

Antiquarian on eBay——Huh??

[postinggranny \(0\)](#) [\(view author's auctions\)](#)

12/06/03 1:59 PM

Perhaps some of those who are book dealers could help me out on this one. I don't consider a book published in the 40's as being antiquarian. Personally, I only use the antiquarian category if I have a book published before 1910. I guess I am confused about just what the category should be used for. I'm from the 40's and I am neither old nor rare!

[zwish \(0\)](#) [\(view author's auctions\)](#)

12/06/03 2:03 PM (# 1 of 32)

Blame it on the eBay bonehead who decided 'antiquarian' and 'collectible' are synonymous in the book world.....

[zwish \(0\)](#) [\(view author's auctions\)](#)

12/06/03 2:06 PM (# 2 of 32)

BTW, books printed before 1910 are not antiquarian unless they're maybe 150 years before 1910.

[fine.books \(743\)](#) [\(view author's auctions\)](#)

12/06/03 2:06 PM (# 3 of 32)

Or blame it on the ABAA, who also agree that a book from the 1940s *can* be an antiquarian book.

By the way, what's special about the year 1910?

[caro*mormorio \(0\)](#) [\(view author's auctions\)](#)

12/06/03 2:08 PM (# 4 of 32)

I remember reading a thread on this topic. It should be that the word "antiquarian" would give a clue in itself.

I would never refer to my parents who were born in first third of the 20th century as "antiquarian", so it wouldn't make sense to call a book of the same age that!

[fine.books \(743\)](#) [\(view author's auctions\)](#)

12/06/03 2:09 PM (# 5 of 32)

zwish: 'Zactly. The Old School, Dyed-In-The-Wool Traditionalist, no-longer-even-remembered-let-alone-used definition is 1750.

[lludwig \(4591\)](#) [\(view author's auctions\)](#)

12/06/03 2:19 PM (# 6 of 32)

fine.books Thanks for the date.

[fine.books \(743\)](#) [\(view author's auctions\)](#)

12/06/03 2:23 PM (# 7 of 32)

lludwig: it's an out-of-date date, just as the word, "antique," for furniture no longer is assumed to mean, "predating the Industrial Revolution."

[postinggranny \(0\)](#) [\(view author's auctions\)](#)

12/06/03 2:28 PM (# 8 of 32)

There's really nothing special about 1910, just a cut off I made for myself. I don't sell anything very valuable,

and the “old” books I do sell usually fit better into other categories.
I think (and I could be wrong), that the U.S. customs defines antique as anything over 100 years old.

[lludwig \(4591 \)](#)([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 2:29 PM (# 9 of 32)

fine.books I like knowing the original meaning/dates of such “book things”.

[postinggranny \(0 \)](#)([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 2:36 PM (# 10 of 32)

Fine.books current listings would be a good example of what serious book dealers consider antiquarian then. Very little of that caliber on eBay. I think I will just forget about the antiquarian category. It would seem that antiquarian should be a sub category of collectible??

Hummm.

[boodust \(0 \)](#)([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 2:48 PM (# 11 of 32)

Aye, but we are 100 years past those people (long dead) who established and favored 1750 as the start of antiquarian. The years move on....

Anything nineteenth century may now be considered antiquarian...and as far as the general trade goes a nice Edwardian binding may be called antiquarian...these days... there is nobody here who is still existng in 1910 (they may wish they were ...and they may wish that the rest of we Barbarians did not exist).... and as King John was to Shakespeare , so George Washington is to us... it is now old history - it is the past - it is antiquarian - no matter what the so-called purists may claim... (Fielding & Sterne & Bewick were to Orcutt and Newton as Wharton and Twain and Henry James & Walter Crane are to us)

They are living in the past who wish to have such rigid and unchanging definitions... and they are neglecting one major truth...the inexorable progression of time... (Those living in 1750 would not even have gotten into such a discussion.... and to them 1750 *was* the modern world...) I have to chuckle at historians who consistently *still* consider the 18th century as the beginning of the modern world... when , in fact the modern world has left them and the 18th century so far behind in the dust...

[postinggranny \(0 \)](#)([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 2:53 PM (# 12 of 32)

Howdy, Boo. Good point. Time marches on.

[psthomas \(918 \)](#)([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 4:22 PM (# 13 of 32)

I've been using the Antiquarian & Collectible >> First Editions catagory for nearly anything — fiction, non-fiction, signed and unsigned. If it is the only “first editions” catagory on ebay, and if that's where folks look for firsts, than that's where they're going. I would put a Stephen King first in there automatically — in hopes of achieving a broader audience — rather than pigeon-holing the book with a “horror” or “science fiction” label.

By the by, one of my primary reasons for doing this is the supper slicing and dicing of catagories by ebay. Sure, lots of catagories *might* have a benefit, but there used to be some utility to general catagories like “mystery >> detective” ...without having to choose between “short stories”, “women sleuths”, and “other”. When your books are constantly ending up in “other”, you know ebay has gone way too far.

[zwish \(0 \)](#)([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 4:32 PM (# 14 of 32)

Me too.....

[rickrussell \(1995\)](#) (view author's auctions)

12/06/03 4:36 PM (# 15 of 32)

Antiquarian does not quite equate to "antique". In point of fact it was originally coined to be synonymous with "out of print". In other words a book for which a new copy was not being produced. This created a different market. A book that you cannot buy or order in a new bookstore. It existed, but was not being produced. Now, take an example. You can buy a new copy of Edgar Allen Poe's Tales. You cannot buy a new copy of it with Henry Clarke's illustrations, but you can with Rackham's; therefore Henry Clarke's illustrations in Tales is antiquarian, Rackham's are not. Poe's "tales" are also, not. Now, there are many books that were out of print for many years and reprinted. The lag time creating a book that is and is not antiquarian. Thus this lag made, for example, the Tauchnitz edition of Poe "antiquarian" for a while and then not antiquarian. Which didn't make much sense so, once "antiquarian", always so, based on the edition. Once it became based on the edition, all editions that had been superceded became antiquarian, and so on, until the term, like "first edition", lost all meaning, and it has come to mean,merely, "collectible".

[lludwig \(4591\)](#) (view author's auctions)

12/06/03 5:24 PM (# 16 of 32)

rickrussell - Thanks! That was my general impression of what it meant and how it evolved.

[procrastinator \(0\)](#) (view author's auctions)

12/06/03 5:26 PM (# 17 of 32)

Beats the old "rare" category.

[fine.books \(743\)](#) (view author's auctions)

12/06/03 5:35 PM (# 18 of 32)

Well, in point of fact, it was, "coined," in 1641, according to the OED, and was intended to describe, "one attached to the practises of antiquity." Further along those lines, the word began appearing in booksellers' catalogues about the same time the Rotary Press was invented, to describe books printed on standing planchet presses - denoting the difference between the two technologies - one "modern" and the other "antiquarian." *The Book Collector* has, over the last fifty years or so, run numerous informative articles on the subject.

In point of personal observation: there's nothing wrong with breaking with tradition; there's everything wrong in scorning that tradition, and in calling it names. Any bookseller who doesn't believe that he or she is standing on the broad shoulders of those who came before, is fooling himself.

[boodust \(0\)](#) (view author's auctions)

12/06/03 5:37 PM (# 19 of 32)

In the OED **Antiquarian** ..."of or connected with the study of antiquities" and has a reference of usage from Ducarel In *Philosophical Transactions LXI*(1771).

The OED also indicates its interchangeability with **antiquary**

It also has the word **Antiquitarian** One attached to the practices or opinions of antiquity. (used in 1641 by Milton)

I see the word *antiquarian* as being perfectly suited for the trade in general and have always considered myself as being in the used and antiquarian trade. Like wise I consider myself an antiquary of sorts, as opposed to those who might be considered antiquitarians....

But I do not see the word antiquarian as being synonymous with out of print.

An old copy of Goldman's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (possibly still the best despite its antiquated English) remains an antiquarian copy (especially if it is the rare 1567 edition). This does not change even though it was reissued by MacMillan in 1965 (Pretending the MacMillan edition is still in print, just for the sake of discussion). The 1965 edition meant it was not out of print, but it does not mean that the old copies ceased to be antiquarian copies. The 1965 edition is certainly not an antiquarian copy.

[boodust \(0\)](#) ([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 6:14 PM (# 20 of 32)

In point of fact ... the word which is referred to as used in 1641 is antiquitarian.... not *antiquarian*...

I see nobody in this thread scorning tradition, which is no holy grail anyway.... (But the flaunting of tradition is frequently used as a shibboleth to impress or silence others or keep them from speaking... not that anyone here is doing that...) but I do see some ribbery and frustration over closed minds.

I have reveled in the antiquarian trade for a little over thirty years and have a great respect for my predecessors. It is the blind adhesion to outdated and no longer viable categorization and thinking, especially when that usage and thinking were merely handy devices in the first place. When a device or tool or a way of thinking ceases to have relevancy, why then a good bookman ceases to use them without feeling that his credentials as an antiquary are in jeopardy.

[rickrussell \(1995\)](#) ([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 6:46 PM (# 21 of 32)

Antiquarian as it relates to books does not follow the strict definition "One attached to the practices or opinions of antiquity." fine books is quite right in that it once related to technological differences in production. However, I'll stand by my entomology as it relates to the question. It's not original but comes from George Redway, a publisher/bookseller around the turn of the twentieth century. the Bookman's Glossary defines "antiquarian bookseller" as "A name sometimes applied to a dealer in old, rare and second-hand books." The term has been appropriated from the scholarly term above and applied to books, originally as OP, and modified from there. The problem stated by boodust has modified it in the modern age and it is used rather sloppily today. The original distinction Redway was drawing was economic, as it pertained to the business of bookselling, not the scholarly applications of the term, in which the study of Greek statues could be termed an antiquarian pursuit.

[firstcreator.ltd \(190\)](#) ([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 6:59 PM (# 22 of 32)

EBay would do well to change the categories to more properly reflect what is being sold. Of course the last time they tried, Antiquarian Books ended up under Entertainment.

But how about the "Books, Manuscripts" category under Antiques? Personally, I think it's just a way for EBay to collect double fees.

[bookspid \(0\)](#) ([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 7:34 PM (# 23 of 32)

I realize that this is a digression from the topic of this thread, but firstcreator.ltd above got it right. I don't think eBay is stupid or uncaring about their categories (as we would like to believe). The present conglomeration of categories makes it conducive to listing in multiple categories out of self defense. I have seen many a Stephen King listed in both First Edition and Horror, just as an example. EBay makes most of its money from listing fees, not final value fees, so a well-structured category list would eliminate the need to double list, thus

reducing the listing fees.

I'm done, so you can continue the antiquarian discussion. Being about to hit 60, I think I now fall into that category myself, a la boodust's comments.

[psthomas \(918\)](#) [\(view author's auctions\)](#)

12/06/03 7:57 PM (# 24 of 32)

bookspid — I agree they make their money from listing fees, and that that encouraging two category listings is the ticket for them. But, they have been fairly consistently pathetic about categories from the beginning. Ebay has a long history of ignoring input from book people and adding categories in a willy-nilly fashion — often to the detriment of what the categories ought to be (and to the detriment of listers). Even now some scrutiny of the categories would probably turn up all kinds of potential improvements which could be recommended by us and which would be ignored by ebay.

[bookspid \(0\)](#) [\(view author's auctions\)](#)

12/06/03 8:08 PM (# 25 of 32)

psthomas: I still don't think it's stupidity. I think it's a matter of the category people arguing with the accounting people and losing :)

The more confusing the categories, the more likely sellers are to list in more than one. It's the same thinking that sets the listing fee breakpoints at \$9.99, \$24.99, etc., knowing that most newbies (and even some oldbies) are going to list at \$10, \$25, etc. and pay the extra fee without knowing it.

(Now, I've really botched this thread - sorry.)

[boodust \(0\)](#) [\(view author's auctions\)](#)

12/06/03 9:10 PM (# 26 of 32)

Rick said: "*Antiquarian as it relates to books does not follow the strict definition "One attached to the practices or opinions of antiquity."*

You are quite right, as the definition which you cite above is for the word **antiquitarian**. not antiquarian.... (see my post above where I cite the OED definition of "antiquarian" and "antiquitarian") as we are dealing in old books, ergo it is quite right to apply the word antiquarian to the collecting, selling and researching of old books. But it does not connote or have any meaning as to a book's out-of-printness.

As to technological differences... again time marches on. Books were, indeed printed in a different manner at the end of the 19th century than they were in the beginning. They are printed now in ways different from the end of the nineteenth century. As to applying a rule of technological advance for a criterion for the use of antiquarian...well every exception disproves the rule.... so are we to say, using the technology stance that a person who used an old hand letter press in 1975 to print up a small batch of pretty poetry was printing an antiquarian book? I think not. His book might be considered antiquarian in another 100 years...

The word antiquarian connotes age and the study of items of age... and is indeed properly applied to books old and hoary... but I think, really we are all in agreement basically... there are antiquarian book dealers, properly called so, and some of whom are antiquaries and some of are present here in this forum.

And I think there is at least one *antiquitarian* among us.

Just as an addendum I have in front of me a book (actually a two volume set) which, by today's light may be considered antiquarian ... I'm going to give the entire title page, because...oh just because it is an interesting title page, rubricated...

or an

Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences;

*Containing an Explication of the Terms,
and an Account of the Things Signified Thereby,
in the Several Arts, Both Liberal and Mechanical;
and the Several Sciences, Human and Divine:*

*The figures, Kinds, Properties, Productions,
Preparations,
and Uses of Things
Natural and Artificial:*

The Rise , Progress , and State of Things

Ecclesiatical, Ciivil, Military, and Commercial:

With the Several Systems , Sects, Opinions &c.

among

*Philosophers, Divines, Mathemeticians,
Physicians, Antiquaries, Critics &c.*

*The Whole Intended as a Course
of Ancient and Modern Learning.*

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Journals, Memoirs, Transactions, Ephemerides, &c.
in Several Languages.*

BY E. CHAMBERS. F.R.S.

The Fifth Edition

LONDON

Printed for D. Midwinter, W. Innys, C. Rivington, A. Ward, J. & P. Knapton, E. Symon, S. Birt, D. Browne, T.

Phew!

These are mammoth fat folios.

For antiquary it has the following entry :

“*ANTIQUARY, ANTIQUARIUS* , A person who studies and searches after monuments and remains of the ancients; as, old medals, old books, statues, sculptures, and inscriptions; and , in general , all curious pieces that may afford any light into antiquity.

“Formerly there were several other kinds of antiquaries. The librarii or copists, ie: those who transcribed in fair legible characters what had been before written in notes were called this.

In the chief cities of Greece and Italy, there were other persons of distinction, called antiquaries, whose business it was to shew strangers the antiquities of a place, to explain the ancient inscriptions, and to give them the assistance they could in the way of learning.

“ ANTIQUE is sometimes contradistinguished from *ancient* which denotes a lesser degree of antiquity when the art was not in its utmost purity....”

There are page after page after page on books, the book trade, publishing and libraies... a great list of the kinds of books , which if I find time I will copy... yes I'll do that as there are some great entries Fulgural Books, Fatal Books, Black Books... but not now...

A Veritable wealth of information on books... but no mention made of collecting...and there are libraries and literati...but no heading is made for literature....

And there is no heading for “antiquarian in this 1741 set

For most of us these great old books may be considered antiquarian.... for thir author they were the height of modernity

enou'

[boodust \(0\)](#)([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 9:13 PM (# 27 of 32)

Volume II was released in 1743.

[joefunsmith \(396\)](#)([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 11:19 PM (# 28 of 32)

Why o' why am I always compelled to add my two cents? Actually as verbose as I usually get, I guess its usually two bits.

I think antiquarian books are like porn... I know them when I see them. That said, here are the loose guidelines I would use.

I don't think whether or not the title is currently being published or not, it's the date MY copy was published that matters. Certainly, if I had a Gutenberg Bible, I would list it under Antiquarian even though I can walk down to Borders and get a copy that still smells like fresh ink. Actually, I would probably use one of the big old-school auction houses for something that rare, but I think you get the idea.

Any book that was published using relatively modern methods and materials, I would not list there. In the case of books using time-tested methods and material such as high-quality leather-bound special editions ala Easton Press, I would base my decision on age and rarity. Anything out-of-print, high quality, and 50 years old or older would be listed as Antiquarian.

Anything published before the 20th century... automatic.

Between 1901 and 1960's, I would depend on andale research to guide me for the most part. I have some 60's book club editions that I will probably list there.

Ciao!

[ubikuitous \(0\)](#)([view author's auctions](#))

12/06/03 11:29 PM (# 29 of 32)

In my shop, any pb older than 1969 gets shelved in the "vintage" category... (assuming it has some 'kitsch' appeal!)

[mrs_beas \(1\)](#)([view author's auctions](#))

12/07/03 12:39 AM (# 30 of 32)

In researching some common mid to late 1990's children's books, I was suprised to see several of each of the 4 books I searched listed in the antiquarian category. Most of those were not 1st editions. The only thing other than ignorance that I could figure out why they did this was because of ebay's lack of categories, other than OTHER to categorize books in.

Murphy's law for me this week has been, Why is it that all the books I try to list don't fit in any of the sub-categories, except for "other" as offered by Ebay?

[ubikuitous \(0\)](#)([view author's auctions](#))

12/07/03 12:45 AM (# 31 of 32)

other = ubiquitous

[lludwig \(4591\)](#) (view author's auctions)

12/07/03 8:12 AM (# 32 of 32)

Thanks for all the information! Made for great reading early this morning. It is nice to read all the assorted tidbits I've picked up in a more organized fashion. Best of all, of course, was learning even more about the subject!