

What Should I Do About My Books?

We are asked that question on a regular basis. We can help.

Whether you have a wall of books or rooms full, determining relative value is extremely difficult for a nonprofessional. We often find that a decision is forced upon clients when they are settling an estate because books are considered a small part of the larger picture. In many instances books may have a much higher value than was expected. If you have your books evaluated before the estate settlement process, you can save time and energy by having a plan in place and knowing what you own. At Artisan Books we have formalized that process into a service we call Library Assessment.

How Does A Library Assessment Work?

We start with an initial consultation via telephone or an on-site visit. This is done at no cost to the client. When we have a sense of the extent of the collection, we prepare an estimate of the work necessary to identify and evaluate significant books in the collection. Once a contract is signed we will schedule an on-site visit. At the conclusion of our research, we deliver an itemized inventory of the significant books in the collection and an assessment report.

Why Should I Have A Library Assessment Completed?

Books accumulate over a lifetime and many houses are filled with books from multiple generations. During personal library assessments we often find books of considerable value that have languished for years on the shelf and have become a part of the decorative element of a home. The books may have been collected by an earlier generation, but current generations have no interest in the subject or even in books. High value books that have no sentimental or family history could be sold, possibly averting a tax burden that comes with settling an estate. Some of the hidden gems we have discovered have paid for home improvements, property taxes, or other things of pressing interest to the owner.

I recently evaluated a collection of over one thousand books in a client's apartment that she had accumulated over the years. Books that she read recently and books passed down within her family lined the shelves. When it came to the final assessment, she had over \$175,000 in retail value sitting on those shelves. She is now deciding which books to pass on to family members, others she might sell when the mood strikes, and which ones she just can't live without. Either way, it has helped in her estate planning process.

What it really comes down to is peace of mind. Having an assessment conducted prior to settling an estate gives the owner an opportunity to make strategic decisions regarding his or her books and their dispersal. They can take the time to contemplate what should happen rather than what has to happen.

Why Should I Have Artisan Books Conduct The Library Assessment?

With over ten years of experience in the field of rare books, we have access to databases and resources available only to members of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America (ABAA) and the International League of Booksellers (ILAB). Artisan Books sells internationally to individual clients and institutions via our catalogues, websites, and network of rare book dealers and exhibit regularly at international rare book fairs in Boston and New York.

What Is The Final Product Of The Library Assessment?

After the site visit we will conduct research on values determined from online sources, auction records and consultation with fellow dealers. This research will culminate in an inventory by author and title with the estimated retail price of each volume as of the date the report was prepared. A written report will accompany the inventory that separates the books into categories as to value and collectability with advice on how to proceed with placing those books that the client wishes to donate, give to family members, or sell.

What Does A Library Assessment Cost?

We are pleased to offer quotations to assess book collections, tailored to meet your needs, and charge on a per diem basis plus travel expenses to and from the collection. A final inventory and assessment report will be submitted within thirty days of the site visit. A deposit of 25% is required once the contract is signed. A second payment of 25% is due once the site visit is complete. The remaining balance and travel expense reimbursement is due upon receipt of the inventory and assessment report.

What Is the Next Step In Conducting A Library Assessment?

If this sounds like a service that would help you or your family, please call us at 207.734.6852 and we can provide greater detail on our process and the time frame involved.

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Helping clients build and maintain their libraries

