

Stories From Our Past

A Plot that Offers More Questions than Answers

by Richard Collins



Kindree Cemetery, 2005

Lisgar is fields of pre-fabricated homes now. The post office closed generations ago. The Credit Valley Railway never had more than a flagstop here – a wooden shed, barely the size of outhouse, from which passengers could wave down the engineer to request a stop. The only history that survives in Lisgar today is a cemetery – a burial ground where you get the feeling Robert Frost must have visited, long after the first settler here had harvested this land for the last time, ". . . to hear his long scythe whispering to the ground, and feel his spirit kindred . . . "

Or perhaps Frost should have said, "spirit Kindree". The Kindree family has been part of Lisgar since the inception of this vanished village. The Kindree graves have outlasted the community itself – although just barely.

For decades the cemetery, where Nathan and Mary Kindree's children rest, lay in a pitiable state. Vandals were partly at fault, but sadly most of the blame must be placed on Nathan himself for his unfortunate choice of location. The cemetery plot may have seemed scenic at the time, but the steep bank that still slopes down into the nearby creek allowed the ground to shift over the decades, nudging the coffins out of place and toppling the tombstones. Then acid rain eroded the carefully-chiseled names.

The memory of the Kindree children might have faded into oblivion had not the chance annexation of old Lisgar, in neighbouring Halton County, brought the Kindree's family gravesite under the authority of the City of Mississauga in 1975. Eventually, responsibility for the cemetery was placed in the hands of Denise Mahoney, supervisor of the city's cemeteries. Denise has become a kindred spirit to the Kindrees, attempting to uncover lost names and restore the cemetery's dignity.

Denise and her coworker, Kim Willis, have become an archaeological CSI team, having so far recovered the names of eight of the twelve children, including two boys named William, born 11 years apart – the second one likely born after the first had died. Those identified so far died between 1829 and 1839. Denise and Kim have yet to uncover the name of a four year-old son born in 1835 or any information at all on three of his sisters. Denise recalls, "*The stone for the children was badly deteriorated and barely readable.*"

The unidentified son and his older brother Alfred both died within months of each other – possibly of tuberculosis bacteria that spread through the Kindree household. The three anonymous daughters may have fallen victim to the same outbreak. Perhaps there are more tombstones to be discovered, or pieces of existing stones that might provide answers.

The Lisgar Residents' Association has helped to refurbish and relocate the broken tombstones. The LRA has also raised funds to put a pedestrian pathway through the plot.

Visitors are welcomed to stroll alongside the creek. Here, in the presence of the spirits Kindree, you might even hear the sound of Nathan's scythe as it whispers to the ground.