

A MOMENT IN HISTORY {SLIDE1}

The idea of placing a marker or tablet, as she called it, on the international bridge between Nuevo Laredo and Laredo, originated in the mind and in the unselfish heart of

[SLIDE 2] Florence Terry Griswold. In fact, she also envisioned placing a tablet on the International Bridges of Brownsville, and El Paso. The bridge at Eagle Pass was also mentioned. It took Mrs. Griswold almost two years to clear all the hurdles of the International Boundary Commission. The American Commissioner was L. M. Lawson and the Mexican Commissioner was Armando

Santacruz Jr. There was a lot of correspondence between Mrs. Griswold and the Boundary Commission. In the end, on

{SLIDE 3} June 16, 1934, Mrs. Griswold received a telegram from American Commissioner L. M. Lawson stating that permission by the Secretaries of State of Mexico and the United States, was given for a marker to be placed half way on the International Bridge in Laredo and in Brownsville. El Paso's permission was not given due to the Chamizal dispute between El Paso and Ciudad Juarez over 600 acres which were caused by a shift in the river. This dispute was finally settled by John F. Kennedy in 1963

{SLIDE 4} and officially settled by President Johnson and President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz in 1964. Preparations began for the unveiling of the Bridge Tablet.

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April 14, 1935 was chosen as the date for the unveiling. Very appropriate for it was Pan American Observance Day and the day before the Pan American Round Tables of Texas 11th Convention in Laredo.

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Engraved Invitations were sent to many dignitaries including the President and Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt, Vice-President and Mrs. John Nance Garner, U S Secretary of

State, Director General L. S. Rowe of the Pan American Union, the President of Mexico, Governors from different Mexican states, Ambassadors and Consuls from different Pan American Countries, and state, city and county officials.

{SLIDE 7} The Tablet on the Laredo Bridge was designed by Henry Wedemeyer of San Antonio. It was to be made of bronze, later changed to aluminum, and the design represented the cemented interests of the Pan American Union. It was to be placed on the boundary between Nuevo Laredo and Laredo.

{SLIDE 8} It had to follow the regulations of the International

Boundary Commission: north side had to be in English and the south side in Spanish. The marker would be illuminated at night to remind “visitors over the Pan American highway of the organization’s aim to ‘provide mutual knowledge, understanding and friendship among the women of the Western Hemisphere’.”

{SLIDE 9} As numerous newspaper articles stated, it was the first marker dedicated to the women of the Americas by a woman’s organization and it was a gesture of good will to emphasize the friendship that existed between the women of the United States and Mexico.

The unveiling of the marker took place on April 14, 1935 at noon before a multitude of people. There were representatives of the federal and state governments of both the United States and Mexico and other countries, as well as the mayors of the city of Laredo and Nuevo Laredo.

{SLIDE 10} The ceremonies were presided over by Mrs. Albert Martin, State Director General of PART and wife of Mayor Albert Martin.

The invocation was given by Right Rev. W. T. Capers, bishop of the Diocese of West Texas of the Episcopal Church.

**{SLIDE 11} James V. Allred,
Governor of the State of Texas gave
the welcome while**

**{SLIDE 12}
Governor Pablo Quiroga of the state of
Nuevo Leon replied to the welcome
address, followed by the Governor of
the State of Coahuila, Mexico, Jesus
Valdez Sanchez.**

**{SLIDE 13} Mayor Albert Martin than
gave the welcome on behalf of the City
of Laredo, followed by Martin
Herrera, Mayor of Nuevo Laredo,
Mexico.**

**{SLIDE 14} The Dedicatory Address
was given by Edward L. Reed Esq.,**

Chief of the Mexican Division, of the Department of State, Washington, representing the United States Secretary of State, Cordell Hull. He stated “We have gathered here today not only to witness the dedication of this admirably conceived marker, placed on this bridge uniting out two countries through the happy initiative and generosity of the ladies of the Pan American Round Table: we are here also to partake of the spirit that informs this manifestation of the friendship and good will which characterize the close relationship existing between our great Republics, a relationship which we can proudly proclaim reposes firmly on the desire for mutual understanding.” Gustavo Serrano, who was especially

designated by the Mexican Government to reply to the dedicatory address of Mr. Reed, gave the response.

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The marker was unveiled by Mrs. Fernando Torreblanco, daughter of the ex-president Plutaroo Elias Calles, and wife of the Under Secretary of Foreign Relations of Mexico.

It was a grand affair and as one newspaper article stated it “promises to be one of the most important international events ever staged on the border, as it will demonstrate conclusively the good will prevailing among the peoples of the two Americas. Even the Governor of

Texas commented ‘Tell the ladies of Laredo and all of the Pan American members, Mrs. Allred and I had no idea this was going to be such an elaborate and such a stupendous affair.’

After the bridge ceremony, a luncheon followed at the Hamilton Hotel with the visitors as honored guests of the Pan American Round Table.

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Let us fast forward to the year 2016. The condition of the marker was appalling. At the summer PARTT workshop in San Antonio, the board voted to restore the marker. The first

part of the restoration was the bottom part.

{SLIDE 17} It was then brought to my attention that the top part or the shield was also in need of restoration.

Thanks to a generous PART member the restoration is in process and will be completed this month.

{SLIDE 18} Invitations, similar to the ones sent in 1935, were addressed to many state, city and local officials, to state and city officials in Tamaulipas, and to various consuls both in Texas and Mexico. The unveiling ceremony at the bridge will be brief. Unveiling the tablet will be our Alliance Director General assisted by the PARTT Past State Directors.

Following the unveiling a reception will be held at La Posada. This reception is being hosted by the PART of Laredo.

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At the Reception, the Mistress of Ceremonies will be Diana C. Rodriguez, PART of Laredo Director. The welcome will be given by the mayor of Laredo, the Honorable Pete Saenz.

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The dedicatory address will be given by Carlos Cascos, Texas Secretary of State.

As you see, we tried to mirror the unveiling ceremonies of 1935 where we could. We live in different times and therefore we had to adapt to the present time. However the message at this dedication will be the same. May this marker be a reminder to all that

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The aim of the Pan American Round Table Movement is to provide mutual knowledge, understanding, and friendship with all the women of the Western Hemisphere and to foster all movements leading to a higher civilization, especially those affecting the women and children of these countries.

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This marker will forever exemplify the spirit of our organization for on it is written “One for All and All for One”