

The Finlays of Moggill

By Robert Finlay, Great-great-grandson of William John Finlay

William John Finlay was born on 10 June 1839, at Broughshane in Antrim, Northern Ireland. Broughshane was a small village in the 19th century nestled at the foot of Slemish Mountain, the home of St Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. William was the only son of Samuel & Margaret Finlay. On 25 August 1863, William married Mary Margaret Taylor, also an Antrim native, born in 1840. She was the daughter of David and Hannah Taylor. The marriage took place at Loughguile, a small village in County Antrim about 14 miles (22 km) from Broughshane.



Present-day Broughshane, Northern Ireland 2016
Source: Robert Finlay

In 1865, William and Mary together with young David, left Ireland and made for England. They left the port of Plymouth on 11 March aboard the *Lobelia*, an 824-ton immigrant steamer. There were 338 immigrants on the ship and soon after sailing, between 50 and 60 passengers became sick with “ship fever,” a kind of typhus common in the conditions of crowded immigrant ships. Sadly, nine cases proved fatal and the journey was made worse by the fact that the ship lost her main top and gallant-top masts and jib-boom (part of the bowsprit).¹ When the ship arrived in Moreton Bay on 3 July, she was towed by the steamer SS *Platypus* to

the Quarantine Station at Dunwich on Stradbroke Island.² Unfortunately, the *Platypus* “failed in accomplishing her objective” and cast off the ship between Mud Island and St Helena.³ Five days later, the steamer *Kate* was sent out to tow the *Lobelia* on the remaining passage to Dunwich.⁴ The immigrants languished at Dunwich for a full two weeks before Dr Purdie, the Health Officer allowed the ship *pratique* (a clean bill of health) and on 25 July, the passengers finally disembarked in Brisbane.⁵

REGISTER OF RE-ARRANGEMENTS. Brisbane 226 LOBELIA from Plymouth March 1865				
NAME	EXPIRATION OR AGREEMENT.	AGE	SEX AND RELATION AND BY WHOM.	GENERAL REMARKS, SUCH AS TRANSFER, INTERLUDE, DEATH, ETC., WITH DATE OF EVENT AND BRIEF PARTICULARS.
Enright	Thomas 20		Male	William 5
Doyle	Margaret 27		Female	Lizzie 2
"	John 21		Male	John 21
Finlay	William 20		Male	John 23
"	Mary 20		Female	Nancy 23
"	David 21		Male	James 25

Passenger list for the *Lobelia* which reached Moreton Bay on 3 July but spent a further three weeks awaiting quarantine clearance. Queensland State Archives Item ID DR8369

The Finlay family initially settled at Oxley and sometime later, they moved to Moggill and established a dairy farm at a location known at the time as Lesley Hill on Moggill Road. They took up portions 10 and 11 which ran from Moggill Road down to the Brisbane River near the centre of present-day Bellbowrie. In 1871, it was noted that William was growing corn, potatoes, and cotton on 17 acres.⁶

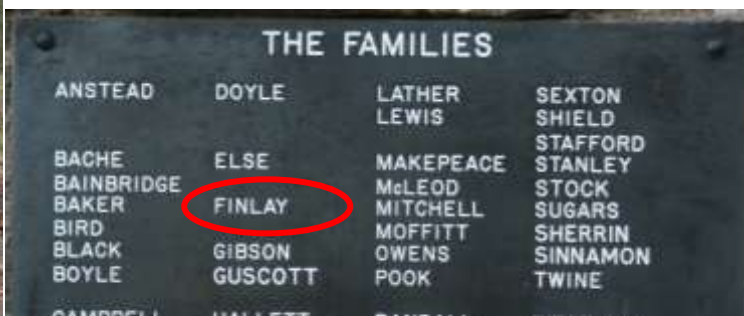


William John Finlay. Photo: Ancestry.com

William Finlay took an active role in the community. He was a member of Moggill State School Committee, a Justice of the Peace and a member of the Indooroopilly Divisional Board. While on the Board, he presented silver medals to each child at Moggill State School.⁷ He was active in lobbying for improvements and funding for the Moggill Ferry and local road network and often spoke against the Federation of Australian states prior to amalgamation.⁸ He was described as industrious and respected by all who knew him. He regularly attended political meetings at the school: in 1878, at a “very unanimous and agreeable meeting,” he supported the candidate for the State electorate of Bundamba, William Hendren and again in 1888, he took the chair at a meeting to support Charles Hardie Buzacott, the candidate for Oxley.⁹ Hardie was elected and went on to be Postmaster General.

William and Mary were active members of Moggill Methodist Church and many years after their deaths, on the Church’s Diamond Jubilee “a handsome pulpit bible” was presented by their sons and daughters in their memory.¹⁰

While acting as Secretary of the School committee in 1886, he advocated for the school to remain open in the face of falling attendance due to the prevalence of fever and because children were being kept at home during the dry weather to water the cattle. He believed that because “coal and good freestone has been found in the neighbourhood of the School, the population is likely to increase in the future.”¹¹ His relationship with the School, however, did not get off to a good start. William took exception to the fact that the Head Teacher’s daughter Isabella Watt was not qualified to teach needlework. In fact, there was general dissatisfaction with the sewing classes such that attendance had fallen to a single student. William Finlay had approached Allan Watt, the Head Teacher, to tell him that his daughter would not be attending needlework to which Mr Watt retorted that the District Inspector expected “every girl above 1st Class Standard to produce (sewing) samplers.”



Moggill Pioneer Cemetery (20 January 2021) showing the memorial cairn with names of pioneer families. Source: Robert Finlay

Moggill
1st May 1880

Dear Sir

I write this in answer to your note dated the 11th inst. it was entirely my fault ~~not~~ not answering the letter you sent before about the sewing.

If you had any one competent to teach sewing we would only be too glad to have them taught sewing but you know you have not I think it is only wasting their time keeping them at it we do not intend sending any ~~more~~ samples nor yet paying for any.

you know very well that your daughter is not fit to teach sewing

If you think proper to keep the children idle during sewing ours you can do so if I am not satisfied I suppose I will have to fetch them home during sewing ours I have no doubt you will do your duty to them I have always done my best to keep them as regular at school as possible to keep up the attendance and also urged upon others to do the same

Yours Respectfully
Wm. Finlay

William Finlay's letter to Allan Watt, the Teacher of Moggill State School, complaining that his "daughter is not fit to teach sewing." Queensland State Archives, Item ITM 15418

William and Mary had nine children. David was the first born in Castle Quarter, Antrim and celebrated his first birthday aboard the *Lobelia*, the day the family arrived in Moreton Bay on 3 July 1865. Their first daughter, Rebecca arrived on 19 July 1867 in Moggill followed by another son, Samuel, also born in Moggill on 20 April 1869.

A further six children were all born in Moggill: Francis James Finlay (20 April 1869), Hannah Finlay (1 June 1872), Mary Margaret Finlay (3 September 1874), Ann Eliza Finlay (3 February 1877), Frederick William Finlay (7 September 1878) and Harriet Elizabeth Finlay (23 April 1882).

William John died in Moggill on 28 September 1905 at the age of 66 and Mary died in Moggill on 15 July 1909 aged 69.¹² They are both buried in the Moggill Pioneer Cemetery.

All of William and Mary's nine children reached adulthood although Samuel died at the age of 18, when he drowned at Bremer Junction while swimming with his brothers David and Francis on 18 January 1888. The Police Magistrate's inquiry records the details of the sad event. Samuel could "only swim a few strokes" and was walking along the sand up to his waist in water. When he started swimming, the strong current "swept him out of his depth." Samuel called out to his brother "Davie, it is too deep to bathe here"

and before he could be rescued, he sank beneath the water.¹³ He is buried in the Moggill Pioneer Cemetery.



Swimming at Bremer Junction early 1900s. Source: Robert Finlay

The remaining eight children married and gave William and Mary a total of 30 grandchildren. David married Isabella Begg Reid on 25 April 1888 and they had one daughter named Jane. David then married Bridget Letitia McMahon on 23 July 1907 but there are no known children from this union. David died on 26 December 1933 at the age of 69 and is buried at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum Cemetery in Dunwich on North Stradbroke Island,

DUNWICH BENEVOLENT ASYLUM.

No. *202/33* INMATE'S NAME *FINLAY, DAVID*

Date of Admission	<i>16. 11. 33</i>	Where Admitted	<i>Brisbane</i>	Remarks	
Case of Admission	<i>R. Leg Amputated</i>		Remarks	<i>Since 1865 in Queensland - Farming for himself in the Burnett District - Railway construction work</i>	
Age	<i>69</i>	Origin	<i>Wexford, Ireland</i>	Remarks	<i>Wexford County, Ireland - was gardener at Bendigo</i>
Religion	<i>Meth.</i>	Education	<i>R. 1807</i>	Remarks	<i>since last December by Brisbane Hospital</i>
Trade	<i>Farmer</i>	Married to	<i>John Finlay Farmer</i>	Remarks	<i>last January in the Brisbane Hospital</i>
Father's Name and Profession	<i>John Finlay Farmer</i>		Remarks	<i>By amputation</i>	
Mother's Name and Profession	<i>Mary Finlay</i>		Remarks	<i>By amputation</i>	
Wife's Name	<i>Isabella Reid</i>		Remarks	<i>By amputation</i>	
Age when Married	<i>26</i>	Where Married	<i>Brisbane, Queensland</i>	Remarks	<i>No money to pay for</i>
Children	<i>Miss Jane Cole - Clarke</i>		Remarks	<i>By amputation</i>	
Other Relatives	<i>782 Brunswick St. New Farm</i>		Remarks	<i>From his history due to a malignant growth</i>	
	<i>Bro. James J. Finlay</i>		Remarks	<i>resulting from an old ulcer</i>	
	<i>Down St. North Brisbane</i>		Remarks		

Last of illness			Death, Discharge, etc.		
From	To	Date Rec'd.	Part	Date	Remarks
		<i>7</i>		<i>Nov 33</i>	<i>Admitted</i>
					<i>Not Seen 25. 12. 33</i>
					<i>Died 26. 12. 33</i>
					<i>Cause 2 hard heart</i>
					<i>Heart failed</i>

CLINICAL RECORD.

Certified to Admittee as follows from *Pro Certificate*

By amputation

Remarks

Dunwich Benevolent Asylum Hospital records for David Finlay showing his employment history and amputation of his right leg following "a malignant growth resulting from an old ulcer." Queensland State Archives. Item ID DR51167



The Hallett headstone in Ipswich General Cemetery. Photo: Australian Cemeteries Index

Rebecca Finlay married Henry Herbert Hallett on 10 December 1885. The bride “who was much admired, was attired in an exquisite cream dress.” The *Queensland Figaro's At Home* reporter noted that “The impatient bride-groom found it quite impossible to wait for the conclusion of the ceremony, to taste the nectar of his first conjugal kiss but tenderly saluted his bride (!)”¹⁴ Rebecca died on 30 August 1912 at the age of 45 but Henry, who was born in Brisbane on 17 April 1860, reached the grand age of 91 years when he died in Ipswich on 9 July 1951. Rebecca and Henry are both buried in Ipswich General Cemetery.

Francis James Finlay was born on 20 April 1869. He married Ann Bannister on 10 June 1896. They had five children: William, Leonard, Mary, Francis and Anna. Ann passed away on 17 September 1931; Francis worked as an engine driver in the coal mines at Tivoli; he died in North Ipswich on 6 September 1934.¹⁵

Hannah Finlay was born on 1 June 1872. She married another Moggill resident, Sidney Herbert Hucker on 6 May 1896 and moved to Maryborough. Sidney became a long-standing member of the the Protestant Alliance Friendly Society Excelsior Lodge and was also a Trustee of the Methodist Church.¹⁶ Hannah and Sidney had five children: Hannah, Ivy, Sidney, Arthur and Ruby.

Mary Margaret Finlay was born on 3 September 1874. She died on 28 February 1908 at the age of 33 and is buried in the Moggill Pioneer Cemetery. Mary never married.¹⁷

Ann Eliza Finlay was born on 3 February 1877. She was married to Frederick Charles Sugars on 9 August 1899 by the Rev W Hudson at the Sugars residence.¹⁸ Ann died in Brisbane on 27 January 1954 at the age of 76. Frederick was born in Queensland on 18 June 1873; he worked in Sugars Quarry which had been opened by his father and was tragically killed on 23 November 1934 when “about a ton of rock” fell from the cliff face and pinned him to the ground.¹⁹ He is buried in the Moggill Pioneer Cemetery. They had six children. Sophia, Harold, Frederick William, Myrtle, Mary, and Eric.

Frederick William Finlay was born on 7 September 1878. He died in Queensland on 3 May 1956 at the age



Francis and Ann in later life with son William and his wife Ann Finlay (nee McLaren) and children Bill, Don and Agnes. Source: Robert Finlay

of 77. At the age of 34, Frederick married Florence Jane Irving on 2 April 1913 in Brisbane when she was 33 years old. They had five daughters: Agnes, Muriel, Harriet, Ivy and Hazel. Florence Jane was born in Queensland on 19 March 1880. She reached 47 years of age and died at her home at Canning Street in North Ipswich on 17 January 1928. Florence was buried at Ipswich General Cemetery in Ipswich.



Frederick Finlay's memorial in Ipswich General Cemetery. Photo: FindaGrave.com

Harriet Elizabeth Finlay was born on 23 April 1882 and married William Percival Sherrin on 3 July 1903. She died in Queensland on 14 November 1971 at the age of 89. They had eight children: Norman, Beatrice, Arthur, Vera, Hilda, William, Leonard and Leslie



Harriet and William later in life. Photo: Ancestry.com

The Finlay farms were sold in 1910 in three lots, 20 acres in Subdivision 2, Portion 11 and Portion 10 consisting of 41 acres. Improvements were listed as "a well-built House, Out-Buildings securely Fenced, and Watered by the Brisbane River."²⁰

Mary being a woman of her own means and ability is evidenced by the sale on the same date of her own property, portion 100 of 23 acres at Chuwar.

With the presentation of the "handsome pulpit bible" to Moggill Methodist Church in 1928 by Councillor Heiner, a family friend, the Finlay connection with Moggill was at an end, the children moving to Mt Crosby, Bremer Junction, Chuwar, Tivoli and Ipswich.

Bibliography

Dunwich Benevolent Society Admission Register 26 December 1933, Queensland State Archives. Item ID DR51167

Moggill Pioneer Cemetery burial register (<https://moggillhistorical.au>)

Find a Grave <https://www.findagrave.com/>

References

- ¹ *The Brisbane Courier* Tuesday 11 July 1865, p.2
- ² *The Brisbane Courier* Thursday 6 July 1865, p.2
- ³ *The Brisbane Courier* Saturday 8 July 1865, p.4
- ⁴ *The Brisbane Courier* Monday 10 July 1865, p.2
- ⁵ *Queensland Times* Tuesday 25 July 1885, p.3
- ⁶ *Queensland Times* Saturday 10 June 1871, p.4
- ⁷ *The Telegraph* 26 June 1897, p.4
- ⁸ *The Telegraph* 12 September 1900, p.2
- ⁹ *Queensland Times* Saturday 26 October 1878, p.3 and *Brisbane Courier* Thursday 17 May 1888, p.6
- ¹⁰ *Brisbane Courier* 7 May 1928, p.18
- ¹¹ Queensland State Archives, School Correspondence Files Item ITM 15418
- ¹² *Queensland Times* 26 September 1905, p.9 & 16 July 1909, p.4 and *The Telegraph* 5 October 1905, p.7
- ¹³ *The Telegraph* 25 January 1888, p.10
- ¹⁴ *Queensland Figaro* 19 December 1885, p.35
- ¹⁵ *Queensland Times* 7 September 1934, p.1 and *South Coast Bulletin* 7 September 1934, p.6
- ¹⁶ *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser* 15 May 1916, p. 5
- ¹⁷ *Queensland Times* 27 February 1909, p.4
- ¹⁸ *The Telegraph* 21 August 1899, p.4
- ¹⁹ *Courier Mail* 24 November 1934, p.18.
- ²⁰ *Queensland Times* 10 February 1910, p.8