

# DIAMOND JUBILEE

*"One for All, All for One"*



*"Una para Todas y Todas para Una"*

**NOVEMBER 10, 2007**

**This program booklet is dedicated to all members, past and present of the Pan American Round Table I of Brownsville and is humbly gifted to all our Table Sisters in the hopes that the zeal for true Pan Americanism will be nourished and the quest for knowledge, understanding, and friendship of all our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere will further flourish.**

PAN AMERICAN ROUND  
TABLE I  
OF  
BROWNSVILLE

1932 – 2007

## Prelude

The history of the Pan American Round Table I of Brownsville would not be complete without reviewing one of the key factors that influenced its formation. This was the Pan American effort that was a direct result of the Monroe Doctrine. Even though Spanish dominance in the Americas had been defeated in 1826 by the leadership of such Generals as Simon Bolivar, Jose San Martin, and Garibaldi, Spain and the other European monarchies had remained a constant threat to the newly founded freedom. It was then that United States President James Monroe intervened to protect all the Western Hemisphere and issued the Monroe Doctrine, which intended to prevent any other foreign powers from ever seizing or invading any of the nations of the Americas. Pan Americanism was born. It was the joining of all the peoples in the Western Hemisphere for a common goal of freedom.

However in 1890, the role of Pan Americanism took on a different face. Instead of using conflict to insure freedom, more peaceful means to achieve the same goal were sought. This led to the first Pan American Conference in Washington, D. C. with the purpose of preserving peace among all the nations of the Americas.

Resulting from the conference was the establishment of the Pan American Union in 1910. Its goals were to promote friendship and cooperation among the nations of the Western Hemisphere. In 1948, President Roosevelt brought 21 nations of the Western Hemisphere together in what we call today the OAS (Organization of American States) to further these objectives. Today the OAS has grown to a membership of 34 active nations from North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. Cuba, having been suspended, would make the total 35. Nations from other parts of the world participate but only as permanent observers. It continues to lead the charge in carrying out the pursuit of friendship and goodwill among the nations of the Western Hemisphere. Its motto of "Democracy, Justice, Peace, and Prosperity in the Americas" is the essence of Pan Americanism.

As Audreyjane Castro stated in her presentation of the meaning of Pan Americanism on April 14, 2000:

"It can be said that the lasting legacy of Pan Americanism is a peaceful solution to understanding one another whether we be from Canada, Mexico, the United States, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, or any of the other members of this Hemisphere. Pan Americanism is a vehicle through which we can speak to one another, where we can resolve differences and solidify strengths, and where we can promote friendship and goodwill for the next millennium."

# THE BIRTH OF THE PAN AMERICAN ROUND TABLE MOVEMENT

Drawing on the philosophy and mission of Pan Americanism and her own life experiences, Florence Terry Griswold, created the Pan American Round Table Movement in 1916. It was as if she had been groomed her whole life to begin this great adventure. She was born on May 29, 1875 near Eagle Pass where she would spend her formative years. Thanks to a Spanish speaking maid, she learned to speak Spanish before she did English. Living so close to Mexico, she learned to appreciate the Mexican culture and character. She was a fun loving and vivacious girl who made friends on both sides of the border and she learned quickly to value their loyalty and devotion.



Florence Terry  
Age 18

In 1894, she married Felix Shaw. They had four children and lived on one of the three Shaw ranches near Carrizo Springs. Mr. Shaw died suddenly in 1908 and Florence was left to run the ranches and educate the children. She made the house in San Antonio, which Mr. Shaw had purchased before his death, the permanent residence. As time elapsed, Florence Terry Shaw became successful in business matters as well as a leader in community and social affairs. In 1914, she married John Case Griswold.

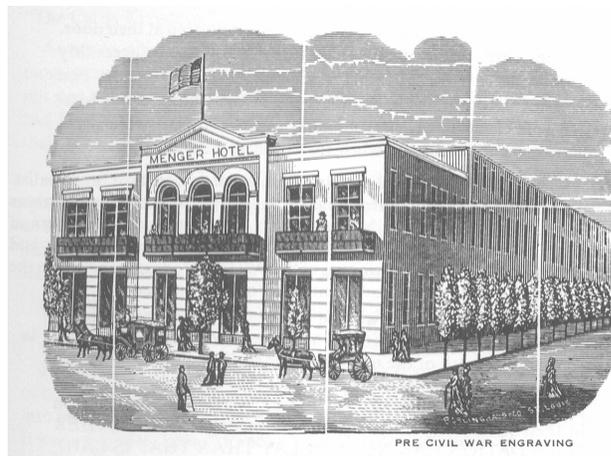
During the period between 1910 to 1916, politics in Mexico were in an upheaval which resulted in destruction, banditry, and the displacements of many Mexican citizens. Many women and children made their way across the Rio Grande to escape the perils of revolution, only to become helpless refugees in San Antonio. This deeply troubled Mrs. Griswold. She wanted to help in anyway she could, taking many of the women and children into her own home to feed and shelter them. For the families that came and started their new homes in San Antonio, Mrs. Griswold tried her best to make things pleasant for them. She called on them, took them to points of interest in the city and even gave luncheons and evening parties in her home so that her different friends could meet them. In all of these efforts, Mrs. Griswold called on her friends and associates for help and assistance.

These experiences created an idea in the mind of Florence Terry Griswold, the creation of the Pan American Round Table which would modeled after the Medieval Round Table, where everyone would be an equal. Each country in the Western Hemisphere, would be represented on the table. Adopted as an insignia a circle that had no beginning and no end, symbolizing unity. At the base of this circle, she would

have the flags from the different represented countries. Called on 21 of her friends to join her, they quickly responded and were eager to participate. As Mrs. J. Tom Williams stated in her 1941 tribute to our Founder:

“So this is what came to pass. On October the sixteenth, nineteen hundred and sixteen, in luncheon session at the Menger Hotel in San Antonio, Florence Griswold met with the women she had invited to be charter members of the proposed Pan American Round Table and we organized. For our guidon we selected of course, One for All, All for One. Mrs. Griswold proclaimed that our Pan American Round Table was strictly non-political and non-sectarian and that we had organized solely to help promote friendliness and understanding among the WOMEN of the Western Hemisphere.

Once organized, we began by meeting twice a month in luncheon session at the hotel. At every luncheon we had some of the strangers within our gates to dine with us. And what charming women the strangers proved to be. We became friends.”



Menger Hotel Circa 1916

The birth place of the Pan American Round Table Movement

Florence Griswold was encouraged in her efforts to establish the Round Table by her friend Mr. John Barrett, first Director General of the Pan American Union, who helped in directing the organization of the Table so that it would coincide with the ideals of the Pan American Union in Washington, D. C. Mrs. Griswold felt that the Pan American Union Ideals could also be carried on by women. In 1967, Mrs. Clyde Trotter in delivering a talk on the Pan American Round Table Movement stated:

“She felt the ideals of the Pan American Union could be advanced by Women, these ideals being: (1) Achieving an order of peace and justice; (2) Promoting American solidarity; (3) Strengthening collaboration among member states; (4) Defending their sovereignty independence and

international integrity. Mrs. Griswold felt women could, through knowledge and understanding, move toward close friendship. They could study the languages and the cultural heritage of the countries.



She believed the women of the Americas could join hands from Canada to the southern tip of South America, as she often said, “To forge as unbroken chain of friendship, reaching the length of the hemisphere.’ ”

The Pan American Round Table Movement began to grow. Other Texas’ cities followed and organized their own Round Tables, Laredo and El Paso in 1921, Austin in 1922. Also in 1922, a state organization was formed and a convention was held. In 1928, a Pan American Round Table was organized in Mexico City. The latter would play a vital role in the Pan American Round Table Movement in our own city of Brownsville, Texas.

The PART movement continued to grow even after the death of its founder in 1941. She entrusted to us a legacy to follow. As Mrs. Claude R. Nobles stated in her 1966 tribute to Mrs. Griswold and featured in the [Panamericana Texana](#):

“The word that best sums up her character is HEART, a heart full of sympathy, compassion and Christian charity; a heart tender enough to be moved with pity at a neighbor’s plight; a heart resolute enough to plan a crusade in that neighbor’s behalf; a heart strong enough to lay well the foundation for a structure which even in her time gained wide recognition, and which, if we-you and I are faithful to our trust, will live to bring reverence, honor, and respect to her name as long as freedom and democracy- and the very Hemisphere itself- shall endure.

What is this trust, this heritage left by our Founder to you and to me? FAITH is the righteousness of our cause; HOPE is the ultimate realization of our ideals; LOVE and DEVOTION to the work; COURAGE in the face of disappointment; VIGILANCE and ALERTNESS to changing conditions; STEADFASTNESS in duty to fellowmen; CONFIDENCE in cooperation of all peoples of the Western Hemisphere in our efforts to bring about that perfect understanding and good-will among the American nations that will present to the world a united front under the unconquerable manner of a living Pan Americanism! We will succeed: for we build on knowledge, understanding, and friendship.”

Our Legacy  
The will of Florence Terry Griswold

“I, Florence Terry Griswold, mindful that the day will come when I can no longer lead you along the path we have chosen, do hereby GIVE, DEVISE, and BEQUEATH to you, Members of the Pan American Round Table, all of my faith in the righteousness of our cause, all of my hope in the ultimate realization of our ideals, my love and devotion to the work, my courage in the face of disappointments, my vigilance and alertness to changing conditions, my steadfastness in my duty to my fellowmen, my confidence in the cooperation of all peoples of the Western Hemisphere in our efforts to bring about that perfect understanding and good will among the American nations that will present to the world a united front under the unconquerable banner of a living Pan Americanism. Because of the great love and devotion I bear you, all this I leave unto you, and through you to all the Women of the Americas.”

Panamericana Texana, June, 1985



Florence Terry Griswold  
Founder of the Pan American Round Table Movement  
October 16, 1916 in San Antonio, Texas

Today there are 21 Pan American Round Tables in Texas. There are also 2 tables in Florida, 1 in Washington D.C., 1 in Oklahoma, 6 in New Mexico, and 4 in California. The movement has also spread to the rest of the Western Hemisphere with 65 tables in Mexico, 21 tables in Central America and the Caribbean, and 50 tables in South America. Florence Terry Griswold had a dream and that dream has become a reality.

## Mrs. Griswold's Rules

1. Try to remember that a Pan American Round Table is not a club in the ordinary sense of the word. Your purpose will not be to have a grand big time among yourselves, but to work for understanding among the women of the Americas, North, South, and Central.
2. First, there is the necessity of overcoming ignorance, especially your own. Study, think, discuss, learn. Don't wait for somebody to come and tell you. Find out for yourselves.
3. Never neglect the Round Table concept, which is a coming together to discuss, to share the things you have learned, to ask questions. Never let your Round Table come to depend on speakers who may only entertain you. If you study and watch and learn about all the countries of our Americas, you will become authorities yourselves. Think what it means to know the geography, history, and culture of a Hemisphere.
4. Be careful what you do with your money. Use it only for the stated purposes of the Pan American Round Tables. Never, never, NEVER, let your Round Table become just a tail to some other kite. If you don't stick to one purpose, you will lose your way.
5. Don't try to be too big. Be busy. Check on yourselves to see if you are accomplishing what the Round Tables are intended to do.
6. Try to think about the other Americas as if they were as precious as your own country. If you will work on this you will find that Argentina and Peru, and Mexico will seem as important to you as Louisiana and Arkansas – neighbors, parts of a whole.
7. Now, one thing more, a little delicate. If you find yourselves with a member who is forgetful of the purposes of the Round Tables and seeks and struggles for her own glory – make her the custodian of the flags. There is enough glory in these American flags for anybody.

Panamericana Texana, November, 1964

## PAN AMERICAN ROUND TABLE I



Bessie Kirkland Johnson  
Lovingly known as "Mother Johnson"  
Founder of Pan American Round Table I of Brownsville  
October, 1932  
Honorary Member of the Mexico City Pan American Round Table

The Pan American Round Table I of Brownsville was founded in 1932 by Mrs. Bessie Kirkland Johnson. She had belonged to the PART in Mexico City and upon her move to Brownsville, she was named honorary member of that same Table. In organizing PART I, Mother Johnson, as she was affectionately called, brought with her many life experiences that helped promote the philosophy and ideals of Pan Americanism and the PART Movement. Born in Houston in 1874, she moved with

her family to Tuxpan, Veracruz, Mexico. At the age of eight months, she was taken to Houston to be raised by an aunt. When the latter decided to move to Mexico, Bessie went with her. She spent her growing up years in Mexico and attended school in San Antonio. She married George W. Johnson at age 18 and they settled in Oaxaca, Mexico and later moved to Mexico City. Bessie Johnson fell in love with Mexico, its people, its customs, and its dress. It was then that she began her collection of authentic Mexican costumes and handicrafts and became one of Mexico's leading authorities on that country's folklore and native dress.

In 1932, the Johnsons moved to Brownsville with Pan American Airways. Bessie brought with her the rich love for Mexico and her knowledge of the Pan American Round Table Movement. Together with a group of interested women, they met at the El Jardin Hotel and organized the Pan American Round Table I of Brownsville. The Brownsville Herald of October 1932 states:

“Mrs. Volney Taylor, well known club woman, presided as temporary Chairman, Mrs. J. L. Rentfro, acting as temporary secretary for this meeting.

The luncheon table was appointed in pink with bowls of pink rosebuds, corona vine and fern forming the center adornment.

Mrs. F. W. Johnson, Sr. was elected director with the following other officers: first assistant director, Mrs. Volney Taylor; second assistant director, Mrs. Pedro Chapa; recording secretary, Mrs. G. W. Johnson, Jr.; treasurer, Mrs. John Holler; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Grider Perkins; parliamentarian, Mrs. Willa A. George and historian, Mrs. Albert Fernandez.

The director is an honorary member of the Mexico City association which is in its fourth year. She was extended this honor prior to her leaving Mexico. Mrs. Johnson explained the functions of the association and its object which is mutual understanding.

Each member will represent 22 Pan-American countries and Canada at the meetings which are to be held on the first Friday in each month. Mrs. Rentfro will be in charge of the first program on Argentina Republic on Nov. 4.”

PART I of Brownsville became the 5<sup>th</sup> Pan American Round Table to be organized. There were twenty charter members and three associates. The members of the Table received their “certificate of Membership” in the Pan American Round Tables of Texas at the first program meeting which was held in November, 1932.



El Jardin Hotel Circa 1932

Bessie Kirkland Johnson and a group of interested women met here to organize the Pan American Round Table I of Brownsville

Mother Johnson lived a very long and fulfilling life. In 1957, at the age of 72, the managing editor of the San Antonio Express gave her the title of “dynamite and old lace”. This description lived with her until the end of her life. At age 67, she became an airport landscape artist and beautified many airports including Brownsville and many in Mexico. She was an aviator, noted lecturer and historian. Throughout her life, she continued her devotion to the Mexican people. Her greatest gift to us was entrusting her authentic costume collection to the Pan American Round Table I.



Mother Johnson surrounded by the costumes and people she loved. Standing are Mrs. Paul Cunningham, Mrs. Reynaldo Garza, and Mrs. George Lipe. Seated are Mrs. P. J. Vivier, Mother Johnson, and Henri De Stefano.

The Brownsville Herald

## Started 62 Years Ago

# Costume Collection

Sixty-two years ago the late G. W. Johnson was so fascinated by the costume of an Indian woman in Tehuantepec, Mexico, he determined to buy one for his young wife.

The woman offered to sell Johnson her own dress for seven pesos and then proceeded to take it home and launder it for him.

### WOULDN'T FIT

When he brought the costume home, his wife, the former Bessie Kirkland, San Antonio, couldn't wear it.

Mrs. Johnson is less than five feet tall while the original owner was a 6-footer.

But the costume was the start of Mrs. Johnson's collection of 35 native costumes from all over Mexico as well as handicrafts for which each area is noted.

Says Mrs. Johnson, whose collection is on display at Joske's of Texas in connection with inauguration of San Antonio-Mexico service by Mexicana de Aviacion:

"Every time I see some item of handwork that comes from the same section as one of my costumes, I get it."

Some of the costumes are for every-day wear, while others are for special occasions, including weddings.

### RICH IN COLOR

All are rich in color and in exquisite handwork.

One costume, worn by Chiapas Lacandon Indians, ordinarily hangs like a sack with the sides open, but Mrs. Johnson in the interest of modesty, discreetly sewed up the sides.

Mrs. Johnson, whose late husband was a founder of Mexicana de Aviacion, affiliate of Pan American World airways, became a career girl at 67.

Now a chipper 82, she's a professional airport landscaper as well as a lecturer and writer. She designed landscapes of airports all around the east coast of Mexico, including those in Vera Cruz, Tampico, Merida, Carmen and Tapachula.

She lived in Mexico from the time of her marriage in 1893 until Pan American World airways set up a headquarters in Brownsville.



**MRS. JOHNSON DISPLAYS MEXICAN COSTUME**  
She has 35 native costumes from all over Mexico.

## PAN AMERICAN ROUND TABLE I DIRECTORS



BESSIE KIRKLAND JOHNSON  
1932-1936

The first director of the Pan American Round Table I was Bessie Kirkland Johnson. She served from 1932 to 1936. It was during her term that PART I celebrated its first Pan American Observance Day. The April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1933 issue of The Brownsville Herald reported:

“The director announced that this would be a different program from the first planned, because April will be Pan American day, declared so by ex-president Hoover two years ago. She welcomed the guests, but most particularly four girls from the

Brownsville high school, (sic) Mary Jane White and Marizell Taylor and two from the junior college, Clara Patterson and Barbara Barrier.

She said that the round table was not honoring these young people who had responded to the invitation for representatives from their groups, but instead was honored by their presence, because the students have their Spanish clubs and have been connected with the Pan American idea long before the Round Table was started here.”

Her tenure as Director witnessed the beginning of the PART I costume collection.

“The director gave warning that one year from now the members would be expected to come in the native costumes of their respected countries, having ample time for preparation, so that no excuses might given. If a country should prove to have no special dress, they, our next door friend Mexico, had a number from which to choose.

Mrs. Johnson then said that the Brownsville Round Table was six months old, and when started it had been feared that material and speakers might prove

difficult to find in so small a city. On the contrary, each program has been splendidly carried out, a wonderful response given to every call for assistance.” The Brownsville Herald April 7, 1933

PART I was off to a fabulous beginning. As Mrs. Johnson stated in her 1933 annual report to the state:

“We are finding splendid response to our organization and have had as many as sixteen guests at a time. We now have a complete membership and a waiting list, with the expectation of successful progress in the future.”

Brownsville was the site of the State Convention on April 25-26, 1934. It was at this time that Mrs. Johnson reported that the message of Pan Americanism had been carried to other towns in the Rio Grande Valley resulting with the formation of four tables. McAllen was organizing with 22 members followed by Donna, Harlingen, and Mercedes. PART I offered to help them in their organization, attend their opening meetings, and continue with any future aid that was needed.



Mrs. J. W. Worthington  
1936 – 1938

During Mrs. Worthington tenure, PART I continued to grow and prosper. It was in January of 1938 that PART I was called in to help with the plans for a festival. The latter would be called Charro Days and the Round Table played a major role in its organization and success.

As Mrs. Worthington reported to the annual convention:

“We set a new high note of color and achievement with our beautiful costumes and the success of our Mexican Market Plaza during the Charro Days festival. We all posed in costume for pictures which ran in the local paper to stimulate interest in the coming fiesta. Our Director, Mrs. J. W. Worthington and our Founder, Mrs. C. W. Johnson acted as co-chairman for the Pan America Foods on the Charro Days Committee, and our Bolivian member, Mrs. W. W. Ely, served on the same committee as Chairman for ladies costumes. Furthermore, the Director and Associate Director, Mrs. R. D. Sundell, acted as judges for the Costume Contest in the schools through Charro Days as well as for the Children’s Pet Parade of this fiesta.”



Members of the Pan American Round Table I posed in costumes to Stimulate interest in Charro Days Circa 1938



Members of PART I participate in 1<sup>st</sup> Charro Days

In her 1938 report to the State, Mrs. Worthington stated:

“The Director of the Brownsville Round Table cannot speak too highly of the cooperation and good will of her members, and anticipates another well-rounded and gratifying year of work and study. With this report comes greeting and the renewed assurance of cooperation from every member of the Brownsville Round Table.”

Mrs. Worthington was elected State Director in 1938. The first PART I member to be honored with this office.



Mrs. R. D. Sundell  
1938 – 1940

It was during Mrs. Sundell's tenure that the Pan American Round Table I Charro Days Merienda had its beginning. Members, dressed in costumes, acted as hostesses for a group of winter visitors at the Chamber of Commerce building. This event was very well received and the PART I continued its annual Charro Days Merienda to pleasing crowds until 2004. The showing went on to include a hundred or more distinct regional and national costumes with a narration describing and telling about them. The revenues received from this event went into the scholarship fund.

Mrs. Sundell served on the committee that helped to organize the PAA Pan American Round Table which today is known as PART II of Brownsville. She was named as an honorary member of that same Table.

The report made to the State in 1938 reported that PART I had send a generous donation to the quake stricken people of Chile keeping thus alive the spreading of good will to our Pan American Neighbors. PART I members also participated in some civic activity. They also reported that they had finally acquired their own stationary.

At the state convention in Dallas, Texas, April 18, 1940, Mrs. Sundell was nominated and elected to be State Treasurer. At the State Convention held in San Antonio (April 13-14, 1942) , she was named one of the Associate Directors for the State.



Mrs. Ben Freudenstein  
1940 – 1942

The state convention during Mrs. Freudenstein's term was held in Dallas, Texas. In the annual report to the State, it was stated that PART I had celebrated its birthday with the showing of a film borrowed from the Pan American Union in Washington, D. C. In observance of Pan American Day, an essay contest was held. It was open to students from Brownsville High School Pan American Forum and cash prizes were awarded.

Mrs. Freudenstein also served as PART I Recording Secretary in 1944-1946.

Mrs. J. L. Rentfro  
1942 - 1944

During these years, PART I sponsored Pan American Round Table II. This table was to include women who were employed by Pan American Airways. It was called PAA Pan American Round T able. Mrs. Todd was elected director. During her tenure, the director appointed a committee to greet Pan American students who were attending U S Colleges as they arrived at the Brownsville airport to board connecting flights to their final destination.



Mrs. W. W. Ely  
1944 – 1946

Mrs. Ely was a very active member of Pan American Round Table I. She was a delegate to the State Convention in Dallas, TX on April 18, 1940 and was placed on the nominating committee. Together with Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Ely attended the first Inter American Conference of the Alliance of Pan American Round Tables in Mexico City on October 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup>, 1944 and was elected Treasurer of the Alliance at the 1955 Convention. The PARTT State Convention was held in Brownsville in 1949 and Mrs. Ely was nominated and elected to serve as State Director for the term 1949-1951. She served the State in other capacities and even became Publications Chairman of the Panamericana Texana until 1963. She headed a committee in 1956 to compile a Table Directory that would include the history of the Pan American Round Table Movement and the form used to organize; in 1957 she founded the Matamoros Table and was honored for her distinguished service in the area of International Relations by the Club Venecia of Matamoros in 1965. Mrs. Ely was one of three PART members to receive the Florence Terry Griswold Award which is the highest state award.



Mrs. D. W. Simpson  
1946 - 1948

It was at the 1947 State Convention that Pan American Round Table I extended an invitation to host the next state convention. The annual report to the State stated “All members of the Brownsville Table own one or more authentic costumes – particularly of the various provinces of Mexico (AUTHENTICITY is stressed) – exhibit them ‘en masse’ for Fiestas – or as an example, in the house-party when the State Convention of Garden Clubs met in B’ville last spring. Up state visitors were delightful with the colorful display – and many are really gorgeous”.  
*PARTT archives*





Mrs. P. J. Vivier, Jr.  
1948 - 1950

In 1949, Brownsville hosted the PARTT State Convention. Mrs. Vivier opened the convention by giving a warm greeting to the delegates.

Mrs. Milton H. West  
1950 – 1952

In her report to the state, Mrs. West stated that PART I had sponsored a Latin American Girl Scout and Brownie Troop, continued with the high school essay contest and would soon be celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday.



Mrs. J. K. Wells  
1952-1954

Mrs. Wells reported to the State convention that Pan American Day was still being celebrated as it was 11 years ago with an essay contest open to the High School Pan American Forum. The PART I, in cooperation with the Texas Good Neighbor Commission, entertained 2 Mexican teachers and presented 21 flags to the Rio Grande City Round Table. They also joined other Tables in the Valley in sending a wreath to Cuba to honor Jose Marti.





Mrs. F. W. DeStefano  
1954 – 1956

“Henri”, as Mrs. DeStefano was known, narrated the Charro Days Merienda for many years. She was a natural for the position and the audience loved her. During her tenure PART I not only helped the Charro Days’ celebration by hosting the “merienda” but also maintained a costume shop where costumes could be exchanged, bought or sold.

At the 1959 State Convention held in Brownsville, Henri was elected State Parliamentarian. She served as Convention chairman and did an excellent job. Upon completion of her term, Henri continued to serve the Table and the state in various capacities.

Mrs. Paul Y. Cunningham  
1956 – 1958

In 1957, Mrs. Cunningham reported to the State that PART I had established a memorial Scholarship in honor of its First Director, Bessie K. Johnson. She also reported that three Fundamental Gift Packages had been sent to Panama, Peru, and Cuba and books on American Literature to the University of Venezuela. Mrs. Cunningham served as State Parliamentarian.



Mrs. Reynaldo Garza  
1958 – 1960

Brownsville hosted the State Convention in 1959. It was the second time Brownsville had held the convention. Mrs. Garza presided at the opening session and at the luncheon meeting held in Jacob Brown Auditorium.

It was during her tenure that the Matamoros Table was organized.





Mrs. Albert Fernandez  
1960 - 1962

Mrs. Fernandez served PART I as the 14<sup>th</sup> Director and served as the State Director from 1967 until 1969. She also served the State in various capacities. During her tenure, PART I invited their sister Table from Matamoros, Mexico to join them at their February luncheon. It was at this lunch that members representing the same countries sat together and had “delightful bilingual conversation”. In October, 1961 some members of the PART I attended festivities of the Mexican PART National Convention in Reynoso, Mexico. Mrs. Fernandez received the Florence Terry Griswold award from the State. This is the highest award that can be bestowed to a member of The Pan American Round Tables of Texas.

Mrs. Sherill B. Oaks  
1962 – 1964

The fifteenth PART I Director also served the State as the Director from 1979 through 1981. It was during her tenure that the Mexican National Convention of Pan American Round Tables met in Matamoros, Mexico. PART I hosted a Sherry Party for the delegates on October 26, 1963. Mrs. Oaks was also elected State Treasurer in 1969 and State Historian in 1973. She also served as Chairman of Publications for the Panamericana Texana from 1977 to 1979. She was a recipient of the Florence Terry Griswold Award.



Mrs. Ygnacio Garza Jr.  
1964 – 1966



Mrs. Garza reported that in observance of Pan American Day, the winners of the annual essay contest were honored along with their mothers and Spanish teachers at the monthly luncheon. At the May meeting of that year, Mrs. Ely was honored for her work in the Brownsville PART I and for her state and international contributions.



Mrs. Donald Ferguson  
1966 - 1968

In October, 1966, PART I & II sponsored the Workshop for Area "C" which was held at the Rio Posado Motor Hotel. The State Director, Mrs. Hart Brown, was the guest speaker.

In 1967, the Panamericana Texana reported "that they were touched and gratified by the many letters and cards from other Tables expressing concern as to their fate in Hurricane Beulah. She says that they suffered great loss of trees and plants, but in less than a week the city was cleaned and back to normal again."

Mrs. Dan Breeden  
1968 – 1970

The Panamericana Texana reported in 1970 "The development of Charro Days has become a major part of the Table's activities and their Costume Review is given on an average of 24 times a year upon request to schools and clubs, for conventions, church groups and sister Round Tables in addition to their participation in Charro Days. Donations given to the Table as a result of these reviews are used to furnish two scholarships to Texas Southmost College in Brownsville. All work done is voluntary with several members alternating as commentators."



Mrs. Gustavo Pena  
1970 - 1972

During Mrs. Pena's tenure PART I added the dress of the Canadian Iroquois Indian Woman, complete with the wooden papoose carrier and blanket, to its collection. Mrs. Pena served as Chairman of the State Friendship Committee and the State Nominating Committee for the 1973 and 1981 Conventions.



Mrs. Ray Hughston  
1972 - 1974

In 1973, the Panamericana Texana reported that the PART I “celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> birthday with ‘Life Begins at Forty’ luncheon on Friday, November 3 in the home of Mrs. Fredrick De Stefano. Hostesses for the party were the sustaining members of the Table.

Preceding the luncheon, Mrs. Ray Hughston, Table Director, presented Mrs. W. W. Ely with a gift from the members. Mrs. Ely, honorary member, will soon depart on a trip around the world.”

Mrs. Larry Herrera  
1974 - 1976

During Mrs. Herrera’s tenure, the Pan American Round Table I added the North American Indian dress to its authentic collection of dresses from the Northern Hemisphere. The collection of North American Indian Dresses were presented as a finale to the “Merienda”.



Mrs. W. E. Lynd, Jr.  
1976 – 1978

In 1978 at the last spring luncheon during Mrs. Lynd’s tenure, Mrs. Freudenstein was honored for her forty four years as a member of the Pan American Round Table I. She was presented with a lovely orchid corsage.

In December 1977, PART I held its annual luncheon honoring the Sister Table of Matamoros, Mexico. Members look forward to renewing old acquaintances and making new friends.



Mrs. Lee Langford  
1978 – 1980

The State Board Meeting was in Brownsville during the term of Mrs. Langford. After her tenure as Table Director, she served as Table Parliamentarian from 1980 - 1982

Mrs. Frances Lipe  
1980 - 1982

Mrs. Lipe served as chairman for the 1983 convention held in Brownsville. It was at this convention that she was nominated and elected State Historian for the term 1983-1985. She held the State office of First Associate Director (C) for the term 1985 – 1987. In 1986, she compiled a much needed and appreciative comprehensive handbook for Table Directors. She was elected State Treasurer in 1987, served on the Griswold Scholarship Board of Trustees and served as State Scholarship Chairman from 1989 to 1991.



Mrs. Don J. Everson  
1982 – 1984

The Forty First Pan American Round Tables of Texas Convention was held in Brownsville, Texas during the tenure of Mrs. Everson. She presided at the opening session.



Mrs. George W. Storter  
1984 – 1986

During her tenure the PART I produced a set of photographic post cards of models in authentic dresses from their costume collection.

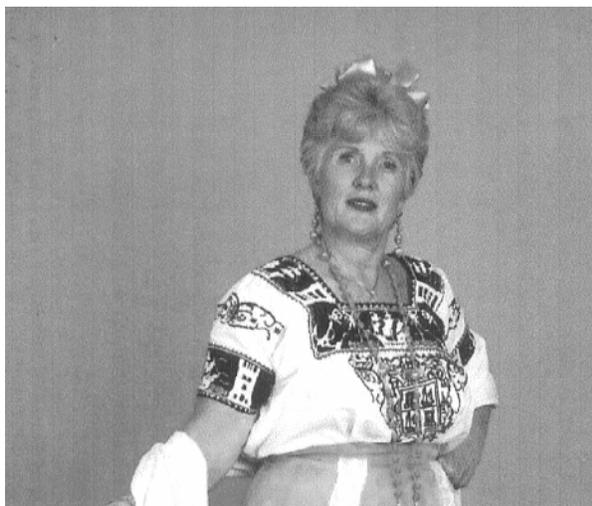
Mrs. J. M. Castellano  
1986 – 1988

During Mrs. Castellano, the PART I continued to have their annual Charro Days Merienda with the proceeds going to the scholarship fund. She served on the State Friendship Committee from 1989 to 1990.



Mrs. Louis E. Pashos  
1988 – 1990

“It was a double celebration for Brownsville Table I as member marked the 56<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Table’s founding with a birthday ‘Fiesta’ as well as the announcement of the Teocali Award recently presented to the Table by the Mexican Cultural Committee in conjunction with the Mexican Consulate in Brownsville.



The plaque reads: “To the Pan American Round Table in recognition of their outstanding promotion of the Mexican culture in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.” (Panamericana Texana January 1989). Mrs. Pashos served as chairman of the Interchange Library from 1991 to 1993.



Mrs. Gary Kimberling  
1990 - 1992

Pan American Observance Day was celebrated at the Holiday Inn. All PART I members came in costume and were entertained by the students from Brownsville High School who presented traditional dances and sang songs in Spanish. A most delightful afternoon was spent by all.

Mrs. Mike McKinney  
1992 – 1994

The May 1994 issue of Panamericana Texana, reported that “Brownsville I members take their marvelous costume collection ‘on the road’ with great success. It is justifiable the pride of the Table”.



Mrs. Teddy Renfrow  
1994 – 1996



The February, 1995 issue of Panamericana Texana reported “Brownsville I – the 5<sup>th</sup> Table formed in Texas, celebrated its 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary this past November with a Fall Round-up. Sixty-five members, spouses and guests enjoyed a B-B-Q dinner hosted by past director Frances Lipe. Director Teddy Renfrow presented a brief history of the movement”.



Mrs. David Hughston  
1996 - 1998

It was during Mrs. Hughston's tenure that PART I was approached by Mrs. Melanie Connor on the possibilities of a costume museum being part of a cultural and educational complex. The idea was turned over to a committee with Mrs. Ann Ray presiding.

Mrs. Henry Lipe  
1998 – 2000

The theme for the Merienda in the year 2000 was “Legends and Folklore” casting more than 70 native costumes from a collection which now numbers about 300 authentic costumes. In March 1999, 100 costumes were donated by Bobby Dew and daughters. The Panamericana Texana, May 2000, reported that “the collection will soon move to a new Cultural Education Center, containing 3,376 square feet of exhibit hall, work space and storage areas, that is part of the Dean Porter Park Renovation Project.”



Mrs. Edward Moore, Jr.  
2000 – 2002

It was during Mrs. Moore's tenure that the Pan American Round Table I joined with Pan American Round Table II and the San Benito Round Table to celebrate Pan American Observance Day. It was a great success and the tradition has continued to the present.



Mrs. Jimmy Raulston  
2002 - 2004

During Mrs. Raulston's tenure as PART I Director, the Pan American Day celebration was attended by the State Director. The Charro Days Merienda was held for the last time during Mrs. Raulston's term and the first "Noche de Colores de Mexico" fund raiser was held for the Costumes of the Americas Museum.

Miss Lita Ortiz  
2004 - 2006

Miss Ortiz initiated the "mentoring" program for new associates and concentrated on acquiring new members. A "Silver Tea" with a silent auction was introduced so that monies would continue to flow into the scholarship account. The "Silver Tea" would take place every other year so as to allow the Costumes of the Americas to have a major fund raiser the other years. During her tenure, Brownsville PART I held the PARTT State Board Meeting in March, 2006.



Mrs. John Schwarm  
2006 - 2008

During Mrs. Schwarm's tenure, Pan American Round Table I celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday, became a member of the Alliance of Pan American Round Tables and began planning, along with PART II and PART of San Benito, the 54<sup>th</sup> State Convention. Mrs. Schwarm served as PART I's delegate to the 31<sup>st</sup> Convention of the Alliance of Pan American Round Tables.



Mrs. Mario Yzaguirre  
2008 – 2011

During Mrs Yzaguirre's tenure, PART I served as one of the hosts of the 54<sup>th</sup> State Convention. The other hosts were PART II and Part of San Benito. She also served as the Convention Treasurer and as chair of PARTT long range committee. She was asked to serve a three year term so that PART I's executive board elections would coincide with the PARTT State elections.



Mrs. Robert Vezzetti  
2011 – 2013

During Mrs. Vezzetti's tenure, the beloved "Merienda" was brought back to help celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Charro Days, a celebration that PART I helped to organize in 1938. The Silver Tea, a major fund raiser for PART I, was celebrated at the home of Mrs. Nohemi Gonzalez and became an annual December event. In 2012, PART I celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> birthday with a "blast from the past" celebration.





The Costume Collection belonging to the Pan American Round Table I is now housed in the PART I Costume of the Americas Museum and is owned by the Costume Corporation.

## IN CONCLUSION

Since its formation in 1932, the Pan American Round Table I of Brownsville has been very successful due to the hard work and dedication of many women that came before us. These women gave unselfishly of their time never expecting praise and monetary rewards. They were dedicated to the ideals of Pan Americanism and believed in the principles and dreams of our Founder, Florence Terry Griswold.

From this Table came four State Directors—Mrs. J. W. Worthington (1938); Mrs. W.W. Ely (1949 – 1951); Mrs. Albert Fernandez (1967 – 1969); Mrs. Sherrill B. Oaks (1979 – 1981). These outstanding ladies did so much for PART I and for the State Organization. The list of offices that they held is lengthy as well as their contributions. Three were awarded the highest honor the State can bestow, the Florence Terry Griswold Award. The recipients of this award were Mrs. Ely, Mrs. Fernandez, and Mrs. Oaks. How blessed PART I was to have them as its members.

PART I also brought the State Convention to Brownsville four separate times and is looking forward to hosting with PART II and the San Benito Table the Convention in 2009.

PART I was the fifth Table to be organized. It has helped, through the years, to organize other Tables both in Texas and throughout the Americas.

PART I is probably best known for its unique costume collection. This collection is now housed in the PART I Costume of the Americas Museum and is owned by the Costume Corporation. These costumes were modeled for many years during a Charro Days “Merienda” The latter was always attended by hundreds of people who marveled at the beauty of all the costumes. The costumes were also modeled upon request for schools, other Tables, and conventions. The latter are still occurring today.

Mrs. George R. Lipe in writing about the history of PART I stated it best

“The unique geographical location of Brownsville, with Mexico beside it, the consulates here, for years the army post and a major headquarters for Pan American Airways, all have given this Table many outstanding opportunities to meet, greet and help host distinguished celebrities and to be of service to the community. Through these contacts and the intense interest and activity with costumes, this has always been and continues to be a strong and very active Table.”

And we will go forth in the days ahead carrying the torch of Pan Americanism and the ideals of our Founder to the very best of our ability “ to fulfill its objective, knowledge, understanding and friendship until we are ‘one for all and all for one’.

## **Acknowledgements**

The information that has been gathered of the history of PART I could not have been possible without the wonderful records that are part of the Pan American Round Tables of Texas Archives. They are to be congratulated for all the work that has been done to preserve the history of the Round Tables of Texas.

This program book is a brief history of our Pan American Round Table and the readers are encouraged to go to the web site [www.PARTT.org](http://www.PARTT.org) to seek further information. So much has been written and written well, that trying to retell our history was a monumental job.

The Brownsville Herald microfilms that are kept at the public library were also very helpful.

Lastly, we cannot exclude our PART I archives. The ladies that had the foresight to preserve our history are to be commended.

Special Thanks goes to Susana Schwarm for helping us locate pictures of the past directors.

## **A Pan American Prayer**

Eternal God, grant, we beseech Thee, the gift of Thy Spirit of love and peace to our Pan-American Round Table, and in all our doings direct us with Thy most gracious favor, and further us with Thy Continual help, that in all our efforts begun and continued in Thee, we may strengthen the bonds of friendship among the nations of the American Continent and thereby contribute toward advancing universal peace and good-will among all mankind. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, who bringeth forth food and abundance from the earth.

*(The Pan American Round Table by Lois Terry Marchbanks Page 171)*