

## Annual Gathering To Enjoy Cars Last Made 75 Years Ago

By Dave Phillips

At the end of July, my friend Mark Straitz and I were frantically getting ready for our trip to upstate New York for the 56<sup>th</sup> Franklin Trek, which was scheduled for Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> to Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>. We loaded the 1933 Franklin Olympic into the trailer and all our gear into the Ford Excursion tow vehicle. This year we were accompanied by 19-year-old Eddie Fowler, who was to become a first-time Trekker and enjoy the unique experience of air-cooled touring.

Early Saturday we headed north through Pennsylvania into New York to Cazenovia, which is north of Binghamton and just southeast of Syracuse. The hub of the Trek week was Cazenovia College, which provided ample space for our cars and the trailer

to ride in a 1910 Franklin model G. With no windshield or top it was a breezy ride around Cazenovia Lake.

On Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> the Trek fun started in earnest with very favorable weather. And Franklins continued to arrive. We toured 24 miles to Earlville



*Above: Eddie, Dave & Mark with the '33 Olympic. Below left: Franklins parked at Harden's; and right: Drover Farm.*

Back at the college there were opportunities to give rides to other Trekkers, especially first timers.

Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup> featured the longest tour day. I was concerned about inclement weather, so we hitched a ride in a modern SUV to the Harden Furniture Factory. We were issued safety goggles and ear plugs to tour this enormous facility. The furniture is high quality and expensive. Back at the college, Eddie discovered the college pool and there was a live band in the cafeteria that evening.

Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup> was the road rally. Eddie was offered the chance to ride in the rumble seat of another car, so Mark and I navigated the road rally. As is always the case on these rallies, there is a good chance of getting lost and it is disconcerting to see a Franklin coming



rigs. In addition, all of us stayed in the college's dorm rooms and had access to facilities such as the swimming pool. The cost of this arrangement was modest and appropriate in this economy. Trek attendance was good with 349 attendees (including 43 children and 43 first-time Trekkers). There were 86 Franklins and a 1908 Cameron. After registering, it took us three trips to gather our luggage. Did we really need all the stuff?

Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> dawned with a light rain that persisted, so the opening parade through town was cancelled and the Chamber of Commerce cookout was moved indoors to the American Legion Hall. The Franklin store did a brisk business while we waited for better weather. By afternoon the rain stopped and skies cleared. I finally got

around the numerous lakes to visit the historic 1890 Opera House. We were entertained by the Van Norstrand brothers. From there it was a short jaunt to the Jewitt's Cheese House and the Drover Hill Farm, and eventually to lunch at the Colgate Inn in Hamilton. Someone remarked that Franklins are just transportation from one meal to the next. There is little danger of going hungry on a Trek! The "Franklin Five" is often mentioned as the number of pounds you'll probably gain in a week.

Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup> we had a Tech Session and then a short trip to Chittenango Falls State Park. The falls drop 167 feet flowing north to Oneida Lake. We had another cook-out and a huge birthday cake to celebrate the Franklins on the Trek that were 100 years old. We had four this year.



from the opposite direction.

Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, the last full day, there was a short tour that took us to the Stone Quarry Art Park. Then we had the annual auction loaded with items that you just couldn't live without.

The reception and fashion show started the evening's wrap up festivities. I had decided to be in the fashion show this year and brought along my 79<sup>th</sup> Highland Regiment uniform. To my surprise Eddie showed up in a black suit and tie. Katrina Short, a 22-year old student from McPherson College, dressed in 1930's garb, grabbed Eddie and they paraded around with Eddie blushing. The banquet followed.

Saturday at 6 AM we were loaded and heading back to Maryland. What a fun week of driving our beloved Franklins!