

JOSEPH VINCENT KECK & JULIA MOSER



Joseph Vincent Keck was born on 13 Apr 1870 in Hawks, Vinton Co, OH, son of Andrew Keck and Sarah Jane Sweeney. He was baptized in St. Mary's Catholic Church in Minerton, OH on 8 May 1870.¹ In 1878 he moved with his family to Trowbridge, IL. Four of his siblings died between 1881-1883 and his mother, Sarah, died in 1884, all in Trowbridge. His father, Andrew, was so filled with grief that he packed up all the remaining children and went West to Coffeerville, KS.² Less than two years later they returned to Illinois and settled in Decatur.



His father was an invalid so Joe and his siblings had to care for him. Andrew lived at his home at 200 Broadway (MLK) with Joe, Bill, and Florence, for a time. The 1896 Decatur City Directory lists him living at 849 E. William with his father and his sister Florence. It also lists the Keck & Co. saloon, Joseph V. Keck, owner.³ Joe was single and 27 yrs. old in 1897 when his father, Andrew, died.

On 24 Nov 1903 at 33 yrs. of age he married **Julia Moser**, daughter of Frank Moser and Julia Donner, also members of St. James Catholic Church in Decatur. She was 26 yrs. old.⁴ Julia was the 7th of 19 children who grew up on the Moser dairy farm on the outskirts of Decatur.



They had eight children:

Leonard	Nov 12, 1905	married Lucille Goodmiller
Thomas	Jun 2, 1907	married Beata Keck
John	Mar 18, 1909	married Mary Conley & Helen Stoehr
Florence	Oct 4, 1911	married Jim Heatherton
Edward	Mar 29, 1914	died at age 7
Beatrice	Nov 22, 1915	never married
Delores	Oct 13, 1918	married Jim Layton
Elizabeth	Jun 9 1920	married Ken Meyer



The 1910 census lists Joe's occupation as furniture salesman.⁵ He worked as a bartender for \$7/week till 1914 when Adolf Mueller offered him a job. Mueller frequented the bar where Joe served drinks. He quit the bartenders' union in 1914.⁶ He worked as a machinist at Mueller Brass Works for 19 years (1914-1939)⁷ and was laid off before he qualified for pension. He always hoped to be called back but never was. The 1910 and 1920 census shows them living at 1262 E. Main St. In Oct. 1921 Eddie died at the age of 7 of diphtheria. Leonard and Thomas were away at St. Mary's Mission House in Techny, IL studying for the priesthood. They both graduated from high school there but then dropped out of the seminary.

They were faithful members of St. James Catholic Church which was only three blocks away. They walked to church for Mass every Sunday and for devotions during the week. They instilled their children with their faith and devotion. The children all attended St. James Grade School.

¹ St. Mary's Catholic Church records

² Transcription of tape recorded Oct. 1881 by Charles Keck & sent to JWP Keck

³ 1900 census Decatur, Macon Co, IL

⁴ Marriage license

⁵ 1910 census Decatur, Macon Co, IL

⁶ Bartenders International League, Withdrawal Card

⁷ J.V. Keck obituary

Builds His Own Home



The house was built this spring, completed in early August. It was designed according to plans of J. V. Keck. Four bedrooms, two bathrooms, kitchen, sewing room, pantry, front and back stairs, dining room and living room, vestibule and several spacious closets are most conveniently arranged. Seven doors open into the kitchen. Joe Keck has been in the Mueller employe for about nine years, working in Department 9. Thomas Keck, one of his sons, has recently located in Department 27.

During the school year the house was filled with Tom's kids who waited there after school for dad to drive them home. They attended St. James School just a short walk away. Joe & Julia used the basement a lot for cooking, eating, washing, ironing, and for the grandchildren to play in after school. The living room upstairs was off limits to grandchildren. It was always a special treat when she took one of her grandchildren into her pantry to get one of her delicious home-made cookies.

Julia was a very hard worker. She did laundry for others to earn their meager income. She sewed most of the family's clothes and was an excellent quilter. Joe helped Tom at his sign painting shop for several years. Julia really enjoyed working in her very nice flower garden in back and also grew some vegetables. In the early '50s both Joe and Julia assembled Picture Craft (paint-by-number kits) in their basement as Tom's employees.



Joe was an extremely patient and quite husband, who tolerated Julia's demanding nature very well. He enjoyed his pipe and even grew his own tobacco in the '40s & '50s. He loved to bounce his grandchildren on his knee and sing little ditties to them. In his later years he could usually be seen in his rocking chair on the porch or in the dining room, sometimes with his pipe, other times with his rosary.

Joe & Julia celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1953. Julia died at age 79 of a heart condition on May 13, 1957. She is buried in Calvary Cemetery in Decatur.

After Julia's death Joe continued to live in the home on Clay Street with Beatrice who never

When her father died in 1925, Julia inherited \$21,000.⁸ She used the money to have a house built in 1926 on E. Clay St. which Joe helped design. It cost \$7,500 (a lot of money in those days) and was their pride and joy. The 1930 census shows them living at 1074 E. Clay with John and the four daughters at home yet and Joe as a brass finisher at Mueller's Brass Works. Leonard and Tom had married shortly before this and had moved away. John is working as a pressman at the Decatur newspaper and Florence is working at the Decatur Garment Co. as a stenographer. Beatrice (14) is not attending school but Dolores (11) and Betty (9) are in school.

John married Mary Conley in 1933 and Florence married Jim Heatherton in 1934. Betty married Ken Meyer in 1944 and Dolores married Jim Layton in 1948. This photo was taken at the Layton wedding.



1948 - Betty, Beatrice, Julia, Joe, Dolores, Florence; Tom, Len, John



⁸ Frank Moser will

married and keep up the house for him. Dolores died of breast cancer in 1958. In his last years he started showing signs of senility and once even started a fire in the basement that almost caught the house on fire.



1957 - Tom, John, Len; Beatrice, Florence, Joe, Betty, Dolores

Joe lived to be 90 yrs. old. He died on Oct 27, 1960 of respiratory failure. He is buried in Calvary Cemetery alongside his wife.



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(to be continued)

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