

The Friends of the Hemingway Collection

Newsletter

September 1996

The Hemingway Foundation and Society held its biennial international conference in Sun Valley, Idaho, July 19-21. In addition to hearing some extraordinarily fine papers and discussions, conference attendees had the opportunity to see some of Hemingway's favorite places around Sun Valley, where he vacationed often and where, in a hillside house above the small town of Ketchum, he spent the last years of his life. Curator of the Hemingway Collection Stephen Plotkin represented the Collection and the John F. Kennedy Library.

The conference, organized around the topic of "Hemingway and the Natural World," began with a keynote address by Terry Tempest Williams, author and naturalist, and one of the finest nature-writers in the U.S. today. Her meditation on Hemingway, nature, and place set a high standard for the conference, but a standard that was justified by the presentations that followed. Although much excellent work and discussion were on display, most in attendance would agree that a highlight of the conference — even, as scholar Michael Reynolds put it, an historic moment — was a gathering of five of Hemingway's friends, who met to reminisce and occasionally to set the scholars straight on some details. *At right: seated, Ruth Purdy, Clara Spiegel, Tillie Arnold; standing, Bud Purdy, Forrest MacMullen. Picture courtesy Mike Venso, Lewiston Morning Tribune.*



For those who know Idaho through the "lens" of Hemingway's life and death, the conference was an opportunity to become acquainted, or even reacquainted, with the natural beauty that brought Hemingway back to Idaho so often. Although the scenery may be quite familiar to Hemingway aficionados who have seen it so often in the black and white photographs that illustrate biographies, even the finest of these cannot do justice to the subtle, muted colors of the high desert landscape around Sun Valley. *At left, one of Hemingway's favorite places, Trail Creek, where a memorial has been built. The words of the caption are Hemingway's own, from his 1939 "Eulogy to Gene Van Guilder." Picture courtesy Mike Venso, Lewiston Morning Tribune.*



Below, a close-up of the Picasso print on the side of the book case. It is not known when Mary acquired the print, although the 1967 date clearly makes it impossible for it to have been in the house during Ernest's lifetime.



At left, the desk in Hemingway's bedroom. Most of the photos are from the "Dangerous Summer," when Hemingway followed the mano a mano between bullfighters Dominguin and Antonio Ordoñez.





Another high point for conference-goers was the opportunity to visit Hemingway's house in Ketchum. Although certainly not as inaccessible as the Finca Vigia in Cuba, the Ketchum house is not generally open to tourists. Upon her death Mary Hemingway bequeathed house and land to the Nature Conservancy of Idaho, who opened it to visitors from the conference.

In comparison with the Finca Vigia, Hemingway's "presence" in the Ketchum house is somewhat muted; for many years after his death, Mary lived here, and the Nature Conservancy has used the house for business purposes. On the other hand, unlike the Key West house, the Ketchum house did not leave family control before the Conservancy took it over.

Although the Conservancy has not maintained the house as a museum, most of the furnishings date from Hemingway's residence. From the foot-lockers blazoned with his name to the pictures on the wall to the eclectic furniture from around the world, the house retains Hemingway's imprint. *At right, the living room in the Ketchum house. Photo courtesy Mike Venso, Lewiston Morning Tribune. Below, an endtable inset with antique Spanish tiles depicting bullfighting scenes.*



Next page: Although Hemingway's library remains in Cuba, filled bookshelves abound in the Ketchum house. Many of these were Mary's books, or books owned by both Mary and Ernest, but many appear to be books that Ernest purchased and was reading at the end of his life. The bust was produced in the late fifties for a television production. Reportedly, Hemingway disliked it intensely. Other items in the case include ammunition boxes, camera equipment, and a copy of Mary's memoir, How It Was. The small sketch on the side of the case is actually a Picasso print.

In addition to the house itself, the Idaho Nature Conservancy has created 14 acres of nature preserve from the property around the house. About a mile of the Wood River, which flows just below the Ketchum house, is protected by the preserve. The Conservancy has plans to open the house to visitors on a highly restricted basis. Tentatively, plans are to allow tours through the house two days of each week during July and August. A trial run will be made during this autumn. Access will be highly controlled and carefully monitored, so interested visitors to the Sun Valley area should be sure to contact the Nature Conservancy before planning any visits.

For their part in allowing the library to be represented at the International Conference, the assistance of the Friends of the Hemingway Collection is greatly appreciated.

In Memoriam Paul Smith

Paul Smith, Professor Emeritus of English at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, died June 29 at McLean Home, Simsbury, Connecticut, of throat cancer. Professor Smith was a fine teacher and renowned scholar of the work of Ernest Hemingway. He was a founder and first president of the Hemingway Society. His book, *A Reader's Guide to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* is a standard of criticism and absolutely essential to any serious student of Hemingway's work. Professor Smith's learning and wisdom were always at the service of the Hemingway Collection, and the aid he gave to the collection was invaluable. The 1996 International Hemingway Conference was dedicated to his memory, as will be the volume of papers to be published from the conference.

Recent Acquisitions

In other Hemingway Collection news, through the kindness of the Heritage Bookshop of Los Angeles, we have acquired photocopies of five Hemingway letters and ancillary correspondence. Two of the letters are from Hemingway to Dr. Charles Guffey, Pauline Hemingway's obstetrician. Dated 12 and 17 April 1931, the letters primarily discuss books and book-collecting. Accompanying these letters is a thank-you note from Pauline to Dr. Guffey, dated May 26, probably 1931. A further two letters, dated 20 November 1935 and 9 December 1936, are written to Prudencio di Pereda. They discuss writing and the Spanish Civil War, respectively. The last letter is written to Professor Arthur L. Scott of the University of Illinois, dated 8 February 1956. In it Hemingway disclaims any revisions to the Bantam reprint of *The Sun Also Rises* and denounces the charge that he is anti-semitic. Accompanying this letter are two brief notes to Scott regarding *The Sun Also Rises*, one from Charles Scribner, Jr. and one from Harold Loeb.

A private collector has given us photocopies of his small collection of Hemingway material. The collection includes a three-page letter to Richard and Jane Armstrong written from Havana. The letter is undated, but undoubtedly dates from the 1930s. Other items are two brief telegrams written to Mary, dated 2 and 26 September 1959; ten short cables and telegrams written to Bill Davis in 1959-60; and a copyedited typescript of Hemingway's poem "Ultimately."

All of these materials will be cataloged shortly and made available to researchers.

As part of our ongoing collaboration and exchange with Colby College, we have recently finished photographing three scrapbooks by Hemingway's long-time friend, the Maine artist Waldo Peirce. A talented painter and a good sportsman, Peirce was in many respects a fitting counterpart and companion to Hemingway, although Hemingway professed to be somewhat mystified by Peirce's affection for domesticity. The two met in 1927, at Peirce's instigation, and their friendship continued, with some hiatus but no rupture, for the rest of Hemingway's life.

Two of the scrapbooks record expeditions to Pamplona to view the bullfights. The third, and longest, records Peirce's extended fishing trip to Key West in 1928. Profusely illustrated with Peirce's exuberant paintings and drawings, as well as dozens of photographs, the scrapbooks are a lively record of Hemingway at recreation. The slides of the scrapbooks and a reference color photocopy, made possible with the help of the Friends of the Hemingway Collection, will shortly be cataloged into the Collection and made available to researchers.

The PEN/Hemingway Foundation Award

The 1997 Hemingway Foundation/PEN and L. L. Winship/PEN New England Awards will be presented on April 6, 1997 at the John F. Kennedy Library. Friends of the Hemingway Collection should be sure to reserve that date. The 1996 Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award winner was given to Chang-rae Lee for *Native Speaker*. The 1996 L. L. Winship Award/PEN New England winner was Jane Brox for *Here and Nowhere Else*. Nobel Laureate Saul Bellow gave the keynote address to the gathering of 600. The Friends of the Hemingway Collection cosponsors the award ceremony along with the John F. Kennedy Library, the Kennedy Library Foundation, the *Boston Globe*, and PEN New England.

Changing of the Guard

In June, Megan Desnoyers, Curator of the Hemingway Collection for the past nine years, relinquished her duties as Curator to concentrate on her work as Supervisory Archivist of the Library's Papers Processing Unit. Associate Curator Stephen Plotkin is now Curator of the Collection.

Megan has very much enjoyed working with the Collection, its Friends and users and the Hemingway Family and will miss it all, but it is time for a new generation to take over and the Collection could not have a better curator than Stephen Plotkin. Stephen has been Associate Curator for 4 years and his background in English studies suit him perfectly for the job. Megan was an archivist first and curator second, but Stephen draws from both the archival and literary research traditions. Megan will serve as Stephen's back-up during absences and will continue to help with the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award Presentation.