



Horton Creek where Hemingway learned to fish

## Grosse Pointer hunts Hemingway haunts in Michigan

By: Kath Usitalo 05.12.2012

Before Ernest Hemingway sold a story or published a novel, before the bullfights, deep-sea fishing, Paris, Havana and the Keys, before he was "Papa," there was Petoskey.



A young Ernest hung out at the Horton Bay General Store near his family's Windemere cottage on Walloon Lake.

The northern Michigan resort community was the summertime retreat for Dr. Clarence Hemingway, his wife Grace and their five children, including Ernie, from 1899 when they built a cottage on what is now called Walloon Lake.

Ernie spent 18 summers at Windemere, and on a tour of the area I began to understand what a lasting impression that time and place had on the future Nobel Prize winning author. Northern Michigan is where he roamed the woods, learned to love the outdoors, to hunt and fish. Ernest sought refuge there after being wounded in Italy during World War I. In 1921 he married his first wife, Hadley Richardson, in a local church and honeymooned at Windemere. Hemingway's youthful adventures in Michigan, the people he met and places he knew appear in his short stories and novels.

They are the fabric of Petoskey Yesterday tours, which offer well-researched information, anecdotes and insights into local history and the Hemingway family connection. The company was co-founded by Christopher Struble, a local business owner and Hemingway aficionado, and Michael Federspiel, a Central Michigan

University history professor, president of the Michigan Hemingway Society and author of the book "Picturing Hemingway's Michigan." Federspiel, who is executive director of the Little Traverse History Museum, says, "You can't think of Key West or Ketchum (Idaho) or Cuba without thinking of Hemingway. Really, there are more stories here (in Northern Michigan)."

Tours begin at Struble's business, Arlington Jewelers, where a corner of the store is dedicated to the sale of Hemingway-related books, magazines, movie posters and historic photos of the area. The shop is in the heart of Petoskey's pastel painted Gaslight District where restaurants, galleries and boutiques have catered to the tourist trade since the late 1800s, after the lumber boom went bust and local businessmen re-imagined the area as a vacation destination. It appealed to city dwellers that headed north aboard Great Lakes steamships or trains to enjoy the clean air and pristine waters of the Little Traverse Bay region. By the early 1900s Petoskey had 6,000 residents and 125,000 summer visitors, the Hemingways among them.

### **Just Another Lad**

Ernie would not have attracted any undue attention as he fished Horton Creek, made friends with the Ojibway at their Indian Camp or caroused with other young people in the village of Horton Bay. Years later Hemingway would tap those experiences for his semi-autobiographical Nick Adams Stories but, says Federspiel, "When he was here he wasn't famous. There was no indication he would be famous."

After the writer gained notoriety, says Strubel, "Everyone has a Hemingway story. All of a sudden Hemingway slept here, ate here, drank here..." But on Petoskey Yesterday tours, "We articulate what we know for a fact."

Tours can be adapted to the level of interest, with more literary references for Hemingway fans and biographical information for those who need an introduction. Our excursion accommodated my curiosity and cursory knowledge of the writer with a combination of "The Hemingways' Petoskey" and "Nick Adams' Country" tours. The outing requires a bit of walking around town and a drive to Walloon Lake and other outlying locations.

### **Familiar Places**

Sites in Petoskey associated with the adult Hemingway and the 1926 novella "The Torrents of Spring" include Stafford's Perry Hotel, last of the grand Victorian-era lodgings; the rooming house where Ernie stayed when he returned from Italy; the Carnegie Library; Jesperson's Restaurant, likely the setting for his story "Killers;" and City Park Grill, known as the Annex when Hemingway claimed a stool at the 32' foot-long mahogany bar.

We drive to Walloon Lake but don't approach Windemere, the private residence of Hemingway's nephew. (He opens it on rare occasions like the June 17-22 Hemingway Society Conference when attendees may visit the property; see info below.) By the time we roll into tiny Horton Bay I begin to feel the Hemingway vibe, probably because the village looks much like it did during Ernie's day.

The Methodist Church where he married Hadley Richardson in 1921 is gone but still standing are Shangri-La cottage, where the groom and his men stayed the night before the marriage and Pinehurst cottage, scene of the post-wedding breakfast. At the white clapboard Horton Bay General Store we climb the steps Hemingway lounged on, and The Red Fox Inn next door, once known for its chicken dinners, is filled with Hemingway books and memorabilia.

Our last stop is a short drive away at a nature preserve. We follow a footpath to the clear, rippling current of Horton Creek where young Ernie fished at the stream. As we take in the quiet beauty of the woods and sparkling water I think of that lad, what his future held, and the memories of Michigan he carried with him the rest of his days.

### **TIPS TO GO**

#### **Petoskey Yesterday Historic and Hemingway Tours**

Tours are offered year round and cost \$15 and \$20 per person; reserve by calling 231-330-9657

[www.petoskeyyesterday.com](http://www.petoskeyyesterday.com) (<http://www.petoskeyyesterday.com>)

**Hemingway Up In Michigan:** 15<sup>th</sup> Biennial Hemingway Society Conference, June 17-22, 2012 is open to members of The Hemingway Society (membership is open to all, \$25 to \$45 per year).

Conference information: [www.mhs2012.com/](http://www.mhs2012.com/) (<http://www.mhs2012.com/>)

Hemingway Society: <http://hemingwaysociety.org> (<http://hemingwaysociety.org>)

#### **Little Traverse History Museum**

The Hemingway exhibit is the main attraction in this 1892 train depot. The museum is open from Memorial Weekend through September, but visits may be arranged at other times by calling 231-347-2620.

[www.petoskeymuseum.org](http://www.petoskeymuseum.org) (<http://www.petoskeymuseum.org>)

**Petoskey Area Convention & Visitors Bureau**, 800-845-2828 [www.petoskeyarea.com](http://www.petoskeyarea.com) (<http://www.petoskeyarea.com>)

**Travel Michigan**, 888-784-7328 [www.michigan.org](http://www.michigan.org) (<http://www.michigan.org>)

*Kath Usitalo of Grosse Pointe Woods writes about Michigan at her [Great Lakes Gazette](http://greatlakesgazette.wordpress.com/) (<http://greatlakesgazette.wordpress.com/>) and explores other areas *On the Offbeat Path*.*

Back to

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