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# Winter Car Racing in Franconia

For about a dozen years, starting in 1952, sports car races were held in Franconia on one weekend in January. "Another 'first' in excitement is the sport car race on ice. A race course will be plowed out on Echo Lake in Franconia Notch, and for the first time in the East a competitive automobile race will be held on an ice surface. The Sports Car Club of America, a club devoted to amateur racing events, is sponsoring the race, and foreign-make cars, such as British MG's, Alldards, Jaguars and German BMW's, will compete."

In 1953 nine days of events were scheduled for the Franconia Frolics, "a cooperative wintertime promotion between the people of Franconia, the New England Council and the N. H. Forestry and Recreation Department. The Boston and Maine railroad, Eastern Airlines and other travel agencies are cooperating wholeheartedly in distributing information and encouraging travel to Franconia during the nine-day period. Principally among these events are the two auto races. This year the races will be held on the airstrip on the Easton road. A snow-packed course, with snow banks at the curves, will provide as authentic a course as could be found anywhere. Right now the snow plows of Littleton and Franconia are busy shaping the course and getting it ready for these two events. The first race is scheduled for Saturday, January 24, when jalopies and mud-buggies will compete in their famous dare-devil manner. The drivers of these jalopies are old hands at this type of course for they come from Lake Winnepesaukee and the town of Weirs where they have regular Sunday features of racing on the lake. The following Sunday, February 1, the Eastern division of Sport's Car Association of America will hold several types of races. These racers are the same who speeded around Echo Lake last winter, and all types of sports cars will be entered."

Proceeds from the 1954 event went towards sending a United States ski team to the F.I.S. world championships in Sweden. "Speed races, which will be the main events, will begin at 11 a.m. Sunday over a one-mile, lightly-sanded course on Echo Lake. Relay and

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Auto races on the frozen surface of picturesque Echo Lake provide a breath-taking spectacle for the winter vacationist in Franconia. Whether the competing cars are jalopies or sleek sports cars, there is a thrill-a-second for both drivers and spectators as the cars race around the icy course.

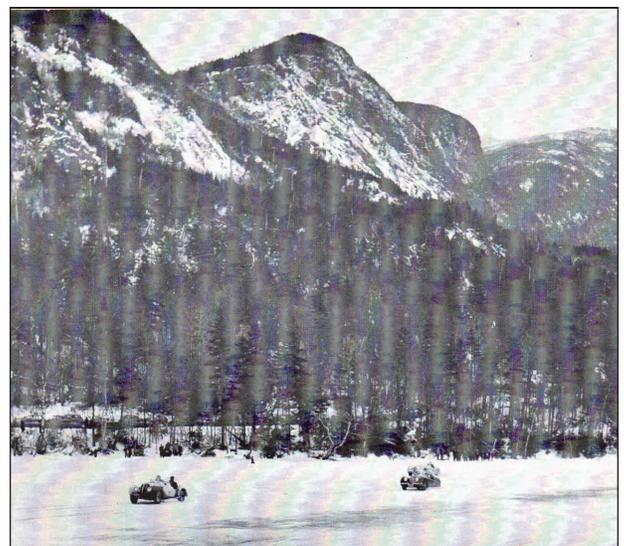
[Photo from *A History of Franconia New Hampshire* by Sarah N. Welch p. 196; caption from *Franconia Frolics* flier.]

women's races will also be held that day. Cars will run individually for time trials and there will be competitive events with two and three cars in a heat. Many of the drivers entered participated in the grueling "Race to the Clouds" to the summit of Mt. Washington this summer."

The 1957 races were sponsored by the Franconia Ski Club and held at the track on Lovett's Field on route 18 near Lovett's Inn. The proceeds went to the Roland E. Peabody Memorial Fund which furnished skis and equipment for the children in the Cannon Mountain area. "The large field for Sunday's races includes five New Hampshire drivers, one of whom, Ray Seidel of Manchester, will drive a revolutionary designed Swedish Saab. Four of these two-cycle engine cars will enter the race, two of them driven by representatives of the factory. The driver coming from the farthest will be Lewis Young of Lewisburg, Pa."

"The Sports Car club members are an intrepid lot and have run their winter meet under all kinds of conditions since the first time in 1952. That year the course was on Echo Lake. The following year it was on the Franconia airport in a sea of mud one day and a frozen mass the next day. Echo Lake was tried the next year with water flooding the ice. The past two years the new course on Lovett's Field has offered packed snow which was an ideal surface. This year it looks like frozen ground unless new snow falls."

[All quotations are from The Littleton Courier: Jan. 10, 1952; Jan. 15, 1953; Jan. 28, 1954; Jan. 24, 1957 issues.]

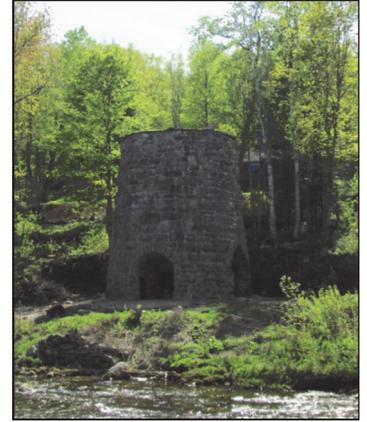


# Iron Furnace — Definitely a Tourist Attraction

The renovated iron furnace and the Interpretive Center displays and park-like grounds continue to please visitors. Some of their recent comments:

Nice to see that history continues on ~ ~ ~ very educational thanks ~ ~ ~ love the place ~ ~ ~ beautiful artifact of your past ~ ~ ~ thank you for restoring the furnace ~ ~ ~ Drove by many times. Finally stopped. Amazing! ~ ~ ~ History helps explain how we got to where we are today! ~ ~ ~ highly recommended ~ ~ ~ What an education! Can't believe they worked so hard! ~ ~ ~ Thanks so much for bringing history to life for future generations. ~ ~ ~ We've stopped here often over the years. ~ ~ ~ Never knew it was here! ~ ~ ~ Great job since our first visit some 40 years ago, and many times since. ~ ~ ~ Wow! Thanks to Jean for restoring it. ~ ~ ~ Impressive - always love to learn something new. ~ ~ ~ Too bad trespassing is forbidden, or we'd be having a blast! How iron-ic. ~ ~ ~

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## Franconia Gets TV Coverage

WMUR-TV Channel 9 out of Manchester, NH gave Franconia some free advertising this summer. Phil Krill, FAHC treasurer, was our spokesman for a Chronicles segment on the Heritage Museum that aired on June 16; it also briefly covered the iron furnace. Fritz Wetherbee did four of his short speeches in September on:

- 9/13 Making Iron in Franconia
- 9/15 Franconia Named
- 9/20 Franconia College
- 9/27 Franconia Iron Works

The September talks can still be watched on the [www.wmur.com](http://www.wmur.com) website.

## Recent Donations

- Carolyn Grass—Dow Academy items and 8x10 photo of the Notch
- Phil Rysanek—hole punching tool for leather
- Ken & Linda Ford—iron chisel, possibly made by the Franconia Iron Factory Co., and Dow Academy child's t-shirt
- Charles Barry—book he wrote *Behind Badge 32: True Stories of a NH Conservation Officer*
- Jean Goehlen—menus from Hillwinds and Lovett's

Thank-you !

## In Memoriam



Muriel Manghue, 87, passed away in May 2016. She was the FAHC treasurer for 12 years, retiring at the end of the 2011 season. She also knitted mittens and baby blankets for the gift shop, baked cookies for events, helped run plant sales, decorated parade floats, did hostess duty.



There is still one very good farmer in Franconia - Ken Eastman. At his home on Dow Avenue, he turned his entire yard into garden space and grew spectacular picture-perfect vegetable plants that stopped traffic.

