

Leicester Hemingway:

An Inventory of His New Atlantis Collection in the Manuscript Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Hemingway, Leicester, 1915-1982
Title:	Leicester Hemingway New Atlantis Collection
Dates:	1964-1966
Extent:	1 box (.42 linear feet)
Abstract:	This collection includes letters, clippings, and ephemera from the New Atlantis Exhibit that was on display at the University of Texas at Austin in 1966. All items in the collection were given by Hemingway himself to the university for the exhibit that displayed papers and artifacts relating to the creation of the new island nation of New Atlantis.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-01905
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research. Researchers must create an online Research Account and agree to the Materials Use Policy before using archival materials.
Use Policies:	Ransom Center collections may contain material with sensitive or confidential information that is protected under federal or state right to privacy laws and regulations. Researchers are advised that the disclosure of certain information pertaining to identifiable living individuals represented in the collections without the consent of those individuals may have legal ramifications (e.g., a cause of action under common law for invasion of privacy may arise if facts concerning an individual's private life are published that would be deemed highly offensive to a reasonable person) for which the Ransom Center and The University of Texas at Austin assume no responsibility.
Restrictions on Use:	Authorization for publication is given on behalf of the University of Texas as the owner of the collection and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder which must be obtained by the researcher. For more information please see the Ransom Center's Open Access and Use Policies.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation: Leicester Hemingway New Atlantis Collection (Manuscript Collection MS-01905). Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

Acquisition: Gift, 1966

Processed by: Erin Baudo, 2003

Repository: [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)

Biographical Sketch

Leicester C. Hemingway, only brother to the great American novelist Ernest Hemingway, was born in Oak Park, Illinois, on April 1, 1915. Like Ernest, Leicester was a writer, world traveler, and avid outdoorsman. He worked as a newspaper reporter, photo editor, boat builder, and authored many articles on fishing and outdoor activities for men's publications, along with six books. Among these books was a novel entitled *The Sound of the Trumpet* (1953), which was based on his experiences in France and Germany during World War II. This work received slight praise by critics, but many seemed to think that Leicester was simply living in the shadow of his older brother. A review of this work in *The New York Times* declared that Leicester Hemingway was part of the first younger generation shaped by the writings of Ernest Hemingway. Leicester's most famous and well-received work, a biography entitled *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway* (1961), is considered by some to be the finest work on the subject. For the last five years of his life, Leicester focused his attentions on *The Bimini Out Islands News*, a small monthly newsletter on fishing.

Besides his work as a writer, it is not as widely known that Leicester was also the founder of a new island republic off the coast of Jamaica, declared New Atlantis, on July 4, 1964. Built up from a depth of fifty feet, the 8 x 30 ft. "country" was constructed with iron pipes, stones, bamboo, and stainless steel. Essentially, it amounted to a bamboo raft, anchored by a railroad axle and an old Ford engine block, six miles off the west coast of Jamaica near Bluefields.

The purpose of this tiny new nation was to house the headquarters of the International Marine Research Society, an organization founded by Hemingway. This society's mission was to further marine research, raise funds for this research, and to build a scientifically valuable aquarium in Jamaica. Hemingway also believed that by creating this new country he could help protect Jamaican fishing, and this was another of his goals.

There were six original inhabitants of New Atlantis, including Leicester, his wife Doris, their daughters Anne and Hilary (seven and three years old at the time), Washington international public relations specialist, Edward K. Moss, and his assistant, Julia Cellini. Leicester was elected the first president in 1965.

To fund the construction of New Atlantis, Hemingway used all the proceeds from his biography, *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway*, and though the island was quite small, he had plans to expand it in the future. Unfortunately, this never came to be, as the tiny island nation of New Atlantis was destroyed in a storm only a few years after its creation.

Late in his life, Leicester was diagnosed with a severe case of Type II diabetes, and, after suffering through five operations and the possibility of losing his legs, he decided to end his life in 1982 at the age of 67. Tragically, he was not the first or last in his family to commit suicide. Ernest also shot himself in 1961, at the age of 62, his sister, Ursula, and grandniece, Margaux, died at their own hands, and his father, Dr. Clarence Edmonds Hemingway, killed himself in 1928 after suffering from depression.

Sources:

Bevona, Don. "Rise of a New Republic: New Atlantis Hq. for Research." *New York Herald Tribune*. 13 September 1964.

Mitgang, Herbert. "Leicester Hemingway, Writer and Ernest's Brother, is Suicide." *New York Times* 15 September 1982, Late City Final Edition: D27.

Scope and Contents

This collection includes letters, clippings, and ephemera from the New Atlantis Exhibit that was on display at the University of Texas at Austin in 1966. All items in the collection were given by Hemingway himself to the university for the exhibit that displayed papers and artifacts relating to the creation of the new island nation of New Atlantis. Other aspects of Leicester Hemingway's life and works (such as his writings) are not represented in this collection. The material is arranged alphabetically in a single series.

Newspaper and magazine clippings concern the inception of the new nation, its purpose, and its first elections. The correspondence is between Leicester Hemingway and Mary M. Hirth, librarian at the Ransom Center, who seems to have been in close contact with Hemingway and the one in charge of the New Atlantis Exhibit. Their letters discuss nearly every item in the collection, and it is quite helpful to read through them before perusing the collection. Among the legal documents are "Copy A" of the Constitution of the Republic of New Atlantis, citizenship papers for a Ms. Betty M. Henry and her ballot for the first New Atlantis elections, and a handwritten list of "suggested legislation" that Leicester composed in 1965. Also present is a brief and rough handwritten manuscript for the *New Atlantis Cookery Book*. This was to be the first book published in New Atlantis, according to Leicester's notes at the top of the paper.

Artifacts include the strange, but official currency of the island nation, comprised of a fish hook, carob bean, shark tooth and other curious items. The flag of New Atlantis, made by Hemingway's wife, Doris, was the third flag to fly over the bamboo platform. The first two were apparently stolen by fisherman, and the fourth was carried away in a storm. A single photograph depicts the New Atlantis Exhibit, as it looked at the University of Texas in 1966. The official postage stamps of New Atlantis, some of the most interesting items in the entire collection, are discussed in Hemingway's letter to Hirth, and in some of the clippings.

Related Material

Additional correspondence and manuscripts by Leicester Hemingway (including the typescript of *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway*) are located in the Ernest Hemingway Collection at The Ransom Center.

Index Terms

Subjects

New Atlantis (West Indies, British).

Newly independent states.

States, Small.

Document Types

Flags

Money

Photographs.

Postage stamps.

Clippings, 1964-65	Box 1 Folder 1
Correspondence, 1966	Folder 2
Currency	Folder 3
Flag	Folder 4
Legal documents (constitution, citizenship papers, legislation), 1965	Folder 5
New Atlantis Cookery Book, handwritten manuscript	Folder 6
Photograph	Folder 7
Postage stamps, 1964-65	Folder 8