

THE FINNEY FAMILY

AND THEIR WABASH & ERIE CANAL CONNECTIONS

By Charles Davis

Joseph Finney Sr., son of John and Ruth Loyd Finney, was born April 2, 1765 in Newcastle county Delaware. From about 1785 to 1825 he lived in Surry county, North Carolina, and Grayson county, Virginia He was a school teacher and taught in the above places. In 1826 he with his second wife and his two youngest children, Richard K. and Margaret, moved to Parke county, Indiana, buying land from the U.S. government in Penn township described as the W½ SW¼ Section 2 Township 16, Range 8. Deed Record 107-49



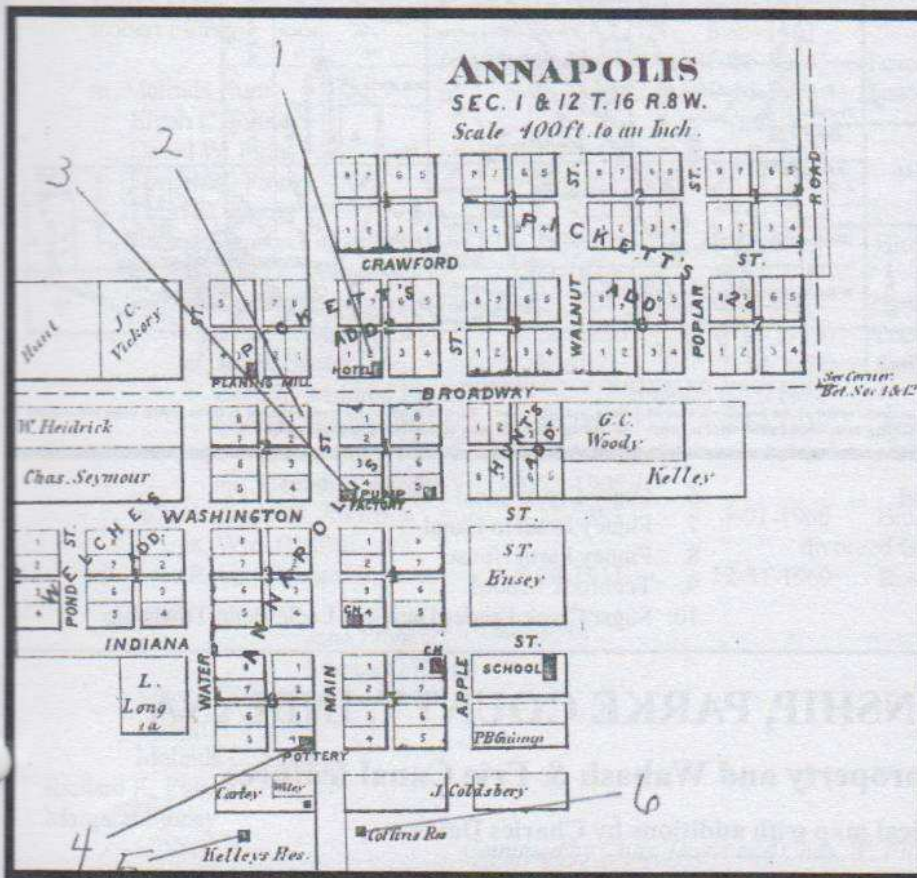
Joseph Finney Sr. built this log home in 1826. Later wooden siding was put over the logs. It is at the dead end of 200 W. Photo Charles Davis

county, Tennessee. While there he served during the War of 1812 in the 2nd Surry Regiment, North Carolina. Around 1815 he and all of his family left Surry county after the war and went to Lawrence county, Indiana. From there they moved to Parke county and settled next to his father in Penn township, also buying land from the government in 1830. They were located about a mile and a half northwest of Annapolis, Indiana. In 1842, Joseph Jr. bought one half interest in lot #1 block #2 in Annapolis from Joseph A. Wright, leaving Thomas Woody as his partner. This shows us what kind of business was conducted by them. Thomas Woody was Annapolis' first merchant and first blacksmith in the town. In 1827, Mr. Woody made all the irons in the first Armiesburg mill for Abner and Jonathon Cox, hunted and fished with Miami Chief Johnnie Green at his village on Leatherwood creek, cleared and cut logs for the first court house in Rockville, and, in 1856, pioneered the town of Tuscola, Illinois starting with one house, which he built. From the description, lot #1 Block #2 probably was a store and blacksmith shop.

After the canal opened up through Parke county in 1848, Joseph Jr. bought out the interest of Mr. Woody on the above lot on October 26, 1849. Then that same day he sold his part to Samuel T. Ensey. Deed Record 11/521-522

Joseph Sr's. oldest son, Joseph Finney Jr. was born Sept., 18, 1784, in Orange county, North Carolina. He married Polly Long on September 10, 1805 in Green

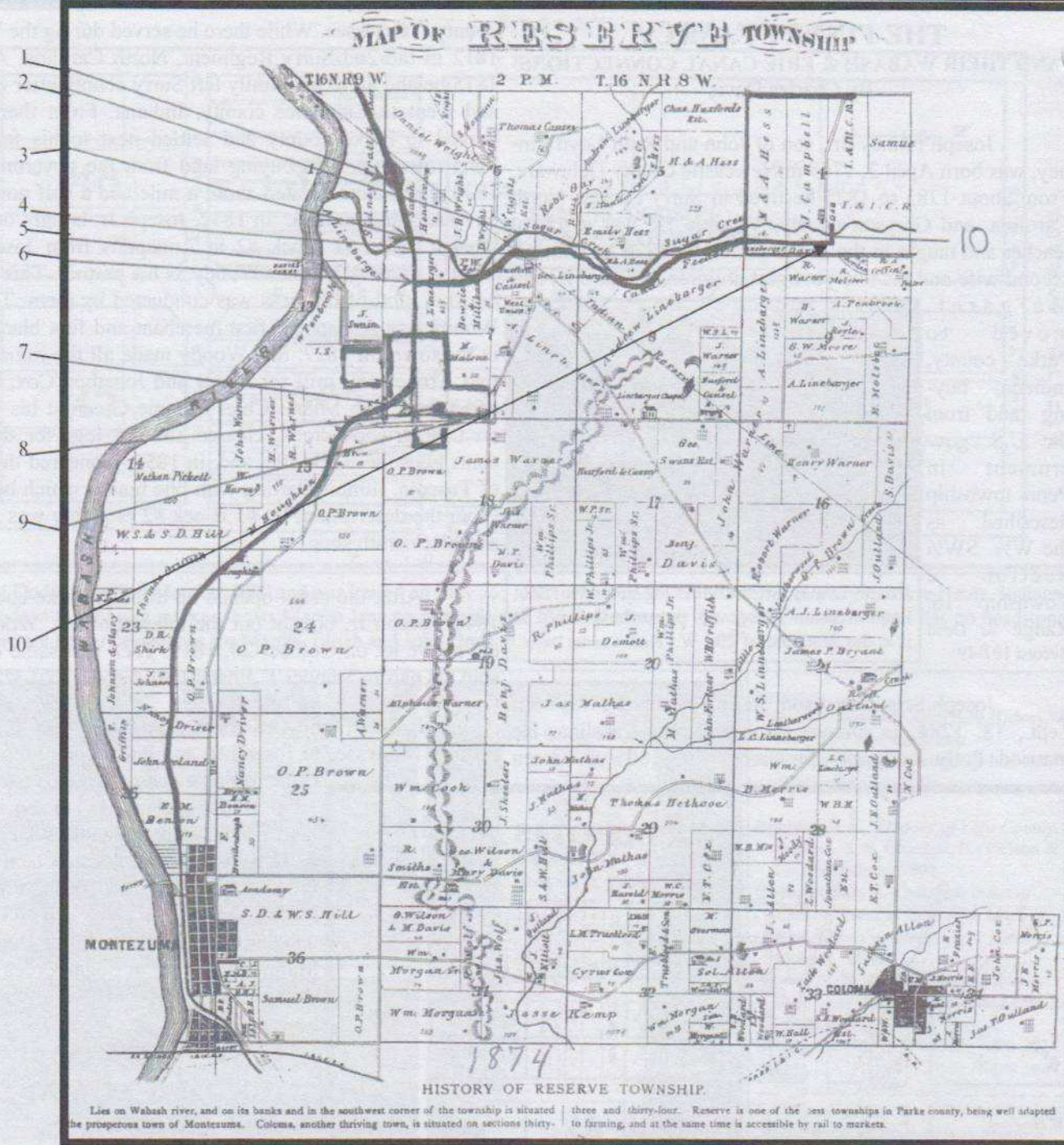
county, Tennessee to Joseph Jr. and Polly Long Finney. He came to Parke county with his parents in 1830 at the age of 24. He too bought land from the government on December 6, 1830, which was located next to his father's farm. D. R. 2/275 Robert married Malinda Hunt on May 10-1835, the daughter of Zimri and Mary Dix Hunt. Malinda grew up in Sugar Creek township around Hunt's Mill that her father built



HISTORICAL MAP OF ANNAPOLIS, PARKE COUNTY, INDIANA

With additions by Charles Davis

1. Samuel T. Ensey Hotel
2. Thomas Woody & Joseph Finney Jr. store and blacksmith shop
3. Joseph A. Gurley pump factory
4. David L. & Ranson G. Atcheson pottery
5. Joseph Cannon grew up here, Wm. P. Stanley built the house
6. Coffin underground railroad



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| 1. Manwarring Basin of Wabash & Erie Canal | 6. Sugar Creek Canal Feeder |
| 2. Star Mills | 7. Finney Road to Canal |
| 3. Sugar Creek Aqueduct No. 11 | 8. Finney Farm House |
| 4. Canal Lock #38 | 9. Tenbrook School |
| 5. Oliver P. Davis Ferry | 10. Sugar Creek Feeder Dam and Lock, Penn Township |

RESERVE TOWNSHIP, PARKE COUNTY, INDIANA

Showing Finney property and Wabash & Erie Canal features

Historical map with additions by Charles Davis

THE HOOSIER PACKET - OCTOBER 2013

in 1830. The mill later became known as Wilkens mill.

Robert's son, Robert Johnson Finney, was born on his father's farm on December 10, 1844. On November 25, 1859, Robert, the father, bought a farm in Reserve township, consisting of 204 acres for \$7320 from William Tenbrook. D.R. 19/300 The Wabash and Erie Canal ran through the middle of this farm.

William Tenbrook's father, William Tenbrook Sr., is the man who named the town of Annapolis in 1826. This is where Robert Johnson Finney worked and grew to manhood on the farm and canal.

Farming was prosperous here and the canal brought them wealth. There was a canal "wide water" at this point that was contained by a bluff on the east side or berm side of it that contained the water. On the map at number 5 you can see a road going north to the wide water for shipping from the farm. Number 6 was high land where the Finney farm house stood and number 9 was the location of the local school, a one acre lot excepted in the land deed

above. This school was deeded to the township trustees on August 14, 1858 by William Tenbrook. D.R. 17/582.

On March 9, 1861, Robert Finney died and was laid to rest in the Linebarger cemetery. There is no obituary or cause of death known. His estate was probated and recorded in Book 21, page 208. His wife Malinda vs. Adult children, Elijah C., David W., Daniel W., and Minors: Zimri D., Robert J., Mary E., Joseph H., and Malinda C. each got a share. They didn't start selling the estate until October 20, 1865 at which time they sold the 160 acre farm in Penn township. They kept and operated the farm in Reserve township until November 14, 1868 when they sold the 62 acres on the west side of the Wabash and Erie Canal to Andrew Linebarger for \$4,000. D. R. 27/574 Then on November 16, 1868, Malinda, Robert's wife, sold the farm home and the 62 acres on the east side of the canal to Charles and Benjamin Huxford for \$6,450 along with other parcels. D. R. 29/1

When the Civil War began, Robert Johnson Finney worked on the Finney farm until February 13, 1865 when

| Name | Birth/Place | Death | Burial/Place | Marriage |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Joseph Finney Sr. | 4-02-1765 DE | 1835 | Rawlins Cem. Parke Co. IN | |
| m1. Rachel Barkey | | 1800 before | | |
| m2. Ann | 1773 | | | |
| Joseph Finney Jr. | 9-18-1784 NC | 3-18-1867 | Linebarger Cem. Parke Co. IN | |
| m. Polly Long | 4-02-1786 VA | 9-27-1872 | " " " " Green Co. TN | 9-10-1805 |
| Robert Finney | 8-23-1886 TN | 3-09-1861 | " " " " " " | |
| m. Malinda Hunt | removed and buried in 9-28-1815 | 10-16-1896 | Tuscola, IL | |
| Elijah C. Finney | | 10-16-1896 | Tuscola, IL | (parents Zimri and Mary Dix Hunt) |
| David W. Finney | | | | |
| Daniel W. Finney | | | | |
| Zimri D. Finney | | | | |
| Robert Johnson Finney | 12-10-1844 | 12-11-1912 | Bloomigdale, IN | |
| m1. Melissa D. Thompson | 2-09-1845 | 9-04-1909 | " (father Morris Thompson of Lodi) | 7-08-1867 |
| Infant daughter | 7-25-1868 | 7-27-1868 | Rawlins Cem. Parke Co. IN | |
| Charles Edward Finney | 4-29-1869 | 9-13-1954 | Tucson, AZ | |
| m. Jessie Groce | 11-30-1871 | 1-14-1952 | San Diego, CA | 6-20-1895 |
| Dorothy Mildred Finney | | infant 6-11-1898 | | |
| Charles Wesley Finney | 11-30-1899 | 5-14-1948 | San Diego, CA | |
| m1. Helen Gladys Cline | 4-00-1898 | | | divorced 5-10-1921 3-10-1921 |
| m2. Beulah B. Birden | 3-23-1905 | | | 6-30-1928 |
| m2. Gertrude M. Atkinson | 4-27-1883 | 7-01-1960 | Bloomigdale, IN | 12-01-1910 |
| m. Wm. Griffith | | | divorced Griffith 6-17-1925 and took back Finney name | |
| Robert Howard Finney | 9-28-1911 | 12-31-1969 | Roselawn, Terre Haute | |
| m. | | | | |
| Jane Finney | | | | |
| Michael Finney | | | | |
| Mary E. Finney | | | | |
| Joseph H. Finney | | | | |
| Malinda C. Finney | | | | |
| Richard K. Finney | | | | |
| Margaret Finney | | | | |

Compiled by Chas. Davis and Chas. W. Finney

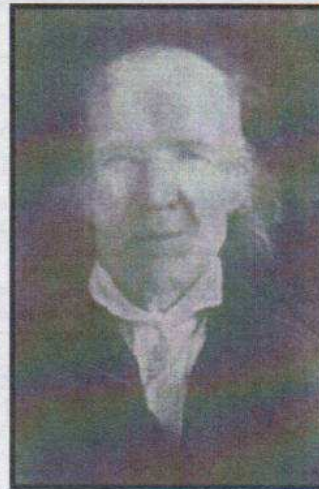
W.D. Mull was in command, under orders of Gen. Kezyanowski, at Stevenson. There the 149th had the pleasure of receiving the surrender of Roddy's and Pillow's forces, to the number of several thousand. The war ended before they had a chance to do anything, no casualties in battle, little sickness and only two or three deaths. The 149th passed the summer on guard duty, was returned to Indianapolis, and mustered out in 1865. When Robert returned home, he married Malissa D. Thompson on July 8, 1867. In 1868, his mother and some of his siblings moved to Tuscola, Illinois. His brothers went into businesses from Tuscola to Neosho Falls, Kansas. Robert remained in Parke county. For many years he lived in Bloomingdale.

In 1871, Robert Johnson Finney moved his family to Neosho Falls, Kansas. They lived there for two years. He was there at the time the Missouri-Kansas-Texas railroad was being built southward across the Indian nation. It issued a call in the summer of 1871 for carpenters to go as far as Sherman to build depots along the new route ahead of the rails. The crew of which he was foreman built stations at Sherman, Denison and Marshall, Texas, and at several points in eastern Oklahoma near Vinita. After this two year period he moved his family back to Parke county, Indiana and settled in Bloomingdale. There he ran a grocery store. He bought the Post Office and was in the mail service on the railroad from Indianapolis to Decatur for 28 years.

Malinda Hunt Finney became ill at Tuscola, Illinois and on her death bed she requested her son Elijah to return to Parke county, dig up her husband, Robert Finney, bring his remains to Tuscola, and bury them at her side. Malinda and Robert Finney were buried October 16, 1896 in Tuscola.

Robert Johnson Finney's wife Melissa died on September 4, 1909, and was buried in the Bloomingdale cemetery in Parke county, Indiana. Her obituary says, "she was a dear lover of nature and never so happy as when in God's outdoors with His creatures." Robert J. was elected sheriff of Parke county in 1908 and re-elected in 1910. He married Gertrude Atkinson on December 1, 1910. Their son Robert Howard Finney was born on September 28, 1911. Robert J. died on December 11, 1912, before his second term of sheriff was over. His estate was probated. Gertrude then married William Griffith but divorced him later on June 17, 1925 and took back the name of Finney. She raised Robert H. to manhood. Probate Book 28.321 January Term 1930 shows Gertrude sold the Post Office on lot 5 block 9 Newlins Addition to William Cox on April 1, 1930.

Robert Howard Finney adopted the middle name of his father "Johnson" at adulthood. He served in World War II, had a family, died at Terre Haute and was buried in



JOSEPH FINNEY JR.
 B. 9-18-1784
 D. 3-18-1867
 Buried
 Linebarger Cemetery near
 West Union, Parke County,
 Indiana



**MELISSA THOMPSON
 FINNEY**
 B. 2-09-1845
 D. 9-04-1909
 From her obituary in the
Rockville Republican
 September 8, 1909

Roselawn Cemetery in 1969. His half-brother, Charles Edward, died at Tucson, Arizona on September 9, 1954. Charles Edward's son, Charles Wesley Finney, died at San Diego, California on May 14, 1948. He had served as an editor of the San Diego *Tribune-Sun* since 1944. The Finney family with all its branches was a large one and many descendants survive today. This was their story and their Wabash and Erie Canal connections.

Sources:

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- Finney, Malinda Hunt # 97920243
- Finney, Joseph Harrison # 96435087
- Finney, Robert # 979202001
- Finney, Elijah Cook #59004323
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- "Finney, Melissa obituary," *Rockville Republican*. 9-8-1909.
- "Finney, Robert Johnson obituary," *Rockville Republican*. 12-11-1912.
- Parke County Cemetery Records. Rockville, Indiana library.
- Probate records in basement of Rockville court house