

**Inventory of the  
Melville C. Brown Papers  
In The New Bedford Whaling Museum  
Research Library**

**Title:** Melville C. Brown Papers  
**Date Span:** 1538-2010  
**Mss Number:** Mss 167  
**Provenance:** Gift of Karen Clifford (2017.95)  
**Extent:** 3.5 linear feet  
**Abstract:** Correspondence and research notes compiled by Melville C. Brown,  
genealogist of the Slocum Society International  
**Processed by:** Mark Procknik and Maureen Coleman, 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 in 2017 by Karen Clifford on 18 November 2017 as part of Accession 2017.95.

## Biographical Note

Melville “Mel” C. Brown was born in Glendive (Montana) on February 8, 1937. An avid genealogist, Brown could trace his ancestry all the way back to the Slocumbe family of Devon (England) and was a first cousin three times removed of the famed sea captain Joshua Slocum. Brown was also a member of the Slocum Society International, serving in the capacity of the Society’s genealogist and fielded several genealogical inquiries from Slocum descendants. Brown also spearheaded a DNA testing of all willing Slocum descendants for genealogical research purposes and worked with Judith Slocum, a fellow Slocum genealogist, on a book documenting Slocum family ancestry. Brown passed away at the age of 79 on April 26, 2016.

## Scope and Content Note

Papers in this collection reflect the genealogical pursuits of Melville C. Brown in the form of his correspondence and notes dedicated to his Slocum family research. Brown’s correspondence spans the years 1989 to 2009 and contains letters, faxes, and e-mails to and from relatives, journalists, genealogists, researchers, libraries, and the Slocum Society regarding his research. Several family members also contacted Brown looking for genealogical assistance over the years, and these papers document each exchange, including correspondence concerning DNA testing for Slocum descendants from 2003 to 2004. The collection contains a great deal of correspondence with Judy Slocum, a fellow Slocum genealogist that Brown worked with very closely for an extended period of time and who co-authored with Brown an article for the *New England Ancestors* magazine in 2003, a book titled *The Slocums Before Joshua Slocum and After*, and several other typed Slocum family genealogy reports.

From 1989 to 2001, Brown shared correspondence with Walter Teller, a noted Joshua Slocum biographer. Brown also shared communications with Leon Fredrich, another prominent Slocum researcher from 2000 to 2007 with the bulk of their correspondence consisting of letters from 2000 to 2002. In 2003, Jed Handspicker sent a series of lengthy and anonymous e-mails containing lineage charts detailing his Slocum lineage. There is also a set of correspondence from 2003 that deals with the Buffalo Pan-American Exposition in 1901 that Joshua Slocum attended as a guest. Brown communicated frequently with Heather Ayshford, a family history consultant in England, during the years 2003 to 2005 while she assisted Brown in researching the Slocumbe line in Devon (England). There are several letters to and from Ed Mueller and others from 2003 to 2004 researching Joshua Slocum’s nephew Frank Laffoley and his time onboard the *Northern Light*. Brown also shares correspondence in 2004 with David Sinnett-Jones up until his sudden death in November of that year. Sinnett-Jones built and sailed a replica of the *Liberdade* and wrote to Brown often. Although the vast majority is meticulously dated, there is a set of undated correspondence Brown shared with “Tweed” Roosevelt, great-grandson of former president Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt regarding Joshua Slocum and Roosevelt’s friendship.

Research notes contain documentation dating back to 1538, however, the bulk of Brown's research materials date from 1871 to 2010 and reflect his interest in Joshua Slocum and Slocum family genealogical research. Brown collected several photocopies and typescripts of Joshua Slocum's correspondence for the years 1885 to 1906 concerning his voyage in the *Spray* and the publication of his book *Sailing Alone around the World* (New York: The Century Company, 1901). Brown also amassed photocopies of several documents related to Joshua Slocum, including his marriage certificate to Virginia Albertina Walker (1871), the birth certificate of his son, Benjamin Aymar Slocum (1873), and census information (1920). Brown's Slocum research notes also contain 1967 correspondence of Col. Harvey C. Slocum, documentation on Victor Slocum, Henrietta Slocum, and Virginia Slocum, including material from 2002 regarding Virginia's memorial. There is also a scrapbook compiled by Kenneth and Mary Lou Garrett of Fairhaven and spans 1994 to 2002 documenting Joshua Slocum and Nova Scotia.

Brown also collected material related to Walter Teller and his research. These items include photocopies and typescripts of Teller's correspondence from the years 1951 to 1972. In addition to Teller's general correspondence, Brown also maintained copies of letters Teller wrote to and received from Brown's grandmother Grace (Gracie) from 1952 to 1956, who served as a storyteller for Teller on many accounts related to Joshua Slocum. Brown also collected several newspaper articles from 1975 to 1993 on Teller's life and career. In addition to Teller's research, Brown also amassed several items and documents from 1882 to 2007 relating to the vessels Joshua Slocum commanded during his lifetime, including the *Spray*, *Liberdade*, *Northern Light*, and *Benjamin Aymar*. Material for the *Liberdade* also includes items from 2000 to 2004 related to David Sinnett-Jones and his *Liberdade* replica voyages.

Brown's Slocum family genealogy notes contain documentation dating as far back as 1538 consisting of family trees, lineage lines, genealogy worksheets, vital records, and printed material. Brown also compiled detailed notes on several of Joshua Slocum's forbearers, including Anthony Slocumb, Giles Slocum, Hugh Slocumb, John Slocumb, Phillippe Slocum, and Simon Slocumbe. Judy Slocum, a fellow genealogist and Brown's research colleague, assisted him in compiling a lot of this material. Documentation includes notes related to the origins of the Slocumbe [Slocum] surname, the Slocum family coat of arms, and photocopies of several Slocum family documents dating from 1806 to 2004. The oldest documentation in the collection dates back to 1538 and relates to the Slocumbe ancestry in Devon (England) that Heather Ayshford, a family historian based in England, helped him accumulate and also compiled genealogical notes and information related to the Bromham, Chapple, Downe, Fleming, Lancey, Prouze, and Skinner families of England. In addition to the Slocum family's English roots, Brown also researched Nova Scotian property records as they pertained to Joshua Slocum and the Slocum family and collected eight facsimile maps of Nova Scotia, notably Annapolis County and Digby County, dated 1871 to 1953.

Brown, serving as the project lead, also organized a DNA testing project from 2002 to 2010 for any Slocum family members who were interested. Over a span of eight years, a total of 19 Slocum descendants volunteered to have their DNA tested for genealogical research purposes. Brown and Judy Slocum published the project's findings in an article for the *New England Ancestors* magazine in 2003. Brown also compiled several notes from 2003 to 2004 for his book *The Slocums before Joshua Slocum and after* that he co-authored with Judy. The collection also includes itinerary plans, ferry information, travel brochures, maps, and hotel documentation for his six trips to Nova Scotia during the years 2000 to 2008 in addition to an undated map of Grand Cayman Island and a 2003 map of Lake George.

### **Arrangement of Collection**

- Series A: Correspondence, 1989-2009
- Series B: Research Notes and Documents, 1538-2010

## Collection Inventory

### **Box 1**

#### **Series A: Correspondence, 1989-2009**

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- Folder 2: 1990
- Folder 3: 1991
- Folder 4: 1995
- Folder 5: 1998
- Folder 6: January 1999 – July 1999
- Folder 7: August 1999 – October 1999
- Folder 8: November 1999 – December 1999
- Folder 9: January 2000 – March 2000
- Folder 10: April 2000 – July 2000
- Folder 11: August 2000 – October 2000
- Folder 12: November 2000 – December 2000
- Folder 13: January 2001 – March 2001
- Folder 14: April 2001 – May 2001
- Folder 15: June 2001 – August 2001
- Folder 16: September 2001 – December 2001

### **Box 2**

- Folder 17: January 2002 – February 2002
- Folder 18: March 2002 – April 2002
- Folder 19: May 2002 – June 2002
- Folder 20: July 2002 – August 2002
- Folder 21: September 2002 – December 2002
- Folder 22: January 2003 – February 2003
- Folder 23: March 2003 – April 2003
- Folder 24: May 2003 – June 2003
- Folder 25: July 2003 – September 2003
- Folder 26: October 2003 – November 2003
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### **Box 3**

- Folder 28: January 2004
- Folder 29: February 2004
- Folder 30: March 2004 – April 2004
- Folder 31: May 2004 – September 2004
- Folder 32: October 2004 – December 2004

## **Box 4**

- Folder 33: January 2005 – June 2005
- Folder 34: July 2005 – December 2005
- Folder 35: 2006
- Folder 36: 2007
- Folder 37: 2008
- Folder 38: 2009
- Folder 39: Undated

## **Box 5**

### **Series B: Research Notes, 1538-2010**

#### *Sub-series 1: Joshua Slocum Research Notes, 1871-2009*

- Folder 1: Transcriptions and photocopies of Joshua Slocum's letters, 1885-1906
- Folder 2: Photocopies of Joshua Slocum documents, 1871-1920
- Folder 3: Joshua Slocum's editorial comments for *Sailing Alone*, 1899
- Folder 4: Joshua Slocum's map of South America, 1905
- Folder 5: Joshua Slocum at the Pan-American Exposition, 1900-1954
- Folder 6: Documentation related to Joshua Slocum's centennial, 1995
- Folder 7: Joshua Slocum proclamations, 1995-2000
- Folder 8: "Books by and about Joshua Slocum," 1999
- Folder 9: Printed material and articles related to Joshua Slocum, 1896-2002
- Folder 10: Scrapbook compiled on Joshua Slocum, 1994-2002
- Folder 11: Slocum family correspondence, 1967
- Folder 12: Research notes and documentation related to Victor Slocum, 1872-1949
- Folder 13: Research notes and documentation related to Virginia Slocum, 1986-2009
- Folder 14: Documentation related to Virginia Slocum's memorial, 2002
- Folder 15: Printed material and articles related to Henrietta Slocum, 1986
- Folder 16: Documentation related to Slocum memorials, 2003

#### *Sub-series 2: Walter Teller Research Notes and Documentation, 1942-1993*

- Folder 1: Photocopies and transcriptions Teller's general correspondence, 1951-1972
- Folder 2: Photocopies of letters between Teller and Grace Brown, 1952-1956
- Folder 3: Transcriptions of letters between Teller and Grace Brown, 1952-1956
- Folder 4: Photocopies of letters between Teller and Grace Brown, undated
- Folder 5: Transcriptions of letters between Teller and Grace Brown, undated
- Folder 6: Selections of Teller's writings edited by William Howarth, 1942-1992
- Folder 7: Documentation related to Teller's life and career, 1975-1993

## **Box 6**

*Sub-series 3: Research and documentation related to Joshua Slocum's vessels, 1882-2007*

- Folder 1: Documentation related to the *Spray's* steering wheel, 2003-2007
- Folder 2: Painting of the *Spray* at Martha's Vineyard Cooperative Bank, 1998-1999
- Folder 3: Poetry inspired by Joshua Slocum and the *Spray*, 2002
- Folder 4: Research notes and documentation related to the ship *Liberdade*, 1995
- Folder 5: David Sinnett-Jones' voyage reports for his own *Liberdade* voyage, 2000
- Folder 6: Newspaper clippings documenting David Sinnett-Jones, 2000-2004
- Folder 7: Images of David Sinnett-Jones' *Liberdade*, 2003
- Folder 8: Newspaper articles documenting the ship *Northern Light*, 1882-1884
- Folder 9: Logbook entries from the steamer *Grant* regarding the *Northern Light*, 1882
- Folder 10: Research notes related to the ship *Benjamin Aymar*, 1938-1971
- Folder 11: Documentation on sloops and shallops, 1966
- Folder 12: Documentation on Slocum gliders 2002-2003

## **Box 7**

*Sub-series 4: Slocum Family Genealogy Notes, 1538-2005*

- Folder 1: Slocumbe family history compiled by Judy Slocum, 2003
- Folder 2: Origins of the Slocum surname, undated
- Folder 3: Documentation on the Slocum family coat of arms, 2000
- Folder 4: Copies of Slocumb family documents, 1806-2004
- Folder 5: Anthony Slocumbe genealogical notes, undated
- Folder 6: Giles Slocum genealogical notes, undated
- Folder 7: Hugh Slocumb genealogical notes, undated
- Folder 8: John Slocumb genealogical notes, undated
- Folder 9: John Slocum research notes and documentation, 1887-2002
- Folder 10: Phillippe Slocum genealogical notes, undated
- Folder 11: Philip H. Slocum genealogical notes, undated
- Folder 12: Simon Slocumbe genealogical notes, undated
- Folder 13: Frank Laffoley research notes and documentation, 1884-2003
- Folder 14: Genealogy worksheets for the Slocum/Guernsey/Hermanet line, 1999-2000
- Folder 15: Genealogy worksheets for the Jimerson/Dyer/Van Dame line, 1999-2000
- Folder 16: Genealogy sheets for Ansell/Fordham/Hawes/Decker/Angie line, 1999-2000
- Folder 17: Genealogy worksheets for the Maxim/Holland line, 1999-2000
- Folder 18: Slocum family trees and lineage lines, undated
- Folder 19: Slocum family trees and lineage lines, undated
- Folder 20: Ayshford family history compiled by Heather Ayshford, 2005
- Folder 21: Genealogical notes of related families, undated
- Folder 22: Devon (England) vital records relating to the Slocumbe family, 1538-1812



**Box 8**

- Folder 23: Documentation on the Slocumbe family in Devon (England), 1538-1812
- Folder 24: Documentation on the Slocumbe family in Devon (England), 1538-1812
- Folder 25: Slocum family Nova Scotia property records, 1838-1901
- Folder 26: Documentation related to Slocum family churches, 1971-1990
- Folder 27: Printed material and notes on Slocum family genealogy, 1882-2001

**Box 9**

*Sub-series 5: Slocum Family DNA Analysis, 2002-2010*

- Folder 1: Melville C. Brown DNA analysis, 2002-2010
- Folder 2: Richard Miller DNA analysis, 2002
- Folder 3: Keith Pumroy DNA analysis, 2003
- Folder 4: Bradley A. Slocum DNA analysis, 2006
- Folder 5: David Slocum DNA analysis, 2003
- Folder 6: Donn Slocum DNA analysis, 2002
- Folder 7: Douglas Slocumb DNA analysis, 2002-2006
- Folder 8: Frank Slocum Jr. DNA analysis, 2003
- Folder 9: Harvey C. "Skip" Slocum Jr. DNA analysis, 2002
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- Folder 15: Robert Slocum DNA analysis, 2002-2006
- Folder 16: Ronald Slocum DNA analysis, 2002-2006
- Folder 17: Russell H. Slocum DNA analysis, 2004-2006
- Folder 18: Ted C. Slocum DNA analysis, 2003-2006
- Folder 19: Randy Weeks DNA analysis, 2002
- Folder 20: Notes and documentation on Slocum family DNA analysis, 2002-2009

*Sub-series 6: Melville Brown Writings and Collected Materials, 1991-2005*

- Folder 1: *New England Ancestors* article on Slocum family DNA testing, 2002-2003
- Folder 2: Notes titled "The Slocums Before Captain Joshua Slocum and After," 2003
- Folder 3: Drafts of *Captain Joshua Slocum Family: Before and After*, 2003-2004
- Folder 4: Additional writings by Melville Brown, 2002-2005
- Folder 5: Style guides and abbreviations used by Brown for his writings, undated
- Folder 6: List of Melville Brown's professional contacts, undated
- Folder 7: List of books owned by the Slocum Society, 1991
- Folder 8: Brochures collected by Brown as part of his research, undated
- Folder 9: Maps, 2003

*Sub-series 7: Nova Scotia Trips, 2000-2008*

- Folder 1: Documentation related to a 2000 Slocum descendants Nova Scotia trip, 2000
- Folder 2: Documentation related to a 2001 Slocum descendants Nova Scotia trip, 2001
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- Folder 4: Documentation related to a 2005 Slocum descendants Nova Scotia trip, 2005
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## Subject Headings

Angie family--Genealogy  
 Ansell family--Genealogy  
 Ayshford, Heather  
 Ayshford family--Genealogy  
*Benjamin Aymar* (Ship)  
 Bromham family  
 Brown, Grace  
 Brown, Melville C.  
 Brown family  
 Chapple family  
 Decker family--Genealogy  
 Devon (England)  
 DNA-protein interactions--Testing  
 Downe family  
 Dyer family--Genealogy  
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 Fordham family--Genealogy  
 Fredrich, Leon  
 Genealogy  
 Genetic genealogy  
*Grant* (Steam ship)  
 Guernsey family--Genealogy  
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 Holland family--Genealogy  
 Jimerson family--Genealogy  
 Lancey family  
*Liberdade* (Ship)  
 Maxim family--Genealogy  
 Nova Scotia--Description and travel  
*Northern Light* (Ship)  
 Pan-American Exposition (1901 : Buffalo, N.Y.)  
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 Sinnett-Jones, David, 1930-2004  
 Skinner family  
 Slocum, Benjamin Aymar, 1873-1965  
 Slocum, Harvey C.  
 Slocum, Henrietta Miller, 1862-1952  
 Slocum, Joshua, 1844-1909  
 Slocum, Joshua, 1844-1909. Sailing alone around the world  
 Slocum, Joshua, 1844-1909--Centennial celebrations, etc.  
 Slocum, Joshua, 1844-1909--Monuments  
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Slocum, Victor, 1872-1949  
Slocum, Virginia Albertina, 1849-1884  
Slocum, Virginia Albertina, 1849-1884--Monuments  
Slocum family  
Slocum family--Genealogy  
Slocum family--Monuments  
Slocum Society  
*Spray* (Sloop)  
Teller, Walter Magnus  
Underwater gliders  
Van Dame family--Genealogy