

Northwest Arkansas Oral History Project
 Mary Peel Marquess Interview Abstract
 July 9, 2019

Interviewee	Mary Peel Marquess
Year of birth	1921
Place of birth	Bentonville, Benton County, Arkansas
Interviewer	Camille Hatcher
Interview date	2019-07-09
Interview location	Ashley Rehabilitation & Health Care Center; Rogers, Benton County Arkansas
Keywords	<p>Marquess, Mary Peel Linebarger, C. A. Marquess, George Harvey Marquess, Steve Peel, Samuel West Hatcher, Camille Bella Vista, Benton County, Arkansas Bentonville, Benton County, Arkansas Rogers, Benton County, Arkansas Benton County Fair; Bentonville, Benton County, Arkansas Lindenwood University; St. Charles, St. Charles County, Missouri University of Arkansas; Fayetteville, Washington County, Arkansas Wonderland Cave; Bella Vista, Benton County, Arkansas African American Arkansas Department of Human Services Carnivals and Fairs Education Hila Morgan Tent Theatre Railroads Recreation Schools Segregation Small town life WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) World War II</p>
Description	<p>Mary Peel Marquess will tell you that growing up in Bentonville in the 1920s and 1930s was filled with adventures. And she has the stories to prove it.</p> <p>Her first adventure is one she does not remember. In 1921 Dr. Cargile came to the family home to deliver her. This home--near the Bentonville Square--was where she, her brother, and two sisters grew up, near the schools they attended, and next door to her grandparents. Marquess remembers her grandfather always had a dime in his pocket for her, while grandmother made the delicious triangular pies. And then there was the memorable Easter Egg Hunt at a friend's home.</p> <p>Summertime meant lots of time for more adventures: trips to</p>

	<p>swim in nearby Bella Vista, movies and stores on the Bentonville Square, taking her kitten to one of Hila Morgan's tent shows, and bingo using corn kernels at the Benton County Fair. She loves to tell the stories of her brother missing lunch to stay to ride the tilt-a-whirl and how the damp floor at the Wonderland Cave made dancing not much fun.</p> <p>Graduating from Bentonville High School did not mean the end of Marquess' adventures. Unlike most of the girls in her class, Marquess left for college in 1938. She took her clothes in a steamer trunk. After a year at Lindenwood College (St. Charles, Missouri), she transferred to the University of Arkansas (Fayetteville) and graduated with a degree in English. College years meant lots of walking up the University hills, pledging Chi Omega, and riding the bus to get to campus.</p> <p>When World War II occurred, Marquess felt she "had to do something for the country". And she did; serving in the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service). With ranks of midshipman and ensign, Marquess coded and decoded messages. She carried a gun (she never used) when she delivered the messages to her superiors.</p> <p>In 1944, Marquess married George Harvey Marquess. She and George had known each other since high school. At their first home in Monroe Louisiana son, Steve, was born. Siblings Jill and George would join the family after the family moved back to Bentonville.</p> <p>Marquess' adventures continued. Working for the Arkansas Welfare Department (now DHS), Marquess' position took her around Northwest Arkansas. For several years she moved to Little Rock where she taught new department employees. One of her students was the governor.</p> <p>Throughout the interview Marquess includes stories of the adventures of her Peel and Marquess families. Her ancestor, Samuel West Peel, became involved with Native American issues during careers as a lawyer, banker, and Congressman. Her grandfather and father were well-known Bentonville banking and insurance executives. Marquess' husband George flew missions in Germany during World War II.</p> <p>When asked about her favorite adventure, Marquess tells of the trip she and her daughter took to Europe. They visited England, France, Italy and Austria. They took time to explore a house in England from the 12th century that belonged to a Marquess Family (not sure if it is her family). Just one more adventure in a lifetime filled with them.</p>
Duration	70 minutes
Audio File Format	MP3
Images	Yes
Producer	Northwest Arkansas Oral History Project
Copyright	Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History, University of Arkansas

Website URL	http://pryorcenter.uark.edu
Questions or Comments	https://nwaoralhistory.org
Interview sidebar	Marquess remembers when a train came to Bentonville about once a week. "One time my Grandmother Peel took all the grandchildren to Rogers on the train...and we thought that was a real big deal...my Dad picked us up in Rogers and brought us home." [00:51:40]