

Fire muster celebrations are popular over the years

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By DEL STELLING

Burnsville's Fire Muster celebration follows a long tradition of fire musters, dating back to the mid-1800's when the first such event was held in Amesbury, Mass.

Since then, they have been popular community attractions, particularly on the East Coast.

Among the more recent fire musters is the antique fire apparatus muster that is held each year at the famous Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Mich.

This year's muster, held July 24-25, attracted hundreds of visitors who enjoyed the spectacular exhibit of equipment and also toured the fabulous "living museum" of Greenfield Village and adjacent Henry Ford Museum.

Antique equipment from various parts of Michigan and surrounding area was used for contests and demonstrations of fire-fighting skills in this recreation of an activity that was popular in communities across America.

In the early days, athletic competition was virtually non-existent, and fire musters became a common way for citizens to compete.

Water was hauled and carried, and teams vied to see who could shoot streams of water the farthest distance.

In Burnsville, the fire muster celebration was started in 1978, when a small parade of units proceeded down Nicollet Ave. to Diamondhead Mall.

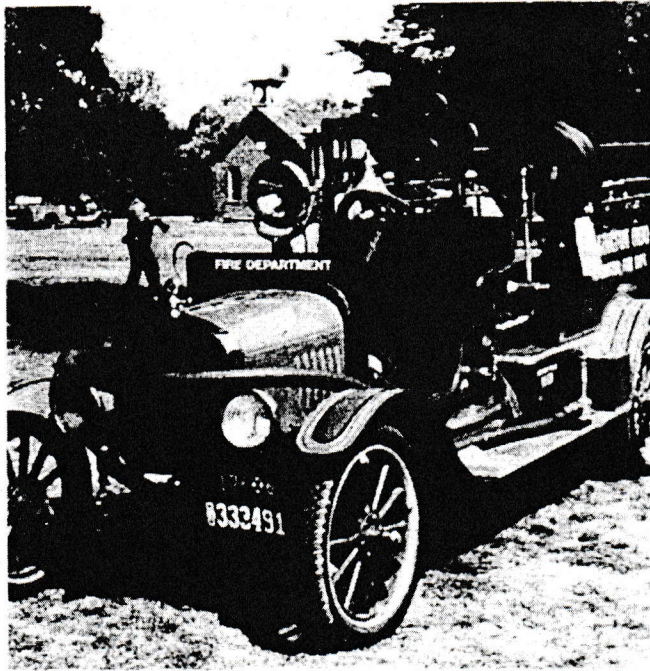
The following year, the parade had doubled to 32 units, and the route had increased in length.

Since then, the event has escalated to "a full-blown big event," thanks to broad-based support of Burnsville citizens, business firms and civic groups.

The popularity of the fire muster celebration in Greenfield Village was evident, too, with dozens of pieces of antique equipment on hand, all restored to superb condition.

Greenfield Village, by the way, is one place that should be visited by all Americans, for it contains so much of our historical heritage.

Greenfield Village, along with



(SUN photo by DEL STELLING)

AN ANTIQUE FIRE TRUCK — Antique fire trucks such as this Model T Ford, more than a half century old, were featured at a recent Fire Muster celebration held at the famous Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Mich. Similar vehicles will be displayed at the Burnsville Fire Muster next month.

Henry Ford Museum, is open throughout the year, with special exhibits and demonstrations featured at different seasons of the year.

During the summer months, for instance, visitors are able to see, feel, smell, taste, and become a part of this busy country as it was when the nation of today was developing.

At the adjacent Henry Ford Museum, visitors are able to enjoy one of the world's largest and most interesting collections of the things that Americans used in building their lives and their nation.

The fall season at Greenfield Village is particularly appealing, featuring colorful foliage and cider straight from the press.

At the Henry Ford Museum, the "Workers' World" exhibit in Octo-

ber and November tells of 19th-century industrial villages and company towns.

In December, visitors are able to enjoy a Victorian Christmas, played out in Greenfield Village homes and shops.

No matter what time of year, visitors to the fascinating Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum are guaranteed a seemingly never-ending display of exhibits.

Most of these visitors, too, will want to return for further inspection at this most unique American showplace.