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Interview of George Didden, Jr., conducted by Ruth Ann Overbeck. Interview was conducted on June 20, 1990 in the library of the National Capital Bank Building at 316 Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E. Washington, D.C.

Format: first portion is synopsis only. After the dotted line the statements, questions, and paragraphs enclosed within ()s are Overbeck's. All non-parenthesized entries are by Didden.

Born Washington, D.C. in "southeast part" of the city.

Father was George Didden, an architect in Washington.

My grandfather on my mother's side was Albert Carry, one of the first stock holders of this bank. He later became a vice president. In those early days, banks would give their largest depositors a seat on the board. It was honorary.

Albert Carry, (II or Jr.) succeeded his father when he died in 1925.

I succeeded my uncle to this board in July, 1940.

I'm a lawyer by profession and did legal work for the bank before I became a director here and shortly thereafter I became the counselor to the bank and I still

[He answered "Not really," when I asked him if as a young boy he'd aspired to become professionally associated with the bank.]

When I graduated from law school I opened a law office downtown. General practice of law. Became affiliated with the bank as a lawyer. When the then chief executive became ill members of his board came to me and asked me I would become president of the bank and a group sponsored me for that position. I retained the title of Legal Counsel for the bank.

[He responded "No," when I asked him if he was also on the board of East Washington Savings {I said "and Loan," which was a misnomer, but he knew what I meant}.]

From here transcription is verbatim, but there are a few rough places where I have to go back to fill in a

word or two.

in 1943 to start a movement to consolidate National Capital Bank and East Washington Savings Bank and that became successful in 1944.

(A number of people had tried that before, for 30 or 40 years. To what do you attribute your success?)

That is true. Harry McKee was president of both and was failing badly because of old age and I think some of the directors of East Washington Savings Bank felt they would have to find a new chief executive. That gave the [Natl Capital] bank board opportunity to persuade enough of them [East Washington Savings] to consolidate the two banks. They were operating side by side under an agreement that the savings bank would not take any commercial deposits and that National Capital would not take any savings deposits. I thought that was a great failing in National Capital Bank and insisted that National Capital Bank start taking savings. Members of the board of East Washington thought that might do great harm to East Washington Savings and that's one of the reasons I think that changed it.

(Well, you did have some members of the board in common over different periods of the banks' histories. Did you have members in common at that time of the merger?)

Yes, we did. There were at least three or four men who were on the board of both banks at the same time. Those continued to be members of the board of National Capital after the consolidation, plus some other key members of East Washington Savings' board, who then were taken in as members of the National Capital Board.

(You made a decision to expand the bank to a branch bank shortly after that, I believe.)

Yes, National Capital had never had any branch. I thought it was time to branch out and we opened a branch National Capital at Randall Highlands.

(What other communities had you looked at as options for the bank; or was Randall Highlands the most logical? What made you go there?)

Well, I still felt we should remain a community bank. I wanted an area that was contiguous to our present area on Capitol Hill, that gave us some chance to expand across the [Anacostia] river. The river tends to be a dividing (trails off)

(The bank formed the branch shortly after the end of World War II, as I believe. Was there a lot of activity, development, new families in Randall Highlands, or was it almost a complete developed community?)

It was a separate small community. It had been growing and expanding, both business people and residential and more or less a natural outgrowth for a business on Capitol Hill. I didn't want to move downtown because it was an obvious transfer the main office to a downtown commercial location. I wanted it to remain a community bank, which it has for a hundred years.

(When you said earlier in the tape where you were born you referred to "Southeast Washington." My understanding is that your parents lived out by Lincoln Park at that point. I assume from your choice of words that you did not consider where you lived as part of Capitol Hill. Was that not a definition, was it called Lincoln Park?)

I don't know. I think the term is not a precise term of geographical location. I never considered that, as I think about it now, as part of the Capitol [Hill]. Some people did consider the entire southeast Washington as part of Capitol Hill, but I never considered it that way.

(The reason I asked that question is because the very earliest records of the bank talk about serving the southeast section of Washington, but made a concerted appeal to the people across the [Anacostia] river as well as to the people here on this side of the river and I didn't know if this was phrase you had used so many times because of your association with the bank or whether it was a personal decision, so thank you for clarifying that.

What kinds of changes do you feel you have made to the bank that are the most beneficial?)

Well, I think building this new main office building was one of the primary steps that I took. The old building was built around the turn of the century and was no longer suitable for the bank. It had no elevator and the stories were 20 feet [in height]. When you climbed up to the third floor it was extremely tiresome and elderly people couldn't make it. Now, of course, we have an elevated building and we had outgrown the old building in many ways.

(Are you the person who can take the credit for having initiated the first drive-in or drive-up window in banking in Washington?)

I think we were actually the second. I think our drive-in window was the first truly practical drive-in. I think another downtown bank had a branch at Connecticut and Calvert Street, but the drive-in had no way out. They had to erect a turntable and drive on the turntable and then have the table turn around to exit the car back on the street. It didn't prove very practical. Ours was straight through and you could go out the other way.

(You installed that here at the Capitol Hill bank.)

Right.

(Was there anything that you tried to implement that didn't work?)

No, I can't recall anything we attempted that did not work. Most everything we tried was so carefully thought out ahead of time that we didn't run into any trouble. That's been true in planning this new building. We've run into virtually no trouble spots by reason of the fact that every location, every square foot of the building was thought out carefully as to its use to its best advantage. This proved to be a very practical operation.

(Now, you had a major role that you played in those plans, as I understand.)

Yes. I did. I don't know whether I inherited any architectural ability from my father or not, but I really acted as the chief designer of the building. Also, decorating. I did most of the decorating.

(For the record, I've been told that your favorite color is blue.)

That is true.

(Both this bank and the branch bank bear that stamp.)

Yes. I wouldn't let them put any orange in the bank because, just like I know the kids [go with] so-called earth colors, rust, orange and I have a natural tendency toward the blues, that's true.

(Is that partly because you love the water so much?)

I doubt that there's any connection.

(You are quite a sailor.)

Yes.

(Is there anything that you personally would have changed if you had known what the outcome of implementing that process had been in banking?)

That's very difficult to say. Looking back I can't think of any thing, move I would like to have made, but didn't. Possibly in light of expanding, a few more branches, but in the light of present conditions I'm very happy that we did not.

(You are known for being very forthright in your opinions. What changes would you make to banking law that you think would be better for the economy, the nation, your customers, your depositors?)

Well, some of the worst things that happened I think [was] when they relaxed the old regulations which absolutely forbade banks from paying interest on commercial accounts. They gradually changed that and banks are now competing with each other in a sense to buy that kind of business by paying more interest than its neighbor. I think that has resulted in a great deal of banking troubles and is largely responsible for the savings and loan trouble. I attributed the bank holiday back in '29 and '30 to the same, bidding for deposits. That's why it was outlawed as an aftermath of the '29 and '30 bank holiday. And then they began to relax it and today many banks are paying more to get deposits than they can earn on the money when they get it. It results in a deficit. My philosophy has never been to take any piece of business at a loss. I never had a size complex or big shot complex. I was perfectly happy to be a small time community banker. Being a large bank with [...] a giant bank with great deposits was never an ambition of mine. I very, very carefully avoided it. We've had slow steady growth.

(One of the things that I found when I was doing the research was that part of that slow steady growth was attributed to the fact that unlike a lot of your competitors you were very willing to loan money on automobiles. Now, is that a correct interpretation?)

Yes, we did. I saw no reason why we couldn't lend money safely on new automobiles and we did a very extensive business and had very few losses in doing it.

(Were most of the people to whom you loaned money for automobiles also clients of the bank, or depositors of the bank?)

No, as a matter of fact I think most of the business came from outside. We always brought a lot of business in from many miles around. I think the bank became well-known for its reasonable interest rates on such loans. We don't have that much business today because dealers have gotten into the business of financing, although we still do a bit of it.

(How would you compare the volume of business of the bank in relationship to housing or real estate loans and automobile loans?)

Well, a few years back I think our total automobile loans exceeded our mortgage loans. Today that's no longer true. Automobiles have dropped down and the mortgage loans have come ahead steadily. So, our largest category of loans today are mortgage loans.

(What is the first domestic real estate loan that you can remember that was for over \$10,000?)

I'm sorry, my memory isn't that good any more.

(Do you have a, do you remember whether or not you did any loans of that magnitude before the end of

World War II?)

Oh, I think so.

(Would they have been for Capitol Hill houses, or would they have been for the houses out in maybe Randall Highlands?)

They came from so many places. Today we draw mortgage loans xxx all over the city and even most of the suburbs. Our rates have always been reasonable enough to attract that business. Mostly we concentrate on owner occupied residential largely. We don't do very much commercial real estate, some, but not a great deal.

(Is there a philosophy behind that?)

Yes. That's always been the safest kind of business. Back in the good days of savings and loans when they were healthy they also specialized in that. When they switched to large commercial development, that's when they got into trouble.

(You came to this field as an attorney.)

Right.

(Where did you pick up your banking acumen? Was it on the job? Or did you go back and do special course work?)

Well, I studied as I went. You learn when you study law to do a great deal of reading and I read a great deal. And I went back and studied the history of banking and formulated policy ideas and I still try to keep up with it although the laws and regulations are so numerous it takes about a half a dozen of us to keep up with them today. If I read every new regulation that came across my desk I'd go blind.

(Is that the biggest change that you've seen in the relationship of the federal government to the banking industry?)

Oh yes. That's one of the biggest, yes.

(What would be another one?)

I think government has tried to influence the growth of banking as certain xxx they have pushed large commercial banks and believe that it is better to have these big commercial banks and not so many small community banks. I xxx the concentration that take most of the money in great big banks is harmful to the public. I think the small community bank knows its people better and is closer to the people and is better

able to serve them and help them.

(What has been the biggest change in the larger neighborhood that surrounds the bank? The community you serve?)

Oh, the community changed over the years. I've watched Capitol Hill change. At one time, the United States Navy Yard was the chief influence of most southeast Washington. It was the greatest employer and most of those people xxx nearby became homeowners and were good solid middle class people [who] had good steady government wages. The more affluent people began to move away to the northwest section. We still have many of the old-time residents, the second generation of the old residents whose parents or fathers at least worked in the old Gun Factory that's almost gone now, I think.

(White collar paper pushers.)

They've pretty well closed up that part of it.

(What did you first think about the idea that people of substantial means were coming back to some of the old houses and redoing them?)

Well, the growth in meant northwest and the property values in southeast were stabilized or actually decreased. That meant great opportunities for people to buy property in southeast and renovate [it]. It was convenient for many of them to get to xxxx their working place and it allowed young professional people in particular to start to move over here and of course that generated a whole new class of people for the bank.

(Now, you served on the District Bar Association board and became its president.)

No.

(You were not its president?)

No. Not the Bar Association, the Bankers Association.

(Pardon me, Bankers Association. Your namesake has done likewise and your family is noted for being active in community affairs. They have part of CHAMPS and the Folger Board, the National Zoo, and a number of other things. Is this a basic family trait or is this something that comes out of a business community orientation?)

I think it comes out of talent xxx. I never was really a joiner. I belong to different organizations, but because of very poor eyesight, that was a great handicap. I was almost an introvert by reason of not being

able to see which made me terribly shy. To be a good joiner and social person you have to be able to know people on sight and know their names. I could never do that, so I was very limited in that direction.

(You certainly turned your talents to good use otherwise. You offset that. At one point, I believe, when you first became bank president you had a depositor who ultimately became the Vice President of the United States. It was Alban Barkley.)

Yeah. He used to bank here and he used to borrow here also. I remember lending him the money to go to one of the conventions when he ran for vice president. He came to me and wanted to borrow \$10,000 or \$15,000 for "back room politics." (I love it!) That's what you need to entertain in the back room.

(Now what kind of collateral would you take for a loan like that?)

Well, the only thing he had at the time was some farms on his property in Kentucky. He didn't have any actual collateral. His financial statement always had these four xxx farms. During the wartime he used to say that got WPA and PWA and such organizations to build lakes and streams on his property which increased its value. I think the only way he was able to pay xxx was that he married a rich woman and she finally paid off his debts.

(That helps. What's the most unusual request you've ever had from a person who's come in to ask for a loan?)

Well, I had a very presentable young lady come from New York to me. I think she was an actress and wanted some money to get her teeth capped. I loaned it to her and she repaid it.

(Very good. When you became affiliated with the bank you inherited a relationship of the family to the bank.)

Yes.

(Did you encourage that relationship in your children?)

Yes. I think, well, I meant to. The entire Carry family banks here and they're large depositors and stockholders in the bank and they continue. They still do to this day. Being wealthy people they carry large accounts, some times as much as a million dollars. I think that's been part of the stability and the reputation of this bank. They [the public] knew a wealthy family was 100 per cent behind this bank. Some of the directors who came to me to see if I would go with the bank, they said because of the family background. I was the grandson of one of the original stockholders of the bank.

(A number of other families have been associated with the bank off and on. I understand the Marlow

family)

Yep, the Marlow family they were connected with both this bank and the East Washington Savings Bank and when there was a movement to talk about consolidating the banks, Ralph xxx Marlow told me he gave me the first proxy he'd ever given anybody to vote his stock.

(That was quite an honor. Were the Marlows at that time already doing their development of the Marlow Heights area?)

No. That was their farm. They actually didn't develop it themselves. They sold the old farm and some developer bought it all up.

(In addition to the personal kind of honor that Mr. Marlow paid you by giving you his proxy, what other kind of indications have you had about how people perceive you?)

Well, I was always a serious person, even as a young man. Never very frivolous and I got along very well with older people. I guess it's stood me in good stead over the years. I was comparatively young when I started. I think when I became president of the bank I was one of the youngest bank presidents in the United States. Now I'm one of the oldest. I go from one extreme to the other.

(You were the youngest president of a Washington bank.)

Yeah, I was.

(Are you the oldest president of a Washington bank?)

Yeah. (That's quite an achievement.) Yeah. Stretching from one to the other.

(Has there ever been anything that made you just want to throw up your hands and say, "I'm not going to do this any more?")

Well, it's getting that way. I would have to admit the present regulatory system. It's structure has taken most of the pleasure out of banking. Now it's just plain hard drudgery. It used to be a pleasure to come to work and help people meet the problems of the day, but now it's so overwhelming and I guess you need youth to combat that because I no longer have that. I have some of the young people around me to take part of that.

(You still come into the bank several days a week when you're in town.)

Right. (Do you still service clients? END OF SIDE A. (people whom you service as clients?))

Yes. There are many people I've served over the last 50 years who still like to come to me and find out what I think about this or that, particularly in today's economic turmoil and the conditions of the economy. They want to know my opinion. They know I'm a natural conservative and I give them good conservative advice.

(You were brought into the bank in the middle of the Depression as its legal counsel. There is a story that I hear every so often that predates that just a little and I wonder if you have any personal knowledge of it. And that is that when the government was getting ready to declare the bank holiday that in order to safeguard the bank's, part of the bank's funds or whatever, they were transferred to the Donohoes for overnight. Now, is there any truth to that?)

It wouldn't be possible.

(I had thought that, but that's just one of those little oral history untruths that come up every so often.)

I think that some of the reverse would be true.

(O.K. Coxey's Army came to Washington.)

Yeah, I remember that.

(and they camped not too far from the bank. Was there any special security that had to be implemented then or at any other time that you can remember?)

Yes. On occasion we've had special guards to come.

(Was one of those special times the spring after Martin Luther King was assassinated?)

Yes. xxxxx

(Describe what that event, the effect, the aftermath of that event did to the business community on Capitol Hill, please.)

I don't think it was anything lasting. Now, it was very upsetting and traumatic at the time. I remember as a young man actually going down where they set up tents in Anacostia Flats. Went down and walked in the tented area and their fires and all. It was a very disillusioning and disheartening thing to see all those people. Most of them looked like tramps and beggars and xxx every thing were lost in a sense.

(Your building is only about two blocks from the Capitol. During World War II there were some initial, in the first part of the war there were some armaments placed around in various places on Capitol Hill, anti-aircraft batteries out on Massachusetts Avenue. Were any of those close to this part of the Hill?)

Not that I recall.

(What's the most exciting thing that ever happened?)

The basement of the bank was designated an air raid shelter at one time. We kept all kinds of supplies. I remember rations and the bottles of water. Might be some still down there for that matter.

(Did they have practice air raid drills?)

Yes.

(And were people out on the street to come into the bank at that point?)

Yeah. Some people came in and the air raid warden went down in the cellar.

(I think I'm surprised. I think of all the businesses that I would think it would be appropriate to have uninvited people into) Yes (it's not the bank cellar.)

It wasn't. It didn't help much, security in any event, but the cellar of the old branch had heavy construction. The cellar would be the best protection against a bomb.

(What kind of conditions had Mr. McKee left? He'd been ill for quite a while, hadn't he when he retired from the bank?)

Yes. xxx Well, he was the president of the bank during the '29-'30 bank holiday. When I came in they still had a lot of stocks and bonds that were practically worthless and I had to clean them up. He had lost his nerve completely. As far as he was concerned the money could stay in the vault. They wouldn't lend any and invest any. The bank's earnings were very poor. I'd seen some of the Depression, but I hadn't experienced it as a banker and I was young and still had the energy of youth, so I wasn't afraid to bring it back to what would be normal.

(Did the government interfere in your efforts to do that?)

No. They could tell that while the bank was still sound and solid, it couldn't remain so without producing income and they knew sooner or later it'd had to change. And I was able to do that.

(What was the most important area that you felt the bank at that time should invest in?)

Well, [at] one time the bank used to invest in ordinary corporations' stocks and bonds. They xxxx investments almost entirely government securities and gradually we built it back where the money was fully invested, but in very conservative types of investments, as it is today. We've been rated time and

again as one of the strongest banks in the nation. I've received two certificates from two different bank analysts rating the bank as one of the top banks in the nation for safety and security.

(You have a policy of having a very high ratio of assets to debts.) Yes.(In fact the last time I got one of those little pieces of paper that rated the bank high when it came in my bank statement it indicated that, I believe, there was in excess of 100 per cent of assets over debt.)

No. (Did I not read it correctly?)

That wouldn't be exactly right. (What is right?)

Banks deposit xxx. Your capital is what they judge by. We have a high ratio of investment of our own to the bank. It's one of the highest in the country, compared with its deposits, about 20 something per cent, the last time I looked at it it was about 23 per cent. That means that that money would be dissipated before a depositor could lose any money. That's what they've done now with the savings and loans. They're making the owners pay up money so the FDIC wouldn't bear the total loss. All this would be a substantial amount for credit purpose.

(What public figure in your experience in the bank would you rank as having been the best for the soundness of banking?)

Some of the past chairmen of the Federal Reserve. All I can think of was Arthur Burns who was a conservative minded person and who was not dominated by politics in any way. He didn't play politics with the banks xxx. They like to see all this money, depositors' money sitting in the bank. They always xxx Why can't we use that money, it's just sitting there, But it doesn't belong to you. It doesn't make any difference, use it temporarily and we'll pay it back. They think they have the right to use all that money, billions and billions of dollars and they try to use it for social causes in a lot of ways to use to help the poor. They would rather xxx principal xxx Politics and the banking should be entirely separate.

(What do you want to be remembered for most in banking?)

I guess for running a very honest and careful operations in which no depositor has ever lost any money at all or ever will.

(Your depositors are very important to you, aren't they, Mr. Didden?)

Oh yeah.

(And over and above just the fact that they're doing business at your bank? They seem to be important to you, as almost an extension of a family in a way. That they're your concern.)

xxxx The depositors are really one of my main jobs. Naturally I try to protect the stockholders, too, but to run a good sound operation that doesn't endanger any of the depositors' money. When they step up to the window and want to draw their money it's there waiting for them. I don't want to have to say, "I'm sorry, we've loaned it to Sam Jones and he didn't pay it back, so you'll have to wait till next week. You want your money and that's xxx It's there whenever you want. No excuses.

(Do you think that you have had, could you formulate any guiding principles? Over time, I'm sure you've had an opportunity to think a lot about banking. Do you have your own creed or your own personal philosophy?)

Oh yeah. (Besides protecting your depositors and the stockholders?)

Yes. xxx lender, too. When people want to borrow money or want to buy a new car, somebody ought to help them. And if it's done properly it's good for us and good for them, too, if you can do it safely. There's no reason, I don't believe that anybody that's connected with bank policy should be a gambler of any kind. Don't take chances with other peoples' money. I don't gamble. xxx that's the best I know how as if it were my own. And I don't gamble. And I don't gamble use other people's money to gamble. Of course there's a risk element of lending money any time. People can have misfortunes and can't pay it back. But the majority of the people do. You make enough to cover the few misfortunes we've run into.

(Do you think that the banking industry as it exists today, not necessarily here at National Capital, because you're unique, but at another bank, do you think on average that you would advise a young person to go into banking?)

No. There's too many people that're guided by greed and the greed for more and more makes them gamble. They take risks that they shouldn't take. I don't have that greed. I have enough to be comfortable. They pay me well. I have some inheritance, so I have enough. I'm the largest stockholder in the bank. I invest in what I know best. That's my own institution. If I didn't have faith in it I don't know why anybody else should. Most of what I have I've invested in the bank.

(And I understand that enough people besides you believed in the bank that when you decided to build the new building you didn't have that much difficulty raising capital.)

We didn't have any difficulty at all. We borrowed about two million dollars. It didn't take two weeks to find it. We paid it back, I don't know how fast it was, but I know that it was within ten years, it was all paid back. That's one of the smartest moves I ever made was to build this building. It's worth probably three times what it cost me and we get xxx in most of it and we get a very nice income from it.

(Is there anything that I haven't asked you or that we haven't discussed that you'd like to go on record saying?)

I think most of the present savings and loans problems and bank problems were brought on by the executives themselves. I don't think it's due to economic problems. It might have had some difficulty in farming communities where they've had crop failures or what not, but by and large most of the bank failures and "S and L" failures are gross mismanagement. They have nobody to blame but themselves. I have directors that come to me that read all this information that comes out of Perpetual which is one of the bedrock savings and loans of Washington where the president is resigning under fire. They're in trouble. The area's largest savings and loans report the return to basics. They should never have departed from the basics in the first place.

(The basics are good sound banking practices?)

Yes.

(How are you going to celebrate your fiftieth anniversary with the bank?)

Well, actually now there are two different things that are fiftieth. I was on the board three years before I became president of the bank, so what I am celebrating now is in 1940 I became a director. I've been director of the bank so the board is having a party.

(Now are you going to do anything special for yourself?)

No, I don't think so. I might take a cruise on my boat some place. I enjoy it's very relaxing to me. You see, I have very limited eyesight. I can't engage in any kind of a sport. I can't play golf, I can't even drive a car. I used to be able to drive a boat, but I can't any more because it's too crowded. I could out on the ocean somewhere where there's plenty of room, but... [trails off]

(For someone who has troubled eyesight as you have had, you started out in a field that is extraordinarily difficult because law depends on eyesight. You got into another one that extraordinarily difficult because so much of banking depends on eyesight. I know you're a voracious)

Yes. You have to be able to read. I read everything. I love these cheap novels; I read them by the ton. My house is loaded with them. But it's xxx something xxx

(I notice that the paper you just read from has been enlarged.) Yeah.

(What did you do)

They do that for me here.

(Before we had Xerox machines or copying machines what other techniques did you)

I used to have to use a magnifying glass and I use large print books because ordinary print always led to eyestrain. I brought in some instructions on a camera as operating the camera I couldn't read it without a magnifying glass. I had Diana blow it up for me so I could read it.

(You talked about the fact that you tended to be shy or not to be, more introverted because you couldn't recognize people at a distance. What have you learned to do to compensate for that? Do you know people's voices, do you look at their)

Yes. I can tell voices and mannerisms, even hair styles. That helps. Now and then I've mistaken a person. I've talked with someone now and then and turned out to be someone I didn't know at all. I'm a little hesitant. In limited surroundings with a limited number of people I don't have that trouble. I'm chairman of the board of twenty or twenty something men for fifty years and I've never had any trouble operating in a group I knew.

(Do you think the day will ever come when National Capital will have a woman on the board?)

I think so. I'm tempted right now. I remember when I had a bank director resign from the board because I employed women. He was old-fashioned. During the war time, women are what carried us. They went by priorities and banks didn't have very high priorities and we hired them out of ten cent stores or waitresses or any place we could get them, and made bookkeepers out of them. We couldn't have run the bank without them.

(You lost a substantial, well not lost, a substantial proportion of your bank staff went off to fight the war.)

Right. And you couldn't find replacements either. That's when the women came in. I have two women officers of the bank now. Mrs. Bolton is a vice president and Mrs. Johnson downstairs is an officer and I have a branch manager in our office who is a woman. [trails off]

(When you opened the bank at the branch, in the branch bank, you had a staff that included both men and women. That one's had both men and women from the start, but this establishment has had them in fits and starts.)

Yeah. Although it's been steadily since the war. We haven't been without at least half a dozen women. Right now I guess we are almost half and half. It might be more women than men right now. and... Mrs. Bolton, I think, is one of the best, most capable officers I have in the bank. She's been here a long time,

she's an extremely capable person.

(Do you remember the name of the member of the board that resigned?)

Yes. (Do you mind telling me?)

I can't recall it. It doesn't come to me quickly.

(O.k.)

(I would like to thank you very much for your time.)

It will come to me and I can tell you. My memory is not as good as it used to be, but a lot of times my memory'll come back to me like that.

(I tend to think that's because you know so much, that you don't think it so good, because you have so many more thoughts to process to get the right answer.)

It's crowded up there, that's true.

I have directors come to me practically every meeting. They're downtown somewhere and they say, some friend of theirs has, some downtown banker, says, "You know, it sure proves that George Didden was right about banking, what's happened to them down there and he's sitting over there solid as a rock."

(What are your hopes and dreams for the bank's future?)

I'd like to last a few more years. My anniversary as president of the bank, fiftieth, will be in '93. I'd like to last that long. I had to watch my predecessor go down hill and I don't want to have that happen. Of course, I have four sons here to keep me on top of things. But, I have some impairments since I've had this stroke. I can't get around well. I get very disillusioned being a cripple of sorts. But it could have been worse. Well, thank you for coming over. If you think of anything else....

(I thank you, Mr. Didden. Congratulations. You've certainly left a legacy for the community and established s...)

I hope I've ingrained enough of my philosophy in my sons to keep it up this way. It's what I want to happen. I hate to see them let it go and degenerate into something else. Somehow I think they try anyway.

(Those of us who deposit with you hope that your hopes come true.)

Well they're all good boys. I haven't had any trouble with any of them.

(They're very nice people. They're a credit to you and they show how well you have guided them.)

I tried to make them be gentlemen first and no excuses.

(You've left a legacy in banking in Washington and you've left it, created a very sound institution on the rocks of something that had some problems during the Depression. Still, the bank has never missed a dividend.)

Never.

(That, in the tumultuous times from the 1930s on when you became associated with the bank is a real credit to you.)

Well, just hope it stays this way.

(Absolutely. Thank you again.)