

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Ernest Hemingway House

AND/OR COMMON

Ernest Hemingway House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

907 Whitehead Street

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Key West

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

fifteenth

STATE

Florida

CODE

12

COUNTY

Monroe

CODE

87

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mrs. Bernice Dickson

STREET & NUMBER

907 Whitehead Street

CITY, TOWN

Key West

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Florida

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Monroe County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Whitehead Street

CITY, TOWN

Key West

STATE

Florida

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1967

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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#### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This house, one of the older buildings in Key West, was constructed by Asa F. Tift, 19th century owner of one of the major wharf areas in Key West, ca. 1850. The house is a two-story rectangular structure built of native limestone quarried from the site, which enabled it to be built with a full basement, a feature unique in that area. The stuccoed exterior is highlighted by quoins and a keystone in the arches above the doors and windows.

The house is surrounded on all sides by a corrugated metal canopy over a two-story veranda, and is topped by a flat roof with plain parapet. The veranda is ornamented by fluted cast iron posts with acanthus pattern capitols supporting an iron lintel decorated with rosette medallions. The balustrade which surrounds the second story is wrought iron worked in a heart pattern.

On the west facade, the first floor main entrance is composed of a large French door with a round arched transom light. This entrance is flanked by smaller French doors with segmental arched transoms on the south and a single French door of the same style on the north. The segmental arched French door is repeated on the second story above the main entrance, flanked by two-over-two double hung sash windows with segmental arches, two on the south and one on the north. All windows and doors are protected by full-length, operable, louvered shutters.

On the north side of the house an outside stairway ascends to the second level. Otherwise the north and south facades are identical in treatment with four of the segmental arched French doors on the first floor, and four of the double hung sash windows of the same style on the second story.

The house has a central hall plan and on the ground floor to the left of the entrance is the dining room, and behind it the pantry and kitchen. To the right is a large living room, used presently as a gift shop and bookstore. The staircase to the second floor is just to the right of the entrance. To the right at the top of the stairs is the master bedroom which has the same dimensions as the living room. To the left are two smaller bedrooms and a bath once shared by Patrick and Gregory, Hemingway's sons.

Doors in all of the rooms on both floors open onto porches, windows reach nearly from floor to ceiling. Some of the furnishings in the house belonged to the writer and his family and the present owners would like to acquire more of the Hemingway furnishings which are apparently kept in storage by Patrick Hemingway who is a hunter's guide in Africa.

The Hemingway House stands on a 190 by 197 foot lot at the southeast corner of Olivia and Whitehead Streets. The property is enclosed by a six foot high masonry wall of paving bricks, wrought iron gates and lush tropical foliage which obscure the view of the property from the street. A variety of tropical shrubs and trees, many brought from Havana and Africa by Hemingway, surround the house. The 65 foot long concrete swimming pool was constructed by Hemingway in 1938 and was the first on the island.

Besides the main house and pool house, there is a garage with furnished apartment on the second floor. A cistern is located in a small ell on the northeast corner of the

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1931-1961

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ernest Hemingway bought this Spanish style house in Key West, Florida in 1931. He lived there with his second wife, Pauline until 1940 when they separated. During this important period of his career he wrote many books, including Death in the Afternoon, Green Hills of Africa, Winner Take Nothing, and To Have and Have Not, which has a Key West setting, and he probably also worked on For Whom the Bells Tolls, which appeared in 1940. While living here Hemingway worked long hours, rising very early to write in the study above the pool house, but he also traveled extensively and cultivated the image of rugged Papa Hemingway.

Owned by the Hemingway family until 1961, the house is now a museum, opened to the public.

## History

Early in 1928 Ernest Hemingway and his wife returned to America from Europe. Pauline was pregnant and wanted to have the baby near her parental home in Piggott, Arkansas. To begin with the couple settled in Key West, Florida, the southernmost town in the United States, so that Pauline could get plenty of sun and rest. In the years that immediately followed, the Hemingways returned to Key West again and again and soon established permanent residence there.

In the next four years the writer and his wife rented several houses in the area. Finally the Hemingways decided to buy a house, a large two-story, Spanish house made of native stone with a rather flat roof, yellow shutters, and wrought iron balconies on three-and-one-half sides. Later they built a pool house in the rear, the upper story of which Hemingway used for a study. The pool house was also made of native stone and had a mansard roof. A catwalk from the master bedroom balcony gave Ernest quick access from the main house to his study, where he worked in the early morning.

Although the Hemingways spent much time in Key West between 1931 and 1939, before their marriage ended in divorce, they traveled a great deal, vacationing in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, in Arkansas during quail season, in Europe, and in Africa. After the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, Hemingway spent a great deal of time in Spain, where he became involved with Martha Gelhorn, a newspaper reporter whom he married in 1940. At various times Hemingway went to Havana to get peace and quiet for his writing and often stayed at the Hotel Ambos Mundos on Obispo Street. Consequently it is difficult to say exactly what he wrote at the house at Key West and what he wrote elsewhere. It is probably safe to say, however, that he worked on the following books there in one stage of production or another: Death in the Afternoon, God Rest You Merry Gentlemen, Winner Take Nothing, Green Hills of Africa, and To Have and Have Not, which has a Key

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Historic American Buildings Survey. "Tift-Hemingway House" (FLA-179), prepared by F. Blair Reeves, AIA, July 1967.
- McDermott, John D. "Sites Associated with Ernest Hemingway in Michigan, Florida and Idaho," special report for Historic Sites Survey, October 2, 1968.
- Little, Rodney. Architectural description of the Tift-Hemingway House prepared for Florida State Historic Preservation Office's files, 1974.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	41,88,8,0	2,71,528,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the landmark is the current property line, which is the same as when the property was owned by Hemingway. A rectangle of 190 by 197 feet, just less than an acre, the land is surrounded by a brick wall, and bounded on the west by the east curb of Whitehead Street, on the north by the south curb of Olivia Street, and on the east and south by the property line between the Hemingway property and other residences.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

special report

Blanche Higgins Schroer, Landmark Review Project; John D. McDermott, Oct. 2, 1968

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3/4/77

((NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS))

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CONTINUATION SHEET Hemingway House ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

building. A small circular pool with tulip fountain interrupts the main entrance walkway and another fountain-planter resembling a Civil War monitor is also in the west yard. Concrete and cement tile walks provide access from gateways on each street and the patio beside the pool house is covered with tile from the Cuban Presidential Palace.

The pool house is located at the northeast corner of the property and the first floor presently serves as living quarters for the owners, but the study above is open to the public. The study is reached by a wrought iron stairway on the west side of the house. The catwalk between the master bedroom and the study disappeared years ago, after Pauline and Ernest Hemingway separated. The study is a large open room with a tile floor, occupying the section of the structure covered by mansard roof. A bookcase, a table and a few chairs are the only furnishings. Little has changed on the ground floor; the plan is the same, and the east half of the building (as when Mrs. Hemingway constructed this) is occupied by the living room, kitchen and bedroom.

The buildings on the Hemingway property are well-maintained, and open to the public as a museum operated by the owners who live in the pool house.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Hemingway House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

West setting. It is also quite likely that he may have written some of For Whom the Bell Tolls in his Key West home. Two famous short stories written in the pool house were "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and "A Way You'll Never Be."

Hemingway always wrote standing up, using the top of a bookcase for a desk. He rose with the sun in the morning and when in the process of writing a book he stuck strictly to schedule. A. E. Hotchner described the routine in his reminiscence, Papa Hemingway:

When Ernest was book-writing...the change in him was dramatic. The discipline of morning work was absolute. The door of his bedroom was inviolate until one o'clock, when he would emerge and mix a drink to cool out before lunch. While having his drink he would read newspapers and magazines because, he said, he was too empty to talk. In the afternoon he would nap, having started work at five or six in the morning, but by late afternoon he was ready for the drinking and companionship he enjoyed. Toward the end of dinner, however, he would begin to withdraw into himself, for his mind had turned to the creative problems of the morning, and by the time he went to bed, which was always early when he was working, he knew the people, the events, the places and even some of the dialogue he would encounter the following day.

The years spent at Key West were also important in the structuring of an image and in the making of myth of Hemingway as the two-fisted, hard-drinking, monosyllabic taker of big fishes. "The Key West period for Ernest," wrote his brother Leicester, "begins in the public mind with a picture of a bronzed giant fighting huge fish, then heading inshore for the roughest, toughest bar to celebrate the catch, possibly pausing somewhere to beat off a letter to Esquire, using words growled from one corner of the mouth." According to Leicester, it was never like that, but perhaps it would be better to say that it was much more than that. Hemingway was a disciplined writer, and he labored faithfully at the makeshift desk in his bedroom.

As a part of the divorce settlement in 1940, Pauline received 51 percent of the Key West property, and she continued to live in the house until her death in 1950. During the decade she lived alone, Pauline had the pool house enlarged and equipped with a kitchen. The addition was flat-roofed and provided space for a living room and bedroom. After her death, her sons did not want to live in the houses, so Ernest rented them. Hemingway apparently returned to the house to stay there only once, in 1955. Mary Hemingway, however, made repeated visits to Key West to spend time at the estate. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Daniels bought the Hemingway property in 1961, four months after Hemingway's death.

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The history is from the special Historic Sites Survey report by John D. McDermott, October 2, 1968.