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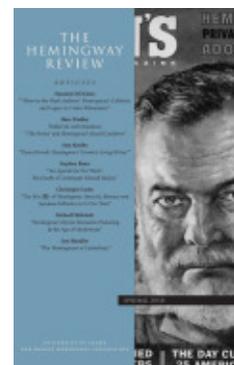
## Waldo Peirce and Ernest Hemingway: Mirror Images

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WALDO PEIRCE AND  
ERNEST HEMINGWAY:  
MIRROR IMAGES

WILLIAM GALLAGHER

*Bangor, Maine*

IN JUNE 1941, Waldo Peirce wrote to Archibald MacLeish: “I am writing or just starting to write a book for Max Perkins, my classmate. Eighteen months of fruitless gestation [I] have too many archives, letters, etc. an embarrassment of epistolary riches and bitches.” Perkins, an editor at Scribner’s, had already advanced \$500 to Peirce, yet despite Perkins’s repeated pleadings the autobiography was never finished.

While no Peirce autobiography or biography exists one can offer a focused sketch of Peirce and Hemingway’s intertwining lives and their long-lasting friendship. Their lives were truly mirror images in many respects. Waldo [everyone called him Waldo] was an American artist, World War I ambulance driver, wit, raconteur, sportsman, and life-long buddy of Hemingway, an accomplishment not shared by many from the Paris days. Both men were remarkable presences in a room, regaling others with ribald tales, great stories, and vivid word pictures. Their six-foot frames were as impressive as their artistic talents.

Waldo was born in Bangor, Maine on 17 December 1884, making him 15 years older than Hemingway. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bangor was the lumber capital of the world, and both his mother’s and father’s families were owners of vast tracts of timberland. Waldo’s father supported Waldo financially throughout his life, but it was his mother’s emotional support—her love, zest for life, sparkling humor, avid encouragement, and unending curiosity—that really sustained and nurtured Waldo.

Anna, his mother, was an accomplished linguist, traveler, photographer, and up until her death in 1928 seemed to write to Waldo just about every

other day. This voluminous correspondence is a treasure chest for any biographer. The vast majority of their letters and memorabilia are housed at the Library of Congress.

Waldo was an extremely bright lad yet a rather indifferent student, attending a number of prep schools and taking six years to graduate from Harvard in 1909. In 1910 he hopped a cattle boat bound for Europe with John Reed (the only American buried in the Kremlin and sort of immortalized by Warren Beatty in the movie *Reds*). Waldo was not too keen on the accommodations, so he jumped overboard in Boston Harbor and this feat began the larger-than-life legend of Waldo (Brown 20). The details of this event seemed to change with each telling of the tale, not unlike what happened to many Hemingway tales over the years.

Waldo lived in Paris and France off and on for the next 20 years. He studied at the Academy Julian and in Spain with Ignacio Zuloaga, a Spanish Impressionist. In Spain he met his first wife, a fellow art student named Dorothy Rice. They married in 1913. Dorothy was a crackerjack of a lady—highly spirited, a motorcycle rider, and an aviatrix—but unfortunately her mother remained very prominent in her life, prompting Waldo to refer to his mother-in-law as “the umbilicus” (Brown 24). Waldo cut off this marriage and the umbilicus in 1918. Later, referring to Dorothy’s wealth and social status (both greater than his), Waldo would often recite some doggerel: “When Dorothy dropped from the womb, and forty reporters were in the room” (Hayford Peirce Jr.). Like Hemingway, Waldo would marry four times.

Waldo found early success in Paris with his impressionist paintings as well as with commissions for portraits. Early in his career he showed a remarkable sensitivity and eventually his palette was filled with vibrant colors. In 1915 in New York City his works were exhibited along with those of John Sloan, George Bellows, and Edward Hopper. Waldo wrote his mother on 8 March 1915: “Bellows is perhaps the best in America just now. I don’t think any human could have had more success than I for the short time I’ve painted. It is only a question of time before I make money in some quantity.” The San Francisco Museum of Art owns Bellows’s portrait of his friend Waldo. The location of Peirce’s portrait of Bellows is not known.

World War I interrupted his career. Waldo volunteered for the American Field Service Ambulance Corps in 1915, joining the growing number of young American men, many Ivy League graduates, who flocked to France to support the country in its hour of need. Waldo served in Alsace as well as at

the Battle of Verdun, where he was awarded the Croix de Guerre for conspicuous bravery. Waldo kept his mother informed of the more social and festive side of his tour, but omitted details of the horrors of war—the blood, the brains splattered in his ambulance, the smell of gangrene, and the roar of the frightening cannon barrages.

Waldo was often viewed as a Rabelaisian character lacking in sensitivity, but one has only to read his contributions to the memorial volume, *The Friends of France*, to realize the depth of his concern, caring, and empathy for stricken friends and fallen soldiers. In the book, published by Houghton Mifflin in 1916, Waldo's account of the death of Richard Hall, a fellow ambulance driver and the first American volunteer driver killed in the war, is especially moving and tender ("Christmas Eve 1915" 139). In his homage to Hall, one finds passages comparable to those in *A Farewell to Arms*. Waldo wrote of the drives up the Alsatian mountains:

On December 21 the mountains spoke and all the cars rolled upwards to the *poste* of Hartmannsweilerkopf—taken and retaken a score of times—a bare, brown, blunt, shell-ploughed top where before forest stood, up-elbowing, buffeting, and tacking their way through battalions of men and beasts, up by one pass and down by another unmountable for there is no going back against the tide of what was battle-bound. From one mountain slope to another roared all the lungs of war. For five days and five nights—scraps of days, the shortest of the year, nights interminable—the air was shredded with shrieking shells—intermittent lulls for slaughter in attack after the bombardment, then again the roar of counter-attack. (141)

And later in the passage, writing on Richard Hall's death:

Gentlemen at home, you who tremble with concerns at overrun putts, who bristle at your partner's play at auction, who grow hoarse at football games, know that among you was one who played for greater goals—the lives of other men. There in the small hours of Christmas morning, where mountain fought mountain, on that hard bitten pass under the pines of the Vosgian steeps there fell a very modest and valiant gentleman. (144)

Even today one finds crossed American and French flags at Hall's grave in the military cemetery in Moosch—still recognizing Hall's sacrifice. Hall lies with three hundred soldiers, the only American in the cemetery (Gallagher).

It is not clear whether Hemingway had *Friends of France* in his library but undoubtedly Waldo and Hemingway discussed their experiences in the ambulance service. Hemingway was extremely friendly with Waldo when he began to write *A Farewell to Arms* in 1928. In *Hemingway's First War*, Michael Reynolds convincingly argues that Hemingway used many sources and used them well to describe accurately all aspects of the war, noting that "Frederic Henry's attitude toward the war is...both spectatorial and war weary; he is in fact more like the Norton-Harjes drivers in his attitude than he is like the young Hemingway" (164). Waldo's World War I experiences may have contributed to Hemingway's novel.

Young Hemingway was eager join the war in Europe. He may have seen a photo of Waldo in his ambulance service uniform in the *Chicago Tribune* in 1917.



From a Scrapbook. Waldo Peirce Papers. Box 21.  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

The accompanying piece notes that Waldo received the Croix de Guerre for conspicuous bravery at Verdun. Perhaps this image helped spark Hemingway's desire to volunteer for the Ambulance Service, although Ted Brumback, another volunteer driver, undoubtedly influenced Hemingway with tales of his four-month stint in the Norton-Harjes ambulance section in the summer of 1917. Or perhaps Hemingway saw one of the many recruiting posters distributed over the United States. These posters depicted heroic and dramatic scenes of the battlefield activities of the ambulance drivers.

The American Field Service and other groups were actively recruiting young men even before the United States entered the war in April 1917.

While in the field Waldo created his own whimsical posters or drawings of life at the front with the ambulance service.



*From a Scrapbook. Waldo Peirce Papers. Box 21.  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

One such poster showed that the tour was not always so grim and filled with death. In a particularly irreverent drawing, one sees Waldo's friend Fred Dawson firmly embracing one of the many available farmers' daughters. Another couple in the scene is off for a dip, and some naked young folks are seen cavorting in the fields, while Waldo sits in the lower left corner sketching away.

For whatever reason, Hemingway finally made it over to Europe where he was assigned to the Red Cross Ambulance Service in northern Italy. There he may not have driven an ambulance very much at all. In *Gentleman Volunteers*, a marvelous and extraordinary book describing the people and work of the Ambulance Services, Arlen Hansen makes the point (based on logs and other data) that Hemingway drove an ambulance at most three times (275n). Hemingway ended up distributing candy, cigarettes, and postcards in the Rolling Canteens under the command of Jim Gamble, and the rest of that story is very well known.

After the war Waldo remained in Paris in his apartment at 77 Rue de Lille, an apartment frequented and enjoyed by ambulance drivers on leave during the war (Brown 16). Hobey Baker and Arthur Blutenthal were frequent guests.<sup>1</sup> Both Princeton men died flying for France and Baker was the

model for Allenby in Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*. After the war, Harry Crosby lived down this same street close to the Seine (Wolff 183).

Hemingway returned to Paris with his first wife, Hadley Richardson, in December 1921. By then Waldo had married Ivy Troutman, an actress, and was dividing his time among Paris, various locales in France, Hammamet in Tunisia, and trips back to the States for Ivy's career and his own art shows in New York.

It is not clear just when and where Waldo first met Hemingway. Harold Loeb in *The Way It Was* remembers Waldo at a party at Ford Maddox Ford's apartment: "Ford's teas had disrupted work of Bird's printing press so Ford gave the next party at his home off Boulevard Arrago near the tennis courts.... Inside, the main room was full of dancers, expounders, strollers, music, and smoke.... I had a scotch and soda and was dancing with a tall, elegant Swedish girl when Bernice Abbott fell on her back in the middle of the floor. Waldo Peirce looked at her tersely" (208). One wonders just how "terse" that look really was.

Hemingway probably met Peirce before 11 April 1927, when Guy Fangel wrote to say that he had just learned from Ivy Peirce of Hemingway's divorce. Fangel notes that the "loveable" Peirce was quite drunk at their dinner at Michaud's. Carlos Baker cites an interview with Waldo as evidence that Waldo sought Hemingway out after reading *The Sun Also Rises* (645). On 26 April 1927, Waldo wrote to his mother:

Did you read *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway? A good novel of the Latin Quarter and the derelicts of the war—that lost generation—they are real people—friends or acquaintances of mine.... [T]he heroine of the book [Duff Twysden] has just moved into my place in Cagnes. [She's] broke and deserted.... [She] came here to be married to the Mike of the book but another lady removed the perfidious spouse a day before the ceremony...he hasn't been seen since. *One spouse goeth down but another doth not also arise* [Peirce's emphasis].... I tried to get Hemingway to dinner with all his characters of the SAR.... One of the year's best sellers...[it is] brutal...and triste, if you like, but true.... They all got drunk even as in the book and [they] didn't show up.

Now that wouldn't that have been a party?

Although exactly when and where they met remains a mystery, what is clear is that in July 1927 Waldo and Hemingway journeyed to Pamplona

(without their wives) and began a solid friendship that lasted throughout their lives. Hemingway's biographers give little information about these two weeks in July 1927, but Waldo, never without a sketchbook, captured the fiesta in a collection of images, line drawings, watercolors, and photographs (Special Collections, Colby College). Many of the photos of this fiesta in the Hemingway Collection at the Kennedy Library were taken by Waldo. Waldo also immortalized the running of the bulls in an oil painting entitled the *Fiesta de San Fermin*, now owned by Colby College.



*Oil Painting. 1932. 26" x 40". Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, ME. Gift of the Zeta Psi Fraternity.*

As the bulls tumble into the ring over a mass of fallen men, one can almost hear the roar of the crowd and the trampling hooves. The colors are as exciting as the scene. Off toward the right Hemingway can be seen making a furtive pass at one of the bulls, and in another section of the painting Waldo is thinking better of it as he runs away. Waldo often placed himself in his paintings, sometimes standing at the edge of his canvas or more often engaged in some one of the activities.

In a colorful letter to his mother, Waldo described the Pamplona scene and mentions that he recorded the festivities. On 12 July 1927, Waldo wrote:

Up at 6 for the famous *encierros* or the running of the bulls through the streets boarded off with the youth of Navarre ahead of them and at their heels...a dangerous and extraordinary business. One lad killed the first day and another in the ring the second day.... [T]he actual bullfight doesn't interest me, too much horse tripe.... Hemingway who fights bulls on occasion and I stand every morning on the top outside gallery of the coliseum—whence we could watch the running...then go down to

see the entry into the ring. [T]he first morning someone tripped and everyone fell on top of each other in a great mass of human meat...six steers and six bulls went over them in a thundering tumultuous catapult of horns and hoofs—which would make a Yankee football game tiddleywinks by comparison.

Waldo gives details on the action by the cows and steers and then continues:

Hemingway got in with the cow the last day—who isn't dangerous, but he wasn't keen on the sudden appearance of the steer from behind.... Had lunch at the horse fair out in the Campo.... Hemingway left last night for San Sebastian to meet his wife. He doesn't want people to know about his second marriage as he had another wife here last year and the Spanish are not as [illegible] with divorce as we are.... Hemingway is coming back with his wife incognito. We can say she's mine if he wants to—and we will all drive back to San Sebastian. Tomorrow we lunch with Zuloaga at Zumaya. He is a very stupid man but an old friend, etc—no sense of humor but crazy about bulls.... They have a procession of gigantic figures of the King of Navarre and his Queen.... I followed the Giants around with the rest of the children every day and loved them...a man inside of them makes them dance—to drums and dulzainas [reed pipes]—a splendid barbaric music....

In later years, Waldo wrote in the notes for his autobiography:

Pamplona. There is some question in my mind as to whether illiteracy gives strength... many of the boys and girls in Navarre are dubiously literate but they can dance for three days and three nights without stopping and the boys run with the bulls in between.

They had an iron bull full of fireworks which they dragged around the square and roman candles and rockets came out of his eyes, nose, ears, asshole, the whole thing just belching with light...a magnificent sight.

We saw one of the toreros killed and a collection was taken from the audience for his widow and children. The next day at the

bullfight it was announced that several thousand pesetas and two hundred francs had been collected, which seems reasonable because Ernest and I had each put in one hundred francs.

One day Ernest got in the ring with a cow. I was supposed to take pictures of him, but put in my camera a previously used film backwards...and didn't get a single thing. Ernest performed prodigies of courage in the ring, but could have killed me when he discovered my stupidity.

Whenever we went riding in a car and drove over a stream Ernest insisted upon getting out of the car to see if there were any trout swimming around.

Later, back in Paris, Waldo composed an epic poem known as *The Ballad of Don Ernesto*. This richly illustrated poem is filled with delightful watercolor images and witty passages describing Don Ernesto's mythical slaying of the bulls of Navarre. Even though Don Ernesto's exploits save the maidens of Pamplona from grief and premature widowhood, the poem is dedicated to Hemingway's bride, Pauline.<sup>2</sup>



Pencil and Watercolor. 1927. Illustration for "The Ballad of Don Ernesto."  
Special Collections. Colby College Library.

The careers of Peirce and Hemingway begin to mature in the late 1920s, as each gained some recognition in his field. After marrying Pauline Pfeiffer, Hemingway moved to Key West in April 1928. In late 1927, Peirce had left Ivy Troutman, his second wife. By now he was a successful artist, with shows in Paris and New York City. He later married Alzira Boehm, whom he met at a Matisse show in New York. Pregnant before Waldo married her, Alzira spent some time in Key West and visited with Hemingway. In 1930, Waldo

took Alzira back to Paris where she delivered twin boys in the American Hospital, the very hospital where Waldo often delivered the Verdun wounded. Later that spring, Waldo photographed Gertrude Stein standing by the twins' carriage in the Luxembourg Gardens. Recognizing that his career needed to be focused in the States, Peirce finally left Paris in 1932 and returned with his wife and two boys to Bangor. He would spend the rest of his life primarily in Maine (Brown 33).

Hemingway invited Waldo to join him and his friends in Key West and the group known as The Mob appears sporadically in Key West in the 1930s. The main members of the Mob are Waldo, Dos Passos, Mike Strater, Archibald MacLeish, Max Perkins, and Bill Smith and his sister Katie (McIver 17–220). The gang would often stay at the Overseas Hotel and eat their “club breakfast” at the Electric Kitchen. Mornings were reserved for relaxation or work but afternoons and evenings were given over to serious fishing and other revelries (McIver 18–20).

Hemingway may have lusted after Katie Smith before meeting Hadley, and Dos Passos eventually married Katie, but in between these times, and before his third marriage, Waldo “courted” her in Provincetown and Key West. Details are lacking, but judging by Waldo’s sexual appetite and by the mores of Provincetown as described by Virginia Carr in her biography of Dos Passos (258), Waldo and Katie were most likely lovers. In the early 1930s, Waldo painted a group portrait of Hemingway, Dos Passos, and himself on the dock in Dry Tortugas and whimsically and ironically titled it “Katie’s Boys.”

Waldo also captured the nightlife in Key West in an exciting oil painting of the Silver Slipper, the dance hall portion of the original Sloppy Joe’s Bar on Greene Street (Shaughnessy 25).



*Oil Painting, 1932. 28" x 40".  
Private collection.*

It's all there in *The Silver Slipper*—music, dancing, sensuality, color, and exuberance. Once again one sees vibrant colors, lots of action and movement. In this narrative painting you can almost hear the music...and you can the cast of characters: Waldo with his pipe, Alzira at a corner table, Al Skinner pouring a drink at the bar. The man at the table with Waldo is most likely Bill Smith, and not Dos Passos, as the original owner of the painting thought. Hemingway is bending over the bar and Pauline is looking a bit put out. Out on the dance floor the sailors from the local Navy base are dancing up a storm, ignoring the sign “No Vulgar Dancing.”

Later, in 1939, two lithographs were produced using images from *The Silver Slipper*. On the verso side of *Sailors Dancing*, Waldo wrote:

I was merely registering the life and movement that was going on around me for the moment...the blare of the Negro orchestra and the robustious [sic] rumba of the Coast Guard with the ladies of Key West. I hope I am not belittling Sloppy Joe's by confessing it was a most decorous joint, as fitting and as proper for women and children as for sailors and beachcombers. As I remember the opening of the Silver Slipper, the dance hall adjacent to the bar, there was a sign over the bar NO VULGAR DANCING. I almost looked for a pendant sign on the opposite wall taken from Pinafore. SAILORS NEVER BE SHY. This last was apparently superfluous. (*Sailors Dancing*. Lithograph. Waldo Peirce Papers. Library of Congress. Box 24.)

So Waldo put Hemingway in the picture and Hemingway put Waldo in his book. The most obvious mention of Waldo in Hemingway's work can be found in *Islands in the Stream* (71) where Hudson is telling his boys about the painters he knew in Paris. One might speculate that the wild mural Hudson later undertakes at the bar is painted much in the expansive style of Waldo, who like many artists of that period painted murals. Waldo painted murals in three post offices for the WPA yet once commented: “I remember writing Ed Rowen why didn't they [WPA] employ half the artists to paint the murals during the day and the other half to paint 'em out by night, with malice towards none, not even the building, employment for all and leaving the edifice in all its primal purity of wall” (*Waldo Peirce* n. pag.). Waldo once painted a luscious nude on a neighbor's bathroom wall when the neighbor

was away. Upon his return the neighbor prized the nude for awhile until his wife suggested painting over the provocative image. Lloyd Rainey, the local plumber, allowed Waldo access to the neighbor's home and described these shenanigans (Rainey).

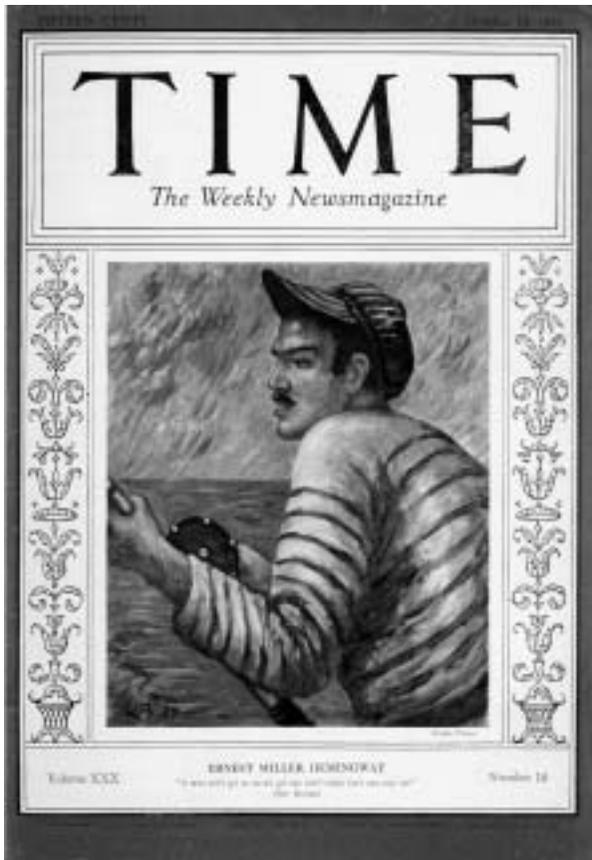
Supposedly Waldo painted two murals in Key West—one in the original Sloppy Joe's on Greene St. and the other in a convent to thank the nuns caring for his three children ("Bangor Artist" n.pag.). If one can believe Waldo—and at times this may be a problem—the convent painting was a mural of the Pieta—and so perhaps the only outwardly "religious" painting he ever created. The convent has since been torn down.

While in Key West, Waldo also painted a portrait of Hemingway's second son, Patrick, who recalls that Waldo was "big and cheerful and nice" (Patrick Hemingway). Unfortunately Patrick's portrait and other items from the Key West house were lost in subsequent moves.

While Waldo's contribution to Hemingway's art education is unclear, the men undoubtedly discussed art. Peirce owned a Cézanne oil painting and a number of Goya etchings, and these masters were a significant influence on his work (Ellen Pierce, Interview). Hemingway said in 1961 "I learned how to make a landscape from Mr. Paul Cézanne by walking through the Luxembourg museum a thousand times" (Ross 60). Waldo was a hard-working and talented artist and Hemingway's voracious curiosity about all kinds of subjects certainly must have come into play during the many times they were together. However, their correspondence contains little helpful or specific information along these lines.

There was even a suggestion from Hemingway that he and Waldo collaborate on a "fishing book." In an unpublished letter dated 17 June 1928, Hemingway proposed to Waldo that they do "a fish book for all time." Hemingway would write the book and Waldo would do color plates and photographs, pictures both funny and serious. The book, Hemingway felt, would sell for \$22.50 and it would be a classic. With a big advance, they could buy a graphic or an automatic movie camera, as well as buy their tackle and pay for the boat and all expenses. The men would fish the Shark River and around the Cape and all along the Keys, then go to Marquesas, Dry Tortugas, and the Bahamas, anchoring in Havana for awhile, with chapters on the fishing, womanizing, and pelota there. Scribner's would serialize their adventures and Hemingway would make the book "funny as hell." We could have funny pictures and serious ones. I think would make it a swell book. What do you say?" Sadly, the book never happened.

Waldo created a number of portraits of his friend Hemingway and many can be viewed in *Picturing Hemingway*, a series of images assembled for the National Portrait Gallery's Hemingway exhibit by Frederick Voss. Peirce's *Kid Balzac*, done in Key West in 1929, hangs in the Hemingway Room at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston. The idea of representing Hemingway as Balzac-like character developed from a comment made by Mary Colum to Max Perkins that Hemingway looked like the French writer (Voss 26). *Time* magazine commissioned Waldo to paint Hemingway in 1937, the year *To Have and to Have Not* was published. In the portrait, reminiscent of the style of Matisse, Hemingway's face is oddly shaped, peering intently upon a fishing line.



Time Magazine cover. 18 October 1937.

After his father died in 1936, Peirce inherited a sizable amount of money. While he supported himself with his paintings—winning prizes and exhibiting throughout the country—his inheritance allowed him to live extremely well. Yet he was never much for clothes, often walking around Bangor without shoes on, looking like a tramp with a rope for a belt (somewhat akin to Hemingway in the early days in Key West). Folks in Bangor felt he was an eccentric fellow, but loveable and very generous—often giving away his paintings to friends and acquaintances.

The correspondence between Peirce and Hemingway was always filled with gossip, witty phrases, raunchy jokes, problems with money and women, and concerns about old friends. They shared their sorrows and joys. For example, Waldo, caught in the middle of a feud between two friends, heard from Hemingway regarding his blow-up with Archibald MacLeish. The 26 May 1934 letter reads in part: “What the hell do American writers turn into? They write a poem advising poets to stay out of politics then get into politics as fast as they can” (*SL* 406). Carlos Baker cites a letter he received from MacLeish about the quarrel: “[Hemingway] was fed up with the world and I was fed up with him. It was my fault as much as his. . . . It was inevitable: we never could have gone on as close friends.” (31 January 1965, *SL* 406 n1). Unfortunately the correspondence between the Waldo and Hemingway petered out in the 1940s.

During later years Peirce’s work often suffered from a hurried, slap-dash quality. But if he took the time with subjects he loved he could still produce a moveable feast of painting. Over his lifetime, Waldo focused on flowers and portraits and in a particularly moving painting entitled *Anna with Flowers* one sees the combination of the two lovely subjects. Anna, his third child, is surrounded by flowers. In a windowsill vase, flowers hold her attention, while in the background cascading garden flowers fill the canvas. While this portrait was done in 1942 and at a time when his style was recognized as more regionalistic, *Anna with Flowers* is one of his most impressionistic paintings.

Waldo and Hemingway met for the final time in Tucson in March 1959; Waldo had wintered in Tucson for a few years. Ellen Peirce, Waldo’s fourth wife, describes this meeting in a letter to a Mr. Sullivan. She did not recall the details, although the two men did talk about the old days in Paris (Hemingway’s memory was shaky at this time). Hemingway was undoubtedly searching for details and facts for *A Moveable Feast*. Aaron Hotchner was along on the trip and admired (and later bought) a version of *The Silver Slipper* (there are two *Silver Slippers*—Waldo often copied or redid certain



Oil painting, ca. 1944. 24" x 36".  
Collection of William Gallagher, M.D.

important scenes or themes). After the visit of these two giants, their correspondence again picked up. Mary Hemingway now was part of the corresponding team. In *How It Was*, Mary notes that Waldo told her he was “an invertebrate letter writer” (460).

Two years later, hearing of Hemingway’s death, Waldo immediately told his wife Ellen that Hemingway had committed suicide. He knew the initial story of an accident was false. Mary continued to correspond with her new confidante after Hemingway’s death—giving tidbits of history related to the donation of the Hemingway papers to the Kennedy Library, sharing her feelings on Hemingway’s death, and giving details about the making of *A Moveable Feast*. Waldo hated *A Moveable Feast* and found it difficult to understand how Hemingway could have written the book. He commented on the book to his friend Joan Woodcock Nestler while he painted her daughter’s portrait (Nestler).

On 7 August 1961 Mary wrote to Waldo: “Ernest left here written instructions in 1956 that his personal letters should never be published and to insure that chance, I’ve burned many of them.” Thus Hemingway joined a remarkable list of authors who burned some of their papers burned or had them destroyed after their deaths (i.e. Samuel Johnson, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, Henry James and Sigmund Freud (Holroyd 7–13). The only positive thing to come from this horrendous conflagration is that perhaps now Sandra Spanier’s daunting task of editing the letters may be a bit easier.

In his later years Waldo assumed the position of the grand old man of Maine painting. He exhibited with Andrew Wyeth; received a Doctorate of Art from Colby College; painted every day; gave away countless paintings to friends and family; won prizes; played with two more children, Karen and Jonathan; illustrated children’s books; and wrote daily letters to a list of

friends—a list which reads like a Who’s Who of the century. He would often illustrate the envelopes with witty watercolors. Two books about Waldo were published in 1941: *Waldo Peirce* by Margit Varga and a monograph, *Waldo Peirce*, by the American Artists Group, really a mini-autobiography encapsulated in a letter from Peirce to “Dear Sam Golden,” written on 15 July 1944. After spending a weekend with Waldo and his family in Bangor, Varga wrote an account that reads a bit like Lillian Ross’s famous interview with Hemingway—both men tearing around, speaking about various subjects in addition to their art, and even using their Choctaw (Hemingway) and Downeast Yankee (Peirce) dialects. Both texts reveal some aspects of the men and their works, but to capture them whole was well beyond these fine efforts.

Always a family man, Waldo is remembered by his grandson, Philip Neisser: “I remember a musty tobacco smell coming from a huge, gentle and confident man with an impressively grizzly beard. He had a deep, gruff and beautiful voice” (Neisser).

In later life, Waldo did not receive the recognition that other artists of his era enjoyed. His insightful sister-in-law, Polly Peirce, perhaps gave the best reason for this. According to her son, Hayford Peirce Jr., she felt that Waldo had too much money to be a great artist. He didn’t have to please anyone with his paintings except himself, so he didn’t work any harder to get beyond where he already was. If anything, Polly always admired Waldo’s full time devotion to his art in spite of the fact he didn’t really have to do it. It was just that she felt he could have been greater if he had had, for financial reasons, to focus a little more carefully on the commercial side of art or perhaps look a little deeper into his soul (Hayford Peirce Jr.).

Vincent Hartgen, Emeritus Professor of Art at the University of Maine, and a good friend, once commented, “Waldo was a pretty good artist but he was truly a great man.” Waldo Peirce died in 1970 at the age of 86, his obituary appearing prominently in papers all over the country. He is buried in Bangor’s Mt. Hope Cemetery next to his mother. It has been said of Waldo’s works that they are European in style, narrative in impulse, to some degree regionalist in content, but defy categorization (Brown 16). In addition, they are joyous, colorful, and life-affirming, like the artist.

When Waldo rises from the dead, he will immediately take out his sketchbook, light up his pipe, and paint the wooded landscape and the dappled light around his grave, capturing in the background the sun’s golden reflection off the distant Penobscot River where once he fished as a boy.

## NOTES

1. Hobe Baker's name appears in two places in Peirce's autobiographical notes but no other details are mentioned. The photo of Baker and a "Princeton classmate" that appears in Davies's book *The Legend of Hobe Baker* was taken by Peirce and can be found in his scrapbook at the Library of Congress. The location is outside Peirce's apartment at 77 rue de Lille. The classmate is Alfred "Bluey" Blumenthal. Both men flew for France and both died while flying.
2. *The Ballad of Don Ernesto* is handwritten in Spanish. Peirce was fluent in Spanish and French. *The Ballad* was translated by Maica San Miguel of Madrid on 1 January 2003. Her efforts not only included the translation, but in addition her insights into the history of the Fiesta were extremely informative and helpful.

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