

Research Report

Who Were the Wives and Children of Joseph M. Keel, alias Joseph McKeel (1776-1864)?

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Research Report

Who Were the Wives and Children of Joseph M. Keel, alias Joseph McKeel (1776-1864)?

1. Research Question

Who were the wives and children of Joseph M. Keel, alias Joseph McKeel (1776-1864)? In documents, Joseph appears as both Joseph M. Keel and Joseph McKeel. He had four children – Catherine, John W., Joseph, and Margaret. He married at least four times, with two of the marriages undocumented.

Because of the name change and the number of marriages, Joseph M. Keel's family composition is often inconsistently presented across online family trees. In fact, no family trees include Margaret as a child. This research report attempts to clarify Joseph's name and nuclear family. Also related to the name change, Joseph's earliest records are often conflated with another individual who was named Joseph Kyle or Kile from Warwick, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and married Catherine Schonauer.¹

2. Limitations

Because Joseph M. Keel was born in 1776 in Pennsylvania at a time where vital records are more scarce and early U.S. census records provide minimal detail, confidently tracking him through records is difficult. Further, his surname change and the inconsistent way it was spelled limits search efforts even when using FamilySearch's full text search function.

3. Research Findings in Brief

Joseph M. Keel was likely born Joseph McKeel. His parents may have originated from Dorchester County, Maryland. Joseph later adopted Keel as his surname as did his four children. Although Joseph M. Keel had four wives, he only had children with his first wife, Elizabeth Weik. His children include Catherine (1802-?), Joseph Jr. (1806-1878), John W. (1809-1891), and Margaret (1815-1892).

¹ See for example, Pennsylvania, Church Records – Adams, Berks, and Lancaster Counties (1729-1881), marriage, Joseph Keie [Kele] and Catharine Schonauer (1806), First Reformed Congregation at Lancaster, Pennsylvania; database, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 5 Oct. 2025).

4. Background Information

Joseph M. Keel was born about 1776 in Pennsylvania² and died 24 October 1864 in Bethlehem Township, Stark County, Ohio.³ On 15 January 1814, Joseph McKeel purchased a quarter lot of land in Pike Township, Stark County (northwest quarter of section six in township 9 in range eight, S6T9R8).⁴ Bureau of Land Management documents indicated he previously resided in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. Despite purchasing the land in 1814, Joseph may not have moved to Ohio until closer to 1820 based on the birth locations of his children, which were all in Pennsylvania.

Despite no probate file for Joseph M. Keel,⁵ he did own three lots in the town of Bethlehem in Stark County at the time of his death, which were purchased for him by his son, Joseph Keel Jr.⁶ On 29 March 1865, Joseph M. Keel's heirs sold the three Bethlehem lots to Job Meredith.⁷ The listed heirs were Joseph and Elizabeth Keel and Catherine Flinn of Stark County; John W. and Barbara Keel of Bureau County, Illinois; and Margaret and James Black of Walworth County, Wisconsin.

5. Research Strategy

To outline the children and wives of Joseph M. Keel, both documentary and DNA research is used. Principally, documentary sources include census, tax, land deed, court, marriage, and newspaper records. Geographic analysis is largely focused on Cumberland County, Pennsylvania and Stark County, Ohio, which is where Joseph lived as an adult. For DNA research, two descendants of Joseph M. Keel through his son John W. Keel are used.

Before the assessment of Joseph's wives and children are presented, a reconciliation of his name must be made so records can be accurately interpreted. While records generally list his name as either Joseph M. Keel or Joseph McKeel, online family trees appear to mostly recognize only those records listing his surname as Keel largely neglecting other records providing insight into his family composition.

² 1860 U.S. census, Stark County, Ohio, population schedule, Bethlehem, Jos M Kyle (Joseph McKeel), p. 109, image 36 of 63; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 8 Sept 2025); NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 29. Joseph's son, John W. Keel, and daughter, Margaret (Keel) Black, lived to the 1880 census and indicated their father was born in Pennsylvania. 1880 U.S. census, Bureau County, Illinois, population schedule, Dover, John W. Keel, p. 88a, image 15 of 17; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 8 Sept. 2025); NARA microfilm publication, roll 177. And 1880 U.S. census, Boone County, Iowa, population schedule, Boone, Margaret Black, p. 90d, image 12 of 34; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 8 Sept. 2025); NARA microfilm publication, roll 328.

³ *Massillon Independent* (1864, Nov 3), Joseph M. Keel.

⁴ Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, General Land Records, Joseph McKeel (1814), Stark County, NW quarter, Section 6, Township 9N, Range 8W; database with image, (glorecords.blm.gov), Accession CV-0020-201.

⁵ Stark County, Ohio, Probate Court, Index to Files (1810-1914), negative search for McKeel or Keel; database with image, *FamilySearch*, film 5870708.

⁶ Stark County, Ohio, Recorder of Deeds, land deed, Joseph Keel Jr to Joseph M. Keel (1855), vol. 61, p. 40-41; database with image, *FamilySearch*, film 8331252, image 381 of 663.

⁷ Stark County, Ohio, Recorder of Deeds, land deed, Joseph and Elizabeth Keel, Catherine Flinn, John W. and Barbara Keel, and Margaret and James Black to Job Meredith (1865), vol. 90, p. 106-107; database with image, *FamilySearch*, film 8331267, image 79 of 710.

6. Research Results and Evaluation of Evidence

The results are presented in three sections – Joseph’s name reconciliation, his wives, and his children.

6.1 Name Reconciliation

The earliest records for Joseph suggest his original surname was McKeel, but for unknown reasons he dropped the “Mc” and perhaps moved it to his middle initial. In most later records he is referred to as, Joseph M. Keel. Table 1 lists the name variations in census, tax, marriage, and newspaper mentions. Land deed records are not included because Joseph’s son Josph Jr. cannot be reliably separated from those of his father.

Table 1 – Name References for Joseph M. Keel

Date	Name	Location	Source
1800	McKill, Joseph	West Pennsboro, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania	1800 U.S. Census
1802	Kiel, Joseph	Frankford, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania	Local tax records
1807	Keel, Joseph	Mifflin, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania	Local tax records
1808	Keel, Joseph	Mifflin, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania	Local tax records
1810	Keil, Joseph	Mifflin, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania	1810 U.S. Census
1811	Keel, Joseph	Mifflin, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania	Local tax records
1814	McKeel, Joseph	Pike, Stark County, Ohio (S6T9R8)	Bureau of Land Management
1820	McKeel, Josh	Pike, Stark County, Ohio	1820 U.S. Census
1822	McKeel, Joseph	Pike, Stark County, Ohio (S6T9R8)	Local tax records
1823	McKeel, Joseph	Pike, Stark County, Ohio (S6T9R8)	Local tax records
1825	McKeel, Joseph	Pike, Stark County, Ohio (S6T9R8)	Local tax records
1826	McKeel, Joseph	Pike, Stark County, Ohio (S6T9R8)	Local tax records
1827	McKeel, Joseph	Pike, Stark County, Ohio (S6T9R8)	Local tax records
1828	McKeel, Joseph	Pike, Stark County, Ohio (S6T9R8)	Local tax records
1829	McKeel, Joseph	Pike, Stark County, Ohio (S6T9R8)	Local tax records
1830	Keil, Joseph	Bethlehem, Stark County, Ohio	1830 U.S. Census
1834	McKeel, Joseph Sr	Bethlehem, Stark County, Ohio (S1T1R9)	Local tax records
1835	McKeel, Joseph	Stark County, Ohio	List of Letters in Canton, <i>Der Vaterlandsfreund</i>
1835	McKeel, Joseph Sr	Bethlehem, Stark County, Ohio (S1T1R9)	Local tax records
1838	McKeel, Joseph	Stark County, Ohio	Marriage record
1838	McKeel, Joseph	Pike, Stark County, Ohio (S6T9R8)	Local tax records
1840	Keil, Joseph M	Pike, Stark County, Ohio	1840 U.S. Census
1850	Keel, Jos	Bethlehem, Stark County, Ohio	1850 U.S. Census
1854	Keel, Joseph M	Stark County, Ohio	Marriage record
1860	Kyle, Joseph M	Bethlehem, Stark County, Ohio	1860 U.S. Census
1864	Keel, Joseph M	Pike, Stark County, Ohio	Death notice, <i>Massillon Independent</i>

One theory for the name change is that Joseph resided in areas of Stark County, Ohio and Cumberland County, Pennsylvania having large German immigrant populations where German was spoken. Perhaps to better assimilate, he dropped the “Mc”, as Keel is more Germanic sounding. An additional consideration is that perhaps those who recorded official documents were German speakers who heard the “Mc” and assumed it was a middle or nick name, e.g., “Mick”, denoting it as “M”. Interestingly, one of the two marriages of Joseph M. Keel Sr.⁸, one of the two marriages of his son John W. Keel,⁹ and the marriage of his daughter Margaret Keel¹⁰ were recorded with the McKeel surname. As also supported in Table 1, there is no discernable pattern that explains the name change other than descendants of Joseph M. Keel assuming the Keel surname rather than McKeel.

Another reason the original surname was likely McKeel rather than Keel is that DNA analysis suggests it. Descendants of William Hill (1775-1836), whose ancestors resided in the Fishing Creek area of Dorchester County, Maryland before migrating to Pennsylvania, lived adjacent to a McKeel family. Both families resided next to each other for more than 100 years from the late 1600s to the late 1700s¹¹ and were involved in probate records together.¹² The Hills and McKeels of Dorchester County shared two property lines on a peninsula now called McKeel’s Point, which is surrounded by Fishing Creek near where it empties into the Little Choptank River (see Figure 1 on the next page). The Hills lived in the middle of the peninsula with McKeel land to the north and south.

The corresponding DNA support is visualized in Figure 2 on the next page, which is abbreviated for concerns of space and privacy. Autosomal DNA matches from multiple children of William Hill (1775-1836) are part of a genetic network¹³ of other matches who include descendants of Joseph M. Keel through two of his four children. The network is comprised of 29 matches found within the list of the Ancestry.com matches for a descendant of William Hill through his daughter Susan (Hill) Wilson (1817-1857). The genetic network was created by selecting the largest match for an individual descending from Joseph M. Keel, which shared 44 cM, and viewing all the matches the DNA tester and the Keel descendant share together. The Keel math descends through Joseph’s son, John W. Keel, through his son Nathan.

The genetic network in Figure 2 is isolated to William Hill (1775-1836) because the DNA matches associated with him descend through children from two different wives. Therefore, the connection is through William rather than either of these wives. DNA and documentary evidence presented elsewhere suggest that it is through William’s father’s line, e.g., Hill.¹⁴ Research

⁸ Ohio, County Marriages (1774-1993), Stark County, Joseph McKeel and Leney Butler (1838); database with an image, Ancestry (www.ancestry.com, accessed 13 Sept 2025).

⁹ Ohio, County Marriages (1774-1993), Stark County, John McKeel and Kasanna (Rosanna) Siefert (1829); database with an image, Ancestry (www.ancestry.com, accessed 13 Sept 2025).

¹⁰ Ohio, County Marriages (1774-1993), Stark County, Margaret McKeel and James Black (1833); database with an image, Ancestry (www.ancestry.com, accessed 13 Sept 2025).

¹¹ See for example, Mowbray, Calvin W. and Mary I. Mowbray (1992), *The Early Settlers of Dorchester County and Their Lands, Volume 1*. Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, Inc.

¹² Dorchester County, Maryland, Prerogative Court, Elizabeth Hill (1770), Accounts, vol. 7 WD, p. 224-225, Cambridge, MD; Maryland State Archives, S531. And Dorchester County, Maryland, Land Deeds, John Hill and Thomas McKeel (1767), vol. 21 Old, p. 451, Cambridge, MD.

¹³ A genetic network is a group of DNA matches who all match one another and therefore share a common ancestor.

¹⁴ See for example, Wilson, Rick T. (2025, February 4), Using Gephi Network Graphs to Analyze Unlinked Family Clusters. Retrieved 8 October 2025 from <https://myfamilypattern.com/network-graphs/>. And Wilson, Rick T. (2025,

presented later in this report about the mother of Joseph M. Keel’s children indicate that the DNA connection is likely through Joseph rather than his wife, Elizabeth Weik, whose ancestors are German immigrants. Although there is DNA evidence tying Joseph M. Keel to William Hill (1775-1836), the exact connection remains undetermined.

Figure 1 – Hill and McKeel Land in Dorchester

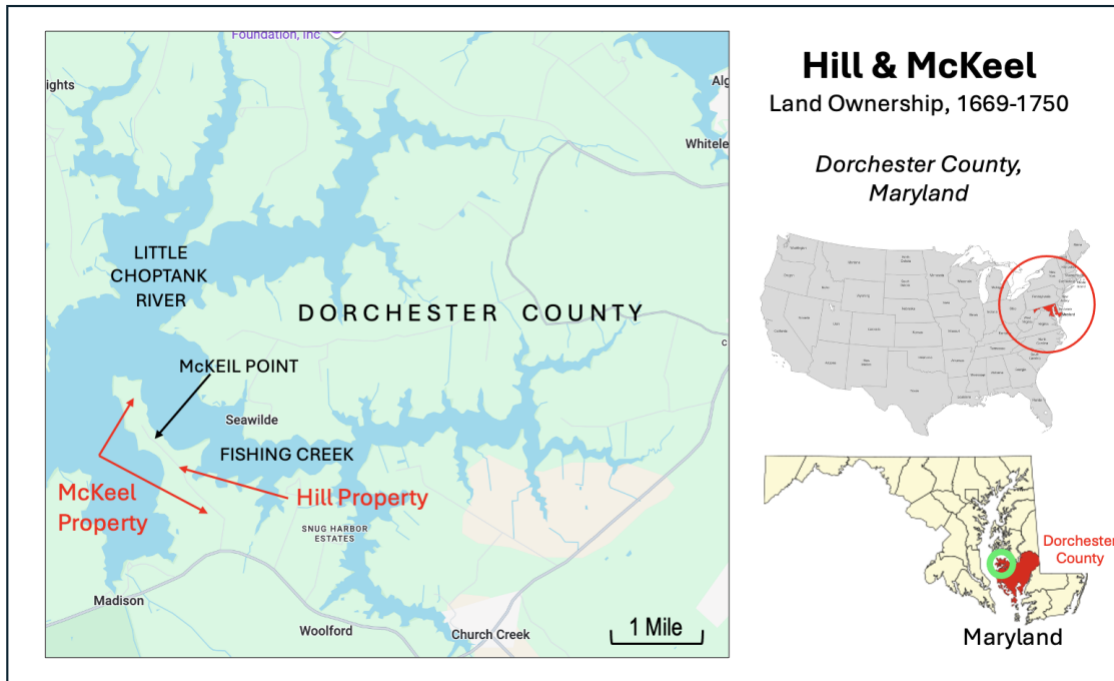
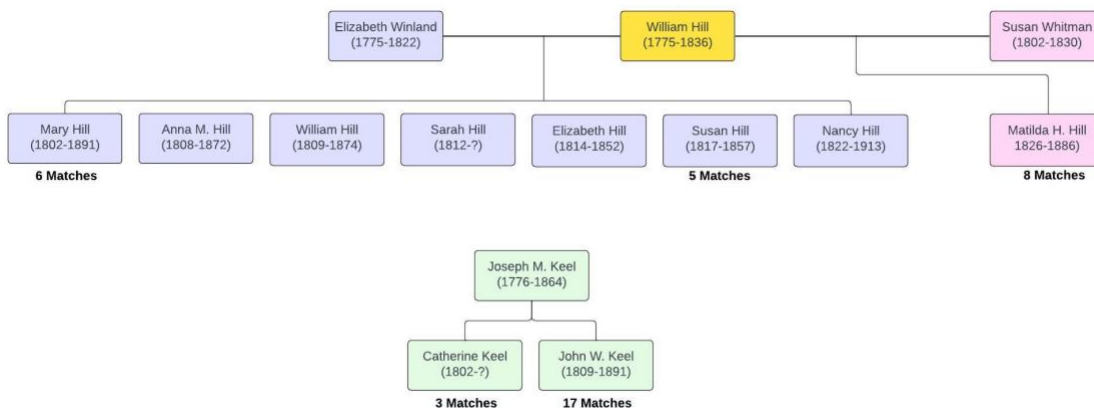


Figure 2 – McKeel and Hill Genetic Network



October 7), *Take a Genealogy Pause: Lessons from Creativity Research*. Retrieved 8 October 2025 from https://myfamilypattern.com/genealogy_pause/.

6.2 Joseph M. Keel's Wives

Most online trees do not capture all or any of Joseph's wives probably because of the name change and that at least one of his marriages occurred in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania where the county did not consistently record marriages until 1885.

It is probable that Joseph's first marriage was to Elizabeth Weik (or Wyke or Wick). In the will of Christopher Wick, he states, "I give and bequeath to my daughter Elizabeth and her heirs now intermarried to Joseph McKill [McKeel] the sum of eight dollars to be paid to her and them at the expiration of five years after my decease".¹⁵ The will was dated 31 December 1814 and proven on 17 January 1818.

The next likely wife of Joseph was Elizabeth Weik's sister, Sarah (Weik) Dunkle. Sarah married Joseph sometime after October 1817 as this is the date she filed for divorce in Stark County, Ohio from her husband, Jacob Dunkle.¹⁶ In August 1845, Sarah's only heir, Hiram Dunkle, petitioned the Cumberland County court for his share of the estate of his grandfather, Christopher Weik.¹⁷ In the petition, Hiram claimed to be the only heir of Sarah (Weik) Dunkle Keel. Hiram further stated that Sarah married Joseph Keel after the death of Jacob Dunkle, and that Sarah died in December 1837.

Joseph's next wife was Seney Butler, who he married on 22 February 1838 in Stark County.¹⁸ It's unknown whether Butler was Seney's maiden name or not, but she was referenced in the estate of Margaret Lingafelter Kroft in 1837 as Seney Butler.¹⁹

Joseph's last wife was Jane Bankson, who he married on 12 April 1854 in Stark County.²⁰ She was likely the daughter of Eleanor Bankson.²¹

6.2 Joseph M. Keel's Children

Joseph had at least four children, who were Catherine, John W., Joseph, and Margaret. Although, no probate record was found for Joseph, his four heirs sold three lots in the town of Bethlehem,

¹⁵ Pennsylvania, U.S. Wills and Probate Records (1683-1993), Christopher Wick (1814), West Pennsboro, Vol. I, p. 62-65, Cumberland County Register of Wills; database with an image, Ancestry (www.ancestry.com, accessed 13 Sept 2025).

¹⁶ Stark County, Ohio, Supreme Court, Sally Dunkle vs. Jacob Dunkle (October 1817), Vol. A, p. 48-49; database with image, *FamilySearch*, film 8331951, image 43 of 590.

¹⁷ Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, Orphan's Court, Petition of Hiram Dunkle (August 1845), Vol. 11, p. 443-445; database with image, *FamilySearch*, film 5534162, image 511-512 of 595.

¹⁸ Ohio, U.S., County Marriage Records (1774-1993), Joseph McKeel and Leney (Seney) Butler (1838), Vol. B, p. 64; database with an image, Ancestry (www.ancestry.com, accessed 13 Sept 2025). And *Der Vaterlandsfreund* (1838, Mar 2), Joseph M. Keel and Seney (Seney) Butler, p. 3.

¹⁹ Stark County, Ohio, Probate Court, Margaret Kroft (1837), Vol. E., p. 193-195; database with image, *FamilySearch*, film 5870714, images 100-101 of 375.

²⁰ Ohio, U.S., County Marriage Records (1774-1993), Joseph M. Keel and Jane Bankson (1854), Vol. C, p. 100; database with an image, Ancestry (www.ancestry.com, accessed 13 Sept 2025).

²¹ 1850 U.S. census, Stark County, Ohio, population schedule, Bethlehem, Jane Bankson, p. 113a, image 27 of 60; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 8 Sept 2025); NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 731.

Stark County in 1865,²² which Joseph Keel Jr. had purchased for his father in 1855.²³ Those listed were, “Joseph Keel and Elizabeth Keel his wife, and Catharine Flinn, all of Stark County, Ohio, John W. Keel and Barbara Keel his wife of Bureau County, Illinois by said Joseph Keel, their Attorney in fact, and James Black and Margaret Black, his wife, of Walworth County, Wisconsin.”²⁴

6.2.1 Catherine Keel

Catherine was born about 1802 in Pennsylvania and most likely Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.²⁵ Catherine first married John Sherman about 1820²⁶ probably in Stark County, although no marriage record was found. Catherine and John Sherman likely divorced because he died in 1861 in Bureau County, Illinois²⁷ and Catherine married James Flinn on 21 June 1853.²⁸ Catherine was found living in Wayne County, Ohio in 1866,²⁹ but her date of death is unknown.

6.2.2 Joseph Keel Jr.

Joseph Jr. was born about 1806 in Pennsylvania and most likely Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.³⁰ Joseph married Elizabeth Chestnutwood on 30 October 1828 in Stark County.³¹ Joseph died 8 August 1878 in Stark County, Ohio.³²

²² Stark County, Ohio, Recorder of Deeds, land deed, Joseph and Elizabeth Keel, Catherine Flinn, John W. and Barbara Keel, and Margaret and James Black to Job Meredith (1865), vol. 90, p. 106-107; database with image, *FamilySearch*, film 8331267, image 79 of 710.

²³ Stark County, Ohio, Recorder of Deeds, land deed, Joseph Keel Jr. from John P. Bortner, (1855), vol. 61, p. 40-41; database with image, *FamilySearch*, film 8331252, image 381 of 663.

²⁴ Stark County, Ohio, Recorder of Deeds, land deed, Joseph and Elizabeth Keel, Catherine Flinn, John W. and Barbara Keel, and Margaret and James Black to Job Meredith (1865), vol. 90, p. 106-107; database with image, *FamilySearch*, film 8331267, image 79 of 710.

²⁵ 1850 U.S. census, Tuscarawas County, Ohio, population schedule, Dover, Catharine Shonnon [Sherman], p. 65a, image 1 of 80; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 5 Oct 2025); NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 734. And 1860 U.S. census, Stark County, Ohio, population schedule, Bethlehem, Catherine Flint [Flinn], p. 111, image 40 of 63; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 5 Oct 2025); NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1037.

²⁶ Based on the birth of Catherine's first child, Mary. 1850 U.S. census, Tuscarawas County, Ohio, population schedule, Goshen, Mary Hubberd, p. 257b, image 36 of 37; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 5 Oct 2025); NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 735.

²⁷ *Find A Grave*, database with images (<https://findagrave.com>, accessed 4 October 2025), memorial page for John Sherman (1797-1861) Find A Grave Memorial ID 68005820, maintained by Find a Grave; citing North Prairie Cemetery, Bureau County, Illinois, USA.

²⁸ Ohio, U.S., County Marriage Records (1774-1993), Catharine Keel and James Flinn (1853), Vol. C, p. 70; database with an image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 5 Oct. 2025).

²⁹ Stark County, Ohio, Recorder of Deeds, land deed, James and Catharine Flinn to Mary Ann Rider, (1866), vol. 92, p. 280-281; database with image, *FamilySearch*, film 8331268, image 169 of 721.

³⁰ 1850 U.S. census, Stark County, Ohio, population schedule, Pike, Joseph Keel, p. 198b, image 14 of 36; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 5 Oct 2025); NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 731. And 1860 U.S. census, Stark County, Ohio, population schedule, Pike, Joseph Keel, p. 425, image 4 of 36; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 5 Oct 2025); NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1038. And 1870 U.S. census, Stark County, Ohio, population schedule, Pike, Joseph Keel, p. 542b, image 6 of 34; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 5 Oct 2025); NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 1269.

³¹ Ohio, County Marriages (1774-1993), Joseph Keel and Elizabeth Chestnutwood (1828), Stark County, Vol. A, p. 162; database with an image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 4 Oct 2025).

³² *Find A Grave*, database with images (<https://findagrave.com>, accessed 4 October 2025), memorial page for Joseph Keel (1806-1878) Find A Grave Memorial ID 91381325, maintained by Mitch Thomas (contributor 47585787); citing Massillon City Cemetery, Massillon, Ohio, USA.

6.2.1 John W. Keel

John was born about 1809 in Pennsylvania and most likely in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.³³ John first married Rosanna Sieffert on 14 March 1829 in Stark County.³⁴ John later married Barbara Bridengaugh on 3 December 1843 in Hancock County, Ohio.³⁵ John died in Bureau County, Illinois on 13 July 1891.³⁶

6.2.1 Margaret Keel

Margaret was born about 1815 in Pennsylvania and most likely in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.³⁷ Margaret married James Black on 20 Aug 1833 in Stark County, Ohio.³⁸ Margaret died on 22 June 1892 in Boone County, Iowa.³⁹

Margaret is often conflated with another Margaret Black who also resided in Stark County and married a man named James Black. However, James and Margaret (Keel) Black were enumerated in 1850 in Sugar Creek⁴⁰ while James and Margaret (McCarty) Black were enumerated in Canton⁴¹ and married in 1835.⁴² In the latter instance, both James and Margaret were born in Ireland.

³³ 1850 U.S. census, Putnam County, Ohio, population schedule, Blanchard, John Keel, p. 39a, image 17 of 34; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 5 Oct 2025); NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 732. And 1870 U.S. census, Bureau County, Illinois, population schedule, Dover, John W Keal [Keel], p. 258a, image 13 of 36; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 5 Oct 2025); NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 190. And 1880 U.S. census, Bureau County, Illinois, population schedule, Dover, p. 88a, image 15 of 17, John W. Keel; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 8 Sept. 2025); NARA microfilm publication, roll 177.

³⁴ Ohio, County Marriages (1774-1993), John McKee and Kasanna Siefert [Rosanna Sieffert] (1829), Stark County, Vol. A, p. 170; database with an image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 4 Oct 2025).

³⁵ Ohio, County Marriages (1774-1993), John Keel [Keel] and Barba [Barbara] Bridenbaugh (1829), Hancock County, Vol. 1, p. 109; database with an image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 4 Oct 2025).

³⁶ *Find A Grave*, database with images (<https://findagrave.com>, accessed 5 October 2025), memorial page for John W. Keel (1809-1891) Find A Grave Memorial ID 20710498, maintained by Find a Grave; citing Prairie Response Cemetery, Dover, Bureau County, Illinois, USA.

³⁷ 1850 U.S. census, Stark County, Ohio, population schedule, Margaret Black, Sugar Creek, p. 221a, image 35 of 36; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 8 Sept 2025); NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 734. And 1860 U.S. census, Grant County, Wisconsin, population schedule, Margaret Black, Liberty, p. 389, image 11 of 17; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 5 Oct. 2025); NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1409. And 1870 U.S. census, Leavenworth County, Kansas, population schedule, Margaret Black, Alexandria, p. 143a, image 27 of 31; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 5 Oct. 2025); NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 437. And 1880 U.S. census, Boone County, Iowa, population schedule, Boone, Margaret Black, p. 90d, image 12 of 34; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 8 Sept. 2025); NARA microfilm publication, roll 328.

³⁸ Ohio, County Marriages (1774-1993), Margaret McKeel and James Black (1833), Stark County, Vol. A, p. 259; database with an image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 4 Oct 2025).

³⁹ *Find A Grave*, database with images (<https://findagrave.com>, accessed 4 October 2025), memorial page for Margaret Black (1815-1892) Find A Grave Memorial ID 38533770, maintained by Toni Lamb (contributor 47022202); citing Linwood Park Cemetery, Boone, Boone County, Iowa, USA.

⁴⁰ 1850 U.S. census, Stark County, Ohio, population schedule, James Black, Sugar Creek, p. 221a, image 35 of 36; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 8 Sept 2025); NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 734.

⁴¹ 1850 U.S. census, Stark County, Ohio, population schedule, Jas Blach [James Black], Canton, p. 533b, image 79 of 104; database with image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 8 Sept 2025); NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 730.

⁴² Ohio, County Marriages (1774-1993), James Black and Margaret McCarty (1835), Stark County, Vol. A, p. 307; database with an image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com, accessed 4 Oct 2025).

7. Conclusion and Summary of Evidence

Based on the documentary and DNA evidence, Joseph M. Keel was likely born Joseph McKeel. His parents may have been from Dorchester County, Maryland. Joseph likely moved the “Mc” in his surname to his middle initial to better blend into the German communities where he lived. Keel is more Germanic sounding. Indeed, there were other German Keel/Kiel families in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania at the time Joseph resided there. However, there is no evidence that they were related or even knew each other formally.⁴³

Joseph married at least four times, but it is his first identified wife, Elizabeth Weik, who bore his four children. Joseph’s children were Catherine, Joseph Jr., John W., and Margaret.

8. Future Research Suggestions

Although initial DNA evidence was found linking the Hills and McKeels, more DNA research is needed to determine exactly how they are related. It is recommended to increase the DNA coverage for both Joseph M. Keel and William Hill to discover other genetic networks that may help establish the connection.

DNA coverage refers to having other descendants of a target ancestor take a DNA test or share their results with others to aid in the evaluation of matches. These other individuals may have more traces of DNA of the target ancestor than those currently tested or evaluated. To more efficiently increase coverage, descendants should be through multiple child lines of the target ancestor. Thankfully, this is currently underway through the collaborative efforts of descendants of Joseph M. Keel generously agreeing to share their DNA match lists with this report’s author.

11. Table of Revisions

The following table records the changes made to the report since its initial publishing.

Version	Date	Change Description
1.0	10/08/2025	Initial publishing

⁴³ The progenitor of the Kiels of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania were John and Catherine Keel/Kiel. John Keil died interstate about the year 1806. When his children sold his land, Joseph M. Keel was not part of this transaction nor was there any other evidence in any other records that the families knew one another. See, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, Recorder of Deeds, land deed, Henry and Catherine Kiel and David and Catherine Ogle to Philip Kiel and Jacob Kiel (1806), vol. R, p. 160-161; database with image, *FamilySearch*, film 8035088, image 396 of 598.