

Thinking Of Selling Your Collection? Things To Consider

Sooner or later, many collectors are faced with either downsizing or selling their collection completely. There are a number of problems potential sellers face, more so if the collection numbers in the tens or hundreds of thousands.

Finding a buyer is the first hurdle. Probably the easiest way is to sell or consign the collection to the nearest club, and let them handle all the hassles as they break up the collection into lots and sell them off through their club auction. If the collection is on consignment, the seller will be collecting checks for many months to come. Another advantage is that this method normally brings the best price for your covers. Disadvantages are 1) the club is going to take a percentage of each sale (something like 15%), and this is the slowest method of disposing of a collection.

On the other hand, selling outright to an individual buyer is much quicker. If the seller is lucky, a buyer can be found locally, but chances are that's not going to be the case. Seller and buyer have to agree on a price, and that's where the seller usually goes into shock. I would guess that at least 90% of sellers overvalue their collections to begin with, and then there are other considerations...which the seller often has not considered.

For example, how are all those covers going to be given over to the buyer? If the buyer is within several hundred miles, he may simply rent a truck, drive over, and pick up the collection. Normally, though, the collection has to be shipped, which is expensive. Either way, that's money out of the buyer's pocket, and he's either going to build that into his stated buying price or deduct that cost from the agreed upon selling price. So, if the seller's collection is valued at \$10,000, and the shipping is going to run \$2,300, the seller is only going to get \$7,700.

And just prepping the collection for shipping can be time-consuming and laborious. The buyer is not going to want the albums or whatever he considers junk, so some covers may have to be culled out and all the pages have to be taken out and then boxed for mailing. For a large collection, we could be talking 50+ boxes. You can find any box size you want, by the way, by ordering from Uline (on the internet or from their 800 number). Lay out your pages as they would be in a box, and then just measure to see what box size you need. Using boxes that are all uniform in size has the double advantage of being easier for everyone to handle and costing less to ship because there is no wasted space. Once everything is boxed, the seller should then contact different shippers and compare prices.

Another pricing consideration is the makeup and condition of the collection. Which categories are represented, how many in each, how many struck, how many damaged? Does the collection total include dupes/trading stock. If so, how many? These are all questions that the buyer will want answered, and yet another reason why every collector should keep running tallies of all his or her categories.

What about the pages, themselves? If they're paper, they're basically a loss from the seller's perspective. There *is* a definite market for used paper pages, but it's negligible. If the pages are plastic, though, they're definitely worth something and should be negotiated with the buyer. The seller, after all, may have \$1000+ just in pages. If they were to be just 'thrown in' with the purchase of the collection, I would consider that a windfall for the buyer.