

Keeney Update

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Roscoe C. Keeney, Jr.

SEPT 1984

EARLY CONNECTICUT KEENEYS TRACED

(From Pat Keeney Geyh, Milwaukee, WI)

Alexander Keeney first appears in the records of Connecticut in 1666/67 when the town of Weathersfield gave him a piece of land for a home on the west side of Millroad, below Goffe's Bridge; he added more land later.

Alexander married Alice, the widow of William Colfax, about 1661. They lived in a frame house, shingled and clapboarded. They owned two oxen and two cows, one heifer, one steer, one mare, six swine, and seven sheep ... they grew Indian corn, oats and hay.

They had seven children: Alexander, born in 1662, married Hannah Searl, daughter of Obadiah; Thomas, born in 1664, and Sarah (his twin), who married Thomas Brewer on 1-18-1682; Joseph, born in 1666, married Hannah Hills and they had Joseph (11-8-1693), Benjamin (1-1-1695), John (5-22-1699), Anna or Susanna (b.1-6-1700/1), Ashbel, b.11-25-1704, name illegible (5-29-07) Alexander, born about 1709.

The fourth child, Lydia, was born in 1669. Ebenezer in 1672 and Richard in 1674. Richard married Eunice Loveland and they were the parents of Richard, Mary and Thomas.

Alexander died in 1680 and Alice in 1683.

Daughters of Americas Colonists researchers claim that Joseph's son, Alexander was born in 1709, that he married Eunice House, and that they had a son Thomas (1741-1840) who was married to Mercy Lamb (1748-1839).

Ebenezer's education was partly paid by the town after his father's death and Ebenezer himself died before May

SARAH (KEENEY) BENNETT

(Picture Missing)

(b. 1845 – Hay Co., MO)

(d. 1916 – Benton Co., OR)

Daughter of James and Catherine (Stewart) Keeney. She came to Brownsville, Oregon in 1851 from Missouri on the "Keeney Wagon Train."

22, 1732, because his son, 14-year old Ebenezer was assigned a guardian then. Ebenezer Sr.'s wider was Alice Colt.

Florence Keeney Robertson, Keeney genealogist of the

Fathers Are Wonderful People

Fathers are wonderful people too little understood,
And we do not sing their praises as often as we should . . .
For, somehow, Father seems to be the man who pays the bills,
While Mother binds up little hurts and nurses all our ills . . .
And Father struggles daily to live up to "HIS IMAGE"
As protector and provider and "hero of the scrimmage" . . .
And perhaps that is the reason we sometimes get the notion
That Fathers are not subject to the thing we call emotion.
But if you look inside Dad's heart, where no one else can see,
You'll find he's sentimental and as "soft" as he can be . . .
But he's so busy every day in the grueling race of life,
He leaves the sentimental stuff to his partner and his wife . . .
But Fathers are just WONDERFUL in a million different ways,
And they merit loving compliments and accolades of praise,
For the only reason Dad aspires to fortune and success
Is to make the family proud of him and to bring them happiness . . .
And like OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, he's a guardian and a guide,
Someone that we can count on to be
ALWAYS ON OUR SIDE.

early 1900's, says that Ebenezer also had a son John, born in 1712. Many later generations of Keeneys trace their ancestry back to him.

Land records in Glastonbury, Conn. show a John Keeney who sold his land in 1737 in exchange for land in Ripton Pariah, Stratford, Conn. In 1752, with Samuel Hurd, he bought 142 acres in Kent, Conn. for 3000 pounds. There are no church records from Ripton Parish that would verify this family.

Who John married is a mystery, but the will of Sarah Webster's father lists her as the wife of John Keeney. Sarah was a descendent of the colonial governor of Connecticut.

Considering the time that he lived John surely would have served in the French & Indian Wars and the Revolution. Unfortunately, so many Johns served in the wars that it is impossible to know which is which.

At the Kent town meeting of December 13, 1762, John Keeney was elected grand jurymen. In 1764 he was selected fence viewer and in 1768 was elected surveyor.

In 1762 a deed was made to Ephraim, John's son, and later John gave land to his son, John, Jr. John had a daughter Esther, born 10-15-1754, and a daughter named Anna.

Mark, son of John, was born 5-1-1740 and died 10-7-1804. He is buried at Lacyville, Pa. His tombstone shows that he was engaged in the two wars. He married Abigail Beeman (1739-1804) in 1759. They had many children, the oldest being Anna, born 10-8-1860. Richard was born 6-17-1762, Frelove 1-20-1764, Joshua 3-29-1766; Jeremiah 3-13-1768, Rachel 3-28-1770, Thomas and Solomon 4-9-1772 and Benjamin, the youngest date unlisted.

Joshua and Richard left Kent. It is said that Joshua was an Indian trader and spoke five Indian dialects. Both he and Richard would up in Luzerne Co., Pa., an area contested by Connecticut and Pennsylvania, but ceded by Congress to Pennsylvania.

The brothers bought land in 1789 and Joshua went back to Kent to marry Phebe Sturdivant. His parents, Mark and Abigail, and his brother Thomas accompanied the newlyweds to Pennsylvania.

Thomas, husband of Mercy Lamb, was active in the Connecticut claim to land and was involved in the abduction of Timothy Pickering, a Pennsylvania leader. His role was downplayed in a trial, but he served as 6 months term, refusing several chances to escape.

County history books record Mercy as the one catching thieves trying to steal the family canoe while Thomas was imprisoned; she refused to let go of the chain holding the boat and won the battle.

Another "tale" recounts Mercy at 16 being in a group of men who had treed a panther. Mercy was the only one who would stay and keep the panther treed while someone went for a weapon.

Thomas and Mercy Lamb died in New York. Richard stayed in Wyoming Co., Pa. His will lists the following children: Chester, Abial, Ira, Lyman, Ann, John Calvin, Charles Miner, Hiram, Richard Thomas and Ezra. Many of them are buried at Lacyville, PA.

KEENEY LINK WITH LEE FAMILY EXPLORED

Visitors at LEE CHAPEL on the campus of Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Va., have often enquired about the lineage of Helen Keeney Lee, whose tomb is there with other members of the Lee family. She was the wife of George Bolling Lee, who was the oldest son of William Henry Fitzhugh Lee, the second son of Robert Edward Lee and Mary Anne Randolph Custis.

The Society of Lees of Virginia did not have genealogical information on Helen, since they trace only the Lee bloodline. However, the Society was helpful in getting us in touch with Mary L. Bowman, daughter of Helen and George, who lives in McLean, Virginia.

According to her daughter, Helen K. Lee's father was Dr. Charles C. Keeney and her mother was Adele Maria Jones. Both, she believes, were born in San Francisco, but later moved to New York to go to school. Adele Keeney died in about 1946 at age 82 or 83. Dr. Keeney had died earlier. His granddaughter had never met him.

Maybe our Western Keeneys will want to see if they can find more on this Keeney family.

(Picture Missing)

More than 200 from New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Georgia, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, and New Mexico gathered for the annual West Virginia Keeney REUNION on August 5. A memorial service preceded the dinner and entertainment. Hostesses Hannah and Mildred Keeney, retired teachers, are shown at the right (Picture Missing).

AMERICAN LABOR LEADERS

KEENEY, C. Frank. Born in Kanawha County, W. Va.; little is known about his childhood and early adult years: along with Mother Jones (q.v.) organized in 1912 the coal miners of Cabin Creek, W. Va., an area regular United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) organizers feared to enter; along with Fred Mooney (q.v.) and Lawrence Dwyer, a UMWA international organizer, established three years later an insurgent district, District 30, in the Cabin Creek area to protest alleged corruption and inefficiency on the part of President Thomas Cairns (q.v.) and other officials of District 17, UMWA, West Virginia; after District 17 was reorganized by the international union in 1917, elected its president and served until 1924; within a year of becoming president, helped District 17 add 10,000 members, pay off a \$35,000 debt, and show a treasury surplus of \$25,000; in 1919, along with the governor of West Virginia, prevented a threatened union miners' march into nonunion territory that promised to result in violence: again in 1921, along with state and federal officials, prevented a second march; an attack by state policemen and Logan County deputies on a union tent colony at Sharples, W. Va., in 1922, however, ignited a march resulting in the "Battle of Blair Mountain", in which three deputies were killed and 40 miners wounded; indicted as a result of the conflict, but acquitted of treason and murder; while under indictment, elected president of the West Virginia State Federation of Labor (WVSFL); defeated for reelection by John Easton (q.v.) in a craft union movement to curb the power of the UMWA in the WVSFL; after his defeat, his UMWA supporters in southern West Virginia boycotted the WVSFL until 1927; along with Mooney, resigned his UMWA offices in 1924 to protest UMWA president John L. Lewis's (q.v.) attempt to enforce the Jacksonville scale in West Virginia, a policy they charged would destroy the union there: thereafter, the district was administered by provisional presidents Percy Tetlow (q.v.), and, later, Van A. Bittner (q.v.); moved to Illinois in 1926 to edit *The Coal Miner*, an official organ of John Brophy's (q.v.) "Save the Union" campaign: during 1927-1930, was first the proprietor of an orange drink stand and then an oil and gas speculator; in 1930, joined John H. Walker (q.v.), Frank Farrington (q.v.), Alexander Howat (q.v.), and Oscar Ameringer in the Reorganized United Mine Workers; after Walker reaffiliated with the regular UMWA and other leaders were expelled in 1931. Founded his own West Virginia Miners' Union, which grew rapidly but destroyed itself with a strike during depressed conditions; became an American Federation of Labor organizer for the Progressive Mine Workers of America in 1938 and organized three West Virginia locals, all of which were destroyed by the UMWA's 1939 union shop agreement: thereafter, his career deteriorated, and his last known job was as a parking-lot attendant; according to relatives, still living in 1973; Evelyn L. K. Harris and Frank J. Krebs, *From Humble Beginnings: West Virginia State Federation of Labor, 1903-1957* (1960); J. W. Hess, ed., *Struggle in the Coal Fields. The Autobiography of Fred Mooney* (1967); Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years: A History of the American Workers, 1920-1933* (1960).

Greenwood Press

Westport, Connecticut ● London, England

ODETTE KEENE , VIOLINIST 1897-1984

ODETTE KEENE was born Opal Keeney in Jackson, Iowa, in 1897, the only child of Frank and Nellie Keeney. A year later the family moved to Maquoketa. They were a musical family. Henry Keeney had a

dance orchestra, which he turned over to his son Frank, who passed it on to his daughter. Frank gave generously of his time to developing new talent and for the Concert Band that he managed for many years.

Odette began violin lessons at age eight. She studied dancing and learned to play the piano, trumpet, saxophone, clarinet and guitar. At 13 she began to teach and write music. In 1915 she graduated with honors from Maquoketa High School. At 18 she went on a Standard Chautauqua tour as pianist with the Sidle Concert Orchestra. At 19 she played a season as violinist and harmony singer in vaudeville, with the Keene-Browne trio. Upon returning to Mequoeta, Odette taught music and dancing and, in 1925, organized The Melody Maids, a concert group which became popular in Eastern Iowa. Her specialty was playing violin and dancing simultaneously to Brahms's Fifth Hungarian Dance. In 1929 Odette went to New York and joined the Violinettes, four girls who worked in the Dave Harris Revue "Variety Land". They toured the southern states, played in Canada and in New York. Returning again to Iowa, Ms. Keene formed her own band, "Odette Keene and her Orchestra", presenting the latest and best in dance music. Annual recitals featured orchestras, instrumental soloist singers, as well as dramatic song and dance sketches. The last recital included a prize to the 1,000th pupil. In 1942 Odette moved to Hollywood to



The Violinettes with the Dave Harris Unit "Variety Land" c. 1929-1930

Left to Right: Maxine Ellis, Odette Keene, Esther Crawford and Bunny Hill

write music for the movie, "All Out for Victory". She joined the faculty of Hollywood Theatrical Training Studio as vocal coach and arranger, later opening the Odette Keene Studio. Her pupils included many children, among them Debbie Reynolds. "The Odette Keene Revue" played casuals at lodge affairs, college programs, military bases and USO clubs. Ray Anthony recorded her song, "So I Said Yes" in his album, "That's Show Biz." Odette Keene (Keeney) was elected to membership in ASCAP in 1961 as was a life member of the American Federation of Musicians. She died January 1, 1984.

(photo caption)

GENEALOGY: Odette Keene was a granddaughter of Henry M. Keeney, great granddaughter of William S. Keeney, great-great

granddaughter of William H. C. Keeney and great-great-great granddaughter of Michael and Catherine Lewis Keeney. This picture was taken in 1928 (picture missing).

WYOMING

ALBERT LAWRENCE KEENEY, b.12-28-1900 at Montour, Iowa, d. 2-3-1963; Green Hill Cemetery, Laramie, Wyo; university dean; A.B., U. of Wyoming, A.M., Columbia U. (1935); married Daisy Lovewell 7-22-1926; children: Alberta Gwynne & Allen Lloyd Keeney; Supt. of Schools, Superior, WY 1931-46; Dean of Men at U. of Wyoming from 1946; President, Wyoming ; Education Association 1931-2; Phi Delta Kappa, Kappa Delta Pi, Democrat, Methodist, Kiwanian candidate for State Supt. of Schools in 1942

KENTUCKY

ARTHUR HALE KEENEY, clergyman and lecturer, born in Rising Sun, Indiana 9-3-1893; son of Senator George A. & Mary Schaffer Keeney; A.B. and A.M. Degrees, Manchester College; B.Th. from Auburn Theological Seminary; D. D., Middleboro University; married Eugenia Hail, of Louisville, Ky. 4-26-1927;

children: Arthur H., Jr. and Mary Aubrey Keeney; Pastor of Fench Lick , Ind. Presbyterian Church 1909-11, First Presbyterian of East St. Louis, MO 1911-1923 and New Covenant Presbyterian Church at Louisville, Ky. after 1923; Vice President of Old Dominion Coal Co.; author of Bible Treasury (60,000 copies sold); Republican. Sigma Chi, Mason, I.O.O.F.; Knights of Pythias; descendent of Arthur Middleton, who signed Declaration of Independence.

WHO'S WHO IN KENTUCKY (1936)

DEDICATION OF CAPTAIN JONATHAN KEENEY PASS



During the Vale Bi-centennial Celebration, a historical exhibit was dedicated on July 3, 1976, by the Federal Bureau of Land Management with a 21-Gun salute in honor of Captain Jonathan Keeney. Over one hundred Keeney descendants gathered about fourteen miles south of Vale, Oregon to see the plaque unveiled; to hear a speaker, Mr. Callahan of the BLM from Washington, D.C., and enjoy the music of the Vale Fife and Drum Corps.

A section of road, previously known as Cow Hollow, was officially designated "Captain Jonathan Keeney Pass." Old ruts, made by wagons of years past are still visible along this road, which runs between Vale and Jordan Valley.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Keeney Update

This issue of UPDATE is being put together on my birthday - couldn't think of anything more appropriate. Actually, the content is a compilation of material sent in from various sources and states. Again we can see what a diverse family we are!

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

There are exactly 112 Keeneys and Keeney relatives interested in genealogy - their genealogy. Who says so? Our mail. However, UPDATE has been sent to about 250 each time in the hope that interest will expand.

What does this mean financially? It means that we have received in contributions for UPDATE from these 112 a total of \$402.50 in one year. The cost of publication has totaled \$481.40, more than half of which is expense for postage.

How do people get on the mailing list? By making a donation.

When are they dropped? Never, unless they ask to be dropped or we receive a death report. People can make donations when they feel moved to do so - but we hope to get contributions from other Keeney kin who are truly interested in their heritage.

KEENEY HISTORY

The book we refer to in UPDATE is "2,597 KEENEY RELATIVES", which was a great start, but is now becoming better known for the Keeneys missed along the way. Fewer than 20 copies remain of the book; they'll be sent for \$15, plus 86c postage (and 75c tax for West Virginians) to those requesting them. Printing is too expensive for re-publication.

GATEWOOD KIN

Keeneys (families of Michael, of Stires J., and Foster Keeney) whose ancestry traces back to Elisabeth Mildred and Eliza Gatewood, will be interested to know that their families will be included in a new GATEWOOD Genealogy, being printed now in California. Family history goes back to the late 1500s, when John Gatewood settled in Essex Co., Va. Many prominent educators, government officials and military heroes are included (and are our kin). The book will be more than 1,000 pages and will cost accordingly, perhaps as much as \$50. Details and ordering information will be published next issue. The writer of UPDATE plans to publish soon "GATEWOODS OF WEST VIRGINIA", which will update these three Keeney branches, as well as the many other Gatewood offsprings who lived in the Elk Valley and Fayette County areas. If you fall in one of these lines please update your family, as listed in Keeney Relatives, and let me have it. I'm especially anxious to hear from the Montagues, Jarrets, Nowlans and Whites listed under the Gatewood kin.

NEWS & PICTURES

News accounts, clippings, obituaries and pictures (the older the better) are solicited and will be returned if requested. Share your Keeney memories with the nation!

ROSCOE C. KEENEY, JR.

Box A

CEDAR GROVE, W. V. 25039

NEW SUPPORTERS:

ARIZONA: Kristy Keeney Olson Clemmons, Mesa

GEORGIA: Norman H. Harless, Jr., Lawrenceville

INDIANA: John H. Keeney, Peru

TEXAS: Mrs. W.C. (Anna F.) Milam, Victoria

VIRGINIA: Florence C. (Mrs. Harvey) Montgomery, Hampton

WEST VIRGINIA: Joyce A. (Mrs. James) Fout Hoffman, Sugar Grove; Helen Houdyshell, White Sulphur Springs; Helen Lafferty, Huntington

DID YOU KNOW...

JASON FREDERICK KEENEY b.8-3-84 at Bowie, MD to Herbert F. (8.39) and Carol Jean Byrd Keeney.

JEANA KAY HOY (8.601) wed Donald R. Adkins, Jr. 9-1-84 at home of bride's parents, 203 Branch Rd., at Belle, WV.

JOSHUA WAYNE QUALLS b .5-31-84 and Warrensburg, MO. grandson of Gloria Jean Keeney (7.485) and Darrell Jean Perkins; son of Deborah Jean & George Leonard Qualls

JONATHAN MATTHEW KEENEY, b. 4-27-84 at Newport News, VA, son of Charles Timothy (8.226) and Debbie Keeney.

ASHLEY NICHOLE MACE, b. 8-8-84, son of Penny Darlene Hoy (8.600) and Bryan Mace (married 7-25-1980

WHO'S WHO?

LISTINGS IN 1980-81 WHO'S WHO AMONG AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:
Karla J. Keeney, Putnam County HS, Cookeville, TN; Cherri Keeney, Charleston HS WV; Kim Keeney, Oceana HS, Wyoming Co., WV.