

SEVERN BRIDGE & THE FALL FAIR

A Celebration of Agriculture—Rural & Rustic



Shortly after the first bridge over the Severn River was built, the community of Severn Bridge was settled through land grants in 1858. A store and local post office soon followed, and by 1865, the village boasted several hotels, a church, a schoolhouse, and community hall.

In the late nineteenth century, most people in the area made their living through agriculture. Rural communities often hosted fall fairs to celebrate the harvest and offer a chance for people to

connect and enjoy displays and entertainment. The Severn Bridge Fall Fair started in 1873 and is one of the longest running fairs in Muskoka. The Fair began in Morrison Township (one of the original townships which is now a part of the Town of Gravenhurst), moved to James Young's field for several years, and in 1903 moved to this location (1153 Southwood Rd) [see map]. The Fair is held annually the first weekend after Labour Day in September.



Events for All Ages

The Severn Bridge Fall Fair has hosted a variety of events for the whole family!



- ★ Antique Displays
- ★ Bobbing for Apples
- ★ Christmas Corner
- ★ Corn Roast
- ★ Donut Eating Contest
- ★ Gardening Displays
- ★ Handmade Goods & Domestic Skills
- ★ Heavy Horse & Equestrian Show
- ★ Hobbies & Crafts
- ★ Horseshoe Tournament
- ★ Little Miss Moppett & Country Squire Contest
- ★ Livestock Competitions
- ★ Log Sawing Demonstrations
- ★ Miss Teen Severn Bridge Pageant
- ★ Mutt Show
- ★ Parade & Opening Ceremonies
- ★ Tractor Pull



Photographs and documents courtesy of the Severn Bridge Fall Fair Archives & Mark Clairmont.



Municipal Heritage Committee
"Preserving Gravenhurst's Past and Present for our Future"

ORIGINS OF THE SEVERN BRIDGE FALL FAIR

Timeline (1858–1928)

The Fair finds its home, builds a grandstand, and hires judges.



- 1858** Settlement began in Severn Bridge.
- 1860s** Morrison Township opened and local post office established.
- 1873** First Morrison Township Fall Fair held.
- 1877** Fair moved to James Young's field (west of the highway at the bridge over the Severn River).
- 1903** Fair moved to present location where you are standing.
- 1909** Entertainment provided by the Severn Brass Band (over 40 members!)
- 1910** Junior Hall and Grandstand built.
- 1913** First women directors were appointed to the Morrison Agricultural Society.
- 1920** Delegate sent to Toronto to attend Convention at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.
- 1924** First Morrison Township School Fair organized (later combined with the Fall Fair).
- 1928** Government Judges for livestock hired for the first time (horses, cattle, sheep, etc.)

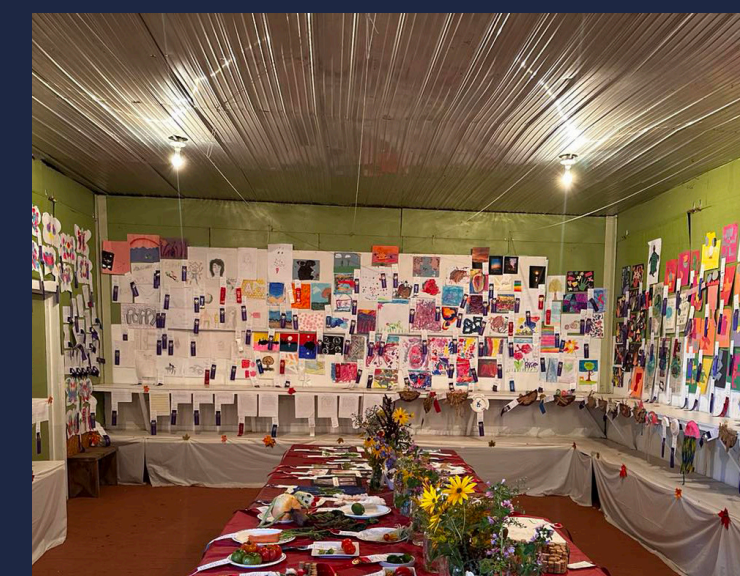
"Little Fair with a Big Heart"

In its early years, the Fair featured agricultural exhibits including livestock competitions, crop displays, handmade quilts, needlework, and baked goods. It was organized by the Morrison Agricultural Society which later became the Severn Bridge Agricultural Society. Farmers and artisans from the surrounding area would gather to present their finest produce, livestock, and handcrafted goods, reflecting the agricultural practices and domestic skills of the time.



The Archway

Structures on the fairgrounds property have expanded over the years to include the Archway, Junior & Senior Halls, Heritage Hall, the Horse Ring with Booth, Secretary Booth (fair office), and Grandstand.



Junior Hall



Senior Hall



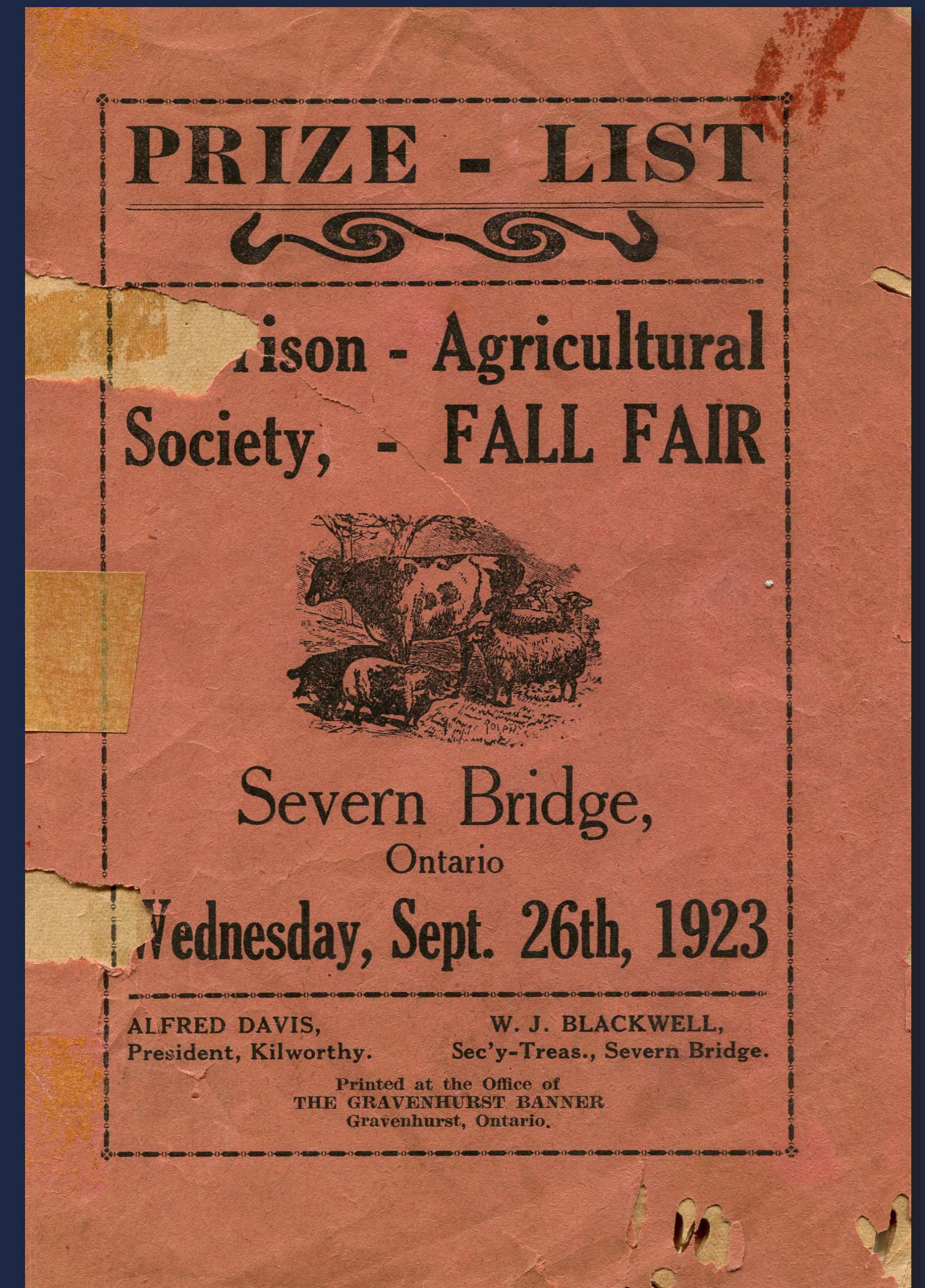
Heritage Hall



Horse Ring



Horse Show Building



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HONOUR THE PAST, LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Timeline (1933–2025)

The 4-H Club is founded, entertainment added, and the Fair celebrates its 150th anniversary.



- 1933** At the height of the Great Depression, local women organized an evening corn roast and bonfire in place of the traditional Fall Fair.
- 1940** School Fair joined with the Fall Fair making room for children's exhibits.
- 1947** A Girls' and Boys' Potato Club and Calf Club was formed, later becoming the 4-H Club.
- 1962** The Centennial of Morrison Township was held on July 14 at the Fairgrounds.
- 1973** Morrison Agricultural Society celebrated their Centennial placing a time capsule in The Archway.
- 1979** Martin and Downs Circus came to the Fairgrounds (June 1).
- 1995** Sheep first introduced to the animal show.
- 2006** Medieval Jousting Tournament held at Fall Fair.
- 2020** Fair cancelled for two years due to COVID pandemic.
- 2025** 150th Celebrations including updates to the Archway, a new horse ring, and placement of another time capsule.

Connecting Community with Agricultural Roots

Over the years the Severn Bridge Fall Fair has evolved to incorporate live entertainment, children's activities, and community gatherings alongside the traditional agricultural displays. For 150 years the Fair has remained a cherished event that reflects the values and hard work of the community. The Fair continues to celebrate the rich history of Severn Bridge and brings together volunteers, exhibitors & visitors to honour the past and look forward to the future!

Morrison School Principal Mrs. Katie P. Manson, parading students to the Severn Bridge Fall Fair September 11, 1971



4-H Parade Float September 7, 1974



In 2025, the Severn Bridge Fall Fair celebrated 150 Years of rural heritage. The theme "A Walk Through Time" honoured the Fair's history and the enduring spirit of Severn Bridge.



Welcome to the Severn Bridge Fall Fair!

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