

BUSTER KEATON FILM LOCATIONS: A SILENT ECHOES TOUR OF LOS ANGELES

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The following self-guided tour directions have been provided as a special bonus to John Bengtson's "Touring Los Angeles Through the Films of Buster Keaton" presentation at the UCLA Film and Television Archive. (You can also download this document from the Archive's website at www.cinema.ucla.edu.) New locations have been added here to the ones discussed in Bengtson's acclaimed book, *Silent Echoes: Discovering Early Hollywood Through the Films of Buster Keaton* (www.SilentEchoes.net, Santa Monica Press: 800-784-9553). Happy navigating your way around town!

Hollywood Tour

The Hollywood tour begins, symbolically, at the corner of Hollywood and Vine (1). Here Keaton jumped onto a fire truck in *The Cameraman*.

Proceed west down Hollywood Boulevard past Highland, to Mann's (formerly Grauman's) Chinese Theater. There, across the street between Highland and Orange, at 6904 Hollywood Blvd., is the former Mary Moll Building (2), which appeared briefly during the film-editing sequence from *Sherlock Jr.*

Turn back east down Hollywood Blvd., and turn right (south) onto Cahuenga, stopping near the corner. The alley on the east side of Cahuenga (3) is the alley from *Cops* where Keaton grabs a passing car one-handed.

Proceed south down Cahuenga a few yards until you reach the parking lot at 1622 Cahuenga (4), the lot where Brown Eyes was kept safe in *Go West*. This parking lot also appears in *The Cameraman*. Across the street from the parking lot (5) is the site of the former fire station that appears in *Three Ages* and *The Cameraman*. The old building next door to the south, 1623 Cahuenga (6), also appears briefly in *Three Ages*. The alley between these two buildings appears in *Neighbors*, *The Goat*, and *Hard Luck*.

Turn your attention to the buildings at 1616-1604 Cahuenga (7), which appear behind Keaton in *The Cameraman* as he rides the fire truck into the station.

Proceed south down Cahuenga, and turn left (east) onto Selma, continuing a half block to the corner of Cosmo (8). Here Keaton's hand was bitten by a dog as he signaled a left turn in *Cops*.

Turn left (north) up Cosmo a short ways, for a better view of the alley (9) as it appears in *Cops* with Keaton attaching his boxing glove turn indicator to the wagon.

Return down Cosmo, turn right (west) on Selma, and then left back onto Cahuenga going south. Stop near the southeast corner of Cahuenga and Selma (10). The strip mall is the site of the former Toribuchi Grocery, appearing in *The Goat*. The building next door, 1542 Cahuenga, appears briefly, and is still standing.

Continue south down Cahuenga until Sunset Blvd. (11). Here Keaton rode a "San Francisco" cable car along Sunset past the Hollywood Laundry. The former drug store at the northwest corner of Sunset and Cahuenga is still standing.

Proceed south down Cahuenga until Santa Monica Blvd. Turn right (west) and continue past Las Palmas until reaching the Ice House nightclub at 6665 Santa Monica Blvd (12). Keaton rode past this lumberyard and icehouse in *Daydreams*.

Return east back down Santa Monica Blvd., and turn right again onto Cahuenga going south. The warehouse on the southeast corner appears during a crowd reaction shot of the fire-hose calamity in *Go West* (13). After one short block you will reach the corner of Eleanor, where the former Keaton Studio (14) was situated between Eleanor, Cahuenga, Romaine and Lillian. Note: the plaque commemorating Keaton's studio is on the wrong corner! It should have been placed at the southwest corner of Lillian and Eleanor. Keaton filmed dozens of scenes adjacent to his studio, many of which are explained in the book. For example, the prison set from *Convict 13*, the tenement set from *Neighbors*, and the collapsing house in *The Boat*, all were situated at the northeast corner of Cahuenga and Romaine.

Continue south down Cahuenga to 815 Cahuenga (15), which appears in the background as Big Joe Roberts delivers a piano in *One Week*.

Continue south down Cahuenga until Melrose, turn left (east) and continue until Vine, where you turn right. Continue south down Vine until you reach Beverly (16). This corner marks the place where Keaton made a big turn on the handlebars of a motorcycle in *Sherlock Jr.*

Turn left (east) onto Beverly. Turn right (south) at Arden, and stop at the corner (17). The house at 247 North Arden appears in the background of the same motorcycle shot.

Return to Beverly and continue east two more blocks until Larchmont. Turn left (north) up Larchmont and stop near the corner (18). The corner of Beverly and Larchmont appears several times in *Sherlock Jr.* Be sure to notice the House of Chan Dara (19) which appears in the film.

Continue north up Larchmont, and turn right (east) back onto Melrose. Continue on Melrose for about two miles, and turn left (north) onto Vermont. At Monroe you will reach Los Angeles City College (20), which served as the campus for *College* before it was remodeled.

Continue north up Vermont and turn left (west) on Santa Monica. Proceed about a mile and stop at the corner of Western (21). At this corner Keaton filmed scenes from *The Goat* (looking north up Western) and *Sherlock Jr.* (looking west down Santa Monica). This concludes the Hollywood Tour.

West of Downtown Tour

This tour begins at Wilshire and Berendo (1), a block east of the former Ambassador Hotel, home of the famous Coconut Grove, and where Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1968. At the southeast corner stands the Talmadge apartment building which served as Keaton's mansion in *Battling Butler*.

Continue east down Wilshire and stop at the entrance to MacArthur Park (2). At the right (southwest) corner of Park View stands the statue of General Otis, which appears in *Hard Luck*.

Continue east on Wilshire through the park, and turn right (south) on Alvarado. Continue three blocks until you cross Ninth Street (3). *The Goat* features a shot of Virginia Fox walking along 853 Alvarado, at the northwest corner of Ninth. Down the street a bit, at 914 Alvarado (4), lies her apartment in the film.

Continue south down Alvarado, and turn left (east) on Olympic. Continue about a mile until Grand, where you turn right (south). About a mile down Grand, just after crossing beneath the freeway, is the Olympic Auditorium (5), 1801 Grand, seen in *Battling Butler*.

Proceed down Grand to Washington, and turn right (west). After two blocks, turn left (south) onto Figueroa, and continue down until turning right (west) at Exposition Blvd, the site of the USC campus (6) and Exposition Park (7). The Museum of Natural History at Exposition Park appears at the beginning of *Spite Marriage*, while the USC Administration Building appears in *Seven Chances* and *College*. The Coliseum appears in scenes from *Three Ages*, while the triangle building from *Cops* and *Seven Chances* was located at 635 Exposition Blvd.

Continue west down Exposition Blvd., and turn right (north) at Vermont, and then left (west) onto Adams. After about ten blocks down turn left (south) onto La Salle (8), the site of the *Seven Chances*

church.

Return to Adams, continue west, then turn left (south) onto Western, and continue to Jefferson where you turn right (west). In five blocks you reach Cimarron St. (9) to your left, the section of Jefferson appearing at the end of the mob scene in *Seven Chances*.

Continue west down Jefferson to Arlington (10), the corner where Keaton tries to flag down a trolley in *Seven Chances*.

Turn right (north) on Arlington, and follow it about a mile and a half until Olympic, where you turn left (west). Six blocks later turn left (south) onto Bronson and stop the car (11). The northeast corner of Olympic and Bronson, and the row of houses along the east side of Bronson south of Olympic, appear in a long tracking shot from *Seven Chances*.

Return to Olympic and continue west. After two more blocks, turn left (south) onto Victoria (12). Near the corner, at 1043 Victoria, Buster and Eleanor lived with his mother, brother, and sister.

Return to Olympic and continue west. After six blocks or so, turn right (north) onto Muirfield. Continue north across Wilshire a few blocks until you reach 543 Muirfield (13), Keaton's home in 1924. This concludes the West of Downtown Tour.

Downtown Tour

Keaton filmed many scenes in a small area of downtown, especially in the old Chinatown district near the Plaza de Los Angeles. Due to freeway construction and the Civic Center redevelopment, many corners and intersections featured in his movies no longer exist.

The tour begins between Main St. and Los Angeles St. at the Plaza de Los Angeles, just north of the Hollywood Freeway (1). North of the plaza, near the intersection of Olvera and Alameda, lies the former intersection of Los Angeles St. and Alameda, which appears in *The Goat*. The spot in the train station parking lot across from where Los Angeles St. curves into Alameda is where Keaton screeches to a halt in front of a Chop Suey house in *Daydreams* (2).

Return to the plaza. Facing the southeast corner of the plaza stands the old fire station on Los Angeles St. (3), which appears in *The Goat*.

Continue across the plaza to Main Street, and turn left (south). Stop at the corner of Arcadia (4) and turn left (east). Keaton filmed at least three scenes along Arcadia between Main St. and Los Angeles St. He zigzagged east down Arcadia in *Cops*, walked past the Hotel de Paris from Arcadia onto Sanchez in *Neighbors*, and made his boxing glove u-turn at the intersection of Arcadia and Los Angeles St. in *Cops*. Sadly, the original stretch of Arcadia now lies beneath the Hollywood Freeway. Keaton also filmed a tracking shot from *Neighbors*, walking up Sanchez from Arcadia while wiping mud off of his face. The section of the alley he used has also been demolished.

Continue east on Arcadia, turn right (south) at Alameda, and cross over the freeway, continuing south until you reach Ducommun (5). Keaton filmed at least six scenes at the corner of Ducommun and Alameda, including his taxi arrival and left-hand turn in *Cops*. He also hit a cop with a horseshoe, and got his coat wrapped around a pole, at the same corner in *The Goat*.

Continue south down Alameda, and turn left (east) on Temple, which merges into Turner going east. Continue on Turner until you reach the corner of Vignes (6). In *Daydreams* Keaton was chased in a Roman soldier costume east down Turner from Vignes toward Center.

Turn right (south) when you reach Center, and continue down Center, under the First St. Viaduct, as it merges into Santa Fe. Continue south down Santa Fe, pass under the Fourth St. Viaduct, and immediately turn right (west) on Fourth Place, and right (north) again on Molina, until you reach Fourth St. (7) This was the site of the Santa Fe freight depot and Maxwell House Coffee building that appears in *Go West*. The old Coca-Cola building is at 963 East Fourth St.

Continue west on Fourth St. back toward downtown. At Hill St. turn right (north) and continue until First St. (8) This spot marks the former Hill St. Tunnel, which ran north of the intersection, where Keaton filmed

the tall building stunts in *Three Ages*.

Turn right (east) on First St., and turn left (north) onto Spring St. Although Spring St. is now reconfigured, around the middle of the block on the left (west) side, before reaching Temple St., lies the general location of where Keaton is surprised by all the police in the parking lot in *Cops*. This concludes the Downtown Tour.

Santa Monica Tour—*Spite Marriage*

After learning of his spite marriage, Buster knocks down Lionel outside of the Hotel Carmel, located at 1451 Second St. on the corner of Broadway in Santa Monica. Buster then dashes up Second St. past shops that no longer stand. At the film's conclusion, Buster and Dorothy Sebastian arrive by taxi in front of the Hotel Carmel. In the center background you can see a building with three arches, the former Rapp Saloon, located at 1438 Second St. Built in 1875, it remains Santa Monica's oldest masonry structure. The building visible to the right of the Rapp Saloon is currently the Second St. Market, located at 1428 Second St.

Note: Buster drives a taxicab up Pier A St. in Wilmington past the Coast Fishing Company, located on the west side of Fries Ave., before plunging into the north end of Slip Number 5 of Los Angeles Harbor, beside the Catalina Island Ferry Terminal.

Venice Tour

Keaton filmed many scenes from *The High Sign* and *The Balloonatic* within a small area of Venice.

Start at the northwest corner of Ocean Front and Market (1). On the beach at this corner lies the former site of the Venice Plunge, which appeared in *The Cameraman*.

Continue down Ocean Front to Windward (2). A few remaining buildings along Windward appear in the background as Keaton replaces a cop's gun with a banana in *The High Sign*.

A bit further down Ocean Front, at the northeast corner of 17th (3), is the site of the former White House restaurant, featured in *The High Sign*, where Keaton unfolds the enormous single sheet of newspaper.

Continue down Ocean Front until you reach 1811 (4), the place where the cop pulls a banana out of his holster while confronting the towering bad guy.

Continue down Ocean Front and turn left (east) on 19th, going until Speedway. Turn left (north) up Speedway until you reach 18th (5). The northeast corner of 18th and Speedway appears in *The High Sign*. The Seaward Apartments were located one house east from this corner.

Continue up Speedway back to Windward and turn right (east). Stay on Windward until Pacific (6). The building at the northeast corner of Windward and Pacific appears in *The Balloonatic*. Across from this corner, east of Pacific and between Windward and Venice Way, is the site of the entrance to the former Race Thru The Clouds roller coaster that could be seen down the street behind the Seaward Apartments.

Turn south down Pacific a bit, and look down Venice Way (7). This marks where Phyllis Haver climbs into her car in *The Balloonatic*. This concludes the Venice Tour.