

Paul James Essex



Born: 17 Dec 1914 in Augusta, Ky.

Mother: Mary Elizabeth Glaser

Father: Paul Essex

Married: 19 Jun 1944

Died: 26 Jan 1991 in Felicity, Ohio

Milestones: Moved to Ft. Lauderdale at age 11; graduated from Ft. Lauderdale High School in 1932; moved back to Ohio working for Liggett and Myers Tobacco Co.; enlisted in 1942; captain in 1945.



Paul James Essex was born in Augusta, Kentucky, on December 17, 1914, the son of Paul Essex of Rural, Ohio, and Mary Glaser Essex of Neville, Ohio. He died at age 76 on January 26, 1991, at Christ Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio.

At the time of his death, he was a resident of Felicity, Ohio, but during his lifetime, he had lived in several other places. When he was 11 years old, the family moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he graduated from Fort Lauderdale High School in 1932.

The family returned to Ohio shortly thereafter, and he worked for Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company. He attended Union College in Barbourville, Kentucky. In 1942, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps and rose to the rank of Captain by 1945. He served as a Company Commander and saw overseas duty in New Guinea and the Philippines. During the war, he met Dorothy Dee Moore at Moose Lake, Washington, and they were married June 19, 1944. After the war, Paul and his family moved to a farm on Saltair Road near Bethel, Ohio, where they lived until 1989.

From 1948 to 1975, Paul was employed by the Department of Agriculture, Tobacco Division. He began as an inspector, and when he retired, was the regional director for Burley Tobacco Inspection, headquartered in Lexington, Kentucky. He supervised over 300 personnel in 10 states and was recognized for outstanding federal service. He enjoyed his

work for many reasons, among them the fine people he grew to know as he traveled in the southern states, from Maryland to Florida to Missouri. He also enjoyed seeing new places; he and his wife visited most of the continental United States.

Paul was a member of the American Legion for many years. He was intensely interested in national and international politics, and he was an avid reader of history and literature.

He had a deep respect and love for the land he lived on and farmed. He frequently said we are caretakers of our land, not owners, and we should leave it in better shape than we found it. He enjoyed most outdoor activities including golf, hunting, and fishing, and led his children and grandchildren to share that enthusiasm. He was devoted to his family, a loyal and loving husband, father and grandfather.

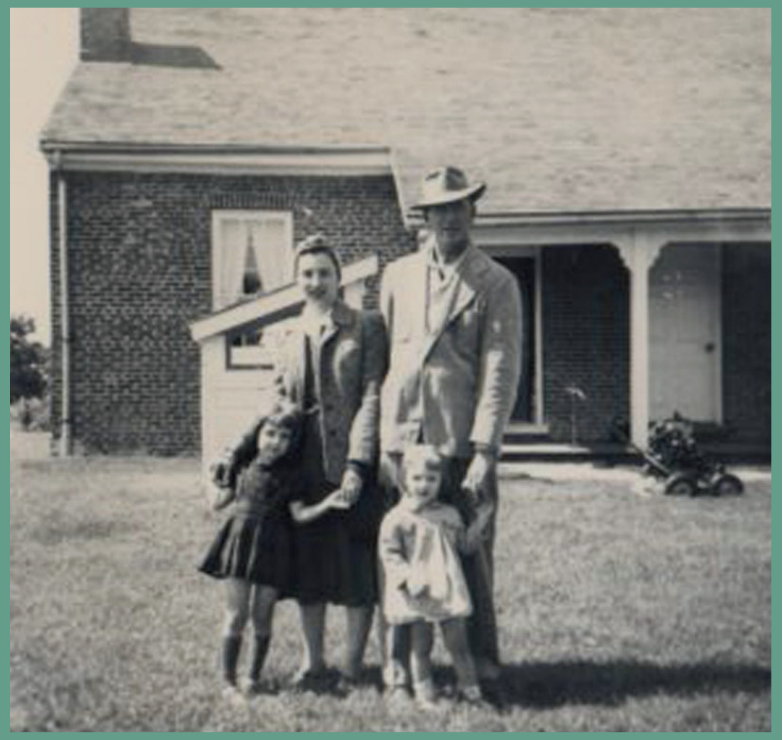
From WWII forward: In 1945, Paul arrived back from World War II to Sprague, Washington, for his first meeting with his baby daughter, Mary Jane. He was a delighted father. He helped his mother-in-law, Mary Willietta, with the grocery store until she could find a manager. Paul, Dee and baby MJ then started back to Ohio (by way of San Francisco where they picked up Paul's sister Caroline (Babs) and made the long trip "on Route 66."

Mom and Dad Essex (Mary and Paul Sr.) and Ruth had moved into the house on the farm on Saltair Road and had begun renovation. To give an idea of the job they had undertaken, the house was listed in the tax “books” as uninhabitable. They more or less camped as they tackled the most necessary jobs. The first thing they did was prepare a room for Paul and Dee and the baby, Mary Jane. It was the big bedroom upstairs on the west side of the house. They did a beautiful job, even retiling the fireplace.

Paul was so happy to be back in Ohio and living on that little farm. He and his sisters bought it as a family farm while he was in the Army Air Corps so they each owned a third. It was spring and time to take care of the tobacco bed and plow the garden space and plant the corn. He was happy! He really wanted to just be a farmer. Unfortunately, he had no farm equipment and no money to buy any. But, if he had the money, there was no equipment on the market because the factories had not yet changed over from manufacturing war equipment to making agricultural and industrial and domestic machines.

Paul decided he would farm during the growing seasons on their small acreage and would be a tenant farmer on more acreage. He would then work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a tobacco inspector during the Burley tobacco sales, which are in the winter months. In order to do that he bought some horse-drawn equipment and a team of horses. They sold their 1937 Packard convertible to buy that and bought Aunt Louise’s very old car for transportation.

Paul arranged with Uncle Albert (Aunt Louise’s husband) to mow and house his hay for half of the crop. He took his team and mowing equipment and cut the hay and left it to cure until the next day. He got a crew together to help him rake and load the hay on the wagon to take into the barn. One of the crew drove the team and wagon to the field while he took the rest in the car, which he parked in the open gateway to the field. They had the first big load of hay on the wagon, they all climbed on the load and headed for the barn to put it in the loft. All was well until something “spooked” the horses and they ran away – scattering people and hay as they went. They headed straight for the gate. The car there didn’t stop them. One ran on each side of the car and the wagon



tongue went right through the middle, clear through the radiator, and into the steering wheel. It did stop the horses!

There were a lot more episodes during the few years they stayed with the plan for farming with the winter months for tobacco markets. There was much more good than bad but none of it was very profitable. It was during that time Paul and Dee started building their small house right up the road from Paul’s parents, that later was expanded into the split level that many of you will remember. The original house was pretty small. That took a long time because they were trying to pay for building supplies as they were ready to use them. They had one and four-ninths children when they started and had two and seven-ninths when they moved in. Kathy arrived about 18 months later.

They had built a two-bedroom house, so they started adding on right away and finished the attic for bedroom space for the girls. That all took time. They were crowded. Paul built the house, with help from his uncle, Charlie Glaser, a carpenter, and occasional hired workers, and then whatever friends wanted to help and had a little time. When Paul decided he could do something, he did it. He did it well enough that it became a sturdy shelter.

When Paul and Ruth and Babs divided the property, Paul had just under 40 acres and the huge old barn. The land had been abused by tenant farmers (as had the house) and needed to be restored. That was a challenge for which Paul was ready. He had been reading a book about a situation

so similar and which described everything that was done to bring the land back. Paul did that with their small farm.

Paul loved his little farm. He walked it nearly every day and knew it well. It was not large enough to support a family, but the crops (legumes, grains, tobacco) paid the taxes, maintenance and insurance. It was a great place for raising children and dogs and cats. Dee loved it, too. The period when they had dairy cattle, Ayreshires, was the most difficult. That's a whole "nother" story!

It became obvious, as their family grew in number and age, that they must have more income. Dee started teaching (Grandma and Grandpa Essex took care of the children), and Paul tried different jobs. He never had a problem getting a job. He did arrange to keep his winter job with the USDA Tobacco Inspection service. He finally decided to work for the USDA for the flu-cured tobacco market in the south as well as for the Burley tobacco market in the winter. That let him be at home in the spring and early summer to attend to his farm and family although he was away from home for six months of the year. That was work he liked and he stayed with it until he retired. He was extremely successful in this work. At the time he retired, he was Regional Director of the USDA Tobacco Division of the Production and Marketing Division and was in charge of the inspection service of all Burley tobacco markets (that was 10 states) and the Maryland tobacco markets. He and one man in Raleigh, N.C., who was in charge of the flu-cured markets in the south (seven states) were next in authority to one man in Washington. Paul was told that he was to be sent to Washington, but he really did not want to go. He was near retirement age and looked forward to going back to his little farm. It seemed so certain they would be moving to Washington that they had actually found a house they could rent in Maryland near the ocean.

However, the promotion and move were slow in coming, and Paul reached retirement age and years of service to be able to retire and come home. And that's exactly what he did – retired and came home.

There was another aspect to Paul's work on the tobacco markets. In the summer months, his family could all go with him. It made a wonderful vacation for the family, and they all saw new parts of the country and met charming,

friendly Southern people with the true hospitality that is written about. The men Paul worked with made a point of telling the children (away from his hearing) what a fine man their Daddy was and how much he was admired and respected by everyone. It was all true. Above all, it was good for the children to hear.

After retirement, Paul had time to do things he enjoyed. There was time for golf, time for hunting, time to raise a BIG garden, and time to make improvements on the farm. There was time for a leisurely breakfast while he read the newspaper. There was time to watch every football game and golf match broadcast if he chose to do so. One favorite thing was, on awakening in the morning, to say, "Let's go to breakfast!" – which they did, usually going to Felicity to Armacosts, and then, in later years, going to the Feed Mill. There were always friends to see or more places to go, sometimes just spending the rest of the day roaming.

It was in this period of retirement that he rescued the puppies from drowning. Dee's version of that episode is somewhat different than that of Kathy, Mitchell, Jana and Paul. "It was a warm day and the living-room door was open. As I stood there, I heard puppies crying. I looked across the road just in time to see a puppy jump into the old well. There were more puppies and the mother dog, a collie named Brandy, owned by Kathy and Mitch, and all of them were whining and crying. I started running to them while yelling and yelling for Paul. He came running and grabbed a ladder to use in the well. When we arrived at the well, there were only two puppies left on dry land. I grabbed those two and ran to the house to lock them inside and to call Kathy to come. She and the children were there in a rush!"

But the thing he liked best was that he had time to be a GRANDPA! He did that well from the beginning, and, as the numbers grew and he had more practice, he was nearly perfect in that role.

