



History of the Pan American Round Table of San Antonio

Written by Louise Actkinson, Table Director 2007-2009

Table Name	Pan American Round Table of San Antonio
Date of Founding	October 16, 1916
Name of Founder	Florence Terry Griswold
Birth Date	May 29, 1875
Family Telephone	na
Number of Active Members	43
Table E-mail	sanantonio@partt.org
Alliance Zone	Zone I
Geographic Location	Texas, USA

It appears to have been foreordained, that, out of the conflict which spilled and mingled the blood of the Latin American and the Anglo Saxon, should be created a natural background, baptized, dedicated and set apart as the birthplace and cornerstone of a movement to cement relations between the peoples of the North and the peoples of the South in the Western Hemisphere. And so, in San Antonio, Texas, the hallowed ground consecrated by the blood of countless patriots from two great nations, came into being the first Pan American Round Table. (The Pan American Round Table by Lois Terry Marchbanks)

It was at a luncheon in the historic Menger Hotel, October 16, 1916, that the Pan American Round Table was actually organized. Florence Terry Griswold assembled a group of women who had labored diligently with her to form an organization with this avowed purpose: "To provide mutual knowledge, understanding, and friendship among the peoples of the Western Hemisphere, and to foster all movements affecting the women and children of the Americas."

The group quickly responded to her leadership. They recognized her genius for inspiring a willingness to participate in a crusade which would reach across every border in the Americas. The women attending that eventful day and who became the charter members were twenty-two in number. The basis of all clubs is that number, twenty-two. The number was based on the 21 American Republics that existed at that time, plus Canada. There women were: Mrs. John Case Griswold, founder, and Mrs. W.S. Hendrick, Mrs. A.C. Pancoast, Mrs. W.A. Daniel, Mrs. T.W. Campbell, Mrs. E.R. Richardson, Mrs. Cora Davenport, Mrs. J. Tom Williams, Mrs. Harry Landa, Mrs. Roy Deitel, Mrs. Mabel Hanna Davis, Mrs. Leo Joseph, Mrs. A.B. Weakley, Mrs. Henry Drought, Mrs. J.R. Sprague, Mrs. Eli Hertzberg, Mrs. A.R. Thomas, Mrs. Carlos Bee, Mrs. Roy Campbell, Mrs. Joseph Burton Dibrell, Mrs. Winchester Kelso, and Mrs. H.F. Mulliken (note: the names as recorded).

The history of the Pan American Round Table of San Antonio and the Alliance are the same throughout Mrs. Griswold's lifetime. After the founding of the P.A.R.T. (which only had one table), other tables were organized. In Texas, Laredo was organized in 1921; it was followed by El Paso and Austin in 1922. Mexico City was the first table outside Texas, organized in 1928. The first table outside of North America was in Costa Rica in 1936. Florence Terry Griswold died in 1941, and the first Alliance of the Pan American Round Tables was held in Mexico City, Mexico, in 1944.

Pan American Round Table of San Antonio has elected 38 directors since its founding in 1916. Mrs. Griswold was the director for all of the first 25 years.

Important Achievements since its Founding

In 1919, the first Pan American Conference between women of the United States and Mexico took place in San Antonio, Texas. An outstanding accomplishment of the conference was the adoption of a resolution, the purpose of which was to encourage the creation of a Pan American chair at the University of Texas. Important attendees included Dr. Julio Uriburu of Argentina, Dr. Hermilia Galindo of the University of Mexico (presiding), and Dr. John Willis Slaughter of Rice Institute who emphasized (as well did Dr. Uriburu) the need of educational opportunities for Latin Americans in the United States. Perhaps neither Mrs. Griswold nor her companions could visualize the far-reaching import of this first Pan-American conference between women of the United States and Mexico. It laid the groundwork for the future of the Pan American Movement.

The Pan American Round Table of San Antonio has been the host of numerous gathering for the PART of Texas as well as the Alliance. On October 16, 2006, the ninetieth anniversary of the founding of the Pan American Round Table, the Pan American Round Table of San Antonio held a coffee as the final event of the thirtieth convention of the Alliance. It was held – where else? at the historic Menger Hotel in San Antonio, Texas.

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