



# Key West: History of an Island of Dreams

*Maureen Ogle*

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Parrotheads, Hemingway aficionados, and sun worshipers view Key West as a tropical paradise, and scores of writers have set tales of mystery and romance on the island. The city's real story—told by Maureen Ogle in this lively and engaging illustrated account—is as fabulous as fiction. In the two centuries since the city's pioneer founders battled Indians, pirates, and deadly disease, Key West has stood at the crossroads of American history. In 1861, Union troops seized control of strategically located Key West. In the early 1890s, Key West Cubans helped José Martí launch the Cuban revolution, and a few years later the battleship *Maine* steamed out of Key West harbor on its last, tragic voyage. At the turn of the century, a technological marvel—the overseas railroad—was built to connect mainland Florida to Key West, and in the 1920s and 1930s, painters, rumrunners, and writers (including Ernest Hemingway and Robert Frost) discovered Key West. During World War II, the federal government and the military war machine permanently altered the island's landscape, and in the second half of the 20th century, bohemians, hippies, gays, and jet-setters began writing a new chapter in Key West's social history.

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