

Valuable Book Group, LLC
Specialists in Rare and Antiquarian Golf Books
Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

Sign Here Please

How much value does the author's signature add to a golf book? In this newsletter we explore the question.

In general, a signed copy adds quite a bit to the value of the book. For purposes of our discussion we have ignored books that were issued in a signed state when printed. These are almost always limited editions. Included in this category are the myriad of modern signed slipcase editions and older volumes such as Robert Clark's *A Royal and Ancient Game* or Bobby Jones's *Down the Fairway*. We have excluded these because the value of the signature cannot be separated from the book since it was issued as such and it is relatively easy to determine their value by looking at their condition and at prices of recent sales.

A little background on how signed copies are often described will be helpful. There are many ways a signed copy can be described aside from purely indicating it is signed. An "Inscribed Copy" is one where the author has written a small inscription of note to an individual, often at their request. A subset of an inscribed copy is a "Presentation Copy" or one that was done as a gift by the author, often spontaneously. It is not always possible to tell the difference, and in our experience it doesn't really matter to the collector. Presentation copies with a demonstrated relationship between the author and the recipient (an "Association Copy") are indeed more valuable than those merely signed one after another by the author sitting a table at Barnes & Noble.

The prices indicated below are estimates of what a book signed by the author are worth, assuming at least good condition. Like the pricing of most items, the value of a golf book with a signature is determined by supply and demand. Palmer, Player, Nicklaus and Snead signed a lot of books, thus, although between them they have won 41 major championships, their signed books are not the most valuable.

One of the most valuable signed golf books we found in our research was by George Fullerton Carnegie whose *Golfiana or Niceties Connected with the Game of Golf*, third edition, published in 1842 sold for \$31,000 in 1998. Subsequent copies without Carnegie's signature sold for about \$5,000 less.

Similarly, a signed copy of Aleck Bauer's 1913 book *Hazards* sold for \$11,500 in 2009, \$2,000 more than an unsigned copy two years earlier. Our overall survey of the field shows that the rarest signatures are those of Alister Mackenzie, Jerome Travers, Aleck Bauer, James Braid and Walter Travis.

ESTIMATED VALUES OF SIGNED GOLF BOOKS

The estimates below are just that – very broad estimates. The intent of the classification below is to show the relative value of the signatures.

Less Than \$100

Arnold Palmer
Sam Snead
Jack Nicklaus
Gary Player

\$1,000 - \$2,000

Violet Flint
Robert Hunter
Bobby Jones
C.B. Macdonald
George Thomas
Harry Vardon

\$100-\$500

Tiger Woods
Ben Hogan
Bernard Darwin
Chick Evans
Henry Longhurst
Byron Nelson
Gene Sarazan
Herbert Warren Wind

\$2,000 - \$3,000

A.W. Tillinghast
Willie Park, Jr.
Ian Fleming (Goldfinger)
Horace Hutchinson

\$500-\$1000

Tommy Armour
James Barnes
Glenna Collette
Walter Hagen
Francis Ouimet
J.H. Taylor

More than \$3,000

Alister Mackenzie
Jerome Travers
Aleck Bauer
James Braid
Walter Travis

Although not the highest value signature, Bobby Jones' is very sought after. Jones signed books in several different forms. He often signed as "Robt T. Jones, Jr." but also sometimes as "Bob Jones" and for close acquaintances "Bob". His later signatures are a bit shaky due to his illness. It is best to be cautious when buying something with Jones' signature on it. Unless it is a signed limited edition (*Down the Fairway*), an association copy where you can clearly establish provenance, or have the signature authenticated, be cautious of forgeries. A progression of Jones' signatures are contained in Donovan & Jerris' *The Game of Golf and The Printed Word*.