

The 'Vandy'—a Splendid Press!

FOR OVER 500 years inventors have sought to provide Letterpressmen with the "perfect" printing press—that is, a mechanism that will easily and faithfully transfer to the paper stock all of the niceties of the metal typographic form.

Most pressmen emphasize there is no "perfect" press nor will there ever be one. While not a job press, the Vandercook may be a serious contender and probably comes closer to perfection than any other press printing from a raised surface.

A number of pressmen have abandoned their beloved little Pearls, trusty C & Ps or famous Washingtons for a fascinating, modern well-built "Vandy" that can effortlessly roll off splendid impressions that would please even the most critical of advertising agency production men.

If a poll were ever conducted among pressmen as to the most important features they would desire, they probably would be a press that:

Has been scientifically designed and built with precision.

One preferably built in the U.S. by a reputable manufacturer who still maintains a stockpile of parts and supplies.

Would occupy only a minimum amount of floor space in relationship to its maximum sheet size.

Employs an adjustable inking system that will lay down a thin film of ink evenly over the entire typeform.

The impression is even over the entire form ~~and not heavier in the center or weaker toward the edges.~~

Can print large typeforms with practically no makeready required.

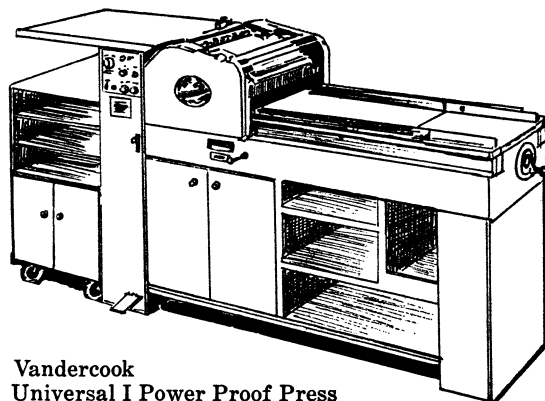
Will probably be superior to any other proving press for pulling reproduction proofs.

Can be hand-fed or operated with an automatic delivery for short runs at speeds of up to 1200 impressions per hour!

Although the Vandercook is usually thought of as a proof press it is much more. Designed as an engraver's test press, it is a hand/power operated cylinder press with power driven ink distribution and designed in every detail as a precision tool for test proving both single and multi-color plates.

Printers before the turn of the century did not have much need for a proof press. But the old hand press, operated by two pressmen could print only about 200 impressions per day.

Robert O. Vandercook, who owned a Chicago suburban weekly newspaper, noticed the absence of equipment for the purpose of quickly obtaining satisfactory proofs from type and printing plates. Proof presses of that day were exceedingly crude in design, construction and operation.



Vandercook
Universal I Power Proof Press

In 1909 he founded the Vandercook Co. and introduced a "rocker" proof press. In the ensuing years improved models were introduced.

The enterprise grew and in 1918 his three sons came into the business and a corporation was formed, Vandercook and Sons, Inc. of Chicago.

Gradually with the increase in the use of color, coupled with the insistent demand from publishers, photoengravers and advertising agencies for better proofs of printing plates—the Vandercook Co. realized that a great need existed for presses capable of coping with every critical proofing task, especially the faithful reproduction of process plates.

The presses designed by Vandercook employ the cylinder press principle. The printing elements are placed on the press bed and the impression cylinder, gripping the paper sheet, roll over the form applying pressure only on the point of contact between the cylinder and the form, thereby calling for less pressure. The first models were hand operated, but succeeding models were power driven, including the inking system. The inking train contains vibrators and rollers comparable to those employed on cylinder presses.

And so came an entirely new conception of a proof press—one that distinguished between a machine capable of producing ordinary proofs of type and plates and a machine that would serve as a testing instrument for accurately checking the printability of type and plates.

According to the Vandercook theory, a large percentage of makeready in Letterpress was the direct result of dimensional inaccuracies, compression of plate mounts and press bear-off.

To help correct these conditions the company developed: cored base planed to exact heights, gauges for checking heights of typographical materials, test presses for locating imperfections in printing surfaces and carbon impression overlays which reveal impression variations as minute as .001".

As a partial solution to the problem the Chicago firm developed the minimum makeready system which maintains that the finest Letterpress printing can be produced with practically a level impression with very little building up of solids or relieving of highlights.

In 1925 Vandercook produced their first en-

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type & press

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SPECIFICATIONS FOR VANDERCOOK PRESSES

Models	Maxium sheet size	Maxium form	Bed size	Floor space required	Net weight
SP15.....	14¾x20"	14x18"	15x31½"	2'8"x5'9"	705 lbs.
SP20.....	19½x28"	19x26"	20x34½"	3'3"x7'4½"	1440 lbs.
SP25.....	24½x25"	24x26"	25x40½"	3'10"x8'	1600 lbs.
Universal I.....	15¼x24"	13x22"	15½x39"	2'11"x7'2"	1200 lbs.
Universal III.....	18¾x28"	18x24"	19x42½"	2'1"x6'7"	1800 lbs.
#4.....	14¾x20"	14x18"	15x35"	2'2"x6'6"	1100 lbs.
#425.....	24¾x27"	24x24½"	25x45"	3'2"x9'3"	4200 lbs.
#219.....	18¾x26"	18x24"	19x41"	2'9"x10'7"	2300 lbs.
#223.....	23¼x30"	22½x28"	23½x50"	3'3"x10'6"	3900 lbs.
#226.....	26x42"	25x38"	28x45"	4'6"x12'	4850 lbs.

The Vandercook (Continued)

gravers test press, the Model 3—a hand operated model with power driven ink distribution—designed as a precision tool for test proving both color and multi-color plates. This machine proved successful and established the basic design on which all Vandy presses have since been built.

Following the success of their first precision test press, Vandercook embarked on an aggressive design program and introduced within the next 10 years a number of new presses. In 1937 they introduced their two-color, completely power operated model 232P which became a favorite of photoengravers. This same year the Model 4 was brought out.

In 1946 at the request of the Curtis Publishing Co. (Saturday Evening Post, Ladies Home Journal) the Chicago company began planning a press that could produce four colors in quick succession, and superimpose them while still wet. Eventually these presses were employed by many national magazine and large edition printers.

A number of competing firms also were supplying cylinder proof presses to the trade. Included were: the Potter, Bower, Poco, Challenge and Hacker. In 1962 a poll by a trade association revealed that 81% of all typographic shops in the U. S. were using Vandercook equipment.

Approximately 55 Universal II Vandy models were manufactured during a one-year period before production of them was stopped in 1959.

Therefore no specs. for this particular model are available. Presses prefixed with an SP designate Simple Precision press.

By 1984 the demand for new proof presses diminished significantly with the move toward offset printing along with the wider utilization of computer typesetting and electronic pre-press systems. Vandercook discontinued manufacturing all presses but continued to rebuild used Vandys, primarily SP15, SP20, Universal I and III models.

As Letterpress printeries switched to offset more and more, Vandys became surplus and a new breed of printer was able to acquire them. Private pressmen, amateur, hobby and book printers were able to buy these precision presses at a fraction of their original cost. These presses may be now purchased for \$400-\$500 and up depending on model and condition.

Charlie Hinde, Vandy enthusiast of Santa Clara (Calif.), who has been printing for many years, says of the Vandercook:

"The Universal I is . . . best for the average hobby printer who wants to do good work. Next in line would be the SP15 followed by an earlier model of the Universal I, called the Vandy No. 4.

"The Universal I is best without all the extras such as ink monitor, cellophane proof attachment and power proofing. Preferred is the one that is crank operated where the pressman can control the slow roll and dwell which gives a better impression. The ink monitor isn't necessary for the average printer who knows when there is too much or too little ink on the rollers. Also avoid the urethane plastic ink rollers. They self destruct in a few years and make a sticky mess when they melt. Rubber rollers are best and with good care will last a lifetime."

Now known as Vanderasons Corp., the firm continues to rebuild and sell previously owned Vandercook presses, parts and supplies. They are now located at 276 Devon Ave., Bensenville, Illinois 60106. Phone is (708) 766-2455.

type & press

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L & M Acquires British Ludlow

L&M (Linotype and Machinery Co.) of England, has recently purchased Linotype Co., of N.Y. L&M also owns Intertype of Virginia and may soon acquire English Monotype's hot-type division.