A Man of the World

Travel, Inspiration and the Works of Hemingway

Exhibit Curator: Sara Metz
A Man of the World: Travel, Inspiration and the Works of Hemingway

“The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page”
- St. Augustine

When Ernest Hemingway stepped on board the Chicago in May of 1918 to travel to Europe as an ambulance driver on the Italian front of World War I, he had no idea how greatly his life would change on his return. After that momentous journey, he realized the power of travel and contracted a case of wanderlust that would lead him to travel the world throughout the remainder of his life.

These journeys provided the fodder for some of Hemingway’s greatest works, both fiction and non-fiction. Originally a journalist, he maintained an eye for places, people and situations, turning real events into works of exquisite fiction or describing them with exacting precision in his numerous dispatches and true-life works.

There have been numerous exhibitions dedicated to Hemingway, which is fitting for an author of his stature. None, however, have focused on the impact his travels had on his writing. Some, in fact, have attempted to eliminate them from the equation and focus only on his “pure” literature. Yet to do so is to overlook their deep impact on his work and lose the ability to view those works with the added dimension of that knowledge.

The goal of this exhibition is to reveal the influence, both obvious and unseen, of Hemingway’s favorite destinations on the novels, stories and articles that continue to engross and educate. Particular attention has been paid to his non-fiction works, which are lesser known but equally engaging, and often show more of Hemingway’s personality than is discernible in his fictional works.

Through personal letters and photographs, manuscripts and first editions, Hemingway’s words are revealed to be not a creation of pure imagination, but an extension of his life experience, a recounting of events in his inimitable voice.

His adage was “good writing is true writing.” Hemingway believed that all writers benefitted from experience, that “the more he learns from experience, the more truly he can imagine.”
*A Man of the World* is divided into five sections, each representing a locale that formed an important part of Hemingway’s life and works. These locations are Spain, Africa, Key West and the Caribbean, Italy and the American West. Each section contains a collection of materials relating to his experiences, his literary works supplemented by personal materials.

In the physical exhibition, the five locales will be represented by a different, complementary color scheme to create clear divisions between each section. The walls will have the outlines of period maps as a background, and large blow-ups of the various exhibition photographs and Hemingway quotations will be placed strategically around the exhibition to draw attention to the individual displays.

Within each section, letters and photographs will be displayed in eye level cases mounted on the wall. Manuscripts, first edition books and magazines will be properly mounted and displayed within table cases. The display cases will be lushly designed with location specific fabrics and art objects to promote an engage the attention of visitors.

Lighting will be kept within conservation standards, but also designed to draw attention to the individual display cases. To engage the sense of sound, a medley of generic world music representing the various locations will be played at a low volume throughout the exhibit. Finally, an interactive element will be provided at the end of the exhibit through a computer terminal set up to send e-cards using public domain photographs of Hemingway.

Beyond the exhibition, there will be numerous opportunities for a variety of programming. Already planned are a series of academic lectures on Hemingway’s work, performances of theatrical adaptations of his short stories, and presentations on bull-fighting, big game hunting and sport fishing.

It is my desire that this exhibit will bring Hemingway to life for a new generation, not only as an author, but as a journalist, sportsman, soldier, and above all, traveler. I hope that visitors take away not just an appreciation for his works, but an understanding of how his life experiences shaped his life and made Hemingway the man he was.

Sara Metz, Exhibit Curator

“He knew that he was at home but that he had also traveled.”
- Ernest Hemingway, “The Good Lion”
Spain

Spain and its people were near and dear to Hemingway’s heart throughout his entire life. After describing a raucous train ride from Pamplona to Madrid, Hemingway noted that “Spaniards are the only people.” Many of his well-known novels take place there, bringing the country to vibrant life on the page. His love of the country led Hemingway to travel there as a journalist during the Spanish Civil War, determined to describe the travails of the nation to the world. Yet it is a lesser-known non-fiction work that best describes Hemingway’s relationship with Spain. In the last chapter of Death in the Afternoon, he laments, “If I could have made this enough of a book it would have had everything in it. What else should it contain about a country you love very much?”


Pamplona is most famous for the encierro, or running of the bulls, but that event is followed by a bull fight using unarmed amateurs instead of professional matadors. Hemingway participated as a young man and returned to the city often.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH 789IP.

2. Ernest Hemingway to Maxwell Perkins
Paris, 6 December 1926

“All that racing of the bulls through the streets and the people running ahead and into the ring, amateurs being tossed, the bulls charging into the crowd etc., really happens every morning between the 7th and 12th of July...the rush of people coming into the ring, coming faster and faster and then finally falling all over themselves and piling up and the bulls jamming over them...”
Written to Hemingway’s long-time editor and friend Maxwell Perkins, this letter describes his work on the book that would eventually become *Death in the Afternoon*. Of interest is the mention of films made by the Hemingways of both professional and amateur bull fights; these films, if still extant, remain lost.

Princeton University Library Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Collection CO365, Box 8, Folder 25

3. Ernest Hemingway to Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas
   Madrid, 15 July 1925.

   “This afternoon is the big Corrida de la Prensa with Nino de la Palma...he stepped out all by himself without any tricks – suave, templando with the cape, smooth and slow...and then killed perfectly. [We] had a bull dedicated to us and Hadley got the ear given to her...”

   In this letter to Stein and Toklas, good friends and members of the Parisian expatriate community, Hemingway describes his family’s visit to Madrid, including trips to the Prado and the bull fights. The events of this trip to Spain influenced the writing of *The Sun Also Rises*.

   Yale University, Beinecke Library, Collection VCAL MSS 76, Box 110, Folder 2240

4. Ernest and Hadley Hemingway at a café with friends, Pamplona, Spain, 1925.

   Both Ernest and his first wife Hadley were fans of the Spanish bull fighting circuit and became close friends with many of the period’s most famous matadors. As a result, they brought many of their friends from the Parisian expatriate community to Spain for the fights.

   JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH5734P

5. *Death in the Afternoon*, pencil manuscript fragment beginning, “It is a strange country, Spain...” pp. 74-76, 74. 4 pp.
Hemingway began work on *Death in the Afternoon* after his first trips to the Spanish bull fights, but it remained a work in progress for nearly a decade. His goal in this non-fiction work was to introduce the sport and art of bull fighting to the English speaking world.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, Manuscript 24a


During the 1920s, Hemingway spent a large portion of each year traveling around Spain, writing, hunting, fishing, and above all, learning more about the art of bull fighting, even taking time to visit nearby ranches to study the making of bulls for the ring.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH 7976P


“The man who went out with the cape in both hands, and with his arms moving the cape slowly just ahead of the bull’s horns, passing the bull’s horns close by his body with a slow movement of the cape, seeming to keep him controlled, bringing him close past his body each time as he turned and recharged; that man was the matador.”

Hemingway’s first major work of non-fiction, *Death in the Afternoon* brought the strange and medieval art of bull fighting to the attention of the rest of the world, providing an insider’s view of the ritual and religion, in what remains one of the best English language sources about the sport. According to Charles Poole, a Hemingway scholar, the Spanish did not know of a better book, even in their native language.

Harry Ransom Center, GV 1107 H4, Copy 2.
Some of Hemingway’s most famous stories dealt with his African adventures, and his exploits there helped create his public persona as fearless and larger than life. In reality, Hemingway visited Africa only twice, for a total of ten months, and on his latter trip in 1954, it seemed as though the green hills of Africa would his final resting place after two consecutive plane crashes. Yet he still loved it, and wrote of his travels there fondly. It was a land that challenged him, as a writer, as a hunter and as a traveler, and one that left a lasting impression on him and his works.


In his 1934 article for *Esquire*, Hemingway described hunting lions on foot as “exactly as dangerous as you choose to make it. The only way the danger can be removed or mitigated is by your ability to shoot, and that is as it should be.”

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH7018P.

9. Ernest Hemingway to Harvey Breit
Near Magadi, Kenya, 3 January 1954

“The lion came into the boma and killed two cows. His is outside the boma now eating one of the cows and growling. So you go, view the remains of the cows, ascertain where the water is, follow the lion out of the country. I tracked one lion down Kilimanjaro…and then (sweating) had to go back up in the rain.”

During his African trip in 1953-54, Hemingway was called upon to serve as a temporary Game Warden due to the Mau-Mau rebellion. Despite his age, he took the job seriously, traveling across Kenya to assist villagers whose livelihoods were threatened by encroaching animals, such as lions and elephants. Hemingway ends this letter: “It’s a lovely country.”

Harvard University’s Houghton Library, Collection MS Am 1791, Container 56

The well-known short story brings together descriptions of not just Africa, but also Europe and the American West, all places close to Hemingway’s heart. These descriptions are crisp and vibrant, showing his skill in bringing far-off lands to life for his readers.

Harry Ransom Center, Ernest Hemingway Collection, Box 2, Folder 7


“He saw them all standing below, waving, and the camp beside the hill, flattening now, and the plain spreading, clumps of trees, and the bush flattening, while the game trails ran now smoothly to the dry waterholes. The zebra, small rounded backs now, and the wildebeest, big headed dots seeming to climb as they moved in long fingers across the plain...”

Widely considered one of Hemingway’s finest short stories, “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” tells the tale of a writer who realizes as he is dying that his life’s work is unfulfilled. His dying vision of a leopard leading him to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro is based on a local legend, indicating the authenticity Hemingway’s travels brought to his writing.

Harry Ransom Center, Q H 373Ees 1936e

12. Ernest Hemingway with Water Buffalo

Africa, 1953

“The buffalo has courage, vindictiveness and an incredible ability to absorb punishment,” Hemingway wrote to Esquire in 1954, though he noted, “I cannot the buffalo as comparing in dangerous possibilities to either lion or leopard.”

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH266T

For Hemingway, every vacation was a working vacation. He wrote continuously on his travels, preferring to get the words down on paper immediately, then rewrite upon his return home. *Green Hills of Africa* was a non-fiction book about his 1934 African trip, while *True at First Light*, published posthumously, was a fictional memoir of his 1954 trip to Kenya.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, Manuscript 697.


“No it is pleasant to hunt something you want very much over a long period of time, being outwitted, out-maneuvered, and failing at the end of each day, but having the hunt and knowing every time you are out that, sooner or later, your luck will change and that you will get the chance that you are seeking.”

A non-fiction work based on his 1934 safari to Tanganyika (now Tanzania), *Green Hills of Africa* is not only an account of the now vanished sport of big game hunting, but also a discussion of American writing and European politics in Africa. Hemingway’s versatility as an author forms but one part of his lasting appeal.

Harry Ransom Center, PS 3515 E37 G7 1935, Copy 1

15. Ernest Hemingway with kudu and oryx skulls

*Africa*, 1934

In *The Green Hills of Africa*, Hemingway describes hunting the kudu: “There was a kudu bull on the lick when we approached and he gave a loud bark and was gone, making no noise at first, then crashing in the brush when he was well away; and we never saw him.”

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH4555P
Key West and the Caribbean

Key West served as Hemingway’s primary residence until 1939, at which point he moved permanently to La Finca Vigia, his home outside San Francisco de Paula, Cuba. Describing his home in Key West, he wrote, “It’s the best place I’ve ever been, anytime, anywhere.” His legacy remains strong in both Florida and Cuba to this day; both his Key West house and La Finca Vigia are now museums.

16. Ernest Hemingway at La Finca Vigia
San Francisco de Paula, Cuba, 1947

The “Lookout Farm”, a historic house in Cuba, served as Hemingway’s main residence from 1939 till Castro’s revolution. Both For Whom the Bell Tolls and Old Man and the Sea were written in the quiet house nine miles from the sea. It was the perfect retreat for the author, rapidly becoming famous around the world, who accepted his Nobel Prize in Literature here in 1954.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH C717T

17. Ernest Hemingway to John Dos Passos
Havana, Cuba, 30 May 1932.

“Have caught 19 Marlin Swordfish. You ought to see them strike Dos. Jump more than tarpon and fast as light – one jumped 23 times. They’re so fast they’ll jump on one side of boat then the line will go slack and you’ll think you’ve lost them and they’ll jump hell over on the other side.”

Written to close friend and fellow Lost Generation writer John Dos Passos, this letter marks the beginning of Hemingway’s lifelong affair with catching marlins. He had loved fishing from a young age, but the struggle of catching marlins, which can measure up to 13 feet in length and weigh over a thousand pounds, was irresistible to the sportsman who craved a challenge.

University of Virginia Special Collections, Collection 5950, Box 148

According to his skipper and close friend, Gregorio Fuentes, Hemingway found the roots for his most famous tale while out fishing on the *Pilar*, where he encountered an old fisherman and a boy in a small boat. Though their meeting was short, Hemingway found the beginnings of a story in the intriguing encounter.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, Manuscript 190


“The fish came out. He was bright in the sun...his sword was as long as a baseball bat and tapered like a rapier...and the old man saw the great scythe-blade of his tail go under and the line commenced to race out.”

Originally intended to be the final volume of a planned book, Hemingway soon realized that this story stood alone and chose to have it published separately. Though shorter than his earlier novels, *The Old Man and the Sea* was specifically cited during the announcement of Hemingway’s 1954 Nobel Prize.

Harry Ransom Center, PS 3515 E37 04 1952, Copy 1

20. Ernest Hemingway and Henry “Mike” Strater with “apple-cored” marlin
Bimini, Cat Cay, 1935

In 1932, Hemingway provided Mike Strater with instructions on rigging bait for use in fishing marlins, noting, “The streamers keep the bait trolling straight in water...also give motion – also give flavor and scent...” He often invited his friends to join him on expeditions, always hoping to catch a record setting fish.

JFK Presidential Library, EH 8264P

21. Ernest Hemingway to Maxwell Perkins
Key West, Florida, 7 September 1935
“We were the first in to Camp Five of the veterans who were working on the Highway construction. Out of 187 only 8 survived. Saw more dead than I’d seen in one place since the lower Piave in June of 1918.”

In this letter to his editor, Hemingway recounts the aftermath of the Labor Day Hurricane, the third most intense hurricane in recorded history. Though his family survived unscathed, there were several hundred casualties, including 259 World War I veterans working to construct the Keys Highway. Hemingway was among the first to find them.

Princeton University Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Collection 365, Box 8, Folder 26


“You're dead now brother, but who left you there in the hurricane months on the Keys where a thousand men died before you when they were building the road that's washed out now? Who left you there? And what's the punishment for manslaughter now?”

This scathing article was Hemingway’s reaction to the events of the Labor Day Hurricane, particularly the government bureaucracy that prevented the rescue of World War I veterans building the Keys highway. Hemingway believed their resulting deaths were murder on the part of the United States government.

Harry Ransom Center, Q H 373Ene 1935

23. Ernest Hemingway fishing, Key West, Florida, 1928.

Fishing was one of Hemingway’s passions from a young age, “the old, deathless thrill of the plunge of the rod.” Moving to Key West allowed him to spend most of his days fishing the waters between Key West and Cuba on his boat, the Pilar. The relationships formed with Cuban fishermen would have a lasting effect on his life and writing.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH 8124P
Hemingway first traveled to Italy in 1918, toward the end of the First World War. Despite his experiences there, he visited many times throughout his life, making many close friends. Yet his writings do not reflect his travels, but rather his wartime experiences, particularly *A Farewell to Arms* and *Across the River and Into the Trees*. With attention, however, a hint of the carefree traveler appears in his fable “The Good Lion.”

24. Ernest Hemingway Recovering
Milan, Italy, 1918

Unable to join the military due to poor eyesight, Hemingway served as an ambulance driver on the Italian front. While delivering supplies, he talked his way into a forward listening post, which was directly hit by an Austrian mortar. During the attack and subsequent gun fire, Hemingway sustained over two hundred wounds to his legs and feet. Amazingly, they were all flesh wounds; there was little lasting damage.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH 2532P

25. Ernest Hemingway to His Family
Milan, Italy, 18 August 1918

“The 227 wounds I got from the trench mortar didn’t hurt a bit at the time...my pants looked like somebody had made currant jelly in them and then punched holes to let the pulp out...They couldn’t figure out how I had walked 150 yards with a load with both knees shot through...’Oh,’ says I, ‘My captain, it is of nothing.’”

Hemingway’s letter home after his wounding in the Piave valley shows the fearlessness that would later become one of his trademarks, as well as his knack for turning his life into a story. He tells of his wounding with the same sense of action that would permeate his later works, and a hint of the humor he seemed to find in even the most desperate situations.

University of Indiana’s Lilly Library, Hemingway Mss. III
26. *A Farewell to Arms*, manuscript, pencil, notebook signed by Hemingway, pp. 588-616.

Nearly a decade after his service in Italy, Hemingway began writing this fictionalized account of his experiences. In a letter to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, Hemingway explained the delay, writing, “I was through with Europe and needed to go to America before I could write the book that happened there.”

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, Manuscript 64

27. *A Farewell to Arms*, New York, C. Scribner’s Sons, 1929

“There was flash, as a blast-furnace door is swung open, and a roar that started white and went red and on and on in a rushing wind. I tried to breathe but my breath would not come and I felt myself rush bodily out of myself and out and out and out and all the time bodily in the wind.”

*A Farewell to Arms* is widely considered to be one of the greatest novels about war ever written, but it caused controversy when first published. Banned in several cities, Hemingway found himself fighting against the expurgation of the violent but compelling scenes of war. It is the authenticity of these scenes, however, that gives the novel such power.

Harry Ransom Center, PS 3515 E37 F3, Copy 1

28. Ernest Hemingway and Agnes von Kurowsky
Milan, 1918

Agnes von Kurowksy served as a Red Cross nurse in the Milan hospital where Hemingway was treated. The two fell in love, but she ended the relationship after Hemingway returned to America. She is believed to be the inspiration for the character of Catherine Barkley in *A Farewell to Arms*.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH 2528P
29. Ernest Hemingway to Gianfranco Ivancich
La Finca Vigia, Cuba, 25 May 1956

“I suppose Cipriani’s is too crowded with the tourists and all, but will you go there and have a drink for me anyway?”

Located on the Piazza San Marco, Harry’s Bar, owned by the Cipriani family, was a favored watering hole of Hemingway’s. It appears, both named and unnamed, in several of his Italian stories.

Princeton University Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Collection CO365, Box 6, Folder 4

30. Ernest Hemingway with Pigeons in Piazza San Marco
Venice, Italy, 1954

It was in Venice that Hemingway recovered from his African plane crashes. With friends, he celebrated his survival with dry martinis from Harry’s Bar and bottles of Champagne on the terrace of the Gritti Palace.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH C355T


“He alighted in the Piazza and everyone was delighted to see him. He flew up for a moment and saw the horses still had their feet up and the Basilica looked more beautiful than a soap bubble. In Cipriani’s nothing was changed.”

Ostensibly a children’s fable, “The Good Lion” tells the story of a Venetian lion who feels he is better than the African lions because he does not partake in their bloody repasts or act in an aggressive manner. What is striking about the story, beyond its delightful descriptions of Venice, is the moral that travel changes a person, even once they are home, a lesson Hemingway knew well.

Harry Ransom Center, Q H 373Eho 1951, Copy 2
The American West

Though Hemingway grew up in suburban Oak Park, Illinois, his mind was focused on the tales of the American West. As a child, he was influenced by his father’s hunting exploits, along with those of the hero of the era, Theodore Roosevelt, whom Hemingway saw in person as a child. An avid hunter from his youth, it was inevitable that he would journey West to face its challenges. Even in his last years, his home in Idaho provided a refuge for the author; after his suicide, he was buried near the mountains that he loved.

32. Ernest Hemingway
Idaho, Undated

Hemingway traveled to the West for nearly forty years, preferring rustic surroundings on guest ranches and fishing camps. He desired a feeling of being tied to the land, a low key life unlike his more public endeavors in Key West and Cuba. This was a place for Hemingway and his family and friends, without interference from journalists and tourists.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH 4074P

33. Ernest Hemingway to Henry “Mike” Strater
Nordquist Ranch, Wyoming, 10 September 1930

“Hunting in the mountains is more damned fun than anything you can imagine. I can guaranty you shots at elk, deer, bear and Big horn sheep – wonderful rainbow trout fishing – all on fly. This is the most beautiful country you ever saw.”

Throughout the 1930s, Hemingway and his family made regular trips to the L Bar T guest ranch in the Clark Valley. During this stay, Hemingway worked on Death in the Afternoon in between “head clearing” bouts of hunting and fishing, finding the isolation conducive to his writing.

Princeton University Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Collection CO365, Box 12, Folder 19

Though this story is set in the Wyoming, it incorporates a great deal of French. While Hemingway was fluent in spoken French, he was wary of his written skills and asked his friend Lewis Galantière, the French playwright and journalist, to correct his errors before publication.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, Manuscript 837


“Across the plain we could see the mountains. They were blue that day, and the snow on the high mountains shone like glass. The summer was ending, but the new snow had not yet come to stay on the high mountains; there was only the old sun-melted snow and the ice, and from a long way away it shone very brightly.”

“Wine of Wyoming” was one of Hemingway’s written from life stories, based loosely on a 1928 visit to Sheridan, Wyoming, where he met a French couple who operated a speakeasy selling home-brewed wine and beer. Afterward, he was determined to write a story about the “cleanliness and order” of these simple people who made the wine of Wyoming.

Harry Ransom Center, PS 3515 E37 W35, Copy 2

36. Ernest and Mary Hemingway in front of Sun Valley Lodge
   Idaho, 1947

After meeting Mary, his fourth wife, Ernest began staying in Sun Valley, Idaho, an upscale resort town more fitting to his status as a world-renowned author. It was here that he finished For Whom The Bell Tolls. In honor of his father, Jack Hemingway worked to preserve the nearby wilderness where his father hunted and fished.

JFK Presidential Library, Collection 104, EH 4972P
37. Ernest Hemingway to Gianfranco Ivancich  
Ketchum, Idaho, 7 January 1959

“The country was beautiful all fall until this snow finally came. You would love the high open valleys – beautiful streams with trout and some with salmon in the spring.”

Hunting big game became impossible for Hemingway in his last years, but he continued to fish and hunt local game birds. He followed a routine of rising early, writing until noon, then heading outside for hunting or fishing, by which point the sun had warmed the ground.

Princeton University Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Collection CO365, Box 6, Folder 5


“You could remember all the hunting and all the fishing and the riding in the summer sun and the dust of the pack-train; then there was the winter; the trees bare now, the snow blowing so you could not see, and the sharp, warming taste of whiskey when you hit the ranch and changed your clothes in front of the big open fireplace. It’s a good country.”

This short, non-fiction piece published in Vogue is simple and absorbing, written in the second person, bringing the reader into Hemingway’s experiences in Wyoming. One of his greatest achievements was dispatching a pair of grizzly bears who had been caught killing cattle on nearby ranches.

Harry Ransom Center, Q H 373Evo 1939
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