

## **GEORGE W. FINNUP**

*Project Consultant – Finney County*

*Thanks to Laurie Oshel, Assistant Director at the Finney County Historical Society Library in Garden City, Kansas, for providing photographs of George Finnup and his family, plus pages from the book titled “Year Book and Biographical Sketches-1936.”*



**GEORGE W. FINNUP**

**GEORGE WASHINGTON FINNUP**, son of Frederick Finnup (27 Dec 1840 - 6 Apr 1914) and Minnie Wilhelmina Lohmann (16 Aug 1840- 7 Aug 1914) was born on 2 Dec 1866 in Vevay, Switzerland County, Indiana. Both of his parents were born in Prussia. His father came to America in 1845, and his mother came in 1852. Burial for both of his parents was at the Valley View Cemetery in Garden City, Kansas.

George was a resident of Garden City, arriving in April 1879. He was in business for fifty-four years. His most significant donation was in 1919, a gift of more than 100 acres in Garden City for Frederick Finnup Park in honor of his father. George owned land in many Kansas counties and several other states. He was thought to be one of the largest landowners in Kansas. At the time of his death, he was 71 years old and still very active in his business. He carried many of the details in his head. He had a remarkable memory of names, dates, and information. He could give details of the tenant's names, amount of crops raised, and dates of contracts without referring to records.

He married **ALTA MAY SMITH**, daughter of Elijah Francis Smith (1844-1928) and Sarah Jane Boyd (1851-1930), on 26 June 1902 in Garden City, Kansas.



GEORGE AND ALTA (SMITH) FINNUP

Alta was born on 3 Feb 1879 in Hepler, Crawford County, Kansas. Between 1880 and 1890, she was on a covered wagon with her parents as they made their way to Finney County, Kansas, homesteading in Eminence. In December of 1890, they moved to Garden City, where Alta went to school and received a teacher's certificate.

George died on 21 Nov 1937 in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. He died at his home from a heart attack that he suffered at his office two weeks earlier. Alta died on 2 Sep 1963.

George and Alta had two children:

**FREDERICK S. FINNUP** was born on 7 Dec 1903 in Garden City, Kansas, and named after his grandfather, who was one of the first settlers in Finney County. Frederick graduated from Garden City Junior College in 1923 and, like his father, graduated from Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, in 1925. After graduation, he went into the family land business. He died on 14 Mar 1988.

**ISABEL MAY FINNUP** was born on 1 May 1907 in Garden City, Kansas, and lived there her entire life. She was a graduate of Garden City Junior College in 1928. Isabel traveled with her mother during the 1930s, visiting France, England, and Switzerland, plus seeing many areas throughout the United States. She worked in the office of the Garden City Company and retired from the Finnup Land Company in 1974. Isabel died on 30 Nov 1978 in Garden City.

Both children (Frederick and Isabel) continued with the Finnup family business, and neither one married.

George and Alta, along with their two children, Frederick and Isabel, were buried at the Valley View Cemetery in Garden City, Kansas.



Mrs. George (Alta) Finnup with her children, Isabel and Frederick

**Newspaper Marriage Announcement  
GEORGE W. FINNUP & ALTA MAY SMITH**

*The Garden City (Kansas) Telegram – Saturday, 28 Jun 1902*

CUPID HAS DONE WELL

Call the Band, Ring the Bells, and Give Congratulations!

A gorgeous wedding took place at the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Smith, located on the east side of the city. On Thursday, 26 Jun 1902, at 8:30 p.m., Miss Alta Smith united in marriage to Mr. George W. Finnup, both of Garden City. Rev. Severance was officiating, using the ring ceremony.

Carnations, lilies, and sweet peas, beautifully decorated the house. Little Gladys Finnup, the niece of the groom, carried the wedding ring.

The bride wore a beautiful white batiste and carried white roses and carnations. The groom wore the conventional black.

About thirty guests were present and delicious refreshments were served.

The happy couple left for Colorado, receiving liberal showers of rice and old shoes.

The bride and groom are among the most popular young people in this city. They will be at home after August 1<sup>st</sup> at 217 Ninth Street.

*(Mr. and Mrs. Finnup returned home from their Colorado honeymoon trip on 16 Jul 1902.)*

## Newspaper Obituaries

### GEORGE W. FINNUP

*The Hutchinson, Kansas News – Sunday, 28 Nov 1937*

#### PROMINENT FINNEY COUNTY MAN IS DEAD

Garden City - George W. Finnup, 71, a veteran businessman and extensive landowner of Finney County, died at his home here yesterday. He had been seriously ill for a week.

He donated the land for the city's Finnup Park as a memorial to his father (Frederick Finnup), a pioneer settler.

### ALTA MAY (SMITH) FINNUP

*The Garden City, Kansas Telegram – Tuesday, 3 Sep 1963*

#### PIONEER GARDEN CITY WOMAN IS DEAD AT 84

Mrs. Alta May Finnup, 84, one of Garden City's pioneers and an early-day school teacher in Finney County, died Monday morning in St. Catherine Hospital. She has been a patient since 30 May.

Mrs. Finnup was born on 3 Feb 1879, at Hepler, in Crawford County, Kansas. She came to Finney County with her parents in a covered wagon. The family homesteaded in the Eminence area northeast of Garden City. On 1 Dec 1890, the family moved to Garden City, where Mrs. Finnup attended school and later graduated in one of the Garden City High School's early graduation classes. She received a teacher's certificate and taught in the neighboring schools.

She was married to George W. Finnup in Garden City on 26 Jun 1902. He died on 21 Nov 1937.

The Finnup family resided at 317 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street until 1923, when they moved to the present residence, just one door north.

Mr. Finnup was associated with his father, Frederick Finnup, in the furniture, lumber, hardware, and grocery business. Later, George W. Finnup became interested in the land business.

Mrs. Finnup was a member of the Community Congregational Church and was active in church activities. She was also a member of the Monday Club and an early member of the City Planning Commission.

Survivors include a daughter, Isabel Finnup, 405 N. 9<sup>th</sup>; a son, Frederick Finnup, 405 N. 9<sup>th</sup>; and one sister, Mrs. F. Berne Carlton, Laguna Beach, California.

The funeral will be Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. in the Community Church, with the Rev. John D. Fitzgerald Jr. officiating. Burial will be in Valley View Cemetery.

### ISABEL FINNUP

*The Garden City (Kansas) Telegram, Friday 1 Dec 1978*

#### ISABEL FINNUP IS DEAD AT 71

Isabel Finnup, 71, 405 N. 9<sup>th</sup>, a descendant of two of Garden City's pioneer families, died Thursday afternoon at St. Catherine Hospital.

Miss Finnup was born in Garden City on 1 May 1907 and had lived here all of her life. She was the daughter of George W. and Alta (Smith) Finnup and the granddaughter of Frederick and Wilhelmina Finnup, who came to Garden City in 1879. The town was named Finnup Park after her grandfather.

Her maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Elijah F. Smith, came to Garden City in 1886. Miss Finnup graduated from Garden City High School in 1925. She worked for several years at the Garden City Company office and later came to the Finnup Land Company, where she worked until her retirement in 1974. During her life, she traveled extensively, visiting England, France, and Switzerland in the 1930s and traveling throughout the United States with her mother.

Miss Finnup was a member of the Community Church and the Monday Club, where she served as treasurer for several years. She was also a past member of the Soroptimist Club.

Surviving is her brother, Frederick Finnup, of the home and several cousins.

The funeral will be at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Community Church, the Rev. Ronald Cebik officiating. Burial will be in Valley View Cemetery. Friends may call at the Garnand Funeral Chapel Friday evening and until noon Saturday.

## FREDERICK FINNUP

The following are bits and pieces of an obituary written by Jane Neufeld.

*The Garden City (Kansas) Telegram, 15 Mar 1988*

### FINNUP KNOWN AS MODEST & GENEROUS

Frederick Finnup died on 14 Mar 1988, at St. Catherine Hospital, of complications from pneumonia. He was born on 7 Dec 1903 and was a lifelong Garden City resident and the third generation of a family famous in this area for its business sense and its philanthropy.

He was the son of George W. and Alta May Smith Finnup and the grandson of Frederick and Wilhelmina "Minnie" Finnup. Frederick was named after his grandfather, who arrived in Garden City in 1879. His father (*George Finnup*) started a land company in the early 1900s and eventually bought and sold more than 1,000 quarter sections of land in Southwest Kansas and Colorado. He was also responsible for developing many acres of wheat and row crops, plus the construction of many businesses on Main Street. George Finnup began a tradition of charity that was carried on by Frederick and his sister, Isabel. In 1902, George Finnup helped refinance Garden City's debt to save the city from bankruptcy. He helped establish libraries in schools throughout the area, gave money to churches, and donated 111 acres for the Finnup Park in Garden City.

Frederick Finnup joined the family land business after graduating from Garden City High School in 1921, Garden City Community College in 1923, and Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, in 1925.

Friends and associates recalled Frederick as a man who was modest but generous and concerned about the community's future. Frederick played golf with Bernice Anderson's late husband and was a longtime friend of the couple. Bernice Anderson thought he was quiet and modest, with a good sense of humor and fun to be around. He always had something good to say about people.

Frederick Finnup never married. He often attended events with his sister, Isabelle, who died in 1978. The two were very different, but they complemented each other. Another longtime associate of the Finnup's was Mary Owens. She said that Isabel took after her father, and Frederick was like his mother. Isabel never met a stranger, and Frederick would stay in the background. The late husband of Mary Owens, Claude, was the park and zoo director here from 1932 to 1970, and they had many conversations with Frederick about the future of the park his father donated to the city. Mary said the Finnup's went through difficult financial times during the Depression but, prospered again and were able to give more to charity. Others who spoke highly of Frederick Finnup were Frank Koksall, Dean Wiley, and Mary Ploger. Each agreed that he was an honest and kind person. That his generosity helped build the city.

He was a member of the Community Church in Garden City. Several cousins, including Mrs.

Dean (Katherine) Hart of Garden City, survive him. The funeral for Frederick Finnup, 84, will be at 2 p.m. Thursday at the Community Church, the Rev. F. Donald Gibson officiating, Garnand Funeral Home in charge. Burial will be at Valley View Cemetery.

### Cemetery Headstones

*The family was buried at the*  
**VALLEY VIEW CEMETERY**  
Garden City, Finney County, Kansas



*Headstone photographs provided by Kathye Snyder-Knight*



*Headstone photographs provided by  
DSH on Findagrave.com – contributor # 47399957*