

# Plymouth Leads Festival Boom

By DOUG JOHNSON

We are witnessing a festival boom in this state as almost every community has some sort of annual fair or festival.

The festivals seem to have the right combination of down-home warmth, good food, and fun for the family to make them successful.

In the Observerland area, Plymouth, Farmington, Livonia and Southfield all have festivals of one kind or another.

Attendance at all of them has been literally unbelievable.

In Southfield the Arts Council this year launched the city's second festival and were overwhelmed when 15,000 people turned out for the three-day event.

Livonia is the johnny-come-lately in the festival business.

And like the city itself, its annual fair is big and brawling and larger in scope than some of the others.

Livonia's Spree 23 began with a wild drawing for some big money in the state lottery on a Thursday and then went on to draw huge crowds for the next three days at a fair-festival-carnival held at Ford Field.

There you could dunk the mayor in a water tank and throw cream pies at the police chief.

Fair rides and games were brought in and beer and wine were sold by the Spree 23 committee. The Livonia Fair began a few years before when the city decided to celebrate its 20th birthday (1950 to 1970).

Fairs in the older towns of Plymouth and Farmington are a bit more sedate but are drawing big crowds every year.

The Farmington Founders' Festival is held at the end of July, every year. Mer-

chants take the opportunity to put on big sales but there are lots of events for the service clubs so they can raise money.

The parade in Farmington is a big event and it moves down old Grand River. The YMCA holds a marathon race.

A pigeon race is a publicity gimmick used to launch the festival.

And there is food all over -- available at the Elks Club ox roast, as well as the good dinners at the Masonic Temple.

Now the Founders Festival is gearing up for a big year in 1974 as the city celebrates its 150th anniversary.

In Plymouth, the Fall Festival seems to be as strong as ever, with record crowds eating all the chicken the Rotarians can cook.

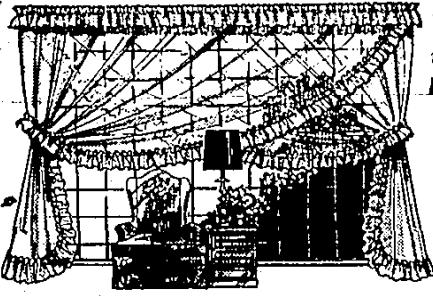
The Fall Festival remains unique in Plymouth in that commercial vendors are kept out of the Festival area so you don't have "flea market" type booths selling those awful bright colored paintings on velvet or grasshoppers blown in thin glass.

All the festivals are great fun and after attending the events in Southfield, Farmington, Livonia and Plymouth I must admit to some hometown pride when I say Plymouth's the best.

There still remains in Plymouth that "family get-together" atmosphere that is missing in the other events.

Fair rides and carnival booths are fun but nothing really can beat the local pet show and those cookies made by the ladies of the Grange Hall.

Nowhere else do you see the superintendent of schools in a white apron, his face beet-red, working on a line of chickens grilling over hot charcoal.



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RODEO ACTION like this was a hit at the Farmington Fall Festival this July first.