

Travel Florida Highways...to Monroe County



Presidents

by Lauren Gibaldi

DUO

Parrotfish

Visitors to the Keys expect sunshine and sandy beaches, not educational museums. But, like every other city, Key West has an abundance of historical and cultural locales to explore. From peering at sea creatures, to learning about presidential visitors, it is easy to find something to explore and learn about in this energetic city.



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Key West Aquarium

The Key West Aquarium hosts a number of beautiful indigenous sea-creatures. During the Great Depression, the federal government decided Key West would make a wonderful tourist destination due to the perpetually wonderful weather and beautiful location. The Work Projects Administration built the venue in 1934 as one of the first and largest open-air aquariums. Today, it is almost twice the size of the original and includes an Atlantic Shores exhibit, as well as large outdoor holding pens.

Families can explore the undersea world watching the awe-inspiring creatures in their habitat. Guides explain the local waterways, as well as what secrets and mysteries lie within them. Guests are invited to engage in shark and turtle feedings at the Touch Tank. The hands-on portion doesn't end there—during the tour, participants can pet a live shark.

For more information, visit www.keywestaquarium.com or call (800) 868-7482.

Harry S. Truman Little White House

Built in 1890, the waterfront two-family dwelling called Quarters A and B served as naval command headquarters during the Spanish-American War. President William Howard Taft visited the area in December 1912, after the house was converted into a single-family residence. In the early 1900s, scientists Edward Hayden and Thomas Edison lived there at different times, while creating aids for the war. Starting in November 1946, President Truman resided in the house for

175 days, dubbing it the Winter White House. An additional 11 working vacations were spent there. The building became known as the Little White House.

After his presidency, Truman visited the Little White House five more times. Since the Truman era, numerous notable people have visited and stayed, including presidents Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy for official duties, and Jordan's King Hussein I as a guest. In 1973, the house was officially named the Truman Annex following Truman's death in December 1972. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. Later that year, its duty as a base ended.

For 12 years, the property was left abandoned. After being turned over to the state, the house was privately funded and restored to reflect the Truman era. The Historic Tours of America continued the restoration. Since then, President Jimmy and Roselyn Carter, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and President Bill and Hillary Clinton have visited. Today, it is a reminder of a historically significant era and a memorial to President Truman.

The Truman Little White House is a living museum, a retreat and a meeting hall for today's leaders. Truman's desk and presidential logs are on display, noting the happenings during each of his visits. Historic photographs fill the walls, documenting who stepped through the doors. Ongoing events and exhibits filter through the museum, and tour guides lead educational tours.

May 14 and 15 is the 2010 Symposium, themed *The Legacy of Harry S. Truman in East Asia: Japan, China, and the Two Koreans*. Held at the Truman Little White House, the event features panel discussions, keynote speakers and more.

Call (305) 294-9911 or visit www.trumanlittlewhitehouse.com for more information.

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