

**SOUTHWESTERN WRITERS COLLECTION**  
**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS - ALBERT B. ALKEK LIBRARY**  
**TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY - SAN MARCOS**

**Rick Bass**  
**Papers, 1982 – 1994**

Collection 020

4.5 linear feet  
9 boxes plus oversize

**Acquisition:** Gifts donated by Rick Bass and Scott Slovic since 1991.

**Access:** Open for Research.

**Processed by:** Jennifer B. Patterson, September, 1994; Inventory revised by Brandy Harris, 2005

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Novelist, essayist, and short story writer Rick Bass was born March 7, 1958 in Fort Worth, Texas. He was raised in Houston and graduated with a B.S. in Geology from Utah State University in 1979. Employed as a petroleum geologist in Mississippi from 1979 to 1987, Bass has since written full time on environmental issues and the vanishing wilderness. Bass has been an active environmentalist and member of the Sierra Club, Montana Wilderness Association, Cabinet Resources Group, Round River Conservation Studies, and the Yaak Valley Forest Council. He regularly publishes articles in magazines such as *Field and Stream*, *Sports Afield*, *Gray's Sporting Journal*, *Outdoor Life*, and others. Bass and his wife Elizabeth moved to Montana's Yaak Valley in 1987, where Bass finds the isolation he requires to write.

Describing Bass's storytelling voice, Leigh Tillman Partington writes that Bass tells a story "true, strong, and intimate; the details of his language are lush and pure, providing just the right amount of landscape and inner turmoil. Above all, his stories are about precarious balances: between men and women, children and adults, friends, lovers, and between humans and the natural world. His language reflects that balance. Like Eudora Welty, to whom he is often compared, Bass plays close attention to inner and outer surfaces, watching where and how they meet, and he captures those meeting places on the page" (*Contemporary Southern Writers*, 1999).

### **SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE**

The Rick Bass papers are comprised of manuscripts, galley proofs, notes, clippings, correspondence, legal papers, photographs and artifacts, 1924 to the present, relating to Bass' career as a novelist. Series include Works, Clippings and Reviews, Writing Related Files, Environmental Concerns, General Correspondence, and Personal. The largest of these series is the first, Works, which is comprised mainly of photocopied pages from Bass' handwritten notebooks which serve as the forum for Bass' ideas and notes.

## SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

### **Series I: Works, 1984-1994, n.d., Bulk 1991-1994** **Boxes 1-6**

This series surveys Bass' works from his earliest published pieces to his more recent articles and stories. In this series are manuscripts for *The Watch*, *Oil Notes*, *The Ninemile Wolves*, *Winter: Notes from Montana*, as well as notes for *The Deer Pasture* and short stories published in *Platte River*. The series also contains numerous short stories and essays, research notes, journal notes, reviews, and interviews. Most of the non-fiction manuscripts relate in some way to Bass' intense relationship with nature and concern for the environment, although they also concern his writing career.

The bulk of this series is comprised of photocopied pages from the notebooks in which Bass does most of his writing, and also contains manuscript pages, typed drafts, computer disks, galley proofs, and published pieces, many of which are heavily annotated. Not all of the manuscripts are complete; many lack pages, while others contain only Bass' notes or are partially finished. It is important to note that the backs of his papers often contain notes to other manuscripts, correspondence, and other information, since Bass recycles paper by using both sides. Some notes are on scraps, and in one case, a note is written on a piece of bark. Sent to the Southwestern Writers Collection in small pieces at a time, the manuscripts have been arranged alphabetically by the processor.

### **Series II: Clippings and Reviews, 1987-1994** **Box 7**

Materials in this series include clippings and reviews regarding works published by Bass, and have been arranged chronologically.

### **Series III: Writing Related Files, 1982-1994, n.d., Bulk 1988-1994** **Boxes 7-8**

These files are comprised of editorial correspondence regarding Bass' writing and its publication, correspondence and ephemera related to author readings and book signings, course description and coursework related to fiction and non-fiction college writing courses taught by Bass, audiocassette tapes and a full transcript of an interview with Scott Slovic regarding Bass' writing career.

### **Series IV: Environmental Concerns, 1990-1994** **Box 8**

Flyers, clippings, and correspondence in this series include letters to and from Bass regarding environmental legislation and policy.

### **Series V: General Correspondence, 1987-1993, n.d.** **Boxes 8-9**

Subjects in this series include oil and mineral leases and real estate transactions made by Rick Bass (1987-1988), while later correspondence is more general in nature, not related specifically to works by Bass.

**Series VI: Personal, 1989, 1993, n.d.**

**Box 9**

This series is comprised of memorabilia such as dog medical records and hunting licenses, travel documents, childhood and adult photographs of Bass, family papers and news clippings.

**Series VII: Artifacts, n.d**

**Box 10**

This series includes personal effects of Bass such as a chainsaw blade, notes he wrote on a piece of tree bark, two Walkman radios, and two old license plates.

### Container List

**Box Folder**

**Series I: Works, 1984-1994, n.d., Bulk 1991-1994**

- |   |    |   |
|---|----|---|
| 1 | 1  | "The Afterlife," drafts, n.d.   |
|   | 2  | Alaska journal notes, 1991  |
|   | 3  | "Angel," drafts, 1991, n.d.   |
|   | 4  | <i>Audubon</i> , notes, 1994  |
|   | 5  | Barry Hannah, notes, 1993   |
|   | 6  | Bedichek, notes, 1993, n.d.   |
|   | 7  | Beloit, notes, 1993, n.d.   |
|   | 8  | "Caribou," typed draft, n.d.  |
|   | 9  | "Chances," draft, n.d.  |
|   | 10 | "Dark-Eyed Owl," third revision on floppy disk,<br>September 29, 1992                                       |
|   | 11 | "Deer Pasture," notes, 1991   |
|   | 12 | "A Dog in the Hand, and other pointers from the bird-dog<br>man of Texas," in <i>Esquire</i> , October 1989 |
|   | 13 | "Dog Poem," for Amy Hempel, n.d.  |
|   | 14 | "Earth Divers," first page of typed draft, May 1994   |
|   | 15 | "Ferns," draft, n.d.  |
|   | 16 | "Field Events," draft and notes, 1984   |
|   | 17 | "Field Stripping Arizona," in <i>The Discovery Channel<br/>Magazine</i> , June 1990                         |
|   | 18 | Fire story, notes, n.d.   |
|   | 19 | "First Snow, On the Road with Rick Bass," in <i>The<br/>Climbing Art</i> , Summer 1991                      |
|   | 20 | "Four Coyotes," in <i>Northern Lights</i>   |
|   | 21 | "Four Days," drafts, notes, and corrections, n.d.   |
|   | 22 | "Four Deer," drafts, 1993, n.d.   |
|   | 23 | "Grace," in <i>Gray's Sporting Journal</i> , Fall 1986  |
|   | 24 | Grant proposal, notes, n.d.   |
|   | 25 | "Green Valley," notes, drafts, 1994, n.d.   |
|   | 26 | "Grizzlies in Non-Fiction," draft, 1992   |
|   | 27 | Hawaii notes, "Paradise Rising," in <i>Traveler</i> , June 1993   |
| 2 | 1  | History of Rodney in "Fireflies," drafts, n.d.  |
|   | 2  | "Hounds"  |
|   | 3  | "Idaho," notes, 1992  |
|   | 4  | "In the Loyal Mountains," draft (1985), published article in<br><i>Southwest Review</i> , Summer 1990       |
|   | 5  | "India," notes, drafts, 1993, n.d.  |
|   | 6  | "The Indians," draft, n.d.  |

**Box Folder**

**Series I: Works, continued**

- 2 7 Interview with Doug Peacock, Jim Tolisan, and Dennis Sizemore, transcript, n.d.  
8 "Key West," notes, drafts, n.d.  
9 "Krapweed," notes, draft, n.d.  
10 "Mahatma Joe," notes, typed draft, 1993, n.d.  
11 McKibben, Bill, quote for his book *The Age of Missing Information*, n.d.  
12 "Memphis," typed draft, n.d.  
13 "Mississippi," in *The Cimarron Review*, June 1987  
14 "More Dennis Stories," notes, 1994  
15 *Myths of Bears*, typed draft, notes, n.d.  
16 "La Nalgai," notes, typed draft, 1988, n.d.
- Ninemile Wolves*, 1991-1992, n.d.
- 3 1 Notes and drafts, 1991, n.d.  
2 Edited typescript drafts (pgs. 3-90), n.d.  
3 Proof, 1992, n.d.
- 4 "Northern Rockies," notes, drafts, n.d.  
5 Notes for the Prade Ranch, n.d.
- Oil Notes*, 1988, 1991, n.d.
- 6 Typed draft, 1991  
7 Copy edited draft (pgs. 1-124), 1988  
8 Copy edited draft continued (pgs. 125-178 and illustrations)
- 4 1 "On Willow Creek," in L. A. Times Magazine  
2 "The Other Fort Worth Bases," drafts, n.d.  
3 "Out on the Wild Fringe," in *Audubon*, January-February 1994  
4 "Peacock" / "San Juans," notes, drafts, 1993-1994, n.d.  
5 "The Perfect Day," notes, drafts, 1993, n.d.  
6 Plans, notes, 1993, n.d.  
7 "Plimpton," draft, 1993  
8 "The Prisoners," drafts, 1994  
9 "Quanah," draft, notes, n.d.  
10 Quote for *A Hunter's Road* by Jim Fergus, 1992  
11 "The Rage of the Squat Kings," disk and drafts, 1992-1993

**Box Folder**

**Series I: Works, continued**

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 4 | 12 | "Records," unpublished draft, 1989   |
|   | 13 | Review of <i>Mao II</i> by Don DeLillo, 1991   |
|   | 14 | Review of <i>The Moon by Whale Light and Other Adventures Among Bats</i> by Diane Ackerman, 1991               |
|   | 15 | Review of <i>Our Happiness</i> by Tom Jenks in <i>The American Book Review</i> , December 1991 to January 1992 |
|   | 16 | Speech given at the Public Lands Forum on February 28, 1991 in Mesa, Arizona                                   |
|   | 17 | "Romania," notes, drafts, 1993, n.d.   |
| 5 | 1  | "Rust," draft, n.d.  |
|   | 2  | "Sea," notes, 1994   |
|   | 3  | Sierra article, draft, 1993  |
|   | 4  | "The Silent Language," drafts, 1993, n.d.  |
|   | 5  | "Stephanie," notes, n.d.   |
|   | 6  | "Swan Valley, Montana" draft, 1994   |
|   | 7  | "Swans," drafts, 1992, n.d.  |
|   | 8  | "Twin Grizzly Peak," early typed draft, n.d.   |
|   | 9  | Unidentified manuscripts and general notes, 1992-1994, n.d.  |
|   | 10 | "The Valley," draft, n.d.  |
|   | 11 | "Valley of the Crows"  |
|   | 12 | "The Wait," draft, n.d.  |
|   |    | <u><i>The Watch</i>, 1991, n.d.</u>  |
|   | 13 | Original publisher's draft, 1991   |
|   | 14 | Master's set, first pass, n.d.   |
| 6 | 1  | Master's set, second pass, n.d.  |
|   | 2  | Master's set, confirmation, n.d.   |
|   | 3  | "What Was Once Life," floppy disk  |
|   | 4  | "When a Publisher Dies," unfinished draft, n.d.  |
|   | 5  | "Where the Sea Used to Be," drafts, n.d.   |
|   | 6  | "The Windy Day," notes and published version in <i>The Quarterly</i> , Winter 1992                             |
|   | 7  | <i>Winter</i> , drafts, notes, n.d.  |
|   | 8  | "Wolves in Fiction," in <i>Northern Lights</i>   |
|   | 9  | "Woodthieves," notes, drafts, n.d.   |
|   | 10 | "Woods Where I Live," draft (n.d.) and published version in <i>Scholastic Scope</i> , January 14, 1994         |



**Box Folder**

**Series I: Works, continued**

6 11 "Writers at Work," notes, draft, n.d.

**Series II: Clippings and Reviews, 1987-1994**

7 1 Reviews of *The Watch*, *Winter: Notes from Montana*,  
and *Oil Notes* (1987-1991), includes an interview with  
Bass in *Kinesis* (1991)

2 Reviews of *Winter: Notes from Montana* and *The  
Ninemile Wolves*, 1992-1994

3 Undated reviews of *Oil Notes*, *Wild to the Heart*, *Winter:  
Notes from Montana*, and *The Ninemile Wolves*

**Series III: Writing Related Files, 1982-1994, n.d., Bulk 1988-1994**

4 Correspondence with publishers and universities related  
to Bass' writing, 1982, 1991-1994

5 Readings, booksignings, and other appearances, 1988-1989,  
1991-1993

6 Teaching (University of Montana), includes syllabi,  
students' manuscripts, memos, notes, 1992, n.d.

8 1 Interview of Bass by Scott Slovic, cassettes and draft of  
published piece, 1993

2 General Materials, includes receipts, notes, business cards,  
etc.

**Series IV: Environmental Concerns, 1990-1994**

3 Correspondence (to and from Bass), 1990-1994

4 Flyers, clippings, and other promotional material, 1991-  
1994

**Series V: General Correspondence, 1987-1993, n.d.**

5 Wittliff, Bill, 1991, n.d.

6 July through September, 1987

7 December 1987 through January 1988

9 1 1989-1993

**Box Folder**

**Series VI: Personal, 1989, 1993, n.d.**

9	2	Memorabilia, includes address book, dog's tag, hunting licenses, membership cards, insurance documents, notes, calendar, shopping list, etc.
	3	Travel, includes itineraries, guidebooks, maps, correspondence, 1993, n.d.
	4	Photographs, childhood (n.d.) and with wife (1989)
	5	Family papers, includes father's draft card, clippings of articles written by his father, receipts, etc.
	6	Clippings and articles
	7	General papers, University of Mississippi newsletters, financial documents, listing for Bass' ranch, miscellaneous documents
	8	Originals of photocopied clippings

**Series VII: Artifacts**

10	1	Chainsaw blade
	2-3	License plates
	4	Notes on tree bark
		Two Walkman radios, pens