



Ernest Hemingway was a cat-lover. He admired their spirit and independence, and often wrote about them. Hemingway was given a special six toed cat from a ship's captain, and from that cat the legends of Hemingway's cats have grown.

This cat, which may have been a Maine Coon, had extra toes (technically known as polydactyl, latin for "many digits"). Today, approximately 60 cats, half of them polydactyl, make their home in the Ernest Hemingway Museum and Home, in Key West, protected and taken care of by the terms of his will.

The many cats now living in and around the Hemingway House are descendents of Hemingway's first cat, and are given fanciful names, as he once did, after movie stars and even characters in his books. These cats are so popular and so well-known, that the nickname "Hemingway Cats" has often been given to describe polydactyls.

The cats wander throughout the house and grounds. They are taken care of by the staff and a full time vet. They are very used to the tourists and pretty much ignore the visitors, preferring to just cat nap where ever they found a cool quiet spot to sleep.

