

# Florida's Keys



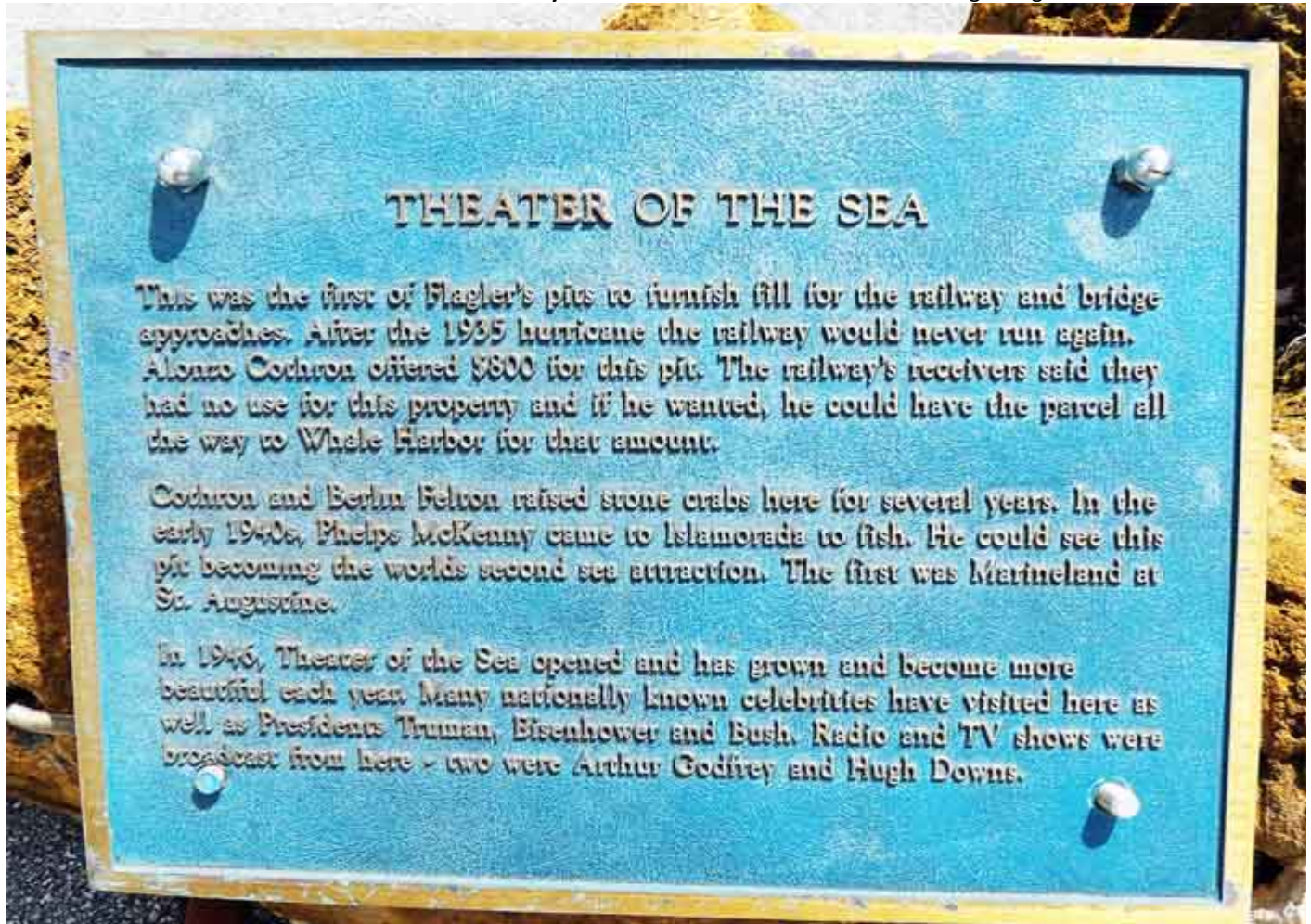
The Theater of The Sea, a Marine Mammal Park, located in the Village of Islamorada in the Florida Keys was established in 1946. It is a clean, well-run, and interesting park with well-trained dolphins who perform marvelously. Besides the dolphins, there are sea lions, sea turtles, fish, sharks, stingrays, alligators, birds, alligators, lizards, and beautiful flowers. Islamorada is halfway between Miami and Key West (78 miles from Miami).

**This photo program also includes two YouTube videos by acuri.net:**

**[Dolphin Stadium Show](#)** and **[Parrot, Nurse Sharks and Sea Lion Shows](#)**

Islamorada was first visited by the Spanish in 1513, its name means purple isle. A Spanish fleet's wreckage in 1733, due to a hurricane, may have started a village for purpose of salvaging the many wreckages over time. <floridakeys.com>

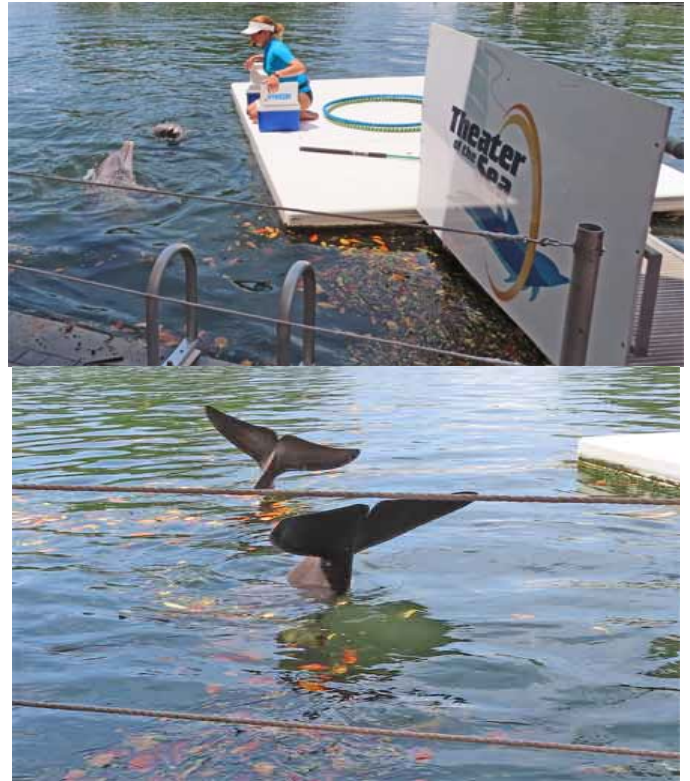
Another hurricane in 1935 called the **Labor Day Hurricane** is mentioned below as the beginning of the Theater of the Sea.



## Before the Theater

"In 1905, Henry Flagler began construction of the Overseas Railroad, which was an extension of the Florida East Coast Railway, stretching 128 miles from Miami to Key West. What is now known as Islamorada, was the first excavation site to furnish fill, predominantly coral bedrock, for the railway and bridge approaches. In 1912, the final link of the Florida East Coast Railway was completed, being widely known as the "Eighth Wonder of the World". The railway would survive a couple decades until the 1935 Labor Day Hurricane. Much of the flooded quarries in the area were purchased by Alonzo Cothron, a huge developer in the Upper Keys, second only to Henry Flagler. It was Cothron who utilized the flooded quarries to farm stone crabs for several years, but in 1940, a tourist from Atlanta, Georgia, happened to take notice of the colorful parrot fish that inhabited the landlocked areas. The tourist contacted his employer, a man by the name of P.F. "Bud" McKenney, who was quite fond of fishing and the beauty of the sea, relaying to him his discovery in Islamorada. After visiting the area for himself, Bud and his wife Martha envisioned the land becoming a live menagerie of sea critters, a Theater of The Sea, and the second oldest sea attraction; the first being Marineland in St. Augustine which opened in 1938." <cflas.org>

















Source: <https://theaterofthesea.com/>, <https://floridakeys.com/islamorada/history/>, <https://cflas.org/2014/05/09/theater-of-the-sea/>, <https://www.roadsideamerica.com/story/7363>, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/416512665537763363/>, and <https://365thingsswfl.com/2016/07/12/the-theater-of-the-sea-a-real-gem-in-the-florida-keys/>.

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