

1925 FRANKLIN TOURING

1925 Franklin Touring Sedan, 2-door

Owner: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Original cost: \$1,950.00 (\$27,787.00 in 2018 dollars)

Number made: 8,595

Engine, etc.: 6 cyl., air-cooled; 32 hp; 3 speed; 15 in. wheelbase

Franklin manufactured cars from 1902 – 1934 in Syracuse, New York.

By 1901 John Wilkinson, a recent Cornell engineering graduate, had completed two air-cooled prototype cars for the New York Automobile Company. He was never paid for them.

He then met Alexander T. Brown, a big-time investor in many companies, and was introduced to Herbert H. Franklin who decided to manufacture the cars.

Herbert H. Franklin started out in the metal die-casting business (in fact, he invented the term) before entering the automobile business with John Wilkinson. Wilkinson wanted to build a car that would be light in weight and economical.

The Franklin was the most long-lived and successful air-cooled automobile in America. All Franklin cars were air-cooled which the company considered simpler and more reliable than water cooling. The lion hood ornament was introduced as standard equipment in 1925. It had the Latin phrase "Aura Vincit" on its base: "Air Conquers".

The first Franklin production car sold in 1902. It was the first four-cylinder car produced in the U. S.

Early Franklin cars used wood frames though the very first ones used an angle iron frame. Beginning in 1928 the heavier cars adopted a conventional

pressed-steel frame. Lightweight aluminum was used in quantity, to the extent that Franklin was considered the largest user of aluminum in the world in the early years of the company.

Franklin was a technological leader with the first six cylinder engine (1905) and automatic spark advance in 1907. L. L. Whitman drove a Franklin from New York City to San Francisco in 1906 in 15 days, 2 hours, and 15 minutes which set a new record.

Franklin pioneered closed automobile bodies, first producing theirs in 1913.

Air cooled cars had a huge advantage in the era before the invention of anti-freeze. ("Permanent" anti-freeze, ethylene glycol, wasn't discovered until the late 1920's – early 1930's) Franklins were popular with people such as doctors who needed an all-weather car. The limitation of air-cooling was the size of the cylinder and available area for valves which limited power output of early Franklins. By 1921 a change in cooling – from sucking hot air to blowing cool air – led the way to gradual increases in power.

Franklin cars did not look like conventional cars and in 1925, in response to dealer requests, were redesigned to look more like other cars. They were given a massive nickel-plated "dummy radiator" which served as an air intake and was called a "hood front".

In 1930 Franklin introduced a new engine which produced 100 hp.

In 1932, in response to competition among luxury car makers, it brought out a 12-cylinder engine with 150 hp, designed to be installed in a lightweight chassis. However, Franklin engineers were overruled by management sent in from banks to recover bad loans, and the car became a 6,000 lb. behemoth. The car did not have the ride or handling of previous models. It was also the wrong time to introduce such a new model, after the crash of 1929 and at the beginning of the Great Depression. The cars sold poorly and came nowhere near recouping the company's investment.

The company declared bankruptcy in 1934. It sold about 150,000 cars during its 30 years in business.

Source: Standard Catalog of American Cars, 1805 -1942. Beverly Rae Kimes, et al. 3rd ed. Krause Publications, 1996.

<http://www.significantcars.com/cars/1925franklin/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_\(automobile\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_(automobile))

http://uniquecarsandparts.com/lost_marques_franklin.htm (Franklin history)

<http://forums.aaca.org/topic/181724-franklin-hood-orament/> (Information about the lion hood ornament)

<http://www.crankshift.com/history-of-antifreeze/> (History of anti-freeze; states ethylene glycol was first used in automobiles in 1926.)

<http://fordbarn.com/forum/showthread.php?t=51835> (Discussion of origin of permanent anti-freeze)