A STUDY OF THE SOURCES OF POWER DEMONSTRATED
BY HOUSTON HARTE, TEXAS NEWSPAPER OWNER

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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Denton, Texas
August, 1978

In fifty years, Houston Harte guided an organization that grew from one afternoon daily to a chain of nineteen newspapers in six states, and one television station.

Much of the civic activity in San Angelo, his hometown, revolved around Harte from 1930 until 1970. He knew many politicians, such as Lyndon Johnson, and was willing to ask their help.

Harte's major contributions were retaining Goodfellow Air Force Base's active status, helping San Angelo College attain four-year status, and influencing General Telephone Company of the Southwest to locate its headquarters in San Angelo. His numerous other projects were of lesser magnitude.

This study probes Harte's sources of power, examining why he was successful in getting the projects he wanted for his community.
As this study was being concluded, Houston Harte's widow, Caroline Isabel, died on April 3, 1978. She was eighty-four years old.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Houston Harte was "the most powerful figure in Texas journalism," J. Evetts Haley wrote in his anti-Johnson book, A Texan Looks at Lyndon (4).

A look at Harte's accomplishments indicates some of the power of the politically active journalist. In more than fifty years of newspapering, Houston Harte guided a business organization that grew during his lifetime from one afternoon daily of 2,300 circulation to a chain of nineteen newspapers in six states with a total circulation of more than 600,000, and one television station.

Long before his chain grew large, however, he had become, mainly by the force of his personality, a figure of statewide importance. He participated firsthand in many aspects of the growth and development of Texas (5).

Harte was born January 12, 1893, in Knobnoster, Missouri. His father, Edward S. Harte, spent most of his life in this western Missouri town. When Houston Harte was six days old, his mother died. When he was fourteen, his first stepmother died, leaving him a building, which he sold for $2,000, to buy his first newspaper.
Harte went to public school in Knobnoster. In 1915, he was graduated from the University of Missouri School of Journalism.

While still a university student, Harte began his newspaper career by purchasing the Knobnoster Gem in 1914. The following January, he bought the Central Missouri Republican, a county seat weekly at Boonville, in partnership with Donald Ferguson, who later became editor and president of the Milwaukee Journal.

In 1917, a salesman told Harte about a newspaper for sale in Texas: the San Angelo Standard. Harte wrote the owner, J. G. Murphy, but transactions halted when Harte enlisted in the Army. After his discharge in 1918, he sold his Boonville paper for cash, and, in 1920, headed for San Angelo with about $20,000. He paid Murphy $10,000 cash and signed notes for $23,000.

Harte's first step toward a newspaper chain in Texas came in 1922, when he bought the Sweetwater Daily Reporter, the Sweetwater Weekly Reporter, and the weekly Roby Star Record.

In 1930, Harte sold half interest in the Sweetwater papers to his partner, Bernard Hanks of Abilene, with whom he established Harte-Hanks Newspapers. Harte-Hanks sold the Sweetwater papers during World War II.

Harte and Hanks met in 1921 and soon became close friends. The friendship lasted until Hanks died in 1948 (5).
Their first joint venture was the purchase of the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal. They sold their interest in the Lubbock paper in 1928 and applied the money to the purchase of the Corpus Christi Caller-Times, one of their most important acquisitions (5).


A month before Harte died, in 1972, the enterprise was expanded further with the purchase of the Anderson [South Carolina] Morning Independent and the afternoon Daily Mail,
and the Woodbury [New Jersey] Times. The corporation went public in March 1972, a week before Harte died, when Harte-Hanks stock went on sale.

Statement of the Problem

From 1930 until the mid-1960s, Houston Harte was the pivot around which much of San Angelo's civic activity revolved. Part of the reason was his wide acquaintance with politicians and his willingness to ask their help for San Angelo (5). He had the influence to keep Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo open even after the official statement had been handed down from Washington, D. C., that the base would be closed. He saw to it that San Angelo College grew from a two-year college into the four-year Angelo State University. He actively worked to influence General Telephone Company of the Southwest to move its headquarters from Dallas to San Angelo.

Citizens of San Angelo realized that Harte was a powerful figure, but the theories on why he was powerful varied. Some believed that the reason merely was the fact that he was a newspaper chain owner. Others speculated that he must have made deals. This study examines both theories and others, discussing the possibilities as to why Harte was powerful enough to successfully carry through projects for the San Angelo community.
Purpose of the Study

Much of Harte's power probably came just from owning all of his newspapers; however, during the period that Harte was gaining so much of his power, his newspaper empire was not large (6). The newspapers were relatively few, and, for the most part, they were in small communities.

Harte's political activity and civic involvement in San Angelo was unusual for an owner of a chain of his size. His involvement was comparable to that of an owner of a much larger chain, such as Randolph Hearst (6); therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine Harte's sources of power, as demonstrated in San Angelo.

The study has provided insight on Harte's successes in major projects dealing with society at large in San Angelo. It examines his acts of power and his friends who gave him so much power, including his best-known friend, Lyndon Baines Johnson.

Review of the Literature

In 1967, Hugh Morgan, of the University of Oklahoma, completed a master's thesis entitled "The Acquisition of Newspapers by Houston Harte," dealing almost entirely with the actual purchases of the newspapers of Houston Harte until 1967 (7). It was descriptive and contained little interpretation of the man and his powers. Morgan made note of Harte's friendship with Johnson, and mentioned briefly a few of the deeds that Harte did for San Angelo.
During the mid-1960s, Maxine Wells, an instructor at Angelo State College, began writing a book about Houston Harte, to be called, *The Harte Beat*. The book never was completed.

With the exception of a few news items concerning events in his life, written in his own newspapers, nothing else has been written on Houston Harte.

**Justification**

Success and power are considered virtues by many. Many considered Houston Harte to be successful and powerful.

This study examines Harte's success and power in San Angelo, giving the reader a chance to see how one journalist became politically active and to decide whether Harte's methods should be used in building a chain in the future. The study provides insight on how one man struggled to the top of a newspaper empire and into the lives of those in a West Texas community.

**Limitations of the Study**

The study deals mainly with Houston Harte's power in San Angelo and his sources of power. It discusses Harte's background, how he got started in journalism, his building of the chain, and his relationships with others. It describes how the chain grew, and touches briefly upon the results of his work today. The study deals with Harte's achievements, involving projects dealing with society at large, particularly in San Angelo, and what lay behind those achievements.
The study does not cover the technicalities of the corporation or its stocks. It does not go into detail on economic activities unless the activities had a direct effect on Harte's accomplishments.

Methodology

The bulk of the information obtained for this study came from interviews with people closely associated with Houston Harte. Interviews were conducted with his widow, Isabel; his son, Houston; Robert Marbut, president of Harte-Hanks Newspapers, Incorporated; L. Gray Beck, president of General Telephone Company of the Southwest; Ralph Chase, San Angelo pediatrician; Walter Jenkins, Lyndon Johnson aide; Lady Bird Johnson, former first lady; Weldon Jones, president of the San Angelo National Bank; Bill Martin, managing editor of the *San Angelo Standard-Times*; John Wood, Texas Ranger; and Jacque Foreman, Harte's secretary for sixteen years. The former secretary provided many of Harte's unpublished memoirs. Background information on Harte came from newspaper articles concerning Harte's life, found in his file at the *San Angelo Standard-Times*, and from Hugh Morgan's master's thesis concerning Harte.

The researcher hoped to talk with enemies of Houston Harte, but no one would provide names of people who did not like Harte.

For the purpose of this study, power is defined as the ability, whether physical, mental or moral, to act.
Two psychologists, John French and Bertram Raven, define five sources of power: (a) reward power, based on a member's perception that others have the ability to mediate rewards for him, (b) coercive power, based on the member's perception that others have the ability to mediate punishment for him, (c) legitimate power, based on the perception by the member that others have a legitimate right to prescribe behavior for him, (d) referent power, based on the member's identification with others, and (e) expert power, based on the perception that the other has some special knowledge or expertness (2, p. 612).

Halbert Gulley defines two kinds of power, springing from different sources: (a) positional power, which comes from the individual's position within a set of hierarchies, and (b) earned power, which comes from the individual's behavior in the past when he earned a reputation for having certain abilities (3, p. 281).

Organization

The study consists of six chapters: Chapter I, the introduction; Chapter II, the acquisition of newspapers by Houston Harte; Chapter III, Harte's role in San Angelo; Chapter IV, the reasons for Harte's power; Chapter V, San Angelo's reaction to Harte; and Chapter VI, summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

THE ACQUISITION OF NEWSPAPERS
BY HOUSTON HARTE

Houston Harte's first serious interest in San Angelo, Texas, began when he read an article in the Kansas City Star about R. T. Kemper, receiver of the Kansas City-Mexico-Orient Railroad and president of the Kansas City-Illinois Railroad. Since Harte knew the Orient ran through San Angelo, the story sparked Harte's memory of an article he had read a year or two before, in which Franklin Lane, Secretary of the Interior, had written that, if he were a young man, he would go to Arizona, New Mexico, or West Texas. In Lane's opinion, this part of the country had a great future (1, p. 9).

Harte already had had some contact with San Angelo. In 1917, a salesman told Harte a newspaper was for sale in San Angelo. Harte wrote the newspaper owner, J. G. Murphy, for further information; however, correspondence was interrupted when Harte enlisted in the Army.

After his discharge in 1918 as a captain of infantry, Harte's interest in San Angelo was rekindled by the Kansas City Star article. As a result, in December, 1919, Harte wrote to Kemper, a friend of his father's, and told him he was interested in West Texas and, especially, in buying a newspaper in San Angelo he had heard was for sale. Kemper
replied that he was going to San Angelo in January for a meeting and, if arrangements could be made, he would take Harte with him to San Angelo. Kemper, glad to hear of Harte's interest in San Angelo and the newspaper, warned Harte not to pay too much (1, p. 10). After reading as much as he could about West Texas and the Southwest, Harte made his decision to go to San Angelo with Kemper (1, p. 10).

Harte already was on the road to becoming a financial success when he left Missouri for Texas in 1920. He took with him approximately $20,000 (5, p. 34). The personality of Harte can better be understood by examining his early years. His mother, a deeply religious Protestant who fled her native Ireland instead of going through with an arranged marriage with a Catholic, died six days after he was born on January 12, 1893, in Knobnoster, Missouri. He had two stepmothers. The first died when he was 14. She willed him a building that he sold for $2,000 to buy his first newspaper.

Harte attended public school in Knobnoster, and then began studying architecture at the University of Missouri. The next year, he transferred to the University of Southern California. While attending the University of Southern California, he decided the university was not getting proper coverage in the Los Angeles newspaper and approached the city editor about the situation. The city editor told Harte that if he didn't like the publicity, he could write the stories himself, which he did (2). The experience must have
sparked a journalistic interest because the next year, he returned to the University of Missouri to study journalism.

Harte's newspaper career began when, as a university student in 1914, he sold the building his stepmother left him to purchase the *Knobnoster Gem*, a weekly. When he began his senior year, he placed a fellow journalism student in charge of the paper. The following January, he bought the *Central Missouri Republican*, a county seat weekly at Boonville, in partnership with John Donald Ferguson, another classmate, who became editor and president of the *Milwaukee Journal*. Harte was excused from the first six weeks of his final university semester so that he and Ferguson, who had completed his course work for his degree, could operate the newspaper (5, p. 5). Harte was granted a degree in journalism from the University of Missouri in 1915. At the same time, he sold the *Knobnoster Gem*.

By the time he traveled to San Angelo, he had accumulated $20,000. Describing his first impression of the West Texas community, Harte said:

> The sun was shining bright and the grass was green and lush. The country looked good to me. I had no idea how many Februarys I would have to look at dry, winter-killed grass and wonder when we would get the winter rains which would provide the early sheep feed I was witnessing that February 21, 1920 (2, p. 5).

After Harte had been in San Angelo a few days, Murphy, owner of the San Angelo newspaper, priced the paper at $35,000. "When he priced it to me at that figure, I knew
he did not know what the paper was worth or I was really fooled in the town," Harte wrote in his memoirs (2, p. 5).

In a half hour, the two had made a deal, agreeing on $33,000. Harte wrote:

I thought the paper was really worth at that time about $50,000 to $90,000 and that estimate later proved to be fairly accurate considering that the paper made $33,000 the first year. There were no taxes, so you had it all. In the first month of operation, I made $5,000 and I was just feeling my way along (1, p. 10).

When Harte purchased the San Angelo Standard, he was twenty-seven years old. He thought at the time that Murphy was not getting out as good a paper as he could. He wrote later:

I felt that a better paper would provide better circulation, which would provide more advertising. The community was underdeveloped, and there was a great deal of land which I knew was selling for a small percentage of what it was worth (1, p. 11).

By 1928, he expanded his San Angelo paper into the morning and Sunday Standard-Times and the evening Standard (2).

A year after Harte settled in San Angelo, he married Caroline Isabel McCutcheon on March 26, 1921, ending a courtship that began in 1916, when she was attending Central Missouri Teachers College, in Warrensburg (5, p. 9).

That same year, at a publishers' convention in Dallas, Harte made an important acquaintance. He met Bernard Hanks, with whom he established Harte-Hanks Newspapers three years later. Hanks was the publisher of the Abilene Reporter, now the Abilene Reporter-News.
"Bernard Hanks and I were a good deal different. He was cautious and conservative. He kept me out of trouble. When I could sell him a deal, I knew it was all right. Mr. Hanks would weed out the bad deals," Harte later said of his partner (4).

On January 12, 1922, Harte, still acting on his own, began expanding ownership of his Texas newspapers by buying three newspapers from Terrell Publishing Company, of Austin, Texas. He acquired the papers on his twenty-ninth birthday on a combined bid of $12,500. They included the Sweetwater Daily Reporter, Sweetwater Weekly Reporter, and the Roby Star Record. Harte sold the Roby weekly a year later for $2,500.

In 1930, Harte sold half interest in the Sweetwater papers to Bernard Hanks, with whom by that time he had established Harte-Hanks Newspapers. Harte-Hanks sold the Sweetwater papers during World War II (3).

Harte-Hanks' first joint purchase was in 1924 with Lindsey Nunn, who owned the Amarillo News. Each of the three put up $1,000 to buy the Lubbock Plains-Journal, a semi-weekly (4). In 1925, the paper became a daily under the names of the Lubbock Avalanche and the Lubbock Journal.

In the fall of 1928, Harte-Hanks sold its Lubbock interest, except for a very small part, and applied the money on its next purchase, the Corpus Christi Times (3). Harte had learned from a salesman for the Goss Acme Press Company that the Times was having financial difficulties.
Harte-Hanks paid $75,000 cash for the paper. Grady Kinsolving, traffic manager of West Texas Utilities Company, took charge of the *Corpus Christi Times*.

Later, Kinsolving introduced Harte-Hanks into the Rio Grande Valley as a result of an airplane accident in Harlingen. While having the plane repaired, Kinsolving investigated the *Harlingen Star*, a semi-weekly. After he returned to Corpus Christi, he persuaded Harte-Hanks to buy the Harlingen paper; they bought it in 1928 for $33,000 (1, p. 20). Later that same year, the newspaper was converted into a daily and renamed the *Harlingen Daily Star*.

The *Corpus Christi Times*, without a doubt, was the second paper in the city to the *Corpus Christi Caller*. The first year, the paper made $2,800. Charles Marsh from Austin and E. S. Fentress from Waco decided to buy the *Corpus Christi Caller* if Harte-Hanks would agree to consolidate it with the *Times*.

In 1929, Marsh, Fentress, Hanks, and Harte formed the Texas Newspaper, Incorporated, a holding company for the *Caller Times* in Corpus Christi. The company was organized as the legal owner of the Harte-Hanks' *Harlingen Daily Star* and *Paris Morning News*, which Harte-Hanks had acquired in 1928, and Marsh and Fentress' *Brownsville Herald* and *Laredo Times*. Since this joint effort during the Depression did not prove profitable, the four-way partnership dissolved in 1932.
Harte-Hanks received the Corpus Christi and Paris newspapers, and Marsh and Fentress, the other papers (1, p. 21).

The Paris newspaper was acquired by Harte-Hanks on April 10, 1929. It purchased the Paris Morning News and the Paris Weekly News, owned by the North Texas Publishing Company, for $112,500 (5, p. 75).

On January 19, 1929, Harte-Hanks acquired the Big Spring Herald. For the down payment of $25,000, Harte-Hanks used the funds obtained in selling the remaining ten per cent interest in the Lubbock newspaper (5, p. 87).

Harte-Hanks Newspapers, Incorporated, consolidated its holdings in Paris in July, 1930, when it purchased the Paris Dinner Horn. The paper, which was discontinued when the afternoon edition of the Paris News began in August, 1933, was purchased for $19,250 (5, p. 81).

In 1936, Harte-Hanks bought the Marshall Evening Messenger and the Marshall Morning News. Its interest in East Texas had been sparked after oil was discovered between Longview and Tyler in 1930 (5, p. 91). Harte-Hanks and Pat Mayse, publisher of the Paris News, agreed to pay $100,000 in cash for the Marshall papers. Mayse was allowed to purchase a minority interest (5, p. 91). Assisted by Mayse, Harte-Hanks acquired another paper in East Texas, the Denison Herald, in 1940 for $115,000 (5, p. 94).
Harte's and Hanks' last newspaper transaction as a team was the purchase of one-third interest in the Wichita Falls Record News and Times in April, 1948, for $500,000. On December 12, 1948, Hanks died after a heart attack in Abilene.

In 1950, Harte purchased the semi-weekly Scurry County Times housed in Snyder. Harte's two sons, Edward and Houston, went to Snyder to take over the operation and to begin the afternoon daily operation of the Snyder Daily News. The Snyder newspaper was purchased equally in the names of the two Harte sons and of Andrew R. Shelton, Bernard Hanks' son-in-law. After Harte's sons moved from Snyder to other Harte-Hanks newspapers, Harte decided to sell the paper. On September 30, 1957, the Snyder paper was sold for $272,992.66 (5, p. 111).

The next newspaper acquisition, the Greenville Texas Banner, brought Harte legal difficulties. The town of 15,000 had a competing newspaper, the Greenville Morning Herald, when Harte purchased the Texas Banner on January 5, 1954, for $65,000. A circulation and advertising war began almost immediately (5, p. 118).

In its first year of operation, the Harte paper, the Greenville Texas Banner, lost from $10,000 to $12,000. As the competition increased, the paper began losing money at a rate that sometimes reached $10,000 a month (5, p. 118). Harte finally met with Tom and Bill Poole, part owners of the competing newspaper. The Pooles agreed to sell their paper to
Harte for $30,000. The merger resulted in the Greenville Herald-Banner.

Before the sale, Tom Poole had written to Texas Attorney General John Ben Sheppard and United States Attorney General Herbert Brownell, protesting the Harte-Hanks competition. The problems of the competition continued after the papers were united. The United States Anti-Trust Division of the Department of Justice presented evidence to a federal grand jury in Dallas, Texas, in September, 1958, which indicted Harte-Hanks Newspapers et al. on charges of violating the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in the legal battle that led to the purchase of the Herald. The indictment charged that the defendants conspired to eliminate the competition of the Herald by (a) intentionally operating the Banner at a loss, (b) utilizing revenues from Harte-Hanks Newspapers to finance such losses, (c) lowering subscription rates for home and mail delivery of the Banner, (d) increasing the Banner's advertising staff, (e) increasing the number of pages published, (f) seeking to curtail credit resources available to the Herald, and (g) endeavoring to purchase and actually purchasing the Herald (5, pp. 120-121).

On January 21, 1959, after a trial of three days, Harte-Hanks was acquitted. Defense attorney T. J. McMahon of Abilene, Texas, had argued successfully that the newspapers had to combine to survive. Judge T. Whitfield Davidson noted in his decision that Greenville had only 15,000 population and that
the next larger Texas town having competing newspapers was Fort Worth, with 300,000 population (5, p. 122).

In October, 1960, Harte got the opportunity to buy 37.4 per cent of the stock of the San Antonio Express and Evening News from B. F. Pitman, Jr., a broker, at $4,000 a share. Two years earlier, Harte and Bruce Meador, general manager of Harte-Hanks Newspapers, met with Frank Huntress, Jr., to see whether he was interested in selling his one-third stock in the Express Publishing Company. Huntress not only refused to sell his stock but offered to purchase the Corpus Christi Caller Times from Harte-Hanks (5, p. 127). The remaining third of stock was owned by the George W. Brackenridge Estate, of which Huntress was one of five trustees. In 1962, the Brackenridge trustees decided to sell their third of stock. Hennepen Paper Company of Wisconsin offered $4,000 a share. Harte-Hanks Newspapers offered $10,000 a share. The corporation notified the Brackenridge Estate, Huntress, and the Attorney General's Office. Huntress agreed to the offer, along with the other trustees, if Harte-Hanks would agree to buy his third of the stock at $10,000 per share. Harte-Hanks accepted and bought the remaining two-thirds of stock for a total of $6,200,000 (3).

In the purchase, it was agreed to pay Huntress $38,500 a year for ten years. Assets of the Express Publishing Company included the newspaper building and KENS-TV and KENS radio buildings, situated side by side on three-fourths of
a block in downtown San Antonio; real estate; and Airnews, Incorporated, which had an aircraft dealership and a charter service (5, p. 137). Airnews, Incorporated, subsequently was sold to W. B. Osborn, Jr., a San Antonio oilman. The sale, which totaled $192,000, included a DC-3 airplane. The real estate was sold to various people for $140,000. The KENS radio station was sold to Texas Star Broadcasting Company of Houston for $700,000. A hunting lodge was sold to Huntress for more than $100,000 (5, p. 132).

Conway Craig, president and publisher of the Corpus Christi Caller Times, moved to San Antonio to fill the same position on the San Antonio Express and News. Harte's sons, Ed and Houston, were named directors of the newspaper.

Matt Sheley, publisher of the Greenville Herald-Banner, handled the purchase of the next newspaper, a weekly in Commerce, Texas. The Commerce Journal was purchased on February 15, 1966, for $75,000 (5, p. 134).

In 1967, Harte-Hanks purchased the Huntsville Item, the Corsicana Sun, and the Bryan Eagle, and, in 1971, the Lewisville Leader. By this time, Harte was not as active as he had been in the handling of newspaper acquisitions.

of the executive committee of Harte-Hanks Newspapers, Incorporated, and member of the board of directors (3).

In 1972, Harte-Hanks was expanded with the purchase of the morning *Anderson* [South Carolina] *Independent* and afternoon *Daily Mail* and the *Woodbury* [New Jersey] *Times*.

A week before Harte died on March 13, 1972, the corporation became a public company when Harte-Hanks stock went on sale.

In fifty years of newspapering, Harte had built a chain of nineteen newspapers in six states with a total circulation of more than 600,000, and one television station.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


"When you buy a newspaper, particularly small ones like we had, the thing you have to look at is the community. If the community is going to grow, then the newspaper is going to grow. If the community goes backwards, you're sunk" (7, p. 25).

In these few words, Houston Harte summed up his attitude about operating a newspaper. Upon moving to San Angelo, he immediately went to work making sure that his community would not go backward. Records and many of his peers indicate that he did everything within his power to make sure San Angelo would grow.

One of the first major civic activities for which Harte is credited was his participation in keeping San Angelo National Bank from closing during the Depression. He did not even have any stock in the bank at that time (10, p. 15).

The San Angelo National Bank did fail to open on Saturday, October 3, 1931. Three hundred banks in the United States failed during that week. Harte had been out of town the day before. Upon arriving in town that night, he was told that Herbert O'Bannon, vice president of the bank, had been trying to reach him to tell him that the bank would not open the next day.
"I was shocked, as I had great confidence in the bank," Harte said in his memoirs, admitting that he had not known the bank was in trouble (10, p. 2).

Harte could not have been too shocked because, upon hearing rumors about San Angelo National Bank on the Tuesday or Wednesday before the fateful Saturday, he went to two other banks in town, where his newspaper, the Standard, and the Standard Building & Equipment Company had accounts. At the First National Bank, the newspaper and company had about $10,000, and at the Central National Bank, the account totaled $17,000, including some Chain Investment Bonds. The bonds were trusted with the Central National Bank. Harte got the balances in the First National Bank and the Central National Bank and got cashier's checks for all but $100 of their deposits. From his safety deposit box in the Central National Bank, he removed the Chain Investment Securities. "The bonds were issued against first mortgage automobile loans and were as good as cash," said Harte in his memoirs (10, p. 2).

With these in an envelope, he went to the San Angelo National Bank and tossed the checks and bonds on the desk where the directors of the bank were gathered.

"I cannot understand why you people are so glum. I know there is nothing the matter with the San Angelo National Bank, but, if there is, I am putting all the money the Standard-Times has and what I have in this bank and will take my chance with you," he said (10, p. 3).
By the next afternoon, O'Bannon was at his home with the Chain Investment Bonds, totaling $10,000 to $12,000. He had not cashed them because the bank had done well on Wednesday, gaining $40,000 to $50,000 in deposits.

Thursday morning, San Angelo National Bank opened with a run. Friday was worse. Saturday, a notice was posted that the bank was closing. The bank directors and Harte "were all rather emotional about the plight of the bank" (10, p. 7). Harte asked them what they planned to do and found that they had no ideas at all. He asked if they had any objections to his calling a meeting to try to reopen the bank. They had none and wished him well (10, p. 7).

Harte had heard about an attempt to open a bank in Paris, Texas, six or eight months before, whereby the depositors took stock for a certain percentage of their deposits and in this manner attempted to get the bank open. Harte asked San Angelo National Bank director R. A. Hall if he thought such a scheme would work in San Angelo. Hall said "no," because, "I would have to put up $40,000 on such a program, and I do not know a single person who owes me money, unless it is you, who can pay his note." Harte did owe Hall $40,000 (10, p. 8).

On that Saturday, Harte went around talking to businessmen about reorganizing San Angelo National Bank. He convinced Culbertson Deal, manager of the Board of City Development, to aid him in calling a meeting for the next day. They selected about fifty persons. They took the bank statement and made
estimate of the amount of deposits in the bank over $500. They had a workable proposition to present by Sunday afternoon. Within twenty-four hours, they had worked out the amount of stock each depositor would have to buy from his deposit, and then had begun committing the old stockholders of the San Angelo National Bank to take an amount of stock equal to their assessment (10, p. 9).

On that same Sunday, Harte was asked to meet John Rust, director of another area bank, Guaranty State Bank, at Rust's office. Guaranty had a run on the day of San Angelo National Bank's closing. When Harte arrived, he found bank directors Rust, Roy Hudspeth, and Vic Pierce. They asked Harte what he thought of a merger of the Guaranty State Bank and the San Angelo National Bank. Harte thought this idea appeared so sound and sensible that the four agreed that the two banks should merge after the San Angelo National Bank was reorganized (10, p. 14).

On November 29, 1931, the first formally called meeting of the stockholders was held, and Harte was elected chairman. All in attendance had purchased stock in the new bank with at least twenty-five per cent of the funds they had on deposit in the closed bank. At this meeting, it was explained that the funds of the depositors would be used as follows:

Twenty-five percent of all deposits over $500 was to go into the purchase of stock in the bank. The next twenty-five percent was to be placed in the checking account of the depositor and could be utilized on the day the bank was opened for business. Another twenty-five
percent was to be held in an impounded account for thirty days. The final twenty-five percent was to become available for use by the depositor in sixty days (10, p. 19).

The reception of the new bank by the community was so good that, at the end of thirty days, all of the depositors' money was made available for use.

San Angelo National Bank reopened January 4, 1932. About 8:30 that morning, Charlies Hobbs, bank employee, called Harte and asked him to come to his office. Hobbs and R. A. Hall were there. They had added up the asset side of the printed bank statement and found it short $10,000.

"Mr. Embry, the bank examiner who had been in charge during the reorganization, says we must have this $10,000 or he won't let us open," Hobbs said (10, p. 21). He wanted to know if Harte had $10,000 in the other banks that he could let them have.

Harte did not have $10,000 but said he could get it, which he did. Harte took the money to the bank examiner, and in ten minutes a milling, cheering crowd filled the bank lobby (10, p. 22).

Through involvement in reopening the bank, Harte earned the respect of the existing power structure in the town. Subsequently, his sources of power increased. Harte became known throughout San Angelo as a person who was more than willing to help the community when needed.

One of the most recognized projects Harte worked for was Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo. For this
particular project, Harte publicly demonstrated his referent power. If Harte had not been so determined that the base retain active status, Goodfellow probably would have been closed permanently many years ago. One major crisis period for the base was in 1957-1958. The Board of City Development in San Angelo sent a committee to Washington in July 1957 to learn the future of the base. It was bad (3). W. P. Barnes, businessman and civic leader, and Russell Willis, Board of City Development manager went back to Washington to establish contacts. Harte could not go because he was having heart problems. Barnes and Willis returned with a plan to send Harte to Washington. Harte agreed to go, against the wishes of his wife and his physicians. "The only thing that would give me a stroke would be for this town to lose Goodfellow Air Force Base," he argued (3). Harte's trip lasted about a week, and he brought the first encouragement of any kind. The base was offered to the Army, Navy and "whatnot" (3). With that message of encouragement, the committee worked continuously until the transfer order to the Security Services was signed.

When the base was reassigned to the Air Force Security Service on October 1, 1958, Harte was recognized at a joint Board of City Development and Rotary Club luncheon. "Let's be realistic about this," said Barnes. "Houston Harte is the man in San Angelo and Senator Lyndon B. Johnson the man in Washington we have to thank. Without them, the base would have been phased out with completion of the current air training classes " (3).
In 1965, Harte made another pitch for Goodfellow Air Force Base to Johnson, now president. At that time, he reminded Johnson that he had gotten the base for San Angelo when the Air Force had placed it on the surplus list, and that James Douglass had told a committee, comprising W. G. Barnes, Russell Willis, Marshall Jones, Clark Fisher, and Lewis Seibert, that there was no mission for Goodfellow, and that it would be closed on July 1, 1958 (11, p. 9).

Harte told Johnson he would hate to lose the base during the presidential administration of the man who had created it in 1941. Johnson told Harte:

The Air Force does not want Goodfellow, and it did not want it in 1958. You know how difficult it was to get. When anything happens to you or me, Goodfellow is gone. I promised [Robert] McNamara if he would stay on as Secretary of Defense, I would not interfere with his operation of the Department of Defense if he would give me a saving of $1,500,000,000 a year. He has closed 650 installations around the world and the saving is $3,000,000,000 a year. I can't talk to him now about any installations. Senator [Robert] Kennedy of New York talked to him about the Brooklyn Navy Yard, but it is being closed (11, p. 10).

Before Harte could answer, McGeorge Bundy, an assistant Secretary of State, entered. The conversation between Harte and Johnson about the base was not completed, but Harte left a memorandum with Johnson about Goodfellow to peruse at his leisure. Harte always had a practice on such a mission of leaving a memorandum containing the salient facts about the matter under discussion so that there would be something on file as a reminder to be referred to if the subject came up again (11, p. 14).
The base did not shut down, which benefitted San Angelo tremendously. Harte's successful, hard-fighting continual efforts to keep the base open throughout the years had a definite effect upon the economy of San Angelo. From the time the base was established in San Angelo in 1941 until the fall of 1977, it meant more than $2,205,900,000 to San Angelen loans (6).

Harte was credited with playing a major role in numerous other projects for San Angelo. He had a special understanding of the elements needed for stimulating the growth of the community, and subsequently, his newspaper. Those elements included better business opportunities, public works and education.

In the early 1950s, General Telephone Company of the Southwest purchased the San Angelo Telephone Company. Harte, who decided that General Telephone should move its headquarters from Dallas to San Angelo, invited General Telephone President Donald Power to San Angelo. Upon Power's arrival, Harte immediately went to work pointing out the advantages of moving the headquarters to San Angelo. L. Gray Beck, General Telephone president from 1964 until 1976, said that as a result of efforts Harte made and his acquaintance with Power, it was determined that General Telephone would move its headquarters to San Angelo (4).

Harte worked on getting Three Rivers Dam for San Angelo. The newspaper owner, however, was not mentioned once in the
countless *San Angelo Standard-Times* articles concerning the dam, although numerous other San Angeloans were credited in the stories for their efforts on the project. Nevertheless, in 1958, Harte received the Citizen of the Year Award from the Board of City Development for his work and influence in San Angelo's effort to get legislation authorizing the Three Rivers Dam project through the Congress in 1957 (14).

Since 1963, San Angelo has had a four-year state-supported institution of higher learning. In 1969, Angelo State College gained university status. "Without Houston Harte, there would not have been an Angelo State University today," Lieutenant Governor Ben Barnes said at a dinner honoring Harte for fifty years of *San Angelo Standard-Times* ownership (13). Barnes recalled one man in the legislature during debate over the Angelo State bill who resented the "undue pressure" Harte was exerting to get the school for San Angelo. Barnes voiced the opinion that Harte did not use undue pressure, but that indeed there "was not a lawmaker's office in Austin that didn't have the print of his footsteps as he pushed for the college for his home city" (13).

Harte's efforts to improve San Angelo were not only political. Harte supported the community through many donations.

Angelo State was one institution to which Mr. and Mrs. Harte openly contributed money. In 1964, the Hartes set up a $25,000 memorial scholarship for journalism students at
San Angelo College, honoring Standard-Times publisher Millard Cope who had died that year (16).

In 1968, the Houston Hartes presented $100,000 in corporate listed stocks and pledged $150,000 in gifts over the next five years to the Angelo State College Foundation, Incorporated (1). At that time, Harte said:

We believe that Angelo State College is the most important entity which has come to San Angelo in almost fifty years we have lived here. We hope other citizens have the interest in its growth and welfare as we do and will make use of this vehicle to help the college and our community. Mrs. Harte and I feel we owe a debt to the San Angelo community and West Texas. All we have been able to accumulate in Texas came from the earnings of the San Angelo Standard-Times or from investments we were able to make by reason of the Standard-Times (1).

After Harte's death, his widow continued the tradition of supporting the university. In 1975, she donated $250,000, and in 1976, she contributed Harte-Hanks stocks valued at $250,000 (17).

Although the gifts to Angelo State were the only publicly known donations the Hartes made, Harte made other donations.

He helped numerous youngsters go to college who otherwise could not afford it. He and another San Angelo businessman, George Morgan, started a revolving college loan fund that anybody in the town could use. The loan program still is in operation under the direction of San Angelo certified public accountant Alvin Hay (5).

Harte donated to such San Angelo groups as Baptist Memorial Geriatric Center and the Fort Concho restoration fund,
although he kept publicity of such donations to a minimum. He led financial campaigns at his own church, First Presbyterian, including a campaign that built Wood Fellowship Hall. He and his wife, Isabel, donated their spacious two-story house to the church (8).

Concerning Harte's philanthropies, his son, Houston H., said:

There was just very little done that father didn't support in every way he could, frequently with money. There were all sorts of private philanthropies that he had going, but he never wanted any credit for it, didn't want anybody to know about. How extensive it was, I don't know. Maybe one of the reasons he didn't like a lot of notoriety about that was that he didn't want to be an easy mark for a lot of people coming in and asking for help. Of course he was an easy mark, and a lot of people did ask. Maybe he just wanted to keep that under control, but toward the end, he just quit lending money to anybody. Well, I say he did. He got us in more trouble. Almost up to the end, I was cleaning up deals after him. Maybe he got softer and softer (9).

In addition to political and financial efforts to improve San Angelo, Harte supported other projects for the general betterment of the community.

In the late 1920s, Harte brought the music he enjoyed to the local stage of the Municipal Auditorium. He sponsored, through his newspaper, appearances of such musicians as Paderewski, Galli-Curci, Fritz Kreisler, and Lawrence Tibbett, all at the height of their popularity (12).

Pecan trees are one of the most prominent types of trees in San Angelo today because of Harte. In the 1950s, Harte took up a Kiwanis Club project to plant pecan trees in the
city's parks and sold thousands of low-cost pecan seedlings to Standard-Times readers (12).

Harte played a part in getting the nationally broadcast Miss Wool of America pageant to originate in San Angelo (15). Harte realized that to fulfill his best potential in supporting San Angelo projects, he had to be an active citizen of the community and of the state.

During the Depression, he served as president of the West Texas Chamber of Commerce. He was a charter member of the Kiwanis Club and was honored for fifty years of membership. At one time, he served as president of that club. He was president of the Boy Scout Council, chairman of the Community Chest campaign, and president of the Board of City Development (8).

He was active in state affairs, serving on the commission that planned the 1936 Texas statehood Centennial Exposition, as vice president of the Philosophical Society of Texas in 1962, as director of the Texas Industrial Commission, as a Texas Tech College regent from 1926 until 1933, as a member in 1957 of a statewide committee to appraise the University of Texas and chart a course for its future, and of the board of directors for The Associated Press from 1935 to 1943 (8).

For all of his local and state activities, Harte was honored many times. In 1931, his alma mater, the University of Missouri journalism school, awarded him a medal of merit for distinguished service to journalism. He was awarded two honorary doctor's degrees. The first came in 1950 from Austin
College in Sherman, and the second in 1958 from Texas Tech University. He was elected honorary member of the Sons of the Republic of Texas. In 1957, he took the Headliners Club award as Texas' outstanding publisher. That same year, the San Angelo Board of City Development named him San Angelo Citizen of the Year. In 1969, the oil industry put Harte's name in its Petroleum Hall of Fame at Midland for his sponsorship of objective oil news reporting from the early days of West Texas oil activity (8). On his seventieth birthday, the Texas House unanimously adopted a resolution wishing him a happy birthday and praising him as "an outstanding editor, publisher, businessman, Christian and civic leader" (18). In 1971, Harte marked fifty years of San Angelo Standard-Times ownership by learning that the city's new east-west freeway would be named the Houston Harte Expressway in his honor (13).

Harte's contributions to Angelo State did not go without notice. In October 1971, Angelo State's governing board voted to name the university's new student center the Houston Harte University Center (2). The action departed from usual board policy that such naming be made for persons who are deceased. The board decided to deviate from policy "because of all that Mr. Harte has done for the university, for the community and for the State of Texas," said Board President William C. Donnell of Marathon (2). Harte died less than five months later.

Because of Harte's active involvement in the city and state, he met numerous people who were able to help him to help
individual San Angelenos, as well as the people of the community as a whole. For example, Harte was able to help Ralph Chase go to the medical school of his choice (5). Chase, subsequently, has been a pediatrician in San Angelo for twenty-four years.

As a young man, Chase wanted to go to medical school, but did not have the money. Chase had considered both Harte and George Morgan, San Angelo oilman, as surrogate fathers since his own father had died when he was very young. Morgan helped Chase arrange things so that Chase was accepted in medical school at the University of Texas in Galveston. Chase, however, wanted to go to Northwestern Medical School in Chicago but had been turned down (5). He mentioned to "Uncle Houston" that Northwestern was the place he really wanted to go, and Harte said, "Let's not give up on that" (5). Chase thought that was kind of him but concluded it was definite that he could not get in, since he had received a rejection letter.

Harte later told Chase that he knew somebody in Chicago who might be of some help. That somebody turned out to be Colonel Robert E. McCormick, owner of the Chicago Tribune. McCormick recently had given Northwestern a piece of land worth millions of dollars in the middle of downtown Chicago. McCormick had some obligations that he owed Harte, Chase said. "Harte could have chosen to use those obligations to help me or for something else that would further his own good, but he
chose to do it for somebody who was a little ole boy, who was just a plain fellow in San Angelo," said Chase (5).

Shortly, Chase received a telegram from the registrar at the medical school at Northwestern, stating that, indeed, Chase had been accepted (5).

Harte's contributions to San Angelo were numerous. He is best remembered for his work in retaining active status for Goodfellow Air Force Base and for his work for Angelo State University. These two projects probably had the greatest economic impact upon San Angelo as a whole, but Harte did much more for the community. Many of his contributions may never be known.
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CHAPTER IV

REASONS FOR POWER

There is no reason to exaggerate the role Houston Harte played in Texas journalism, in the growth of San Angelo, in the prosperity of West Texas, in the progress of the state. He was a titan, a mover and a shaker, the man on whom thousands relied to get things done, with confidence that was never misplaced. He touched the lives of virtually everyone in the state during his fifty years in Texas journalism; the legacy he leaves will long survive him.

San Angelans of course know their debts to Houston Harte -- although they'll never know all of them, because he preferred it that way. Suffice it to say San Angelo could never have become the city it is today without Houston Harte's enthusiastic and incredibly successful effort. If a city can be any man's monument, this one was his (3).

This editorial, written by editorial editor Jerry Norman, appeared in the San Angelo newspaper upon Harte's death. These two paragraphs accurately reflect Harte's role in San Angelo. The question is why. Why did thousands rely on him to get things done "with confidence that was never misplaced"? Why was he so powerful?

Many termed Harte a "favor broker." The fact that he was able to get Ralph Chase into Northwestern Medical School because Colonel Robert McCormick owed him a favor is an example. In fact, Harte would not have even heard about the San Angelo newspaper's being for sale in the first place if he had not been a favor broker. The salesman who told Harte about San
Angelo had traveled to Boonville, Missouri, to thank Harte for a favor Harte had done for him (9).

"He was not averse at all to calling up the fact that if he wanted something, he would say, 'Now you remember when I did so and so,' or it was implicit in what his request was," explained Ralph Chase (1).

Weldon Jones, San Angelo National Bank president, said:

At the right time, he expected people to return the favor. In other words, if he helped someone by having a lot of newspapers endorse and have people out to work for a certain candidate, whether he's a senator or a representative on the state or national level, or even for the president, and spends a lot of time and effort, he's in a pretty good position to say, 'Look, we hope that you can see our point in building a new dam here that we need badly,' but he always had good reasons to present to this person as to why it would be good for this area (6).

Were his favors through his newspapers? Did he support certain candidates? In theory, the Harte-Hanks Newspapers was editorially independent while Harte was alive, and although Harte was not known for sending down mandates to his publishers to include a certain number of column inches supporting a certain candidate, the publishers seemed to know what to do to make their boss happy.

"It was not unusual for father to let everybody know where he stood on these issues, what kind of help he would like to have," said his son, Houston, who, although he carries the same name, was never referred to as "Junior." "The publishers were very perceptive and moved without, I suppose, compromising themselves too much" (2).
The younger Harte explained that in those days, there was hardly any deviation:

Everybody was Establishment. Everybody was for the Chamber of Commerce, or there wasn't that much difference, you know, that there was any problem. Now with individual congressmen and legislators, there might be, and father never worried about that. He just went ahead and made his deal with them, and it was implied and understood, I'm sure, by the politicians that folks at home would be nice to them, and we were supposed to be. We were much smaller and a more manageable group in those days, and everybody had a more unanimity of feeling among the publishers. They were all long time publishers. They had all grown up together. They all thought pretty much alike (2).

Weldon Jones said Harte made sure his candidates were supported:

He knew how to use the power of the press. He hopefully influenced votes for these people or for their legislation they were sponsoring. He was very adroit in his abilities to pick winners and to back them. They knew it. He controlled a lot of newspapers out here, and while they say, of course, that each paper has its own editors and people who are going to call it the way they see it, I think normally the head stockholder, his philosophies have to be observed. Generally speaking, I would think that they were pretty well informed on his philosophies on these things (6).

Robert Marbut, president of the Harte-Hanks corporation since 1972, said, "We're trying very hard to emphasize the local newspapers as really independent as far as editorial philosophies are concerned," implying that this policy is a deviation from the way the chain had operated. "I think a lot of politicians felt that when Houston Harte was around, they could go talk to him, and they could get his support" (7).

To some people, the size of Harte's chain alone was reason enough to listen to him. He had thirteen newspapers in Texas,
with a combined circulation greater than that of any single newspaper in Texas. Bill Martin, *San Angelo Standard-Times* editor, said:

These thirteen papers were spread out geographically, which meant you had a lot of congressmen from the state of Texas who were interested in keeping a lot of newspaper publishers happy, most of whom answered to Houston Harte. Our circulation area, for example, is so large, it goes to fifty-two counties, and they're large, for one certain reason, and that was a political power bust. We don't make any money on a lot of papers we sell out there. We go an awful long way. We go 410 miles to Van Horn every morning. We have the largest circulation area in Texas. It's twice the size of Ohio. It's larger than the New England States, but it provides a very large political bust (8).

Marbut, however, seemed to think that Harte's influence did not stand alone on the fact that he merely owned the chain. Marbut said that much of Harte's power came from his active interest in politics and from Harte's unique personality.

He was more interested in the product and in politics and in the community kind of thing than other people who were in similar positions. I think that's what gave him his perceived power to some degree because if you look at the size of the company, it wasn't that big at that point in time. I mean we're three and a half times that big today than we were six years ago, in terms of revenue, and we're a lot less powerful than we were then, and the difference is that man (7).

Another factor that contributed to Harte's power was that he was a close friend of Lyndon Baines Johnson. The two became friends in 1932 when Harte went to Washington for some cause for San Angelo. Bob Jackson, later editor of the Corpus Christi *Caller Times* and managing editor of the *San Angelo Standard-Times*, was living in Washington with Johnson when
he was a congressional lawyer. Harte spent the night with them, and there began the Harte-Johnson friendship (8).

Apparently, the friendship was genuine, although it is possible that the friendship did involve some favor swapping. Bill Martin said that Harte probably did as much as anybody to get Johnson elected the first time and succeeding times (8). Walter Jenkins, former Johnson aide, recalled that when Johnson needed to get to know some of the people in the San Angelo area, Harte would arrange the meetings (4).

Lady Bird Johnson, the president's wife, said that indeed the friendship was genuine. Although she did not think that Harte and Johnson were favor swappers, she did term the duo as "comrades in arms" (5).

Harte even had Johnson's private telephone number at the White House. During the Johnson presidential years, it was not uncommon for the switchboard operator at the San Angelo paper to get calls from the White House for the publisher (10). Whenever the Johnsons would visit San Angelo, they would visit the Hartes (4). Jenkins said that Harte was very close to the Johnsons and saw them often, going to Washington often and to the Texas ranch periodically (4).

Harte's close friendship with Johnson was what saved Goodfellow Air Force Base. Robert Marbut said, "He [Johnson] certainly would have liked the support, but by that time, Lyndon was his own man, and he didn't need every little newspaper in Texas to support him. He had a national constituency,
and I think it was more their own personal relationship than it was anything" (7).

Harte's son, Houston, recalled that when President John Kennedy was assassinated and Lyndon Johnson was to be sworn in as president, his parents were in Boston:

Mother was in the hospital. The president [Johnson] called father and asked him to come down, either the day or the day after he became president, and if you'll look in Lady Bird's book of the family gallery as Johnson made that first speech after he took the presidency, there's father sitting right in the middle of them (2).

In addition to his friendship with Johnson, Harte was friendly with President Dwight Eisenhower. State Representative O. C. Fisher said that Harte met with General Eisenhower in Paris when Eisenhower was being urged to run for president. "This grass roots support from Texas, his native state, encouraged and reassured Ike and helped him decide to run" (10). Fisher added that without Harte's influence, Eisenhower would not have paid a visit to San Angelo in 1957 when West Texas was drought-stricken (10).

Presidents were not the only people with whom Harte involved himself. He viewed people as very important in his life and became acquainted with as many as he could. Ralph Chase likened him to an intelligence-gathering unit for a nation:

I would say that the basis of his material success stemmed from the intelligence he learned from other people. While he was telling you something, he was always getting more out of you than you got from him. It would be like the CIA has all this information which
comes into their computers, and they sift out that which is important. That's what he did. He was actually a computer that took in facts from everywhere and sifted those particular facts out and used them (1).

Chase said that Harte used to tell him:

There's going to be people that one meets as he goes through life that are worth seeing again or doing something with, but frequently those people don't even know who you are. One of the rules I have had in my life, first of all, I always answer a letter. Every letter that comes to me, I answer, and if I ever meet anyone that is an interesting person, casually, I follow that meeting up with a letter to that person (1).

His son, Houston, agreed:

There's so many people who were in so many different areas that he never failed to see the potential importance of anybody, particularly in the Air Force. He had friends that he made all around the world. He had a mind that just never quit working. He always had a typewriter with him, always writing stories, always finding a West Texas angle to those stories and always making contacts that later on helped him help San Angelo in some way. He never met a stranger (2).

Besides a genuine interest in other people, Harte had other characteristics that helped him achieve power. Chase said that Harte was a person who, although very talented, knew that the way to success was not through talent, it was through labor, it was through absolute dedication to work. "And the man, I don't think, had any concept of the number of hours he spent working. That was his life. That was something he enjoyed" (1).

"He was smart, and he worked hard," said his son. "Work was a recreation to him. After he quit playing golf when he was a relatively young man, he must have been in his forties, he quit all forms of recreation, and that suited
him fine. Business was his recreation. Making deals was his recreation" (2).

Harte's son stressed his father's intelligence. "In those days, he could stand on his feet and think faster in mathematical terms than anybody I've ever seen, and it gave him a decided edge in any kind of a business deal that they might have had because he was thinking so far ahead than most people can think" (2). The younger Harte said that this ability helped Harte in getting General Telephone Company of the Southwest to establish its headquarters in San Angelo (2).

Harte had many sources of power which contributed to his success. He was a favor broker. He had an active interest in politics and became friends with many important politicians, including Lyndon Baines Johnson. He had a unique personality and was able to make friends easily with people all over the world. He was highly intelligent and a hard worker.
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CHAPTER V

SAN ANGELO'S REACTION TO HOUSTON HARTE

Houston Harte loved San Angelo and loved the people of San Angelo, but how did they feel about him?

Without taking a survey of the community of San Angelo during Harte's "reign," it is impossible to gauge accurately the feeling the general public had toward Harte. Of the people interviewed, each one cited uncompromising love and devotion to the man. Although a few conceded that Harte probably had some enemies, no one could give the name of a single person who didn't share his undaunted love for the man.

His son, Houston, admitted that there probably were enemies. "I'm sure there were," he said, "but my mind just doesn't work that way. I don't remember things like that. He's bound to have tread on some toes through his life" (3).

Walter Jenkins, White House aide to President Lyndon Johnson, said, "I seriously cannot think of anyone, and I think that even if I thought for a day, I wouldn't think of anyone. He must have had enemies. Everyone does. I just don't know who they were" (6).

Others remembered a little more clearly. Robert Marbut, president of Harte-Hanks Newspapers, said, "A lot of people
hated him. A lot of people feared him. I think they thought he was a tough, driving person who, if he had a goal, he'd go after it" (8).

His widow did not hesitate to admit that her husband had enemies, stating that he frequently received threatening, anonymous telephone calls (4).

Ralph Chase, San Angelo pediatrician, said:

I've heard in casual gossip that some people have said that he's taken advantage of some people in order to get where he was, and I don't doubt it because if one is going to get in the marketplace and if he's going to get ahead, if he's going to make money, a person has to do that (1).

Weldon Jones, president of the San Angelo National Bank, said, "People resent wealth and power. He had both and as a result, probably some people were jealous. That's true, I think, of any successful man" (7). He admitted having heard "a lot of people cuss him," but, when asked for specific names, he said he couldn't think of any, and "if I could, I wouldn't tell you." He said he thought the number of friends was a lot greater than the number of enemies (7).

Bill Martin, San Angelo Standard-Times editor, said, "There was a lot of antagonism toward him in San Angelo." He explained that one of the stories that still crops up relating to Harte is that he always kept San Angelo small because if it ever reached 70,000 population, he would lose his franchise and another newspaper could move into San Angelo. Martin said:
This is utterly ridiculous. He was all for the growth of San Angelo. The more people that were here, the more stores that were here, the more advertising he got, the better newspaper he could put out. There's only one way you can put out a good newspaper and that is to be financially independent. The more financially independent you are, the better newspaper you can have. He realized that, but a lot of people felt like he was opposed to the town growing for this reason: because he had a monopoly, not realizing that you just don't have two newspapers in towns this small. You just look at the number of metropolitan areas which have one newspaper. It's just not economically feasible (9).

If for some reason Harte did not want San Angelo to grow, he certainly had his close friends and family fooled. Weldon Jones said:

He had an ambition to see a very important trade center here, a city that would be a cultural center, that would have strong financial institutions, that would have fine colleges, fine hospitals, good strong economy, a very fine place to live, parks and auditoriums and all. He was a dreamer to the extent that he could see that we should have those things or could have with the proper drive, proper urgings (7).

Harte's son, Houston, said:

I think he wanted to see San Angelo grow and become a big metropolis city. Certainly bringing General Tel and doing the college and getting them the dam, doing that sort of thing wasn't anything to stunt the growth from any of those angles, and it stood to reason he was going to sell more newspapers the more it grew. He was going to sell more advertising (3).

Harte himself predicted that, by the time the Standard-Times celebrated its one-hundredth anniversary in 1984, San Angelo would be a city of not less than 125,000 (11). In 1978, the population approximately is 75,000.

One thing Harte did not want to grow too much was his newspaper chain. At least he did not want the chain to go
public. "No, he was not pleased about it," said the younger Houston (3).

Bill Martin explained, "I think this was something he personally created, and he didn't like to dilute the ownership of something he created. I don't think he was interested in building an empire like the [James] Bennetts. I think he was pretty well satisfied with what he had" (9).

"I think if the truth were known, he never really accepted that this company should go public," said Robert Marbut. "I'm not sure he accepted or maybe even understood the necessity at that point to do that, and I think he just wanted a little more status quo" (8).

Harte may not have understood the necessity of going public, but once the decision was made, Harte did understand the importance of the stock market. Harte was in the hospital the day the chain went public, his son, Houston, said. The value of the stock went up that day. Houston called his father at the hospital, and when he asked for his father's room, the operator hesitated. Houston explained:

Finally, I said, 'This is family.' That's usually the next thing you tell them. They'll let family through when they won't let anybody else through. Finally the operator said, 'Well, I'm sorry, sir, but we're keeping that line open for Mr. Harte's broker.' I wasn't telling him anything (3).

The younger Harte said he found out that Marion Scott in San Angelo was calling his father every five minutes to let him know how the stock was doing. Less than a week later,
Harte died, "but he certainly was on top of things that day," said his son (3). Harte may not have wanted the chain to go public, but he was the force that set the wheels in motion. He had business know-how, and his journalistic ability cannot be overlooked.

Harte's approach to reporting was different from what the people in San Angelo knew under previous owners of the newspaper. Harte believed in reporting local political news, crime news, court cases and divorces, stories that had not been reported much prior to Harte's arrival in 1920, and his innovations were not widely accepted. Three incidents of violence toward Harte in his early years in San Angelo have been related numerous times in newspaper accounts and banquet speeches.

The first incident involved a fight with the Tom Green County Sheriff, Frank Duckworth. An acquaintance of Harte's, J. D. Lammey, who was a partner in the first Piggly Wiggly grocery store in San Angelo, got into a disagreement with a Texas Ranger at the fairgrounds. The ranger and Sheriff Duckworth arrested Lammey, who immediately was released on bail. Harte visited the sheriff's office in San Angelo for additional facts for a newspaper account of the incident. Harte recalled:

I was defending Lammey without knowing too much about the incident. He [Duckworth] made a pass at me.
We got to fighting. We left the office, and we were fighting as we went. He had a big gun, but I didn't think anybody would get shot about it. Oscar Appelt, a ranchman friend, came by, reached out and pulled me on the running board of his car. He offered me his six-shooter, but I declined. Later I met my wife downtown and whispered to her I had just been in a fight. She replied that anyone could see that I had been beaten up (10).

The violence did not threaten Harte. He ran the story about Lammey and the Texas Ranger.

The second encounter involved Bert De Montmollin, a teller at San Angelo National Bank, who threatened to beat up Harte if a story about his divorce appeared in the newspaper. Harte instructed a reporter to contact the teller and inform him the story would run, but no large display would be made. When the story appeared, De Montmollin stormed into the newspaper office and began swinging at Harte. Ben Roster, an employee of the newspaper, grabbed De Montmollin and pulled him off Harte. De Montmollin immediately left. A bank official called Harte to say the teller would be fired. Harte replied that such an action most likely would ruin the new publisher and pleaded that De Montmollin be retained, which he was. The next morning, the teller went to Harte's office and apologized (10).

Another incident involved a story Harte wrote reviewing the life of a notorious criminal. The story triggered anger in a relative of the man. The relative visited Harte, fully intending to shoot him. C. C. McBurnett, a hotel owner,
calmed the relative, and bloodshed was averted. Harte frequently said that newspapering was "no business for the chicken-hearted" (5).

Citizens of San Angelo finally got used to Harte's style of journalism. At least the physical violence against him subsided.

Harte's son explained that Harte's style of reporting was very objective for his time, saying:

He believed that a newspaper should lead, that it should report everything in its area of coverage without fear or favor, that it should relate all events to its own readers, that a newspaper must be truthful and fair and merit the public's support. Houston Harte insisted his newspaper be used as an instrument for the public good, for the advancement of the community and for protection of the people's right to know. He never allowed it to become a vehicle for self-aggrandizement (3).

Weldon Jones said:

He was a very excellent newshound. He could smell the story so much better than most people and knew the important ones and how to play them up, and he could make a full front page story out of something that was newsworthy that another person would say, 'I don't understand it exactly,' and put it in a corner (7).

Harte wanted all the news, and he didn't care whom it hurt, said Bill Martin. The San Angelo editor explained:

Mr. Harte's philosophy, generally, was if it's news, you print it, and if you think somebody's not doing a good job, then you go try to prove they're not doing a good job. Of all, he like investigative reporting the best. We got after the city a lot. We got after the county a lot. There were no sacred cows, neither then as there are none now (9).

As any human being, Harte had both friends and enemies; however, no enemies still living could be found. His friends
loved the man dearly and seemed to think that revealing enemy names would be betraying Harte. Considering his powerful position, his straightforward philosophy of reporting and his political activism, however, it virtually is impossible for the man to have been liked by everyone. Many of the people who had different views from Harte's, however, were his peers in age and are no longer living. Harte's reign ended six years ago when he died, and most of the people who remember him, remember him fondly.
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CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

When Houston Harte started his business career, he had only $2,000. This money he acquired when his stepmother died. She had left him a building which he sold for cash. The $2,000 set Harte on the road to the newspaper career which he expanded from one afternoon daily of 2,300 circulation to a chain of nineteen newspapers in six states with a total circulation of more than 600,000, and one television station.

For fifty years, Harte was the pivot around which much of San Angelo's civic activity revolved. He never was afraid to ask for favors for his hometown. He had pipelines to congressmen, senators, and even to the United States president and usually was able to talk with whomever he wished.

Because of Houston Harte, San Angeloans now enjoy many benefits that they probably would not have had Harte not chosen San Angelo for his hometown. Because of Harte's strong will and determination, Goodfellow Air Force Base continues to be an active base. For the fiscal year of October 1, 1976, to September 30, 1977, Goodfellow had an estimated $115,000,000 economic impact on San Angelo (3). If Harte had not been around, the base would have closed
many years ago. Without Harte's tremendous influence in the Texas legislature, Angelo State University probably still would be a junior college. The university now has more than 4,000 students enrolled each semester. Without Harte, San Angelo probably would not house the headquarters for General Telephone Company of the Southwest, which has a tremendous economic impact upon the West Texas community.

Goodfellow, Angelo State, and General Telephone are the three most outstanding projects for which San Angeloans remember Harte. For Goodfellow and Angelo State, Harte demonstrated his power and influence most blatantly, using every mode of power available.

Harte made other contributions to San Angelo and its residents; however, many of the contributions never will be known by most people, since that was the manner in which Harte operated. He helped many individuals of the community, especially young people who wished to go to college but did not have the money. He had money and power, and he used both not only to benefit himself but also others in the community.

Conclusions

Houston Harte had an aura about him. He had charisma, an unexplainable quality that attracted people. He was able to use this quality to his advantage.

Harte was not very tall, had a medium build, and wore thick glasses. For most of the years he lived in San Angelo,
he had silvery hair. He had a habit of impeccable cleanliness. Hugh Morgan, in his master's thesis, said, "His monogrammed shirt, with cuff links, appeared as clean in the afternoon as it did in the morning. His suits were well-tailored and well-pressed. His shoes were always shined" (9).

People who knew Harte realized his importance and showed him due respect. "I've known very few people who called him 'Houston,'" said Robert Marbut, president of the Harte-Hanks chain, noting that most people called him Mr. Harte. "It was always with great respect," said Marbut (7). Those who did not call him Mr. Harte, including his sons and his long-time secretary, called him "father" with a reverent tone.

Harte's power was not generated only from his charisma; he possessed multiple sources of power. Halbert Gulley states there are two general kinds of power, springing from different sources: (a) positional power, which comes from the individual's position within a set of hierarchies, and (b) earned power, which comes from the individual's behavior in the past when he earned a reputation for having certain abilities (4, p. 281).

Harte had both positional and earned power. From the day he bought the San Angelo newspaper in 1920, he had positional power in the West Texas community. With each honor and award and with each newspaper he acquired, his positional power increased. The researcher of the Harte study concluded that on a scale from one to ten, with ten
being the highest, Harte's positional power rated a definite ten for most of the fifty-two years he lived in San Angelo.

Harte had earned power. He was intelligent and a hard worker. He had many causes, and when he set out to work for something, he experienced a high success rate. Throughout the years, his successes were many, building one upon the other. The people of San Angelo knew they could turn to him to support their civic endeavors.

John R. P. French and Bertram Raven describe five sources of power (2, p. 612). Harte had the potential of having all five and even more. The five sources, as defined by French and Raven, are: (a) reward power, based on a member's perception that others have the ability to mediate rewards for him, (b) coercive power, based on the member's perception that others have the ability to mediate punishment for him, (c) legitimate power, based on the perception by the member that others have a legitimate right to prescribe behavior for him, (d) referent power, based on the member's identification with others, and (e) expert power, based on the perception that the other has some special knowledge or expertness.

French and Raven point out that it is difficult sometimes to tell the difference between reward power and coercive power. Is the withholding of a reward really equivalent to a punishment? Is the withdrawal of a punishment equivalent to a reward? In Harte's position, he certainly had the
ability to pull the strings and use either power. He could reward people, such as politicians, with favorable stories and publicity. On the other hand, he could withhold information or support from the public through his newspapers. How often he used these options is hard to guess.

Harte supported the people in whom he believed or the people who believed in him and his ideas; he did not appear to be the type to be swayed by people demonstrating principles contrary to his beliefs. He did, however, make deals with those people who shared his same general philosophies. In return, he expected them to support him in his efforts. In other words, he was a favor broker. He gave numerous rewards or favors to others but hoped for favors in return. "He liked to do favors for others so he could ask for favors," explained his widow (6).

Being a favor broker probably was Harte's key source of power. Describing him in such a manner, however, speaks only in the positive. It implies that he used only reward power: that he did favors for others, and they did favors for him; but what happened when Harte or the other person refused to oblige? Whether he used coercive power probably will never be known except by the individuals involved. Harte spent many hours "behind closed doors," said Bill Martin, San Angelo Standard-Times editor (8). If he did use coercive power, no one talked about it.
From Harte's actions when not behind closed doors, one might conclude that his general operating procedure was not to use coercive power. Harte was a deeply religious man. He read the Bible daily at home, said his widow (6). He was in church every Sunday and donated generously to his church. One of the donations was his own home. When his sons, as boys, claimed that reading the Bible was not interesting, Harte, a Presbyterian, edited sections and came up with *In Our Image*, a book that won him a Christopher Award from the Catholic Church in 1950 (5). One might think that since Harte was so deeply religious, his Christianity might influence him not to use coercive power; but making deals was his life, and making deals sometimes involves more than simply doing favors. Sometimes it involves withholding favors.

Gulley explains that influence attempts, such as coercive power, may be either direct or indirect (4, p. 281). Harte's influence, at least as far as the general public knows, was indirect. It was an understood power.

His co-workers said Harte did not dictate to his publishers what they printed or whom they should support. Marbut explained, "His philosophy was to go around and find a newspaper, try to find a man to run it, give the man a little bit of the action, of the stock, and because of transportation and communication in those days, there was very little direct control over the paper" (7).
On the other hand, Harte was an excellent judge of character. He controlled his newspapers' editorial policies, and, therefore, indirectly, could have used coercive power, by taking preventative measures. He carefully hand-picked publishers who held the same political feelings as his; therefore, he did have control over what political stands were taken in the Harte-Hanks Newspapers, even though, in theory, each newspaper was editorially independent. He was confident enough in his choices of publishers that he never even bothered to write down policies the newspapers were to follow.

From what his friends and co-workers say, if Harte did use coercive power, however, the pressure was not for personal gain, directly, but for the benefit of San Angelo. He possibly used coercive power in getting Angelo State University for San Angelo and in keeping Goodfellow Air Force Base as an active base. Harte's family and friends did comment that in those two instances, he called in all his favors and pulled all stops for the two things he strongly wanted for San Angelo. The San Angelo benefits he worked for, however, were indirectly for personal gain, since he knew that if the community throve economically, his newspaper would thrive.

Two unusual incidents should be noted. The circumstances of the incidents could lead one to speculate, if the person has a vivid imagination, that possibly Harte did exert his
power, such as coercive power, in dealings unknown to the general public.

The first event with questionable circumstances was the death of his granddaughter. Caroline, 14, daughter of Houston H. Harte, was stabbed in the heart before dawn July 24, 1969. She was vacationing in the Port Aransas, Texas, summer cottage of friends, the G. Cameron Duncan family of San Antonio. Caroline had been spending the night in a downstairs bedroom of the cottage with the Duncans' daughter, May, also 14. Caroline was in the bed on the far side from the door when the murderer went directly for her. May remained asleep and unharmed while the murder took place. Nothing was in disarray in the cottage. There was no evidence of molestation (10). The murderer has never been caught.

No public statement was ever made as to the motive for the murder. Sergeant John Wood of the Texas Rangers, who has been assigned to the case since its outset, said they still are working on the case. For a while, the authorities ran out of leads, but they received a new lead in February, 1978. Wood is confident that the case eventually will be solved (11). Speculation continues, in the meantime, concerning the strange circumstances surrounding the incident.

Another occurrence with unusual circumstances was a robbery of Harte's long-time secretary's home. When Houston Harte died, he left many of his personal belongings, including his personal business papers and memoirs, to Jacque Foreman.
A few years ago, her house was broken into and many of the papers and memoirs were taken. Even though the former secretary has many valuable personal belongings, nothing was touched except for the Harte papers (1).

These two incidents may very well have had nothing to do with Houston Harte, but the unusual circumstances of the cases could lead one to speculate about the unknown political dealings of Harte's. Was his granddaughter's death a threat to Harte by a political candidate or political enemy? What was in those memoirs and personal papers that someone did not want in the wrong hands?

Harte had other sources of power involving less danger. He had legitimate power, which basically is the same as Gulley's positional power. Harte was a pillar of the community. He had a high, important position, and he had money. Some people probably listened to him because of the position he held, if for no other reason.

Harte had referent power that existed through his numerous political friends. His associations included politicians at the city, state, and even national levels. His close friendship with President Lyndon Baines Johnson was most likely his greatest source of referent power.

He had expert power, which is similar to Gulley's earned power. He was intelligent, which the public and his business associates realized. As his son, Houston, said of him, he
could figure in his head faster than most people, which gave him a decided edge.

Harte had other sources of power, including his personality, combined with his strong interest in politics. Many newspaper owners never get as politically involved as Harte was, but that "was his bag," explained Robert Marbut (7). Marbut said that the Harte-Hanks newspaper chain, although much larger than it was during Harte's reign, is not nearly as politically powerful.

"We have one newspaper now that has more revenue than the whole company did in 1960. As far as circulation goes, there wasn't that much circulation so you have to attribute a lot of it [political power] to his own personality," said Marbut (7).

Harte made sure people he met would remember him, and he was in a position to meet many important people. Not only would he make a lasting first impression, but he would follow up that meeting with a letter to ensure that the person would not forget him. Then he would go to work doing favors for that person. Through such a process, he was able to expand his power base. Harte was a highly organized and an amazingly hard worker, two qualities that contributed to his power. Work was his recreation. "He never had any unnecessary motions. Everything he did had a purpose," said his widow, Isabel (6). Considering the long hours he worked and
considering that everything he did had a purpose, he was able to accomplish many things.

His general outlook on newspapering further played a role in his power. His newspapers were successful because his philosophy was to become an integral part of the community instead of merely draining off the advertising revenue.

In one of his first editorials in the San Angelo Standard-Times, shortly after he purchased it in 1920, he wrote:

Newspaper plants may be bought and sold, but the newspaper itself is never private property. The newspaper as such is nothing more than a reflection of the community which it serves. The better the newspaper, the better the reflection.

A newspaper may so reflect the good there is in a city that it will lead its community to its higher accomplishments.

It is the purpose of the new Standard management to endeavor to represent the best interests of San Angelo and West Texas.

It will continue as an independent Democratic newspaper (9, p. 46).

Harte did strive to represent the best interests of San Angelo and West Texas. The West Texas economy is based on oil and agriculture; therefore, Harte employed two full-time staff members to cover oil and two to cover agriculture. High school football is the leading spectator sport in West Texas. During the football season, Harte saw to it that the newspaper carried accounts of about sixty area high school games. The newspaper's weather reporting is one of the most comprehensive in the state. Rain is an exciting occurrence to the often drought-stricken West Texas. During
a widespread storm, the San Angelo paper carries a banner story about the rain and a table listing the precipitation measurements of the larger towns in the area (9, p. 142).

Many aspects of Harte's life remain without hard-core answers. Did he use coercive power? Were his favors through his newspaper? How exactly did he make deals? Maybe this mysterious side to Harte was a part of his power. He knew how to go about making deals so that no traces of the unpleasant details were left behind. Perhaps a stipulation of the deals he made was that no one talked. In any event, no one did talk, except to praise the West Texas publisher.

Harte did have power that San Angelo citizens and Texas politicians feared and respected. That power was derived from a combination of factors. His newspaper empire contributed to that power, but the man was not born with nineteen newspapers. When Harte moved to Texas in 1920, he only had about $20,000. Just a few years before that, he only had $2,000, but he was intelligent, he liked people, and he knew how to make people, important people, remember him. He used these qualities in building his chain. As his chain grew, so did his power. The situation was a circle. His personality contributed to his power, which contributed to his chain, which contributed to his power. Take away any factor, and Harte would not have been the driving force he was. Take away any factor, and the man would not have been Houston Harte.
Recommendations for Further Study

Through examination of Houston Harte's sources of power and his influence in San Angelo, possibilities for further study arise. Harte had power, not only within San Angelo, but also throughout the entire state. A study could be conducted of his statewide influence. How far did Harte's power reach into the legislative process? What other legislation, besides San Angelo legislation, did he influence?

A study could be conducted on whether Harte's influence carried over to his sons. Would it be possible to repeat Harte's political influence through a newspaper chain? Does Harte's form of personal and political journalism exist today or was Harte only one of a dying breed?
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