

Book Appraisal Tips

Scarcity rather than age is the key to higher value when determining the worth of used books. Many 18th century books are comparatively modest in value despite their age because of being in plentiful supply. These often include textbooks, Bibles, and religious tracts.

That said, many items may have significant sentimental value to the owners because of inscriptions, margin annotations, or genealogical vital records that have been written in the volume making them valuable mementos to their owners.

Condition is another key factor. Items in pristine condition with original dust jackets always fetch a higher price than those that are faded, foxed with age spots, dog-eared, and have loose bindings. In some instances, owners have decreased the value of their items by rebinding or improper storage in conditions that make the item vulnerable to mildew and insects.

Usually books **signed by the author** and those with limited print runs and interesting artwork, illustrations, or typography tend to fetch the highest prices. If you use an internet collectible books website to find value of comparable items, be sure to eliminate the outlier values (extremely high and extremely low) and average the mid-range values to come up with a realistic valuation of the comparable work.

Ex-library books are also problematic because of the accompanying labels, stampings, and markings that decrease collectible value to subsequent owners. In addition, the inexperienced shopper may be unfamiliar with reprints of valuable first edition books and be taken in by authentic looking reproductions of iconic titles distributed as souvenirs for a mass audience.

If you pay an appraiser to value your item, he or she will typically want digitized photos and author name, title, publisher, date of publication, condition, and a detailed description including any distinguishing features. Legitimate paid appraisers will not offer to buy your item because this represents a conflict of interest and is a breach of professional ethics. Public libraries do not typically provide book appraisal services.

Some websites where you might be able to research collectible books include:

Abebooks.com

Alibris.com

Biblio.com

Bookfinder.com

Powells.com

The website worldcat.org is not a sales or auction site, but it may be useful to distinguish various editions of popular books because it represents a mass library catalog with indications of which libraries throughout the world own certain books.

If you decide to donate non-collectible books to charitable organizations for a tax write-off, you might be guided in determining value by IRS Publication 561 "**Determining the Value of Donated Goods**" According to the Salvation Army's Donation Value Guide, the most that should be claimed as a deduction for a garden-variety hardback book is \$3 and for a paperback is \$2. Be sure to keep a receipt from the charity to document your donation. Alamance County Public Libraries will issue a receipt listing the number of various types of items donated, but not their estimated worth.

North Carolina Rare Book Dealers (some do appraisals)

Allington Antiquarian Books in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Phone: 336-414-0435, website: allingtonbooks.com

Armadillo Books in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Contact Lynn Roundtree at 919-419-9740. Fee varies for appraisal. Specializes in American history & literature; English history & literature; books & manuscripts

Frey Fine Books in Rougemont, North Carolina. Contact Chris Frey at 919-357-6818 or Chris@freyfinebooks.com. Website freyfinebooks.com

Pages Past Used & Rare Books in Greensboro, North Carolina Phone 336-574-1877; email: pagespastbooks@gmail.com; Specializes in North Carolina, Virginia, Civil War, Old Leather, Christianity, and Eastern and Western philosophy books

Rare Book Conservation and Repair

Etherington Conservation Services in Browns Summit, North Carolina; Phone: 1-800-444-7534; Website ecsconservation.com; Specializes in cleaning, repair, binding, mold-removal, deacidification and paper conservation

Bookbinding Services

Acme Binding in Browns Summit, North Carolina Phone: 336-931-0800; Website: acmebinding.com