

1982: Report of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity

In 1982, CLR published *Book Longevity. Reports of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity*. The report was based in part on a survey of more than 430 publishing companies to gather information about their use of acid-free paper, awareness of the need for permanent paper, and willingness to identify acid-free publications on the copyright pages of their new books.

Although the dangers of acid paper had become more broadly understood through the 1960s and 1970s, publishers had been relatively slow to switch to acid-free paper, and by 1980, according to the report, only about 25% of the paper manufactured in the US for use in book production was acid free.

The seven-member committee, chaired by Herbert S. Bailey, Jr., of Princeton University Press, had been formed in 1979 and included representatives from libraries, publishing, and the paper industry. The committee's charge was to collect information on paper and bindings to better understand the technical, economic, and organizational considerations likely to influence the current and future production of books. Its key objectives were to increase knowledge about the durability of books and other materials, and to alert publishers, librarians, and others to the need for more careful consideration of production decisions. The report offered 10 recommendations for the textblock and for book covers.

The committee's findings had a significant impact on raising awareness and on publishing industry practices. On March 7, 1989, New York Public Library hosted a "Commitment Day" ceremony honoring 46 authors and 40 publishers who had signed the "Declaration of Book Preservation," which read: "We, the undersigned authors and publishers, hereby declare our commitment to use acid-free paper [*in footnote*: subject to availability] for all first printings of quality hardcover trade books in order to preserve the printed word and safeguard our cultural heritage for future generations."

Among the signatories were Isaac Asimov, Joan Didion, Allen Ginsberg, Barbara Goldsmith, George Plimpton, William Safire, Maurice Sendak, Susan Sontag, Tom Wolfe, and Kurt Vonnegut, as well as some 40 publishers including Simon & Schuster, McGraw-Hill, Inc., William Morrow Inc., Alfred A. Knopf, Time Inc. Book Company, and several university presses.

In the years following, it became increasingly common to see this statement on the copyright page:

"The paper in this book meets the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources."

Most of the commercial printing papers produced today are acid free, alkaline, or permanent.