

# Items of Value, Inc.

A Full-Service Appraisal and Estate Sale Firm

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## **DR. JEROME C. FORD: APPRAISER**

### **Qualifications for appraising historical, autographed, and original documentary material**

Dr. Jerome C. Ford has been invited to authenticate and assign valuations for documents written by historical personages including Dwight Eisenhower for the Eisenhower Presidential Library, General Maxwell Taylor for the Defense University Library, autographed material for both sale and charitable donation including U.S. Presidents Washington/Adams/Jefferson/Harrison/Lincoln/Andrew Johnson/Cleveland, as well as Kennedy/Lyndon B. Johnson/Ford. He has done appraisals of photographs, albums, and other items signed by Presidents, baseball players, foreign diplomats, dignitaries, literary authors, and musicians. Dr. Ford has also done valuations of American 18th/19th century documents for donations to museums, including an 18th century medical prescription book donated to the Lyceum in Alexandria, Virginia; Civil War letters/diaries/medals/equipment donated to the Defense University Library at Fort McNair; and business ledgers, historical family documents, and photographs accessioned by the Maryland State Archives Special Collections (MSA-SC). His appraisal work has further included valuing 18th-19th century printed newspapers including one printed by Benjamin Franklin, printed American colonial currency, and printed pamphlets including an original copy of "Common Sense" by Thomas Paine.

In all such appraisals, Dr. Ford works with established rare document dealers and autograph dealers to confirm authenticity of material and signatures. Valuations are established by corroboration with dealers. For example, Dr. Ford confirmed the authenticity and assigned a value to an 1820s printed copy of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, which is a rare item printed by William J. Stone, that was found in an attic in Maryland. He has also done attribution handwriting analysis of documents signed by U.S. Presidents but with text written by other people.

Dr. Ford has researched and authenticated 18th-19th century wills, indentures, bills of sale, ships' papers, legal passes, and documents pertaining to import/export, war maneuvers, sales of slaves, slave manumission, poetry written in English/French/Spanish/German. Research has included tracing records of ship names/registries, papers for ports of call and quarantine, personal genealogies. In one case, the authenticity of a poem handwritten by a famous 19th century American writer found behind a desk drawer was determined not to be real. In another case, the authenticity of a letter supposed to be written by Susan B. Anthony was determined to be real.

One research project involved identifying the addressee and information value of a letter written in 1840 by the German composer Felix Mendelssohn. Another involved establishing both insurance

and donation values of two journals written by a Confederate soldier as well as sketches done by that soldier during the Civil War. For this appraisal, Dr. Ford established a “weighted value” per page, based on information value of each handwritten page and subject and quality of each sketch. This “weighting” procedure was also used to establish, as scientifically as possible, the value of notebooks written by General Maxwell Taylor during his Vietnam years and the value of a rare two-volume set of documents given by the “Citizens of France” to “the most shot-up American soldier of World War II”. Such appraisals are particularly important for clients making charitable donations of documentary material, where the appraisal is subject of IRS review.

Dr. Ford has also had the privilege to be invited to appraise the following:

- 18th century documents providing for the establishment of towns along the west side of the Connecticut River, now donated to the Vermont Historical Society
- ship’s log for the ship Egina’s voyage around the world in 1859-60
- all primary source material used by Charles Barton in writing his book “Howard Hughes and His Flying Boat”, now donated to the Evergreen Aviation Museum in Oregon