37th Louisiana Rice Festival

State's Oldest Gathering Again Slated in Crowley

125,000 Folks Expected to Attend

(Crowley, La.) - More than 125,000 folks are expected to converge upon this "Rice Capital of America" to celebrate Louisiana's oldest, organized festival, the 37th International Rice Festival, slated here Saturday and Sunday.

Celebrities hailing from all over South Louisiana's Cajun Country will be here to honor the state's valuable rice crop, star and stimulant of this old-time festival. Since 1937, the people of Crowley have hosted this rice extravaganza, which has seen an estimated 2,500,000 file past its gates.

Historical records indicate that the first rice seed was brought into Louisiana by a group of explorers led by Bienville, who founded New Orleans in 1718. Five years later a hurricane scattered rice seed beyond the environs of the city and soon rice was prevalent along the banks of the Mississippi River.

Then, farmers began experimenting with rice all through the uplands and prairies of the Bayou State. It was then discovered that these newer areas away from the river proved more acceptable, and so the rice industry shifted location to Acadia Parish and Southwest Louisiana-and there it has remained and flourished to this day.

So, it is of little wonder that a harvest festival saluting rice has become one of Louisiana's most colorful and durable pageants.

On Friday the festival will feature a creole cooking contest, entertainment by animated animal characters from Astro- world, a world champion rice cooking contest, a children's parade, the rice festival queen contest, and the queen's ball.

Saturday's activities will be highlighted by the annual Frog Derby, hosted by the Rayne Lions Club. Cajun lasses attired in silken uniforms serve as pockyettes to giant Acadian bull frogs, which are persuaded to jump by the girls' prodding with long sticks.

Other features of the day will be a greased pig and tug of war contest, entertainment by the singing Dusenberry Family of Hourna. An international rice-eating contest, a grand parade, and "fais do do" Cajun street dance. A new feature of the festival will be a tricycle relay race.

Times-Picayune
Nov. 3, 1973