

Printing an Oakland Ad

by Tim Dye

In my many years of collecting, this is the first Oakland printers plate that I have ever come across. It was a gift from longtime friend and former POCI president Todd Schafer.

This is an ad that was probably printed in a newspaper, but could have been an advertisement in a magazine or program of some sort. The name of the dealer would

have been printed in the space below the body of text, above the bottom line that says "The Greater Oakland Six".

The ad mentions January 9, but has no year, however the use of the words "The Greater" dates it to 1927. The ad describes an endurance run that Oakland sat up in a window of the General Motors Building in Detroit. A completely stock Oakland was placed on a treadmill and run 100,000 miles, the equivalent of going around the world four times. The ad

shows an illustration of people watching the car, it was set up in a public location so the test would be above board.

Printing this ad from an 84 year old plate was not with-

out its challenges. Although it helps having an early 1900s print shop at your disposal. The condition of this plate was pretty good considering its age. It had a loop fastened to the back so it could be hung up as a decoration. You would have to hold it up to a mirror, or be able to read backwards to make out the words. Even then it is hard to appreciate fully without printing it, so that's what I did.

The type and graphics are made of a lead based metal, making it very soft. It had taken a hit or two over the years, so there were some small chunks missing and some nicks in the lettering. When I laid it on the composing table a more significant problem appeared, the wood that the metal portion was attached to had warped over the years. It has to be flat to print correctly, so

I carefully removed the metal from the original wood and placed it on another piece of type-high-wood. The plate is fastened to the wood with small nails. The overall combined height of the wood and metal plate is very critical.

Once this was done I cleaned it and then locked it in a chase. The chase is best described as an iron frame, you then fill up the space with wood blocks called furniture. Then it is locked in with quoins which expand to hold



1902 Chandler & Price letterpress at the Pontiac Vintage Press.



This is what the Oakland letterpress plate looks like in the chase (iron frame) just after I took it out of the press and cleaned it.

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everything tight. Now it's ready to go to the press.

The press I used for this job here at the Pontiac Vintage Press is a Chandler & Price made in 1902. It will print up to 12" x 18", so this ad which measures about 8" x 6 1/4" was no problem. It's slow going for sure when compared to modern presses and high speed copiers, hand feeding one sheet at a time. But that's ok, printing like this gives you the same satisfaction, enjoyment, and sense of history you feel driving your vintage automobile. After all, how many people get to print an 84 year old Oakland ad on a 109 year old press?

As I printed the pages one at a time, I would spread them out everywhere. If you stack them on top of each other while the ink is wet they would offset on the back.



Here my wife Penny gives a printing demonstration on the Chandler & Price press.

You see this once in a while on old letterpress printed sheets. You can usually spot letterpress printed material, there will be a little indentation in the paper.

The old letterpress, while slow does offer some opportunities to print things that modern presses can't. I have printed paper plates, napkins and paper sacks on this

press. I look forward to printing other unique things like coasters and popcorn bags. Die-cutting on this press is another operation it performs well, while modern presses don't normally handle that very well.

Look for more information about the Pontiac Vintage Press in the future. 🍷

4 times around the world in 6 months

Greater Oakland Six Completes 100,000 mile endurance run
The Most Spectacular Test of Motor Car Stamina Ever Undertaken

On January 9 a Greater Oakland Six completed one of the most amazing tests of motor car endurance that has ever been conceived. Here is proof of Oakland's value, more eloquent than words. Here is evidence of high quality that requires no comment.

In full view of the public this Greater Oakland Six accomplished a treadmill run of 100,000 miles, in the Oakland-Pontiac dealer's showroom window in the great General Motors Building, Detroit. Its engine was never stopped save for re-fueling, re-oiling, and a few minor replacements. Confident that its fine materials and precision construction could withstand this gruelling run, Oakland dared to test the Greater Oakland Six before the public's eyes. The Greater Oakland Six that completed this amazing test is a stock car in every detail. See this Greater Oakland Six today!

Oakland Six, \$1025 to \$1295. Bodies by Fisher. All prices at factory. Easy to pay on the General Motors Time Payment Plan.

The Greater OAKLAND SIX
PRODUCT OF GENERAL MOTORS ~ WINNING AND HOLDING GOOD WILL

Here is what the finished product looks like. Considering the age of the plate and the equipment I was very happy with the quality. You can see the plate and this sheet on display at the Pontiac-Oakland Museum & Resource Center.