

## **Robert Johnson (R.J.) Ackley**

*(from "Yearbook of Garden City, Kansas and Biographical Sketches of Leading Citizens"*

*- Compiled by Frank L. Stowell, 1936)*



County commissioner of Finney county eight years, from 1926 to 1932, and for more than twenty years a leading figure in cooperative farm organizations, Robert Johnson Ackley was born October 10, 1874, near Winchester, Kansas. His parents, Uriah Sanford Ackley and Margaret Varner Ackley, were pioneers of Leavenworth county. His father was a Civil War veteran, having served four years in the Union army, doing scout work along the Santa Fe trail.

R.J. Ackley graduated from the Effingham, Kansas, high school in 1894. The Effingham school was the second in Kansas that was built under the Barnes law. After teaching school two years Mr. Ackley began farming, first in northeast Kansas, then in Osborne county.

He moved to Finney county March 8, 1906, and for two years was engaged in the real estate business, being associated for a time with T.M. Jones. When he bought a tract of raw land twelve miles northeast of Garden City he erected a set of improvements and moved to his ranch, where he built up a herd of registered Shorthorn cattle.

In 1925, Mr. Ackley purchased a 50-acre farm two miles west of Garden City to which he moved and where he lived until 1933, when he returned to the ranch.

Mr. Ackley assisted in organizing the first cooperative equity exchange in Garden City, and since 1921 has been chairman of the board of directors of the present Garden City Cooperative Equity Exchange, which was reorganized in 1919. In 1929 he helped organize the Garden City Cooperative Oil company, a subsidiary of the Equity Exchange. He is a director and member of the executive board of the

Consumers' Cooperative association of North Kansas City, Missouri. This is one of the first and one of the largest cooperative distributing organizations in the United States.

The new Finney county courthouse was built during Mr. Ackley's term as county commissioner, and he took a prominent part in securing this new building for the county.

Robert J. Ackley was married February 22, 1898, in Effingham, Kansas to Adelia May Grable, daughter of Thomas R. and Mary E. Grable. They have one son: Floyd Elmer, and are raising an orphan boy, Edgar Milton Anderson. Mr. Ackley's father died in January, 1919, and his mother died in 1879. Mrs. Ackley's mother died September 5, 1917. Mr. Grable, who for several years was a prominent farmer of Finney county, is now retired and lives with his children, Mrs. Ackley and T.E. Grable.