

**Scott O'Dell papers, 1959-1978**  
**FLP.CLRC.ODELL**

**Finding aid prepared by Lindsay Friedman**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

March 30, 2012

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Free Library of Philadelphia: Children's Literature Research Collection  
1901 Vine Street  
Philadelphia, PA, 19103  
215-696-5370

## Table of Contents

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<u>Summary Information</u> .....	3
<u>Biographical/Historical note</u> .....	4
<u>Scope and Contents note</u> .....	4
<u>Arrangement note</u> .....	5
<u>Administrative Information</u> .....	5
<u>Related Materials</u> .....	5
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u> .....	6
<u>Collection Inventory</u> .....	7

## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Free Library of Philadelphia: Children's Literature Research Collection
<b>Creator</b>	O'Dell, Scott, 1898-1989
<b>Title</b>	Scott O'Dell papers
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1959-1978
<b>Extent</b>	0.95 Linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	Scott O'Dell (1898-1989) was a well-known author of historical fiction for children, most notably the Newbery award-winning <i>Island of the Blue Dolphins</i> (1960). This collection consists of a typescript for the book <i>Island of the Blue Dolphins</i> and related award ceremony materials.

### Preferred Citation note

[Description and date of item], [Box and folder number], Scott O'Dell papers, 1959-1978, Free Library of Philadelphia, Children's Literature Research Collection.

## Biographical/Historical note

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Scott O'Dell was originally born Odell Gabriel Scott on May 23, 1898 in Los Angeles, California. His father, Bennett Mason Scott, worked for the Union Pacific Railroad and the family frequently moved throughout Southern California during his childhood. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the Army during World War I. He then attended several universities including Occidental College, University of Wisconsin, and Stanford University. He worked for Paramount Pictures as a cameraman on the 1925 version of *Ben Hur*, shot in Rome, Italy. He stayed in Rome to study writing at the University of Rome La Sapienza. Upon returning to California he worked for the Los Angeles Times and the Los Angeles Mirror. He released his first novel for adults, *Woman of Spain: A Story of Old California*, in 1934. He finished two more novels and then became the book editor for the Los Angeles Daily News. A typesetter at the paper mistakenly transposed his name and O'Dell liked it so much that he had it legally changed.

He was convinced by his friend, the children's author Maud Lovelace, to turn his manuscript about the legend of "The Lost Woman of San Nicholas Island" into a book for children. Published in 1960, *Island of the Blue Dolphins* became a worldwide success and went on to win the Newbery Medal and was adapted into a motion picture. He continued writing historical fiction for children, winning the Newbery Honor Book for his next two novels, *The King's Fifth* (1966) and *The Black Pearl* (1967). In 1981, he established the Scott O'Dell Historical Fiction Award, which recognized outstanding works in historical fiction. He wrote twenty-five novels for children before passing away on October 15, 1989.

### Bibliography

*Children's Literature Review*, vol. 126.

*Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 52.

*Something About the Author*, vol. 60.

"Scott O'Dell," *Wikipedia*, accessed December 19, 2011, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott\\_O'Dell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott_O'Dell).

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## Scope and Contents note

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This collection consists of a typescript for the book *Island of the Blue Dolphins* and related award ceremony materials.

## Arrangement note

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The items in this collection are arranged in alphabetical order.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Free Library of Philadelphia: Children's Literature Research Collection

### Conditions Governing Access note

This collection is open to researchers by appointment. Please contact the Curator for information on access.

### Conditions Governing Use note

The right of access to material does not imply the right of publication. Permission for reprinting, reproduction, or extensive quotation from the rare books, manuscripts, prints, or drawings must be obtained through written application, stating the use to be made of the material. The reader bears the responsibility for any possible infringement of copyright laws in the publication of such material. A reproduction fee will be charged if the material is to be reproduced in a commercial publication.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Archival Materials note

University of Oregon: Scott O'Dell papers, 1966-1976, Ax 809.

University of Southern Mississippi: Scott O'Dell papers, 1969-1978, DG0743.

## Controlled Access Headings

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### Genre(s)

- Character dolls
- Invitations
- Typescripts

### Subject(s)

- Children's authors--20th century
- Children's literature--20th century

## Collection Inventory

*Island of the Blue Dolphins*, final draft, revised typescript 1959

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Text	1	1

### Scope and Contents note

The first page of this draft is manuscript, with the remainder typescript. Contains notes and corrections by O'Dell and editor.

Regina Medal Award program 1978

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Text	1	2

**Box**

2

Regina Medal Award papier-mache doll centerpiece 1978

### Scope and Contents note

The Regina Medal Award is administered by the Children's Library Services section of the Catholic Library Association and was awarded to Scott O'Dell in 1978. The papier-mache doll centerpiece was made to resemble the main character in *Island of Blue Dolphins*.

William Allen White Children's Book Award invitation, 2 sheets 31 October 1963

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	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Text	1	3

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### **Scope and Contents note**

The William Allen White Children's Book Award is administered by Emporia State University and was awarded to Scott O'Dell for *Island of the Blue Dolphins* in 1963. The verso of the invitation is a reproduction of the first page of the typescript draft. One copy of the invitation is autographed by Scott O'Dell.