

# Resources and Tips for Ticknor Award Entrants

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## Why should you enter the competition? Do you ever ask yourself:

Why do I collect what I collect?

What is the scope of my collection?

What are my present and future goals?

How can I best explain to others why it means so much to me?

Preparing an entry for the George and Anna Eliot Ticknor Collecting Prize is an opportunity to answer those questions for yourself, share the answers with others, and maybe win an award. Even if you don't plan to enter, it's a way to have fun with the books you love. Everyone is welcome to join the Zooms or meet otherwise as we brainstorm together, get questions answered about format and technology, and, best of all, get to know other Ticknor members and book enthusiasts!

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## **Why is The Ticknor Society holding this competition?**

Since 2019, The Ticknor Society has awarded an annual George and Anna Eliot Ticknor Book and Book Culture Collecting Prize to recognize and inspire personal book collecting. The award is given in the spirit of George Ticknor and his daughter, Anna Eliot, who were scholars, teachers, and avid book collectors.

The purpose of this competition is to encourage New England-based book collectors to understand more deeply what their collection means to them, what they have collected, how it might be helpful to other collectors and researchers, and how they want their collection to develop in the future. The application process may help them enhance their skill for describing their collection to others. We also hope it will provide a way for our members to interact more, either in person or on Zoom.

## **Who can enter the competition?**

The competition is open to anyone, of any age, primarily residing at the time of entry in any of the six New England states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

## **What is the award?**

The award currently carries a prize of \$1,000. The recipient of the award is invited to speak about their collection at a meeting of The Ticknor Society and will be offered a complimentary year of Ticknor Society membership. The recipient's submission is posted on The Ticknor Society's website to encourage and provide examples of a variety of book collecting achievements.

All other entrants will receive a complimentary year of membership in the Ticknor Society.

## **What is considered a collection?**

To be considered for the Ticknor Collecting Prize, a collection:

- must be compiled, curated, and owned by the applicant.
- should reflect a clearly defined unifying theme or interest.
- may incorporate books, ephemera, maps, prints, or autograph material that are germane to the collection's focus.

How well a collection reflects the collector's intent is more significant than either the number of items or the monetary value of the collection.

## What should your entry consist of?

### All entries must provide

- an essay of up to 1500 words
- a bibliographic list containing at least 12 but not more than 20 representative items
- at least one representative photo image, reflecting a cross-section of your collection (you can have more, this is the minimum expected)

## How to write your essay

The rules state that the essay must be no more than 1500 words and must include:

- the purpose of the collection
- how the collection began
- how and where the items were collected
- highlights of the collection
- how you envision the collection will evolve

Start by answering these questions:

- 1) How did I start collecting?
- 2) What inspired me to collect these books?
- 3) What is the history of my collection? Where did I collect and how?
- 4) What items do I most want to brag about (the highlights of my collection)?
- 5) What is the current status of my collection?
- 6) How has the collection enhanced or changed my life?
- 7) What is the future of the collection?
- 8) Is there a theme to unify my essay, such as, "Collecting these books has...
  - a. taught me more about my family or home town history
  - b. led to my college major or career
  - c. helped me make friends
  - d. gave me something to do in retirement
  - e. ???? what's your story?

## How to write your Bibliographic Items List

### What goes in the bibliographic item descriptions

The rules state that the bibliographic list must contain at least 12 but not more than 20 representative items:

- Related multiple items, such as the complete run of a periodical, may be presented as one item.
- Each item should be given a full bibliographic description, including the author, title, publication information (if known), type of binding (if applicable), condition, and mentions of any annotations or inscriptions, bookplates, etc.
- Each entry should include an accompanying narrative description of not more than 250 words that explains the relevance of the item to the theme of the collection. The descriptions may cite sources but must be authored by the collector, not copied or adapted from dealer descriptions.

**Here is an example of what an entry might look like:**

Shaplin, Phillapa D. *Harvard University Number Four, Buried Treasures of the Peabody Museum: A Memento of the Hemenway Expedition*. Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum, October, 1971. Softbound paper pamphlet, 6"x 9", 11 pp. plus covers, with 3 reproductions of illustrations and 6 photos.

The format is:

- Author Last Name, First Name. *Title in Italics*. Place: Publisher, Date. Binding, inches, Pages, Condition and problems, Dust Jacket. Photos, Illustrations. First Edition, Signed, Inscribed.

Follow this format as much as you can. If the book doesn't have a dust jacket or photos, you don't need to include them. Don't make yourself crazy, this isn't school and you can't make a mistake. Just use this as an opportunity to provide as much info as you find on the book.

Here it is as a handy list. Each item should contain as many of these as you can learn about:

- the author
- title
- publisher
- place of publication
- date of publication
- type of binding (if you don't know, look on vialibri.net for the same edition you have. Often the booksellers will provide binding information in their listing. Make sure it looks like what you have)
- condition (see "Book Condition Words," below)
- does it have a dust jacket, photos, illustrations?
- Is it a first edition?
- Is it signed or inscribed?
- If the book has more than one author, or has an editor: Last, First and First Last (Ed.).

## Book condition words

Here are a couple sources, but feel free to Google more if these don't meet your needs:

- Book Collecting: Illustrated glossary of terms, edition, & condition: <https://www.emptymirrorbooks.com/collecting/bookselling>
- Glossary of Book terms: <https://www.abebooks.com/books/rarebooks/collecting-guide/understanding-rare-books/glossary.shtml>

## What to put in the annotations for the bibliographic items list

Think of it this way: **Books tell many stories, here is your chance to tell the stories of your most prized books.** This is your opportunity to show everyone the best items in your collection. It should be more than a list of title/author-type information.

Here are some questions for brainstorming what to put in the annotations (if your item is not a book, such as ephemera, please adjust as needed):

**This can be about the content of the book** and how it relates to why you collect book or how it has enhanced your knowledge of the topic. Where did you find or how did you acquire this book? How did finding this book increase your knowledge as a book collector?

**And/or, it can be about the “book as object.”** What can you learn about the writer? The publisher? The illustrator? The photographer? The book designer? The binder? Is there a bookplate or name of a former owner of the book? If so, who was that? Is the book inscribed by the author to someone, and who was that? You may find some hidden treasures. Google and Wikipedia are your handy search tools!

**Feel free to include one or a few representative photos** of the book cover, or of an illustration or photo in the book, or of the inscription, or something else visually interesting. See below for how to submit the photos as part of your bibliographic entry.

## How will the entries be judged?

The Ticknor rules state: Collections will be judged on their originality and creativity, and the degree to which they may support primary research and learning in the topic they represent.

**Here's the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America (ABAA)'s criteria for judging**, which will inspire the Ticknor Society's criteria:

<https://www.abaa.org/ncbcc/judging-procedure-criteria>

Judges will award prizes based on the intrinsic significance, innovation and interest of book collections as presented in entrants' descriptive essays and bibliographies. As part

of the judging process evaluations will be made of the entrants' understanding of their collections' subjects, their use and citation of previously-published bibliographical materials, and their knowledge and appreciation of the items in their collections both for content and as objects of craft. The judges will also consider how collections may help preserve material that could otherwise be lost or forgotten, and the potential of collections to expand and evolve. Age, rarity and uniqueness of items will be assessed independently of monetary value.

## Examples of former Ticknor Award recipients' entries

As examples of the diversity of subject matter and style of entries, the previous entries that received the award are posted on the Ticknor Society site and below:

- **2022:** Dr. Jessica C. Linker, "Emma Hart Willard: A Life in Print"  
You can see Jessica's winning entry [HERE](#).
- **2021:** Erika Knowles, "'A Pleasant Painting, Isn't It?': New Milford, Connecticut as Artist's Muse"  
You can see Erika's winning entry [HERE](#).
- **2020:** Maida Tilchen, "In Celebration of New Mexico Books and Book People"  
You can see Maida's winning entry [HERE](#).
- **2019:** Robert Grandchamp, "Collecting a Regiment"  
You can see Robert's winning entry [HERE](#).

## Examples of winning entries from the ABAA's collegiate competition

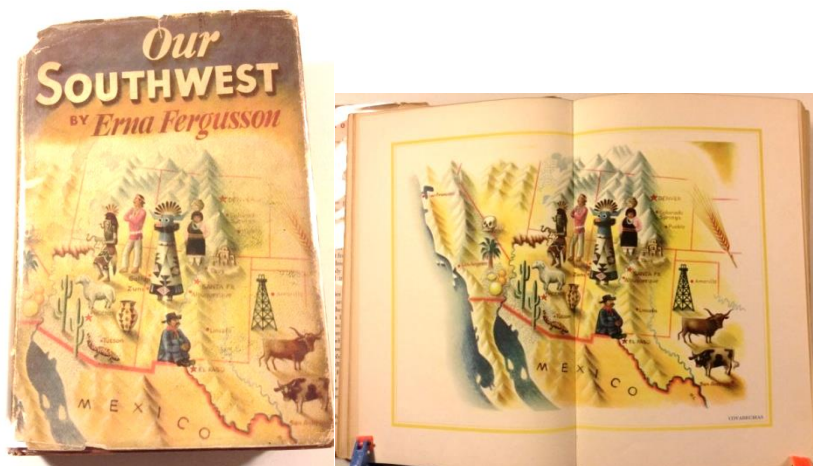
The ABAA runs the best-known competition, but it is limited to college undergraduates (to encourage younger book collectors). This link takes you to downloadable winning entries for 2020, although you can read the titles from other years:

<https://www.abaa.org/ncbcc/2020-Winners>

## Taking and inserting photos into your entry document

We do require entrants to include at least one representative photo of your collection, but we don't require that you show a photo of each item in your collection. **However, images MUST be inserted into the one document you will submit. They cannot be sent as stand-alone JPEG files.** Why? Because it is too difficult for judges to figure out where a bunch of JPEG files, usually with mysterious letters and numbers for the file name, are supposed to go in your document.

- If it's easier for you, you can group all the photos at the end of all the bibliographic items, but be sure it is obvious which photo(s) goes with which item
- You can have a few photos per bibliographic entry
- It would be best to put photo(s) right before bibliographic entries, as in the example below, so the judges know which photo(s) go with which entry.



Fergusson, Erna. *Our Southwest*. New York & London: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940. Hardbound, 6"x 9," 376 pp. Color DJ, two foldout maps, endpaper maps, 24 b/w photos and one color reproduction. First Edition.

### How to take a photo of a book cover or page and save it to your computer

Here are two how-to instructions Googled up, but if you can't follow these, feel free to Google up more.

- These are simplest instructions retrieved: <https://bookspieces.com/how-to-take-better-book-photos-for-instagram/>
- If you want more complicated suggestions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElyzeEYmzyc>

### How to insert photos into a Word file

There are many instructions online if you Google "how to insert a photo into a Word 2010 file" (or substitute whatever version of Word you are using). Here are Microsoft's instructions. Also check YouTube, although many of the examples there are for outdated versions of Word:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/insert-pictures-3c51edf4-22e1-460a-b372-9329a8724344>

## How to submit your entry document

### Saving your file with an acceptable file name

If you followed all these instructions, you should have **ONE** document to submit, which contains your essay, your bibliographic item list, and your inserted photos.

- The **ONE** document may be submitted as either a Word **or** a PDF file
  - If you used Google Docs or other non-Word software, please Google how to convert it to a PDF document, e.g., Google “How to Convert a Google Doc to a PDF”
- The file name for the document should follow this format:
  - [Your last name] [One-word topic of collection] [year].[file format]
  - For example, if your last name is Newton and your collection is books about butterflies, your file names would be:
    - Newton butterflies 2023.docx or doc
    - or Newton butterflies 2023.pdf

### Sending your entry to The Ticknor Society

- In the “To:” line put [ticknoraward@gmail.com](mailto:ticknoraward@gmail.com)
- In the “Subject:” line, put the words “Award Submission [year] from [your full name]”
- In the “Message:” area, put the words “My submission is attached.”
- Attach your Word file or your PDF file with the file name meeting the requirements stated above

## When to send your entry

- Entries will be accepted starting March 1.
- The deadline for entering is April 15.

## Support

The Ticknor Society will be providing support to those preparing their entries:

- At any time, entrants can send questions or suggestions to [ticknoraward@gmail.com](mailto:ticknoraward@gmail.com).
- We will hold occasional “Collectors Happy Hour” Zoom meetings during which entrants can meet other collectors, share their plans and concerns, and encourage everyone to keep working on their collection and entry.



## **When will the results be announced and the award presented?**

- The person selected for the award will be notified on June 30.
- The prize will be presented at the annual Ticknor Society Collectors' Roundtable, typically held at the Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair, which takes place at the Hynes Convention Center each fall.

## **Can I enter again?**

The Ticknor Society encourages you to enter again! Collectors who are not selected for the Prize may revise their submissions and enter again in future years. The competitors and the judges will change from year to year.

Hint: you might want to tweak your entry. Get other members or friends to give some feedback.

## **Conclusion**

We hope you find the process of preparing your entry to be informative and satisfying. We look forward to receiving your submission for the George and Anna Eliot Ticknor Book and Book Culture Collecting Prize!