

Samuel Roberts House
1025 Fleming Street
Monroe County
Key West
Florida

HABS NO. FLA-182

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. FLA-182

SAMUEL ROBERTS HOUSE

Location: 1025 Fleming Street, Key West, Monroe County, Florida.

USGS Key West Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 17.419300.2716250.

Present Owner: Karl O. Thompson, 920 Johnson Street, Key West,
Florida.

Present Occupant: Mrs. E.H. Joens.

Present Use: Residence.

Significance: The Samuel Roberts house is an excellent example of
the typical one-and-a-half-story Conch cottage of Key
West, traditionally built by mariners, spongers, and
fisherman.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1880.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: This property is part of the Von Phister Subdivision (Recorded in Deed Book I, p. 70, 1874). William H. Von Phister sold lot 2 of this subdivision to Thomas Roberts in 1877 (Deed Book J, p. 406) and it was resold by Thomas Roberts in 1879 to Samuel Roberts (Deed Book K, p. 5). Samuel and Sarah E. Roberts sold the house and lot to Thomas Harley Saunders 1889 (Deed Book PP, p. 78; Monroe County Tax Records, 1886). The heirs of Thomas H. and Harriet M. Saunders in 1937 sold this property to Karl O. Thompson (Deed Book G-6, p. 95).
4. Builder: Samuel Roberts.
5. Original plan and construction: A one-and-a-half story, central hall plan house with the main entrance in the long side and a full veranda covering the facade.

6. Alterations and additions: A rear single-story ell addition was constructed at some time. A shed dormer was added at the rear of the building at the second floor level to provide space for a bathroom. On the interior the western wall of the hall was partially opened and book shelves constructed to divide the hall and living room. The last two alterations were believed to have been made between 1938-1940.
- B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with this Structure:

The names Roberts and Saunders indicate that the owners were of Bahamian descent. The area in which this house stands was largely populated by Bahama Islanders and is known as Conchtown, Conchs being the name by which these people are known in the Bahamas.

C. Bibliography:

Monroe County Courthouse Records and Deed Books,
County Clerk's Office, Key West, Florida.

Monroe County Tax Records. Florida Collection
Monroe County Public Library, 700 Fleming St., Key West,
Florida.

Monroe Land Title Co., Abstract, 513 Whitehead Street,
Key West, Florida.

Sanborn Map of Key West, Florida 1889,
Sanborn Map and Publishing Co. New York.

Prepared by Betty M. Bruce
Old Island Restoration
Foundation, Inc.
Project Historian
HABS Key West Project
August 1967

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A typical one-and-a-half story Key West Conch cottage designed to meet the rigors of the near-tropical climate. Environmental adaptations include construction techniques and provisions for ample ventilation.

2. Condition of Fabric: Generally good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: A one-and-a-half-story house, 30'-3" x 52'-2 1/2" with three bays across the facade and a rear ell.

2. Foundation: Monolithic limestone piers; wood lattice or baseboard covers openings between piers (northeast and southeast only).

3. Wall construction: Horizontal wood siding, lapped with 4 1/2" exposures, 1 1/7" x 4" corner boards.

4. Structural system, framing: Wood frame, post and lintel.

5. Porches, stoops: A full veranda extends across the front (Fleming Street) elevation near floor level. The columns are 5" square with chamfered edges and composite mold capitals; the balustrade is formed by square rails with molded caps and wood palings cut in a lantern-shade pattern from cypress boards. The ceiling of the veranda is sheathed and parallels the pitch of the roof allowing windows in the second story. The floor is constructed of 3 1/4" tongue and groove wood boards. Wood board steps lead down to a concrete walk. The column and gate post at the sidewalk have a metal pull bar. At the rear of the ell addition a modern wood board stoop with concrete steps has been constructed. Earlier concrete steps and slab remain under the stoop. Concrete steps lead up to a door in the northeast side of the ell addition.

6. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Front doorway: Simple surround flush with edge of siding, projecting drip mold, fixed sash over doorway, outswinging modern screen door (marks on jamb indicate front doorway probably had a wood louvered door(s), outswinging), inswinging four-panel wood door.

Kitchen doorway: Simple wood trim, drip mold, vertical wood board door swings out.

Doorway into ell: Wood board door, closed concrete steps.

- b. Windows and shutters: Two operating wood louvered shutters per opening hung on pintles at jambs, spring latch and staple keepers; six-over-six-light double hung sash windows, lower section filled with insect screen (modern); window trim simple flush surround, projecting sill and drip mold; false window, west elevation, flush siding over opening behind closed shutters.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof parallel to street (long) elevation; terne metal shingle covering; gable roof over ell except 2'-3" flat section to avoid cornice-eave-gutter intersection at southwest wall of house.
- b. Cornices, eaves: Boxed eaves, galvanized gutters and downspouts, molding and cornice board at gable.
- c. Dormers: Shed roof dormer on southwest side to accommodate modern bathroom.

8. Water sources:

Cistern: Masonry cistern partly above grade, fed from galvanized down spout from front and rear gutters; cement curb and wood hatch cover; cement finish; galvanized iron pipe from cistern to house; cistern is unused, pipe broken.

Well: Round well, battered walls of limestone, cement finish, closed.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: Central entry from porch to stair hall, room each side; dining room and kitchen in ell; back stoop; stairway to second floor originates at back of central hall, closet under stairway.
- b. Second floor: Room each side of stair hall, closet in one corner of each; bathroom at rear of stair hall accommodated by shed dormer.

2. Stairway: wood stairway, 7" risers, 10 1/8" treads, turned balusters and newel, exterior string has beaded lower edge.
3. Flooring: 3 1/4" wood strips, varnished; sheet linoleum covering over portions of wood floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: 3 1/2" wood strips, horizontal flush joints 8 1/2" wood baseboards, molded wood cornice.
5. Doorways and doors: Four-panel wood doors throughout, simple mold wood trim.
6. Decorative features: This building is well proportioned but plain; decorations are limited to a simple paling pattern and wood cornice. The framed opening and book shelves between the hall and living room do not appear to be original.
7. Hardware: Original hardware includes porcelain and brass knobs, key locks on doors of principal rooms, and spring-operated shutter keepers. Water supply and drainage pipes are exposed.

D. Site:

Situated on approximately a 45' x 90' site, the Samuel Roberts house faces southeast on Fleming Street, eight feet from the edge of the sidewalk. A wood picket, rail and post fence provides privacy from passersby. Landscaping includes a frangipani tree, hibiscus and other native or typical foliage.

Prepared by F. Blair Reeves AIA
Supervisory Architect
HABS-Key West Project
August 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared in 1967 during a summer project jointly sponsored by the Old Island Restoration Foundation, Inc. of Key West, and the Historic American Buildings Survey. Twenty-two structures were recorded, ranging from commercial structures, residences and hospitals to a convent, a lighthouse, and the Memorial to the Victims of the Disaster of the U.S. Battleship Maine.

The project was under the direction of F. Blair Reeves, AIA, Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, University of Florida. Measured drawings were prepared by student architects John D. Davenport and John F. Grimm of Texas A. and M. University, and John O. Crosby of the University of Florida. Mrs. Betty M. Bruce of the Old Island Restoration Foundation, Inc., and Professor Reeves were responsible for the historical and architectural data. They were assisted by members of the Foundation. J. Franks Brooks, Photographer, of Key West, supplied the photographs.