

Mariada Comer Arensberg Bourgin

Obituary and News Articles

Mariada Comer's First Marriage

Under the heading, "*Society Bride To Don Traditional Satin For Her Nuptial Ceremony*", by Evelyn Burk in **The Pittsburgh Press**- February 14, 1935.

"Another Valentine bridal couple, Mr. and Mrs. Walter E. Arensberg (Mariada Comer) also will sail Saturday for Bermuda. They were married today at the home of the bride's mother, Mrs. Eva Johnson Comer, in Newtonville, Mass. After their return, they will be at home in Pittsburgh.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Arensberg of Amberson Avenue, parents of the bridegroom, and the best man, Ernest Evans, went to Newtonville for the ceremony. They are expected home tomorrow.

The bride is a graduate of West Hampton College. The bridegroom was graduated from Harvard University, class of 1933."

http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=_HAbAAAAIBAJ&sjid=kUsEAAAAIBAJ&pg=1707%2C1183790

Mariada is Appointed Executive Secretary of the Cuban Freedom Committee

Under the title, "*Ex-Pittsburgher Heads Cuban Freedom Group*," from the Post-Gazette Washington Bureau in the **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette** on April 4, 1961.

"Washington, April 3- Mrs. Mariada C. Arensberg, former Pittsburgher, has been appointed executive secretary of the Cuban Freedom Committee with headquarters in Washington.

The purpose of the committee is to finance radio broadcasts to Cuba similar to those broadcast by Radio Free Europe. The Cuban Freedom Committee also hopes to obtain funds with which to send Cuban refugees as lecturers to other Latin American countries.

From Three stations Now: It now finances radio broadcasts, on standard WGBS, Miami, two hours a day; and Radio Swan, from Swan Island off the coast of Honduras, one hour a day.

Programs are broadcast in Spanish, English and Chinese, the last to benefit 40,000 Chinese living in Cuba who are especially the targets of Red Chinese propaganda.

Mrs. Arensberg, who lived in Cuba from 1946 until last fall, says the radio there is entirely government-controlled, as are the newspapers. Foreign publications are heavily censored. So the Cuban people can get an unbiased idea of what is going on in the world, and of what the world thinks of Castro only from outside broadcasts.

(Mrs. Arensberg is the divorced wife of Walter E. Arensberg, a former Pittsburgh Plate Glass executive, who worked for that firm in Havana for several years. While living in Pittsburgh Mrs. Arensberg was a member of the Junior League.)

Boosting No Candidate: The committee is not participating in Cuban politics in the sense of supporting any slate of candidates. Mrs. Arensberg says the committee is only trying to persuade Cubans to repudiate Castro. It is soliciting funds in the hope of increasing its radio broadcast time, and of sending lecturers to other Latin American countries to counter Castro's propaganda.

Mrs. Arensberg says the school with which she was connected in Havana has been "starved to death."

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=9>

Mariada C. Bourgin, 92, who organized a Washington-based radio network to be beamed into Cuba in the 1960s, died Nov. 10 (2005) at the Washington Home nursing facility in the District. She had Alzheimer's disease.

Mrs. **Bourgin** lived in Havana from 1946 to 1961 as the wife of an American businessman. She was assistant to the headmaster of the Ruston Academy, a private school that conducted classes in English and Spanish. She was in charge of admissions, administration and teacher-student relations.

A gregarious woman fluent in Spanish, she cultivated a wide circle of friends, particularly among diplomats, journalists, the Cuban intelligentsia and opponents of Fidel Castro, who seized control of the country in 1959.

After leaving Cuba early in 1961, Mrs. **Bourgin** was asked by CIA officials to use her contacts to launch a broadcasting service called Free Radio Cuba that would reach Cuban citizens on the island. As executive secretary of the service, she trained and supervised a staff of 17 Cuban emigres who broadcast a variety of news, commentary and musical programs. The radio service was run openly from a studio on H Street NW and broadcast primarily late at night over powerful radio stations in Florida and New Orleans.

According to an article published in the Chicago Daily News in 1966, Free Cuba Radio had 65 hours of programming a week, "designed to offset the propaganda barrage that Cubans receive from their own government-controlled radio and television stations."

In 1969, when the funding source of the broadcast service was revealed to be the CIA, Free Cuba Radio was forced off the air.

In addition to her work at the radio studio, Mrs. **Bourgin** also ran an outreach program that publicized its mission to colleges, the Organization of American States and other groups interested in Cuban affairs.

After Free Cuba Radio, Mrs. **Bourgin** became special assistant to the assistant secretary of state for education and cultural affairs.

She was in charge of the department's programs for minorities and women, seeking to increase their participation in international cultural exchanges.

She conducted meetings at colleges and with Indian tribal leaders, and established an exchange program between U.S. Indian reservations and Mexico's National Museum of Anthropology. She retired in the early 1970s.

Mrs. **Bourgin** was born in Woodlands, W.Va., and attended the University of Richmond.

For many years, she was at the center of a circle of Cuban exiles and others in Washington with an interest in the nation.

Her marriage to Walter E. Arensberg ended in divorce.

Survivors include her husband of 34 years, Simon **Bourgin** of Washington; two children from her first marriage, Ann Arensberg of Salisbury, Conn., and Walter W. Arensberg of Washington; and two grandchildren.
