

Franklin Harrah 1928

William F. Harrah amassed what became the largest private car collection in the world, totaling around 1,450 vehicles stored in warehouses in Sparks, Nevada. When Harrah passed away in 1978, the entire collection was acquired by the Holiday Inn hotel chain.

In 1981, the company announced it would auction off the cars—prompting a nationwide outcry. The Governor of Nevada even attempted to pass legislation to block the sale. It didn't work.

Some of the collection was indeed sold at auction, but a portion was preserved and became the heart of today's National Automobile Museum in Reno, Nevada.

And what you see here? One of those survivors—a genuine Franklin Model 12B from Harrah's legendary trove.

This model was the first Franklin to be equipped with Lockheed hydraulic brakes on all four wheels—a cutting-edge innovation for its time. Like all Franklins, it featured an air-cooled engine—a system preferred by company founder Herbert H. Franklin, who believed it was more reliable than water-cooling.

The company ultimately did not survive the Great Depression, but this elegant machine continues to embody the refinement and engineering spirit of the late 1920s.