Career of art book collector Arthur Jaffe a real page-turner

When you ask Arthur Jaffe to describe his Army service in World War II, he shrugs. It’s about to repeat a sentence. “I was in the Signal Corps, with the 10th Armored Division,” he repeats. “I was a technical photographer.”

His doted eye is steady and boisterous as he says, “I’m just a grad school professor. I’m not interested in history.”

With that, he sits back and talks about his work. His voice is clear, and his speech is rapid. He discusses his work with passion and enthusiasm.

“Jaffe is a self-taught collector,” said Fred Marcus, a professor at the University of Miami. “He is interested in books, not in history.”

Marcus is a member of the Book Club of Florida, a group of book collectors that meets monthly to discuss new and rare books.

“In his collection, he has a large selection of rare books,” said Marcus. “He has a particular interest in first editions.”

Jaffe has donated many of his books to the library, and he is a frequent attendee at the club’s meetings.

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