

CASE FOR SUPPORT

Architectural Preservation of Ernest Hemingway's Home in Cuba



**FINCA VIGÍA
FOUNDATION**

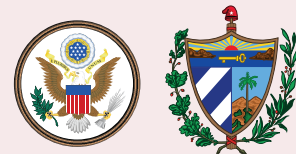
Unprecedented Accomplishments

For the past two decades the Finca Vigía Foundation, a small Boston-based non-profit, has invested more than \$3 million dollars providing materials and expertise in Cuba to preserve Ernest Hemingway’s legacy there.

The Foundation’s work in Cuba is unprecedented. Supporters include the Ford Foundation, EMC Corporation, Caterpillar Corporation, Caterpillar Foundation, AT&T Foundation, American Express Philanthropy, Intel, as well as dozens of authors including Russell Banks, Margaret Atwood, Salman Rushdie, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Barbara Kingsolver; filmmaker Ken Burns; the late Senator John McCain; members of Congress from both parties; Bob Vila of This Old House fame; and musician and songwriter Jimmy Buffett.

The Foundation sends American document conservators and preservation architects to work collaboratively with Cuban specialists in similar disciplines. Together they have protected the author’s papers, letters, manuscripts, his 9,000 book library, his famous fishing boat, and his home outside of Havana from what experts had considered a “preservation emergency.” To date more than 10,000 documents and 5,000 photographs have been conserved.

Digital images of conserved material have been brought to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum providing access for all— international scholars, admirers, and school children.



Our partners include the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, the US Departments of State, Treasury, Commerce, and the Cuban Ministries of Culture, Environment, and Foreign Commerce.



This collaboration has, as no other since the Cuban revolution, built bridges between Cuban and American professionals and won the support of both governments.

In 2019 the Foundation broke new ground in Cuban / US relations with the completion of a state-of-the-art renovation center with wet and dry paper conservation laboratories and an archival storage vault. This was an historic and pioneering endeavor. It is the first building constructed in Cuba since 1959 utilizing American design, materials, and labor.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony in March 2019 was broadcast live on Cuban television and seen around the world. The \$1.2 million building was funded by individual donations, American corporations, and the Ford Foundation. It benefits the vast Hemingway collection and also serves as a training center for museum conservationists across the island.

The dining room at Finca Vigia. Ernest Hemingway preferred to dine on the left side of the table looking at Joan Miró's painting, *The Farm*. In 1925, Hemingway purchased the original, which is now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

It Connects Us

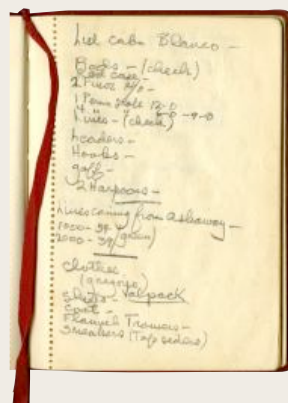
Hemingway loved Cuba and Cubans still love Hemingway. Most important for scholarship purposes, Finca Vigía was where Hemingway gathered some of his most prized possessions.

The collection includes original manuscripts and galley proofs of his stories and novels, thousands of photographs, his correspondence and his journals, animal trophies, fishing rods, paintings, fishing logs, and a personal library of almost nine thousand volumes.

No other Hemingway place—Paris, Key West, or Idaho—comes close.

Much of the material has been out of reach to American scholars.

The preservation of Hemingway's home is a highly visible project important to Hemingway aficionados, scholars, preservationists, and our cultural heritage. Finca Vigía is a much-visited and beloved museum, an example of shared cultural patrimony between the United States and Cuba. Repairing it affords a rare opportunity for civic engagement between the two countries.



Meeting the Need

In keeping with our organization's mission of preserving Hemingway's legacy in Cuba, the Cuban Ministry of Culture has requested that the Finca Vigía Foundation begin a new project: provide US materials and workforce development for the much needed architectural preservation of Ernest Hemingway's home.

The home, named Finca Vigía (Lookout Farm), which the Cuban government has operated as a museum since his death in 1961, attracts thousands of scholars and international visitors a year. It is a stunning seven-room house built in 1880 on a hilltop in the village of San Francisco de Paula with views of Havana harbor in the distance. It was where Hemingway lived for the last 22 years of his life—his most productive period. This is where he wrote *The Old Man and the Sea*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *A Moveable Feast*, and other works standing at his typewriter. It is where he entertained and where he pitched endless innings of baseball with the neighborhood children. It is also where he learned he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954.

The author's residence is currently in danger of destruction from heat, humidity, pests, and the sheer passage of time. Worse, the irreplaceable collection is suffering from intense humidity and fluctuations in temperature. Some windows no longer open which is severely detrimental to the collection, the wood is not termite proof, and the quality of the roof is inferior.



Severe termite damage is readily apparent at multiple windows. Water seepage effects walls and raises the interior relative humidity.



A detailed architectural preservation feasibility study conducted for the Foundation in December 2019 by US engineers and architects estimates the renovation could cost approximately \$3 million. The preservation of Hemingway’s iconic and historic home can be done in phases based on priorities. The numbers below include design and fabrication, international shipping, and US labor in Cuba. A copy of the full report is available at fincafoundation.org.

This multi-paneled window—similar to all twenty-four windows in the house—is not hurricane resistant. The frames must all be replaced due to water and termite damage.

- **Phase 1:** \$1.2 million for custom hurricane resistant windows. Completion estimated for the end of 2021.
- **Phase 2:** \$600,000 for roof replacement and drainage systems. Completion estimated for early of 2023 taking into account the fall hurricane season.
- **Phase 3:** \$740,000 other interior and exterior items. Completion estimated for 2024.

The timeline is based upon the preservation feasibility study and the Foundation’s past experience at the Finca—specifically the successful construction of the Restoration Center from 2016-2019.

Your Help is Vital to Save the Legacy

Those who choose to invest in its' preservation will be appreciated and honored by a nation where civic engagement with the neighbor to the north is seldom celebrated.

All individuals, foundations, and corporations who support the preservation of Hemingway's home with tax-deductible contributions of \$100,000 or greater will be acknowledged on a bronze plaque at the Museo Hemingway. If desired, donors will be promoted in the press, international broadcasts, and social media.

The living room at Finca Vigia is exactly as Ernest Hemingway left it in 1960. His phonograph (behind the open french door) still works; the record collection (on the shelves along the back wall) includes Italian opera, American big band and gospel music.





**FINCA VIGÍA
FOUNDATION**

Mary-Jo Adams
Executive Director
info@fincafoundation.org

25 Channel Center, Suite 1003
Boston, MA 02210
fincafoundation.org