



# Old streets and roads - Liddard

*Charles William Liddard (1836-1909) was one of Muskoka's earliest pioneers, having settled here in 1861 on property now occupied by the South Muskoka Curling and Golf Club in Bracebridge.*

Lately I have been speaking to various church groups and service clubs about a few of the pioneer street and road names in the central Muskoka area.

Some of the reasons for these designations, especially in our towns, have unfortunately been lost in the forgetfulness of time.

Others endure, and relate to historic personages that helped establish the District of Muskoka.

One of those individuals for whom a street perpetuates a family heritage was William Charles Liddard, a very early settler at North Falls (Bracebridge).

Liddard was born in Kent County, England, in 1836 and came to Canada when he was 19 years of age. Being young and strong, he worked for a few years, employed by a railway company, on bridge construction crews.

In 1859, two years before he moved to Macaulay where he homesteaded, Liddard married Miss Mary Diamond.

They raised a family of eight daughters and four sons and lived the remainder of their lives on the family farm (part of which is the South Muskoka Curling and Golf Club property in Bracebridge).

Mary died during the mid 1890s at age 52; Charles passed away in 1909 at age 73. They are buried in the Methodist (United) Church cemetery.

At the time of the Liddards arrival in the bush, the Beal family were the only other permanent residents, their shanty being in the neighbourhood of Oliver's Coffee Shop of today.

Mr. Liddard made a quantity of maple sugar the first year they lived here, gathering the sap from the stand of mature trees between their shanty and what is now the intersection of Manitoba Street and Taylor Road.

Mr. Liddard was fondly eulogized at his funeral by some of his peers who spoke of him as a man of bright Christian character whose aim it was "... to give to others of the brightness and goodness of his own nature."

He was also known as a man who had a "... love of nature and of children."

Having had a dozen babies in their home, the Liddards obviously believed in Psalm 127:4-5 "Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them..."

Every one of these children lived to adulthood despite the primitive times.

Writing in January, 1968, Redmond Thomas noted another example of Liddard's goodness and kindness.

Thomas writes, "In Mr. Liddard's earliest days as a pioneer ... there were still some Indians around ... and he was on such good terms with them that they knew they were always welcome to walk into his home, which was never locked, and sleep on the floor. And many a meal did Mr. Liddard and his wife give to their Indian friends."

Although the above examples of his magnanimity should be reason enough to name a street for him, it was more likely because of his early municipal position as an assessor this recognition came.

In 1868 he conducted the first assessment for the United Townships of Stephenson, Macaulay, Draper and Ryde – a large territory to appraise even today, with our modern means of travel.

Liddard's job went far beyond evaluating land and buildings to include things such as furniture, oxen, horses, sheep, farm implements, wagons, sleighs and stocks of merchandise in stores and much, much more.

Mr. Liddard would carry his large assessment roll book to each township as he laboriously tramped the countryside on snowshoes in order to collect the data.

Mr. Liddard entered Ecclestone's hardware store on the morning of June 10, 1909, inquired about the price of an article and expired on the spot.

His mansion in heaven was ready – no inspection required!