



University  
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

**ISOBEL GRIFFIN**

BA (University of Victoria, 2016)

**“Caging the Seas: Cetacean Capture and Display at Marineland of the Pacific, 1954-1967”**

Department of History

Friday, July 27, 2018  
1:00 P.M.  
Clearihue Building  
Room B215

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Jason Colby, Department of History, University of Victoria (Supervisor)  
Dr. Richard Rajala, Department of History, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Nicholas Bradley, Department of English, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Stephen Lindsay, Department of Psychology, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the early years of marine mammal captivity at Marineland of the Pacific and its impacts on the oceanarium industry, cetacean science, and public perceptions of whales. Opening in 1954, Marineland was the first oceanarium on the Pacific coast of North America, the largest oceanarium in the world, and the lead institution in cetacean capture, entertainment, and marine mammal research. In 1957, Marineland captured and displayed the first pilot whale, "Bubbles," and ignited the whale capture industry that still exists sixty years later. Although often overlooked in scholarly work, Marineland developed innovative capture and display techniques while expanding animal husbandry knowledge. The park also revolutionized the marine mammalogy field by providing unprecedented opportunities for scientists to closely observe, study, and interact with live whales. Furthermore, Marineland's capture, display, and portrayal of pilot whales in popular media generated public empathy toward cetaceans and transformed public perceptions of the animals. Through examinations of scientific papers, popular publications, interviews, and the Kenneth S. Norris Papers from the University of California Santa Cruz, a collection containing Norris's personal scrapbooks, field notes, and unpublished research, this thesis will show that Marineland of the Pacific was the crucible of change for marine entertainment, cetacean research, and public perceptions of whales.