

**Madison Historical: The Online Encyclopedia and Digital Archive for Madison County,  
Illinois**

**Paul Lair Oral History Interview**

Caleb Lair, Interviewer

April 23, 2018

**Caleb Lair (CL):** So, this is Caleb Lair, and I am interviewing Paul Lair, who is from the Bethalto and Madison County area. So how long have you lived in this area?

**Paul Lair (PL):** Well I've lived in Macoupin County for my whole life. Sixty-seven years.

**CL:** Okay. And so, our topic today is the Cold War. When I say the term "Cold War," does anything immediately come to mind or do you remember anything about it?

**PL:** Well I don't remember a whole lot about it, but I'll tell you what I can and what I do know.

**CL:** Okay. So, one question that I have is how did the fear of Russia affect everyday life for you when you were growing up?

**PL:** Well, I think we always lived in fear because you never know when or where [clears throat] anything was going to happen. So back then we had them, what you call them bomb shelters back then.

**CL:** Yeah. Okay. Do you remember anything that was involved in school that had to do with the U.S.S.R.? Like did you have to perform any drills or anything?

**PL:** Well yes, we did, we had drills we had to go through. I think we had to get in the halls and cover your heads. Get down and cover your heads I think.

**CL:** Okay. Another question I have is, what was your reaction to when the Berlin Wall fell, and did you watch it happen on TV?

**PL:** No, I didn't. I didn't watch it.

**CL:** What were your thoughts on the wall falling?

**PL:** Well I don't know, I don't really remember any thoughts.

**CL:** Okay then. I'll move on to the next question. Do you remember anything involving the space race between the U.S.A. and Russia?

**PL:** Well I don't know a whole lot about that either.

**CL:** Okay. Do you remember when the Sputnik satellite was launched or the first man in space or the moon landing?

**PL:** Yeah, I remember when that stuff happened yeah.

**CL:** Okay. So, I know for a time you worked in the steel industry and automobile industry. How do you feel like that was affected by the Cold War at all?

**PL:** Well, I think we was making a lot more steel back then 'cause there was a lot more steel required for different things and the war and that.

**CL:** Uh huh. Okay. Do you have any other thoughts or anything that you have about growing up under the Cold War? Like some conflicts also like the Korean War or Vietnam.

**PL:** Well we were constantly, constantly on alert, but you just had to go on about your everyday lives you know? Keep an eye on the TV and the radar to see and keep up what's going on.

**CL:** Okay. I guess that is about all I have for you then.

**PL:** Okay.

**CL:** Okay, so thank you.

**PL:** That's quite all right. Anytime.

**CL:** Yep.