



PHOTO: BRIAN PATRICK

Kurt Gippert, Bookseller

Homeward Bound

A CHICAGO SPECIALTY BOOKSELLER SHARES
INSIGHTS ON RARE BOOK SELLING



BOOKS SIT ON SHELVES or are packed away in attics for long periods of time—until something changes. It could be a relocation, a death in the family, or just an effort to downsize. The question becomes, then, what to do with them, and do they hold any intrinsic value? Here are insights into how I find and sell rare books.


The special items that I stock are acquired from numerous sources. These include private collections, estates, family libraries, and the occasional auction. You could have something that I might be interested in purchasing for resale—and you may do much better with a specialist than with an auction house that sells in countless categories and may not have a book specialist on staff.

As a specialty bookseller, I am interested in acquiring unusual or uncommon books, historic autographs, pre-1900 maps, original journals and manuscripts, early photographs, and ephemera. While my primary focus is antiquarian books and rare books on American history, travel, exploration, and Native American history, I also handle classics of literature and more modern collectible authors, especially signed and special limited editions. However, if you need a book appraiser for estate purposes, I do not perform that service at this time, but can refer you to someone who does.

DO YOUR BOOKS HAVE VALUE?

Even with a large inventory, I am selective in purchases, and am not a general used bookstore that offers \$5 and \$10 paperbacks or used books. I must see books prior to purchasing them, and do not purchase over the phone or unseen. There are too many variables regarding condition, all of which can raise or lower the interest and hence the value of an item. Autographed material has to be verified and authenticated.

One way to conveniently show me your books is to send photographs by email. Taking a photograph of 10-15 books together on the shelf is often sufficient to determine if they warrant further inspection. Use plenty of lighting when photographing so that I can read the author and title information on the spine, and to get a general idea of the condition. Lists of books can be useful, but photographs are better.

Once I view photographs, if there is enough potential in the collection and the collection is sizable, I will schedule an on-site visit. If there are only a few items, you may have to bring them in, or mail them to me. To get a better idea about the items I offer and may be interested in, visit my website at www.kurtgippert.com. 

Kurt Gippert has been in the book business since 1990 and is a long-time member of the Antiquarian Bookseller's Association of America. He has 50,000 mostly collectible books and items in stock. Kurt Gippert Bookseller is located at 1757 N. Kimball Ave. in Chicago. Visits are available by-appointment at his bookstore on the Northwest Side of Chicago, about 10 minutes off I90/94. There is free parking in a secure parking lot. If you are interested in viewing Kurt Gippert's current inventory in person, or wish to offer something to sell, call him at 773-583-7613, or email to: books@kurtgippert.com.