



The historic and remodeled Grace cottage sits on a bluff overlooking the Virosteck home and Walloon Lake.

Grace Hall-Hemingway Cottage

Tucked down a winding, dirt road on Walloon Lake sits Grace Cottage, newly renovated to restore it to look closer to the original style. The cottage first belonged to Ernest Hemingway's mother Grace Hall-Hemingway.

First introduced to the cottage 30 years prior, Steve and Joanne Virosteck, newest owners of the historical piece, were visiting Joanne's family's place next door, where her family had rented for years. Steve's interest in Ernest's short stories became a fascination during college and as soon as he heard about the remarkable landmark he became intrigued and waited patiently to see when or if it would become available to purchase.

Steve stated he was "not an expert on this subject," but when Grace first purchased the 40-acre Longfield Farm property, her intent was to teach her children how to farm. A local farmer helped the family with their orchard and potatoes. In 1919, Grace had the cottage built on the farm and traveled there to paint and



compose. Steve chuckled as he speculated that when the Hemingway children were at Windemere (across the lake from where she and Clarence built), she escaped to her cottage. It was believed the cottage was a source of contention as it was thought the inherited money used to build the cottage should instead be used for education.

Steve admits he initially thought keeping the cottage was a bad idea. If it hadn't been for Joanne, who insisted they keep it, history may have passed by as a remodel took place. Originally in bad shape, "it wasn't in the ideal spot for the original vision we had for the site," she said.

They kept it because Joanne fell in love, "and like most things she was right and I was wrong and I am so glad we kept it," he said.

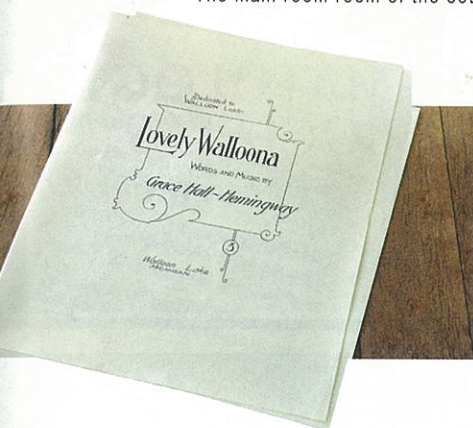
He remembers how he wondered how to tell his wife not to save the cottage, but, as Steve was sitting on the porch, he admitted the cottage somehow spoke to him with its peaceful setting and beautiful views. Thus began the process of restoring the simple cottage from the outside in to the way it was originally built.

The wrap-around porch gives the view to the large, beautiful main house below as well as some of the most beautiful views of Walloon Lake. Builder Matt Stuck, of Stuck Construction, laughed saying between the main house and the cottage the crew jokes the cottage is the coolest one. Matt was quick to give Ken Richmond the praise for giving the crew the task of taking the cottage back to its original state.

Walking up to the porch and inside the Dutch door, a hushed sense of awe sets in like old-



The main room of the cottage looks basically as it was, with uninsulated walls and ceiling and a large fieldstone fireplace.

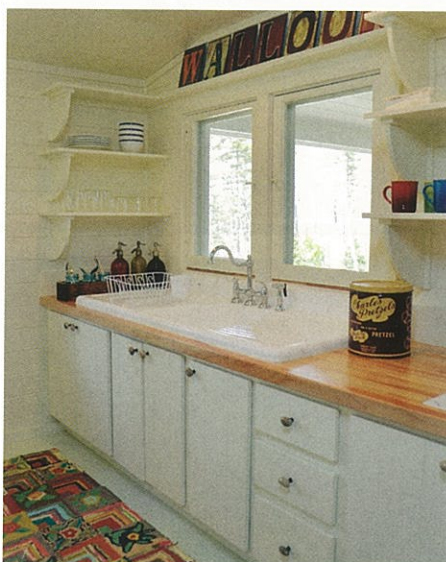


A copy of Grace Hall-Hemingway's original music piece "Lovely Walloona" rests on the main room table.

world charm. The exposed beams and studs freshly painted over with white, give the space an immediate sense of openness as well as traveling back in time, like a spectator watching Grace sing opera or paint.

The fieldstone fireplace is the focal point of the room, and a large rug covers part of the smaller planked wood floors. The windows are single-paned, decorated with antique hardware. The owner had the electricity updated and installed the necessary bathroom.

The quaint kitchen has a maple block countertop and a farm sink for added taste. The narrow staircase was kept and leads to the upstairs, which was converted from two rooms into one. Matt commented how the upstairs stays surprisingly cool during the summer months as long as the windows are open.



Even the small kitchen offers a view of the lake.

Looking back after the remodel, Steve felt the surge of importance in keeping the quaint cottage.

"Here's the mother of one of the most important writers in our country's history and this was her oasis and a big part of who she was, and who were we to tear it down?" Walloon Lake is very special to the entire family.

On occasion now Steve and Joanne sit on the porch of the little cottage, sip wine and think about where Grace would have sat, enjoying the beautiful views of Walloon Lake in her own peaceful oasis. **HL**

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