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Hemingway's 'Last Good Country'

Northern Michigan as he knew it

BY JOHN COHASSEY

'Only the hell of it is that the country has had a hold on me as ever.'



It's great northern air. Absolutely the best 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.

—Ernest Hemingway to his friend Jim Gamble, 1919

For Ernest Hemingway, northern Michigan was an imagined frontier; his fictional north woods reveal a memory's passionate hold on a brilliantly imaginative mind. Pilgrims to Hemingway country still look for surviving landmarks described by the author through the eyes of his first great protagonist, the semi-autobiographical Nick Adams, nearly a century ago.

It was in Michigan's north woods that Hemingway first broke openly with his parents. His seemingly rebellious individualism — the throwing off the mores and expectations of a leftover Victorianism — was actually part of a youth revolt during the 1910s. Defiant artistically, committed to writing, and having a strong interest in sex and alcohol, Hemingway embodied, among the middle and upper middle class, a modern sensibility that shaped the 1920s "flaming youth."

Before Hemingway became obsessed with bullfighting, big-game hunting and deep-sea fishing, Michigan's Little Traverse Bay region inspired his youthful imagination. In the woods beyond the family cottage and the opulent resort hotels, he eyed wildlife, gun in hand, and cast his line in crystal-clear streams

and lakes, often making friends among the Algonquian-speaking Ottawa and Ojibwa, who lived in the shadow of a lumbering-era past. Hemingway once told his brother Leicester that he had "written a number of stories about Michigan country and that country was always true, but what happens in those stories was fiction." Creatively driven by the principle that what is left out of a story is equally important as that which is included, Hemingway's Michigan-inspired works are inventive stories which, just behind their fictional surface, reveal actual faces and names, trails and hills, lakes and streams.

Like numerous others of the upper class living in Oak Park, near Chicago, physician Clarence "Ed" Hemingway and his music teacher wife Grace were drawn to the northwest area of Michigan's lower peninsula, the Charlevoix-Petoskey region — advertised as a haven of summer outdoor activity whose temperate weather was conducive to good health and an escape from hay fever. Ed and Grace first came to the area in 1898 with their first-born infant daughter Marcelline, staying with Grace's cousin, Madelaine Randall Board, on Bear Lake, today's Walloon Lake. Impressed, the couple purchased land for a cottage.

The Hemingways first traveled north by steamship and train — transportation lines of the once-dominant lumber industry. Petoskey-born writer Bruce Catton (1899-1978) grew up near Lake Michigan and witnessed the transformation of his "impoverished" region into a middle-class vacation country with resorters arriving by lake boat, swarming the gangplanks while horse-drawn carryalls waited to take them to summer hotels.

Six weeks after his birth in July 1899, Ernest traveled with his family to Walloon Lake, beginning 18 summer visits to the north country. At the Chicago docks eight miles from their Oak Park home, the Hemingways boarded the luxury lake-going steamship S.S. Manitou, which transported Midwestern elites and upper middle-class passengers. Nearly 275 feet long and powered by a 2,500-horsepower engine, the Manitou, built in 1893, attained a top speed of 19.5 miles per hour. As one historian wrote, "The lines of this beautiful ship were long and racy, with a decided shear from bow to stern, with spars and stack set at a sharp angle." Its interior mahogany-trimmed and beautifully furnished, the Manitou, "Queen of the Great Lakes," was a floating palace of 120 staterooms, and its elaborate dining room had a ceiling of domed, oval-shaped glass. (The family would travel in this way until 1917, when they would begin driving to Michigan.)



PHOTO: WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS



Little Ernest on Horton's Creek at 2 and at 15 or 16 (opposite).

After 24 hours on Lake Michigan, the *Manitou* docked at Harbor Springs. Praised in the local press as "The Naples of the North," Harbor Springs was incorporated in 1880 at the lumbering industry's height, and its population of 600 grew as it welcomed summertime resorters arriving to be met by "hotel runners, hack men, and pursers." From Harbor Springs, the family took a Grand Rapids & Indiana Railway suburban train for a 25-minute ride — with numerous stops — to Petoskey's GR&I station, where resort carriage drivers called out the names of such establishments as the Island House, the Arlington Hotel and the Belvedere.

In Petoskey, the Hemingways boarded another suburban train for Walloon Village, which by 1911 had three stores, a bowling alley, bath house, boat livery and factory, four hotels, two churches and a post office. Proud of its rustic character, Walloon's local newspaper announced: "We do not boast of electric cars, paved streets and patrol wagons; we have nature's highways and byways leading through quiet woods, or by the perfect lake."

Once again traveling by water, the Hemingways boarded a Walloon Lake steamer — either the two-tiered *Tourist* or the smaller *Outing* — that plied the 4,000-acre lake straddling Emmet and Charlevoix counties. These small lake steamers sailed past the Indian Garden Hotel's colonnaded portico and spacious rotunda — its porch filled with wealthy bejeweled women, exclusive card-playing groups, and "porch-rockers" — along winding ravines and wooded hills, passing the Echo Beach Inn until reaching Wildwood Harbor.

From Wildwood, Clarence rowed a small boat to their lakefront lot, in a bay-like area on the lake's east shore (Emmet County), lying between the Echo Beach Hotel and the Bacons' farm — an acre parcel with wide, sandy lakeshore surrounded by white birches, cedars and, farther from shore, thick hemlock groves. If the landscape had changed with the logging of white pines — largely replaced by these second-growth trees — its clear waters still supported an abundance of fish. The Hemingways caught pike and pickerel in Walloon's 100-foot-deep waters, which today teem with brown and rainbow trout, small mouth bass, bluegill, perch, walleye and rock bass.

In tribute to her ancestral England's Lake Region, Grace named the cottage *Windemere*, later shortened to *Windemere*. A simply constructed 20-foot-by-40-foot structure costing \$400, it had a brick fireplace and two window seats often serving as the children's beds. Amenities included a wood-burning range, an icebox, oil lamps, and a hand pump for water. Typical of the upper-middle class, domestic help was brought from Chicago or hired locally. Foodstuffs were delivered mail order and fresh food was purchased from nearby Bacon Farm, where twice daily the Hemingway children fetched the milk for breakfast and supper. Eventually a great deal of food came from Longfield Farm, which the family purchased across the lake.

Clarence taught all six of the Hemingway children to swim. He taught young Ernest to shoot a rifle and use a fishing rod, and eventually all the family — finally including three more daughters and a son, in addition to Marcelline and Ernest — took turns shooting clay pigeons. During summers, Ernest often went barefoot, frequently dressed by his mother in a Native American outfit of fishing or in a straw hat and overalls for a Huck Finn look.

Far from Oak Park's rows of Queen Anne homes, young Ernest let his imagination run wild as he joined his sisters in exploring the nearby wooded hills or camping at Murphy's Point. Across the lake from *Windemere*, Olds' Sawmill operated until about 1911. Sister Marcelline described the perfume-like smell of freshly cut hemlocks. Touring the mill, Marcelline and Ernest were treated by its skilled and kindly cook to a doughnut or a sugar cookie. At the camp, they rode barefoot atop a pile of high-stacked lumber transported on a tram railway by horse-drawn flatcars, a four-mile ride to the dock at Horton Bay.

Nearly a mile east from *Windemere*, the Hemingway children visited Indian Camp, a former lumber camp where Ojibwa families lived in old outbuildings, or "shanties." In summer, the women picked berries, selling them door-to-door for 15 cents a quart. Ernest's sister Madelaine, five years younger and known as Sunny, claimed to have "loved" the smell of the Indian Camp, which Hemingway's fictional Nick Adams describes as a "sick sweet smell," smoky, sometimes odorous of sweet grass that lingered long after its inhabitants departed.

Nick Adams describes the Ojibwa as being "very nice." At the camp, men cut and stripped the hemlock bark used in the industrial tanning



PHOTO: JOHN COHASSEY

Jesperson's Restaurant on Howard Street in Petoskey, reputed to be Hemingway's favorite eatery.



PHOTO: JOHN COHASSEY

Porter's Rooming House at 602 State Street, Petoskey. Hemingway stayed here in the fall and winter of 1919-1920.

Park friends, or to those gathered around his bedside in Red Cross hospitals during the First World War.

In his increasing interest in sex and other pastimes forbidden by the family, Ernest joined a new generation in challenging the manners and morals of his upper-middle-class parents — Victorians who expected their children to become educated and employed in a respectable profession. By 1915, Ernest, aged 14, began sleeping outside the cottage in a tent or at a friend's family cottage. He was still the dutiful son, working at chores and at the farm the family had purchased across the lake. But Grace, who had once dressed her son girlishly to look like Marcelline's twin, seemed to be losing touch with the teenage Ernest, as did her husband, once admired by Ernest as a skillful outdoorsman. Eventually Clarence took longer summer respites from Windemere. Though he claimed this time alone in Oak Park was needed to settle his nerves and to earn more income, he was suffering from severe bouts of depression, which Ernest perceived not as mental illness but as a weakness in character resulting from Grace's domineering personality.

As he had since a child, Ernest summered with his family until 1917, the year of America's entry into World War I. Determined to join this cause, Hemingway missed coming north in 1918 while serving in the Red Cross ambulance service on the Italian front.

Ernest returned to Michigan in 1919 as a decorated lieutenant, still suffering from painful leg wounds caused by trench mortar and machine-gun fire, and stayed, as he had much of the summer during 1917, with one of his closest "pals," Bill Smith. Noncompetitive, witty and a good-natured listener, Smith figured fictionally in several Nick Adams stories and was a main source for *The Sun Also Rises*' Bill Gorton. Bill resided with his aunt and uncle at their Horton Bay cottage, where Ernest escaped his family — drinking, smoking Russian cigarettes, and riding to Charlevoix in Bill's Buick Six searching for "flesh pots."

To visit Bill and his sister Katy, Ernest hiked four miles to the former lumber town of Horton Bay. Fishing-obsessed, Hemingway, during his apprentice years, cast his line in nearby School Creek and Bear Creek not far from Brethren, and caught trout on Horton Creek's marshy banks. Using a technique learned from a local Native American, he fished with "baited whole skinned perch," yielding a large catch.

Later in 1919, he joined friends on fishing trips, packing a tent, a rifle and some food, often taking local trains and reaching the river destinations on foot. Southeast of Horton Bay, they visited "the Pine Barrens," an area today called Pigeon River County for its once large

of hide. Sunny recalled shouts of "Timber!" as Ojibwa men urged the children to clear the way. After bark-stripping season, lasting from May to July, the Ojibwa sold their product at \$3 to \$5 a cord to Shaw's Tannery in Boyne City, which by 1907 produced 6 million pounds of shoe leather annually (Petoskey had a small tannery as well). The Hemingway children also watched the women making baskets from sweet grass and porcupine quills. This ancient woodland Indian art involved the sewing of the colored vegetable-dyed quills that were "moistened in the mouth and flattened by being pulled out by the teeth or with special bone flatteners."

One of the most captivating Native American-inspired events was the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad-sponsored "Hiawatha Indian Play," presented at nearby Wa-ya-ga-mug on Round Lake. Based upon Longfellow's 1855 poem, this pageant production in the woods — complete with a man-made cliff — had an all-Native-American cast, originally featuring participants from the Garden River Reserve, Ontario. The pageant ran from July through September (1905-1917), entertaining vacationers in the wooden grandstand with dances, storytelling and songs, before Hiawatha, his canoe pulled by an underwater cable, miraculously departed alone into the sunset without the use of a paddle. As ersatz as the play seems, it impressed one local Native American who recalled it as "beautiful. They had real Indians playing the parts. They had their real Indian costumes and they had canoes going across the water." Apart from the play, Wa-ya-ga-mug catered to every tourist taste — water sports, tennis and croquet, a hotel, rented wigwags, a restaurant, and an "Indian workshop" where tourists watched Ottawa and Ojibwa making rustic furniture and other various items. (In high school Ernest wrote an unpublished "passion play," "No Worst than a Bad Cold," based upon the Hiawatha play and Native Americans he met in the area.)

Although the Hiawatha play thrilled the Hemingway children, Ernest soon saw the Native Americans' severe poverty, with the lumber industry no longer offering employment. Nick Adams describes Native Americans' stereotypical thirst for alcohol — those who lay drunk on the roadside, or passed out on railroad tracks. A Native American named Simon Green sometimes accompanied Ed and Ernest for rifle shooting practice. The Native Americans referred to Dr. Hemingway, much revered by his son for being a crack shot, as "Eagle Eye," and they considered him a friend for his treating without charge many of the locals in Indian Camp. A born storyteller, Hemingway made much of his supposed first sexual encounter with a Native American girl, Prudence Boulton. What may have occurred between him and the sister of friend Rich Boulton is debated still; nonetheless, Ernest's claim reveals a writer's necessity for creating myths around him. Hemingway's telling of how he lost his virginity to an Indian girl in the northern woods no doubt sounded exotic to his Oak

passenger pigeon population. The Barrens were home to some of Hemingway's favorite rivers — the Sturgeon, the Black and the Pigeon. When fishing the Sturgeon, Hemingway often took the train and camped at the village of Wolverine, lying 19 miles north of Gaylord in Cheboygan County. He reached his favorite, the Black River — reputed at this time as having Michigan's best brook trout stream — by Vanderbilt Road from Gaylord "and camped where the Black crosses Tin Shanty Road."

Though Hemingway wrote his friends that the Pine Barrens could be easily traversed by car through open land nearly free of underbrush, pictures from the period reveal the area to be more difficult to travel than Ernest claimed. To help lure his friends north, Ernest wrote Howell Jenkins that "the Barrens Country is the greatest I've ever been in and there are some great camping places on the Black." To another friend, Jim Gamble, he lauded the area as "a great place to laze around and swim and fish when you want to. And the best place in the world to do nothing. It's great country ..." In 1919 Ernest rode in Bill Smith's Buick through the Barrens (at this time the area was being set aside as a 105,000-acre National Forest).

That September, Ernest joined two high school friends on a fishing trip to the Fox and Little Fox Rivers in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, an excursion that later served as the basis for the brilliant short story "Big Two-Hearted River." They reached the Fox by first stopping in Seney. A once-thriving lumber town about halfway between Newberry and Munsing, Seney experienced an economic boom when the Alger Smith Company logged the area in the 1880s. A decade later, lumbering turned the region's forest into a landscape of stumps that burned before the First World War.

Whether by way of newspaper stories about Seney's lawless frontier — "one of the toughest places" in Michigan — or tales told to him, Ernest was aware of its reputation. Getting off at Seney's train station he encountered a quiet, desolate place, with few buildings remaining from the hotels, saloons, houses of prostitution, and stores that once lined its streets. The trio of young fishermen inspected the ruins of the Grondin Hotel, which had burned the previous summer. Hemingway's first unpublished draft of "Big Two-Hearted River" had the sojourners view the ruined hotel's "twisted iron work, melted to hard rust," and peering inside a charred cabinet of heat-damaged rifle barrels and cartridges forming "a solid mass of copper." But the Grondin Hotel, unlike the story's fictional Mansion Hotel, hadn't been engulfed in a blaze ravaging the countryside (a cigarette-ignited mattress reportedly had caused its destruction).

From Seney, the young fishermen likely walked north along the railroad tracks, camping the first day of this week-long trip, as Hemingway scholar Jack Jobst notes, "two miles above Seney, where the East Branch of the Fox cuts across a railroad embankment." The rest of the trip was spent in an area north of the town. There they fished the Fox and Little Fox, which in some places is 25 to 30 feet wide with a sand or fine-gravel bottom. In "Big-Two Hearted River," Hemingway made the trip a solitary excursion rather than one shared among old friends. And by the time of Hemingway's writing it 1924, he had made the transition from sharp-eyed reporter to literary artist, poetically substituting for the Fox, the name of the Big Two-Hearted River, which lies beyond Tahquamenon Falls and flows into Lake Superior.

When the Hemingways closed up Windemere in late fall of 1919, Ernest stayed behind for several weeks with Jim and Elizabeth Dilworth in Horton Bay. Jim — a stout, mustached hard-cider drinker — owned Dilworth's Black Smith Shop, a red-painted saltbox-style building along the road in Horton Bay. Ernest also admired Jim's wife Elizabeth, aka "Auntie Beth," proprietor of Horton Bay's Pinehurst Inn, noted among tourists for her excellent 50-cent chicken dinners. One local recalled how Elizabeth performed "magic on her cast-iron stove with chicken and dumplings and gravy, vegetables from her garden out back, and fresh bread and desserts way out of the ordinary." A nonpaying Pinehurst guest, Ernest occupied a bunk in the annex shed off the big kitchen, where he read and wrote letters to friends.

Unknown to the Dilworths, they inspired the characters of Hemingway's short story centered around the brutal seduction of a waitress on the hemlock-plank dock of Horton Bay. Not published until 1923, "Up in Michigan" shocked Ernest's mother and sister Marcelline in its obvious description of the Dilworths, and the use their first names, in a story of a rape-seduction committed by the fictional Jim.

Back at his parents' Oak Park home in October, Ernest, writing unsuccessfully, quickly returned north and stayed at the Pinehurst Inn until Elizabeth closed the inn for the season. Following a lead of a newspaper advertisement, he rented a second-floor room in Petoskey at the widow Evva Potter's rooming house — furnished with a wrought iron bed, chest of drawers and a small desk. With the assistance of a local friend, Edwin "Dutch" Pailthorp, son of a prominent lawyer and judge, Ernest placed a keg of apple cider in his room near the radiator, fortifying its contents with cracked corn and raisins for the making of hard cider. On a typewriter loaned to him by Bill Smith, Ernest wrote commercially oriented stories subsequently rejected by the popular magazine market.

One of Petoskey's 13 grand resort hotels, the 100-room Hotel Perry — Ernest once stayed there after a 1916 hiking trip — became one of the young writer's nighttime destinations. (Brick constructed, the Hotel Perry is the only Petoskey resort hotel to survive destruction by fire or demolition.) Without the summer tourist crowds, Ernest felt he could begin to write seriously here, and he made some money shoveling gravel for the county. He wore old shoes and pants, a visored cap, and a sheepskin-lined black leather jacket, hanging around Petoskey in the afternoons often waiting for a girlfriend. He spent time reading newspapers in the local library, a Carnegie-funded neo-classical building, well stocked with books.

In his second-floor room he conceived the basis for the short story "The Killers," in which Ole Anderson, "The Swede," stoically lies in bed awaiting the hit men who are out to kill him. After writing in the morning, Hemingway usually ate at the Grill Café Arlington Jewelers, opposite the suburban train station. The Grill Café served whitefish, lake trout, frog legs, soft-shell crabs and lobster — though Jespersen's Restaurant on Howard Street was reputed to be Hemingway's favorite eatery for its home-style cooking.

Petoskey was the setting for Hemingway's *Torrents of Spring* (1926), a short work of satire, largely targeting Sherwood Anderson, Gertrude Stein and other modernist writers, and also mocked the ineffective use of the narrative flashback. Set in winter and early spring, *Torrents* describes the "sunset over Petoskey Harbor, the lake now frozen and great blocks of ice jutting up over the breakwater." *Torrents'* Scripps O'Neil sees through the window of McCarthy's Barbershop white-jacketed barbers at work. This establishment in the Flatiron building on Howard Street, according to local lore, offered Ernest good conversation and magazines to read. Also on Howard

Street, the New Braun Hotel and Restaurant served as a center point of *Torrents* in the fictional guise of "Brown's Beanery," advertised as "Best by Test."

In mid-December 1919, the winter setting of *Torrents*, Hemingway spoke at a Petoskey Library-sponsored Ladies' Aid Society event. In a wood-trimmed library room, his back to a fireplace, he stood before his audience dressed in his Italian uniform, recounting his war experiences. At this event, he met a wife of the wealthy "dime-store mogul," Ralph Connable, who lived in Canada. This meeting led to a job in Toronto looking after the Connable's teenage son. Through his employer's intercession, Hemingway's was hired by the *Toronto Star*, and during that winter and spring, he contributed a number of articles.

His job having ended with the Connables, Ernest returned to Windemere in June 1920, riding in Bill Smith's car, most likely taking a two-to-three-day trip on the West Michigan Pike. The Pike road stretched 500 miles near Lake Michigan, from South Bend to Benton Harbor, Ludington, Manistee, Traverse City, Charlevoix, Petoskey, and Mackinaw City. Traveling this route, Hemingway and his friends defiantly broke the Prohibition ban on alcohol with little fear of being caught, in that, as he wrote Howell Jenkins, "I don't believe cars are searched at all."

Much to his parent's disappointment, Ernest hung out with friends and still refused to attend college, notably Grace's choice of Oberlin. Not one to have tolerated much tension when dealing with children, Grace demanded respect from her insolent son; and, despite Ernest's experiences as reporter for the *Kansas City Star* and the *Toronto Star Weekly*, his parents did not take him seriously as a writer.

Clarence's long absence from Windemere during the summer of 1920 — while he devoted more time to his medical practice — left Grace to deal with the defiant Ernest. Both strong-minded and artistic, mother and son harshly criticized each other. Perhaps even more outraged than his wife, Clarence wrote letters demanding that Ernest leave the cottage and find employment beyond Horton Bay. Five days after Ernest's birthday on July 21, 1920, he and Ted Brumback joined several women, including Hemingway sisters Ursula and Sunny, and Elizabeth Loomis — in a late-night picnic at Ryan's Point on Walloon Lake. After a failed search for the missing youths, and their coming home in the late-night hours, an outraged Grace placed much of the blame on Ernest, giving him a letter — Clarence thought it her most masterfully composed — voicing her expectations and disappointments, and banishing him from Windemere until he showed respect for his parents and got a job.

This generational standoff symbolized a rebelliousness that Hemingway would flaunt in art and life, helping to shape the 1920s rebel image. To the incorrigible Ernest, this "kicking out business," as he called it, intensified his contempt for his mother, who biographer Kenneth Lynn called "the dark queen of Hemingway's inner world." The banishment came as a welcome break from his parents' stultifying values.

Taking refuge in Horton Bay, the carefree writer spent summer days camping, hunting or irresponsibly shooting glass insulators off electric poles. In letters, he invited friends north to hunt and fish, loaf and laze in the good air, and enjoy campfires under the moonlight. Hemingway thought of returning to Italy, traveling to Asian ports, or possibly exploring America. "I hate buzzing all over Europe when there is so much of my own country I haven't seen," he wrote a friend. "I get so darned much fun out of working on a paper and writing and I like this country ... But then — it's all in the lap of the Gods."

Ernest made the best of his last Michigan summers. Ernest lured friends Ted Brumback, Jacques Pentecost, Howell Jenkins and Dick Smale north in August 1920, for a six-day trip to the Pine Barrens by way of a rented car and trailer. At dusk they cooked their daily catch by campfire, and during the moonlit evenings sang to Brumback's mandolin, until falling asleep near the campfire's dying coals.

Fall approached. With no source of steady employment, Hemingway weighed his options, telling a friend jokingly that he would "have to go to work in the cement plant," a reference to the newly constructed Portland Cement Company plant south of Petoskey. After his father closed Windemere in October, Ernest stayed for a time in Horton Bay picking apples at the Charles Farm, before riding south with Bill Smith to Chicago.

Confident of becoming a writer, Hemingway scrambled for work while rooming with Bill Horne in Chicago and later with Bill Smith's brother, Y.K. In late October 1920, he met Hadley Richardson of St. Louis. In a much-written-about courtship, Hemingway quickly vowed to marry Hadley, while fearing matrimony would, as Carlos Baker asserted, "destroy his kind of life." In April, Ernest wrote Bill Smith about his beloved Michigan rivers: "Guy loves a couple or three streams all his life and loves one better than anything in the world — falls in love with a girl and the goddamn stream can dry up for all he cares. Only the hell of it is that the country has had a hold on me as ever."

Having a tendency to rush into amorous relationships, Ernest afforded himself little time in choosing between bachelorhood and marriage. Rather than an elaborate wedding in Oak Park or St. Louis, Ernest and Hadley decided on a Horton Bay ceremony. A few days before the wedding, Hemingway got in a short fishing trip on the Sturgeon with Howell Jenkins and Charlie Hopkins. Ernest and Hadley, joined by family and friends, were married on Sept. 3, 1921, at the Horton Bay Methodist Church. A Champagne brunch was then served at the Pinehurst Inn, and the couple honeymooned at Windemere.

With a job as a *Toronto Star* overseas correspondent and introductions from novelist Sherwood Anderson, Ernest and Hadley then went to Paris. In *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), Hemingway hints at the end of something in his own life. Lieutenant Henry, while lodging in an Italian barn, remarks: "We had lain in hay and talked and shot sparrows with an air-rifle when they perched in the triangle cut high up in the wall of the barn. The barn was gone now and one year they had cut the hemlock woods and there were only stumps, dried treetops, branches and fireweed where the woods had been. You could not go back."

What is more certain is that Michigan's river country never left the man. In 1928, when his second wife Pauline was pregnant with their son, Patrick, Ernest initially wanted to have the baby delivered at a northern Michigan hospital — a decision opposed by Clarence, who

insisted on a major hospital that afforded better care. Several years later Hemingway revealed his longing for Michigan in *The Green Hills of Africa* (1935), when his autobiographical character marvels at the East African sky, claiming it equal in beauty only to those of Italy, Spain, and the autumn skies of Cuba and northern Michigan.

In the mid-1930s, Grace — widowed and in financial straits — sold her beloved Oak Park home, and then deeded Windemere to Ernest. In 1937, Windemere's now overprotective owner reminded his sister Marcelline, in a harshly worded letter, of his sole ownership and laid down the law concerning who stayed at the cottage. In the same letter, written from Key West, where the keys to Windemere were kept in a desk drawer, he spoke of traveling to Michigan that summer, a trip he never made.

In 1947, on his way to Sun Valley, Idaho, Ernest stopped overnight in Petoskey with a friend. His return became local lore in the 1950s, as have the many apocryphal sightings over the years. This world-famous author held firm to his connection with the "Last Good Country." During the 1950s, when Sunny lived at Windemere, Ernest wrote her instructions about his authorized repairs and said "not to sell it unless you need the money for food."

After Hemingway's suicide in 1961, his fourth wife, Mary Welsh Hemingway, deeded Windemere to Sunny, with the provision that her son, Ernie Mainland, be given survivorship rights. Upon Sunny's death in 1995, Mainland, a Petoskey native, moved into the cottage, much of which is original — its wood paneling, Grace's portrait of Ernest hanging by the fireplace, and the many books read by the Hemingway children.

See a review of [Picturing Hemingway's Michigan](#) by Michael R. Federspiel (Wayne State University Press/Painted Turtle), in which some of these pictures appear.

View [Hemingway's Michigan](#) in a larger map

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