

Mary Elizabeth Glaser Essex



Born: 22 March 1891 in Neville, OH

Mother: Caroline “Lina” Louise Schock

Father: Christopher William Glaser

Married: 1912

Died: 1975 in Felicity, Ohio



Mary Glaser Essex was born in 1891 in Neville, Ohio, and grew up in the house built by her grandfather George Schoch who, like her paternal grandparents, had emigrated from Germany in the mid-19th century.

In 1912 she married Paul Essex, who for some years had been the most eligible bachelor of the village. After their marriage, business and circumstances necessitated many moves. In each new situation, Mary set about making a comfortable home for her family with whatever came to hand. She especially busied herself with the kitchen and setting a good table.

Grandma Mary Glaser Essex was a linchpin of the family. Her grandchildren got to be spoiled (some, but she also could hold the line!), fussed over, fed very well, and just overall loved thoroughly. Mary had not had a lot of material wealth or resources in her life, so she had learned how to make a family survive and thrive on very little. Raising a young family during the Great Depression led to developing those skills. Grandma saved everything: bread wrappers, safety pins, grocery bags, etc.

Grandma also was a pro at organizing her family life. Spring cleaning was definitely a “thing.” Taking down all the curtains, washing everything, cleaning baseboards and doorframes, all had to be done thoroughly every spring. The grandchildren would pitch in but honestly, we were probably more hindrance than help.

Food was definitely a love language for Mary. An excellent cook, and even better baker, she provided great meals and

wonderful desserts for her family. She also taught the grandchildren how to bake. She would give us a small piece of piecrust dough and let us roll it out and make our own mini-pies. At her side, we got to mix up biscuits, cut out sugar cookies, and watch her make her many confections like cream candy. Every birthday was celebrated at her table and for most of them, she made the birthday cake (my own favorite, still today, was her Coconut Cake).

She made a few German dishes, such as “boneless birds,” and Paul’s favorites from his mother’s collection, such as creamed hash-browns, and she began adding recipes learned from friends in a succession of homes. From Kentucky came cream-pull candy and her famous fruit cake. In Florida she delighted in the wild fruit from which she made countless jars of jams and jellies.

Also in Florida, she learned an American version of a Chinese dish that became a family favorite. Though never a food faddist, she liked to try new things, and she was quick to adopt curry, barbecue and Brunswick Stew introduced to her by roaming relatives. When asked by her daughter what gift she would like from France, she replied, “A real French onion soup recipe.”

Mary felt a deep love for her family and friends but seldom expressed it verbally. She believed that love is something that you DO. Her affection was often disguised as a big bowl of mashed potatoes, a platter of fried chicken and an apple pie.

The grandchildren also internalized the meaning of family connections through hearing her and her sister, Louise Tucker, reminiscing about who was related to whom and how. We learned the difference between a first cousin and a second cousin once removed and heard many stories about interesting family characters.

Grandma also loved her “story” (soap opera As the World Turns). Every day at 1:00, the work took a pause and Grandma would sit down in the living room with a plate of crackers and Velveeta cheese and watch her show. Then

she would be back up and either cooking dinner, cleaning or going out to the garden to pick tomatoes or beans or whatever was ripe at the time. (We loved picking a fresh tomato and eating it right from the vine as we were “helping” her.)

Grandma Mary raised three children in difficult times. She moved many times but eventually found a forever home on Saltair Road. She worked hard and loved well. Her children and grandchildren were blessed to have her.



Mary Essex on the right.

