

1954 PONTIAC STAR CHIEFTAIN

1954 Pontiac Chieftain Deluxe Eight, Series 27, 2-door hardtop

Owners: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Original cost: \$2,148.00 (In 1954: average cost of a car: \$1,700; average home cost \$10,250; average cost of a gallon of gas: 22 cents)

Number made: 120,080 (hydra-matic)

Engine, etc.: 8 cyl.; in-line L-head; 268.4 cid; 122 in. wheelbase; 3,416 lbs.

The Pontiac name was first used on a car in 1926 by the Oakland Motor Car Company which dated back to 1907. After the company's founder, Edward Murphy, died in the summer of 1925, General Motors took over the Oakland brand. Pontiac was unique in GM history in being the only offspring ever to kill its parent. Pontiac became so popular that by 1931, production of Oaklands ceased.

Pontiac production at General Motors resumed after World War II. Pontiac helped make rocket bombs throughout the war. Pontiacs were viewed as reliable, value-packed, yet very predictable in appearance after World War II. They appealed to middle income consumers but were very clearly out of the loop for younger drivers interested in the more sporty new models. That changed in 1949 when Pontiac developed newly designed bodies with lower fender lines and longer hoods.

The Pontiac Chieftain was produced from 1949 until 1958. It was noted for its hood ornament of Chief Pontiac which lighted up when the headlights were turned on. In June, 1954 Pontiac produced its five-millionth car since the marque's inception in 1926 and a new record was reached the following year when the company produced 581,860 cars. It became the fourth best-selling American car. The Chieftain, Series 25/27, was Pontiac's top of the line model.

A major redesign of the Chieftain and a two-inch longer wheelbase in 1953 gave the new all-Chieftain line a more "important" look. They were shinier and larger in most every dimension including kicked-up rear fenders, a lower grille, more prominent bumpers, and a one-piece windshield. Optional power steering was made available in 1953 and made parking easier. Only minor design changes were made for 1954. Side moldings and a narrow oval central grille bar were the main changes. Hardtop, convertible, and sedan models were available.

The Chieftain featured a pillar-less design in both the door and window areas, along with top-grade convertible appointments; these "hard-top convertibles", called the "Catalina", were airy and had a sporty feeling. Options included power steering (\$134), Chieftain seven-tube radio, directional signals, back-up lamps, windshield washers, visor vanity mirror, and trunk lamp.

The Chieftain name for Pontiac's entry level model was dropped in 1959 and renamed Catalina.

Sources: [Standard Catalog of American Cars, 1946 – 1974](#). John Gunnell. Rev. 4th ed. Krause Publications, 2002.

<http://auto.howstuffworks.com/pontiac4.htm>

<http://www.conceptcarz.com/vehicle/z14470/Pontiac-Chieftain.aspx>

http://uniquecarsandparts.com/lost_marques_pontiac.htm (History)

See

also: http://oldcarbrochures.com/static/NA/Pontiac/1954%20Pontiac/1954_Pontiac_Prestige_Brochure/dirindex.html, (Original 1954 brochure 1)

<http://oldcarbrochures.com/static/NA/Pontiac/1954%20Pontiac/1954%20Pontiac%20Brochure/dirindex.html> (Original 1954 brochure 2)