfully delivered key components of the grant on schedule. The multi-component presentation, featuring a video biography, exhibition, and exhibit catalog was a major accomplishment, possible only through much collaboration and a bit of frenzied dedication. The collaboration with the Michigan Humanities Council was particularly important in that it reinforced the point made by the 2003 exhibit and catalog regarding how central the Clarke was in the documentation of Hemingway in Michigan, as well as the ability of the library to use those exceptional resources to educate the public.

Since its unveiling, the *Up North with the Hemingways* exhibit has traveled to 35 local libraries, historical societies, and other venues throughout Michigan, often accompanied by speakers, such as the director of the Clarke Historical Library and CMU's own Hemingway scholar, Mike Federspiel.

In 2012, the library was offered another unique opportunity to use the Hemingway collection for outreach. The International Hemingway Society chose to hold their biennial conference in the Little Traverse Bay region, bringing an international audience of approximately 600 guests to explore and experience "Hemingway's Michigan." As part of the conference, the library staff mounted different exhibits in three venues around the Bay, and cooperated again with WCMU television to create another documentary, *Into the North*, which focused on the tourist experience in the Little Traverse Bay area between 1890 and 1920, largely the years the Hemingway family came to summer.

The first and simplest task was to place the traveling exhibit created in 2007, *Up North with the Hemingways*, back in Petoskey. This time the show was placed in the Carnegie Library Building administered by CTAC. This building was where, in 1919, the young Ernest had made a public presentation about his wartime experiences, and thus a "must see" for the conference attendees. That exhibit also showcased four "treasures" from the Clarke to dazzle the attendees. They included two stories in Hemingway's hand, written when he was a youth, the Gamble letter, which had been a focus of the 2003 exhibit, and the postcard written by Ernest to his father while fishing in the Upper Peninsula, part of the trip immortalized in the short story, *The Big Two Hearted River*.

Second, the exhibit that had been shown in spring 2012 in the Clarke's galleries, *A Delightful Destination: Little Traverse Bay at the Turn of the Century*, was reinstalled in the Harbor Springs Area Historical Society, across the bay from Petoskey. This exhibit featured some of the many photographs the library had copied from the Little Traverse Historical Society. Components of that exhibit remain in the area, currently on display in the Emmet County courthouse in Petoskey.



A Delightful Destination: Little Traverse Bay at the Turn of the Century exhibit ephemera

Finally, the Clarke staff cooperated and coordinated with the staff of the LTHS to redesign and update the Society's Hemingway exhibit. *Hemingway's Michigan Story* explored the author's Michigan experiences and the writing inspired by them. Made possible through funds from the CMU Hemingway Endowment and the Michigan Hemingway Society, the interpretive exhibit was, and continues to be, a key experience in this Petoskey museum, located in the heart of Hemingway's Michigan haunts.

All of these activities, coupled with the premiere of *Into the North* at the conference, allowed the Clarke to make an extraordinary impression on a very important audience. The library showed that it could both use the resources already in hand and help develop new possibilities. It also heartened old friends and allies by demonstrating the library's continuing importance in documenting the subject.

THE ERNEST HEMINGWAY COLLECTION AT THE CLARKE

The library's newest Hemingway exhibit continues the library's longstanding efforts to promote the Hemingway collection, while offering an opportunity to reflect on how "the magic"—from envisioning a collection to building exhibits—comes into existence. An exhibit can be many things: educational, entertaining, interactive, or immersive. But what a good exhibit is not is a book on the wall. Nor is it a comprehensive history. Exhibits capture and communicate the essence of a story, pique the interest of visitors, and inspire further learning.

The library staff creates two new exhibits each year for the Clarke. Each is a custom exhibit designed using unique criteria established only for that exhibit. The concept is developed, content is researched, techniques are established, components are designed, graphics are acquired, text is written, AV treatments are developed, and final design specifications are created. Then, the exhibit is fabricated and finally, it is installed. Each task is done once and each time it is a brand-new experience with new content and new components. This was the process followed for the current exhibit.

The foundation of the exhibit design process is based upon the answers to several key questions, which require careful thinking about the purpose of the exhibit. The answers to four questions became the foundation for everything that followed:

1. Why create this new Hemingway exhibit?

The collection itself and the matrix of collaborators and supporters has evolved greatly since the last exhibit in 2012. The Clarke staff determined it should share recent developments in the collection with supporters and the public to continue to build awareness of the current breadth of the holdings, and expand the endowment and collection.



Ernest Hemingway fishing, ca. 1911

2. Who is the audience?

Everybody is not an acceptable answer.

Before beginning, one must determine for whom the exhibit is being designed. An experience created to inspire a 16-year-old may not satisfy a college student or a Hemingway scholar, and vice versa. While the Clarke's primary purpose is to serve CMU and the success of the student body, the staff determined that, in addition to this goal, the library's donors and Hemingway enthusiasts should be the primary focus for this exhibition. The hope was to honor donors, attract enthusiasts and scholars, and give insights to CMU students about Hemingway and the Hemingway collection, as well as how professionals in the field of special collections and exhibitions do their jobs.

3. What is the exhibit's specific objective?

With two prior exhibits discussing the same general subject, it was necessary to determine how this exhibit would be different from past exhibitions. A custom-designed exhibit, by definition, seeks to create a "unique and extraordinary" experience. The content should be based on a storyline only the Clarke can tell and which it has not told in the past, to assure visitors a unique experience. If a visitor has seen it before, or can find it elsewhere, why would they bother to come and see it here?

For past exhibits, the collection had been researched to piece together the stories of the author's childhood experiences, his summers at Walloon Lake, and returning to Michigan after World War I. This exhibit focused on the primary artifacts themselves and the story behind how they found a home in the Clarke. That "backstory" makes this experience unique. For years, people key to the collection's development have occasionally shared tales. Stories of waiting to hear if an auction bid for a prized letter was high enough to win, and when it wasn't, how that obstacle was overcome. Stories of how a postcard considered a gem of the collection was found decades after it had fallen between the studs of a wall in a Horton Bay cottage.

These backstories, the details of how each item came to the Clarke's collection, are gems in their own right. They illustrate the passion, talent, perseverance, and sometimes luck that contributed to making the Hemingway collection as rich as it is. These stories became key features in the exhibition.

4. Storyline research and "The Gems"

After establishing the exhibit objective, one must identify primary materials, sources, text references, and generally "fill in the blanks" regarding the exhibit's content. This step was less difficult for this exhibit than it sometimes can be. Mike Federspiel, who has helped guide collecting efforts since the beginning of the initiative, served as curator. Mr. Federspiel's knowledge about Hemingway and of the library's collection served the work well. If there was a question, Mike could answer it.

The most basic challenge was to sort through the library's hundreds, perhaps thousands, of items to find the gems, and the stories associated with them. Prioritization was needed. Mike was asked to identify the gems and his first list included eight categories with forty subcategories. The library staff put their faith in his knowledge and asked for a very much shorter list. Mike executed a tour-de-force by reducing the original list to seven items. His pain was evident, but understanding that "less is more," he identified only a few items. Having been identified, the exhibit needed to establish a way that visitors, if they remember only one thing, would remember the gems of the collection and something about how they came to be here.

How to inspire memory is challenging. The gems are composed of items such as letters, envelopes, a magazine cover, and a first-edition publication. All these formats reduce themselves to humble, and in many ways, visually uninteresting text. They are items that might be overlooked if placed among many other objects in one of the Clarke's large exhibit cases.

To resolve the problem of how to distinguish the gems, each of them was given a place of honor. Individual exhibition cases were designed for each. To further the aesthetic focus onto the gems, each case was set against a translucent, nine-foot tall banner hanging down from the ceiling. The banners featured the artifact's title, text interpreting its significance, and the story of how it became part of the collection. These gem-and-banner assemblages were clustered together in the center of the exhibit gallery, parting to create a path to what came to be viewed as the single most important item: the Gamble letter. The plan produced a setting in which each of these very special, one-of-a-kind objects is honored, leading to the one that is both arguably the most important single item in the collection and certainly a keystone in the story of how the Clarke's Hemingway collection came to be.

Many additional items were featured around the perimeter of the gallery. Four enormous wall-mounted images, including one of Hemingway, served as a visual backdrop to the gems. Distinctly different from the elegant, monochromatic simplicity of the "gem gallery" found in the Clarke Historical Library's Molson Gallery space, was the ambiance in the library's Meijer Gallery space. Here the boldly saturated colors of giant Hemingway movie posters flanked a five-foot video monitor, where a Hemingway biographical documentary played. The experience in this space expounded on the breadth of collection, in a visually explosive manner.

EXHIBIT TEXT – EVERY WORD MUST EARN ITS KEEP!

Exhibit text is unique. Just as a successful exhibit must deliver only the essence of a story, so must the text. Experience proves extensive text discourages visitors from reading beyond the headlines. But the task of writing a text block in 125 words is always challenging, for an author invariably has 1000 words of stories to tell. Because the team who built this exhibit had prior experience working together, they understood the value of brevity and, if at times a bit begrudgingly, delivered concise, effectual interpretive text.



Hemingway's Michigan Story exhibit panels

VISION TO EXPERIENCE AND THE JOY OF INSTALLATION

At this point in the process, hundreds of hours had been devoted to the creation of broad concepts and design details that remained only a vision. The final hurdle was to assemble all those details into a specification package that was used by a fabricator to build the exhibit. Releasing that design package to production was an important moment to the people who had created the story of *The Hemingway Collection at the Clarke*. Once the contracts were let, there were no second chances for edits or changes.

There is always a bit of apprehension and excitement when the contracted material is delivered, the boxes are opened, and the graphics revealed. This is the fun but anxious moment when vision becomes reality. It has all been seen in the mind's eye and on paper, but the full-size, beautifully implemented imagery and interpretation makes even the people who designed it take pause and, as the items first come into view, hold their breath just for a moment.

The actual installation of this or any exhibit draws attention like it is a construction site, which it, indeed, is. Like construction sites, most museums close their galleries during installation. However, since there is no way to enter the Clarke Historical Library for research without walking through the exhibit galleries, exhibit installation often becomes a participatory process and learning experience. Students, faculty, and the public suddenly appear, asking questions while the Clarke team begins placing artifacts and text. It can be a bit distracting, but the exhibit has begun to do its job and the staff fields questions from visitors whose interest has been piqued.

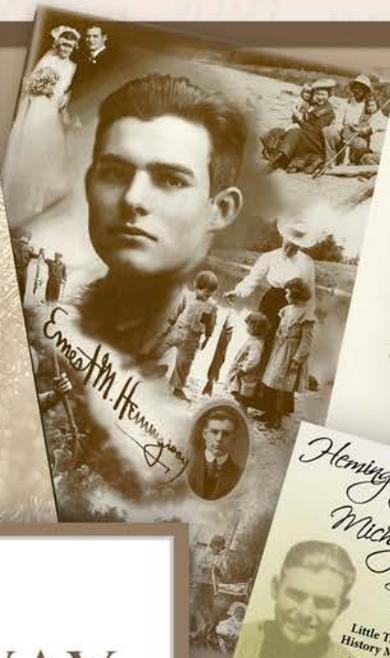
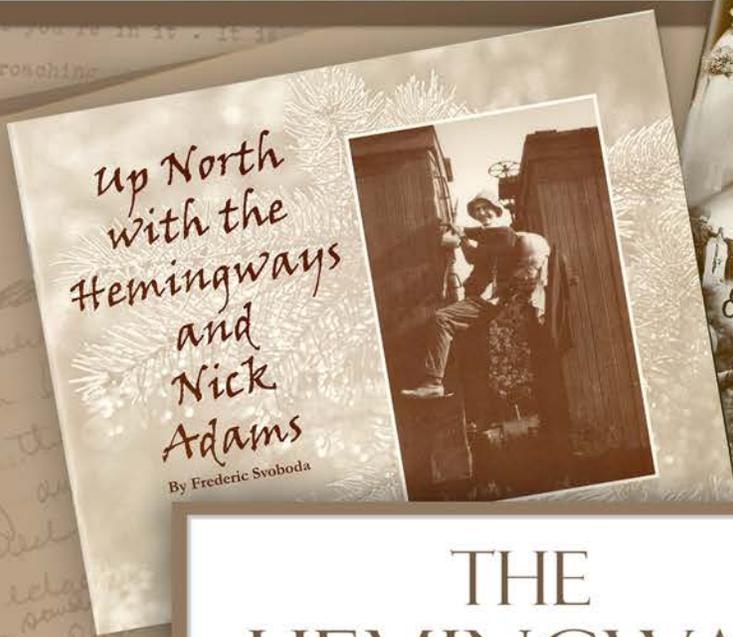
And every exhibit has “the moment.” The moment is when the joy and excitement of seeing all the pieces come together is tempered by the discovery of a typographical error, a missing panel, or some unanticipated problem. The more exhibits that are created, the less likely “that” problem will come up again. But like sunrises, inevitably, a new problem emerges. Resolving it with little time and working with only the material in hand involves quick thinking, going a bit outside the box, and improvisation—skills the smiles on an opening night may conceal, but later make for great stories.



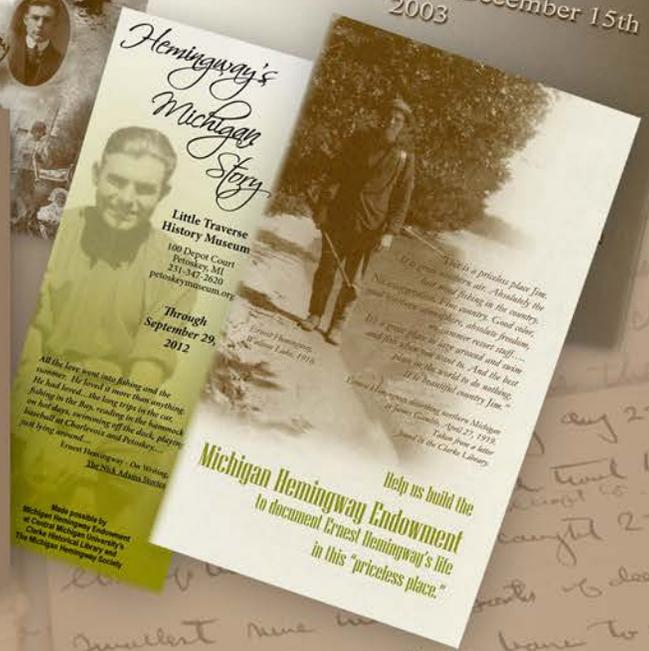
TWENTY YEARS IN THE MAKING

The primary purpose of the Clarke Historical Library is to inspire and support scholarship. The Hemingway collection is a case study in how a library successfully imagines, develops, and markets one part of its many holdings. Starting with essentially nothing, the library developed an internationally recognized and known resource regarding Ernest Hemingway. The story told in the current exhibit celebrates what was accomplished and tells how it came about, revealing the talent, dedication, and passion that inspired the collection's creation and continued evolution and use.

While library staff look forward to that use, as well as to continued growth and outreach through exhibits and other tools, those who work in the library acknowledge and thank those who, over two decades, have helped make the Hemingway collection possible. The Michigan Hemingway Society and many of its members have become long-term partners and good friends through the project. Many generous friends have made decisions that greatly benefited the library, while others have donated items to the library. Still others have made financial contributions to enable the library to make important purchases and grow the endowment. The importance of this financial support, sometimes on short notice with requests for not-small amounts of money and other times asking the same individuals to help build the principal of the endowment to continue the work, cannot be overstated. All of this happened through large amounts of goodwill and the help of good friends who the Clarke staff hopes will continue to work with the library in the future.



THE HEMINGWAY COLLECTION AT THE CLARKE



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although key colleagues in the creation of this endeavor informed me that my name would be listed as the author, an honor I accepted for the convenience of library catalogers everywhere, the exhibit and this catalog are very much a collaborative work rather than the creation of a single individual. I would like to Janet Danek, the University Libraries Exhibit Coordinator, Michael Federspiel, a recently retired fixed-term faculty member of the CMU History Department, and Marian Matyn, Clarke Historical Library Archivist and associate professor, each of who wrote parts of this catalog. Many of the best words you have read in this publication are theirs.

My thanks also go to Bryan Whitlege and Kimberly Chiodo for proofreading this document. The mistakes that remain are mine and not theirs.

Finally, it would not have been possible to publish this work without the hard work of Kari Chrenka, Coordinator of Marketing and Branding within the University Libraries. Her official title gives little clue to her substantial abilities to design and produce printed publications, for which we are all grateful.

- **Dr. Frank Boles**, *Director of the Clarke Historical Library*

The "Hemingway Collection at the Clarke" exhibit, and the accompanying catalog were made possible, in part, by generous donors and funds from the Clarke Historical Library's Michigan Hemingway Endowment and the Cindi J. and Kathryn R. Graham Endowment.

To learn more about the Endowment, visit
clarke.cmich.edu/HemingwayEndowment

MISSION OF THE CLARKE HISTORICAL LIBRARY

The Clarke Historical Library collects, preserves, and promotes nationally recognized collections, that include:

- The history of Michigan and the Old Northwest Territory.
- The history of Central Michigan University.
- Selected topics, including exemplary children's literature, campaign biographies of United States presidential candidates, the history of angling, and historic Michigan newspapers.

As part of CMU's goal of advancing excellence, the library serves the needs of the CMU community and, in particular, student success, fosters scholarly activity through its collections, exhibits, and publications, and strengthens community partnerships through an active outreach program.

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