

Albigen-Papers-History

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History of the Book

SH email to BC on July 25, 2015

So I don't butcher the sentence, what does the bolded quote mean? From Fall 1974 at KSU. You were there. He's talking about the first printing of the book.

"plates cost more than the printing"

Thanks

From 1974-Fall-Public-Meeting-Kent-State-Q-and-A Fragment

Steve

"Because I went by Bucke's statistics on people who were interested in this sort of thing, and we figured a hundred people would be all we'd ever encounter in a lifetime. I ran it off on an offset press and the plates were, if you print a hundred of anything the plates cost more than the printing. [?] So we sold the hundred, and strangely enough we're in our second hundred. But we're going into another step now, and that is the printing of two thousand, at 5" by 8" it will look something like this, about 300 pages. It will all be under one volume, all one binding. "

Email from BC on July 25, 2015

He used some small Wheeling quick-print shop. The quality was pretty bad as you'll recall. There's always plates involved in offset printing – and I'm sure the plates were super-cheap paper plates for that short of a print run. I think the book was run on a tiny duplicator (8-1/2 x 11). Had it been run on a large press making 4, 8 or even 16 page signatures – then yes, expensive metal plates – and other make-ready costs – the so-call prep, or pre-press costs, could require a run of 500 or more to "break-even". (The prep and make-ready costs are fixed, the run costs are variable. This is why today's digital printing is so economical – little or no prep/makeready costs.)

I think his point was that he did it on the cheap since he only printed 100 copies. He also only printed the 2nd half of the book – sold it with the promise of delivering the first half at a later date – using the proceeds from selling what he thought was the most important half in case that's all that ever got printed.

Binding cost is also a big factor in books. Remember the "collating" sessions at TAT meetings! If you print signatures they can be folded on high-speed folders to get the pages in sequence. If you print single pages – that's a lot of sheets to gather up in order. I think he bound the pages himself – staples and duct tape. (Digital presses can print 1 copy of each page in sequence – and feed directly into binding equipment.)

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