AN EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF
THE WICHITA FALLS TIMES IN THE
DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS OF
WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS,
FROM 1907 TO 1976

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
May, 1979
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of the Literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of Thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE TECHNOLOGICAL AND OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE WICHITA FALLS TIMES FROM 1907 TO 1976</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE ECONOMIC AND CIVIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE WICHITA FALLS TIMES TO WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ED HOWARD FROM 1907 TO 1947</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE ECONOMIC AND CIVIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE WICHITA FALLS TIMES TO WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF RHEA HOWARD FROM 1948 TO 1976</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Further Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The functions of the news media in American society and the role of the community press have been the subject of interest through the years in various fields of the social sciences. Researchers have found that the community press often functions as a cohesive, stabilizing force in the community, a force that strives for consensus. At other times, the community press operates as an instrument of social change. Researchers have described the community press as a vehicle for establishing a community identity, as a recorder of events, and as a community spokesman. Because of its diverse roles, the community press touches many facets of community activity, playing a major role in influencing community citizens and decision-makers, and contributing to community development and progress.

Many social scientists have analyzed the functions of the press. Wilbur Schramm outlined four functions of the press; the gossip function, in which the press substitutes for person-to-person communication; consensus function, in which the press airs alternatives that help decision-makers achieve consensus; teaching function, in which the press
helps transmit the culture from one generation to the next; and economic function, in which the press helps sell goods and services.¹

Serving as society's "watchdog" is another historically recognized function of the press. Harold Lasswell wrote that the news media conduct surveillance of the environment.² J. K. Hvistendahl wrote that the press' function is to provide news and information to the citizenry about their political institutions.³

Morris Janowitz concluded that the press has the dual, almost conflicting, roles of operating as society's stabilizer and mobilizing the community into social action.⁴ Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton explained that the media helps to maintain the status quo in society by publicizing deviations from the norm.⁵ Although the press has been criticized


³ J. K. Hvistendahl, "Publisher's Power: Functional or Dysfunctional?" Journalism Quarterly, XLVII (Autumn, 1970), 472-476.


frequently for embroiling communities in conflict, it is recognized that conflict is essential for change.\textsuperscript{6}

Other statements have been made concerning the "power of the press." Thomas Elliott Berry wrote,

> Although the mass culture emerges from a host of unperceived sources, it draws heavily on the body of thought, concepts, ideas, entertainment and data disseminated by the [news] media. The mass culture, therefore, thrives in great part on a cultural fare prepared and served by the [news] media.\textsuperscript{7}

John C. Merrill wrote,

> The press wields tremendous power today as a purveyor of vital information. It has the potential to help erase erroneous impressions and stereotypes and to ease tension; it also can create fears and needlessly perpetuate anxieties. It can shake people from complacency, or it can lull them into an unthinking and dangerous sleep.\textsuperscript{8}

The press has, at times, served special functions for special groups in society. In his study of the immigrant press, Robert E. Park found that the press served to unite those in the immigrant group. The immigrant press, he wrote, functioned as a counselor, because it aided the new Americans in their adjustments and problems. It interpreted American institutions for them and provided them with a means of

\textsuperscript{6}Lewis Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict (New York, 1956).

\textsuperscript{7}Thomas Elliott Berry, Journalism in America (New York, 1976), p. 3.

\textsuperscript{8}John C. Merrill, Carter Bryan and Marvin Alisky, The Foreign Press (Baton Rouge, 1973), p. 3.
self-expression that may have been denied them by dominant society. The immigrant press also provided news of the United States and the mother country.\footnote{Robert E. Park, The Immigrant Press and Its Control (New Jersey, 1922), p. xvii.}

W. Phillips Davison wrote that communication (through the community press or some other form) can lead to change by three methods; the community press can report on actual change in the environment or a previously unknown fact about the environment, it can point out an existing feature of the environment and remind a person that his needs would be better served through change, and it can bring to a person's attention a new way of patterning his behavior toward the environment.\footnote{W. Phillips Davison, "On the Effects of Communication," People, Society and Mass Communications, edited by Lewis Dexter and David White (New York, 1964), pp. 69-88.}

Thus, the community press, through editorials, extensive news coverage of an event, and dominant news play, can influence decisions made on community management and development. The press can influence decision-makers and citizens in the community, for example, to pave city streets, construct a new high school, purchase a franchise for cable television, organize a recruiting effort to bring new industry to the area, and modify property tax assessment procedures.

John Cameron Sim concluded that the community newspaper, through its information-dispensing function in which it airs
both sides of an issue and frequently offers opinions of its own, becomes involved with all components of community power--special interest associations, temporary and permanent organizations, recognized power institutions and influential individuals in the community. Although it cannot actually institute change, the news media can influence community leaders by providing them "ammunition" and information, wrote Schramm.

The press, in its various functions, can become involved in some of the stages of decision-making. Robert Agger, Daniel Goldrich, and Bert Swanson outlined six stages of decision-making: policy formulation, policy deliberation, organization of political support, authoritative consideration, promulgation of the decision outcome and policy effectuation. In its roles as community informant, teacher, counselor and watchdog, the press may become involved in policy deliberation, organization of political support, promulgation of the decision outcome and policy effectuation.

The press is particularly useful in helping a decision gain public acceptance. Nelson Polsby observed that, even

11 John Cameron Sim, "Community Newspaper Leadership: More Real than Apparent?" Journalism Quarterly, XLIV (Summer, 1967), 276-280.

12 Schramm, p. 56.

though decision-making may be concentrated in the hands of a few, communities are not ruled by an elite group. Decision-makers, after making a decision affecting the public, must find some way to make that decision palatable to the public.\textsuperscript{14}

The role of the press in community decision-making is enhanced if the newspaper publisher is a recognized decision-maker who is part of the community power structure. Several studies found that newspaper publishers are among the key influencers in the community. William V. D'Antonio, \textit{et al.}, in their study of eleven communities, discovered that newspaper editors or owners were among both the top and key influencers in four of the five southwestern United States cities they studied. They wrote,

\begin{quote}
In the study of issues it appeared that understanding the local decision-making process may not be possible without giving adequate attention to the strategic position of the newspaper editor. Evidence from our present study demonstrates that major issues have been successfully resolved or blocked by the position taken by the newspaper editor.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Floyd Hunter ranked the proportion of publishers second only to manufacturers in the top leadership list by occupation.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Nelson Polsby, \textit{Community Power and Political Theory} (New Haven, 1963), p. 135.
\item \textsuperscript{15} William V. D'Antonio and others, "Institutional and Occupational Representatives in Eleven Community Influence Systems," \textit{American Sociological Review}, XXVI (June, 1961), 440-446.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Floyd Hunter, \textit{Top Leadership} (Chapel Hill, 1959), p. 177.
\end{itemize}
Arthur Vidich and Joseph Bensman identified the newspaper publisher as being one of the four top members of the power structure.\(^\text{17}\) In a study of Oberlin, Ohio, D. A. Booth and C. R. Adrian found the publisher sixth among the power group.\(^\text{18}\) In a study conducted by George Belknap and Ralph Smuckler, the publisher was found to be among the top seventeen decision-makers of a midwestern city.\(^\text{19}\) Alex Edelstein and Blaine Schulz identified the most influential persons in a study of Grangeville, Washington as a manufacturer, medical doctor, mortician, school official and newspaper publisher.\(^\text{20}\)

Janowitz concluded that, because of the publisher's social and business roles, he exercises much influence in the solution of problems. He wrote that community press publishers, while pursuing economic enterprise goals with an "admixture of sentimentality," made a positive contribution to the community. The author linked the functions of the newspaper and its

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\(^{19}\) George Belknap and Ralph Smuckler, *Political Power Relations in a Midwest City," Public Opinion Quarterly*, XX (Spring, 1964), 73-80.

\(^{20}\) Alex Edelstein and Blaine Schulz, "The Weekly Newspaper's Leadership Role as Seen by Community Leaders," *Journalism Quarterly*, XL (Fall, 1963), 565-575.
publisher, saying, "without tracing the patterns of personal communication surrounding the community publisher in his various social roles, it is impossible to judge the full range of the newspaper's functions."  

To summarize, the newspaper publisher may be a key decision-maker in the community because of his economic power as a businessman and because he is personally active in appointive and elective positions that provide him with opportunities to make and influence important decisions. He may be accepted or invited into the elite group of decision-makers, moreover, because he owns the newspaper, a recognized tool of influence in the community.

One would expect a newspaper to attempt to influence community decisions when the publisher casts himself as community leader with a duty to help solve the city's problems. One such publisher is Rhea Howard, publisher of the Wichita Falls Times in Wichita Falls, Texas. In his position as publisher of the Wichita Falls Times, Howard has been an active participant in community activities and decision-making. He once said,

I don't see how any man who runs a newspaper can dig a hole and crawl in, leaving the battleground of civic life. He must be a part of his city. He must take sides in issues. He must help solve the problems.  

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21 Janowitz, p. 158.

One of the stated policies of the Wichita Falls Times is that the content of the newspaper would be devoted to city and regional progress.

The Wichita Falls Times, one of the oldest institutions in Wichita Falls, began publishing as a daily afternoon newspaper in 1907 when Wichita Falls was a community of about five thousand. In the late 1970's, the Wichita Falls Times and the Wichita Falls Record News, which was acquired by the Times Publishing Company in 1928, were the dominant newspapers in Wichita, Jack, Knox, Montague, Childress and Tillman counties.

Wichita Falls is in North Central Texas, 138 miles northwest of Dallas and 145 miles southwest of Oklahoma City. Estimated population in 1977 was 103,000. Wichita Falls is the population center of twenty-six counties spanning South Oklahoma and North Texas.

The area included in the original townsite was won in a poker game by John A. Scott of Mississippi in 1837. Following Scott's death, his heirs had a townsite mapped on the land.

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in 1854. The town grew steadily and a half dozen railroad lines were constructed that made Wichita Falls a trading and milling center for the area. The discovery of oil in the area shortly after the turn of the century contributed to the growth of Wichita Falls.

Today, the economy is diversified and includes retail trade, government, manufacturing, mining and agriculture. Sheppard Air Force Base, Midwestern State University and Wichita Falls State Hospital are in Wichita Falls.27

Ed Howard, founder and first publisher of the Wichita Falls Times, went to Texas from Tennessee in 1887 to help his brother, Will, publish a weekly newspaper in Kingston, Texas. Ed Howard later became owner of the Wolfe City Chronicle, but sold out after four years to go to Wichita Falls as owner and operator of the Wichita Herald with F. F. Daugherty. In 1898, he decided to go into business for himself and purchased another newspaper, the Wichita Weekly Times, for $100.00.28

He published the weekly for nine years, until 1907, when a group of leading citizens of Wichita Falls offered to support Howard in the publication of a daily newspaper. The group formed the Times Printing Company, renamed the Times Publishing

26 Jonnie Morgan, The History of Wichita Falls (Wichita Falls, 1931), p. 11.
27 Commerce and Industry report.
The first issue was published on May 14, 1907 with a subscription of 1,000.

In 1928, The Times Publishing Company purchased the Wichita Falls Record News, which had been publishing as a morning newspaper since 1913. The Times Publishing Company continued to publish the Record News as the morning newspaper and the Wichita Daily Times as the evening newspaper. Several daily and weekly newspapers were published in Wichita Falls in the early 1900's, but did not stay in operation. The last competing newspaper, the Wichita Falls Post, ceased operation in 1938.

The Wichita Falls Times and Record News are the dominant newspapers in the Central North Texas area. The only other daily newspapers read by as many as one of ten persons in Wichita, Jack, Knox, Montague, Childress and Tillman counties are the Abilene Morning Reporter-News and the Frederick Evening Leader. Circulation of the Record News is primarily outside the city into the surrounding counties, and circulation of the Wichita Falls Times is primarily within the city of Wichita Falls.  


30 RMH Research, p. 10.
Upon Ed Howard's death in 1948, his son, Rhea Howard, became publisher and president of the Times Publishing Company, and kept in effect many of the policies established by his father.

Sixty-nine years of family ownership ended, however, when Harte-Hanks Newspapers, Inc., now known as Harte-Hanks Communications, Inc., purchased 72 percent of the Times Publishing Company stock on May 18, 1976, for $15,020,000. Harte-Hanks, which had purchased 28 percent of the stock in 1948, thus gained complete control of the company. Circulation of the Wichita Falls Times in 1976 was 18,781, and of the Record News, 33,313.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to identify and evaluate the role of the Wichita Falls Times and its publishers, Ed and Rhea Howard, in the development and progress of Wichita Falls, Texas from 1907 to 1976.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was (1) to trace the contributions of the newspaper to the civic improvement and economic growth of Wichita Falls; (2) to trace the contributions of

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31 Wichita Falls Times, April 12, 1976, p. 2.

32 Editor and Publisher, International Yearbook, 1976, p. 250.
the publishers; and (3) to trace the development of the Wichita Falls Times from 1907, when it began as a daily, to 1976, when it sold to Harte-Hanks Communications Inc.

Questions

Questions answered in this study were,

1. Did the newspaper play a leadership role in the community?

2. What political influence did the paper exert in the community?

3. In what ways did the paper promote civic improvement and economic growth?

4. Were the publishers actively involved in community affairs and were they leaders in the community?

5. How did the paper change from 1907 to 1976 in its technology, advertising income, circulation, news-gathering methods, editorial stance and total revenues?

Justification

This study could provide insight into the role of a newspaper and its publishers in the development of one Texas city, specifically, the role of the Wichita Falls Times and its publishers, Ed and Rhea Howard, in the development of Wichita Falls, Texas.

This study could benefit journalistic scholars and social scientists, because it illustrates how a newspaper can provide leadership in the growth of a community. This study
illustrates how a publisher, firmly entrenched in the power structure of the community through his roles as businessman, politician, civic worker and journalist, exercises leadership and influence in the community.

This study adds to the recorded history of journalism in Texas, because it analyzes the role a Texas newspaper and two Texas publishers played in the development of a Texas city. It adds to the recorded history of Wichita Falls and identifies some of the highlights of its development, benefitting North Texas historians and citizens of Wichita Falls.

Review of the Literature

No other histories of the Wichita Falls Times were found. Information available about the history of the newspaper was contained in isolated articles published by the newspaper and in special anniversary editions. These articles were written primarily as a public relations effort by and for the newspaper and would not be considered scholarly or comprehensive. There is no study that examines the role of the newspaper in the development of the city.

However, a 1974 study of the power structure of Wichita Falls, conducted in the Department of Sociology at Midwestern State University, named, by inference, Rhea Howard as one of the most powerful persons in the community. Ed Lane, Etta Litteken, and Edward Pate, the authors of the study, used
both the reputational and decisional approach to determine the identity of the most powerful people in Wichita Falls. They wrote,

The reputational approach found the editor and publisher of the newspaper near the top of the 15 biggest vote-getters. All of the people interviewed in the decisional approach said they felt this man was either the most powerful or the second most powerful man in Area City [Wichita Falls].

In using the reputational method, the authors asked 45 individuals, who represented a cross-section of business, professional, religious and ethnic interests, to list 15 individuals whom they perceived to constitute the power structure. In the decisional method, the authors asked community leaders and other individuals involved in civic affairs to explain how a decision was reached on some specific issues. Each interviewee was asked (1) how the decision was reached in each situation; (2) what leaders favored or opposed each issue; and (3) to whom he would first go for support if he intended to start a project. The authors found that the two lists of names, determined from both the reputational and decisional methods, were similar.

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33 Ed Lane, Etta Litteken and Edward Pate, "Community Power: The Reputational and Decisional Approach Revisited," unpublished paper prepared for presentation at the 1974 annual meeting of the Southwest Sociological Association, Dallas, Texas, in March, 1974, p. 5.

34 Ibid., p. 4.
The authors, concluding that the newspaper wielded influence in political decision-making, wrote,

In the area of political decision-making, several past and present elected city officials indicated that the media also wielded influence here. It was thought that editorial comments in the newspaper had a profound effect on many of the actions of the council.35

Limitations of the Study

This study outlined the history of the Wichita Falls Times only. It included an analysis of the contributions to the economic growth and civic improvement of Wichita Falls made by the Wichita Falls Times only. The time period in this study was from 1907, when the Wichita Falls Times began as a daily newspaper, until 1976, when Harte-Hanks assumed control of the Times Publishing Company. The years from 1907 to 1976 represented the period of family ownership.

The Wichita Falls Times was the only newspaper included in this study, because it has been in existence longer than any other newspaper in Wichita Falls. Although other newspapers existed at various times in Wichita Falls, the Wichita Falls Times emerged as the only successful one, except for the Record News, which is under the same management, and seemed to be the best subject for a study of the journalistic influence of a newspaper in the development of Wichita Falls.

Because this study was concerned with the contributions made by the newspaper in Wichita Falls alone, and because

circulation of the Wichita Falls Times is primarily within the city, while circulation of the Record News is primarily out of the city, the Record News was not included in this study.

Methodology

This study was based on information obtained from the files of the newspaper, from interviews with key newspaper administrators and reporters, and from interviews with community leaders in a position to assess the role of the newspaper in the civic improvement and economic growth of the city.

This study attempted to determine the role of the newspaper played in the development of the city by citing editorials written on certain issues and describing news play and extent of news coverage devoted to certain issues. This study cited specific actions by the publishers, Ed and Rhea Howard, that contributed to the civic improvement and economic growth of the city.

Publisher Rhea Howard was interviewed and Bill Donnell, senior vice president, was interviewed. Donnell, considered the company historian, allowed access to his files for this study. Donnell has been a long-time employee of the Times Publishing Company, serving in many capacities. His father, Ben Donnell, began working with Ed Howard in 1907 and served as city editor and managing editor of the newspaper.

Several employees and former employees who worked in the editorial department of the Wichita Falls Times were
interviewed. They were asked to give instances in which the newspaper did not exercise leadership in the community or when the newspaper did not fulfill the watchdog function of the press. These people asked that they not be identified.

Interviews were conducted with long-time residents of Wichita Falls, who have been active in civic and political affairs in Wichita Falls and in a position to make critical judgments as to the role the newspaper played in the city's development. These persons were selected because they have served in key positions in the community and are long-time observers of the city's development. Persons interviewed were George Adams, president of Parker Square Bank and civic and business leader; Jerry Page, retired commander of Sheppard Technical Training Center; Pat Hardage, postmaster of Wichita Falls from 1939 to 1970; Winston Wallander, former mayor and alderman of Wichita Falls and businessman; and Henry Grace, Wichita Falls businessman.

Each person was asked what contributions the publishers and the newspaper made to the economic and civic progress of the city. Each person was asked what he thought the role of the newspaper should be in the community.

Organization of Thesis

Chapter I provides the introduction. Chapter II provides a history of the Wichita Falls Times from 1907 to 1976. Chapter III provides a biography of Ed Howard, founder and
publisher of the *Wichita Falls Times*, and information on the role the newspaper played in civic improvements and economic growth of the city from 1907 until 1948. Chapter IV provides biographical information about Rhea Howard and information on the role the newspaper played in the civic improvements and economic growth of the city from 1949 until 1976. Chapter V provides a summary and conclusions.
CHAPTER II

THE TECHNOLOGICAL AND OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OF THE WICHITA FALLS TIMES FROM
1907 TO 1976

In 1837, the Republic of Texas was a vast, unsettled land. Sparsely populated, Texas was unable to collect enough taxes to support its government. To encourage growth, the government stationed numerous land agents in cities throughout the United States to sell 600,000 acres of Texas land at not less than fifty cents per acre.¹ One of the agents, Thomas Toby, sold nineteen certificates of 640 acres each to Nolen Stewart and Field Davis while in New Orleans in February, 1837. The land designated on the nineteen certificates was in that portion of Texas later known as Wichita County. Those certificates were traded to Albert J. Foster, who, in December of that same year, is said to have lost them in a poker game to a Greenville, Mississippi planter, John A. Scott.² For seventeen years, Scott kept the certificates in the bottom of his trunk, where they were discovered by his heirs in 1854, a year

¹Jonnie Morgan, The History of Wichita Falls (Wichita Falls, 1931), p. 11.
²Ibid., p. 15.
after his death. After the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway, now part of the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad system, began building west from Dallas, Scott's heirs sent a surveyor in 1876 to lay out a townsite on the land. The site was named Wichita Falls, for the little waterfalls on the Wichita River.

Until the late 1870's, Wichita Falls was a sparsely inhabited outpost surrounded by vast cattle land. Cattlemen, Indians, border outlaws, and other transients drifted through the tiny hamlet, but with the arrival of the Craig and Barwise families in 1879, followed by other settlers, the settlement became permanent. By 1880, 161 people were in Wichita Falls, including 33 families and 32 houses.

After 1879, Wichita Falls began to acquire the characteristics of a community. In 1879, Miss Harriett Seeley opened the Community Sabbath School in her home. The next year, she married and opened the first public school in Wichita Falls, a one-room log cabin. That structure, to which additions were made in later years, was used for a school until 1910.

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4Morgan, p. 12.

5Ibid., p. 20. 6Ibid., p. 18.

71880 Census of Wichita County, Moffett Library, Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, Texas.

8Morgan, p. 28.
A lumber yard and general merchandise store were opened in 1882. About that same time, the first manufacturing establishment, a shingle and sorghum mill, opened.\(^9\)

Growth of the community accelerated after town lots were sold at a public auction on September 27, 1882. An excursion train of the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway brought speculators to the auction where a crowd of hundreds had gathered.\(^10\) Wichita Falls had attracted attention because of a movement to organize a county apart from Clay County, under which Wichita Falls was governed, and because it was soon to become a railhead.\(^11\)

In May, 1882, a petition with 150 signatures was presented to Clay County Commissioners Court, asking that Wichita County, surveyed upon order of the Texas Legislature in 1858,\(^12\) be organized into a governmental entity.\(^13\) On November 6, 1883, Wichita Falls was voted the permanent county seat. By 1894, the town had a population of 2,000.\(^14\)

With the construction of several other railroad lines through Wichita Falls during the next two decades, the city grew into an agricultural and trade center for North Central Texas and South Oklahoma.\(^15\)

\(^9\)Friend, p. 903. \(^10\)Morgan, p. 29.
\(^12\)Morgan, p. 11. \(^13\)Ibid., p. 22.
\(^14\)Friend, p. 903. \(^15\)Ibid.
In 1891, when the town was not quite a decade old, Ed Howard went to Wichita Falls from Wolfe City, Texas to own and operate the Wichita Herald, a weekly newspaper established by H. A. Lewis in 1883. The Wichita Herald was later owned by Frank Daugherty and, from 1891 to 1897, by Daugherty and Howard. In 1897, however, Howard sold his share of the Wichita Herald for $100.00, and bought the Wichita Weekly Times, started in 1883 by Sam Bell Thomas. From 1898 to 1907, under Howard's ownership, the Wichita Weekly Times operated as a weekly, except for a few months during the Spanish-American War, when it was published daily to provide readers with more current news of the war.

In March, 1907, a group of leading businessmen in Wichita Falls offered to support Ed Howard in the publication of a daily newspaper. Although Wichita Falls had two weekly newspapers, the businessmen decided it was time to have a daily newspaper. The project may have developed more from their civic spirit than from any real interest in a business enterprise. John Dobbs, mechanical supervisor of the Wichita Weekly Times, wrote in 1932:

They did not expect a daily paper to pay much, if any, return on the money invested in it. What they were interested in chiefly was lifting Wichita Falls out of a village class and they looked upon a daily as a means to that end.

16 Ibid. 17 Wichita Falls Times, April 20, 1975, p. 2.
The group met in March, 1907, and formed the Times Publishing Company and elected the first board of directors; Frank Kell, president; Ed Howard, vice president and general manager; G. D. Anderson, secretary-treasurer; and T. C. Thatcher, N. Henderson, R. E. Huff and Wiley Blair. It was the group's original intention to form the company with $20,000 capital, but they succeeded in raising only $12,300 during that first meeting. Perhaps some of the original stockholders were hesitant to invest large sums because they did not believe the paper would be profitable. Some purchase $50.00 in stocks; others, $1,500. But it was Howard himself who purchased the largest portion, $5,000 worth. By May, 1908, $12,625 in shares had been sold; by May, 1911, $20,000. In January, 1912, the directors authorized the sale of 400 more shares of stock, bringing stockholder investment to $30,000 to pay for a new plant and other materials.

The Wichita Daily Times proved successful. It and the Wichita Falls Record News, acquired by the Times Publishing Company in 1928, were the only newspapers in Wichita Falls to

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20 Wichita Falls Times, April 20, 1975, p. 2.

21 Minutes of Stockholders and Board of Directors of Times Publishing Company, p. 9.


23 Stockholders minutes, p. 14.

24 Ibid., p. 38. 25 Ibid., p. 53.
survive. The **Wichita Falls Morning Tribune** was started in 1915 by E. P. Haney and was renamed the **Wichita Falls Record News** when it was purchased by W. H. Bagley and James H. Allison in 1919.  

In March, 1922, it was sold again to Newspapers Incorporated, a newspaper publishing partnership between E. W. Fentress and Charles E. Marsh, who owned the **Waco News Tribune**, the **Austin American**, and the **Port Arthur News**.

In 1928, the Times Publishing Company merged with Newspapers Incorporated, and the Times Publishing Company assumed control of the physical assets, circulation, features and wire service contracts of the **Record News**. Fentress and Marsh became stockholders in the Times Publishing Company, retaining 28 percent of the stock.  

Houston Harte, publisher of the **San Angelo Standard Times**, who joined with Bernard Hanks to form Harte-Hanks Newspapers, Inc., acquired 28 percent stock in 1948 after paying off a defaulted loan of Fentress' in which he had used the stock as collateral.

Other newspapers existed for brief periods of time in Wichita Falls. Wichita Falls' first newspaper was the four-page **Wichita Mirror**, a news sheet printed by Steve Reynolds, a 19-year-old store clerk and mail carrier for the small

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27 Ibid.

28 Interview with Bill Donnell, senior vice president, Times Publishing Company, August 9, 1978.
community. When Reynolds began printing the news sheet and how long he published it is not known. However, it is documented that Reynolds printed the news sheet with a small hand press on the farm of E. J. Perego, where Reynolds' parents worked as hired hands in 1879. The next newspaper was the *Wichita Herald*, begun by H. A. Lewis in 1883.

Six years later, the *Wichita County Democrat*, a weekly, began publishing. The *Wichita Post*, published by Hayes and Norwood, began in 1892. The *Democrat* and *Post* combined to make the *Wichita Post-Democrat*. Wichita Falls' first daily newspaper, published in 1897 by J. B. Barnett, was the *Dinner Horn*. It was described as "four very small pages with a few lines of local news surrounded by advertising." How long it lasted is not known.

The *Wichita Daily News*, published by McKeehan and Jacobs, began publishing in 1909 and suspended publication in 1911. In 1910, several businessmen sponsored the publishing of the *Morning News*, the city's first morning newspaper, published by D. A. Jacobs in opposition to Ed Howard's unyielding stance.

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29 Mrs. A. H. Carrigan, memoirs written in the 1930's, obtained from Miss Louise Kelly, Wichita Falls, Texas.

30 Friend, p. 903.


against alcoholic beverages and his support of prohibition. In 1936, the Wichita Falls Post began publishing as an afternoon newspaper, and ceased operation in 1938. The last issue of the Post included this message.

With today's issue the Post ceases publication. After two years of unprofitable operations, we are convinced that the field does not justify three newspapers. We are appreciative of the efforts of our friends and are sorry that the opportunity does not justify further expense.

With the termination of the Post, the Times Publishing Company was the sole company in Wichita Falls to publish a newspaper and remained so until it sold out to Harte-Hanks Communications, Inc. in 1976.

Between 1907 and 1976, the Wichita Daily Times made many technological advancements and expanded its services to readers. As the population of the city increased, so did the circulation of the newspaper. The conversion from weekly to daily publishing increased the demand for better, faster machinery. Howard had been using a Washington hand press, which required that type be set by hand, to publish the Wichita Weekly Times. But, in 1907, he purchased a Cottrell press, powered by a Fairbanks gasoline engine and capable of printing 500 copies per hour.

34 Donnell interview, August 9, 1978.

He added two linotype machines to his operation, the first typesetting machines to be operated in North Texas.\textsuperscript{36}

The first issue of the \textit{Wichita Daily Times} was published on May 14, 1907, with a subscription of 1,000. The paper was eight pages of six columns filled with "local news, Associated Press dispatches, editorials and the advertisements of local business houses."\textsuperscript{37} Seven employees were working when the first issue was published; Ed Howard as editor and general manager, Ben D. Donnell as city editor, a man who solicited subscriptions and made collections, a foreman for the composing room, a make-up man, a linotype operator, and an employee who served as printer and pressman.\textsuperscript{38} The payroll in 1907 was $4,537.22.\textsuperscript{39}

The \textit{Wichita Weekly Times} had been distributed only through the post office but, after the Times Publishing Company began publishing a daily newspaper, a city delivery system was established. A weekly \textit{Times}, a compilation of news stories from the week's daily \textit{Times}, continued to be published until World War I, when a paper shortage forced suspension.\textsuperscript{40}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{37}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39}Donnell and Moore, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{40}Interview with Bill Donnell, senior vice president, Times Publishing Company, August 9, 1978.
\end{flushright}
During the first years of publication, the news was collected from The Associated Press "pony reports," which delivered 1,000 words daily by commercial telegraph from The Associated Press Bureau in Denver. Correspondents who lived in neighboring communities were hired to submit news items and were paid by the number of inches of news copy published. Reporters who worked between 1907 and 1928, when the Times Publishing Company purchased the morning Record News, were often required to work double shifts, especially when a story broke between 6:00 p.m. and 7:30 a.m.

Publishing a paper in the early days was not an easy task, John Dobbs, mechanical superintendent, wrote in 1932,

It was a grind in those days to produce a readable paper. The editorial room was on the first floor, and the editor, to get his copy to the machine on the second floor, had to send it up on a sliding box attached to a cord. When the printer thought the editor was a little slow in getting copy to us, he would jerk the string furiously, causing the box to bang almost under ye editor's nose. It is not necessary to say that he often "talked back" profusely. After working on a weekly so long we figured it was necessary to trot most of the time to get out a paper-a-day before dark. A hard-boiled foreman, yelling "more copy" down through that hole in the floor caused nervous reporters to beat a path across the street, slightly east to north--the Invincible saloon. After the type was set up, it was carried down a flight of stairs and placed on a flat-bed press. After the issue was printed the "forms" were removed to the rear of the building, washed in lye water and carried upstairs again.

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42 Donnell interview.
44 Ibid.
During the first few years, the Wichita Daily Times was published every day except Sunday. But, in 1911, the Times began publishing a Sunday edition in place of the Saturday afternoon issue. Apparently, the editor was concerned that this Sunday edition might disrupt the sanctity of the Lord's Day, for he included this message on the first Sunday issue, December 17, 1911:

We have tried to make the paper bright and interesting, although we know there is room for improvement, and there is just about enough of it to be read before the Sunday School hour--and right here we will say that the Sunday School lesson for the day can be found in the paper. Read the paper, then go to Sunday School, but go to Sunday School whether you read the paper or not.45

In September, 1919, the company leased the United Press wire service, and the Wichita Daily Times became a seven-day publication, with Saturday afternoon editions.46

The paper continued to expand its capabilities as the population of Wichita Falls and, subsequently, the circulation of the paper increased. In 1910, the third year of operation, the Times Publishing Company moved from its original quarters into a larger facility, adding two linotype machines to its operation. By 1912, the Wichita Daily Times, in its fifth year of publication, had more than doubled its circulation to 2,250.47

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45 Donnell and Moore, p. 7.
46 Ibid., p. 11.
Wichita Falls grew rapidly between 1910 and 1920, after oil was discovered in the Wichita Falls vicinity. As the city became the center for oil activities in North Texas, its population grew from 7,565 in 1908 to 40,079 in 1920.\textsuperscript{48} Circulation of the \textit{Times} increased with the town's growth. In 1916, its ninth year of operation, the \textit{Times} reported circulation had more than tripled.\textsuperscript{49} In 1919, the Times Publishing Company installed a $21,000 Duplex tubular press, capable of printing thirty thousand sixteen-page newspapers per hour and began using sixteen linotype machines in its operation. In July, 1919, a 10:00 a.m. edition of the \textit{Wichita Daily Times} began to be issued. By 1923, the paper had a circulation of more than 12,000.\textsuperscript{50} The next year, the press was enlarged so that it could print 30,000 twenty-page papers per hour.\textsuperscript{51}

By 1925, sixty-seven adults and forty salaried carriers were on the payroll, and a large staff of newsboys were selling papers on the streets. The payroll that year was $130,000. The newspaper, by that time, was leasing two Associated Press wire services, which delivered 22,000 words of news each day in addition to the United Press wire service. The \textit{Wichita Daily Times} was utilizing a dozen syndicate services, including Newspaper Enterprise Association, Chicago Tribune Newspapers

\textsuperscript{48}Interview with Bill Donnell, senior vice president, Times Publishing Company, August 18, 1978.

\textsuperscript{49}Donnell and Moore, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{50}Ibid., p. 13. \quad \textsuperscript{51}Ibid., p. 14.

In 1928, the Wichita Daily Times began receiving 50,000 words daily from The Associated Press. This was made possible by the installation of automatic teletype machines that replaced Morse Code telegraph operators. That year, the paper added a farm section called the "Wichita Valley Farmer," and a feature for teen-agers called "Junior Times." 

Between 1920 and 1930, the population of Wichita Falls stabilized, increasing slightly from 40,079 in 1920 to 43,690 in 1930. The circulation of the Wichita Daily Times increased substantially, however, from 12,000 in 1923 to 19,786 in 1930. Between 1930 and 1934, however, the circulation of the paper dropped to 13,732, because some of the Wichita Daily Times subscribers shifted to the Record News, which was purchased in 1928 by the Times Publishing Company. Circulation

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52 Wichita Daily Times, May 14, 1925, p. 2.

53 Donnell and Moore, p. 15.

54 1930 Census of Wichita Falls, Texas, Wichita County Courthouse, Wichita Falls, Texas.

55 Audit Bureau of Circulations, Audit Report of Wichita Daily Times for fifteen months ending March 31, 1931.

56 Audit Bureau of Circulations, Audit Report of Wichita Daily Times for twelve months ending March 31, 1934.
of the **Wichita Daily Times** probably decreased because subscribers suffered economic hardships in the Depression.

Many news stories in the early 1930's told about the hardships and poverty that many Wichita Falls residents suffered in the Depression. During those years, the oil industry also declined in the area as oil operators left in search of shallow pay wells to drill. The American Refining Company failed in 1928, causing many people to lose heavy investments. Before the Wichita Falls firm was finally closed, it was kept under receivership for months. North Texas oil operators, who sold their oil for twenty-five cents a barrel, suffered economically because East Texas oil field operators sold their oil for only ten cents a barrel.

In 1940, the population of Wichita Falls was up to 44,937, a gain of 1,247 over 1930. Circulation of the **Wichita Daily Times** increased slightly to 14,491. In 1941, when the United States became involved in World War II, Wichita Falls began to get an influx of civilian and military personnel to build, staff, and undergo training at Sheppard Field, a military installation named in honor of Senator Morris Sheppard of Texas.

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57 Donnell and Moore, p. 16.

58 Ibid., p. 15.  
59 Ibid., p. 17.  
60 Ibid., p. 18.

61 Audit Bureau of Circulations, Audit Report of **Wichita Daily Times** for twelve months ending March 31, 1940.

62 Donnell and Moore, p. 18.
By 1944, the population of Wichita Falls was up to 50,000\(^{63}\) and the circulation of the paper up to 16,474.\(^{64}\)

Sheppard Field was deactivated in September, 1946, but a Chamber of Commerce campaign to promote post-war development lessened the economic loss of the base closure to the community. Two years later, Sheppard Field reopened as a permanent United States Air Force training facility.\(^{65}\)

In 1950, the Times Publishing Company completed a second major remodeling and expansion of its facility and installed two Duplex unit presses that had three double color units. The two new presses, combined with the press purchased in 1919, were capable of printing a forty-page paper.\(^{66}\) In 1953, the paper acquired Associated Press Wirephoto Service and, in 1954, adopted eight-point Corona body typeface, which made the paper more attractive and readable.\(^{67}\) In 1955, the paper was renamed the \textit{Wichita Falls Times}. Population of Wichita Falls that year was 110,000\(^{68}\) and circulation of the \textit{Wichita Falls Times} was 21,376.\(^{69}\) In 1956, \textit{Family Weekly} magazine was added to the Sunday edition.\(^{70}\)

\(^{63}\)Ibid., p. 19.

\(^{64}\)Audit Bureau of Circulations, Audit Report of \textit{Wichita Daily Times} for twelve months ending March 31, 1944.

\(^{65}\)Donnell and Moore, p. 15. \(^{66}\)Ibid., p. 22.

\(^{67}\)Ibid., p. 23. \(^{68}\)Ibid.

\(^{69}\)Audit Bureau of Circulations, Audit Report of \textit{Wichita Falls Times} for twelve months ending December 31, 1955.

\(^{70}\)Donnell and Moore, p. 22.
In 1964, the Times Publishing Company moved to a new 62,615-square-foot facility at Thirteenth and Lamar, its present site.71 Estimated population of Wichita Falls was 109,500.72 In 1965, the circulation of the paper was 19,347.73 By 1970, the company was using 5,000 tons of newsprint a year, or an average of twelve railroad carloads per month.74 In late 1975, the Times Publishing Company began its conversion from hot metal to "cold type," or photocomposition assisted by electronically-controlled optical equipment that sets type automatically from perforated tape.75 The system replaced the molten lead mechanical system and eliminated the need for linotype machines. The new system was capable of setting eighty lines of type per minute, turning out two pages of market quotations in one hour and fifteen minutes. Under the former system, the same work took seven hours and thirty minutes.76

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72Polk's Wichita Falls City Directory for 1964 (Dallas, 1964), p. viii.
75Wichita Falls Times, January 9, 1977, p. 8D.
76Wichita Falls Times, November 2, 1975, p. 2.
From 1907 to 1976, the Times Publishing Company had two publishers; Ed Howard from 1907 until his death in 1948, and Rhea Howard, his son, from 1948 to 1976. There were eight years, however, when Ed Howard did not work as publisher. From 1916 to 1924, Howard served as postmaster of Wichita Falls. In his absence, Ben D. Donnell served as general manager of the Wichita Daily Times. When Howard returned to the newspaper in 1924, Donnell returned to his position as managing editor and served in that capacity until 1936.

From 1907 to 1976, the Wichita Falls Times had four managing editors. The first was Ben Donnell, who went to Wichita Falls in 1907 to assist Howard in establishing the Wichita Daily Times. Howard recalled how he hired Donnell.

Just as we were getting ready to start the daily paper I had to fire my managing editor for getting drunk. I called the managing editor of the [Fort Worth] Telegram and asked him to recommend somebody. They recommended Mr. Donnell, but said he had already left there. He was on his way to Denver and ran out of money, so he stopped off here to try to get a little job to make enough to pay his railroad fare. He got a job with a cement man and was to go to work at one o'clock, when he happened to pass by the Times office and saw us setting up a linotype machine, and stopped in. I didn't know who he was, and asked him if he wanted something. I soon found out that he was the man I had been trying to get in touch with, and I hired him at once.

Before going to Wichita Falls, Donnell worked for the Fort Worth Telegram, the San Angelo Daily News, and Fort Worth

77 Donnell and Moore, p. 9.
78 Donnell interview, August 18, 1978.
79 Howard notes, p. 3.
Record. In 1909, Donnell returned to Fort Worth to work for the Texas News Service, but went back to Wichita Falls fourteen months later and remained with the Times Publishing Company until his death on March 28, 1952. His first position with the company was that of city editor, but he eventually became vice president. 80

In the late 1930's, Al Parker, news editor for the Wichita Daily Times, was promoted to managing editor and served in that capacity until his retirement in 1967. 81 He joined the staff of the Wichita Daily Times in April, 1923, as a sportswriter. Before going to Wichita Falls, he worked as sports editor of the Galveston News. He became news editor for the Wichita Daily News in 1932 and worked in that capacity until becoming managing editor. 82


80 The exact date that Parker became managing editor is not documented and Parker, in an interview August 22, 1978, did not recall the date. Newspaper files state that he became news editor in 1932 and "a few years later" became managing editor. It is documented that Donnell served as managing editor until 1936.

Times in July, 1926, and worked as a reporter, telegraph editor and city editor before becoming managing editor. Before going to Wichita Falls, Hamlett worked for the Fort Worth Press, Dallas Dispatch, Austin American, and the Texarkana, Texas Four States Press. 83

After Hamlett retired in September, 1973, the newspaper remained without a managing editor until June, 1974, when Charles W. Ward assumed the position. Ward, husband of the publisher's granddaughter, worked as a reporter, columnist, business editor, and city editor before becoming managing editor. 84

Before 1975, the publisher and board of directors of the Times Publishing Company had never seriously considered selling the company. But, in 1975, the company received an offer, and Rhea Howard, eighty-four years old, decided to consider that offer and others. None of the major stockholders in the company had an heir who could assume responsibility for the company, and tax inheritance laws were becoming progressively complicated and restrictive. 85

On May 18, 1976, the Times Publishing Company sold its remaining 72 percent stock to Harte-Hanks Newspapers, Inc.

84 Ibid.
85 Interview with Bill Donnell, senior vice president, Times Publishing Company, August 9, 1978.
for $15,020,000, ending sixty-nine years of family ownership. Small shareholders, those holding fewer than twenty-five shares, were paid in cash. Large stockholders were paid one-fourth down, with the remainder to be paid over a ten-year period, with 8.5 percent interest on the unpaid balance. Company officers and department directors were offered ten-year contracts. No changes were made in personnel or editorial stance, but Harte-Hanks did assume control over budgetary matters and did modify the accounting system.

When Harte-Hanks purchased the Times Publishing Company in 1976, Ward was managing editor of the Times and the Record News. The company had 100 employees, and a payroll of $1,820,030. Advertising income that year was $4,500,000, and total revenue was $5,448,501.

The editorial philosophy of the Wichita Falls Times did not change significantly from 1907 to 1976. The newspaper supported the Democratic Party and its candidates, community improvement projects, Chamber of Commerce interests, and other projects which Ed and Rhea Howard considered to be good for Wichita Falls.

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87 Donnell interview, August 9, 1978.
89 Donnell interview, August 9, 1978.
CHAPTER III

THE ECONOMIC AND CIVIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE WICHITA FALLS TIMES TO WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ED HOWARD FROM 1907 TO 1947

Ed Howard was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee on September 30, 1866, shortly after the War Between the States ended. He was born at a time when his family suffered financial hardships, created by General William Sherman's Union soldiers who, conducting economic warfare on civilians in the South, destroyed property along the route of their famous march to the sea that started from Chattanooga in May, 1864. Chattanooga was hard hit by the War Between the States, because it and Vicksburg were primary targets of the Union Army. The Howard family fortunes were entirely lost during Reconstruction.

Howard was a staunch Democrat his whole life and it was probably his experiences with Reconstruction during his early years that shaped his political philosophy. After the War Between the States, radical Republicans used Reconstruction

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to punish the defeated South. They wanted to ensure that ex-slaves received their rights as free men. They enlisted Negro support in their attempts to form a Republican Party. Many scalawags and carpetbaggers worked through the Union League, a Northern organization that tried to persuade Negroes to vote Republican. Reconstruction programs often combined fraud with liberal, and sometimes impractical, social legislation, so that Southern whites began to resent the Republican Party and formed their allegiance with the Democratic Party.  

Howard's father died while Ed Howard was still young, leaving the family's financial plight even worse. Howard was able to attend public school for only three terms and, at the age of thirteen, he became a printer's apprentice in Chattanooga. He worked as an apprentice for several years and became a journeyman printer. Among his early employers was Adolph Ochs, who became publisher of the New York Times. Ochs had started his career at age fourteen, as an errand boy at the Knoxville Chronicle and bought half-interest in the Chattanooga Times. When Howard worked for Ochs, Ochs was a young man struggling to keep the Chattanooga Times solvent.  

Howard worked as a printer in Memphis and in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1887, when he was twenty-one, Howard went to

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Texas to assist his brother, Will, in the publication of a weekly newspaper at Kingston, Texas. A prohibition election was held soon after he arrived at Kingston and his brother was attacked and wounded by some opponents of prohibition. Howard did not forget the experience and, for the remainder of his life, he abstained from alcohol, supported prohibition, and refused to accept advertising of alcoholic beverages in his newspapers.  

Howard did not stay in Kingston very long for, soon after he arrived, he purchased the Wolfe City Chronicle and moved to Wolfe City, Texas, where he lived for four years. While he was there, he met Jettie Maloney. They married on November 4, 1891.

Shortly after the wedding, the couple moved to Wichita Falls, Howard had acquired an interest in the Wichita Herald and, after his arrival in Wichita Falls, co-owned and operated it with Frank Daugherty until 1897. He sold his interest in the Wichita Herald and purchased the Wichita Weekly Times from Clarence Gilmore for $100.00. For that $100.00, Howard got a Washington hand press and a "shirttail full of type," he later recalled. He continued to publish the weekly until 1907,

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6Wichita Falls Times, April 20, 1976, Sunday Magazine, p. 2.
7Ibid.
when he began publishing the *Wichita Daily Times* as general manager and president of the Times Publishing Company.

Howard has been described as a stern, intimidating man, who conducted his business in a serious manner. In 1932, John Dobbs, mechanical superintendent of the Times Publishing Company, wrote a description of his first meeting with Howard.

Like most young boys, I always dreaded facing a new boss, so hesitated and peered inside for a once-over. My heart almost failed me when I beheld a rather tall, lank, long-mustached gentleman, slumped down in a swivel chair, his feet elevated on a table strewn with papers, a hat and odds and ends. He was smoking a cob pipe and aimlessly manipulating a pair of scissors cutting paper to bits and allowing it to fall on the floor. Something told me to scram before being discovered, and seek greener pastures, but remembered having relatives in Wichita Falls who were instrumental in securing me the job, and as it would not do to embarrass them, braced myself and walked up to the gentleman seemingly in authority. After identifying myself, he squinted at me a few minutes, deliberately knocked the ashes from his pipe, slowly unwound himself and arose, announcing he was the owner, Ed Howard.

Ed Howard was a loyal Democrat and very active in politics. He became a very powerful influence in city and state politics because he owned a newspaper and because he had the good fortune to endorse politicians who won the office they sought and did not forget the support he gave them. The *Wichita Daily Times* was one of the first newspapers in the nation to endorse and support vigorously the candidacy of

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Woodrow Wilson for the Democratic nomination for president. Howard and R. E. Huff, directors of the Times Publishing Company, attended the Democratic National Convention in June, 1912, and were two of the "immortal forty" who swung the nomination to Wilson.1

Wilson did not forget Howard's support and returned the favor by appointing Howard postmaster of Wichita Falls in 1915.13 Howard left the operation of the newspaper to Ben Donnell and began work to improve the postal system, which was experiencing problems because of the rapid growth of the city. Oil was discovered in Burkburnett, Texas in 1917, initiating a boom that caused Wichita Falls to grow from a population of fifteen thousand to 40,000 in less than ten years. Postal facilities were inadequate to handle the mail load that resulted from the population increase, so Howard applied to the federal government for money to expand the postal facility. Funding for the project was delayed, so Howard donated his own money and asked affluent Wichita Falls citizens to contribute funds to build an annex on the south side of the post office building to accommodate the extra load. The contributors did not have any guarantee they would get their money back, but the government did eventually reimburse them and Howard was

1Wichita Falls Times, April 20, 1975, Sunday Magazine, p. 2.
12Ibid.
13Ibid.
commended for his work in handling the mail explosion. Howard served as postmaster until June 10, 1924, when he returned to the newspaper.14

In 1915, the Ku Klux Klan, which had been active during Reconstruction, was reorganized in Atlanta, Georgia and, in the following years, became a powerful political force in many states.15 The Ku Klux Klan grew in power in Texas. In 1922, it elected one of its representatives, Charles Culberson, to the United States Senate. In 1925, it nominated George C. Butte to challenge Governor Miriam "Ma" Ferguson for the Texas governorship. The Wichita Daily Times endorsed Ferguson16 and kept up an almost daily editorial attack against the Ku Klux Klan and Butte in the final weeks of the campaign. Howard received many threatening letters from Klansmen, who tried to coerce him into joining the group. He refused, because he believed that the Ku Klux Klan acted as a secret, punishment society that usurped the system of justice.17 Howard was not subtle in his Klan resistance. One editorial in the Wichita Daily Times read,

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14 Ibid.


16 Wichita Daily Times, October 19, 1924, p. 6.

The Klan wants to punish the Democratic Party nationally because of the refusal of free Democrats to be dominated by that secret society. If to recognize such a situation is to descend into an orgy of hate, then let the worst be said about us.18

Governor Ferguson lost to Butte in Wichita County by a vote of 4,741 to 4,625, but won in Wichita Falls by a vote of 3,064 to 2,949 and elsewhere in the state, and retained her governorship.19

In 1925, Ferguson appointed Howard to the Board of Regents of the University of Texas in recognition of the unwavering anti-Klan stance of the *Wichita Daily Times*.20 While a regent, Howard discovered that the university was not being compensated for oil and gas produced from university lands. He insisted that special legal counsel be employed to protect the university's interest in the matter. He did not receive the immediate cooperation of the other regents and was criticized in some newspapers for demanding an investigation.21 Eventually, however, a lawsuit was filed against the oil companies and a final agreement brought an immediate $1,000,000 return, which has meant millions of dollars to the university since.22 In 1951, a portrait of Ed Howard was unveiled in ceremonies at

18 *Wichita Daily Times*, October 24, 1924, p. 10.
the University of Texas and placed in the School of Journalism library in appreciation of his service to the university. 23

Howard was very active in the Democratic Party and attended the Democratic National Convention in 1928 as a delegate. At the convention, he supported Al Smith for the Democratic presidential nomination. Smith, however, lost the election to Herbert Hoover. 24 Howard attended the Democratic conventions in 1932 and 1936, where he supported Franklin D. Roosevelt for the nomination. The Wichita Daily Times was one of the first papers to advocate the nomination of Roosevelt for president. 25 In 1934, Howard was appointed to a statewide committee to summarize and publicize Roosevelt's first year in office. 26 In March, 1934, the Wichita Daily Times featured a special section on Roosevelt's first year in office. 27

Howard had many friends who were politicians, because of his work in the Democratic Party. On the thirtieth anniversary of the Wichita Daily Times, Howard received congratulatory messages from Vice President John Nance Garner of Uvalde, Texas, Senators Morris Sheppard and Tom Connally,

23 Donnell and Moore, p. 22.


25 Ibid.

26 Donnell and Moore, p. 17.

27 Wichita Daily Times, March 4, 1934.
and Texas Governor James Allred. In 1941, the Wichita Daily Times supported Representative Lyndon B. Johnson in a special senate election to fill the unexpired term of Morris Sheppard, who had died in office in April. Johnson, however, lost by a small margin to Governor W. Lee O'Daniel, a New Deal foe. Johnson was elected to the senate in 1948, however, and maintained a friendship with the Howard family during his years as a United States senator, vice president, and president.

In his last years, Howard's eyesight began to fail so much that eventually even reading glasses were not useful. When he could no longer see to read, he had the news and business reports read to him in his office. He worked at the newspaper every day until a few weeks before his death on January 13, 1948. He died at the age of eighty-two.

Throughout his journalistic career, Ed Howard used the paper he published to promote projects that he thought were good for Wichita Falls. Because of his political activities and contacts, Howard was a powerful community leader and decision-maker, who contributed to the progress and civic and economic development of Wichita Falls.

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28 Donnell and Moore, p. 18.
30 Ibid.
Howard participated in the first Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce session in November, 1909, during which $10,000 was raised for its budget in fifteen minutes. With the money it raised, the Chamber of Commerce worked to establish a federal court, to pave streets in the business district, to develop a pleasure resort at Lake Wichita, to install a street car system, and to develop the agricultural resources of the area. During the first fund-raising session, the Times Publishing Company pledged $5.00 a month and various members of the board of directors pledged more.\textsuperscript{32}

In 1914, the \textit{Wichita Daily Times} endorsed the "Buy a Bale" movement, a program to help farmers who were losing profits on their bumper cotton crop because foreign trade ceased during World War I and prices dipped.\textsuperscript{33} In the movement, citizens were encouraged to buy, for ten cents a pound, a bale of cotton from farmers so that they could dispose of the crop. The \textit{Wichita Daily Times} gave extensive coverage to the farmers' plight, and many stories were written about the depressed cotton market.\textsuperscript{34} Several days after the drive began, a Buy a Bale Club was formed to purchase a facility to store the cotton pending better market conditions. Ed Howard was listed among the club members.\textsuperscript{35}


\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Wichita Daily Times}, September 8, 1914, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Wichita Daily Times}, September 8, 1914, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Wichita Daily Times}, September 13, 1914, p. 3.
The *Wichita Daily Times* played an active role in trying to bolster the economy of Wichita Falls during the Depression. Wichita Falls, in 1930, had a population of 55,000, and 2,000 workers were unemployed. The newspaper extended free want ads for the jobless and endorsed a campaign for staggered and shorter work hours to provide work for the unemployed. The newspaper urged citizens to make home improvements in order to provide more jobs, and encouraged individuals and businesses to make work wherever possible.

In 1933, Ed Howard and Ben Donnell met with a group of citizens of Wichita Falls to discuss plans for opening a community thrift and barter exchange through which the unemployed could exchange labor for goods, services or property. The exchange was formed later that year. In 1935, the *Wichita Daily Times* ran a series of promotional stories urging Wichita Falls residents to spend their money in the community in order that the local economy might be boosted. In urging citizens to spend their money at home, the newspaper told readers they were like stockholders in their city. The articles explained how "Bill Dollar," a fictionalized character

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36 Donnell and Moore, p. 16.


in the promotional series, benefited people in his travels throughout the city.\textsuperscript{41} A \textit{Wichita Daily Times} printed in 1935 urged that children be kept in school until they graduated from high school, whenever possible, to leave jobs available for heads of households.\textsuperscript{42}

The newspaper worked to protect the economic health of the oil industry of Wichita Falls during the Depression. In 1933, the newspaper endorsed the establishment of a regulatory body for the oil industry in Texas to help stabilize oil prices. East Texas oil producers were selling their oil for ten cents a barrel, undercutting North Texas oil producers, who were selling their oil at twenty-five cents a barrel.\textsuperscript{43}

In November, 1937, the \textit{Wichita Daily Times} called for an open meeting of the Chamber of Commerce to discuss the advantages of publicizing the fact that deep pay oil had been discovered in Kemp City, in the southern part of Wichita County. Most of the oil production during the Burkburnett oil boom from 1918 to 1928 had been from shallow wells. When shallow well production began to slow, producers left the area and the economy of Wichita Falls suffered. The city's economy would be boosted if the deep pay oil discovery were publicized, the newspaper

\textsuperscript{41}\textit{Wichita Daily Times}, September 1, 1935, p. 1.


\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Wichita Daily Times}, May 3, 1933, p. 6.
argued. \textsuperscript{44} The paper ran page one stories on the oil development and feature stories about old oil producers, helping to reactivate oil exploration and production in the area. \textsuperscript{45}

In the middle 1930's, Wichita Falls began to recover from the Depression and was listed in \textit{Forbes} magazine as one of the ten cities in the nation in which business had improved best. \textsuperscript{46} A year later, Wichita Falls was listed as one of the Texas cities that made above average progress in economic recovery. \textsuperscript{47}

To progress further, the Chamber of Commerce formed a committee of 100 businessmen, including Ed Howard, to find ways to improve business conditions in Wichita Falls through industrial and civic development. \textsuperscript{48} The \textit{Wichita Daily Times} gave editorial support two days later to the "Forward Business Movement." \textsuperscript{49}

The newspaper played an active role in ensuring that Wichita Falls had sufficient water supply. In 1920, a $4,500,000 bond issue was called for the construction of Lake Kemp-Diversion,


\textsuperscript{45}Interview with Bill Donnell, senior vice president, Times Publishing Company, August 9, 1978.


\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Wichita Daily Times}, October 18, 1936, p. 8.


which would serve as the water supply of Wichita Falls and irrigate 150,000 acres of farmland surrounding the city. The newspaper gave extensive coverage to the bond issue and published an editorial urging voters to approve it. The bond issue was authorized.

In 1944, a $3,500,000 bond issue was called for the construction of a dam on the Little Wichita River that would create Lake Kickapoo, another source of water for Wichita Falls. A page one story reminded voters that Lake Wichita had failed to supply the city's water needs six times in the past. In the same issue, the paper devoted a full page to the city planning commission's report recommending the project. Stories on the city's water supply were featured daily, mostly on page one. The newspaper tried to convey the message that water was the most important factor in city and area growth. The water bonds were approved by a seven to three vote.

In 1940, Ed Howard was named to serve on a water advisory committee, formed to see that Wichita Falls kept an adequate water supply. That same year, Ed Howard's son, Rhea, was appointed to a water improvement committee of the Chamber of

53 Ibid., p. 4.
54 _Wichita Daily Times_, April 11, 1944, p. 1.
Commerce, which helped the city develop a $620,000 project to rebuild and enlarge the city's water filtration plant.  

The Wichita Daily Times contributed significantly to the civic betterment of Wichita Falls by sponsoring many community activities. In 1931, the newspaper established the Junior 4-H Club and Future Farmers of America Calf Show, which became an annual livestock competition highlighted by a banquet for participants. The show is still an annual event. In 1935, the Times Publishing Company established a yearly cooking school for housewives in the Wichita Falls area. The cooking school is still an annual event. In December, 1939, the Wichita Daily Times helped Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer conduct research for the motion picture "Boomtown," by publishing an appeal to area residents for their old photographs of Burkburnett during the 1918-1919 boom. In the spring of 1937, the Times Publishing Company sponsored a fishing derby for youths at Lake Kemp-Diversion and Lake Wichita. The fishing derby was an annual event for the Times Publishing Company until the Northwest Texas Field and Stream Association assumed sponsorship for the event in 1953.

59 Interview with Joe Tom White, executive director, Texas Field and Stream Association, March 15, 1979.
The *Wichita Daily Times* often solicited public support for worthy causes and actively participated in fund drives for nonprofit organizations. In 1932, the *Wichita Daily Times* urged public support of a Parent-Teacher Association free lunch program for needy students. Among those responding to the plea for support was a dairy, which donated 20,000 bottles of milk. Enough money was raised from the drive to pay the five-cent cost per lunch.\(^{60}\)

Ed Howard's son, Rhea, was one of twelve citizens who organized the first United Fund drives for Wichita Falls and one of the first in the United States. The newspaper supported the drive, using the slogan "Give Once."\(^{61}\) In 1934, the Times Publishing Company took the lead in organizing the first March of Dimes campaign in Wichita Falls, beginning the drive on the birthday of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Rhea Howard served as first general chairman for the county campaign, in which $2,500 was collected and sent to the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.\(^{62}\) In January, 1934, Rhea Howard was named to head the fourth birthday ball in honor of Roosevelt, which was given to raise money for poliomyelitis.\(^{63}\) In November, 1937, Rhea Howard was named to the Red Cross Enrollment

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\(^{60}\) Donnell and Moore, p. 17.

\(^{61}\) *Wichita Daily Times*, November 20, 1921, p. 1.

\(^{62}\) Donnell and Moore, p. 17.

committee and the Wichita Daily Times editorially supported the enrollment movement, calling attention to the Red Cross home nursing program, first aid classes, public health work, and services to veterans of World War I.

The newspaper supported the construction of health facilities for the area and promoted movements to combat disease. In June, 1941, the Wichita Daily Times endorsed a plan to set up a countywide health unit for disease control and public health. The health unit was established that year. In July, 1943, the Wichita Daily Times advocated in an editorial a clean-up of the area to prevent poliomyelitis. The newspaper urged citizens to prevent an accumulation of garbage, cut down overgrown weeds and grass, and leave no debris that could harbor rodents, flies or mosquitoes, which could transmit poliomyelitis.

World War II brought many changes for Wichita Falls, even before the United States entered the fight. The Wichita Daily Times worked to encourage patriotism, urged citizens to do their part in the war effort, and tried to maintain high morale among readers. In May, 1940, Rhea Howard became a member of

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67 Donnell and Moore, p. 18.
the Chamber of Commerce aviation committee that sought to improve aviation facilities in Wichita Falls in an effort to attract new industries or a war preparedness plant to the city. The committee urged that the facilities be modernized and that a flying school be established at the airport.69 A year later, a newspaper editorial urged citizens to vote for a $150,000 bond issue that would bring in $16,500,000 in federal funds to the city for the establishment of a United States Army technical school, water system and airport improvements, and a pilot training school. The bond issue, which represented the city's share of the cost of the projects, was authorized.70

Although the nation was called upon to make sacrifices during the war, the newspaper did not always agree with some sacrifices and fought to protect the interest of Wichita Falls in such matters. In 1941, the United States Army Air Corps wanted to assume exclusive use of the city's municipal airport for an air school, but the paper called on city leaders to resist the move, arguing that the airport was vital to the city, just as a railroad had been in earlier days. The Wichita Daily Times editorial encouraged the public to send telegraphs of protest to their congressional representatives.71 A few days

71 Wichita Daily Times, August 5, 1941, p. 8.
later, representatives from the city went to Washington, D.C. in an effort to retain city use of the airport.\textsuperscript{72} A few weeks later, a lease agreement was signed between the city and the military, which turned over the airport to the United States Army Air Corps, but allowed Braniff Airlines to use the facility and private planes access in emergencies.\textsuperscript{73} A newspaper editorial expressed acceptance of the arrangement, arguing that, after the war emergency was over, Wichita Falls would have either a good municipal airport because of government improvements that would be made, or a permanent military establishment. Both would benefit Wichita Falls economically, the editorial said.\textsuperscript{74}

The population of Wichita Falls began to increase in 1941, because civilian and military personnel were sent to the area to build, staff, and undergo training at Sheppard Field, a military installation named in honor of Senator Morris Sheppard of Texas. A \textit{Wichita Daily Times} editorial in March, 1941, discussed the problems of bringing an air school and military establishment to Wichita Falls and urged property owners and landlords to obtain a reasonable return on their rental property, but avoid "unpatriotic rent profiteering."\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{72}\textit{Wichita Daily Times}, August 8, 1941, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{73}\textit{Wichita Daily Times}, August 26, 1941, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{74}\textit{Wichita Daily Times}, August 28, 1941, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{75}\textit{Wichita Daily Times}, March 23, 1941, p. 8.
As in other American cities, wartime restrictions limited wages, rents, building materials, new automobiles, tires, food, gasoline and other items in Wichita Falls. War bond drives; scrap paper, rubber, and metal collections; victory gardens; and food and fuel conservation campaigns were kept before the Wichita Daily Times readers. An editorial in October, 1942, said that forty full pages of the newspaper had been devoted to promoting salvage collections alone.

The Wichita Daily Times participated in the Newspapers Scrap Metal Drive during World War II, in which the newspapers across the country were asked to assume the responsibility of motivating the public to collect scrap metal. The Wichita Daily Times ran large ads that read, "Your Being Lazy May Cost a Life!" "Have you turned in your 100 pounds of scrap metal? Or are you shirking your duty?" Wichita County collected 9,707,257 pounds of scrap metal in the drive, 50 percent more than the national drive quota of 100 pounds per capita.

Adequate housing was of primary interest to Ed Howard, and the Wichita Daily Times often devoted its news and editorial attention to housing conditions. In 1936, rental property in Wichita Falls was scarce. Housing vacancies were

76 Donnell and Moore, p. 19.
77 Wichita Daily Times, October 8, 1942, p. 3.
78 Ibid., p. 11.
80 Donnell and Moore, p. 18.
estimated to be under 5 percent. The Wichita Daily Times published a sixteen-page section on home improvements and repairs, new construction, and the Federal Home Administration housing loans.

In 1938, the Federal Home Administration polled the Wichita Falls area to see if a Wichita Falls Housing Authority was needed. J. H. Allison, vice president and advertising director of the Times Publishing Company, and Ben Donnell served on a Chamber of Commerce low-cost housing investigative committee that was instrumental in obtaining a $450,000 grant under the Wagner-Steagall bill, which provided construction of an apartment complex. In June, 1945, the housing authority was organized, and Ben Donnell was named chairman. Although the new apartment complex would alleviate some of the housing shortage, Wichita Falls still needed single family dwellings to accommodate the population increase. The Wichita Daily Times continued to call attention to the housing needs of the city. In September, 1945, the newspaper published an editorial saying that home building industry in Wichita Falls needed a "Henry Ford" to build enough homes to meet public demand for economical housing.

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81 Ibid., p. 17.
82 Wichita Daily Times, February 23, 1936.
83 Wichita Daily Times, February 24, 1938, p. 9.
84 Ibid.
86 Wichita Daily Times, September 24, 1945, p. 6.
Summary

In summary, the *Wichita Daily Times*, between 1907 and 1948, played an active role in the economic and civic development of Wichita Falls. The publisher, Ed Howard, worked closely with civic and business leaders in the community to promote projects that would improve the quality of life in Wichita Falls. Under Howard's direction, the *Wichita Daily Times* devoted much news coverage and editorial attention to problems and solutions concerning housing, transportation, water resources, health facilities, education, and commerce in Wichita Falls. Howard used his personal influence as a business and civic leader in the community, and the influence of the newspaper to effect many improvements for Wichita Falls.
CHAPTER IV

THE ECONOMIC AND CIVIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE WICHITA FALLS TIMES TO WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF RHEA HOWARD FROM 1948 TO 1976

Rhea Howard was born to Ed and Jettie Howard on July 25, 1892, in Wichita Falls, Texas. He attended Wichita Falls public schools and, as a young boy, helped his father with the publication of the Wichita Weekly Times. He described himself as "just a skinny newsboy" when he sold the first bundle of newspapers of the Wichita Daily Times on May 14, 1907. While still a teen-ager, he wrote news stories, sold advertisements, set type, melted lead, fed the presses, and swept the newspaper building.¹

He attended Trinity University in Waxahachie, Texas and the Eastman School of Business in Poughkeepsie, New York. After graduation from Eastman School of Business, he worked as a district manager of accounting for Blair-Hughes Grocers in Dallas, Texas for about three years.² He was a first


lieutenant with the National Guard during World War I. On October 22, 1913, he married Kathleen Benson. The couple had one daughter, Anna Katharine.³

When his appointment in 1915 as postmaster of Wichita Falls made it necessary for him to leave the newspaper, Ed Howard asked his son, Rhea, to resign his position with Blair-Hughes Grocers and return to Wichita Falls to help operate the newspaper. Rhea Howard became secretary-treasurer of the Times Publishing Company and served in that capacity until his father died in 1948. He was then elected publisher and president of the company. In 1952, he became editor of the Wichita Daily Times and Wichita Falls Record News after Ben Donnell died. A second son of Ed and Jettie Howard, Leslie, worked for the Times Publishing Company in a limited capacity because of illness. He died on July 18, 1966.⁴

Rhea Howard retained all company policies established by his father, and did not alter any aspect of the company operation.⁵ The Times Publishing Company, under Rhea Howard's direction, continued to refuse all alcoholic beverage advertising, to support the Democratic Party, and to promote and support all activities that Howard thought would contribute to the progress of the community.

³Personal history record of Rhea Howard, publisher, Times Publishing Company library.

⁴Wichita Falls Times, April 20, 1975, Sunday Magazine, p. 2.

⁵Howard interview.
If he supported a project, Howard did not hesitate to use his newspaper to publicize its merits. Howard saw himself as a vocal protagonist for his city, and it was his philosophy that a newspaper should provide leadership in the community. "I don't see how a man who runs a newspaper can dig a hole and crawl in, leaving the battleground of civic life. He must be a part of his city. He must take sides in issues. He must help solve the problems," he said.6

Because of his involvement in political affairs, Howard had many political contacts. Not surprisingly, then, Howard wielded considerable influence in Wichita Falls. He was invited to serve on many committees and boards, for to have his participation and endorsement of a project was to lend to its success.

Like his father, Rhea Howard had the good fortune to endorse state and national politicians who won the offices they sought and they did not forget the support he gave them. After his father died in 1948, Rhea Howard maintained an acquaintance with Ed Howard's friend, United States Senator Tom Connally.

During his years as an active worker in the Democratic Party, Rhea Howard developed friendships with Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives for sixteen years, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Baines Johnson, Harry Truman, United States Senators Tom Connally and Lloyd Bentsen of Texas, and Governors Preston Smith and Dolph Briscoe.

The *Wichita Daily Times* was one of the few newspapers in the country that supported Truman for president in 1948. At the dedication of the Sam Rayburn Library in Bonham, Texas, Truman singled out the Wichita Falls publisher, shook his hand, and said, "Here's my good friend, Rhea Howard, of Wichita Falls."^{8}

Rhea Howard kept in close communication with Rayburn, often going to Rayburn to seek his political support in approving a project that would benefit Wichita Falls. After Rayburn's death on November 16, 1961, Howard initiated a campaign among Texas newspaper publishers to raise funds for the Sam Rayburn Memorial Library in Bonham. He began the campaign with a one thousand dollar donation to the fund. Most newspapers in the state joined in the drive, donating to the fund and collecting money in their cities for the library, which became a legislative research center. As a result of his efforts to support the library, Howard was named a trustee of the National Board of Development of the Sam Rayburn Foundation.^{10}

Howard's political activities included serving as a delegate to five Democratic national conventions in which he supported the candidacies of Adlai Stevenson, John F. Kennedy,

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^{7}Ibid.  
^{8}Ibid.  
^{10}*Wichita Falls Record News*, July 20, 1961, p. 2.
Lyndon Baines Johnson and Hubert H. Humphrey.\textsuperscript{11} Howard worked as a district committeeman for the Texas Democratic Executive Committee's Thirtieth Senatorial District from 1950 to 1952 and from 1956 to 1958.

He was an active worker in the Kennedy and Johnson campaigns and earned political favor from the two presidents. In October, 1962, Howard was one of twenty-two Texas publishers invited by Kennedy for a briefing and consultation on national and international affairs.\textsuperscript{12} In October, 1963, he was one of one hundred newspaper executives throughout the nation who were invited by Secretary of State Dean Rusk to attend the National Foreign Policy Conference for Editors in Washington, D. C. to be briefed on foreign affairs.\textsuperscript{13}

Howard's friendship with Johnson proved to be politically valuable. The two were friends from the time Johnson was a freshman congressman in the United States House of Representatives. When Johnson ran for the senate in November, 1948, Howard served as finance chairman and cochairman of the Thirtieth Senatorial District campaign.\textsuperscript{14} Wichita County was one of the pivotal counties to carry the vote for Johnson, and Johnson never forgot Howard's assistance in his election.

\textsuperscript{11} Personal history record of Rhea Howard.
\textsuperscript{12} Amarillo Sunday News-Globe, September 18, 1969, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Personal history record of Rhea Howard.
to the United States Senate. The two remained friends as long as Johnson lived. After Johnson became president, Howard frequently corresponded with him, talked with him on the telephone, and visited him on his numerous trips to Washington, D.C. Howard many times called upon Johnson to lend his political assistance in gaining approval for projects that would benefit Wichita Falls.¹⁵

In May, 1966, during Johnson's administration, Howard was chosen to represent Texas at the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, where leading Americans were briefed by Pentagon officials on the military power of the United States.¹⁶

Howard made full use of his political connections to help Wichita Falls. One of the most significant contributions he made to the economy of Wichita Falls was his work in the reactivation of Sheppard Field, renamed Sheppard Air Force Base. Sheppard Field had been one of the major training bases for the Air Corps during World War II. After the war, military spending was cut back drastically, and Sheppard Field was deactivated in August, 1946. Immediately after Sheppard Field was deactivated, Howard and other community leaders began a campaign to reopen the base, inviting Air Force Secretary Stuart Symington and Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson to Wichita Falls to inspect

¹⁵ Interview with Carroll Copelin, assistant managing editor, Wichita Falls Times, January 24, 1979.

the base premises and to discuss its potential as an Air Force training center.\textsuperscript{17}

Howard made several trips to Washington, D. C. to talk with Rayburn, Connally and Johnson about the possible reactivation of the base.\textsuperscript{18} Trouble in the Far East, which led to the Korean War, convinced Symington that another training center was needed. Sheppard Field was reopened in August, 1948 and renamed Sheppard Air Force Base.\textsuperscript{19} In September, 1948, the community honored Symington, and the Times Publishing Company published a special edition recounting the past and future use of the military installation.\textsuperscript{20} Howard continued his effort to promote the base until it was designated a permanent installation in 1950,\textsuperscript{21} becoming the second largest technical training center in the Air Force. From 1970 to 1975, it had annual expenditures in the Wichita Falls area of $200,000,000.\textsuperscript{22}

After Sheppard Air Force Base became a permanent installation, Howard continued to support it through the newspaper. Special sections were published during annual Air Force Week,

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Wichita Falls Times}, September 12, 1976, p. 19A.
\textsuperscript{18}Howard interview.
\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Wichita Falls Times}, September 12, 1976, p. 19A.
\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Wichita Daily Times}, September 17, 1948.
\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Wichita Falls Times}, April 16, 1975, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}
publicity was given to special base events, feature stories were written on military training programs, and dignitaries who visited the base were given newspaper coverage. Articles were written to promote good relations between the community and the base, and editorials outlined the positive contributions of the base to the community.\textsuperscript{23} When the Sheppard Area Public Relations Council was formed in 1973 to identify common interests of the base and the community, it was given editorial support by the \textit{Wichita Falls Times}.\textsuperscript{24}

Howard made other contributions to the progress of the base which, in turn, helped the progress of Wichita Falls. He was credited with helping to secure funds for a $4,500,000 base hospital, which was dedicated in 1963.\textsuperscript{25} When a move was initiated to accredit the technical courses at the base, Howard was among city leaders who persuaded representatives of the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities to visit the base and audit the courses to determine if they met accreditation standards.\textsuperscript{26} Courses in the base School of Health Care Sciences were accredited in December, 1972, by the Southern

\textsuperscript{23} Interview with Major General Jerry Page, retired commanding officer, Sheppard Technical Training Center, January 29, 1979.

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Wichita Falls Times}, March 13, 1973, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Wichita Falls Times}, April 16, 1975, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{26} Page interview.
Association of Colleges and Universities. The accreditation at Sheppard Air Force Base initiated a move throughout the Air Force to accredit its technical courses.

In March, 1971, the Air Force Association cited the Times Publishing Company as the organization of the year. In April, 1975, Rhea Howard was presented the Air Force Exceptional Service Award, the highest award the Air Force bestows upon a civilian, for his "dynamic action and unselfish dedication of personal resources toward the professional accreditation of the training courses taught at Sheppard and improvement of facilities and training, and improvement of base-community relations."

Adequate housing was of primary interest to Howard, and the Wichita Falls Times often devoted its news and editorial attention to housing problems and conditions. After it was announced that Sheppard Field was to be reactivated, the Wichita Daily Times published an editorial calling for the construction of rental units at prices that could be afforded by the 25,000 anticipated military and civilian personnel to

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27 Interview with Captain Bruce Bossart, chief of administration, School of Health Care Sciences, Sheppard Air Force Base, February 8, 1979.

28 Page interview.

29 Citation on Air Force Exceptional Service Award given to Rhea Howard, publisher, Times Publishing Company, on April 16, 1975.
be stationed at the base. In August, 1948, a page one editorial endorsed a movement to form an organization to construct more rental units. In December, 1948, the Times Publishing Company sent a staff writer to several Texas cities to study methods of coping with housing problems and growing populations. Each report was published on page one of the newspaper.

A Chamber of Commerce housing committee began working on solutions to the housing problem. Howard asked Johnson to help Wichita Falls solve its housing problem. At Johnson's request, Scott Donaldson, Air Force Director of Housing, and R. G. Hughes of Pampa, Texas, president of the Texas Home Builders Association, met with base and city officials and Wichita Falls businessmen to identify the city's housing needs and discuss solutions. The R. G. Hughes Development Company was formed and, by October, 1950, 1,600 modestly-priced homes, apartments, and duplexes were under construction. Four hundred more homes were built by the firm in 1955. In 1973, when housing for military personnel was again in short supply, the Wichita Falls Times

33 Wichita Daily Times, June 1, 1949, p. 1.
published an article urging city real estate dealers to list their properties with the Sheppard Air Force Base housing office. 35

The Wichita Daily Times took the position that housing should be not only ample, but also available at a fair price. In March, 1949, a page one editorial in the Wichita Daily Times reminded readers that Sheppard Air Force Base was making a significant economic contribution to the area and urged them to be hospitable toward military personnel by not gouging them with high rental rates. 36 In November, 1951, the Wichita Daily Times printed a survey on which readers could report if they were being charged high rental rates. At the same time, a voluntary advisory rent board was formed to establish fair rental rates. 37

Howard worked to bolster the economy of Wichita Falls by supporting industrial expansion. He served on the board of directors of the Industrial Development Incorporated of Wichita Falls, which was formed in February, 1963, with $1,000,000 in pledges to underwrite a five-year program to attract new industry to the area. 38 The Wichita Falls Times editorially

37 Wichita Daily Times, November 6, 1951, p. 1.
38 Wichita Falls Times, January 12, 1968, p. 10.
supported the campaign to collect the $1,000,000, and the Times Publishing Company donated $10,000. During the first five years of its existence, Industrial Development helped bring six firms to Wichita Falls; Gates Rubber Company, Swift and Company, Johnson and Johnson, Texcolor Laboratories, Sprague Electric, and Piping Engineering Company.

In 1968, another drive was conducted to collect $1,000,000 to support a second five-year program. The *Wichita Falls Times* ran frequent editorials encouraging donations to the fund and, toward the end of the drive, published page one editorials urging donations. During this drive, the Times Publishing Company donated $15,000. Industrial Development collected $947,399, 5.2 percent short of its goal.

Each year during Texas Industrial Week, the statewide observance to pay tribute to Texas industry and to call attention to its industrial potential, the Times Publishing Company coordinated with Industrial Development to publish daily feature stories on Wichita Falls industries, and devoted news coverage

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43 Hathaway interview.

44 *Wichita Falls Times*, May 2, 1968, p. 4C.
to the organization's goals and activities. During Texas Industrial Week in April, 1965, the newspaper conducted a photo contest in which participants identified the manufacturer of articles in newspaper photographs. Industrial Development provided a $100.00 prize to the winner. 45

In 1969, the Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Development Incorporated merged to become the Wichita Falls Board of Commerce and Industry. 46 The Wichita Falls Times continued to support the organization editorially, publicize its projects, and support it financially. In 1973, when the Board of Commerce and Industry conducted an industrial drive, the Times Publishing Company donated $54,000. 47 Howard helped to contact representatives of prospective industries and published special newspaper editions about new industries that moved to the Wichita Falls area. 48

Howard, who was named to the board of directors of the Board of Commerce and Industry when it was formed in 1969, continued to support projects of the business community and was cited several times for his contributions. In February, 1970, Howard was named "Salesman of the Year" by the Sales and

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45 *Wichita Falls Times*, April 5, 1965, p. 3A.


47 Hathaway interview.

48 Interview with George Adams, Sr., president of Parker Square Savings and Loan, January 9, 1979.
Marketing Executives of Wichita Falls and the Wichita Falls Board of Commerce and Industry for his contributions as a salesman for the city and his leadership in the social and economic development of the city. In 1974, he was presented a Small Business Administration public service award for a three-part series on the agency that was published in the newspaper. The series was reproduced and distributed by the Small Business Administration to 2,800 of its advisory council members throughout the United States. In 1968, Howard was given the Internal Revenue Service Commissioner's Meritorious Public Service Award for its southwest region for the newspaper's contribution to good tax law enforcement in Texas by publishing information on the tax system.

The Wichita Falls Times helped bolster the Wichita Falls area economy by supporting a highway development program. In 1951, the Chamber of Commerce formed a highway committee to work for the development of highways in the Wichita Falls area and appointed Henry Grace, Wichita Falls oil man, to lead the committee's efforts. Grace enlisted the aid of Howard, who was serving on the executive board of the Chamber of Commerce, and Bill Donnell, senior vice president of the Times Publishing

49 *Wichita Falls Times*, February 11, 1970, p. 3A.


51 *Wichita Falls Times*, July 12, 1968, p. 2.
Company, and a team of other civic leaders to begin work on attaining local, state and federal support for the construction of the highway system. Much controversy surrounded the highway development program in the following years. There was organized resistance from the area hotel association, landowners who did not want to sell their property so the highway network could be constructed, citizens who feared the highway would divide the city or be constructed too close to schools, and citizens at Burk Burnett and Iowa Park, Texas, who did not want the highways to bypass their cities.52

The Wichita Falls Times and Record News supported the highway construction program editorially and publicized the program extensively. Howard used his political influence to persuade Texas Highway Commission representatives to appear before the civic and business groups in the area, and "wined and dined" them at his own expense while they were in Wichita Falls. Howard made many appearances with Grace and other city leaders at hearings in Austin, Texas before state officials on the program.53

Bill Donnell helped Grace do much of the work to win public approval of the project, appearing before civic clubs

52 Interview with Henry Grace, Wichita Falls oil man, past president of the Chamber of Commerce, member of the executive committee of the Texas Good Road Association, February 2, 1979.

53 Ibid.
and business groups, conducting research and survey work, and helping to attain the approval of the Wichita Falls city council, Wichita County commissioners, Texas Highway Commission, and the Federal Bureau of Public Roads.\textsuperscript{54}

The highway committee's work on the highway development program eventually led to the construction of the $57,000,000 Red River Expressway, now United States highway 81-287 through Wichita County, and a connecting four-lane highway from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma through the western United States. Other accomplishments of the committee included construction of the farm-to-market 369 through Wichita Falls, Loop 79 to Waurika, Oklahoma, and approval of the Wichita Falls Kell Freeway system.\textsuperscript{55} The relocation of six industries to the Wichita Falls area was credited to the modern freeway facilities.\textsuperscript{56} In September, 1975, Howard, Donnell, and Grace were presented the Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation Road Hand Award for their work in the highway construction program in North Central Texas.\textsuperscript{57}

Howard contributed much of his time, money and influence to organizations that would help the youth of Wichita Falls. He was one of seven persons who organized the Wichita County

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{55}Wichita Falls Times, April 8, 1975, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{56}Wichita Falls Times, October 29, 1972, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{57}Wichita Falls Times, September 16, 1975, p. 1.
Child Welfare Board in August, 1955, and served as chairman of the board from its inception. Under his direction, the Welfare Board established a county probation department. In 1970, he appointed a committee to study the shortages of day-care facilities in the community and, in 1972, a day-care facility designed to accommodate eighty children was established. The Child Welfare Board cosponsored three grants from the Texas Criminal Justice Council and Department of Health, Education and Welfare to fund a Domestic Relations and Family Counseling Service, an extra-judicial probation program for adults, and a teen training and employment program.

Under Howard's direction, the Times Publishing Company continued to sponsor the awards luncheon of the annual Junior 4-H Club and Future Farmers of America Calf Show, a practice the company began in 1931. In 1968, the Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation cited Howard as an outstanding friend of 4-H because he donated money, trophies, and other needed items to the program. Howard served on the board of directors of the Young Men's Christian Association and Wichita Falls Boys Club. In 1955, the Times Publishing Company began

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58 *Wichita Falls Times*, July 22, 1971, p. 2A.

59 Ibid.

60 *Wichita Falls Times*, June 3, 1968, p. 2.

61 Personal history record of Rhea Howard.
sponsoring the city Soap Box Derby and the district spelling bee for elementary school children. Young winners of both events competed in national competition. The *Wichita Falls Times* reserved a page each week for news about high school students. The feature, which began in 1928, was called "Junior Times," renamed "Teen Times," and "Youth Beat." At various times during the years Howard was publisher, the youth page was used as a laboratory for high school journalism students.

The *Wichita Falls Times* worked to make Wichita Falls a healthy place to live, by encouraging readers to eliminate unsanitary conditions. In 1949, health officials reported that Wichita Falls had the second highest incidence of poliomyelitis of any city in Texas. As it had done in 1943, the *Wichita Daily Times* ran a page one editorial urging citizens to eliminate places where rodents, flies and mosquitoes, which could transmit the disease, could harbor by cleaning up filth and trash and cutting down overgrown weeds. The next day, a Chamber of Commerce committee outlined an inspection and clean-up campaign and compiled a list of proposed city ordinances relating to health conditions. A few days after that, the

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64 Copelin interview.
Times Publishing Company and a city radio station conducted a fund-raising campaign to support the clean-up effort\(^6^7\) and collected $10,290.\(^6^8\) About 1,200 workers volunteered to participate in a weekend clean-up effort,\(^6^9\) and the *Wichita Daily Times* and *Record News* ran page one photographs of the volunteers at work.\(^7^0\)

Howard made many contributions to improve education in Wichita Falls. He served on the Wichita Falls Independent School District board of trustees from 1931 to 1940.\(^7^1\) During the Depression, the school system was forced to pay the teachers with script.\(^7^2\) The school system could not afford to keep its lunch program operating so, in 1932, the Parent-Teacher Association initiated a drive to collect funds to open a free lunch program for needy students. The *Wichita Daily Times* urged public support of the program and enough money was raised from the drive to pay the cost of the nickel lunch.\(^7^3\)

\(^6^7\) *Wichita Daily Times*, June 24, 1949, p. 1.


\(^7^0\) *Wichita Daily Times*, June 28, 1949, p. 1.

\(^7^1\) Elizabeth Eyers, list of trustees for Wichita Falls Independent School District, Times Publishing Company library.


The Wichita Falls Times consistently supported school bond issues. No bond election conducted by the Wichita Falls public school system failed.74 The Wichita Falls Times, for example, editorially supported and gave extensive news coverage to a $3,500,000 school bond election in 1954 for a five-year program to expand school facilities.75 The school bonds were approved by a nine to one vote.76

Howard worked to improve and expand Midwestern University. For years, the Wichita Falls Times campaigned to have Midwestern University declared a state-supported college. Howard used his political influence in the effort and served in a number of capacities. He was named to the Midwestern University board of directors in 195777 and was a charter member of the Texas Council for Higher Education, which was established in May, 1969, to identify the needs of colleges and universities in the state.78 Midwestern University became a part of the state system of colleges and universities in 1961.79 In addition, Howard was a charter member of the Midwestern University

74 Interview with Bill Donnell, senior vice president, Times Publishing Company, September 27, 1978.


78 Wichita Falls Times, May 22, 1969, p. 7B.

Foundation, which was established in 1960 to administer bequests and raise funds for the university.\(^{80}\) Howard donated thousands of dollars to scholarship and university improvement funds.\(^{81}\) In February, 1976, Howard received the Midwestern State University Distinguished Service Award for his contributions to the university and for the daily newspaper attention given the university, which provided the community with a better understanding of the university's operation and programs.\(^{82}\)

Howard contributed to the progress of Wichita Falls in many other ways. Between 1948 and 1976, Howard served on the boards of many city and state organizations. In 1959, he was named to the executive committee of the Texas Law Enforcement and Youth Development Foundation, established to enlist the aid of leading citizens to work closely with law enforcement agencies to gain more citizen support for them.\(^{83}\) He served as vice president of the Red River Valley Association in 1968, 1970, and 1971. The association is a four-state organization dedicated to the development of flood control, navigation, water supply, pollution abatement and water recreation.\(^{84}\) In 1971, while he was vice president of the association, the

\(^{80}\)Wichita Falls Record News, May 1, 1976, p. 6.

\(^{81}\)Hathaway interview.

\(^{82}\)Wichita Falls Times, February 20, 1976, p. 1.

\(^{83}\)Wichita Falls Times, December 9, 1958, p. 1.

\(^{84}\)Wichita Falls Times, June 10, 1968, p. 6.
United States Congress allocated $3,500,000 to the association for rehabilitation of the Lake Kemp Dam, which is on the Little Wichita River and owned by the city of Wichita Falls.  

Rhea Howard served on the board of directors of numerous other civic organizations and contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to various church, youth and civic organizations. He was vice president of the North Texas Society for Crippled Children and Adults and served on the board of directors of the American Red Cross, Wichita Falls Woman's Forum, Wichita Falls Art and Museum Center, Wichita Falls Symphony and the United Fund of Wichita Falls. Fund drives and other projects of these organizations received editorial support and news attention in the Wichita Falls Times.

Howard's business connections have extended outside the Times Publishing Company. When the Great Northern, Northern Pacific and Burlington Lines railroads merged in February, 1970, Howard became a director of the Fort Worth and Denver Railway Company, a subsidiary of Burlington-Northern. He is a member of the President's Club, a group of professional and businessmen in the United States, and is a member of Texas Oil and Gas Association.

85Wichita Falls Times, May 25, 1971, p. 5.

86Hathaway interview.

87Personal history record of Rhea Howard.

In general, the Wichita Falls Times stressed the positive aspects of community life and avoided issues that created conflict. Under Howard's direction, the newspaper was generally supportive of Chamber of Commerce and city council actions. There were occasions, however, when the newspaper took exception to council actions, if Howard thought the council was not acting for the public good. In 1956, the Wichita Falls Times campaigned against a city administration effort to increase water rates for general revenue purposes, arguing that the water department revenues should not be used to finance other municipal services, but should be used for future water development. The water rates were not increased that year.

In a December, 1955, page one editorial in the Wichita Falls Times, Howard chastized the city council for buying forty new city automobiles directly from the factory instead of buying them from Wichita Falls dealers. The editorial argued that city government should support the local economy by shopping at home.

There were other actions of the Wichita Falls city council that Howard did not believe were in the best interest of the

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89 Wichita Falls Times, September 2, 1956, p. 1.
90 Donnell and Moore, p. 23.
city. In 1958, the Wichita Falls city council and Water Improvement and Control District Number One, of which Rhea Howard was a board member, proposed building a $15,000,000 reservoir at Ringgold, Texas on the Little Wichita River to supply Wichita Falls with additional water. The site, thirty-one miles east of Wichita Falls, was to be developed in two stages. In full development, the reservoir was to cover 21,010 acres and have a safe daily yield of 67,000,000 gallons. The Wichita Falls Times supported the project vigorously and devoted daily news coverage to it, reminding readers that the project was recommended after years of study by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the Red River Authority, and the engineering firm of Freese, Nichols and Endress. However, ranchers near the Ringgold site, who did not want their land flooded by the project, organized a campaign to oppose the construction and won the sympathy of two city council members. The two councilmen proposed that a reservoir be built on another site, eleven miles southeast of the city between Scotland and Henrietta, Texas. The bond election to build Ringgold Reservoir was defeated.

92Wichita Falls Times, June 20, 1958, p. 1.
93Wichita Falls Times, August 25, 1958, p. 4.
94Wichita Falls Times, July-August, 1958.
95Wichita Falls Times, April 14, 1960, p. 1.
In 1960, the Wichita Falls city council abolished the Water District Number One and scheduled a $12,500,000 water bond election in December, 1960, to build a reservoir at the second site. That site was on the Halsell Ranch and was called the Halsell Reservoir project.\(^97\) The *Wichita Falls Times* opposed the project, agreeing with the Red River Authority and the Corps of Engineers that the project would not fully develop the waters of the Little Wichita River and would not meet the future water needs of Wichita Falls as well as the Ringgold site would.\(^98\) The newspaper argued that the Halsell Reservoir would meet the city's water needs only until 1984, at which time the Ringgold site would have to be constructed. The construction of both reservoirs, the paper argued, would waste water and land. Engineers' reports estimated that 10,500,000 gallons of water per day would be lost through evaporation, and ten square miles of excess land, which could be used for agriculture, would be wasted if both reservoirs were built.\(^99\) Voters approved the project,\(^100\) however, and the Halsell Reservoir, renamed Lake Arrowhead, was built.

In July, 1978, the Wichita Falls Board of Aldermen determined that another reservoir would have to be constructed to

\(^{97}\) *Wichita Falls Times*, November 15, 1960, p. 1.


\(^{99}\) Ibid.

\(^{100}\) *Wichita Falls Times*, December 9, 1960, p. 1.
meet the future water needs of the area and hired a consultant to study possible sites for a reservoir. The site under consideration was at Ringgold, Texas.\textsuperscript{101} As the \textit{Wichita Daily Times} and engineers had predicted in the late 1950's, Lake Arrowhead proved to be inadequate to meet the water needs of Wichita Falls. Although the \textit{Wichita Daily Times} was unable to persuade voters to support the Ringgold project, it did exercise leadership and spoke out in an effort to save money of the taxpayers, avoid waste of land and water, and secure an adequate resource for the city.

On April 3, 1964, a tornado struck Wichita Falls, killing eight persons, injuring 128, destroying 225 homes and 20 buildings, and damaging 86 homes and buildings.\textsuperscript{102} The \textit{Wichita Falls Times} published emergency procedures for the victims to follow, published condition reports on the injured, and reported the status of repair work done to utilities made inoperative by the disaster.\textsuperscript{103} Rhea Howard received a telephone call from President Lyndon Baines Johnson, expressing his sympathy to the victims and promising to help the people who suffered losses. At Howard's request, Johnson sent Small Business Administration


\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Wichita Falls Times}, April 4, 1964, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Wichita Falls Times}, April 5, 1964, p. 4.
and Federal Housing Administration representatives to Wichita Falls to help the tornado victims recover their economic losses.\textsuperscript{104} In 1964, the \textit{Wichita Falls Times} and \textit{Record News} won awards from the Associated Press Managing Editors Association of Texas and Headliners Club for their coverage of the tornado.\textsuperscript{105}

One of the last services Rhea Howard did for the community before the Times Publishing Company was sold to Harte-Hanks Communications, Inc. in April, 1976, was to divert the American Freedom Train to Wichita Falls. During 1976, the nation's bicentennial year, the American Freedom Train traveled 25,833 miles across the country and stopped in 138 cities in 48 states.\textsuperscript{106} Cars on the train contained exhibits of America's 200 years of achievements in technology, art, sports, culture, and crises.\textsuperscript{107}

The train was not scheduled to stop in Wichita Falls, but Rhea Howard asked Lady Bird Johnson, cochairman of the National Advisory Board of the American Freedom Train, to schedule the train for Wichita Falls. Mrs. Johnson fulfilled the request and Wichita Falls became the seventh and final stop for the train in Texas.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{104}Interview with Rhea Howard, publisher, Times Publishing Company, February 8, 1979.

\textsuperscript{105}\textit{Wichita Falls Record News}, April 4, 1969, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{106}\textit{Wichita Falls Times}, January 2, 1977, p. 10A.

\textsuperscript{107}\textit{Wichita Falls Times}, March 7, 1976, p. 4A.

\textsuperscript{108}\textit{Wichita Falls Times}, October 29, 1975, p. 1.
The Times Publishing Company published many stories and a special section on the American Bicentennial-American Freedom Train. During its three-day stop in Wichita Falls, an estimated 15,000 people filed through the train. Major General Cecil Fox, commanding officer of Sheppard Air Force Base, called the train's stopover the 'highlight of Wichita Falls' year-long Bicentennial celebration.

Rhea Howard sponsored three military music concerts during 1976 as part of the city's Bicentennial celebration, distributing tickets to the public at no charge. The United States Air Force Academy Band, the United States Army Field Band, and the United States Armed Forces Bicentennial Band played to capacity audiences in Wichita Falls that year.

Summary

In summary, the Wichita Falls Times, from 1948 to 1976, played an active role in the economic and civic development of Wichita Falls. The publisher worked closely with civic and business leaders in the community to promote projects that

112 Wichita Falls Record News, October 1, 1976, p. 1.
would improve the quality of life in Wichita Falls. Howard used his political influence to reactivate Sheppard Field, which contributed culturally and economically to Wichita Falls. He worked to expand training at Sheppard Air Force Base and improve the relationship between the civilian and military communities. The Wichita Falls Times devoted much news coverage and editorial attention to problems and solutions concerning housing, water resources, community health, youth, education, commerce and highway development.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The Wichita Falls Times had its beginning in 1907, when a group of civic-minded businessmen offered to support Ed Howard, publisher of the Wichita Weekly Times, in the publication of a daily newspaper. Although Wichita Falls had two weekly newspapers, the men wanted a daily publication. To them, a daily newspaper was a status symbol, proof that Wichita Falls was no longer a drowsy settlement in the expansive North Texas plains, but a thriving agricultural and trade center.

With $12,300 in capital, the men founded the Times Publishing Company. Ed Howard and six employees published the first issue of the Wichita Daily Times in May, 1907, with two linotype machines and a gasoline-powered press, capable of printing 500 copies per hour of the eight-page newspaper. There were 1,000 subscribers to the Wichita Daily Times that first year. The payroll was $4,537.

In the next decades, the Times Publishing Company grew into a multimillion-dollar operation, producing two of the most widely-read daily newspapers in a six-county region and the only surviving daily newspaper in Wichita Falls. In 1976, the company was purchased by Harte-Hanks Communications, Inc.
for $15,020,000. The company employed 100 people and had an annual payroll of $1,820,030, and an advertising income of $4,500,000. In 1976, circulation of the Wichita Falls Times was 18,781 and that of the Record News, acquired by the Times Publishing Company in 1928, was 33,313.

From 1907 to 1976, the Wichita Falls Times, under the direction of Ed and Rhea Howard, made significant contributions to the economic and civic progress of the city. Both publishers worked closely with civic and business leaders to promote projects to improve life in Wichita Falls.

Under Ed Howard's direction, the Wichita Daily Times devoted much news coverage and editorial attention to the problems and solutions concerning housing, transportation, water resource development, construction of health facilities, education, and commerce in Wichita Falls. Ed Howard was very influential in the community because he was publisher of the newspaper, and because he had political contacts through his involvement in the Democratic Party at the state and national levels.

During his service as postmaster of Wichita Falls, Ed Howard initiated a project to expand the postal facilities. As a member of the University of Texas Board of Regents, Howard was instrumental in obtaining for the school compensation for oil and gas produced from university lands, which amounted to millions of dollars. While Ed Howard was publisher, the Times Publishing Company sponsored the Future Farmers of America
Calf Show annual banquet, the annual youth fishing derby, and the yearly cooking school for housewives. Each year, the *Wichita Daily Times* promoted the United Fund drive and, in 1934, organized the first March of Dimes drive in Wichita Falls. The newspaper worked to bolster the economy of the city during the Depression, promoting various Chamber of Commerce projects to build commerce and eliminate unemployment. During World War II, the newspaper worked to keep public morale high and to instill patriotism. Officers of the Times Publishing Company helped to establish the Wichita Falls Housing Authority, and construct several hundred rental units for low-income persons with federal funds. The newspaper, through extensive news coverage and editorial support, helped to win passage of two bond elections for the construction of Lake Kemp-Diversion and Lake Kickapoo, additional water sources for the city.

Like his father, Rhea Howard was active in the Democratic Party and had a great deal of political influence. He was an active community leader and served on numerous organizational boards and committees. Under his direction, the *Wichita Falls Times* devoted much news coverage and editorial attention to problems and solutions concerning housing, water resource development, community health, youth, education, commerce, and highway development.

Rhea Howard was instrumental in the reactivation of Sheppard Air Force Base and worked to make it a permanent installation. The reopening of the base helped the city's
economy significantly, but created a housing shortage. The Wichita Falls Times published numerous stories about the shortage and Rhea Howard exerted his political influence to bring together key leaders who could effect a solution. Approximately 2,000 moderately-priced houses and apartments were built. Rhea Howard actively campaigned to make Midwestern University a state-supported institution and served on the university board of directors.

He served on the Wichita Falls Independent School District Board of Trustees for several years and many other organizations that served youth. He supported efforts to bring new industry to Wichita Falls and helped to promote highway development in the Wichita Falls area. Generally, the Wichita Falls Times supported all city and school capital improvements bond elections. Through his friendship with Lyndon Baines Johnson, president of the United States, Rhea Howard was able to obtain immediate disaster relief for the victims of the 1964 tornado. He continued his friendship with Lady Bird Johnson after Johnson's death and, in 1976, asked her to bring the American Freedom Train to Wichita Falls. Rhea Howard not only donated much of his time and political influence to community projects, but he was also a generous philanthropist.

Conclusions

Ed and Rhea Howard were what Alex Edelstein and Blaine Schultz call "community editors." The authors defined community editors as largely accepting elitist values, working
cooperatively with elites and stressing consensus rather than conflict values. Journalist editors, on the other hand, assert the conviction that a newspaper should be a mirror for the community, reflecting all facts. Journalist editors often exhibit a sense of rivalry with elites over issues related to the exercise of power.\(^1\)

Both Howards were part of the power structure of the community, belonging to a select group of decision-makers. They worked cooperatively with other elites in the community, particularly those who belonged to the Chamber of Commerce. The *Wichita Falls Times* often stressed consensus rather than conflict and supported what the "establishment" believed to be the good of the community.

As active leaders in the community, Ed and Rhea Howard were able to contribute much to the progress of the city. That same involvement in community affairs, however, resulted in a conflict of interest and compromised their ability to be unbiased, aggressive journalists.

At times, high journalistic standards were sacrificed. The newspaper did not exercise leadership on some controversial issues and did not perform the historically recognized "watchdog" function of the press in some cases. At times, legitimate

\(^1\)Alex Edelstein and Blaine Schulz, "The Weekly Newspaper's Leadership Role as Seen by Community Leaders," *Journalism Quarterly*, XI (Fall, 1963), 565-575.
news stories were suppressed because they would have been disruptive or would have offended the elite circle.

In May, 1971, Don Waldrip, superintendent of Wichita Falls Independent School District, was discharged from his position in a secret meeting of the school board. The official reasons the board gave for discharging Waldrip were that they did not agree with Waldrip's programs concerning such things as sex education and the open classroom concept of teaching. The unofficial reason Waldrip was fired was that he advocated integration of the schools. A study conducted in 1974 by Ed Lane, Etta Litteken and Edward Pate revealed that many people thought that the group who had worked for the removal of the superintendent were made up of people from the elite group of community leaders.² Waldrip was hired, less than a year after his removal, as superintendent of schools in Cincinnati, Ohio, because he was considered to be a reputable administrator. Many of the programs which he instituted in Wichita Falls were continued after he left, despite the school board's stated opposition to his programs.

A citizens' group attended many of the school board meetings, demanding to know why Waldrip was discharged. The meetings were often heated and bitter, but news accounts were

deliberately toned down by the editors. The *Wichita Falls Times* was editorially silent on Waldrip's discharge and published lukewarm editorials, asking readers to make the best of the integration situation, since the federal government was determined to institute it. Stories were suppressed in which reporters asked officials when the school district was going to conform with the government's integration requirements. Reporters, however, were allowed to report on a program initiated by city ministers to help make integration harmonious.³

The newspaper did not set a good example for the community on race relations. Until the 1960's, photographs of Negroes were not published in the newspaper. Accounts of Negro weddings or other Negro functions were not allowed. A Negro woman could not be entitled Miss or Mrs. in her obituary.⁴

For many years, the school board perpetuated itself with members of the elite group taking turns serving on the board. In order to assure that they alone served on the board, members would retire from their positions rather than complete the term. Remaining members would appoint a replacement to complete the term. When it was time for school board elections, the appointed member was an incumbent and usually won the election. The *Wichita Falls Times* did not report this self-perpetuating system to the public.⁵

³The source of this information asked not to be identified because of the negative nature of the information.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.
Other employees in the Times Publishing Company prevented stories from being published because the stories were critical of organizations in which they were active. In 1971, a *Wichita Falls Times* staff writer wrote a story reporting that City View Independent School District, a small school district in the Wichita Falls city limits operating one school for grades one through eight, owed Wichita Falls Independent School District almost $100,000 in unpaid tuition for City View high school students who attended Wichita Falls schools. An employee of the Times Publishing Company, who served on the City View Independent School District board of trustees, prevented publication of the story. For many years, the Wichita Falls Housing Authority, constructed from federal funds, housed only Caucasian people. Because two officers of the Times Publishing Company had helped to establish the housing authority, reporters for the *Wichita Falls Times* were not allowed to call the public's attention to this fact.  

There were other cases in which reporters were called upon to report on board meetings in which their superiors were actively involved. The reporters were expected to write favorable accounts of the meetings. Until the mid-1970's, the *Wichita Falls Times* never published administrative costs of the annual United Way drive or allocations made to each of the

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6 The source of this information asked to not be identified because of the negative nature of this information.
United Way agencies in the community. Some editors thought that to do so would cause conflict among the recipients of the United Way funds.

Since the mid-1950's, a group of fifty Wichita Falls businessmen have generally determined who would serve as mayor and city councilmen. The group, calling itself the Citizens Committee for Good Government, is comprised of affluent, elite members of the community. The committee members take turns serving on the council and help finance each other's campaigns. Citizens Committee for Good Government candidates rarely lose an election. Middle- and low-income and minority members of the community usually do not serve on the council. Until about 1976, the *Wichita Falls Times* never reported that the Citizens Committee for Good Government endorsed candidates and paid for the campaigns of certain candidates. The newspaper has never published a profile of the committee, identifying its members and describing its operations.\(^7\)

Civic pride, and their desire to preserve their place in the power structure of Wichita Falls, sometimes prevented administrators in the Times Publishing Company from publishing stories that did not reflect a good image for the city. In the mid-1960's, a staff writer for the *Wichita Falls Times* wrote a story reporting that Wichita Falls had a high number of abandoned Federal Housing Administration single-family homes, which were built under the Section 235 program.

\(^7\)Ibid.
Occupants of the homes, who defaulted on their mortgage payments, abandoned the homes, leaving the structures to be wrecked by vandals. The story was not published because it presented a bad image of the community.  

There were other instances in which the newspaper was overly cautious in controversial matters and did not fulfill its journalistic function of informing the public. One such instance occurred in 1972, when the newspaper refused to print a story reporting that Wichita County District Attorney Jim R. Phagan was being investigated by the grievance committee of the Wichita County Bar Association for professional misconduct through malpractice.

A formal complaint against Phagan was first filed in June, 1972, with the grievance committee of the Bar Association. After conducting a hearing, the committee voted to refer the complaint to the grievance committee of the 13th District Bar. The district committee, after holding hearings, voted that a grievance for professional misconduct be instituted against Phagan and they referred the matter to the office of the general counsel of the State Bar of Texas.

A suit was filed against Phagan in the Wichita County District Clerk's office on January 2, 1973. The suit alleged that Phagan was "guilty of professional misconduct through malpractice, through numerous acts of fraudulent and/or

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8 Ibid.
dishonorable conduct and through willful violation of the canons of ethics of the State Bar rules."^{9}

Phagan was accused of improperly handling community property in a divorce case while acting as a private attorney in 1969. Phagan allegedly told his client, the husband, to assign an oil and gas lease to him, but not to date it. He then instructed his secretary to notarize it and backdate it. According to testimony during his disbarment trial, Phagan had agreed to return the property to his client, but did not, claiming that the client owed him legal fees that were unpaid.^{10}

Phagan was disbarred on June 11, 1973, but stayed in office for a time because John Hill, Attorney General of Texas, issued an opinion that disbarment was not enough to remove Phagan from office. Phagan did resign on March 9, 1974, however.^{11} State charges of forgery of a land title were dismissed against him after he resigned.^{12}

When the *Wichita Falls Times* and *Record News* first learned that Phagan was under investigation in October, 1972, Rhea Howard was out of the state on vacation. James B. Barnett, executive vice president and treasurer of the Times Publishing Company, issued instructions that the newspaper would not

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^{11}*Wichita Falls Times*, March 8, 1974, p. 1.

^{12}Ibid.
print the story unless a suit against Phagan was filed in district court. Barnett suppressed the stories because he feared that the paper could be sued by Phagan for libel\textsuperscript{13} and may have been hesitant to print the stories because he had publicly supported Phagan's controversial and vigorous campaign to convict marijuana- and other drug-users in the community.\textsuperscript{14}

Barnett, who served on the Midwestern State University Board of Regents from 1964 until 1973, may have been instrumental in preventing a story on the Phagan case from being printed, in November, 1972, in the university newspaper, The Wichitan. The university publications board, consisting of university administrators and faculty members, called a special meeting to discuss the planned story about Phagan and voted not to allow the story to be published. Ordinarily, the publication board restricted its duties to approving the student editor of the newspaper.\textsuperscript{15}

The Texas Observer and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram printed stories about the Phagan investigation, although the Wichita Falls Times and Record News refrained from doing so until the suit was filed on January 3, 1973.\textsuperscript{16} The two television stations and three radio stations in Wichita Falls followed the example of the newspaper.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13}The source of this information asked not to be identified.

\textsuperscript{14}Interview with Michael Duty, director of public information with Amon Carter Museum of Western Art and editor of The Wichitan during 1972-73 academic year, March 26, 1979.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid.
The *Wichita Falls Times* general practice of avoiding controversial or negative issues is not surprising when one considers that many studies have found that conflict is reported less in the community press. Clarice Olien, George Donohue and Phillip Tichenor found that editors of smaller papers who were in the power structure were less likely to report news of controversy than were editors of papers not in the power structure. Arthur Vidich and Joseph Bensman, in their study of a rural community, found that the newspaper generally emphasized the positive side of life and avoided the unpleasant happenings, such as bitter exchanges at public meetings.

Indeed, Rhea Howard's philosophy was to view life positively. Apparently, he thought he could more effectively contribute to the community if he avoided controversy. He once said:


My temperament has always led me to dwell on the virtues of men and institutions rather than upon their limitations. My disposition has always been to build rather than tear down or join the wrecking crew.20

Studies have concluded that newspaper publishers often are among the top decision-makers in the community and Ed and Rhea Howard were no exceptions. Perhaps the Howards avoided controversy, at times, to lessen the strain between themselves and their business associates and friends. As part of the elite group in the community, the publishers very likely shared many of the power structure's values and role prescriptions for the newspaper. Therefore, they would see no harm in maintaining the status quo and minimizing controversy. The publisher of a newspaper assumes several roles, including that of citizen, businessman and journalist. At times, these roles are incompatible. It would not be unusual to find a publisher who would subordinate his journalistic role in those instances. By removing himself from the power structure, a publisher might accomplish less. Ed and Rhea Howard were able to contribute significantly to the progress of the community because they were part of the power structure.

By avoiding conflict, community newspapers perform the function of tension management, Olien, Donohue and Tichenor wrote. This function can be valuable because small communities

have fewer mechanisms for protecting the social order against total disruption that might result from uncontrolled public dispute.21

Researchers have listed other reasons why smaller newspapers, like the Wichita Falls Times, emphasize consensus rather than conflict. Smaller communities have fewer interest groups and thus have less dissension. These communities rely more heavily on interpersonal channels of communication than do larger cities. Consequently, much controversial discussion may filter through the interpersonal communication channel, rather than show up on the pages of a newspaper. Leaders in small towns can communicate directly with each other about issues of concern without depending on the mass media.22

Decision-makers in Wichita Falls frequently operated like town leaders studied by Edelstein and Schulz.23 They frequently worked out new ideas themselves, organized support for the projects, and then took them to the newspaper for support and publicity.

Metropolitan newspapers, on the other hand, more frequently report controversy in order to facilitate public dialogue necessary to resolve conflict. They are often used to test public reaction to new ideas and to reach potential "legitimizers" of a project.24

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21Olien, Donohue and Tichenor, p. 244. 22Ibid.

23Edelstein and Schulz. 24Olien, Donohue and Tichenor.
The Wichita Falls Times is a medium-sized newspaper and is neither a community nor a metropolitan newspaper. As a small daily operating in the early 1900's, the Wichita Daily Times was very characteristic of a community newspaper. It met the goals expected of a hometown newspaper and served readers on a grass-roots level. Through the years, the paper grew in technological sophistication and circulation, but did not change philosophically because ownership did not change. It remained a community newspaper in a city that became much larger and more diverse.

If one subscribes to the theory that the press is an instrument of social change and that a certain amount of tension is necessary for social change, then one must assume that a newspaper which avoids reporting conflict hinders the progress of the city. The Wichita Falls Times, by emphasizing the less controversial aspects of community life, probably hindered the progress of the city in some respects. For example, the improvement of race relations was retarded because the newspaper did not exercise aggressive leadership. Actions of the elite group, which were probably not always in the best interest of the entire community, were condoned by the newspaper by its silence.

Nevertheless, Ed and Rhea Howard made many significant personal contributions to the community. The newspaper, under the direction of the publishers, took advantage of every opportunity to protect the military, agricultural, and oil
industries in the Wichita Falls area. These three industries were the economic base of the city. On the whole, the newspaper did more good than harm for the city and contributed to its progress by fulfilling many functions. The *Wichita Falls Times* helped to establish the community's identity, dispense information to the public, at times helped to mold public opinion, and worked as a cohesive, stabilizing force in the community.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

A possible subject for another study would be an investigation into how publishers handle the contradictory roles they play in the community. Newspaper publishers are citizens, businessmen and journalists. How do they exercise their citizenship by becoming involved in the community without creating conflict of interest situations for themselves as journalists?

Another possible subject for study would be a comparison of corporately-owned newspapers and family-owned newspapers. How do they differ in operation, editorial stance, and involvement in the community? Do corporate-owned newspapers fulfill a more aggressive "watchdog" function in the community because the administrators do not have emotional ties in the community? Do corporate-owned newspapers, on the other hand, fail to appeal to their readers on a grass-roots, personal basis? Why are more family-owned newspapers selling out to corporations?
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