

February 24, 1954

Internal Memorandum

Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

Interview with Parker Willis and the bank's secretary Mr. Ansgar Berge on personalities in the Boston bank.

The Boston bank has had eight governors in its forty years, Mr. Alfred Aiken, is the first; he dates from 1914 and is still living. Mr. Morse followed him then in succession came Governor Harding, Roy Young, Mr. W. W. Paddock, Mr. Flanders, Mr. Whittemore and Mr. Erickson; most of these men are still living.

In addition to these there are other characters in Boston who played various roles in the bank in the early days. These include Carl Pitman (see memorandum on Mr. Pitman) Mr. Louis Stoye, Administrative Assistant who was the original secretary to the first chairman, Mr. Frederic H. Curtiss of Dover, who was chairman from 1914 to 1942, Mr. William Willet who came to the bank in 1914 and rose to be first vice president, (he is said now to be in Florida) and Miss Andersen now secretary to Mr. Erickson who has also been secretary to Messrs. Paddock, Whittemore, Flanders and who also worked with Governor Harding on his book on the Federal Reserve System.

There is also a Robert Harvey of whom I have only the name. Mr. Willis questioned whether there were papers of Mr. Charles Curtiss in the bank. This may have been a slip for Mr. Frederic H. Curtiss.

The bank's librarian during most of its history is Miss Marion G. Eaton, now retired and living in Cambridge. I will try to reach her by telephone and report in this group memorandum.

The division of labor as between Mr. Parker Willis and Mr. George Ellis (both of whom are engaged in research) is that Mr. Willis confines his

work to research in money, banking and credit, whereas Mr. Ellis is assigned to other types, namely community economics, trade statistics, etc.

As to material of primary importance in this bank, the annual reports up to some date in the 1930's would be fairly complete. There was however a date after which annual reports cease to include policy matters and became straight statistical records.

The second group of important publications is the printed procedures of the annual stockholders meeting. These have been held from 1923 to 1953 with the exception of two war years when no meetings were held. It is Mr. Berge's belief that the Boston bank is peculiar in having meetings of its members banks in the form of stockholders meetings. The procedure developed early and has been popular in this area.

In 1923, when there was much discussion about advantages and disadvantages of branch banking, the New England bankers were eager to appear before Congress and listen to and give testimony. They needed some kind of a structure within which to work. They set up a TEMPORARY STOCKHOLDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, and under that label they went to Congressional hearings. They decided to make a temporary committee a permanent one. The State associations meet and elect 1 member to this. Since about 1925 the STOCKHOLDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE has been appointing a committee of seven members to constitute the nominating committee for the election of directors, that is those director which represent member banks.

The STOCKHOLDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE has played an important part in quieting the dislike of the Federal Reserve System which was so prevalent in New England in the Systems early days. At present, the committee also runs the Stockholders Committee, helps choose the nominating committee and acts in liaison capacity with the banks.

Within the first district some fifty-five percent of the existing banks belong to the Federal Reserve System; about eighty-five percent of the

banking resources in the district are comprised within this system.

Mr. Berge is very helpful and will send us whatever further information we need. I told him that we might later want a list of the directors of the bank over the years. He will send this when we ask for it.

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