Ninnes Grave

1852, Myers Flat

'So ends the history of a good, clean, careful, affectionate wife'

A miner's memorial for his wife and young daughters.

In 1852, after a long and arduous journey to the Bendigo goldfields, tragedy struck the Ninnes family. Two of their four young daughters – Grace, 2 years and Jane, 2 months – died on the same night, just weeks after the family reached their destination. Soon after, their mother Maria also died. Maria and her two daughters were buried here by Thomas, Maria's husband in July 1852.

The Ninnes family was Cornish, and had travelled with other Cornish families from the copper mines in Burra, South Australia, to try their luck in the newly discovered goldfields in central Victoria. Their journey took 10 weeks and they covered more than 700 kilometres. Maria gave birth to Grace along the way, and then fell ill, and never recovered. After a burial service, Thomas carved their names in a tree and built a stone wall around the grave.

Thomas continued to work the goldfields after their deaths, but it was a hard life and 18 months later he left, to return to South Australia. He remarried, and settled on a farm near Clare where he lived until his death more than 40 years later. His surviving daughters Martha and Mary, returned here in 1905 to arrange for the grave to be cared for. The stone wall was rebuilt and a headstone erected.

This site remains one of the earliest and best examples of a lone grave in Victoria and serves as a stark reminder of harsh realities of life in the early goldfields.

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO

'Record of reaching the diggings' 1852, General notebook of Thomas Ninnes
Courtesy of State Library of South Australia.

Early image of local young girl and Ninnes Grave
Bendigo Advertiser, 1968

'My wife requested me to make a coffin for her also. It was a severe trial to me, but I managed to make it'

Burra
SOUTH AUSTRALIA | VICTORIA
Adelaide
Wellington
McIntosh's
Horsham
Bendigo
Grampians
Burnbank
Melbourne