



Draft as of 9.11.2024

**CENTER FOR POPULAR MUSIC  
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, MURFREESBORO, TN**

**JOE KEENE-KENNETT SOUND STUDIOS COLLECTION**

**19-029**

**Creator:**

Keene, Joe (July 10,1938-)

**Type of Material:**

Manuscript Materials, Photographs, Recordings, Interviews, Artifacts

**Physical Description:**

Describe in terms of linear feet of manuscript materials in number of boxes, audio formats, and visual formats.

**Dates:**

c.1959-2022

**RESTRICTIONS:**

*All materials in this collection are subject to standard national and international copyright laws. Center staff are able to assist with copyright questions for this material.*

**Abstract:**

This collection contains a variety of materials that encompass the life and career of musician and recording studio owner, Joe Keene, along with materials related to Keene's recording studio, Kennett Sound Studios (KSS), located in Kennett, Missouri, and individuals associated with the studio.

**Provenance and Acquisition Information:**

Joe Keene donated the collection to the Center beginning in February 2020. The items were given to J. Hunter Moore, a PhD candidate in Public History, and processing began during Moore's residency at the Center in August and September of 2022. Moore's interest in Keene and KSS began when he made a recording at KSS in November 1969 as a member of his high school rock band, Absolute.

**Arrangement:**

The original arrangement scheme for the collection was maintained during processing where possible. Some items were organized and moved for ease of access where no apparent organization was available. For a detailed, item-level inventory list, please contact the Archivist.

**Subject/Index Terms:**

Keene, Joe  
Kennett Sound Studios  
Kennett, Missouri  
Country Music  
Black Gospel Music  
Rockabilly Music  
Rock 'n' roll Music  
Southern Gospel Music  
Felts, Narvel  
Pulliam (Whitehorn), Mildred  
Riley, Billy Lee

**Agency History/Biographical Sketch:**

Joseph Eugene (Joe) Keene was born in Clinton, Kentucky on July 10, 1938. For most of his school-age years, Keene lived with his family in the Mississippi River town of New Madrid, Missouri. He dedicated himself to music in 1956 after being "Elvis-ized" (as he describes it) by the music of Elvis Presley and hearing Jerry Lee Lewis perform at a local club. Keene began playing rock 'n' roll and popular songs in local bands, eventually teaching himself to play guitar, piano, bass, and drums. He also developed an interest in recording and began traveling to Memphis to work in recording studios including Sonic, Meteor, and High. He also worked as a radio announcer for stations in nearby Portageville and Kennett. WSM radio awarded Keene the honorary title of Mr. DJ USA in 1961 and 1962.

Following his marriage to Kay Damon in 1961 and after serving two years in the Army stationed at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, Keene continued to perform extensively in southeast Missouri and northeast Arkansas. Kay Keene provided backing and lead vocals for live performances and recording sessions. Joe and Kay Keene also wrote songs together, several of which were recorded by Joe Keene or by others. Keene continued to work with Sonic Studios and producer Roland Janes through the mid-1960s, releasing four 45 rpm singles. Desiring to gain more control over the recording process, Keene opened his own recording studio, Kennett Sound Studios (KSS), in the under-used live broadcast studio of KBOA in Kennett, Missouri in 1967. After a break-in and theft of the studio's recording equipment in 1971, Keene constructed a new building for the studio, located a short distance from KBOA. Over the next twenty-six years Keene recorded himself and over 350 groups and individuals performing country, gospel (Black and Southern), rock, and other styles. Many recording sessions at KSS were manufactured into vinyl LPs, 45s, several cassettes, and one compact disc. KSS operated almost completely as a custom operation. That is, anyone who could afford the relatively inexpensive recording cost could record whatever and however they wished. After the sale of the studio in 1997, Keene continued to record in his home studio using the name Kennett Sound Studios.

Keene continued to perform and release singles until 1987 when he retired from full-time performing. In the early 1980's Keene and his and his band served as an opening act and back-up band for his longtime friend and fellow southeast Missouri native Narvel Felts.

**Scope and Content:**

Box 1 (Correspondence) contains letters written by Joe Keene to Hunter Moore, beginning in February 2020. Letters from two other individuals related to KSS and Joe Keene are also included. Some letters contain photos, clippings of articles, and other items.

Box 2 (Index Cards) contains three file card boxes containing over 600 3x5 index cards, each with details about a recording session that took place at KSS between November 1971 and October 1994. The information contained on the cards include: the name of the performer(s); if the recording was intended for manufacture (into an LP, 45, etc.); the performer's contact information; and the cost of the recording session.

Box 3 (Miscellaneous Documents) contains clippings from newspapers, books, and other documents related to Keene and KSS. It also includes a three-ring binder of various documents created by Keene.

Box 4 (Manuscript Audio-visual) contains a compact disc recording of four songs recorded by Joe and Kay Keene at KBOA in Kennett, Missouri in 1961 and a DVD recording of three episodes of a community access cable program featuring Joe Keene recorded in 1988 and 2001.

Box 5 (Artifacts) contains several examples of keyrings used by Keene to promote the recording studio and a t-shirt with lettering related to Keene's business as a coach of women's fast-pitch softball pitchers.

The collection includes commercial sound recordings, most of which were recorded at KSS. Clients who ordered manufactured copies of their KSS recordings could supply their own record label but usually preferred using one of Keene's labels. J.E.K. International (the initials stand for Joseph Eugene Keene) was the label most frequently used by KSS clients between 1968 and 1971 when Keene moved into his new studio. After the move the KSS label became the most frequently used. Keene used the Prince label for several gospel releases in the early 1970s but stopped after learning another label had the same name. Keene used the Stone label in the early 1970s when he thought a recording might reflect negatively on the reputation of the K.S.S. label. Keene used a numbering system to identify manufactured recordings by the year they were made and their order in the sequence of manufactured recordings of the same format (LP, 45, cassette, CD) produced in the same year. For example, the Bono Oak Ridge Quartet's "When He Calls, I'll Fly Away," KSS-LPS-7413, is an LP recorded in 1974 that was the thirteenth LP manufactured for a KSS client that year.

**Collections Contents (Box/Folder):**

**Box # Folder # Description:**

**Box 1**                      **Correspondence**  
[1 folder containing correspondence in chronological order]

- Keene, Joe. February 3, 2020. Small manila envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: several compact discs. See Manuscript Audio-visual for individual item descriptions.
- . July 16, 2020. Standard envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: The envelope contains a photocopy of a December 18-19, 1971, article by Tony Pippen in the *Daily Dunklin Democrat* about the opening of the new KSS studio; three printed pages listing Keene's releases; a photocopy of clippings from an article (source unknown) from Sept. 1968 (date is handwritten) about the Caruthersville group The Collection, whose 1968 recordings at KSS were the first to be pressed into vinyl copies.
- . August 12, 2020. Standard envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: The envelope contains a hand-drawn floor plan of the KSS building with dimensions. It also contains printed sheets sent to Keene by HM with names of KSS studio musicians for Keene to fill in telephone numbers and return.
- . November 16, 2020. 8.5 x 11 manila envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: obituary for Onie Wheeler, member of Roy Acuff's band and Senath, MO resident; a print ad for Sand Hill Gang who recorded at KSS and released one of Keene's songs as a single (on reverse side of same document as the Onie Wheeler obituary); a clipping of the obituary for Les Coffman, a member of the Bono Oak Ridge Quartet and the Gospel Heirs, groups that recorded at KSS; a photo and description of the B&B club in Gobler, MO, a venue where Keene saw Jerry Lee Lewis in 1956 and later saw Carl Perkins, Charlie Feathers, and Warren Smith; a copy of the June 4, 1982 *Daily Dunklin Democrat* feature section "Making a Living Making Music" article; and a hand-written note from Keene describing the letter's contents of the correspondence.
- . February 25, 2021. Small manila envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: Five photocopied pages of a dedication from a novel by William Johnstone and covers of two of Johnstone's novels. Johnstone was a lifelong friend and early bandmate of Joe Keene's. Also includes a paper reinforcement.
- . April 22, 2021. To HM. The envelope contains photos and photocopies of photos of the 1971 KSS building (exterior and interior) and of studio musicians.
- Wilcoxson, Gary. July 16, 2021. Standard envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: original exterior photos of the new KSS studio, sent for use in the historical marker, and a note from Wilcoxson stating which photo perspective Keene liked the best. Wilcoxson is a life-long resident of Kennett who worked at KSS as a musician and producer. He also led the fundraising campaign for the KSS historical marker.

Keene, Joe. August 12, 2021. 8.5 x 11 manila envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: one black and white 8.5 x 11 PR photo of Keene seated at piano; two color 8.5 x 11 photos of Joe and Kay Keene plus two band members performing on a stage at an American Legion Hall; a typewritten copy of the poem "God's Favorite Color is Green" by Joe Keene; a printed two-page list of Keene's releases (same as the first two pages included in Keene's 7.16.2020 letter); a printed three-page list of musicians who worked in Keene's band or were otherwise associated with Keene; a printed two-page list of venues where Keene worked; and a computer-generated black and white photo of Keene with inverted print.

———. September 10, 2021. Standard envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: a filled-out W-9 form requested by Spring Fed Records to set up an artist's account prior to production of new CD.

Felts, Narvel. September 14, 2021. 8.5 x 11 manila envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: a letter from NF about the "Life in Song-The Narvel Felts Story" CD package that NF sent to HM separately, also two signed release forms for the recorded interview with HM by telephone (originals removed, copy included).

———. Sept. 14, 2021. Portion of packing envelope. Addressed to HM. The envelope has Felts' address and signature written on it.

Keene, Joe. November 15, 2021. 8.5 x 11 manila envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: a hand-written letter conveying Keene's thanks to HM's compiling the index of KSS recording artists; a thank you note; a page of photos of the horse-racing track game and a page of photos of the softball "pitchback" frame that Keene built with a note saying they are examples of how he "gets carried away with things"; and a copy of Keene's poem, "God's Favorite Color is Green."

———. November 20, 2021. Standard envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: a hand-written letter conveying Keene's thanks for HM's work on Kennett Sound Studios and Keene's career (the studio's fiftieth anniversary panel and historical marker dedication in Kennett occurred earlier in the month); a personal check (removed) from Keene sent as a token of his appreciation and information about repairing Keene's printer and replacing printer ribbons; and two slips of paper with information for ordering printer ribbons.

Minton, Jonell, and Julie Orff. Notecard envelope. November 2021. Addressed to HM. Contents: a thank you note from the librarians at the Dunklin County Library for HM's donation to the library in relation to the KSS fiftieth anniversary reception and panel event.

Keene, Joe. December 17, 2021. Standard envelope. Addressed to HM. This letter contains a hand-written note about repairing Keene's printer.

- \_\_\_\_\_. December 28, 2021. 8.5 x 11 manila envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: a copy of the November 2021 *Bootheel Magazine* issue featuring Keene and the studio's fiftieth anniversary events; and a typed note from Keene.
- \_\_\_\_\_. January 3, 2022. Standard envelope. Addressed to HM: Contents: a promotional ink pen with Kennett Sound Studios printed on it and a thank you note saying that the pen is the last one. Pen has been removed and put in Box Five, Artifacts.
- \_\_\_\_\_. June 11, 2022. Standard envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: a clipping of Joe Lee's obituary from the *Jonesboro Sun*. Lee was a musician and studio owner in Jonesboro AR who knew Keene.
- \_\_\_\_\_. May 3, 2023. 6 x 9 manila envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: Lyrics to two songs recorded by The Decisions (Mildred Pulliam, vocalist) in 1971 and a CD containing the two recordings. The CD is in Box 4, Folder 1, Manuscript Audio-visual.
- \_\_\_\_\_. November 13, 2023. 6 x 9 manila envelope. Addressed to HM. Contents: materials related to Bill Duniven, a performer who recorded at KSS, and Bill Rice, a successful Nashville songwriter who made recordings of his songs with Joe at KBOA before KSS started.

**Box 2**

**Index Cards**

Tan plastic box "KENNETT SOUND STUDIOS recording sessions February 21, 1971, Thru December 31, 1980."

Green metal box "KENNETT SOUND STUDIOS recording sessions JANUARY 1981 thru December 1988."

Gray metal box "Kennett Sound Studios, Inc., P.O. Box 602, Kennett, Missouri 63857 (Contains recording sessions December 31, 1988, through October 8, 1994.

**Box 3 Folder 1**

**Miscellaneous Documents**

Anderson, George. "Thanks for Caring: Local Man Honored with Landmark Dedication." *Bootheel Magazine* (Kennett, Missouri), November 2021.

This is a physical copy of the magazine containing a cover story about Keene and the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the opening of KSS's new building held in Kennett in November 2021. The feature article includes biographical material and multiple photos of Keene.

Garrison, Elaine. "Making a Living Making Music." *Daily Dunklin Democrat Magazine*. June 4, 1982.

This two-page feature article describes how KSS operates and includes details of Keene's career. Photos of studio interior and studio personnel are included.

Keene, Joe. *Songwriting: from Ideas to Royalties* (Dallas: Skyward Publishing, 2001).

This book is about songwriting and publishing. The book includes personal anecdotes from Keene's career as a songwriter and performer. Paper copy.

### Box 3 Folder 2

Keene, Joe. Seller's statement. December 31, 1997.

This one-page document is the seller's statement generated when KSS was sold on December 31, 1997.

———. Kennett Sound Studios inventory. October 28, 1997.

This four-page typed document lists the contents of the studio at the time of its sale to Larry Norred in 1997.

———. Printed order form for ordering manufactured copies of recordings.

This one-page document has blanks for costs and numbers of copies desired. It also lists KSS's equipment at the time. As a 4-track recording is the most sophisticated recording machine available at KSS at the time this document probably dates from around 1971 and the opening of the new studio.

———. Kennett Sound Studios brochure.

This one-page document gives a short history of the studio and facilities including publishing companies. Probably created shortly after new studio opened in 1971.

———. "The Collection." This handwritten document lists the members of The Collection, a Caruthersville-based band, that recorded at KSS in 1968 and whose single was the first to be manufactured from a KSS recording session.

———. "Recorded at KSS, Billy Lee Riley." No date.

This handwritten document lists information about the Billy Lee Riley LP that was recorded at KSS, "Vintage." The document includes the song titles and the record label name and number.

———. "Joe Keene Marks 60 Years in the Music Business." 2016.

This three-page typed press release gives details of Keene's career, likely composed by Keene. The most recent date listed is 2003.

———. "Joe Keene." No date.

This two-page typed resume was likely created by Keene. The most recent date listed is 1997.

———. "Joe Keene." No date.

This one-page handwritten document lists several of Keene's accomplishments and month, date, and year awarded for Mr. DJ USA (6.30.1961, 2.1.1963), Kentucky Colonel (2.11.1982), Kennett Ring of Honor (inaugural class), November 9, 2003, and Joe's first produced play by SEMO Little Theater (Kennett), "Mama's Front Porch."

———. "God's Favorite Color is Green." This a typed version of Keene's poem.

———. "The Joe Keene Show."

This is a printed booklet containing piano arrangements of seven of Keene's songs, biographical material in the front and back insides, and a photo and drawing of Keene. Copyright 1979.

### **Box 3 Folder 3**

Keene, Joe. KSS discography. 42 pages.

This is a discography of the 45s, LPs, cassettes, and one CD manufactured from KSS recordings.

### **Three-ring binder "Misc., ADS, ETC."**

This is a collection of clippings and other paper documents assembled by Joe Keene. It includes the following:

*Daily Dunklin Democrat*. 2000. "ASU Songwriting Classes are Being Offered, Joe Keene Will Instruct." April 28, 2000.

The article describes a songwriting course to be taught by Keene at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, AR. Biographical material about Keene and a photo are included. Two copies.

*Daily Dunklin Democrat* (?). 2000. "Donations still streaming in for auction." Fri., Sat., November 3-4, 2000.

The article describes donations of the Delta Children's Home, including a donation from Joe Keene. The section was continued but the second page is not included.

Anonymous. Typewritten document.

This page was probably created by one of Keene's grandchildren. No date. It begins, "Dear Papa."

Redeffer, Linda. "Kennett's Joe Keene Looks Back on a Diverse, Rewarding Musical Career." *Daily American Republic* (Poplar Bluff, MO). October 25, 1998.

This is a feature article based on an interview with Keene. Biographical material and a photo of Keene with his grandchildren are included.

Keene, Joe. Letter to the Editor. "Sports add to the lives of our children." *Daily Dunklin Democrat*. Kennett, Missouri, 4.7.1999.



This is a newspaper clipping of a letter to the editor by Keene about the benefits of sports for children.

Hunt, Bud. "From basketball to books and a haircut." *Daily Dunklin Democrat*. January 10, 1999. This is a newspaper clipping of a column that mentions Joe Keene dropping by the newspaper to express an opinion about the NBA settlement.

Keene, Joe. Letter to the editor. "Dedication to caring for ball fields recognized." *Daily Dunklin Democrat*. Kennett, Missouri. November 25, 1997.

———. Letter to the Editor. "Resident defends swimming pool tax." *Daily Dunklin Democrat*. Kennett, Missouri, August 28, 1998.

This is a newspaper clipping of a letter to the editor by Keene in support of a swimming pool tax for the city. Keene also included a clipping of a letter to the editor that he was responding to.

*Daily Dunklin Democrat*. 1998. "Getting Around; Three complete Xi Delta Pi pledge training." March 17, 1998.

This is a newspaper clipping of an article describing a meeting of a local woman's association. Part of the program was a showing of a video of a local theater production of a play by Joe Keene.

Keene, Joe. Letter to the Editor. "Citizen happy 11-year-old boy was safely apprehended." *Daily Dunklin Democrat*. Kennett, Missouri, October 14, 1997.

This is a newspaper clipping of a letter to the editor by Keene supporting the police treatment of an underage driver. Keene also included a clipping of the letter to the editor to which he refers.

*Community Action* (possibly a section of the *Daily Dunklin Democrat*) "Kennett Sound Studio: An Idea come to reality." March 20, 1992. This is a newspaper clipping of a story about KSS's twenty-fifth anniversary, the studio's history, and describes Norwegian performer Stephen Ackles recording at the studio the previous year.

Campbell-Jones, Cathe. "William Johnstone, novelist, visits Kennett to cut record." *Daily Dunklin Democrat*, August 13, 1995.

This article describes Bill Johnstone's career and his recording an album at KSS. Johnstone was an early bandmate of Keene and helped Keene get his novel, "Baby Grand," published.

"Great Balls of Fire," Jerry Lee Lewis newsletter. August 1991.

This is a one-page document discussing trivia and releases related to Jerry Lee's career. It also plugs Joe Keene's recording of "Nobody Can Do It Like Me," mentioning that Keene's record is dedicated to Lewis.

“Dunklin County Peace Officer’s 1<sup>st</sup> Annual ‘Delta Children’s Homes’ Benefit Concert” flyer.

A single page, pink flyer advertising a benefit concert in Kennett, MO held on Monday, December 8, 1980. Featured artists were John Wesley Ryles, Jerry Foster, Narvel Felts, and Joe Keene. Two copies.

“Xi-Iota-Rho 50’s Dance” advertisement.

This a newspaper clipping of an advertisement for a dance featuring Joe Keene in New Madrid, Missouri on March 22 (no year given).

*Daily Dunklin Democrat*. 1993. “Local Man Releases First Two Songs on CD, Tape.”

December 28, 1993.

This is a newspaper clipping of an article describing the release of two songs by Kennett resident Ronnie Zolman, including one of Keene’s compositions. A photo of Zolman is included.

*Daily Dunklin Democrat* (?). 1994. “Local library to continue Story Time.” August 21, 1994.

This is a newspaper clipping announcing that Joe Keene will be the featured guest for the weekly event.

*Daily Dunklin Democrat*. 1987. No title. March 5, 1987.

This a newspaper clipping of an article about the success of Bill Barnett’s recording of Joe Keene’s song “You’re a Hard Act to Follow,” recorded at KSS.

Carr, Jim. “Doniphan Country Singer Makes Top Ten List.” *The Weekly* (Poplar Bluff, MO). February 25, 1987.

This is a feature article about performer Bill Barnett and his recording of a song written by Keene at KSS. A photo of Barnett and band is included.

Campbell, Wendy. “Little Receives Music Award.” *Daily Dunklin Democrat*. November 17, 1995.

This is a newspaper clipping highlighting Bob Little, a performer from the area who recorded at KSS with his group Sand Hill Gang. The article contains quotes from Joe Keene and a photo of Bob Little in the KSS studio. Two copies.

Heartland Writers Guild Certificate of Commendation. December 12, 1993.

This is a paper certificate presented to Keene in appreciation for his serving as president of the organization.

Heartland Writer’s Guild Certificate of Commendation. December 13, 1992.

This is a paper certificate presented to Keene in appreciation for his serving as vice president of the organization.

Heartland Writers Guild Certificate of Commendation. December 11, 1994.

This is a paper certificate presented to Keene in appreciation for his having served as coordinator of the 1994 Heartland Writers Guild Conference.

Jones, Cathe. 1991. "Kennett Sound Studio goes international." *Daily Dunklin Democrat*. July 28, 1991.

The article describes the recording of an album at KSS by Stephen Ackles of Norway in July 1991. Two copies (courtesy of two local banks).

"Missouri Center for the Book: Missouri Authors Directory and Database." Jefferson City, Missouri, February 1, 1995.

This one-page document states that the organization is setting up a database to publicize Missouri authors. It was accompanied by a poster, described in the next entry.

"Read a Missouri Author" poster. February 1, 1991.

This foldout poster encourages viewers to read Missouri authors. Joe Keene's name is included in the background of Missouri authors' names which are listed alphabetically. The poster accompanied the letter described in the entry immediately preceding this one.

#### **Box 4 Folder 1**

#### **Manuscript Audio-visual**

The Decisions (Mildred Pulliam, vocalist). "Something to Sing About," and "It's the Sweetest Lips That Tell the Sweetest Lies." This is a CD copy made by Joe Keene of two songs recorded by The Decisions at KSS in 1971 for demonstration (demo) purposes. Insert contains publishing information for the two songs.

Keene, Joe. "Christmas is Everywhere." 2009. Compact disc.

This is a homemade copy of Keene's Christmas CD with a photocopy of the cover art. It was included in a mailing to Hunter Moore on February 3, 2020.

———. "Nobody Can Do It Like Me." 2010. Compact disc.

This is a homemade copy of Keene's 2010 CD with a photocopy of the CD booklet. It was included in a mailing to Hunter Moore on February 3, 2020.

———. "River Rat," "You've Got the Right Idea, But You've Got the Wrong Man." Compact disc.

The disc contains Joe Keene's studio performance of two original songs with backing musicians. It was included in a mailing to Hunter Moore on February 3, 2020.

Keene, Joe, and Kay. "You Got to See Your Mama Every Night," "Tommy is a Bad Boy," "Now I Know Just What I Missed," "Take It Easy, Take It Slow." Kennett, Missouri, 1961. Compact disc.

Joe and Kay Keene made recordings of four songs at KBOA in Kennett shortly before their marriage in May 1961. Joe and Kay provided the vocals. They were

accompanied by Jerry Anderson, bass, Raymond Jones, drums, Glen Dean, piano, and Joe Keene, electric guitar. The recordings were made using a one-track machine and two microphones using KBOA's live broadcast studio. Keene converted the same room into Kennett Sound Studios in 1968.

Kennett-Senath Cablevision. "Talk of the Town" cable access tv program." Three episodes. Kennett, Missouri, 1988, 2001. DVD.

These video recordings contain three episodes of "Talk of the Town," a cable access television program produced in Kennett, Missouri. "Me? Write a Song?" with Joe Keene" (parts one and two), recorded in 2001, and "KSS," recorded in 1988. Each episode is 15 minutes in length. Episodes one and two are an interview of Keene (mainly) and Narvel Felts about the songwriting process. It also includes information about Keene's and Felts's careers. The recording was made in Keene's home in Kennett, Missouri. Episode three features Narvel Felts recording a new gospel album at KSS. The recording includes the only known videorecording made inside the KSS studio and shows the interiors of the control room and recording room. Joe Keene and Narvel and Loretta Felts discuss the gospel project, the recording process, and aspects of Felts' career.

Stanfill, Clete. Interview with Joe Keene. KCRV, Caruthersville, Missouri, c 1987.

This is a CD recording of a radio interview of Joe Keene by Clete Stanfill about the publication of Keene's first novel, "Baby Grand." The interview is undated, but the book was published in 1987. Keene refers to his career as a musician and performer. The compact disc was included in a mailing to Hunter Moore on February 3, 2020.

## **Box 5**

### **Artifacts**

Two types of promotional KSS keyrings, one with multiple examples in red, yellow, and black.

One white cotton tee-shirt with the words "Keene Sport Instruction" and a graphic image of a baseball printed in red on the front. Keene operated a business teaching young women how to pitch fast-pitch softball in the 1990's and early 2000's.

One promotional ink pen with KSS's name and contact information printed on it. This item was mailed to HM on January 3, 2022.

### **Electronic Materials**

#### **Audio-visual**

Anderson, George. Kennett Sound Studios fiftieth anniversary panel discussion. Video recording. Dunklin County Library in Kennett, Missouri on November 13, 2021. Length: 1 hour, 5 minutes.

This is a videorecording of a public discussion panel held to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the new Kennett Sound Studios building in November 1971. The panel consisted of individuals who recorded at Kennett Sound Studios, including Mildred Pulliam Whitehorn, Steve Wilkerson, Daryl Wilcoxson, Narvel Felts, and the studio's former owner, Joe Keene. Individuals in the audience with experience at KSS also shared their memories. Hunter Moore moderated and made opening remarks.

Dickey, Ed. The following are demonstration ("demo") recordings made by Ed Dickey at KSS from 1983-1990 for the purpose of securing commercial recordings by established performers. Joe Keene is the vocalist except on #3 and #13.

1. "Got It Satisfied," by Ed Dickey, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country/gospel, title is in the last stanza.
2. "When the Load Gets Too Heavy," by Ed Dickey and Ray Hall, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country/gospel, (some tape damage).
3. "Another Mama Like Me," by Ed Dickey and James Hall, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country/blues, singer: Bonne Nelson, released on Door Knob Records, not recorded at KSS.
4. "Another Daddy Like Me," by Ed Dickey and James Hall, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country/blues, original version of the title above.
5. "Baby Needs a New Pair of Shoes," by Ed Dickey-Ray Gurley, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country/blues, Texas Breeze (a local group) were the musicians and provided the dice game background sounds.
6. "Busch Mountain," by Ed Dickey, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country, Ed submitted the song to Budweiser for use as an ad. The company passed but wrote back thanking him. Dickey then changed the song title to "Coors Valley" and pitched it to Coors.
7. "Dillman's" jingle, by Ed Dickey, Sugar Ridge Music BMI, country, voice/guitar, Dickey entered and won a jingle competition for a hardware store in Caruthersville. According to Dickey, the store used the jingle for years it for years.
8. "Does It Matter That I Love You," by Ed Dickey, Door Knob Music (BMI), country, Door Knob Records got the song cut on a female artist named Susan Thompson.
9. "Drink Her Memory Off My Mind," by Ed Dickey and Ray Gurley, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country. Door Knob Records got the song recorded on a doctor from Jonesboro.

10. "Give Me Back My Name," by Ed Dickey, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country, (some tape damage).

11. "Going Wrong, Getting Right," by Ed Dickey and James Hall, Sugar Ridge Music, country.

12. "How about You?" by Ed Dickey and James Hall, country, Door Knob Music (BMI).

13. "How About You", by Ed Dickey and James Hall, Door Knob Music (BMI), country, a cover version of preceding song by Wayne Kemp, who co-wrote George Strait's "The Fireman." Not recorded at KSS.

14. "Habadangee," Ed Dickey, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country/blues, novelty song, Joe's voice is sped up. Note: contains offensive stereotypes of Africa and African people.

15. "Hurry Up and Wait", Ed Dickey, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country, Joe sings this version, Ed also released a single containing the song on his label, Sugar Ridge Records, sung by Ray Gurley, Dickey the song while waiting in the doctor's office.

16. "I Don't Like to Say It but I Told You So," by Ed Dickey and Jerry Hatley, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), Dickey released an album on an artist from Portageville, MO, containing this song.

17. "I Forgot Her," by Ed Dickey, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country/blues shuffle, Joe sings this version. Ed also released a single version with a different singer on his label, Sugar Ridge Records, Dickey's song "Mississippi River Rat" is on the other side.

18. "I Go to Bed with Your Memory (and Wake Up with the Blues)," by Ed Dickey, James Hall, and Harold Norrid, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country.

19. "I'm Happy, Happy, Happy," by Ed Dickey, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country.

20. "I'm Not Ready for the Old Rockin' Chair," by Ed Dickey and Harold Norrid, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country.

21. "If You've Seen One Heartache," by Ed Dickey and James Hall, Sugar Ridge Music (BMI), country.

KFVS12. Com. "Historic Dedication Ceremony; Kennett Sound Studios." *Heartland News*. Cape Girardeau, Missouri. November 9, 2021. Video recording. Length: one minute.

This is a video recording of a local TV news story run by the CBS-affiliate in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. It was also run on the CBS-affiliate in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Both stations cover southeast Missouri and northeast Arkansas.

Moore, Hunter. "Joe Keene: Keepin' It Independent." 2022 International Country Music Conference. Nashville, Tennessee. June 3, 2022. Length: thirty minutes.

This is a videorecording of a presentation made by Hunter Moore about Joe Keene at the 2022 International Country Music Conference held at Belmont University. The introduction was made by Dr. Kristine McCusker.

### Commercial Sound Recordings

Bill Davis Family, The. "Feelin' Fine." KSS-LPS-7301, LP, 1973. Photos of the cover art and label are included.

Bono Oak Ridge Quartet, The. "The Bono Oak Ridge Quartet." KSS-LPS-7308, LP, 1973. Photos of the cover art and label are included. Track #2, "They Are Having a Big Revival" is missing from the digitized version..

Bono Oak Ridge Quartet, The. "When He Calls, I'll Fly Away." KSS-LPS-7413, LP, 1974. Photos of the cover art and label are included. Track #6 is missing from the digitized version.

Calvary Gospel Singers, The. "In the Palm of His Hand." KSS-LPS-7903, LP, 1979. Photos of the cover art and label are included.

Chimes of Joy, The. "Look at Jesus on the Cross," and "What Do You Think About Jesus?" KSS-45-8603, 45, 1986. Photos of the cover art and label are included.

Followers, The. "I Will Serve Thee." KSS-LPS-7702, LP, 1972. Photos of the cover art and label are included. Track #3, "Tears Will Never Stain the Streets of That City" is missing from the digitized version.

Mighty Stars of Heaven, The. "Don't Put Off Today for Tomorrow." KSS-LPS-8603, LP, 1986. Photos of the cover art and label are included.

Songsmen Quartet, The. "Something Old, Something New." KSS-LPS-7503, LP, 1975. Photos of the cover art and label are included.

Songsmen Quartet, The. "We Love to Sing." KSS-LPS-7415, LP, 1974. Photos of the cover art and label are included.

Wayfaring Singers, The. "Just as the Sun Went Down." KSS-LPS-7617, LP, 1976. Photos of the cover art and label are included.

Young Evangels, The. "The Young Evangels." KSS-LPS-7505, LP, 1975. Photos of the cover art and label are included.

### Interview Recordings

All the interviews listed were conducted by the author and by telephone except when a location is given or otherwise noted. Recordings of the interviews and partial transcriptions are in HM's possession. All the interviews were recorded as digital audio files (MP4). Documents with logs of the interviews, including unrecorded conversations and partial transcriptions, have been included.

Anderson, Jerry. February 28, 2022

Conley, Jon. Kingston Springs, Tennessee. May 28, 2021.

Felts, Narvel. September 2, 2021.

Keene, Joe. Kennett, Missouri. In person: February 18, 2020. By telephone: April 9, May 16, 18, 20, 28, 30, June 2, 4, 30, August 5, October 14, November 12, 2020; February 4, March 30, April 1, August 13, 26, 27, September 7, 2021; March 7, September 20, 2022.

Keene, Johnie. September 10, 2021.

Keene, Kay. September 1, 2021.

Reeder, Reece. February 7, 2022.

Whitehorn, Mildred Pulliam. September 19, 2021.

### Photographs

Numbered according to the order of the photographs in folder.

"Information on photographs in folder." Document (MS Word). This accompanying document describes each of the photographs in the folder.

1. (L. to R.): Eddie Keene (Joe's brother) and Joe Keene c. 1955.
2. (L. to R.): Joe Keene, Titus Hall, Velma Cokeneur, Glenn Dean. Friends that Joe played music with, at Velma's house in New Madrid, Missouri, November 1956.
3. Joe Keene performing c. 1957. Joe painted the blue Harmony guitar he purchased in October 1956 several times and in different colors, eventually restoring it to the original color.



4. (L. to R.): Glenn Dean (saxophone), Willie Ham (guitar), Joe Keene. Silver Slipper Club, Blytheville, Arkansas, c. 1958-1959.
5. Joe Keene, 1959.
6. Joe Keene, c. 1959.
7. Joe Keene with white guitar, c. 1959.
8. (L. to R., bottom row): Mirt Merly, Narvel Felts, Joe Keene, (L. to R. top row): Pop Crites, Ernie Thompson, unidentified man. Tiny's Danceland, Illmo-Scott City, MO, c. 1958-59.
9. (L. to R.): Bill Johnstone (drums), Joe Keene (piano), Jack Adkins (Fender bass, not visible). Buford Peek Memorial Show, Bragg City High School Auditorium, Bragg City, MO, Nov. 23, 1959.
10. (L. to R.): Jerry Anderson (bass), Bill Johnstone (drums), Joe Keene (guitar). Taken at Wilhemina Club, located north of Campbell, MO, c. 1959.
11. Joe Keene and his baby blue Cadillac Fleetwood, in front of his parents' house at 907 King Street, Portageville, Missouri, c. 1959.
12. Joe Keene, on the air at KBOA, Kennett, MO, mid-1960s.
13. (L. to R.): Jerry Anderson (bass), Kay Keene (vocal), Tommy Redmon (partially hidden, drums), Joe Keene (piano). American Legion Hall, Kennett, Missouri, 1966.
14. (L. to R.): Billy Lee Riley, unidentified person in background, Joe Keene (seated at recording console), and Larry Donn (aka Larry Don Gillihan), standing. Recording sessions for Riley's *Vintage* LP, recorded at KSS in September 1979.
15. Billy Lee Riley recording in KSS studio, *Vintage* LP sessions, recorded at KSS in September 1979.
16. (L. to R.): Billy Lee Riley and Joe Keene, *Vintage* LP sessions, recorded at KSS in September 1979.
17. Joe Keene (piano, white boots), 1982.
18. (L. to R.): Gary Wilcoxson, Steve Wilkerson, Joe Keene, Daryl Wilcoxson, Kelly Keene, outside Kennett Sound Studios, 1991. Recording session for Billy Poore.
19. (L. to R.): unidentified man in background, Joe Keene, Daryl Wilcoxson, Terry Ray Bradley (partial), KSS control room, 1991. Recording session for Billy Poore.

20. (L. to R.): Narvel Felts (seated at console), Steve Wilkerson (standing w guitar), Daryl Wilcoxson, Gary Wilcoxson, and Joe Keene, KSS control room, 1991. Recording session for Billy Poore.
21. Kelly Keene, KSS control room, 1991.
22. (L. to R.): Joe Keene and Billy Poore with KSS front office in background, 1991.
23. Kennett Sound Studios, 1971 building, date unknown.
24. Kennett Sound Studios, 1971 building (different angle), date unknown.
25. (L. to R.): Joe Keene, Narvel Felts, unidentified man. Caruthersville, MO music festival, 2003.
26. Joe Keene club listings (page one).
27. Joe Keene club listings (page two).
28. Joe Keene library display case photos 1, Dunklin County Library, Kennett, Missouri.
29. Joe Keene library display case photos 2, Dunklin County Library, Kennett, Missouri.
30. Joe Keene library display case photos 3, Dunklin County Library, Kennett, Missouri.
31. Joe Keene library display case photos 4, Dunklin County Library, Kennett, Missouri..
32. Joe Keene library display case photos 5, Dunklin County Library, Kennett, Missouri
33. Joe Keene library display case photos 6, Dunklin County Library, Kennett, Missouri.
34. Joe Keene library display case photos 7, Dunklin County Library, Kennett, Missouri.
35. (L. to R.): Joe Keene and Hunter Moore, Dunklin County Library, Kennett, Missouri, Feb. 18, 2020.
36. Jukebox inserts for two of Joe Keene's releases.
37. B & B Club, Gobler, Missouri.
38. Eazy with Jamie Holmes and Mike Lawler.
39. Eugene "Gene" Keene, Joe Keene's grandfather, standing, first on left.

40. "First" session at studio 1967 article clipping part one (Joe later said that KSS was not in full operation until the following year).
41. "First" session at studio 1967 article clipping part two (see previous comment).
42. The Galatians (group) sessions 1976, 77-Joe tuning bass.
43. The Galatians (group) sessions 1976,77-Joe w studio players.
44. The Galatians (group) session 1976,77-KSS exterior.
45. Harold, Joe, and Lucille Keene 1938 (parents holding young Joe).
46. Joe band promo card (pink).
47. *I've Done It All in My Time* CD cover.
48. Joe's baby blue 1955 Fleetwood Cadillac.
49. Joe's grandmother Anna Nora Tisher.
50. Joe's Jimmy Pierce session article clipping 1967 part one 600.
51. Joe's Jimmy Pierce session article clipping 1967 part two 600.
52. KBOA staff (Joe Keene, far right).
53. Keene family birth dates.
54. KSS print advertisement.
55. KSS-Happy Day Music ads pt. one 300.
56. KSS-Happy Day Music ads pt. two 300.
57. KSS studio interior w Delayna Marrow, 1984.
58. Roland Janes at Sonic Recording Studio.
59. Scott and Kelly Keene, sons of Joe and Kay Keene, (l, r).
60. The Collection publicity photo 600.
61. The Collection article 300.
62. Steve Wilkerson and Gary Wilcoxson, Billy Poore session, 1991.

63. Al Jordan (bass), Jamie Holmes (drums), Bobby Neal (guitar), and Peggy Holmes, leader of Singspirations, 11.1971 600.
64. Bobby Neal and Peggy Holmes, Singspirations session, 11.1971 600
65. Singspirations at KSS 11.1971 600.
66. Joe etc. piano labeled (2), 1959 600.
67. Joe standing w guitar mid 50s 600.

### Print Documents

#### Articles

Bell, Trina. "Kennett Sound Studios Historic Marker Dedication." *Daily Dunklin Democrat*. Tuesday, November 16, 2021.  
This article describes the dedication of a historical marker at the former site of Kennett Sound Studios.

*Daily Dunklin Democrat*. 1967. Two articles, "Area Talent Has Access to Recording Studio at KBOA." August 7, 1967. "New Recording Company Is Formed Here." July 26, 1967.

Clippings for two articles are included in this document. The first article describes the first recording session in Keene's recording studio and plans for the studio. It likely appeared in the same issue as the second entry in this section. Keene later said that the studio didn't begin full operation until 1968. The second article describes the first release on Keene's record label, JEK International.

*Daily Dunklin Democrat*. 1967. "First Session at Kennett Recording Studio." August 7, 1967.

This front-page feature includes a photograph of Joe Keene at the recording desk and another of the first two performers to record at the new studio. The caption describes the first recording session at Keene's first recording studio, located at radio station KBOA in Kennett, Missouri. The studio is referred to as Kennett Recording Studios in the article.

*Daily Dunklin Democrat*. 2001. "Kennett Native Shares Tips on Tuning into Career in Music Business." December 14, 2001.

This article describes the publication of Joe Keene's book on the music business.

*Democrat Argus*. 2000. "C'ville girls receive fast-pitch instruction."

This article describes Joe Keene providing fast-pitch softball instruction to a high school team in Caruthersville, Missouri.

Forester, Lecia. "Mr. Music." *Daily Dunklin Democrat*. October 7, 2010.

This article describes Keene's career and a musical reunion held in his honor in Kennett.

Garrison, Elaine. "Making a Living Making Music." *Daily Dunklin Democrat Magazine*. June 4, 1982.

This two-page feature article describes how KSS operates and includes details of Keene's career. Photos of studio interior and studio personnel are included.

*Memphis Music News*. 1971. "Kennett, Missouri Studio Vandalized." January 1971.

This is a photocopy of a newspaper article about a break-in at KSS, then located at KBOA, that occurred in January 1971, and the theft of the studio's recording machines. The article and Keene's handwritten note identify the type of recording machines that were stolen. The event motivated Keene to move his studio to a new free-standing building. The new KSS building opened for business in November 1971.

Moore, Hunter. "Keene CD Played Across the U.S." *Delta Dunklin Democrat*. August 13, 2022.

This article describes Keene's reissue CD, "I've Done It All in My Time" being played on radio stations across the United States.

———. "Kennett Studio Was Valuable for Local Musicians." *Delta Dunklin Democrat*. August 10, 2021.

This article describes the opportunities for local musicians that KSS made possible and mentions the achievements of some of the musicians. The article also promotes the historical marker campaign for the studio.

———. "Marker Sought for Historic Kennett Recording Studio." *Delta Dunklin Democrat*. June 10, 2021.

The article describes the campaign to raise funds for a historical marker at the site of the former KSS studio and includes a brief history of the studio.

———. "Studio Celebration Includes New CD Release." *Delta Dunklin Democrat*. November 4, 2021.

The release of Keene's new CD as part of the studio's fiftieth anniversary celebration is discussed in this article.

Orf, Julie. "Bootheel Musicians." October 2021.

This draft of an article has short descriptions of the careers of several southeast Missouri musicians, including Joe Keene.

———. "Joe Keene: Renaissance Man." *Delta Dunklin Democrat*. December 4, 2021.

This article is an overview of Keene's career.

- . “Kennett Sound Studio to Receive Historical Marker.” *Delta Dunklin Democrat*. November 2, 2021.  
This article describes the historical marker dedication on the site of the free-standing Kennett Sound Studios building built in 1971.
- . “Kennett Sound Studios Significance.” October 2021.  
This draft of an article describes the impact of Kennett Sound Studios and Joe Keene’s involvement with the studio.
- Pippen, Tony. “Kennett Makes Bid for Its Slice of the Growing and Lucrative Music Market; New Recording Studio Opens on South By-Pass.” *Missouri Weekly* (the weekend edition of the Daily Dunklin Democrat). Kennett, Missouri. December 18-19, 1971.
- . “Missouri Weekly Visits Music City USA.” *Missouri Weekly*. February 11-12, 1967.  
Kennett, Missouri. This article describes one of Joe Keene’s songs being recorded at RCA Records in Nashville by the singer Jimmy Pierce.

#### **Emails**

Relevant emails were copied into separate word document files and put in folders according to the correspondent.

#### **Letters Sent**

Electronic files of letters sent by Hunter Moore were separated into folders according to the correspondent.

#### **Miscellaneous Documents**

Keene, Joe. KSS discography. 42 pages.  
This is a discography of the 45s, LPs, cassettes, and one CD manufactured from KSS recordings.

#### **Session Cards**

- . KSS session card index. 2021.  
Using the information on the more than 600 3 x 5 cards used by Joe Keene to record information about KSS performers and sessions. HM created an alphabetical index of KSS performers and their individual recording sessions.
- . KSS session card scans. These are scans of all the 3 x 5 index cards with information about individual recording sessions at KSS. The cards were scanned three to a page.

#### **Three-ring binder**

Scans of the contents of the three-ring binder described under Miscellaneous Documents, Box 3 Folder 3 are included in the electronic materials.

### **Materials Catalogued Separately**

#### **Commercial Sound Recordings**

Keene's system of numbering records and the record labels he used at KSS are described in detail under Scope and Content (pg. 3).

Commercial recordings (LPs, 45s, CDs, etc.) are listed on a separate spreadsheet.

#### **Location:**

All manuscripts are located in the special collections storage area filed by accession number. Digital material files are located on the CPM server: CPM\_DC >> Special Collections Digital Images >> Manuscript Collections >> Joe Keene-Kennett Sound Studios 19-029

#### **Related Materials:**

There are additional electronic documents related to Joe Keene, Kennett Sound Studios, and to Keene's 2022 Spring Fed Records release, *I've Done It All in My Time* (SFR 122) in the holdings of the CPM. Please contact the Spring Fed Records Manager for more information. The Center holds other manuscript, audio, and video collections related to country music and Black gospel, notably the Doug Seroff Black Gospel Disc Collection (89-009) and *The Recording Industry: Historical Perspectives* audio cassette collection (87-048). Special collection sheet music, performance documents, trade catalogs, photographs, sound recordings, rare books, and reading room materials related to the subjects of country music, Black gospel music, and rock 'n' roll are also held by the Center and are searchable through the CPM website database or MTSU's Walker Library catalog.

Processed by J. Hunter Moore, August 2022-September 2024.