

FREDERICK FINNUP PARK

Garden City, Finney County, Kansas

Written by Bernice Crooms

Consultant: George W. Finnup

**Additional information added about Frederick Finnup*



FINNUP PARK
The Early Years

The Frederick Finnup (Memorial) Park, the showplace and playground of far Southwest Kansas, is a wooded tract of 100 acres of Arkansas River Valley land in the Southwest corner of Garden City in Finney County. It lies on land, which at one time had been expected to be an active part of the city but was just a little too far away from the town's early boom business tract. The Arkansas River's overflow made the land undesirable and unsuitable for the houses ever built on it. At one time, a good-sized lake was in the midst of what is now the park. For many years, it was mainly pasture and feeding grounds for cattle.

George W. Finnup had come to Garden City in 1879 with his pioneer father, Frederick Finnup, a Union Army Veteran, and the rest of the family. George had long desired to do something substantial for his beloved city in honor of his father. He thought of the idea of giving the town a park. After purchasing even more lots than what he already owned, on May 5, 1919, he and Mrs. Alta Finnup executed a warranty deed giving and granting forever to Garden City, the 100 acres mentioned. On May 8th, they recorded

the warranty deed and later commemorated it by founding the annual “Finnup Day.”

Frederick Finnup died in Garden City on April 6, 1914, and his widow survived him for four months. They were each buried in the Valley View Cemetery in Garden City. Frederick Finnup was born in Germany on Dec 27, 1840, and was brought to the United States when he was five years old. His early life happened in Cincinnati, Ohio. He married Miss Minnie Lohman* on Feb 11, 1866. There were three children; George W. Finnup, Sallie M. Finnup, who is now Mrs. George T. Inge of Garden City, and Edward G. Finnup, who lived nearly all of his life in Garden City. All of the children were born in Vevay, Switzerland County, Indiana, on the Ohio River right below Cincinnati, Ohio. Frederick Finnup, who never lost faith in Garden City or its territory, had a large Lumber and General Mercantile business in Garden City for many years.



THE FINNUP FAMILY

George, Frederick, Edward, Wilhelmina, and Sallie

Photograph provided by Laurie Oshel, Assistant Director at the Finney County Historical Society Library in Garden City, Kansas

The Frederick Finnup Park is adorned with electrical lights on the arch at the Fourth Street entrance and erected soon after 1919, at the cost of \$800, which George W. Finnup paid half.

One of the most notable things about the park is its richness of Nature. The city

officials have taken much pride in it from the beginning. There are new drive areas, shrubs, trees, and flowerbeds, and each year, officials see the park as a more enticing place of natural beauty to which the town's people love to drive or stroll. It is so large it houses many attractions. Its swimming pool is the largest concrete pool in the nation. It is over a city block long and is the park's most distinguishing feature. Its zoo is one of the largest in the country and is in a city with fewer than 50,000 people. It is also a great drawing card for visitors. It houses many diverse animals and fowls and is well cared for by the city. Towards the west end of the park is a softball diamond, lighted by floodlights in the summer. At the northeast corner is an excellent baseball ground with a new concrete grandstand. Near the river bank are large playgrounds for the children and ample picnic spaces with ovens and permanent tables.

Finnup Park is free to the public except for the swimming pool, which bars Negroes. It is not a law (*in 1936*) but a custom practiced over the larger part of Kansas and many other areas. (*Thankfully, this came to an end after World War II when everyone was finally welcome to the swimming pool.*)

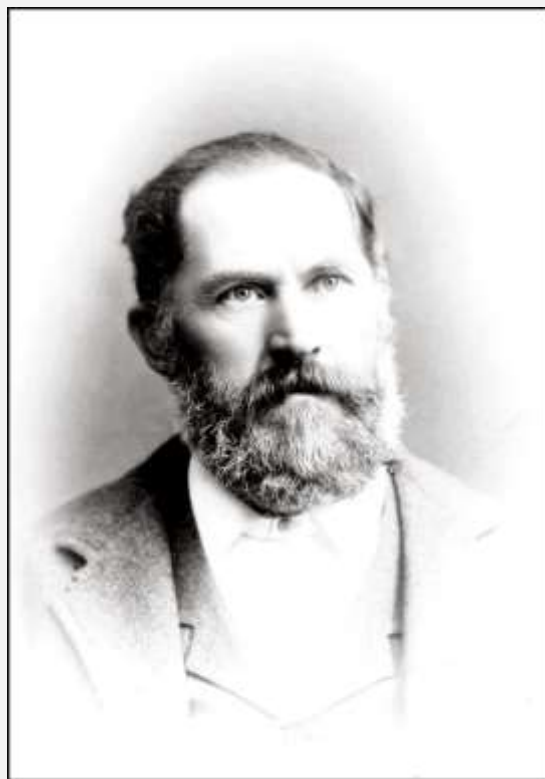


FINNUP PARK
Grounds Caretakers

John Becquet, Sr. (*left*), was the Garden City Finnup Park landscaping superintendent. He was a gardener and caretaker there for several years.

Photograph of John Becquet, Sr. is from the book "Our Becquet Family Heritage" - researched and compiled by Kathye Snyder-Knight

Additional Information
FREDRICK FINNUP



FREDERICK FINNUP

Photograph provided by Laurie Oshel, Assistant Director at the Finney County Historical Society Library in Garden City, Kansas

NEWSPAPER OBITUARY

The Garden City, Kansas Telegram – Friday, 17 April 1914

Frederick Finnup was born in Prussia now a part of the German Empire, on 27 Dec 1840. He died at St. Mary's Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri, after being sick there for 12 days, on Monday afternoon, April 6th. He was 73 years, 3 months, and 9 days old. He had spent part of the winter in Florida and was on his way home when taken sick. He was very cheerful and had strong willpower to get up, but his weakened heart condition was something he could not overcome.

He grew to manhood in Cincinnati, Ohio, and learned his trade there when a young boy, so that years later, the training would be valuable to him. He enlisted at the age of twenty, in the Civil War, in the Ninth Ohio Regiment, and served over three years in the service. His regiment was one of the first in the field and was in the Civil War's early skirmishes. At the Battle of

Chickamauga, they suffered the loss of nearly forty percent of the killed and wounded. General Thomas, one of the bravest and most careful generals in the Union Army, remarked after this battle, "Whenever you meet the Ninth Ohio, lift your hat from off your head." That was one of the greatest compliments a regiment could have for good service. This regiment had its fiftieth anniversary in Cincinnati on 22 Apr 1911. Most of the surviving members were present, numbering some eighty, and only three of Company E, Mr. Finnup's company, being then alive.

At the close of the war, Mr. Finnup moved to Vevay, Indiana, on the Ohio River halfway between Cincinnati and Louisville. There, he and others started the Vevay Furniture Company, which manufactured furniture for several years and sold the same through different southern states. For several years he had the desire to come to Kansas, and after making one trip out, he decided to move to the new state, so the dream of the West came in 1879. After looking at different towns, he met C. J. "Buffalo" Jones down the road and decided he would go and see Garden City, which then had a few houses and no depot, and the few trains on the Santa Fe did not like to stop but just slowed down. The town, at that time, was being surveyed.

Mr. Finnup married Miss Minnie Lohmann in Vevay, Indiana, on 11 Feb 1866. Their three children, George W. Finnup, Sallie M. (Finnup) Inge, and Edward G. Finnup, have always resided in Garden City.

When Mr. Finnup came to Garden City, he was different from most settlers and pioneers in that he had considerable money. He started in the business of buying properties, which later on, he built up. He wanted to continue improving and keep his property in "first-class" shape. Garden City can never forget such men as Mr. Finnup, Mr. Jones, Mr. Stephens, and others who did so much to make the town prosperous by investing all of their money as they made it.

We would also like to add that after knowing Mr. Finnup for thirty years, we have observed that he was a man of strict business integrity. Fair in his dealings with all, he was a man whose example tended to make the world better.

Like the moral hero he was, calmly and serenely, he met the fate common to all humankind at peace with the world. By his death, we remember that the real value of life is in its relation to others. He did not live to himself alone; in the business world, in the more tender family circle, in the small and large affairs of life; our lives have been made richer and happier by knowing him.

He died at an age when there is no necessity for tears, nor for the anguish that scares and does not heal. The fullness of days was his, and as a soldier of our blessed country, we lay him to rest and touch his casket with the fingers of our love.

Additional Information
WILHELMINA "MINNIE" LOHMANN
(Mrs. Frederick Finnup)



WILHELMINA "MINNIE" (LOHMANN) FINNUP

Photograph provided by Laurie Oshel, Assistant Director at the Finney County Historical Society Library in Garden City, Kansas

NEWSPAPER OBITUARY

The Garden City, Kansas Telegram – Friday, 14 August 1914

MRS. FINNUP PASSES AWAY

Mrs. Frederick Finnup was born in Prussia, now a part of the German Empire, on 16 Aug 1840 and died in Garden City, on Friday, August 7th, at 1 p.m. The burial was at Valley View Cemetery on Monday afternoon, August 10th. Her husband preceded her in death just four months ago and was buried simultaneously on April 10th. Had she lived to the 16th, she would have seen a full 74 years.

Her maiden name was Minnie Lohmann, of a family of four brothers and two sisters, of which one brother and one sister remain, neither of which was able to attend the funeral due to ill health. In 1852, her family came to this country and settled in Southern Indiana in Switzerland County.

The deceased was married on 11 Feb 1866 at Vevay, Switzerland County, Indiana, to Frederick Finnup. To this union, there are three children; George W. Finnup, Sallie M. Finnup (*wife of G. T.*

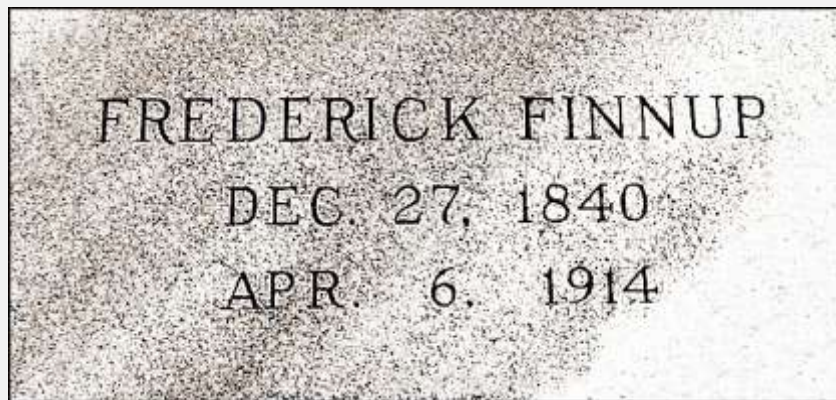
Inge), and Edward G. Finnup, all living in this city. There cannot be suitable and sufficient words of consolation for the loss of a devoted and faithful mother.

The residence of the family in Garden City dates from 1879. She was a patient pioneer mother and homemaker, noted for her unselfishness. She was a member of the Congregational Church.

All that her childrens loving care and attention could do to help their mother, they did. She grieved over the loss of her husband, and it did seem that she had fought the good fight, and her work here on earth was now complete. She was entitled to enter into the joys of her Lord.

Rev. W. E. Brehm (her former pastor) conducted the funeral services.

CEMETERY HEADSTONES



VALLEY VIEW CEMETERY
Garden City, Finney County, Kansas

