

## FRANK MOSER & JULIA DONNER



**Frank MOSER** was born on 16 Sep 1843<sup>1</sup> in Buhlthal, which was a short distance south of Baden in the Black Forest province of Germany. Tradition gives his birthplace as Kappel<sup>2</sup> or Windik, Baden. Frank was the fourth of nine children of Joseph Moser, a vineyard operator, and Josepha Beirly. He was 11 yrs old when his father died in 1854. He attended school from 6 to 14 years of age and worked in the family vineyard. His passport was issued 18 Mar 1867, Buehl, Grossherzogtum Baden.<sup>3</sup> He was described as 23 years old, with brown hair and eyes and was a Cotswald



shepherd.<sup>3</sup> He probably emigrated with his brother Connel to avoid conscription into army. In 1867 at 24 yrs. he sailed on the SS Mississippi from LaHavre and reached New York on April 20<sup>4</sup>, after seventeen days on rough seas.<sup>2</sup>

Frank found work at once on a farm in NJ and then in NY operating an engine for \$5/week. He met **Julia Donner** who was born on 7 Sep 1848<sup>5</sup> in Schoenlanke,<sup>6</sup> northwest of Poznan in Posen and at 19 yrs immigrated to the USA in 1867, the same year as Frank. It is not known how they met. She was probably Lutheran. They married as Catholics in St. Johannes Lutheran Church in Newark, NJ on May 3, 1869. (This was the only church in the vicinity.) He was 26 yrs; she was 21 yrs. She attended Catholic Church after marrying Frank and converted to Catholicism around 1900 after receiving instructions from Fr. Tepe at St. James in Decatur. This marriage of two Germans from opposite corners of the German world and different religious backgrounds proved to be very solid and long lasting.

Their first child, Fred, was born on Apr.13, 1870. Soon after Fred's birth they moved from NY westward first to Monticello, IL and then on to Decatur where Frank found work at Union Iron Works for three years at \$9/week. He then worked 1½ years in a furniture factory, again three years at Union Iron Works, and 7 yrs on a dairy farm<sup>2</sup> on Moffit St. near Johns Hill. He earned only \$7.50/week but managed to save enough to purchase land.

They had following children:

1. Fred	13 Apr 1870	16 Jun 1946	married Belle
2. George	29 Jul 1871	26 Dec 1872	(died as a child)
3. Anna	29 Aug 1872	26 Nov 1955	married Ed Quintenz
4. Mary	14 Feb 1874	6 Nov 1946	married Andrew Harpstrite
5. Frank	18 Feb 1876	26 Nov 1879	twin (died as a child)
6. Amelia	18 Feb 1876	31 Jan 1955	twin married Henry Chappel
7. Julia	18 Sep 1877	13 May 1957	married Joseph Keck
8. Edward	14 Nov 1878	8 Sep 1881	(died as a child)
9. Charles	18 Dec 1879	20 Jul 1880	(died as a child)
10. Albert	11 Mar 1881	16 Mar 1918	never married
11. Louis	22 May 1882	11 Aug 1962	married Carrie Steiner
12. Clara	20 Sep 1883	19 Jun 1976	never married
13. Mina	31 Dec 1884	Sep 1979	married Charles Gillen
14. Rose	2 Feb 1886	8 May 1965	married Harry Hackett
15. Louise	28 Mar 1887	10 Oct 1949	married Richard Harpstrite
16. Bertha	24 May 1888	21 Apr 1962	married Frank Hayden
17. John	17 Oct 1889	10 Mar 1986	married Anna Blenz
18. Margaret	5 Feb 1891	19 Jan 1980	married Roy Hornback
19. Joseph	1894		(died as a child)

<sup>1</sup> Death Certificate

<sup>2</sup> Portrait and Biographical Record - 1893

<sup>3</sup> Passport issued 18 Mar 1867, Buehl, Grossherzogtum Baden

<sup>4</sup> SS Mississippi passenger list, 20 Apr. 1867

<sup>5</sup> Death Certificate

<sup>6</sup> called Trzcianka, Poland after WWII

On the 1880 census Frank is listed as a dairy farmer, living with Julia and 7 children on the farm just outside Decatur city limits. Only Fred (10) is in school.<sup>7</sup>



In 1882 he started his own dairy farm which eventually covered 160 acres<sup>8</sup> and had 50 cows, horses, pigs, chickens, etc. He also had about 5 acres of grapes and made his own wine. In 1893 the farm was described thus: “His residence is a substantial one, and it is supplemented by all the necessary buildings. The many improvements and the well –tilled fields make this one of the valuable and desirable places in the neighborhood.”<sup>3</sup> A 1903 Decatur Township map shows his property as 5 separate but adjoining parcels of land.<sup>9</sup>

The Moser farm was a popular site for church picnics and other groups from the city. Frank often hosted card parties. One of his visitors was a Lutheran, Rudolph Lorenz, whose daughter, Bea, would later marry Frank’s grandson, Tom.



Front: Louise, Frank, John, Bertha, Julia with Margaret on lap, Rose. 2<sup>nd</sup> row: Minnie and Clara.  
3<sup>rd</sup> row: Louis and Albert. Back: Julia, Mary, Fred, Fr. Fuerster, Anna, Amelia.

The photo above, taken in 1892 when Margaret was a baby, shows 14 children with Frank (49) and Julia (44) and the assistant pastor of St. James, Fr. Fuerster. This photo was published with a newspaper article in the Decatur Herald, Jan 3, 1973, which referenced another article published in 1904 (1900) describing the Moser family as the largest in Macon County.

<sup>7</sup> 1880 US census, Decatur, 4<sup>th</sup> ward, Macon Co, IL

<sup>8</sup> Land Plot Map

<sup>9</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> Century Atlas of Macon Co., IL 1903

This photo taken in 1911 shows Grandma Julia with 15 grandchildren.



Front: John Keck, \_\_\_\_\_, Ruth Gillen, Tom Keck.  
Middle: \_\_\_\_\_, Len Keck, Julia holding Frank Hackett, Sylvester Quintenz, James Hackett.  
Back: Quintenz children: Otto, Cornelius, Ed holding Carl, Lou, and Frances.

Frank's brother, Connel, was a farmer in Summerville, NJ in 1893. Frank and Julia went back to Germany right before WW1. Tradition has it that they brought one of Frank's brothers back with them. This brother is said to have died in Decatur before Frank and to be buried in Decatur.

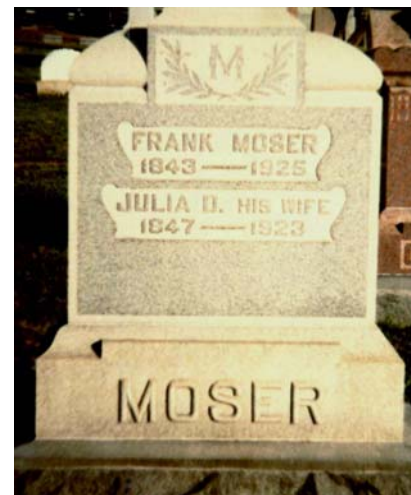
Albert died at the age of 37 during the influenza pandemic of 1918. On May 4, 1919 Frank and Julia celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. The picture below was published in the Decatur Review.

The 1920 census (under Molser) shows Frank (76) and Julia (72) still living on the farm with their son John and Anna next door.<sup>10</sup> Julia Donner Moser died 30 Sep 1923 of bladder problems and heart condition.<sup>11</sup> Frank sold his farm and property to A. E. Staley Co. in 1924 with the agreement that he



Front: Clara, Amelia, Mary, Frank, Julia, Anna, Julia, Mina; back: Rose, Bertha, Louis, Fred, John, Louise, Margarite.

could live in the house until he died. He died 6 Jan 1925 of shock and injuries after being struck by a Ford Coupe on East William St. while walking to church in icy conditions. The roads were too icy to drive his car and his horse was not roughshod for winter conditions. He was 81 years old.<sup>12</sup> He is buried next to Julia in Calvary cemetery in Decatur. Thirteen of his nineteen children survived him.



<sup>10</sup> 1920 Census Macon Co, IL

<sup>11</sup> Obit & death certificate

<sup>12</sup> Obit & death certificate

FRANK MOSER, 81, DIES OF INJURIES

Prominent Farmer for Forty Years

HIT BY AUTOMOBILE

Had 19 Children, Largest Family in County

Frank Moser, eight-one years old and living in the 2800 block East William, a retired farmer, died in St. Mary's hospital Tuesday afternoon of injuries received when he was struck by a Ford roadster Monday while on his way to Decatur. He was taken to St. Mary's hospital where it was found that he had a fractured hip. It was thought that he also suffered internal injuries.

The car that struck Mr. Moser was driven by Miss Booher of Cerro Gordo, employed in Decatur. Her father came in to Sheriff Underwood Monday evening and told the sheriff that his daughter struck Mr. Moser. Mr. Booher was then going to the hospital to Mr. Moser. The accident happened while Mr. Moser was walking along the hard road on East William Street.

Frank Moser was one of the most prominent farmers in Macon County having been on the farm east of Decatur for more than forty years. He prospered and acquired considerable land.

CHILDREN

The children who survived are Fred and Lewis Moser, of McLeansboro; Mrs. A. W. Harpstrite of Spring Fork, Mo., Mrs. Ed Quintenz, Decatur, Mrs. Harry Hackett, Gary, Ind., Mrs. Charles Gillen, Bearsdale, Mrs. Charles Boehm, Decatur, Mrs. Richard Harpstrite, and Mrs. Roy Hornback, Decatur, Mrs. John Keck, Decatur, Clara Moser, Decatur, John Moser, Decatur, and Mrs. Frank Hayden of Petersburg.

HAD LARGE FAMILY

The Moser family was one of the largest in Macon County. Nineteen children were born, five of whom died in infancy. Mrs. Moser died in October 1923, at the age of seventy-five. Both Mr. and Mrs. Moser were born in Germany. Both came to this country, Mrs. Moser when she was nineteen years old. They were married in New Jersey and celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1919, six years ago.

Soon after their marriage they moved to Monticello and forty-one years ago moved to the farm two miles east of Decatur on the William Street road. They lived there until their last illness, both dying in the St. Mary's hospital.

IN CITY LIMITS

Part of the land in their farm is now city property within the city limits. A. E. Staley recently bought part of the Moser land for an outlet of the Staley conduit and for recreation grounds for the Staley employees.

Frank Moser was born in Baden Germany, Sept. 6, 1843. He came to America in 1867 and located in Newark, N. J. After working on a farm he went to New York where he ran an engine. He got \$5 a week and it cost \$4.50 to live. That was only fifty cents less than he made, but there in lies the secret of his success. He always made more than he spent. Even after he came to Decatur he worked for \$7.50 a week but at that managed to save and get along in the world.

WAS A FARMER

He was a farmer in every sense of the word. He liked the business and he thought that the farm was the only place to raise a big family. For quite a while he conducted a dairy south of Decatur. He saved enough money from his earnings while working in a foundry and other places in Decatur to establish himself in that business. He made it pay him well, but the work was hard and he was called upon to do so much that he feared the strain was telling upon

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His will divided his estate as follows:<sup>13</sup>

\$500 each to Mary Ann, Anna, Rosa, and John	total \$2,000
\$100 each to 37 grandchildren	3,700
260 acre farm in Hamilton Co. (McLeansboro, IL) - half to Louis, half to Fred	
11 surviving children each got 3 distributions - first, \$6,000; second, \$11,000; third, \$4,000.	
	<u>231,000</u>
	total \$236,700

## **MOSER WILL IS FILED IN COURT**

### Majority of Estate, in Equal Shares Given To Children

The will of Frank Moser Monday offered for probate gives his estate in equal shares to his children, but provides that before the division is commenced, his daughters, Mary A. Harpstrite, Anna M. Quintenz, Rosa Hackett and his son, John Moser, shall be given \$500 each and \$100 to each of his grandchildren.

To his son, Louis Moser, he gives in fee and undivided half interest in 260 acres of land in Hamilton county, the other undivided interest in that farm is given in trust to National Bank of Decatur for Fred Moser and the heirs of his body there being a stipulation that there shall be no partition of that farm while Fred Moser cares to continue as its occupant. After the special bequests of \$500 and \$100 have been paid the division begins there being a provision that Louis Moser shall not share in the division of the residuary estate until after all but Fred have a share equal to \$6,000.

National Bank of Decatur is named as executor of the will the hearing on the petition to probate being set for February 9.

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(to be continued)

Jim Keck  
[jkeck1@triad.rr.com](mailto:jkeck1@triad.rr.com) 336 229-0426

<sup>13</sup> News article