



J. H. KEENEY & CO.

Keeney & Sons, Jefferson

J. H. Keeney & Co., Inc., Chicago

The company Keeney & Sons was founded around 1905 by John Benjamin Keeney in Jefferson, Iowa, who within a decade became one of the most successful operators of coin operated scales, vendors, and slot machines in the mid-west States. Early in 1916 J. B. Keeney and his family moved from Aberdeen in South Dakota to Chicago and established the company at 700 East 40th Street. Two of his sons, William Edwin and John Harley, were soon involved in the daily routines, inaugurating a new plan of sales, a mail order system, which enabled the company to cover all States. Especially the youngest John Harley, aged about seventeen, became very active in the daily activities, and represented the company in Minnesota. It seems the daughter Maude Leora (1890-1976) and the youngest son Kenneth Kendrick (1907-1980) did not take active part in the family company. It is interesting to note that the major commercial phonograph manufacturer David C. Rockola was employed as a mechanic at Keeney's workshop around 1923 before he founded the Rock-Ola Manufacturing Corp. in 1927.

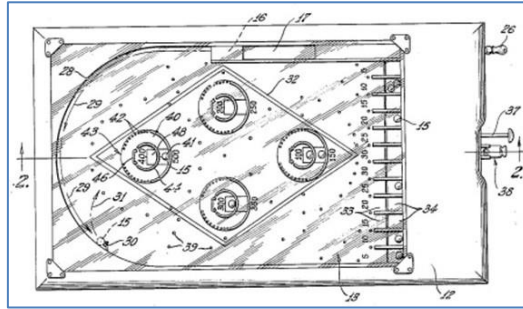
John Benjamin Keeney withdrew from active service in 1926 and lived with his wife Sylvia and the youngest son Kenneth at his country home, a farm near Kansasville in Wisconsin. It is a sad story that John Benjamin lost his life in an automobile accident on the 20th August 1935 on the way home from his older brother William's funeral at Clarinda in Iowa. In the car was also his nephew John Logan (*Jack*) Everett Jr. (1917-2003). He was a son of John Logan Everett Sr. (1884-1976), who was involved with the amusement machine manufacturer Baker Novelty Co. in Chicago. John Benjamin's wife Sylvia Irene, born *Bardsley* in 1869, passed away on the 6th October 1933.



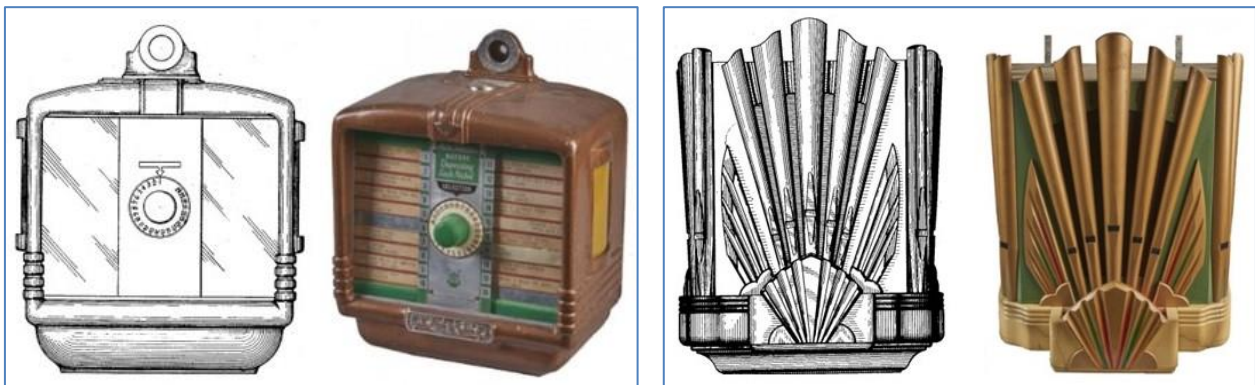
John Harley Keeney
10/3 1892 – 26/7 1948

The old company Keeney & Sons was terminated in November 1933, a few weeks after the death of Sylvia in October, and in September William Edwin (*Bill*) had become suddenly ill at work and needed complete rest at home for at least a month. Thus, it was the right time for John Harley (*Jack*) to terminate the Keeney & Sons company. Later William Edwin was an operator of coin machines with own routes and registered

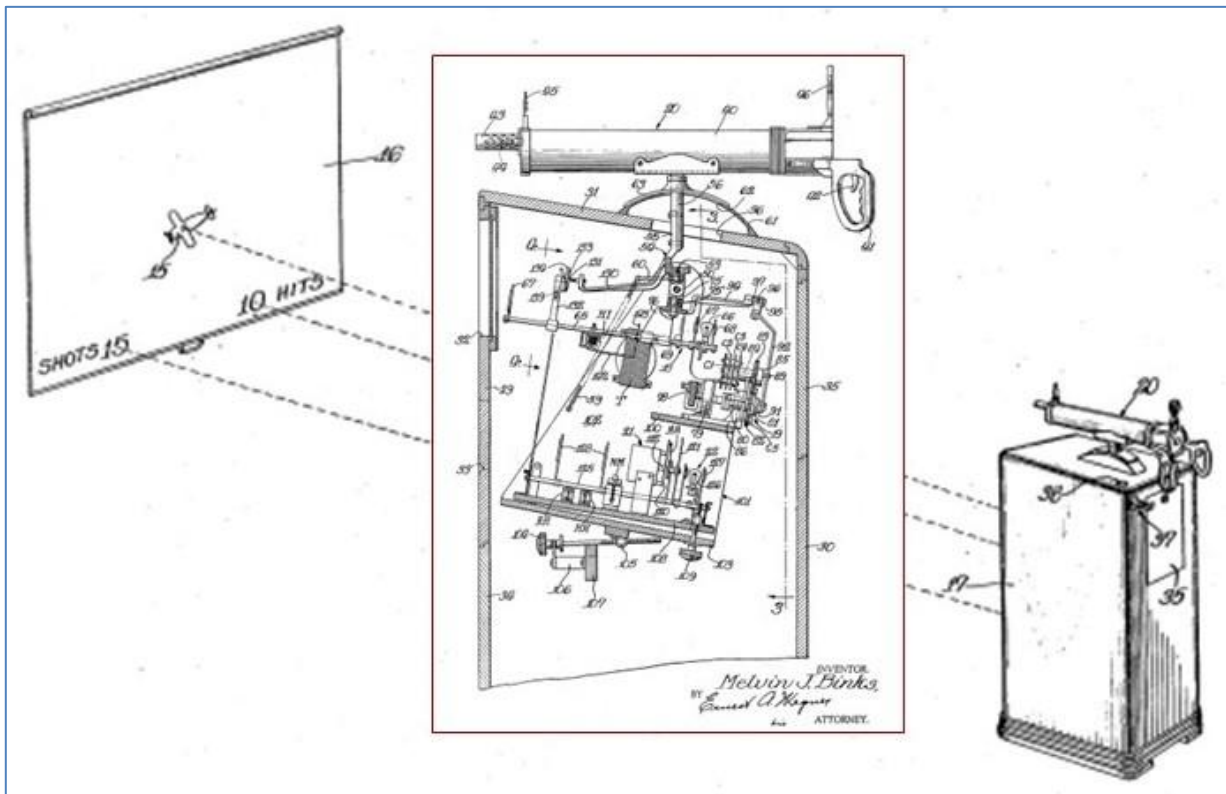
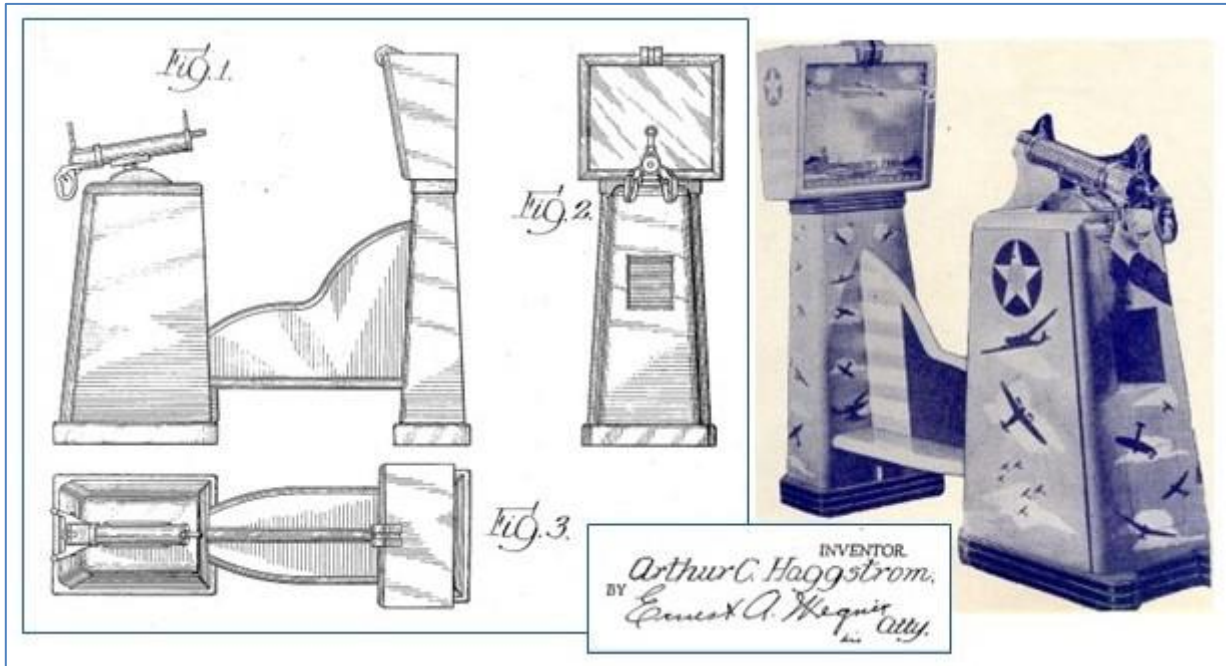
company W. E. Keeney Mfg. Co. at 5239 South Oakland Avenue. In January 1934 John Harley established the manufacturing company J. H. Keeney & Co. with offices and production at 2900 South Michigan Avenue. After the first “Baby Vender” trade stimulator was manufactured in 1927 by Keeney & Sons at 700 East 40th Street, the first amusement machine John H. Keeney patented was the “Baffle Ball” in 1931.



Late in the thirties the company tried to enter the commercial phonograph field with a special phonograph remote control system developed by Hubert Lawrence Bryan and Melvin Joseph Binks, who was the daily manager of the Keeney production facility. The Keeney Wall Box system was known for its flexibility and simplicity of installation, and it was adaptable for most 20-sel. and later also 24-sel. commercial phonographs. Interesting is of course the Keeney auxiliary organ speaker cabinet designed by Arthur Charles Haggstrom. At the same time other commercial phonograph speakers made by Capehart, Seeburg, and Wurlitzer, also had the reminiscence of organ pipes from mechanical music machines, the old-fashioned street organs and orchestrions. The mechanical music wonders could still be admired at the World Fair in New York in 1939.



Arthur C. Haggstrom was a freelance furniture designer involved in several projects at J. H. Keeney & Co., but he was also working for Exhibit Supply Co., A.B.T. Manufacturing Corp., O. D. Jennings Co., and Bally Manufacturing Corp. in the thirties. The most interesting arcade game Arthur C. Haggstrom designed for J. H. Keeney & Co., the “Air Raider” introduced in 1941, was developed by Melvin J. Binks.



Following the War Powers Act 1941 J. H. Keeney & Co. was of course taking part in war time production from May 1942, and a special item the company manufactured was an over-sized working model of the Browning 1918 automatic rifle for military demonstration.



After the war ended in 1945 J. H. Keeney & Co., Inc. did not explore the market for jukebox accessories further, but started production of other coin operated amusement machines at 2001 Calumet Avenue and at the former Majestic Radio & Television Corp. building at 2600 West 50th Street purchased in the autumn 1944, but owner and general manager John H. (*Jack*) unfortunately suffered a serious heart attack in December 1947 and passed away in his sleep on the 26th July 1948.



William James Ryan
11/7 1891 – 5/11 1951



John Sidney Conroe
4/8 1901 – 19/9 1957

The daily management of the company was by then in the able hands of William J. (*Bill*) Ryan (1891-1951), who soon went back to work again for the O. D. Jennings Co., and the manager of the vending machine division, John S. Conroe (1901-1957), took over as the general manager of J. H. Keeney & Co..

The incorporated company was financially taken over by Roy Phillip McGinnis (1891-1968), when John Harley Keeney suffered his debilitating heart attack. The firm, J. H. Keeney & Co., Inc., was under the new management active in the coin-op vending and amusement machine industry until the mid-sixties at 2001 Calumet Avenue, and the last of more than hundred different amusement games with the Keeney name was the upright slot machine “Mountain Climber” advertised in 1966. It seems the company was finally dissolved when the majority stockholder Roy Phillip McGinnis passed away on the 28th August 1968.

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after April 28, 1877 and on or before February 16, 1907)

SERIAL NUMBER: U 2584 / Name (Print): Roy Phillip McGinnis / ORDER NUMBER: _____

1. PLACE OF BIRTH (Print): 1211 Southview Road, Baltimore, Maryland / (Town, village, or city) (County) (State)

(THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL)

2. MARITAL STATUS: Same / (Indicate status if other than given on line 1. If ever been married)

3. TELEPHONE: Ce 5428 / 1. AGE IN YEARS: 57 / 2. PLACE OF BIRTH: Joliet, Illinois / (Town, village, or city) (State or country)

3. DATES AND ADDRESS OF PLACES WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS: 2011 Maryland Ave, Roy McGinnis Company / (Street) (City) (State) (Country)

4. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: 2011 Maryland Ave, Baltimore, Maryland / (Street) (City) (State)

I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE TRULY GIVEN ADDRESS AND THAT THIS IS MY SIGNATURE: Roy McGinnis / (Signature)

Dr. H. H. POWERS, JR. / (Director)

Roy Phillip McGinnis
23/5 1891 – 28/8 1968

The Keeney family members were not among the major manufacturers of commercial phonograph equipment in the Golden Age, but they deserve their places in the Amusement Industry Hall of Fame.

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Gert Almind, Nov-2024

- The Keeney Family**
- John Benjamin Keeney, February 12, 1864 – August 20, 1935
 - Sylvia Irene *Bardsley* Keeney, April 16, 1869 – October 6, 1933
 - William Edwin (*Bill*) Keeney, May 15, 1888 – September 4, 1964
 - Maude Leora Keeney *Leggett*, January 29, 1890 – November 28, 1976
 - John Harley (*Jack*) Keeney, March 10, 1892 – July 26, 1948
 - Kenneth Kendrick Keeney, October 2, 1907 – June 9, 1980



SERIAL NUMBER 2129	1. NAME (Print) Melvin Joseph Binks		OFFICE NUMBER 2450
2. ADDRESS (Print) 1402 Park Avenue, River Forest, Cook Ill.			
3. TELEPHONE Forest 4546	4. AGE IN YEARS 35	5. PLACE OF BIRTH Chicago	6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP U.S.A.
7. DATE OF BIRTH Apr 28 1905			
8. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. Lydia T. Binks			9. RELATIONSHIP OF THIS PERSON Wife
10. ADDRESS OF THIS PERSON 1402 Park Avenue, River Forest, Ill.			
11. EMPLOYER'S NAME J. H. Keeney & Co.			
12. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS 2001 Calumet Ave Chicago			
13. I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE FURNISHED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.			
REGISTRATION CARD D. B. S. FORM 1 Melvin J. Binks			

Melvin Joseph William Binks
28/4 1905 – 15/7 1985

SERIAL NUMBER 3602	1. NAME (Print) Hubert Lawrence Bryan		OFFICE NUMBER 1632
2. ADDRESS (Print) 7416 Phillips Ave Chicago Cook Ill.			
3. TELEPHONE 9517	4. AGE IN YEARS 31	5. PLACE OF BIRTH Riviera	6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP U.S.
7. DATE OF BIRTH 16/06/1908			
8. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. LA RUE VELMA BRYAN			9. RELATIONSHIP OF THIS PERSON WIFE
10. ADDRESS OF THIS PERSON 3614 TRAVIS DALLAS-TEXAS			
11. EMPLOYER'S NAME J. H. Keeney			
12. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS 2001 CALUMET CHICAGO-COOK ILL			
13. I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE FURNISHED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.			
REGISTRATION CARD D. B. S. FORM 1 Hubert L. Bryan			

Hubert Lawrence Bryan
6/12 1908 – 3/9 1999

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after February 17, 1897 and on or before December 31, 1921)			
SERIAL NUMBER 3558	1. NAME (Print) Arthur Charles Haggstrom		OFFICE NUMBER 2146
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) 922 North Ave Rockford Winnebago Illinois			
3. MAILING ADDRESS 922 North Ave Rockford Ill.			
4. TELEPHONE 771 6141	5. AGE IN YEARS 37	6. PLACE OF BIRTH Chicago	
7. DATE OF BIRTH July 7 1904			
8. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Helen Haggstrom 922 North Ave Rockford Ill.			
9. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Barber-Colman Co. Rockford Ill.			
10. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS 150 Loomis St. Rockford Winnebago Ill.			
11. I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE FURNISHED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.			
D. B. S. FORM 1 Arthur C. Haggstrom			

Arthur Charles Haggstrom
7/7 1904 – 17/3 1996



Keeney Building, 700 East 40th Street (July 2018)

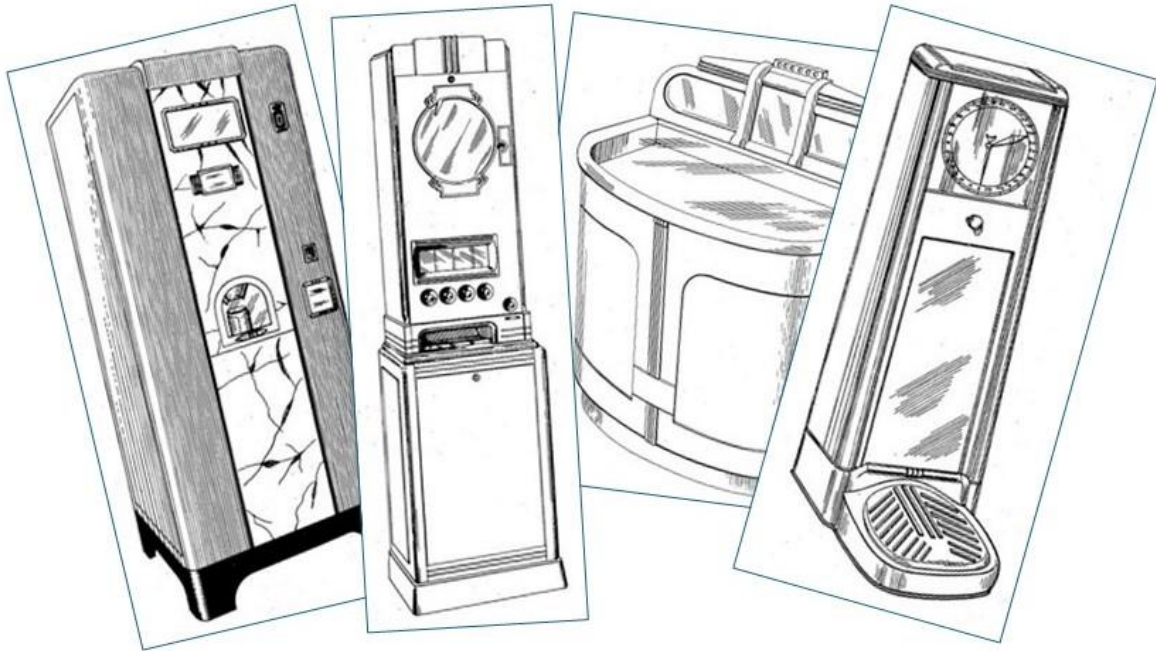


Keeney Plant, 2900 South Michigan Avenue



Keeney Factory, 2001 Calumet Avenue

Arthur Charles Haggstrom



Est. 1901 by
John Franklin Meyer
13/7 1881 – 9/11 1948



Est. 1906 by
Ode Douglas Jennings
16/9 1874 – 21/11 1953



Est. 1920 by
Gustav Max Adler
31/3 1879 – 17/4 1952
Archie Harrold Bechtol
13/11 1883 – 12/5 1942
Walter Albert Tratsch
9/12 1879 – 4/11 1960



Est. 1932 by
Raymond Thomas Moloney
2/11 1899 – 26/2 1958