

↪ THE WORLD FAMOUS ↪

# CONCH TOUR TRAIN

## *Tour Script*



Hello everyone. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'll be your tour guide and train engineer today. I'd like to welcome you to the "WORLD FAMOUS CONCH TOUR TRAIN" and to Key West. The Conch Tour Train is owned by Historic Tours of America, "The Nation's Storyteller," which also operates our Old Town Trolley Tours in San Diego, Washington, D.C., Savannah, Boston, Saint Augustine, Nashville, San Antonio and Charleston. Right now, you're in the southernmost city in the continental USA. Key West is also the oldest city in south Florida. The oldest city in Florida is St. Augustine, which is 370 miles north and is also the oldest city in the United States. We are closer to Cuba than we are to mainland Florida. We are on the northern edge of the Caribbean basin, surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. When returning to the mainland, you must take a boat, plane, or cross 42 bridges in a car.

As we get started, I'd like to tell you about a recurring theme you'll hear now and then during our tour – something we call our Golden Thread: Why did Key West become an island city in the first place, and how did it become one of the most important economic centers in the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Whether you came here for its natural beauty, its vibrant atmosphere, or any other reason, Key West owes its prominence and longevity to industries that thrived on its deepwater harbor and strategic location along the Straits of Florida. A lot of money sailed by here, stopped here, and in some cases even sank here. You see, although Key West's history dates back much longer than the United States, the Louisiana Purchase influenced the destiny of this little island immensely. Included with that 1803 acquisition was the entire Mississippi River. Almost all worldwide shipping heading to or from the Mississippi had to come around a mostly underwater obstacle called the Florida Reef, including this southernmost island. As you might imagine, some tried to cut the corner, and that meant shipwrecks. Lots of shipwrecks. As you are about to see, the wrecking industry made Key West the nation's richest city, per capita, in the mid-1800s. Many of our sites and stories tie to that very Golden Thread in Key West.

Our island today is about a mile-and-a-half wide and a little less than four miles long. In the early 1800s it was only half the size it is now. You will notice the houses in Old Town are very close together and the streets are quite narrow. We will be traveling close to other vehicles, buildings, and trees. For your safety and comfort, please remain seated even while taking pictures. Please make sure the safety ropes are fastened at both ends of the seats. These ropes are just reminders to always keep your arms, legs, head, hands and feet inside the train cars. Young children that do NOT require a ticket must be held by a parent or guardian during the tour. For safety, young children should sit in the center of the seat.

The tour gets can get windy at times, and some streets are **VERY BUMPY**, so please secure all loose articles before we leave the depot. If anything gets blown or bumped off

the train, I am not allowed, by state law, to stop for you to retrieve lost items, no matter how valuable. For those with cameras, we are not allowed to stop just for picture taking. As we pass different points of interest on the tour, I will go as slowly as traffic allows so you can take pictures.

We are in the subtropics, and we get only 39 inches of rainfall annually, making this the driest city in South Florida. If it does rain during our tour, in these open cars, we WILL get wet. If there is anyone on the train who cannot take the chance of getting wet, now is the time to postpone your tour. Your tickets are good anytime. However, once we get underway, the tour will continue rain or shine.

For those facing backward, when I refer to something on the right, I mean the right side of the train. You will have to look to your left and vice versa. It is a fully narrated tour. If you speak to your neighbor, please, talk quietly as a courtesy to others. Also, please silence your cell phones as a matter of courtesy. There is no smoking on the train as it is public transportation, and no consumption of alcoholic beverages.

We will be making one stop on the tour before returning to Mallory Square. About halfway into the tour we will be stopping at our Front Street Station for a ten-minute break and following the break, our tour will end here at Mallory Market – to the right, by the Shipwreck Treasure Museum.

I am going to get a quick head count now and when we get the “ALL ABOARD” from the conductor we will be on our way to see the beautiful island city of Key West.

### **SB Train Out: 45**

(WHEN PULLING AWAY, RING THE BELL FOR SAFETY)

1. On the right, our little **YELLOW DEPOT** was a one-man barbershop that ran for 39 years. [1917- 1956]

2. On the right corner is a white building that was built in the early 1900s. It became the **KEY WEST ART CENTER** in 1961, featuring works by local artists. [It was a grocery store until 1938 and during WWII, it was the local headquarters of the American Red Cross.]

3. To the right, at the end of the lane, is the **KEY WEST AQUARIUM**. Opened in 1935, it was Key West’s first tourist attraction. The aquarium offers tours four times a day. [Volunteer on the tour, and you might get to feed the stingray.]

(LEFT ONTO WHITEHEAD STREET)

4. On the right is our first tie to that Golden Thread: **BUILDING NUMBER ONE**. With shipping trade and piracy rising in this region, logic dictated that the Navy establish a presence on this southernmost island, which it did in 1823. This building was the Navy's first brick structure in Key West, built in 1852 by the Corps of Engineers. After the Civil War, the Navy used the lower level as a coaling depot for refueling the steam powered ships. [After the Civil War, the upper level was used as a sail loft. It has now been renovated into our mall, the Shops at Mallory Square.]
5. The red brick building on the right also figured prominently because of our southernmost geography. This is the **CUSTOM HOUSE**, built in 1891. This Clinton Square building was once a post office, customs house, and federal courthouse where shipwreck salvage cases were heard. Given that Key West grew its earliest wealth on the wrecking industry, the Customs House was in many ways the nerve center of the island's economy. The inquiry into the sinking of the USS Maine was also held here. An \$8 million restoration was recently completed and is now open as a museum. [Notice the Richardson Romanesque Revival architecture, constructed of red brick with stone and terra cotta trim.] [The museum exhibits Florida's heritage and cultural creativity and is one of the finest community cultural facilities in the country.]

(CONTINUE ON WHITEHEAD STREET)

6. Yet another institution with ties to shipwrecks is now on our right: **MEL FISHER'S TREASURE EXHIBIT**. In 1622 the Spanish treasure galleons, the [Nuestra Señora de] Atocha and the Santa Margarita, sank 30 miles west of here in a hurricane. In 1985, Mel Fisher and his crew found the motherlode from the Atocha with more than \$400 million dollars in treasure. Much of the gold, silver, and emerald treasure is on display in this museum. Fisher and crew found tons of silver bars, thousands of coins, 200 pounds of gold bars, chains and medallions and \$60 million of exquisite emeralds. [The museum also has exhibits showing how Fisher's team discovered and salvaged the sunken treasure.] [State and Federal governments both claimed the treasure. Finally, the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of Mel Fisher.]

## **SB - Pres. Gates: 18**

7. Ahead on the right are the **PRESIDENTIAL GATES**, at one time they were only opened for U.S. Presidents. The gates were built in 1906, opened for Presidents Howard Taft in 1912 and John F. Kennedy in 1961. They were opened several times for President Harry S Truman during his many visits to Key West. [The gates were also opened for

former President Jimmy Carter in 1997.] Through the gates and up one block is President Truman's **LITTLE WHITE HOUSE MUSEUM**. Harry Truman loved Key West and spent 11 working holidays here. [His visits were known for poker, piano playing, casual atmosphere, and Hawaiian shirts.]

Ahead on the left is the grandest member of the ficus family, a magnificent Banyan Tree. It is probably the largest on the island. When one of the hanging or aerial roots touches the ground or another part of the tree, it starts to form a new trunk. [The tree is more than 100 years old, planted by Philip Cosgrove's wife, Myrtle.] [The house behind it is the Philip Cosgrove house, built in 1872. Cosgrove commanded the first ship to reach the USS Maine when it was sunk in Havana Harbor in 1898.]

(CONTINUE ON WHITEHEAD STREET)

8. On the right is the **KEY WEST POST OFFICE**. It was built in 1985, designed by local architect Sonny McCoy. Its design is similar to the turn of the century federal buildings, in keeping with historic guidelines in effect on the island today. [Sonny was our mayor in the 1970s, also known for water skiing to Cuba on one ski, documented in the Guinness Book of World Records.]

Many people assume that it gets very hot here in the summer. Though the humidity drives the heat index well over 100° for weeks at a time, NOAA has confirmed that our all-time record high temperature is 97°, which happened on July 19, 1880, and again on August 29, 1956. The trade winds help keep the actual temperature cooler. These same winds, along with the warm water of the Gulf Stream, also help keep us warmer in the winter. Our lowest temperature ever recorded is 41°. Key West is the only frost-free area in the continental United States.

(CONTINUE ON WHITEHEAD STREET)

9. You're now at the corner of Whitehead and Fleming Streets, the official beginning and end of the road. On the far-right corner is the **MILE MARKER ZERO** sign for **US-1**. If you want to complete the entire US-1 route, beginning here... your journey will take you more than 2,300 miles north all the way to Fort. Kent, Maine. [The trip is exactly 2,369 miles (about the width of the United States).]

10. On the right is **JACKSON SQUARE**, the location of Monroe County buildings since the county was first formed in the 1820s. [76 years before Miami was incorporated.]x [Jackson Square is named for Andrew Jackson, the first military Governor of Florida



and later President of the United States.] [Key West is the seat for Monroe County with a population of 25,000.]

In the center of Jackson Square is the **MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE**, built in 1890.

(CONTINUE ON WHITEHEAD STREET)

We have hundreds of flowering plants and trees in Key West. The trees overhanging the road here are royal poinciana trees. In the spring, they begin to bloom a blanket of red-orange blossoms. Also called the “flame” or “flamboyant” tree. [It is native to Madagascar. In the 1700's, the British planted Royal Poincianas throughout their island colonies. Passing ships would see the brilliant flowers and know it was a British colony.]

We’re about to cross Angela Street, and this was the **southern boundary of town** when the city of Key West was first incorporated in 1828. The original town limits were from here back to the harbor behind us, near our rest stop. [In 1889, the limits were expanded to include the original entire island.] [Most of the streets in Old Town are named for family and friends of the early owners.] [William Whitehead conducted the first survey of the island in 1829, laying out the streets and housing plots in Old Town. Most of the streets, their names and the lots that Whitehead laid out are still used today.]

11. Ahead on the right, this large white building is the **CORNISH MEMORIAL A.M.E. ZION CHURCH**, named after Mr. Sandy Cornish, born into slavery in Maryland (c. 1793). He was assigned to a railroad-building project in Port Leon on Florida's panhandle. The position allowed him to earn money for himself and was able to buy his own freedom and that of his wife Lillah. He and his wife Lillah arrived in Key West and bought a farm (c. 1850). He was a notably successful farmer and a leading member of the community; he had a knack for growing things that no one believed would grow here [tobacco, cayenne, coffee, fruits and vegetables.] He founded the Cornish Chapel here to your right, established in 1865. It was the first church for the Black community on the island. It was founded by Sandy Cornish and Cataline Simmons. [Although slavery was present on the island in the early 1800s, it never became deeply rooted. Given the island’s isolated location and overriding concerns about survival, racial and ethnic divisions weren’t prominent. In the 1800s, one quarter of Key West’s population was Black, a high percentage of whom were free, not slaves.] [Free Blacks owned property here as early as 1829.] [By the 1900s Blacks in Key West were involved in all aspects of the community, including government jobs such as postmasters, sheriffs, customs inspectors, etc.]

## SB - Bahama Village: 26

12. We're approaching the **BAHAMA VILLAGE** area. It was settled in the mid-1800s by Bahamians, mostly of African descent. They worked in the sponging, fishing and wrecking industries, and many of their descendants live here today. One example is the Sweeting family, owners of the shops in the pink building on the right for nearly 50 years.

The merchants in the area hope to make Petronia Street similar to Key West what the French Quarter is to New Orleans, while keeping the character of the neighborhood. A block to the right is Blue Heaven, a hub of the neighborhood since 1884. Originally a saloon, in the 1930s it was the Blue Goose Arena, where local legends fought in boxing matches. One notable referee was a young man from the neighborhood, **Ernest Hemingway**. Today the complex is a combination of restaurants, shops and art galleries, with roosters and chickens in the yards.

13. Ahead on the left, behind the brick wall, is the **ERNEST HEMINGWAY HOUSE**. The house was bought for Ernest and his wife Pauline by her uncle, in 1931, as a wedding gift. On the property are expansive gardens, the first swimming pool built on the island, and many cats, some descendants of Hemingway's own six-toed cats. Hemingway lived on the island for about ten years and did some of his most productive writing here. After his tragic death in 1961, the estate was sold to family friends who opened it as a museum. His writing studio has been restored to look as it did when he worked there. The house itself was built in the 1850s by merchant Asa Tift in the French Colonial style, the only French Colonial in Key West. [Novels he wrote here include To Have and Have Not, The Snows of Kilimanjaro, and A Farewell to Arms.] [The brick wall was built with old city street paving bricks.]

14. On the right, above the treetops, you can see the Key West **LIGHTHOUSE**, built in 1847. The island's first lighthouse was built in 1825, much closer to the water by Whitehead Spit. That one was destroyed in the hurricane of 1846. Rebuilding a bit inland seemed prudent. Now a museum, you can climb the 88 spiral steps to the top for a great view of the island. Next to it on the corner is the Lighthouse keeper's quarters. [There are two front doors on the quarters because originally two families lived here to take care of the lighthouse.] [The lighthouse stands 78' high or 92' above sea level.] [The light was visible for 15 miles.] [It was removed from the active list Dec. 1, 1969.]

15. The **LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER'S QUARTERS** was built in 1887. The house was designed for two families because two families were needed to keep the lighthouse operational 24 hours a day. The quarters have been restored to look as it did at the turn

of the 20th century and is now a museum. You can see the outbuildings in the back, including the cistern. It's the short building with a peaked roof and big pipe coming out of the top. The rain runs off the roof, into the gutters, into that pipe and then a cistern that can hold about 6,000 gallons (about the volume of a large U-Haul truck) [Behind the cistern is the old privy & beyond it is a covered well] [The house is a style of keepers' quarters throughout the South. The families shared the parlor, dining room & kitchen, but had private rooms & separate front doors.] [The first lighthouse keeper was Barbara Mabrity. She served here by herself for eight years until an assistant was hired. She was paid \$500 a year to tend the lighthouse & keep the beacon lit. She served a total of 32 years in the lighthouse. She was dismissed in 1862, during the Civil War, because she was suspected of being a Confederate sympathizer, like most of the residents in town.

(CONTINUE ON WHITEHEAD STREET)

16. This area was **GATO VILLAGE**, where workers at Gato's cigar factory lived in the 1880s. He employed 500 workers and built houses, stores, and a trolley line for them. Gato Village was the largest of the villages and became the heart of the Cuban community on the island. It was a small, bustling city within a city. [Complete with schools, churches, saloons, groceries, bakeries, coffee shops, barber shops and drug stores.] [By the early 1900s, the cigar industry had expanded. Clustered around the larger factories were other villages]. [Along with Gato Village, there were Lords Village (near Truman Annex)], Pohalski Village (near White Street)], Marrero Village (by Simonton Street and others.)]

17. We've been traveling along Whitehead Street, named for **JOHN WHITEHEAD**, a shipwreck survivor who was first brought to the island in 1818 by the ship that rescued him. Years later, Whitehead bought a share of the island from John Simonton, becoming one of the island's early owners. The men's relationship helped shape the destiny of Key West, as Whitehead was among those who convinced Simonton to purchase the island because of its deepwater harbor and potential as a bustling seaport. Whitehead Street was the first street to cross the width of the island, built by the Navy in the 1820s. [But in Gato Village, the street was known as El Morrocoyo – the gopher – because of the large number of gopher turtles living here.] [Several streets had Spanish names about the turn of the century. Elizabeth Street was Calle de Esponjas because of the sponge boats nearby; Simonton Street was Calle de Tablas, street of tables for the walkways over the mud; Eaton Street was Calle de Iglesias for a large number of churches.] [On the left corner, the small shop was originally the Salinero Grocery Store for Gato Village.]



18. On the right, is a housing facility and communications center for the **TRUMAN ANNEX** Naval Station. The Naval Air base is located seven miles north of here on Boca Chica Key. Remember I just mentioned John Simonton? Well, when he bought the island, he urged the Navy to establish a presence here because of all the shipping trade stopping, sailing by, or sinking here. The Navy has had a strong presence in Key West since 1823. As you can tell by looking around at all the Navy installations here, that also had a tremendous influence on the future of the island. [Off to the right, beyond the housing area is Fort Zachary Taylor. They began building it in 1846. It is open as a museum with the largest collection of Civil War armament in the country. Also, it is a State Park with a very nice beach. There are two other Civil War era forts on the island - the East Martello, by the airport. It is a museum of the Key West Art and Historical Society. Also, the West Martello which we will be passing by shortly in our tour.]
19. The Navy began making use of our harbor in the early 1800s, first to thwart piracy, then during the Civil War as part of the Atlantic blockade, capturing 300 Confederate blockade-runner ships. **MILITARY** presence continued on the island through the Spanish-American War, WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Vietnam War. Today it is primarily a Naval training location. [The base was closed briefly in the 1970s, then reopened in 1980s.] [The Spanish-American War in 1898 brought the entire Atlantic Fleet. Five thousand officers and sailors were stationed here during World War I, including the first Naval aviators and 19 submarines, to defend the Gulf from German submarines.] [After World War I, the military base was closed. Then, World War II brought 15,000 military personnel here.]

### **SB – Anchors Aweigh:**

20. Our next Golden Thread site is more symbolic, but also much more well-known than some of the others: We're approaching the **SOUTHERNMOST POINT** in the continental United States. Remember, although the entire Florida Keys archipelago has always been a perilous obstacle for maritime traffic to get around traveling to or from the Mississippi River, this is the most famous corner that sailors dared not cut. Cuba is about 95 miles from here, and Miami is 130 miles. The cement buoy marking the Southernmost Point will be on your right. [We are 85 miles farther south than Brownsville, Texas and 375 miles farther south than Cairo, Egypt. Cleveland, Ohio sits to our East.] [On the right, that tiny building

was the cable house for the Western Union Cable that was connected to Cuba in 1917.]

(TURN LEFT ONTO SOUTH STREET)

21. On the right, the house beyond the wall is the current **SOUTHERNMOST HOUSE**, built in 1941, by author Thelma Strabel. She was a writer for the Saturday Evening Post. She wrote Reap the Wild Wind about our wrecking industry. It became a movie starring John Wayne, the only movie where the Duke played a bad guy! [The current Southernmost House is 18" farther south than the original.]

22. What happened to sailors who tried to shortcut the Keys? Well, coincidentally, the value of their salvaged goods helped build the next couple houses. On the right corner is the **Original Southernmost House**, built by **JUDGE J. VINING HARRIS**. It was built in 1896 and serves as a fine example of Victorian Queen Anne architecture here on the island. All the original electrical work was installed by Thomas Edison, and the exterior foyer reveals an original back-lit Tiffany & Company stained glass ceiling. [It has one of the few excavated basements on the island.] [It cost \$200,000 to build and took four years to complete.] [In the 1950s this was the Casa Cayo Hueso, a restaurant popular with Tennessee Williams, Carson McCullers and others in the literary set.]

(TURN LEFT ONTO DUVAL STREET)

23. The elaborate Victorian house on the left corner was built in 1885 for **EDUARDO GATO, JR.**, a cigar factory owner. This classic Victorian was originally built across the street where the parking lot is (point to the Southernmost Motel lot). However, Mr. Gato Jr. did not like how the sun fell on his favorite terrace. So, he had the house moved, by mule power, to its current location. Now he could enjoy his terrace without the glaring sun - but he never got around to changing the street number. It's the only odd numbered house on that side of Duval Street.

24. As we move along, off to the left is a large yellow building with green shutters and a large glass greenhouse behind it, the **Key West Butterfly & Nature Conservatory**, a lush tropical home to more than a thousand free flying butterflies from around the world, around 20 species of exotic birds as well as two pink flamingos named Scarlet & Rhett. Yep, just like "Gone with the Wind". Along with a gift shop and gallery.

25. The **CIGAR INDUSTRY** started in Key West in 1831, when Sir William Wall opened a small factory in the heart of Old Town. By the 1870s the industry exploded

locally, in great part because of Cuba's fight for independence from Spain, when many factory owners and workers fled to Key West. By 1890 the population was near 20,000, and one-third were Cuban producing 100 million hand-rolled cigars annually in more than 160 factories. Key West cigars became world famous. But fires, hurricanes, and labor problems would create challenges, and the cigar business continued on a limited scale until 1931, when the last of Key West's Cuban cigar factories shut down. [William Wall's factory was near Mallory Market on Front Street, employing 50 workers.] [In the 1920s, the lifestyle of both smokers and cigar workers greatly decreased the number of factories.] [Today there are still a few small factories that make old-fashioned hand rolled cigars, in the heart of Old Town.]

26. In the late 1800s Cuba was fighting for independence from Spain. Many of the revolutionaries would come to the United States to raise money and support for their cause. One of those revolutionaries was **JOSÉ MARTÍ**. Martí was a poet, journalist and a passionate, powerful speaker. He came to Key West several times and spoke to large crowds, to rally support for the revolution in Cuba. [Martí's visits always caused great excitement on the island.] [The Cuban government, not the Castro government, built this monument in 1937. It was dedicated with a citywide festival and celebration.]

27. On the far right is **LA TERRAZA DE MARTÍ**, known today as **La Te Da**. In 1893, José Martí delivered a speech to his many supporters from the balcony, raising money for the revolution in Cuba. José Martí was sometimes referred to as the George Washington of Cuban Independence. [It was then the home of Teodore Perez, a cigar manufacturer.]

### **SB - Jose Marti: 12**

28. On the left corner, the two-story white building is the old **CUBAN CLUB**. It was formed in 1900 as a patriotic, social, and beneficial club. The Club's original building was constructed in 1917, offering education, medical care and recreation, along with some of the most legendary dances in Key West history upstairs. The structure you see is a replica of the original Cuban Club, which was lost to a fire in 1983.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO TRUMAN AVENUE)

29. We're turning onto **Truman Avenue**, named for **President Harry S Truman** but previously named Division Street, because it divided the island in half, separating the suburbs from the outer rural areas. Prior to that, before it was paved, it was Rocky Road. [In 1861, with the Civil War about to start, Captain John Brannan marched his

Union troops from the barracks at Peary Court, about two miles ahead of us [or to the left], to Fort Zachary Taylor behind us [or to the right]. [He wanted to secure the fort, then under construction, for the Union, and avoid the townspeople, many of whom were Confederate sympathizers.] [At that time, this end of the island was woods and uninhabited.] The troops carved out a path through those woods that was to become Truman Avenue.] At the turn of the 20th century, this section was very much a commercial district. Key West had 18,000 residents and was one of the richest cities in the country, had eight miles of streetcar/trolley tracks, an electric plant, an ice making plant, even an opera house. It was one of the most important ports in the United States. [But still did not have a citywide freshwater system – was dependent on cistern and well water. There was no citywide running water until 1942, when the pipeline was built.] [And the last of the privies were not banned by city ordinance until 1957]

30. Ahead on the right behind the stone wall, is the **ST. MARY'S STAR of the SEA CATHOLIC CHURCH** property. The large building is the Convent School. The original school was built in 1886. [The school building was designed by William Kerr, a noted local architect. The original was octagonal with wings on either side. The building was badly deteriorating by the 1960s and sadly was torn down.] During the Spanish-American War in 1898, it was converted into the Key West Convent Hospital, treating 600 wounded soldiers.

31. Following the stone wall, look through the second opening toward the rear of the property. There's a stone **grotto**, built in 1922 by **Sister Louis Gabriel** with her students. She had endured three severe hurricanes that hit the island. Upon dedicating the grotto, she prayed that Key West would never again suffer a direct strike by the full force of a major hurricane. Key West has not had a severe hurricane since 1919. [During hurricane watches, many people visit the grotto to pray and light candles.] [Next to it is the burial ground for the nuns who served here.]

32. On the right corner is the **ST. MARY'S STAR of the SEA CATHOLIC CHURCH**. The church was founded in 1851, and this building was completed in 1905. Note the absence of windows; instead, there are high doorways to allow the flow of cool breezes. [The parish church of Saint Mary Star of the Sea was given the honorary designation of a minor basilica because of its historic, architectural, and spiritual significance. It is one of six minor basilicas in Florida and the 73rd in the country. As a basilica, it is connected to the Holy Father and may display the coat-of-arms of Vatican City - which can be seen as a mosaic on its façade - as well as the crossed keys of Saint Peter on its furnishings.] [It's the only Catholic church on the island.] [The parish's first church building was constructed in 1852 at the corner of Eaton & Duval Streets.]

33. You've been riding on board the world-famous **Conch Tour Train**. Bill and Olive Kroll began the Conch Tour Train with one train, #97 on January 18, 1958. You can still see Old #97 traversing the island today. By 1971 the Conch Trains were carrying 300,000 passengers annually. The following year, the Krolls sold out and began fulfilling their dream of world travel. People they met all over the world told the Krolls that they'd been passengers on the train, removing any question that this is the "**WORLD-FAMOUS CONCH TOUR TRAIN**." The Krolls managed the Key West Aquarium from 1946 to 1956 and were so often questioned about sightseeing tours of the island that they decided to build a sightseeing service. [They planned to work hard in the winter, then let #97 rest all summer and fall. That was not to be. Instead of old #97 resting, another train - #98 - was built and put into service December 22, 1958.] [Today there are 14 trains and we're owned by a corporate entity, Historic Tours of America, which also operates the Old Town Trolley Tours in Key West, St. Augustine, Boston, Washington, D. C., Nashville, Savannah, San Diego, & San Antonio.]

(TURN RIGHT ONTO GRINNELL STREET)

34. Ahead on the right corner is one of the oldest fire stations in the state of Florida. It's our very own Key West Museum of Firefighting, old Fire House No. 3, or Station No. 3. It was built in 1907 and opened in 1908. At that time, the Key West Fire Department consisted of 12 paid men and 200 volunteers, with horse-drawn steamers and hose carriages. The station has endured several hurricanes, the worst being the storm of 1909 that hit Key West with winds exceeding 100 mph. [In 1931, in the middle of the Great Depression, the city had no money to pay its employees, so the firefighters went on strike – all except the firefighters at Station No. 3. The others threatened them, but with the protection of the sheriff's department, Station No. 3 remained open throughout the strike and throughout the Depression, all while many fire houses around the country were forced to close.] [Next to the firehouse is our State Champion MAMEY [Ma'm – Me] SAPOTE TREE, believed to have been planted in 1914, the grandfather of Mamey trees in the United States.]

The streets in Old Town were laid out in the early 1800s and are still conspicuously narrow today. The houses are built quite close together - sometimes only a couple of feet apart. Houses were built in the center of the blocks and are accessible by lanes that are even narrower than our streets. With a town full of wooden houses, one would think fire would be a huge problem. But, all things considered, our track record has been quite good. Our first fire department, organized in 1834, was a volunteer outfit. The unit was great at marching in parades, not so hot at putting out fires. That department was disbanded after it did not show up at one particular fire. When the worst fire in our history started in 1886, our brand-new steam engine was in New York

for repair. That fire taught the city some serious lessons and led to some changes. Among them, a saltwater system was installed around the island. The newest and best equipment was purchased, and training was improved. In recent years, the Key West Fire Department has received high insurance ratings.

You are now in a **“Quiet Zone.”** This travels from just past the Firehouse Museum until your caboose is on United Street.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO UNITED STREET)

35. On the right corner, is a large Gumbo Limbo tree. The Gumbo Limbo always has a red peeling bark, resembling the burned skin of someone who didn’t apply sunscreen. Because of that we call this “the tourist tree.” [Its wood is used to make Haitian voodoo drums.]

36. A man named Henry Flagler completed the Florida East Coast Railroad from St. Augustine to Miami in 1896. In 1905, Mr. Flagler began the Overseas Extension to Key West. At the time it was considered one of the greatest feats of engineering. The OVERSEAS RAILROAD was 106 miles long, including 37 miles over open water, to connect the string of 29 islands to Key West. In 1912, after \$50 million of construction, the first train crossed the 41 bridges and arrived in Key West. From that moment, Key West was no longer an isolated island; Flagler’s railroad changed life here forever. (Note: the first train arrived on January 22) [Flagler was 82 years old when the first train arrived.] [Few people believed that a railroad spanning so much open water could be built, calling it Flagler’s Folly.] [When it arrived, there was a huge celebration. 10,000 people waved flags and cheered. Bands played and children sang and threw roses to make a carpet for Flagler.] [Most residents had never seen a railroad.]

(TURN LEFT ONTO REYNOLDS STREET)

37. Flagler built a luxury hotel for his passengers at each stop along his railroad. On the right is Flagler’s creation for Key West, the CASA MARINA, House by the Sea. Construction of the grand hotel started in 1918 and it opened on New Year’s Eve 1920. At the time, room rates were considered very high, \$8-12, although that did include all meals. The Casa Marina is built of imported German poured concrete. The walls are considered hurricane proof, measuring 12 inches thick at the top and tapering outward to 22 inches thick at the base - quite impressive. [We didn’t have a mainland-connected water pipeline at that time, so a 750,000-gallon cistern was built to collect rainwater from the roof and provide running water. In case there wasn’t enough rain to fill it, a special railroad car brought water from the mainland, and that water was piped across



the island to fill the cistern.] [Today, that same water cistern is used to provide irrigation for the lush landscape around the property.] [A frequent guest was Leonard Bernstein. In 1941 he sketched out an idea for a ballet called "Conch Town." It was shelved without ever being finished. But one of its songs was revived and became the popular "America," in the musical "West Side Story."]

(TURN LEFT ONTO ATLANTIC BLVD)

38. On the right is HIGGS MEMORIAL BEACH. In the 1800s, much of this side of the island was wide, sandy beach. But with storm damage and the arrival of man-made structures, the shape of the island and the tidal flow changed, causing much of the sand to erode. The once long, continuous beach is now broken into several smaller beaches along this side of the island.

39. We've talked a lot about how maritime shipping trade and tragedy built Key West and gave her first affluence. Directly in front of us is the superhighway on which that traffic traveled, and still does to this day: This is the Straits of Florida, which connects the Gulf of Mexico with the Atlantic Ocean. You may have noticed the lack of large waves on our shores. That's because the big waves break on the CORAL REEF about five miles offshore. The Florida Reef is the only living coral barrier reef in North America, extending about 200 miles, from Miami to the last seven keys, the Dry Tortugas, which are about 70 miles west of here.

40. You could say Key West's early opulence was largely opportunistic. In the 1800s, before there were navigational aids along the Florida Reef, ships often ran aground there. WRECKS occurred as often as once a week. When a wreck was spotted, a cry would go throughout town "WRECK ASHORE!"

## **SB -Wreck Ashore: 20**

41. In the early 1800s nearly all of Key West's 600 citizens benefited from the **wrecking industry**, a sort of "wrecking lifestyle". Everything from their furniture, luxury items, and even their basics came from the wrecks. Much of the lumber for the houses came from the wrecks, known as the "Ocean Lumber Company." Just about every able-bodied man on the island worked as a **WRECKER** at least part-time. When the call "wreck ashore" call went out, competing crews would drop everything, hurry to their sloops, and race to the wreck, to rescue survivors and salvage the ship's cargo. The first captain was designated the "Wreck Master." Profits and fees were split among the crews. [The wreckers purpose was to save lives and cargo, not to pirate or plunder.] [The industry was highly regulated, and a federal court was set up to control the

industry and issue wrecking licenses. Key West was the only city to issue such licenses.] [Once salvaged, the profits were auctioned.] [This industry was the basis of Key West's economy, bring in up to a half a million dollars annually.] [Cargos included everything that world commerce Provided.] [Once, a shipload of pianos wrecked offshore, and everyone in town got a brand-new piano. Some had to add additions to their homes to make room for them. For a while the most popular person in town was the piano teacher.]

By 1850, Key West was the richest city, per capita, in the United States. About that same time (NOTE: the 1850s), a system of lights and buoys was installed along the Keys and the number of wrecks slowly declined. By the turn of the last century, the wrecking industry was pretty much dead, and the wrecking court closed in 1921.

42. The red brick structure on the right is the **WEST MARTELLO FORT**. During the American Civil War, Key West was the only port in the South that remained under Northern control. The Union started building the West Martello in 1861, but it became obsolete before it was finished because of the development of rifled cannons. It's now home to the Key West Garden Club. [Later it was used for Navy target practice and as a cattle pen.

43. Next to the West Martello is an **AFRICAN CEMETERY**, with a memorial to the Africans who died aboard three ships that were caught transporting them off the coast of Cuba in 1860. Trading humans as cargo was illegal. These ships were carrying 1,400 young people but were intercepted and brought to Key West, where 295 of the 1,400 were eventually laid to rest here. Most sailed back to Africa 80 days later, after being freed, but some remained to settle here. To this day we have local residents who are descendants of this rescue, still happy to call Key West home.

44. On the right, extending into the Atlantic Ocean is the **WHITE STREET FISHING PIER**, a very popular place for fishing. There are more than 600 varieties of fish in the surrounding waters' [Some jokingly refer to the pier as the unfinished road to Cuba.] [Not as well-known as our sunsets, but just as beautiful, this is also a great place to watch sunrise.]

At the foot of the pier, the ground level monument is the **Key West AIDS Memorial**. It was dedicated in 1997. Honoring the more-than-800 locals who have died from the disease. [The memorial was financed with local donations.]

(TURN LEFT ONTO WHITE STREET)

45. By now you're getting to know the modern story of Key West and its affluence. But the island's complete history goes back much further in time. Early inhabitants the Keys were the **Indigenous Native Americans**. When Spanish explorers first arrived in the early 1500s, there were small settlements throughout the Keys. By 1763 most natives had left the Keys for Cuba. However, as late as 1840, native raiding parties are known to have invaded the Keys. In the 1500s it's believed the local tribes were the Calusa - a warlike people, and the more peaceful Tequesta. Over the years, many tribes passed through the Keys: **Matacumbes, Caribes, Calusa, Tequesta** and others.

46. Believe it or not, it's the remains of natives that indirectly gave Key West its name. The first Spanish explorers came across a multitude of human bones around the island. Because of these remains of natives, they called the island "CAYO HUESO," which means little island of bones. The English later phonetically corrupted the pronunciation of Cayo Hueso to "Key West." So, the name has nothing to do with the cardinal direction west. Key West indirectly means "Little Island of Bones." [Cayo means "little island" and hueso means "bone."] [Another belief is that the island was some type of sacred burial ground]

47. One of the early explorers of the Keys was **PONCE DE LEON** in 1521. He discovered a small group of islands 68 miles west of here, and called them "Las Tortugas," meaning "the turtles," because of an abundance of sea turtles there. English mariners would later add the word "Dry," as a warning that there was no fresh water in those islands. Hence, those last seven Florida Keys are the Dry Tortugas. On one of those islands, Garden Key, holds the largest brick fortification in the Americas or western hemisphere, Fort Jefferson. Begun in 1846 to help Key West become known as the Gibraltar of America, **Fort Jefferson is now a national monument**. [Dr. Samuel Mudd was imprisoned there for setting the broken leg of John Wilkes Booth hours after Booth shot President Lincoln.] [This South Beach area has several small motels and hotels, some still family-owned. Before World War II, there were only a few motels with individual cottages. With the influx of service members and families during the war, development in this area exploded.]

48. You cannot be in Key West more than ten minutes without hearing the word **CONCH**. The original **settlers from the Bahamas were known as Conchs**. Their houses

in Old Town are called “Conch Houses.” A conch is a sea animal in a large shell like a giant snail. The meat is edible and used to make conch fritters, conch salad, or conch chowder. People born in Key West are colloquially called Conchs. If you come here from somewhere else, you reach the status of “Freshwater Conch” after seven years living here. The high school football team is the Fighting Conchs and the all-girls drill team is the Conchettes. [If you’ve ever tried to remove a conch from its shell, you understand the name - Fighting Conchs.]

49. Remember, you are closer to Cuba than you are to mainland Florida, and arguably in a place much different from the rest of the country. We refer to ourselves as the Conch Republic. Maybe you’ve seen our blue flags waving around town. But while “Conch Republic” is a sentimental name, it has a somewhat serious back story. You see, the **Conch Republic** was born as a response to a United States Border Patrol blockade of the Florida Keys on April 18, 1982. The Patrol began stopping and searching every car leaving and entering the Keys, for illegal aliens and contraband. That backed traffic up for hours, discouraging tourists and putting an immediate dent in our economy. The mayor at that time was Dennis Wardlow, who wrote to the government pleading to ease up on the restrictions. All pleas to remove the blockade were ignored. No choice remained other than secession!! So, that’s what we did. We declared independence since we were being treated like a foreign country, and we declared **WAR on the U.S.** There was a tongue-in-cheek attack on the Navy base, with a hunk of stale Cuban bread as our weapon of choice. As part of the strategy, we immediately surrendered and applied for a billion dollars in foreign aid. It was arranged as a national publicity stunt, and in a way it actually worked. The blockade was removed by April 23, 1982, and although we never did get the hefty foreign aid as a condition of our surrender, the national attention brought a fresh wave of awareness and tourism to Key West, and we’ve been benefiting ever since. In other words, we won! By the way, because legal secession documents had indeed been filed properly... we are technically - and still proud to be - called the Conch Republic. Take notice of the pun that is our motto: **“WE SECEDED WHERE OTHERS FAILED!”** [Yes, a bit of a tongue-in-cheek remark that lives on with our culture, but all in good fun. We re-celebrate our Conch Republic story every April. The Navy and Coast Guard meet us in the harbor on boats, while we challenge them with old stale Cuban bread for all to witness.]

On the left is the current **Key West City Hall**, built in 1924. It once served as the high school, then later an elementary school. The tiger mascot in front was built by the high school welding class in the 1980s. The high school students also built the mascot in front of the present high school on Flagler Avenue – a giant conch shell. [During the Great Depression in the 1930s, Works Progress Administration artists painted murals in the auditorium depicting Columbus arriving in the New World.] [There’s also a WPA

mural at the aquarium, reliefs at the Truman School, and paintings displayed at the East Martello Museum.]

We're on White Street. In the 1940s this area was considered the outer boundaries of the island. It was, and still is, a **Cuban neighborhood**.

## **SB – Cuban Culture: 16**

There are Cuban coffee shops, restaurants and bakery. Cuban coffee, called "Bucci," is stronger and richer than American coffee, basically a super-strong shot of espresso. If you add milk and sugar its "con leche." Cuban bread is similar to French bread but it's softer and tastes a bit different. [Makes good sandwiches and toast.] [The area is transforming a bit with the addition of art galleries and antique shops.]

50. Remember, US-1 is our only land route to the mainland. After the Great Labor Day Hurricane of 1935, the Roosevelt Administration sought to repurpose the surviving railroad structures into the **OVERSEAS HIGHWAY** by 1938. It's 120 miles to the Dade County line. The Overseas Highway is the longest overwater road in the world, with 42 bridges - the longest being seven miles. The original overseas highway began in the 1920s. At that time there were only a few unconnected stretches of road, along with a network of ferries, that formed a combined route to the mainland. Because it wasn't all connected, a trip between Key West and the mainland typically took more than eight hours. The ferry ride alone took four hours. Our water pipeline runs along the connected bridges from the mainland, first completed by the Navy in 1942.

(CONTINUE ON WHITE STREET, CROSSING OVER US-1)

51. On the left is a row of beautifully restored **SHOTGUN HOUSES**, built to house cigar factory workers. The factory owners built row after row of these cottages, very close together and near their factories, all over town. They were originally built with two or three rooms in a row, with the front door in line with the back door for ventilation. They're called shotgun houses because, in theory, you can fire a gun from the front door and the bullet will exit the back door without hitting anything in-between. [This style became popular in the South and originated in Haiti and West Africa.]

52. Most houses in Old Town are made of wood with **TIN ROOFS**. In the early years, most of our drinking water came from **collected rainwater**, since there is very little available well water from the ground here. The tin roofs combined with a gutter system led to one downspout and, in turn, down to a cement holding tank or cistern. **Cisterns**

would hold the water until needed. Thanks to the Navy, a water pipeline built in 1942 brings fresh drinking water from the mainland.

(TURN LEFT ONTO PETRONIA STREET)

53. Another function of those tin roofs is **FIRE PROTECTION**. With all these wooden houses, all built near each other, spreading fires were a constant threat. With a tin roof, the sparks from a neighboring fire would bounce off instead of igniting like a wood shingle. The **Great Fire of 1886** was the worst fire in Key West history, with \$2 million in property losses. It started at 2 o'clock one morning and burned for 12 hours, destroying most of the downtown area. Many residents fled to boats and moved offshore to helplessly watch the town burn. After the fire was a time of suffering. A huge rebuilding effort eventually helped the city rebound. Tin roofs became a requirement after 1886, and you'll still see them throughout the neighborhoods. [The fire destroyed the area from Fleming Street to the harbor - between Whitehead and Simonton Streets.] [It was finally halted by a fire break created by the US Marshal setting off a dynamite blast on Eaton Street.]

Frequently, guests ask how these old homes have survived for so long here in the hurricane belt. Builders in Key West learned some tricks to accomplish that, as most of the houses were built in the 1800s by **Ship Carpenters**. They were master craftsmen and built houses as they did their ships: snug and trim. They used mortise and tenon joints instead of nails (often using wooden spikes called treenails). This method allowed houses to flex in high winds. Flexible construction techniques and hardware allowed buildings to give a little rather than break apart. [Although the ship carpenters were not trained architects, they skillfully combined different architectural styles from all over the world, using features that would help keep homes cooler. One feature was ceilings 10-12 feet high, allowing warm air to rise, thus cooling the house. Most of these homes are built a few feet off the ground, so the low pressure of a storm couldn't pull the building off its foundation as easily. There are hurricane straps to keep them from losing their roofs in storms.]

(TURN RIGHT ONTO FRANCES STREET)

54. On the left is the **KEY WEST CEMETERY**. The cemetery was moved to this location in 1847. It's divided into several sections - on the left is the Jewish cemetery and ahead on the far corner is the Catholic cemetery. The original settlers' cemetery was found near the Southernmost Point. But the Havana Hurricane of 1846 disturbed all those graves, and it was decided to move them to higher ground. Because of the hard coral rock ground, most of the graves are above ground. Sometimes you might see a funeral



procession led by a New Orleans-style coronet band. At the far side of the cemetery there's a monument to the U.S.S. Maine, and 27 of her sailors are buried here. [Overlooking the victims is a statue of a solitary bronze sailor shielding his eyes and looking out to sea]. [The Maine's last port of call before she sank in Havana was Key West. [The monument was dedicated in 1900, paid for by the citizens of Key West.] [The layout conforms with the "Rural Cemetery Movement" of the 1840s. The cemetery includes named streets, benches, wrought iron fences around some plots, and pump spigots for water.] [The oldest gravestones are for John and James Sawyer, who died in 1829 and 1843. Their graves were both moved here from a settlement graveyard.] [Before telephones, there was a fire bell at the center of the cemetery. The number of rings would tell which firehouse to respond and which section of town the fire was found.]

Some of the epitaphs reflect **Key Westers' odd sense of humor**. One hypochondriac, Betty Roberts, who for years always said she was dying, has the admonition "I Told You I Was Sick" engraved on her gravestone. [There is also one "devoted fan of Julio Iglesias."] [There used to be an epitaph that read "At least I know where he's sleeping tonight," but it was stolen several times and the family stopped replacing it.] [Thomas Romer, was "a good citizen for 65 of his 108 years." We don't know about the other 43 years.] Tours are available of the cemetery. Check at the sexton's office at the entrance, on the far side.

55. Many of the houses in Old Town have fancy scrollwork trim, called **GINGERBREAD**, along the porches, roof lines and fences. In the early 1800s, ship carpenters hand-carved the gingerbread. By the late 1800s, during the Victorian age, gingerbread had become very popular and was mass-produced by machine. There are several standard patterns of gingerbread, also many unique ones - more than 150 different patterns on the island.

(TURN LEFT ONTO SOUTHARD STREET)

As we turn, the first cottage on the left has gingerbread trim shaped as Arrowheads. The cottage next door is a true gingerbread house with rows of... Gingerbread men. Across the street on the right is the more formal, ornate Victorian gingerbread. This Victorian house was built in the late 1800s. Built on one of the largest housing lots in town, at the time it was the grandest house in Key West.

NOW WE HAVE A QUIET ZONE UNTIL YOUR LAST CAR IS PAST GRINNELL STREET.

56. The houses in this neighborhood were built mostly in the 1870s and 1880s. In that era Key West was enjoying enormous prosperity that continued until the **GREAT DEPRESSION** in the 1930s. Key West was especially hard-hit by the Depression. Once the richest city per capita, by 1933, the city was now bankrupt and had to return the city charter to the state. We are the only city in America that had to turn control of the its municipal government over to a federal agency. Even Henry Flagler's railroad was going broke. Contributing to all of this was the worst hurricane to ever strike a U.S. coastline. In fact, it hit the upper Florida Keys.

57. It was the **Great Labor Day Hurricane of 1935**. Key West itself was not damaged by the storm. Instead, the hurricane slammed into the upper Keys about 60 miles north, killing more than 800 people. [Almost every structure was destroyed between Tavernier and Duck Key. Sustained winds were more than 185 mph - the same destructive power as an EF-4 tornado; evidence points to a tidal surge of 18-20 feet sweeping over the islands. Forty miles of the railroad washed away.] [Before the barometers broke, the last reading was 892 millibars (hPa), the lowest in recorded history (Note: 26.15).] [One year after the Great Labor Day Hurricane hit, the Florida Keys Memorial, a 17-foot-tall monument, was built on Upper Matecumbe Key, to remember the victims.]

58. If not for one man's decision, Key West might have faded from being an inhabited island during the Depression. A federal relief administrator named Julius Stone was assigned to the southeastern U.S. He found a bankrupt Key West with almost zero employment. Stone was given the choice to either move the entire population to Tampa and make the entire Keys a park or try to convert Key West into a tourist resort. Fortunately, he chose the latter. In fact, preparations were being made for a grand opening in December 1935. But on Labor Day that year, a horrific hurricane destroyed the overseas railroad about 70 miles up the Keys from here, cutting off Key West from the mainland. What happened next is why we're here today: rebuilding. U.S. Highway 1 was laid right on top of the railbed and across the bridges, and in 1938 the Overseas Highway opened. With the onset of World War II just a few later, the military returned in force. And although the prosperity we know today isn't the same as it was during the heyday of shipwrecking in the 1800s, we clearly are beneficiaries of those hard-nosed decisions of nearly a century ago. Attracting new industry didn't seem to be a workable plan, but because of our marvelous climate and tropical beauty, we could become a tourist attraction. Citizens and the Works Progress Administration began repairing the railroad, started cleaning up the island, painting the houses, and built our first tourist attraction - the Aquarium. It is because of you friends that we still have a strong economy. So, let me say, "Thank you for visiting us, and we hope you'll always remember our little island."

59. Several of the large houses in Old Town have **CAPTAIN'S WALKS**, or widow's walks on the roofs, where sea captains would watch in the 1800s for ships running aground on the coral reef. When sea captains set sail, their wives often paced the same rooftop perches watching for their husband's safe return. In some cases, those voyages ended in tragedy, giving those rooftops a different name: "**widow's walk**." Some warehouses in town had wrecking towers that were even taller, like the wrecking tower atop the Shipwreck Treasure Museum at Mallory Market.

We're now climbing one of the tallest mountains on the island: **Solares Hill**. Two blocks to the left down Elizabeth Street, it rises to the magnificent height of 18 feet [5.5m] above sea level. The highest point is at the intersection of Elizabeth and Angela Streets ... impressive! [Solares Hill is named for Victorio Solares y Prineda, who owned a store at the very top of the 'mountain.']

The white house ahead on the left is the **John Lowe Jr. house**, a stately Bahama-style home built in 1855. John Lowe, Jr. was the first native-born Key Wester to make a fortune. He was originally a wrecker, but also owned sponge and lumber ships. [A recent renovation (Note: 1998) restored the house to its appearance in John Lowe's time.] Notice the captain's walk on top of the house.

As we turn, soon to be on the left, on the roof of the yellow building, is another cupola with a captain's walk - also known as a Mirador, Spanish for "lookout," that affords a view of the surroundings. The house was built in the late 1800s and was home to the **B'nai Zion Synagogue** in 1905, for the oldest Jewish congregation in Florida.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO SIMONTON STREET)

60. We've turned onto Simonton Street, named for JOHN W. SIMONTON, first American owner of the island. Purchased on January 19, 1822, for the equivalent of 2,000 pesos while in Havana, from Juan Pablo Salas, a Spanish Army officer from St. Augustine. Salas had been awarded the island by Spain. When Spain ceded Florida to the US in 1821, Salas sold the island to Simonton. There was some dispute about ownership, as Salas had sold the island more than once. It finally took an act of Congress to decide that Simonton was the rightful owner.

John Simonton recognized the importance of our deepwater harbor and strategic location near the shipping lanes. He felt there should be an American wrecking station

based in Key West. So, when he bought the island, he encouraged settlement and used his influence to declare Key West a port of entry. [In March 1822, Simonton's representatives arrived on the island - the first permanent settlers.] [Within days, Commodore Matthew Perry arrived to establish the first Naval station, sailing in on the Schooner "Shark".] [John W. Simonton didn't spend much time on the island. He acted as an absentee landowner, overseeing and aiding the town from a distance.] [He soon improved his investment by selling three quarters of the island to John Whitehead, John Fleming, John Warner and John Mountain. But a short time later, Warner and Mountain transferred their land to Pardon C. Greene, who became a permanent resident of the island.]

On the right, the large trees lining the curb are **West Indian mahogany trees**. They were planted in the 1930s, one of the many beautification projects during the Depression to dress the city up to become a tourist resort. Once, mahogany trees lined this entire street. [They were planted by the same organization that became the Key West Garden Club]

Ahead on the left is the **William Kerr House**. Also known as the **Carpenter House**, it's an exquisite building constructed in 1875 to be the private residence of William Kerr, a renowned Irish-American architect. Kerr moved to Key West from Boston in 1872, where he'd worked as an architect, contractor, and builder. He built this Carpenter Gothic-style cottage, but his most recognizable works were his contributions at the Convent of Mary Immaculate, built in 1878, the Old Post Office, and Custom House. [Carpenter Gothic is a North American architectural style known for its use of Gothic Revival architectural detailing applied to traditional light-frame construction. Often, these buildings were built by house-carpenters. The style freed house carpenters to improvise and emphasize the charm and quaintness of what otherwise would have been a simple wooden building.]

61. On the right corner is the United Methodist Church, known as the **OLD STONE CHURCH**. Its two-foot-thick walls are quarried native limestone. It was built in 1877 and is the oldest church structure on the island. The previous chapel was made of wood in the 1840s and the stone church was built around it. When the stone structure was completed, the wood church was taken apart and brought out the front door, all without canceling one service. The limestone was quarried on the property. [On the right corner is an Indian Laurel tree, another member of the ficus family with hanging roots, this one planted when construction of the Old Stone Church began.]

62. When **Ernest Hemingway** first arrived in Key West in 1928, he came to town expecting to pick up a car that was being delivered to him. The delivery was delayed, so he and his wife, Pauline, stayed in an apartment above the Ford dealership. That dealership was found ahead on the left, at the present day **CASA ANTIGUA**, the two-story building with brown balconies. [Hemingway stayed here for seven weeks, finishing his first draft of *A Farewell to Arms*. [Hemingway's rooms were on the second floor toward the rear.]

63. The stone building on the right corner was built in 1931. Originally a post office, federal courthouse and customs office, today it's still the **FEDERAL COURTHOUSE**. The customs office can be found here too, as Key West is still an official port of entry. Looking at the structural base, we can see its foundation is constructed of granite, but the rest is fossilized Florida Keys limestone quarried in Islamorada, about 90 miles northeast of here. [You can see the fossils of marine animals in the surface of the stone.]

64. William Curry, a very successful entrepreneur on the island in the 1800s, was involved in many businesses. One was importing tobacco from Cuba. Ahead on the right, the brick building is the former **WILLIAM CURRY AND SONS TOBACCO WAREHOUSE**. In the late 1800s, tons of rich Cuban tobacco were stored here. The tobacco warehouse, built in 1877, is one of the very few buildings in the downtown area that survived the terrible 1886 fire. [As much as \$100,000 worth of tobacco stored to be sold to the cigar factories.]

65. Ahead on the right corner, is the **BOTTLING COURT**, where rum is distilled. But in 1903 it was a Coca-Cola Bottling Company, one of the first in the country. The plant remained in operation until the 1970s. It's now renovated into commercial shops. [Coca-Cola made its soda locally from rainwater that was stored in a cistern. If the cistern was low, the plant had to stop bottling until it rained again.]

(TURN LEFT ONTO FRONT STREET)

**Announce:** We're now approaching the only stop of the tour. We'll be taking a 10-minute break here. At the end of the break, I'll call you back to train #\_\_\_\_, with \_\_\_\_ as your engineer. Nearby attractions are the beautiful Yellow Gift Shop Station, which has restrooms and refreshments, also the world famous Duval Street, the Pilar Rum and Key West Legal Rum Distilleries that we passed moments ago, the Old City Hall, Sloppy Joe's Bar, Captain Tony's Saloon, and Hog's Breath. (Ring Bell) Please remain seated until the vehicle comes to a complete stop.

(ENTER THE FRONT STREET STATION)

**SB - Train In: 31** (SB while pulling into the station.)

(Ring your bell for safety.)

**Please watch your step and use the handholds. Backing down while facing the Conch Train is recommended. If you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them.**

# Script to Front Street Station

## BREAK TIME

(After 8 minutes, use the PA system to call back your passengers. This will allow reboarding time so you can leave at the ten-minute mark.) May I have your attention, please? All passengers who arrived with \_\_\_\_\_ on train \_\_\_\_\_, this is your reboarding call for the continuation of your tour. **Please re-board the train at this time. When you re-board, if possible, take your original seats. You are welcome to bring anything to eat or drink, non-alcoholic, on board. We will be leaving in one minute. Again, all passengers who arrived with \_\_\_\_\_ on train \_\_\_\_\_, it is time to re-board... ALL ABOARD!**

(Before the vehicle begins to move, you must ring the bell for safety and restate the safety guidelines.)

**Welcome back! Are we missing anyone from your immediate party? Please raise your hand so we can wait a moment for them. I need to remind you that the safety rules are back in effect. Please be sure the safety ropes - the yellow and black - are fastened at the ends of each seat. Please remain seated at all times. There is no smoking on**



**board, but you may eat or drink anything non-alcoholic. We've got everyone on board, so we can be on our way. ALL ABOARD!**

#### **SB - Train Out: 45**

On the right is a **glass-bottom boat, Pride of Key West**. It offers tours out to the living coral reef. This is something you should definitely do while you are here. [The view is so clear through the glass, you'll think you're only inches from the coral.] [The living reef is unlike anything you've ever seen, with all the different colors of living coral, tropical fish and other marine life.] [Coral is a living animal] [There are also snorkeling and diving boats that offer tours.]

(TURN LEFT ONTO DUVAL STREET)

66. On the far-right corner, the red and yellow brick building originate as a **BANK** in 1891. The wooden gallery on the second level is made of hand carved mahogany. It took one man five years to carve the gallery, and it was so heavy that 20 oxen were needed to raise it. The bank was founded by Cuban cigar factory owners. [A recent restoration project included rebuilding the cupola on top. (NOTE: in 1995)] [In the Hemingway novel, *To Have and Have Not*, this is the bank that was robbed.]

67. We're now on **DUVAL STREET**, Key West's main street. It's named for William Pope Duval, the first civilian territorial governor of Florida. Robert Ripley of *Believe it or Not!* Fame wrote that Duval Street is the longest street in the world because it goes from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. [If you want to walk the entire 14 blocks (1.2 miles), it will take you about 20 minutes.]

68. On the far-left corner is Ernest Hemingway's favorite bar, **SLOPPY JOE'S BAR**, owned by his fishing buddy Joe Russell. This is where Hemingway liked to go after a day of fishing. Inside, there are pictures of Hemingway and other memorabilia. [After his death in 1961, Hemingway's widow came to Sloppy Joe's to sort through papers he'd left when he moved away in the '30s. She found checks, letters, and portions of the then-unpublished *Islands in the Stream*] [Prior to 1937, Sloppy Joe's was found down the street in the yellow building to the right, where Captain Tony's is now located. Joe Russell had a dispute with his landlord about a rent increase. So, one night while open for business, he and his friends took everything from the building and moved it up the street to the present location.]

69. On the left corner is the **DR. JOSEPH FOGARTY HOUSE**, built in 1875. At about the turn of the 20th century, Dr. Fogarty was elected mayor of Key West. In 1912, when

the railroad first arrived, Dr. Fogarty hosted an elegant lawn party for Henry Flagler here. Across the street, on the right corner is the Bull & Whistle bar, first constructed in 1912 to be a fruit market. The architecture is unusual for Duval Street, with a wraparound balcony of wrought iron similar to what you can find in New Orleans. Ahead, on the left, is one of the few all-brick houses on the island. It was built in 1892. In 1940 it was purchased by the Key West Women's Club. [And was home to the first public library. [It was built for Martin Hellings, who married one of William Curry's daughters and was manager of the telegraph office.]

70. On the right, the home with the elevated porch is the **OLDEST HOUSE** on the island, built in 1829. It was the home of Captain Francis Watlington, a shipwrecking captain. In the rear of the house is the only remaining outdoor kitchen in the Florida Keys. Today the house is the Wreckers Museum, telling the history of the wrecking industry and family life in the 1800s. [Notice the dormers on the roof. They are three different sizes.] [Watlington lived here with his seven daughters.] [Members of the family lived here until 1974.] [It's on high pilings because when it was built, Duval Street was just a cow path with a big pond in the middle. At high tide, the water would rise to the corner just behind us at Caroline Street.]

On the right corner is the Baldwin House. In 1842, the rear section of the house was used as a private school, one of several at the time. That's why there's a school bell on the second story porch. [The school was run by Mrs. Passlague, a French lady of rare intellectual achievements.] [In the 1860s Annie Baldwin and her three daughters taught music here.] [The original building was built in the early 1800's and the front two story portion was added later.] (NOTE: This house was built, added on to and rebuilt several times. Impossible to give an exact construction date.)

71. On the far-left corner is **ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**, the oldest Episcopal parish in South Florida. The parish's first services were held at Jackson Square on Christmas Day 1832. Its first church building was destroyed by the hurricane of 1846, the second by the fire of 1886, and a third by the hurricane of 1909. The present building was finished in 1912.

72. Ahead on the right, the tall pink building is the **LA CONCHA HOTEL**, opened in 1926. It is the tallest building in Old Town. In 1947, the playwright Tennessee Williams stayed here while rewriting his play "A Streetcar Named Desire." Shortly after that, in 1949, he bought his own home here in Key West on Duncan Street.

[While visiting, if you need a change in latitude and attitude, ahead on the right is Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville.]

73. In 1871, a group of Cubans patriots formed the **SAN CARLOS INSTITUTE**, a place to meet and conspire for Cuba's independence from Spain. The present structure, ahead on the right, was built in 1924 in Spanish Colonial style and modeled after Havana City Hall. José Martí gave rallying speeches here. It was also here that the horrible downtown fire of 1886 began. The building became badly deteriorated in the 1980s but was restored and reopened in 1992. [It became the Cathedral of Cuban patriotism] [Along with meeting rooms and offices, there's a theater for plays and other productions.] [Until the mid-1970s there was also a school - the first bilingual and integrated school in Florida. The school was funded by the Cuban government until Castro assumed power in Cuba.]

74. On the left is the **STRAND THEATER**. The present structure was built in 1934 by Juan Carbonell. Try to get a glimpse of the elaborate second level. It is rococo architecture, similar to many buildings in Havana, Cuba. [The original building, completed in 1918, was destroyed by fire.]

*On the left corner is the **Pegasus Hotel**. This is one of the few **Art Deco** buildings on the islands. Most of the buildings from that time period were greatly remodeled over the years. A few years ago, (NOTE: in 1990) the Pegasus did some major remodeling and received permission to do the façade in Art Deco.]*

(TURN RIGHT ONTO SOUTHARD STREET)

75. The block in front of us is the **600 BLOCK OF DUVAL**, one of the hubs of Old Town. When the Navy closed its base in 1974, many businesses in this area went bankrupt and the area became neglected and rundown. As part of the bicentennial in 1976, there was a major restoration effort along Duval Street, trying to recapture the atmosphere of the turn of the 20th century and focusing on tourism. [Buildings were repaired and painted, trees planted, and the area generally cleaned up. Businesses gradually began to prosper again.] [The revitalization was part of the Bicentennial celebration.] [The area was dependent on military business since the main entrance to the Navy base is only two blocks from here.]

76. On the right corner is the **GREEN PARROT BAR**, one of the oldest bars in the Florida Keys. The building dates back to 1890, when it was a grocery store [The store was owned by the grandfather of local artist Mario Sanchez.] [Ahead of us, beyond the housing area, is Fort Zachary Taylor. It's one of several forts built to defend the southeastern United States after the War of 1812. Construction began in 1845. It's open as a museum with the largest collection of Civil War armament in the country. It's also a state park with a very nice beach. There's one more Civil War era fort on the island - the

East Martello, by the airport. It is a museum of the Key West Art and Historical Society, and the West Martello that we passed earlier.]

(TURN RIGHT ONTO WHITEHEAD STREET)

If you look in front of the courthouse you will find a large tree. This is a **Kapok tree**. Before synthetic products the seed pods from the kapok were used to stuff life jackets. [They were also used for voodoo rituals, among other uses.]

Underneath the tree is a sign that reads "End of the Rainbow and End of US Route 1." [Next to the Old Courthouse is the Courthouse Annex, built in 1965 (Note: date the cornerstone laid).]

On the right corner is the southern end of US 1 with mile marker zero. You are now at the Whitehead and Fleming intersection, the official end of the road. The north end of US 1 is more than 1,700 miles away – more than 2,300 miles of roadway - in Fort Kent, Maine.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO FLEMING STREET)

77. Ahead on the right is a house that was home to **FRANCISCO MARRERO**. Marrero bribed his way out of a Cuban jail, came to Key West, and by 1889 owned a large cigar factory. He built this home. When he died, his wife inherited the house and his fortune. But then Marrero's first wife showed up from Havana to claim the house as hers. She kicked the Key West wife out, homeless and penniless, onto the street. Legend has it the ghost of the Key West wife returns at night to wander the halls of the home she lost. [The house was built in the 1890s.] [You may have had trouble finding street signs, especially in Old Town. And I admit, it's a bit of a challenge. There are some traditional ones of metal attached to poles. But in the Old Town area most street signs are on short posts at corners or painted low on utility poles. Just like the one on the far-left corner.] [We're now on Fleming Street, named for John Fleming, one of the early owners of the island. John Fleming died in 1832 and was buried on St. Paul's Church property on Duval Street. It was said that every night, his tomb would open up and his ghost wandered around the churchyard. Skeptics claimed it was just a goat feeding in the churchyard.]

78. The Old Town area is a Historic Preservation District, one of largest historic districts in the country. There are more than 3,000 structures in Old Town, and more than ten percent are on the **NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**. Key West has the largest collection of wood frame buildings in Florida, and the largest collection of 19th

century architecture anywhere. On the far-right corner, by the front doors of the Marquesa Inn, there's a small brass plaque indicating it is on that National Register. [(Stuck at the light before the Marquesa? Then . . .) On the right corner, the brick building is one of the oldest commercial buildings on the island. It opened in 1873 as a dry goods store. In 1903 it was purchased by Dr. John Maloney. He owned a private hospital on the island, and he bought the building to be his pharmacy, the Key West Drug Company.] [On the far-right corner, the Marquesa Inn was the "Gents Goods" store built about 1890.] [It's also been a drugstore, grocery store, and gas company.] [It later fell into terrible disrepair and became a flophouse.] [In 1988, an award-winning restoration was completed, transforming it into a deluxe 27-room hotel.] [When making the film "License to Kill," James Bond (Timothy Dalton) stayed here.] [In the Old Town area we have many different styles of architecture, styles from the low country Carolinas, New England, the Bahamas, and Caribbean, since people from all those areas settled here.] [Although many people call any old wooden house in Key West a Conch House, there are really different styles.]

A very basic style of architecture on the island is the **Classic Revival** from New England. Ahead on the right, the gray house is a Classic Revival, a two-story house with the porch on the first and second floors [This style (Classic Revival) was modified for the tropics, with larger windows, higher ceilings and Bahama shutters, becoming West Indian Colonial.]

A variation is the **Conch or Bahama-style**, which has the porches wrap around the building to help keep it cooler. The tan house on the left corner and the two identical white ones on the far left are Conch or Bahama-style.

On the far-left corner, the two identical white Bahama houses were built in 1873 by **Captain L.E. Pierce** for his two daughters. They were carefully restored in the 1980s. [They were purchased and restored by Broadway producer Jerry Herman. He lived quietly in the second house for many years.] (Note: not TWIN daughters)

79. Across the street on the right, the pink building, is the **MONROE COUNTY LIBRARY**. It was the first public library in South Florida, established in 1892. [The building dates from 1959 and built in the Bermudian style of architecture.] [Next to the library is a marvelous palm garden built in 1994. There are about 25 different varieties of palms gathered from all over the state and throughout the Caribbean.]

80. Often, additions to small homes were needed as families grew. On the far left corner, the second house from the corner - the one with green shutters - look to the rear of the cottage at the roof line. It forms a **ZIGZAG PATTERN**. That was a beneficial addition.

Hot air would be trapped in the high peaks of the zig or zag, while the deep valleys on the roof made it easier to collect the rainwater needed for drinking water. [As the family grew, another zig or zag was often added.] [Most of these homes originally had large backyards with cisterns, privies, cook's quarters, and large gardens with fruits and vegetables - sugar cane, melon patch, oranges, soursop, guava, lemon, lime, sapodilla, and on and on.]

On the far-left corner, the yellow building was a **sponge warehouse** from 1889, when sponging was a million-dollar business that employed 1,200 men and 140 vessels at the time. Notice the tilt - yes, it has been leaning like that since the hurricane of 1909.

81. Two blocks to the left is our harbor. There was a time when it was full of small sponge boats. ccli Key West became the main supplier of sponges in the country in the mid-1800s, when **SPONGE BEDS** were discovered in our shallow waters. Spongers went out in small boats to pluck sponges from the ocean bottom. In the early 1900s, Greek spongers arrived. Locals felt the Greeks were destroying the sponge beds, and there was a great deal of resentment. Eventually, the Greeks moved on. Key Westers again dominated the area sponge beds until 1938, when a red tide crisis caused a blight that temporarily wiped out our sponge beds. A whole generation passed before the sponge beds began recovering, but it was the end of large scale sponging around Key West.

(TURN LEFT ONTO GRINNELL STREET)

82. Another variation of the Classic Revival architecture is what's called an **EYEBROW HOUSE**, a Key West invention. Ahead on the left, in the middle of the block, the house with the two flags is an eyebrow. Notice the second-floor windows - the roof overhangs to shade the upstairs rooms from direct sunlight. There are about 100 eyebrow houses scattered around the island. [The original layout of this style had a central hall and two large rooms upstairs.] [Before air conditioning, people used about every trick in the book to cool these houses.]

83. If you look above the front door, you'll notice a round ceramic plaque with a star in the middle. Each year, the **HISTORIC FLORIDA KEYS FOUNDATION** and the historic board award these stars to outstanding examples of preservation, restoration, and sometimes even new construction projects. In the 1950s several historic homes and buildings were demolished. With the goal of avoiding the loss of more historic buildings, in 1960, the Historic Florida Keys Foundation was formed. A voluntary organization, its mission is to encourage preservation and restoration. [Each year the color of the star is different.] [Every year Old Island sponsors House & Garden Tours,



an opportunity to tour some of these private homes.] [In 1986, the local Historic Architectural Review Commission was established to enforce restoration & construction guidelines.]

84. The large white home on the far-right corner was built in 1891 by Benito Alfonso, a Cuban cigar manufacturer and supporter of Cuban independence from Spain. In 1906 **ANTONIO DIAZ Y CARRASCO**, the first Cuban Consul to United States, bought the house, and his consul office was here. He became a symbol of Cuba's newfound independence and a hero to the Cubans who lived here. [Carrasco died in 1915 and is buried in Key West Cemetery.] [In the 1920s the back of the house was only 30 feet from the water's edge. The owner, Archie Thompson, was said to be a rumrunner. He built the house in the back to house storage tanks for hiding rum during Prohibition. The rum was unloaded at docks in the bight.]

(TURN LEFT ONTO CAROLINE STREET)

The road to the right leads to **Trumbo Point**. In the early 1900s, **Henry Flagler's** railroad terminal that connected Key West to the mainland was located there. Steamships left here with passengers continuing to Cuba. Today, Trumbo Point is the Coast Guard base with housing, and occasionally Navy ships tie up to the docks.

85. We're approaching **FLAGLER STATION**. Here, you'll find a replica of one of Flagler's Overseas Railroad Stations, as well as a **Payroll Car** and the **Maggie Atwell House**, which was moved here from Big Pine Key, about 30 miles from here. It was built in 1912 for a family of six! Now, the payroll car and Atwell House have been modified into the Sails to Rails Museum. (**Expand on Sails to Rails**)

(RIGHT ONTO MARGARET STREET)

**Announce: We are in the heart of the old seaport area!**

**SB – Sea Shanty: 22**

86. In front of us is the **KEY WEST BIGHT** area of the harbor. A bight is a body of water surrounded by land, with only one narrow opening to the sea. This makes for a very safe harbor.

87. As recently as the 1980s, the Bight was home to the **SHRIMPING** fleet, with more than 500 shrimp boats. Shrimp were discovered in Key West waters in 1949. The large, pink, jumbo shrimp feed only at night, unlike other shrimp. When this was a shrimping

hub, you'd typically see hundreds of shrimp boats tied up to each other in this small harbor. Since then, the number of shrimp has declined. The remaining shrimp fleet is based on Stock Island, the next island north of here. [In the 1970s, the shrimp processing plant and many of the shrimp boats were owned by the Singleton family. Straight ahead, by the water, is a statue of Henry "Booty" Singleton.] [The Singleton family was based in the Tampa Bay area.]

Our natural deepwater harbor gave our remote island city of only 22,000 people superior commercial importance, considering that there was no land route connecting us to the rest of the country until the 1930s. This area was the commercial center of Key West, with factories, freighters, fishing, shipping, and support businesses. As the Gibraltar of the Caribbean, this **Key West seaport** was the gateway to the Panama Canal, Cuba, Central and South America [with tons of freight imported and exported daily.]

88. On the right, at the end of the road, is a large green building. This is the **TURTLE KRAALS**. "Kraal" is a Dutch-African word meaning a fenced pen or corral. The corrals – or kraals – here were used to hold giant sea turtles before they were used for turtle steak or turtle soup. See, Key West was the turtle capital of the world until the 1960s, when the sea turtle was added to the endangered species list. [In the 1880s, schooners brought in an average of 400 turtles from the surrounding waters daily.] [The Granday Canning Company produced 200 quarts of fine Green Turtle Soup daily.]

On the right you'll see a "**Whaling Wall**" painted by Robert Wyland. Wyland was born in Michigan but lives part-time in the Keys. He painted more than 100 such murals around the world between 1981 and 2008, all depicting scenes of marine life. This is wall number 52.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO CAROLINE STREET)

89. On the far-left corner is the **RED DOORS**, built in 1886 as a grocery store for Theophilus Pinder. But in 1969 it was the Red Doors Tavern. It was infamous for countless bar brawls, earning it the nickname "the bucket of blood." Rumor has it, patrons were frisked at the entrance. If they didn't have a weapon, they were handed one.

**We're about to turn onto Caroline Street. In the 1950s and 60s, this area was lined with bars and rooming houses. It was a rough and bawdy part of town, as Jimmy Buffett noted in his song, "Woman Goin' Crazy on Caroline Street."**

## SB - Caroline Street: 16

On the right corner is the **Cypress House**, built in 1888 for the **Kemp family** to replace the original, which was destroyed in a fire. The original house was built of cypress, but this replacement is termite-resistant pine. The name "Cypress" simply stuck. The Kemps were among the richest of our sea sponging families. The Kemp's ridley sea turtle - the rarest species of sea turtle - is named after Richard Kemp, who discovered it in 1880. Cypress wood doesn't take well to paint, but it is termite-resistant, making it a popular wood for building. [The house was built for the Kemp family, who were spongers, merchants, and seamen.]

[About the turn of the 20th century, this stretch of Caroline Street was the premier residential neighborhood on the island.]

[On the far-left corner is the Delaney house, built after the fire of 1886. It's made of Charlotte Company Pine, a termite-resistant pine. Notice the unusual windows in the pediment, under the roof peak.]

[The white house on the right, behind the trees, was built in 1892 and purchased in 1906 by the Bartlum family from Green Turtle Cay, Bahamas. It's still owned by members of that family. Harry Truman and his wife, Bess, visited their close friends here several times after his presidency.] (Note: House #531)

On the left, behind the hedge, is the George Patterson house. The home is Queen Anne architecture, with turrets and balconies. [But it's not painted in the usual Queen Anne fashion. It's done in Key West traditional - white with green trim.] [It remained in the Patterson family until the 1960s] (Note: white with green shutters, behind the tall hedges)

39. On the right is the **CURRY MANSION**, a Victorian mansion. Construction began in the 1890s but was halted by William Curry's death in 1896, later finished by his son Milton in 1905. The Curry Mansion is now a guest house and museum with 20 rooms of antiques to explore. William Curry arrived in Key West from the Bahamas in 1837 as a young boy seeking wealth. Although Key West was already the wealthiest town in Florida when Curry arrived, he became the state's first self-made millionaire by the 1850s, on an empire that included wrecking and ship building. [The house is the Newport cottage style that was popular in the late 1800s.] [In 1861, William Curry started his own business, buying and selling goods from shipwrecks.]

91. On the far-left corner is the original **PORTER FAMILY HOME**, built in 1838. Dr. Joseph Yates Porter, Florida's first public health officer, was born in this house in 1847. He died in the same room where he was born, 80 years later, in 1927. He was an Army doctor during severe yellow fever epidemics and became the foremost expert in the country of this dreaded disease. His prevention methods helped to eradicate yellow fever. [Dr. Porter entertained Clara Barton, Teddy Roosevelt, Thomas Edison and others at his home.] [It is built in the Second Empire style, an unusual architecture on the island.] [Next door, the white house was built in 1898 by Judge W. Hunt Harris. He'd received the land from the Porter family when he married their daughter.] [In the 1980s, before the house was restored, it was home to Mel Fisher's treasure salvors] (NOTE: Do not mention the current owners, their names - per their request.)

Ahead, on the left is the **Second-Oldest House in Key West**, built in 1834. In the front yard is a pirate's well, used by pirates in the 1700s. The house was purchased by the Porter family in 1934. At the back of the driveway is a small green cottage, the Robert Frost Cottage, where the famous poet stayed when he visited his friend, Miss Jessie Porter, who owned the home. [It was built by Captain George Carey, a classic sea captain's house of the time period.]

92. The building on the right corner is the birthplace of **Pan American Airlines**. This was the ticket office in 1927. Pan Am started an international seaplane service, transporting both passengers and mail to Havana, Cuba, on October 28, 1927.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO WHITEHEAD STREET)

[On the right, in the back of the little parking lot, notice the gingerbread in the fence. There are wine bottles, whiskey bottles and hearts. That's Prohibition gingerbread.]

93. On the right corner is the **AUDUBON HOUSE**, built in the 1840s by Captain John Geiger. It was named in honor of the famed naturalist, John James Audubon, who visited here to create paintings of the beautiful birds of the Florida Keys. [This was the first major restoration by the Old Island Restoration Foundation. The foundation heard that the house was to be demolished for a gas station and felt it should be preserved instead.] [If you want to learn more about our great variety of plant life, the Audubon House offers a nice walking tour of the gardens.] [Audubon named one of the trees he found in the garden the Geiger Tree, after Captain Geiger. A small Geiger tree with orange flowers is near the corner, by the fence.]

94. Ahead on the left is **CLINTON PLACE**. In the middle is a monument to the 167 Union soldiers who lost their lives to the yellow fever epidemic during the Civil War. [Named for DeWitt Clinton of New York.] [The monument was built in 1866 by the Navy Club] [The fence was later installed by a Confederate soldier.]

95. As we wind down our tour, hopefully you've gained a greater understanding and appreciation of how our southernmost status isn't just symbolic, but how that geographic position – coupled with reef dangers, piracy, and our deepwater harbor – all led to Key West building a population and tremendous wealth. That's the Golden Thread that weaves our story and our tour together. If you'd like to learn even more of that story, a terrific opportunity is literally directly in front of us: Straight ahead of us, soon to be on the left, is a tall wrecking tower atop the **SHIPWRECK TREASURE MUSEUM**. It has a touch of theater, detailing the shipwreck salvage industry in the 1800s. If you'd like to visit, I have dollar-off coupons for admission. See me at the end of the tour. You might even find Asa Tift himself conducting inventory.

(TURN RIGHT ONTO FRONT STREET)

96. On the left is **MALLORY MARKET**, where I'll be finishing my tour. For those of you who joined my tour at either Truval Station or Flagler Station, when you're ready to continue with your tour please walk up to the Front Street Depot where train “#” is currently parked to our left. That train will take you back to Truval and Flagler Stations.

(TURN LEFT ONTO TIFT ALLEY)

97. We're now heading toward **MALLORY DOCK**, where Sunset Celebration takes place every night. Crowds gather to watch the beautiful sunset and free shows. You'll want to be here about an hour before sunset, it is straight ahead of the train, just past these buildings.

98. On the far-right corner is the **MEMORIAL SCULPTURE GARDEN**, highlighting our early history with busts and life stories of many of our early settlers.

99. Just to the right of the Sculpture Garden you will find one of the best Cuban Restaurants on the island **El Meson de Pepe**. Not only known for their wonderful Cuban food, but also their award winning Mojitos.

(TURN LEFT ONTO TIFT ALLEY)

**SB -Train In: 31** (SB while turning onto Wall Street.)

100. On the right, the wonderful **SHELL WAREHOUSE**. It was originally constructed in the early 1850s by Asa Tift as the first icehouse in the Northern Caribbean. Next to it is the lovely **SPONGE MARKET**. Also, here in the Mallory Market you will find our first tourist attraction, the **Key West Aquarium**. Friends, that brings us to the end of our tour.

**SB - Margaritaville** (SB while pulling in front of the Shipwreck Treasure Museum.

**Again, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you for taking the tour with me today. (Ring Bell)**  
**Remain seated until the vehicle comes to a complete stop.**  
(When pulling into a stop you are to ring your bell for safety.)

**Please, watch your step and use the handholds. Backing down while facing the Conch Train is recommended. Make sure you take all your possessions with you. If you have any questions or need directions, please do come up to the cab. I'll be happy to help you out. If you'd like to come up and visit, I'd be happy to give you one of our Comment Cards. It doesn't cost anything to fill out other than time and ink as it is postage-paid. Please, take a moment, fill it out and drop it in a mailbox. We would love to hear what you thought of our tour and any suggestions you may have.(Hold your copy up and let guests see it.)**

**Again, thank you and have a delightful vacation.**