

## 1954-1964

The first decade of Delta Theta was punctuated by fundraisers: card parties, white elephant sales, auctions, and fruitcakes, fruitcakes, fruitcakes! Programs addressed women and their place in Society. Meetings were often held at local restaurants and special events took place at members' homes. Our first members worked hard to organize a strong chapter and made decisions that have endured throughout the first sixty years of the chapter's life.

Programs included presentations about world affairs, travel information, pioneer women, book reviews, professional growth, the role of women in education, and new teacher training. Three interesting programs were "Teacher Welfare—The Danger of the Merit System," "Teachers Are People," and "Automation and Its Impact on Society."

Keeping the chapter solvent during those early years was a major problem. The balance in the treasury peaked at \$503 in 1958 but also fell to a low of \$83.87 in May of 1964. Fundraisers included sales of baked goods, fruitcakes, chances on a bride doll, dolls with home-made dresses, more fruitcakes, a tablecloth, chances on an automatic coffeepot, books on civil defense, birthday calendars, another round of fruitcakes, cookbooks, a quilt top, school T-shirts, suppers, and some more fruitcakes along with numerous rummage sales, white elephant sales and a card party. A drawing for an electric clock netted \$14.75. Every time the budget cratered, the chapter voted to order more fruitcakes.

Every December Christmas gifts were exchanged. The limit spent on gifts was usually between one and two dollars, and names were drawn at the December meeting. Christmas carols were always sung, often led by Margaret Smith, and members brought their favorite holiday treats to share with the members.

Service projects were a big part of Delta Theta's infancy. They included saving old magazines and hosiery to send overseas to Japanese war widows. They once purchased a 50¢ bag which would hold 22 pounds of hosiery to send to an international welfare service.

Members often met at local restaurants, among them the Flying Chef restaurant at the airport, the Jack Tar Motel Petro-Chem Room in Orange, the Ridgewood Motel in Port Arthur, the Schooner Restaurant, Leo & Willie's Restaurant, the Shady Retreat in Groves, and Luby's Cafeteria in Jefferson City Shopping Center. When meetings were not held at restaurants, dinner became a fund-raiser, often costing each member as little as \$1.75.

In those early years, members were also advocates of change and were not afraid to step forward with suggestions for change. In 1959, members wrote their US senator in support of abolishing discrimination between the sexes. In 1960, they wrote letters to eliminate discrimination against women, asking particularly that the letters be sent to Senator Lyndon Johnson while he was in his political campaign for vice president. The shortcomings of Texas law as it pertained to women and their affairs under these laws were always a topic of discussion.

New members were recruited once every two years until 1963, when new members were invited to join the chapter at least once a year.

By the end of its first decade, Delta Theta had proven itself to be an advocate for women educators state-wide who were also conscious of their duties to their students and their communities. The relatively small group of fourteen charter members in 1954 had grown to 34 by the end of the decade. Twelve of the original fourteen were still active members in 1964; only Margaret Smith, who became a member in 1960, is still a member of Delta Theta today.