

## **Bluebird Books**

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## How I Go About Buying Books

I am often asked “where do you find your books?” Indeed, this is a key to my used, antiquarian bookselling business. If I somehow manage to acquire a first edition of a collectible book, such as Margaret Mitchell’s famous “Gone with the Wind”, I will photograph it, describe it and post it to my website. If it sells (which books such as this always will) I can’t just go down to the used book wholesaler and get another copy. No, these sorts of items must be hunted down.

The best source for me are people who find themselves with books that they need to be rid of. This may be a handful of books, or an entire library. Reasons for needing to be rid of the books may range from downsizing a household, moving from a house to an apartment, or, sadly, due to the death of a loved one who happens to have been a lover of used and rare books. In such cases, I am called in to help out. I will make a “house call”: I’ll drive to the location where the books are located, take a careful look at them, and if I can use them, I will make the fairest, most generous offer that I feel I can make (see “OOPS”, below\*). If my offer is accepted, I will write a check on the spot, then box the books up and haul them away.

A challenge for me is getting people such as I’ve described above to contact me in the first place. I am interested in helping people who want to sell their old, antique books in the Denver and Front Range areas of Colorado. So, I have tried quite hard to find ways for them to “find me” on the internet. Frankly, this article was partly written as a way of enticing sellers to contact me.

Owners of brick and mortar used book stores often tell me that they are inundated by people wishing to sell their used books. They have such an oversupply of possible books to purchase that they often must decline to even look at them. I, on the other hand, am an internet-based bookseller selling books out of my home in Littleton, Colorado. I do not get approached as often as I’d like by people who wish to sell their used books in the Denver area.

So I have been doing this for some time and have had some interesting house calls. I remember one in particular that sticks out: The man who wanted me to buy his books just couldn’t cogently tell me how he ended up with them. The book plates in some of the books came from a prominent Denver-area family, but the seller couldn’t tell me anything about that family or how he acquired them. As you might have guessed, I left that house call empty handed, and glad of it.

*“Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all.”—Henry David Thoreau*

I've experienced:

- dogs sniffing me
- kids howling and crying
- really beat-up, average books in really pretty awful condition
- dark, dingy rooms (I always try to remember to bring along a flashlight) and other less-than-ideal conditions. One of the most baffling scenarios is to go on a call, have the owner eagerly show the books to me, then after some time has gone by, announce that the books aren't really for sale after all. I can't understand this one, as I always try to make it crystal clear as to why I'm visiting. But mostly, I have the chance to meet very nice people who share their love of books with me.

So if you'd like me to take a look at your books, please contact me, Eric Mayer, at 303-912-4559 or by email at [books@bluebirdbooks.com](mailto:books@bluebirdbooks.com). I will make an appointment with you if I think I can use your books, and will come to your location, as stated above.

More details on this can be found on my website at this link:

<http://www.bluebirdbooks.com/Ibuybooks>

\*Oh, and that OOPS that I mentioned. As I said, I always try to pay as generously as possible for the books. Realizing that I can't pay "retail", I nevertheless try to pay as much as I possibly can. This has resulted in referrals from sellers who tell their friends to contact me. BUT, sometimes I goof up and pay way too much. All I can do in these cases is to try to at least get my money back and sell the books for approximately what I paid for them.

--Eric Mayer