

Pelican Path Self-Guided Key West Tour

MALLORY SQUARE

Walk the length of Mallory Square; the freestanding walls around the restrooms were once cisterns to collect rainwater for passing ships and the Waterfront Playhouse was built as a warehouse. The various masonry-built structures in this area were used for storage of salvage from ships wrecked on the reef, ice brought to the island by steamships from New England and for storing Cuban tobacco when Key West was the cigar-making capital of the world in the 19th century.

1. Wall & Co. Warehouse, Mallory Square, built in 1879 by William H. Wall, an Englishman shipwrecked here who started up the cigar-making industry in the 1830s. By 1900, the island had 200 cigar factories, half the population was Cuban and we produced more cigars than anywhere else in the world.

--- **TURN RIGHT HERE & PROCEED to FRONT STREET** ---

2. BANK OF KEY WEST/ Harbour House, 423 Front. Built in 1886 in brick as dictated by City ordinance after the Great Fire, an attempt to make commercial structures more fire resistant. Note the upper balcony, reminiscent of the architecture of New Orleans.

--- **CONTINUE ALONG FRONT ST. to CLINTON SQ.** ---

3. COAST GUARD BLDG./ Clinton Sq. Market, Front Street. Built in 1856 by the Navy for storage of coal, this building served as headquarters of the East Coast Blockade Squadron in 1861 when Key West was one of the only portions of the South to be in Union soldiers' control throughout the Civil War. It later served as the Naval Administration Bldg. until 1932, the Coast Guard Headquarters until the 1970's and now has been cleverly adapted to a shopping mall.

4. CUSTOM HOUSE/ Museum of Art & History, Front & Greene Streets. This 1891 landmark was built at a cost of \$108,000 and required almost one million bricks. Designed by William Kerr in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, it served as the Federal Bldg. during the city's wrecking era, Post Office and U.S. District Courts. After a \$9 million restoration, the building now is filled with Key West memorabilia presented by the Key West Art & Historical Society.

--- **WALK ALONG GREENE ST. to WHITEHEAD ST.** ---

5. GEIGER HOME/Audubon House, 205 Whitehead. Captain John Geiger and his heirs occupied this home for over 120 years. In 1958, this handsome structure was slated for demolition to make room for a filling station; saving this property from that fate sparked the restoration movement in Key West. After careful restoration, the home was opened as a museum in 1960 to commemorate the 1832 visit of John James Audubon and the nineteen new species he discovered here for his monumental work *Birds of America*. This property with nearly an acre of lush gardens is maintained by the Mitchell Wolfson Family Foundation, heirs of the man who saved it.

PRESIDENTIAL GATES, Whitehead at Caroline. Installed in 1906 as the ceremonial entrance into the Navy base beyond and only opened for visiting dignitaries. This 40 acre parcel was deactivated in 1974 and was purchased by a developer in 1987 for \$17.5 million. An attractive residential community, called Truman Annex, has evolved on the old base since then and the Gates maintain the tradition of opening only for dignitaries. Former president Jimmy Carter and Colin Powell have been through these gates in recent years. Twenty-three military structures, dating from 1845 to 1923, survive on the old Navy base, first established here in 1823.

6. HARRY S. TRUMAN LITTLE WHITE HOUSE, 111 Front. Built in 1890 by the Navy as a duplex for the commandant and paymaster, it was transformed into a vacation home for President Truman in 1948. Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy made use of this retreat while

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they were in office. It is Florida's only presidential home site and is presented by Historic Tours of America as a commemoration of the Truman years.

--- [TURN on CAROLINE ST.](#) ---

7. AERO-MARINE AIRWAYS/ Kelly's, 301 Whitehead. Originally built on the Porter Docks at the foot of Duval on the Gulf where sea planes took off and began the first international air mail route to Cuba in 1920. In 1927, Pan American World Airways was created to offer the first international flight service ever for passengers, a 90 mile/1 hr. and 20 minute journey from Key West to Havana. Jessie Porter Newton moved this building to its present location when her family sold their waterfront property. She and Pauline Heming-way established the Old Island Trading Post in this building, a shop offering local crafts. Now called Kelly's, a restaurant and micro-brewery bar once owned by actress Kelly McGillis.

8. CAPT. GEORGE CAREY HOME/ Jessie Porter's Heritage House & Robert Frost Cottage, 410 Caroline. The original 2-room cottage Carey built here in 1834 was expanded toward the street and to the present 2- story height in 1844 as his family enlarged. Jessie Porter, a 5th generation of prominent early settlers on the island, purchased the neglected property in 1934, restored and enlarged it and filled it with extraordinary treasures handed down through her family. A popular hostess, Jessie Porter entertained many famous people in the literary and entertainment world including poet laureate Frost who wintered here from the 1940s until 1960.

9. W. HUNT HARRIS HOUSE, 425 Caroline. Built about 1900, with unusual double round columns and arched entrance, it was home to Judge Harris who was president of the Florida Senate 1907-09, and later the Lt. Governor of Florida.

10. J. Y. PORTER HOUSE, 429 Caroline. Built in 1838 with later addition of rare mansard roof and gabled dormers to create a spacious third floor, J. Y. Porter was born here in 1847 and died in the room of his birth 80 years later. Dr. Porter, grandfather of Jessie Porter, was a contributor to yellow fever research and became Florida's first Public Health Officer. Note hand-wrought iron balconies on the sides.

--- [TURN RIGHT on DUVAL ST.](#) ---

11. OLDEST HOUSE IN SOUTH FLORIDA, ca. 1829, 322 Duval. The home of Capt. Francis Watlington, his wife and nine daughters for decades, incorporates the influences of colonial architecture found in the Caribbean and New England. Watlington was a Customs Inspector, Lightship Captain and harbor pilot. Of particular note is the only surviving Cook House in South Florida located in the spacious rear garden. Operated as a non-profit museum by Old Island Restoration Foundation with original furnishings and maritime artifacts.

12. MARTIN HELTINGS HOUSE/Woman's Club, 319 Duval. This unusual brick home was built in 1892 by the manager of the International Ocean Telegraph Co. The first public library in South Florida was housed here; since 1941 it has been home to the Woman's Club. The original carriage house at the rear was cleverly transformed into the Red Barn Theater decades ago.

13. PATTERSON HOUSE/Prudential Knight Realty, 336 Duval. The first private school was created here in 1842 by Mrs. Passalogue, a French lady of rare attainments; note school bell still hanging on second floor porch. Later inhabitants were the Henry Baldwins, an aristocratic British family who traced their ancestry to Lord Nelson and Sir Robt. Walpole. Annie Baldwin and her three daughters taught music here.

--- [TURN LEFT on EATON ST.](#) ---

14. ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, 401 Duval. The first Episcopal Church in South Florida was established here with a Christmas Day service in 1832. Early structures on this site were lost to

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fire and hurricanes. The present church is the fourth built on this corner; it dates from 1916 and incorporates stained glass saved from the earlier structures.

15. WARREN HOUSE/ Eaton Lodge, 511 Eaton. This classical revival home was built in 1886 by Sam Otis Johnson; he had a general store to the right of the house, which was moved to the rear of the property in the early 1900's for garage use. By then this property had become the home and office of Dr. Richard William Warren and remained in the family until his widow's death in the early 1970s. The tallest cistern in the Keys, 3-storys for gravity fed rainwater into the home, survives at the rear of the property.

16. ALVEREZ HOUSE, 523 Eaton. Judge Alvarez was married to one of the Watlington sisters, daughters of Captain Francis Watlington (see #11 above). The large tree in front of this 19th century mansion is a Gumbo Limbo, known locally as the 'Tourist Tree' because its bark is always red and peeling.

17. OTTO HOUSE/The Artist House, 534 Eaton. Built by Thomas Osgood Otto in the 1890s in the popular late Victorian style of the period, this home was occupied by his descendent, Eugene Otto, an accomplished artist, until the late 1970s. The painter used the turreted room at the top of the house, with light from all sides through the shuttered windows, as his working studio.

--- [CROSS SIMONTON ST.](#) ---

18. UNITED (formerly OLD STONE) METHODIST CHURCH, 600 Eaton. This handsome structure was built of two-foot thick limestone quarried in the Keys during the 1870s and is the oldest standing religious building on the island. The robust construction withstood the 1886 fire and early 20th century hurricanes. It is shaded by a Spanish Laurel, a ficus variety related to the Banyan.

19. PETER A. WILLIAMS HOUSE/Donkey Milk House, 613 Eaton. Built in 1866, this home remained in the same family for over 120 years. U.S. Marshall Williams saved his home by dynamiting along Eaton during the Great Fire of 1886. As a man of considerable means, his home incorporates a black walnut staircase, Spanish floor tiles and hand-decorated ceilings created by an Italian artist. The large clay pot in front, a "tinajone," dates from the 1800's, made in Cuba to collect rainwater. Donkey Milk Alley, at the back of this home, was created for the 19th century milkmen who delivered containerized cow's milk in carts pulled by donkeys.

20. GEORGE H. CURRY HOUSE, 620 Eaton. This handsome mansion was built after the 1886 fire in grand Classical Revival style. The large trees at the front are Canary Island Date Palms. This property encompassed several of the narrow plots that were originally platted along this street; the home to the right of the main house (#616) was the original carriage house.

EATON STREET was originally known as Church St. due to the three religious structures within one block of each other. The current name comes from John Henry Eaton, US Senator and member of Pres. Andrew Jackson's cabinet. Jackson appointed Eaton to the governorship of Florida.

--- [CROSS ELIZABETH ST.](#) ---

21. WILLIAM URIAH SAUNDERS HOUSE, 709 Eaton. Saunders and his wife came from Green Turtle Key, Bahamas and incorporated Bahamian influences in the design of their 1853 home. The central doorway with sidelights and heavy surround mouldings is unusual in Key West.

22. RICHARD PEACON HOUSE, 712 Eaton. Peacon, owner of the town's largest grocery store, built this house in the 1890's. Often referred to as the 'Octagon House', it is actually a rectangular structure incorporating a multi-sided front. This once neglected home was restored

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by famous designer Angelo Donghia in the 1970s and sold to Calvin Klein in the 1980s for a record price at the time of nearly \$1 million.

23. FILER HOUSE, 724 Eaton. Built in 1885, this unusual home incorporates Victorian fashion of the time with classic Bahamian design. Samuel Filer, who built this house for himself, was a lumber merchant apparently wanting to display extravagant use of wood embellishments known locally as ‘gingerbread’. Note etched cranberry glass transom window.

24. JOHN BARTLUM HOUSE/Bahama House #1, 730 Eaton. This home was built on Green Turtle Cay in the Bahamas in the early 1800’s. After losing his Key West residence in the 1846 hurricane, Bartlum dismantled this structure, put it onto a barge in the Bahamas and brought it to this site where it was reassembled in 1847. Bartlum built a famous ship, the Stephen R. Mallory, believed to be the only clipper ship ever built in Florida.

--- [TURN RIGHT into WILLIAM ST.](#) ---

25. RICHARD ROBERTS HOUSE/Bahama House, #2, 408 William. Brother-in-law of John Bartlum (#24), Roberts also dismantled this Bahamas-built house and reassembled it here in 1847. Low ceiling/porch heights are common to both. Note the hand-planed pine siding of varying widths with unique beading on the lower edges and the exterior stairs on the deep veranda.

26. GIDEON LOWE HOUSE, 409 William. The rear portion of this home was built in the early 1840s and enlarged toward the street in the 1870’s. It is an outstanding example of Classical Revival proportions and detailing.

27. ISLAND CITY HOUSE, 411 William. Built in the early 1900’s as a hotel, this enormous structure had fallen upon hard times by the late 1940’s when it was condemned by the City. The neglected building, with distinctive 3-story wrap-around verandas, underwent a massive restoration in the late 1970’s when the tourist industry was just beginning to revitalize after the Navy down-sized heavily in the mid ‘70’s.

28. WILLIAM RUSSELL HOUSE/ Key West B&B, 415 William. This turn-of-the-century home incorporates unusual double/triple columns adorned by ornamental trim across the front porch.

29. SHORT JACKET METHODIST CHURCH, 729 Fleming. The unusual name comes from the many members who were seamen and traditionally wore short jackets. First established on this corner in 1884, the original structure was destroyed in the 1909 hurricane. The present concrete building was completed in 1912.

--- [CONTINUE on WILLIAM, crossing over FLEMING](#) ---

FLEMING STREET is named for John W. C. Fleming, an Englishman and business partner of John Simonton (the New Jersey gentleman who bought the island for \$2,000 in 1821). Fleming saw the potential for a salt industry on the island.

30. THE ROBERTS HOMES, 512 & 516 William. The graceful “eyebrow” house at #512, a style unique to Key West (named for upper windows shaded by roof overhang) was built by Charles Roberts in the 1890’s. His brother, John Samuel Roberts, constructed the Classical Revival home at #516 at the same time. Lowered capitals on the columns, allowed for the late Victorian fashion of ‘gingerbread’ embellishments on porches.

31. WILLIAM ALBURY HOUSE, 730 Southard. One of the earliest homes built in this area, it incorporates the mid-19th c. preference of simplified detailing on the 3-sided wrap-around porches and a fine example of the “widow’s walk,” the lofty perch crowning the roof for the sighting of ships approaching the island.

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32. Restorations by Jerry Herman, 626 & 628 William. The well-known lyricist and composer of Hello Dolly and Mame brought these neglected 19th century homes into good order during the years he lived here in the 1980's and '90's. Herman was responsible for several handsome refurbishments on the island, such as the "twin" houses opposite the library on Fleming Street.

33. EDWARDS ROBERTS HOUSE, 643 William. This nicely-detailed and proportioned "eyebrow" home was built at the end of the 1800's. Roberts, who had been born in Ireland, worked as a ship builder and stone mason in Key West. He worked on the construction of the Old Stone Church in the 1870s (#18).

--- **OPTIONAL: TURN LEFT into WINDSOR LANE** ---

KEY WEST CEMETERY. The island's original burial ground, along the southern edge of the island, was badly damaged by the 1846 hurricane. The City established this 16 acres of 'high ground' (10' above sea level) as the new cemetery in 1847. The unique above-ground vaults were described by Key West poet James Merrill as "white-washed hope chests." Numerous family plots contain open roof structures, some even incorporate masonry buildings. Tours of the cemetery are offered to guide participants around the many eccentric delights, such as hand-carved angels, pet burial and the headstone proclaiming "I Told You I Was Sick."

--- **TURN RIGHT into WINDSOR LANE** ---

34. WINDSOR VILLAGE/ Writers' Compound, 713-727 Windsor Lane. Behind the stucco wall and double gates is a Key West phenomenon called a compound where numerous small original plots are joined together, some old houses retained, some newer ones added and a 'common' garden area with pool is formed in the center. This is one of the earliest on the island, created in the 1950's and has traditionally been home to writers. Ralph Ellison (author of Invisible Man) was one of the first to live here. In recent years, Joseph Lash, John Ciardi, John Hersey and Poet Laureate Richard Wilbur have called this home.

--- **TURN RIGHT into ELIZABETH ST.** ---

35. BENJAMIN BAKER HOUSE, 615 Elizabeth. Possibly the most 'decorated' house in Old Town, this substantial home was built by entrepreneur Baker in 1872 as a wedding gift for his daughter. This house displayed the strength of structures built by ship carpenters when a 1972 'hurricane-spawned tornado' shifted this massive bulk 8' off its supporting piers; the home was jacked up and returned to its foundations with no structural damage or cracked window panes.

--- **TURN LEFT into SOUTHARD ST.** ---

36. JOHN LOWE JR. HOUSE, 620 Southard. Lowe owned one of the largest sponging fleets in Florida and, as a lumber merchant, had the first sawmill on the island. Construction of his enormous villa, with enclosed 'widow's walk', or belvedere, took years to build and was completed in 1865.

37. BENJAMIN CURRY HOUSE, 610 Southard. Curry bought this plot for \$200. in the 1850's from Pardon Greene, one of John Simonton's partners in the original ownership of the island. This home was completed in 1856 and remains in the Curry family, now seven generations after Benjamin moved here from the Bahamas.

--- **TURN RIGHT into SIMONTON ST.** ---

--- **Optional: TURN RIGHT into FREE SCHOOL LANE** ---

This lane gave access to the first 'free', or public, school on the island. The 3-story building from the late 1800's was demolished in the early 20th century with the completion of the new Harris School on Southard. Nancy Forrester's Secret Garden, an acre of rare, tropical rainforest, is at the end of this lane. Within it is an 1880's Bahama house and cook house. The garden can be toured for an admission cost.

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38. DR. JOHN MALONEY BUILDING, 536 Fleming. Commercial buildings favored non-combustible construction after the devastating 1886 fire. Dr. Maloney established his Key West Drug Co. in this brick structure. In 1908, Maloney connected this building to the houses adjoining and established the Louise B. Maloney Hospital, the first private hospital. As surgeon to the Overseas Railway, Henry Flagler's crew working on the "railway that went to sea" were treated here during the years of this massive bridge construction and rail laying.

39. JOHN HASKINS BLDG./Marquesa Hotel, 600 Fleming. Built after the 1886 fire, this commercial building with residential attachment has seen various businesses. A "Gent's Goods" operation was one of the earliest. Later it was used as a drug store, the Key West Gas Co., a car dealership and the first home of Fausto's Food Palace. The property underwent a large refurbishment and enlargement in the 1980's to create the present hotel and restaurant.

40. WILLIAM R. KERR HOUSE, 410 Simonton. Architect Kerr designed this home for himself about 1880, employing lessons learned from the then fashionable Downing's Carpenter Gothic style; the heavy ornamentation, decorative bargeboards and jerkinhead roof distinguish this cottage style. Several brick or masonry commercial structures in Key West were designed by Kerr.

41. DANE ALLEY/Simonton Court, 320 Simonton. The 2-story building on the street was a cigar-making factory in the late 19th century. Walk down the lane to the left to see the "cigar-makers' cottages" behind that were built by the factory owner for employee housing. At the end of the attractively landscaped lane is an unusual pool created from an old cistern. The historic structures on this 2-acre compound now offer a variety of guest accommodations.

42. THE TREV-MOR/Casa Antigua, 314 Simonton. This early 1900's building was the first Ford dealership on the island, with two floors of a residential hotel above, run by Messrs. Trevor & Morris. Ernest Hemingway and his second wife, Pauline, stayed here on their first visit to Key West in 1928. Hemingway completed his first draft of *A Farewell to Arms* while awaiting delivery of his new Model A. This Mediterranean Revival building has been transformed into a private residence with an extraordinary atrium garden.

43. RICHARD KEMP HOUSE/Cypress House, 601 Caroline. The Kemp family moved to Key West from the Bahamas in the early 19th century. William Kemp, brother of Richard, introduced the sponge industry to Key West, from which they prospered. Note the third floor eyebrow-style windows tucked under the roof overhang of this Bahamian-influenced home built after the 1886 fire. The pine and cypress used in the 1800's for construction did not require a protective coat of paint.

--- [TURN LEFT into CAROLINE ST.](#) ---

44. GEORGE BARTLUM HOUSE, 531 Caroline. Bartlum, a successful sponge merchant, completed this New England style house in 1888. For many years this was the home of Senator John Spottswood and his wife Mary. Spottswood owned the Casa Marina and LaConcha Hotels. Harry & Bess Truman considered the Spottswoods as their closest friends in Key West and were frequently entertained in this home.

--- [TURN RIGHT into ANN ST.](#) ---

45. MILTON CURRY HOUSE/Curry Mansion, 511 Caroline. Milton Curry's father, William, came to Key West from the Bahamas in the mid 19th century. William established a lucrative ship's chandlery, served as mayor and became Florida's first millionaire in the late 1800's. His son, Milton, built this exact replica of a 22-room Newport, RI "cottage" in 1905. He was also famed for his extravagant 18K gold flatware, trays, tea/coffee service/napkin rings created by Tiffany & Co. in New York. **46. OLD CITY HALL**, 510 Greene. This 1891 brick structure

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replaced the original wood City Hall that was destroyed in the 1886 fire. The building was designed by William Kerr (# 40); market, jail and fire department occupied the lower level with city offices and local courts on the floor above. City Commission meetings open to the public on a weekly basis now take place in the spacious second floor chamber.

--- [TURN LEFT on GREENE and RIGHT into DUVAL ST.](#) ---

DUVAL STREET evolved as the main thoroughfare for Old Town with shopping and entertainment. It was named for Florida's first Territorial Governor, William Pope Duval, when Key West was the largest and richest city in the state.

47. OLD CUSTOM HOUSE, 124 Duval. This mid 1800's building, with distinctive dormers in the mansard roof, was the processing center for the thousands of Cuban and Bahamian immigrants entering the United States in the 1800s. The very profitable cigar-making and salvage industries in Key West were the obvious draw. It was also to this building that wreckers brought their salvage claims for processing.

48. CLAUDE ROBERTS HOUSE/ Bagatelle, 115 Duval. Roberts was foreman to the Cortez Cigar Factory. His gracious home, with an unusual curve on the wrap-around porch, had been built on Fleming. To enable Library expansion in the 1970's, this home was placed on rollers and brought down Duval St. to this new location. It became the Rose Tatoo, a favorite dining spot for Tennessee Williams.

--- [TURN LEFT into FRONT ST.](#) ---

49. FLORIDA FIRST NATIONAL BANK, (established 1891) Front & Duval. By the late 1800's, with half of the Key West population being Cuban, it should not come as a surprise that this 1897 red and yellow brick building, with heavy Spanish influence, was financed by a group of wealthy cigar manufacturers. The carved balcony along the Duval side, with finely detailed column capitals, and the tower on the corner are particularly noteworthy.

50. JOHN W. SAWYER BUILDING, 400 Front Street. Sawyer was a Bahamian- born merchant. After the loss of the 1868 building he had on this site, Sawyer imported Irish bricklayers after the 1886 fire to construct his new "fancy clothing emporium."