

**Inventory of the
Dick Russell Papers
In The New Bedford Whaling Museum
Research Library**

Title: Dick Russell Papers
Date Span: 1806-2011
Mss Number: Mss 192
Provenance: Gift of Dick Russell (2018.49)
Extent: 7.5 linear feet
Abstract: Research notes and drafts compiled by Dick Russell for his book *Eye of the Whale* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001)
Processed by: Mark Procknik, 2021
Repository: New Bedford Whaling Museum Research Library

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Introduction

Materials in this collection were donated to the New Bedford Whaling Museum by Dick Russell on 2 August 2018 as part of Accession 2018.49.

Biographical Note

Richard (Dick) Russell is an author and environmental journalist born on August 19, 1947, in Minneapolis (Minnesota). Earlier in his journalistic career, Russell worked as a staff reporter for *Sports Illustrated* from 1969 to 1970 and later served as a staff writer in the Hollywood Bureau of *TV Guide* Magazine from 1977 to 1979. Following his stint at *TV Guide*, the focus of Russell's writings became the environment, particularly the world's fisheries and oceans, and Russell has written dozens of articles about various environmental issues for several publications including *The Nation*, *Parenting*, and *OnEarth* (formerly *Amicus Journal*), among others. His *Eye of the Whale* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001) chronicles the migration of the California gray whale from Mexico's Baja peninsula to northern Alaska and Siberia and was named among the best books of 2001 by the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Russell's other books include *The Man Who Knew too Much* (New York: Carroll and Graff, 1992) and *Black Genesis: And the American Experience* (New York: Carroll and Graff, 1998).

Scope and Content Note

Papers in this collection reflect the research interests of Dick Russell while he wrote his book *Eye of the Whale: Epic Passage from Baja to Siberia* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001) for publication. Russell's correspondence exists primarily in the form of printed e-mail exchanges, but there are letters and faxes as well. Correspondence ranges from 1993 to 2011 with the bulk dating from 1998 to 2000. The majority of the correspondence deals with Russell compiling and verifying information on gray whales, subsistence whaling, the effects of climate change on biodiversity in Arctic environments, and marine mammal conservation issues throughout the course of his research. Letters from 1994 deal primarily with the Acoustic Thermometry of Ocean Climate (ATOC) program and its impact on marine mammals. There is also a set of correspondence in 1998 concerning Francisco Guzman Lazo and his involvement with the proposed saltworks facility planned for San Ignacio Lagoon (Baja, California). Several e-mails in 1999 document his research trips, most notably to Russia and Alaska. There is a fax Russell received on 20 June 2000 that contains correspondence and documents related to a lawsuit filed in response to the anti-whaling response protesters generated at 1998 Makah Whaling Days festival. Russell also shared correspondence with several research associates from July 2000 to October 2000 regarding drafts of his book. Correspondence from 2002 to 2003 deals primarily with the Ocean Alliance pioneered by Dr. Roger Payne to protect whales and their ocean environment through research, scientific collaboration, public education, and the arts.

The bulk of this collection contains Russell's research notes in the form of documentation and printed materials, but the bulk consists of transcripts of interviews Russell conducted from many experts of varying fields throughout the course of his research. Russell's research interests are diverse and his research materials span a range of topics for the years 1806 to 2010, including gray whale behavior, bioacoustics, whale conservation, Baja California, Vancouver, Makah whaling, Charles Melville Scammon, Alaska, Diomed Islands, Bering Sea, Pribilof Islands, Chukotka (Russia), and Sakhalin Island (Russia). Interviews regarding gray whales document a variety of the species' behaviors, including feeding habits, reproduction, and migration. Items related to whale conservation include interviews with Captain Paul Watson and other members of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society in addition to articles dating from 1985 to 1988 that deal with Greenpeace's activities, Sea Shepherd, and the North Atlantic right whale in addition to Russian, Japanese, and Icelandic commercial whaling. Russell also collected letters mailed by conservation foundations to third parties in 1987.

Russell collected a substantial amount of material documenting gray whales and Baja California with the majority of these items consisting of interviews and documentation from the years 1999 to 2000 related to a proposed plan by the Japanese corporation Mitsubishi to build a saltworks facility at San Ignacio Lagoon and the eventual decision by the Mexican President Zedillo to halt the project on March 2, 2000. Russell also focused a great deal of his research on the Makah gray whale hunt at Neah Bay and interviewed several Makah on their heritage in addition to interviewing many of those who opposed their whale hunt during the years 1998 to 2000. Russell also devoted a portion of his research to Charles Melville Scammon and the Western Union Telegraph Expedition of 1865 to 1867. Interviews related to Scammon span the years 1998 to 2000 and document his work on the natural history of the California and Alaska coast in addition to his contribution to gray whale studies. In addition to these Scammon interviews, the collection contains photographs and photocopies of Scammon's correspondence from 1868 to 1873 that Russell obtained from the Bancroft Library and the Smithsonian Institution along with copies of articles Scammon wrote for *Overland Monthly* containing descriptions of the geography of the Alaskan and California coast between the years 1869 and 1889. Russell also collected documentation related to Scammon's contemporaries, Louis Agassiz and Jared Poole. Interviews and research notes Russell compiled on the Alaskan coast, Pribilof Islands, Diomed, Chukotka, and Sakhalin Island span primarily the years 1998 to 2000 and contain information related to the subsistence whale hunt of the native inhabitants of those regions in addition to descriptions of daily life at the high latitudes, the impact of climate change on the region, and marine mammal conservation.

Press releases and print outs of online articles reflect Russell's research interests in contemporary whaling, marine mammal conservation, and the impact of climate change on marine life. These items span the years 1986 to 2011, but primarily consist of material from 1998 to 2000 and 2005 to 2010. Russell compiled the majority of these press releases through e-mail by means of his association and membership in several marine mammal and climate advocate e-mail lists. Press releases deal with the anti-whaling reports and activities of Greenpeace and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society against Japanese, Norwegian, and Icelandic whalers and whaling industries. Russell also received and collected reports on whale conservation and scientific

discoveries related to whales and other marine mammals and fish, including humpback whales, narwhal whales, grey whales, dolphins, minke whales, tuna, and turtles. There are also press releases that deal with environmental issues, notably in Arctic waters, including pollution, the oil industry, and the impact of climate change on Arctic marine life. There are several press releases and articles documenting the Makah whale hunt in from 1997 to 2000, especially from 1999 to 2000. There is also a set press releases that deal with whale strandings from 1999 to 2000 in addition to reports from 2005 to 2009 that deal with the effects of sonar and noise pollution on whales.

This collection also contains various proposals and drafts Russell wrote for *Eye of the Whale* from 1998 to 2000, and the text went through several revisions during that time. His copy editor was Denise Roy, and her comments, annotations, and editorial suggestions are included in some drafts. Russell also obtained feedback from several colleagues and researchers as he polished his drafts into the final published version, and their written feedback is included on several annotated chapter drafts as well. Along with *Eye of the Whale*, Russell also wrote several smaller publications for various articles on gray whales and gave various talks on the subject as well, with one such speech titled "Save the Whales" that Russell delivered at a rally in Santa Monica on May 22, 2010.

In addition to the contents of this collection listed in the inventory, Russell collected several articles and publications related to gray whales and his other areas of research interest. These publications have been cataloged separately and are searchable in the Museum's Library catalog.

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