

Colgate W. Darden, Jr.

Colgate Darden is one of those people who has been associated with William and Mary in a statewide context. From 1942 to 1946 he served as governor of Virginia, and in this interview he discusses issues dealing with William and Mary during this period. Briefly, from 1946 to 1947, he was honorary chancellor of the college, resigning that to accept the presidency of the University of Virginia, serving there for twelve years. He now practices law in Norfolk.

Governor Darden was most agreeable to the idea of an interview, and he left any "tracking" of the interview to the interviewer.

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 Date of interview March 23, 1976
 Place Va. Natl. Bank Building, Norfolk, Va.
 Interviewer Emily Williams
 Session number 1
 Length of tape app. 60 mins.

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Colgate W. Darden, Jr.

Norfolk, Virginia

March 23, 1976

Williams: I wanted to start off by asking you some questions about when you were governor and how the decisions a governor makes affect a state-supported institution, specifically William and Mary.

Darden: Well, it affects them very directly because the governor makes up the budget; he's the one to make the final determination of what he's going to suggest to the [General] Assembly. After it goes to the assembly, as you saw in this last session, they'll ^{figure} out what they want ^{to do.} When they send the bills back to the governor he can veto them if he wishes; I never vetoed any ^[appropriations] bills, but he has that right, then ^[in the assembly] they have the right to pass them over his veto-- if they get enough votes. So he's directly concerned with all the institutions of higher learning in preparing their budgets.

Williams: Would you say that's the most important way he affects the colleges?

Darden: Yes, I would say it is the most important way, ^{subject to confirmation.} although he does appoint their boards, [^] But I would guess that the budget would be more important than ^{appointments,} the board, [^] would have greater influence on the institution.

I would guess either in the short term or the long term that would be ^{the} most influential point .

Williams: When the governor is making board appointments, what kinds of factors ^{at least} went through your mind?

Darden: Oh, there are all kinds of factors. In the first place you're set upon by everybody and his brother who wants to get somebody on the board. And you've got to give those consideration if you're in political life or you don't stay in it very long; They get mad and whatnot. Then you have to go through and figure out in your own mind individuals ^{you think} that are best suited. Also, you ought to give in the board a range of interests--in other words, you ought not to have all lawyers, or all doctors, or all educators--^{you have to} bring in the various aspects of Virginia life. You are never able to satisfy everybody. After the appointments are over some of them are mad (and there's not much you can do about it), but they get over their anger because they think of something else they want and they're back after you wanting to do that. That's a short answer to your question, but it's fairly accurate.

Williams: It's probably not fair to single out one person, but one person whom I talked to a couple of weeks ago whom you did appoint was Francis Pickens Miller.

He told me that Colgate Darden one time said that appointing him to the board [at William and Mary] was the costliest appointment he ever made.

Darden: Well, Pickens loves to tell that yarn. It was costly in a way--only in a way[^] because he was a virulent opponent of the Virginia organization [Harry F. Byrd 's], to which I belonged. When it came up, there were a lot of them who wanted to kick him off. They were my friends and political allies. ^{But} Pickens had been a [^] very good member of that board--he's a very capable fellow. He's opinionated as he can be, but he's smart. I just looked it over, and I felt he ought to stay on the board. Politically it was a very difficult appointment. They got rared up about it, but in time that went away. [Discussion of Colonel and Mrs. Miller] It's black and white for Pickens; he's not troubled by these things ^{that worry} the rest of us who have to slosh around in life--it's either right or wrong.

Williams: One thing that I know that he was very much tied up in and I don't know if the governor would have been or not. While you were [#]governor, John Stewart Bryan retired as president at William and Mary. Would you have known Mr. Bryan as publisher of the Richmond newspaper?

Darden: Oh yes.

Williams: What kind of a man did you find him to be?

Darden: Well, I think he was one of the greatest individuals I ever knew in my life. When you talk about great people, John Stewart Bryan is at the top of my list. I not only knew him, I worked with him in all kinds of state endeavors. He was generous and intelligent and industrious. The real tragedy was that Mr. Bryan died when he did. I think he caught cold at a fundraising venture (he and I were working together on the U.S.O.); he caught cold, and it developed into pneumonia and killed him. I don't believe those newspapers had he lived would have taken the hard line that they took on integration. I don't believe he would have permitted that. So when you come to evaluating him and you cast up things from that time, you put him right at the top and you'll have it just about right. Do you know Tennant, his boy?

Williams: I've never met him, no.

Darden: He's something like the old man. The old man--he was a great one; he was a very great one. He worked mighty hard at William and Mary, worked awful hard at William and Mary, but didn't get the credit he deserved for what he did because there was a lot of snipping on the board. The board at William and Mary at that time--I don't believe it's true any longer--but it was divided right much. There were two or three

people on the board--and you find them often on boards-- who looked on themselves as administrators. Boards are not administrative, they're policymakers. The board sets for the state the policy. The president is sometimes a member of the board (I think at William and Mary he was; at the University of Virginia he's not. I attended all the board meetings, but I was not a member at the University of Virginia). There are a certain number of board members who set out to run the college, and that makes it a little difficult. I think that one or two of those people on there in Mr. Bryan's day -- I don't think it made life any easier, but I don't think he cared much about it because he was just a broad-gauged sort of a fellow.

Williams: Were you aware of the division that was going on over selecting the new president after Mr. Bryan announced he was going to retire?

Darden: Who followed Mr. Bryan--Jack Pomfret? He was a great scholar, a fine person. Jack Pomfret was the brother-in-law of John Dana Wise of the Richmond paper. No, I don't remember that much; I don't recall talking to people. I do recall the outrageous treatment of

Pomfret later on by the faculty at William and Mary College when they got in a row about athletics down there, as they always ^{did.} The faculty in its treatment of Pomfret was just as pusillanimous as they could have been; instead of standing by him--his position was right. ^{In addition to that} There never was a more honest, straightforward person ^{than} as Pomfret. (He lives out on the west coast; he went out to the Huntington Library.) They deserted him in one way or another; it was an outrageous kind of a performance (but ^{nevertheless} that's ~~what~~ it was) and made his close there, I think, very unpleasant. But I'll say this to his credit (I didn't learn this from him; I learned it from somebody who knew what happened): he had been offered this place out in California before the storm broke. After it broke he wrote the trustees and said in view of the controversy he wanted to tell them he'd be glad to relieve them from any obligation. The Huntington is one of the top places in the United States. They wired him back not to trouble himself at all, to come on out there. That was it, which was exactly my opinion.

There was a lot of trouble about athletics. When I went in to office ^[as governor] I was faced with a very difficult problem: the war had come on, and the football season was busted open; they were deeply in debt. It wasn't Mr. Bryan's fault or anything; it was just that they had planned for a ^{big} season and couldn't have a season on account of the war. The college was in the hole for the money; we had a terrible time scuffling around trying to get it straightened out in the budget. Gasoline was cut, you know; you couldn't get there--couldn't have football games because you couldn't get the team together. They had some outstanding obligations there; they'd gone into professional athletics--or rather paid amateur that all of them have engaged in at one time or another. It was just a mess.

Williams: Speaking of the men going away brings up another thing I wanted to ask you about: while you were governor and Mr. Pomfret was president, there came out something called the Darden Report that the students at William and Mary just had a fit over because it said that fraternity and sorority separate living establishments were to be abolished.

Darden: Oh, they got awful mad, awful mad about that.

That's a long story, and a lot of it I've forgotten, except I know they got very mad. I ^{had} belonged to a fraternity when I was at the University of Virginia, and I'd also affiliated with my chapter at Columbia when I was up there in law school (I did my work in Columbia in public law; got my M.A. in public law). I thought that the ^{fraternity} idea of breaking a student body up into small groups had much to recommend it. You can't have a whole big school (like the University of Virginia or William and Mary) ⁱⁿ one happy family; you've got to break them down into small groups. But they got to be too small and they got to be too dominating in the control of politics ^{in the institution}, and I thought too exclusive of other students to a point where ^{it was injurious}. So I set in motion a plan to break them up into separate living ^{from} around in the houses and let them have clubrooms. They'd have to go back into the student body, then they could come back for their meetings. Of course, they got out here and yelled and hollered all over the state that I was abolishing them. Well, it never occurred to me to really abolish them; I never thought they were worth worrying about much one way or another, although I had enjoyed at the University of Virginia my membership in a fraternity. ^{Some of the closest friends I had were made there--they're mostly dead now.} (I never lived in a fraternity house

at the University of Virginia.) I ^{just} had a feeling that if the students were back out amongst the student body it would be a more wholesome situation. And we finally got them to build the lodges down at William and Mary. I reckon they've been abandoned now--are they still using them?

Williams: They're still used, but not for fraternity lodges.

Darden: I see. Have they got fraternity houses back up there?

Williams: Fraternity dormitories are what they are. They're on the campus.

Darden: They're part and parcel of the student life, aren't they?

Williams: I suppose so.

Darden: But boy, they raised Cain. Yelling and hollering and writing their parents and carry^{ing} on.

Williams: Were the parents writing you?

Darden: Yes, that and telephoning me and otherwise indicating what they wanted done.

But we were so busy fighting the war that ^{that} was kind of a side effort, you see--a skirmish over on the side road. I don't believe it ever amounted to much. But if you want to read something on it, one of the best editorials on it was written by old "Kilpo,"

/ James J. Kilpatrick / of the News Leader in support of
 my point of view: that the fraternities were too drawn
 in on themselves and too selfish in their domination
 of ^{all} school activities. (Discussion of the place of
 fraternities and the changes in that in Governor
 Darden's lifetime.) <sup>I was trying to curtail these at the University of Virginia because I thought they
 leant themselves to snobbish control.</sup> William and Mary and the Univer-
 sity were the ones we had the row about.

Williams: Then, as we've said, the war was going on at the time.

Darden: The war was a dreadful ^{many} drain; it was a far more
 dangerous thing than ^{many} people understood. I had the ^{Hitler came mighty close to winning.}
 organization of civil defense in Virginia; it took
 a lot of my time. And then I tried to help out in
 the war drives; that's where I worked so much with
 Mr. Bryan. He and I were working together on the
 U.S.O. Tayloe Murphy, who was treasurer of Virginia
 at that time, worked with us, and we drove all over
 the state. It was an exacting four years, ^{not because}
 anything dreadful happened, but because of the fear
 that something dreadful might happen. It was terribly
 oppressive in that way. To give you an illustration:
 the Germans were sinking boats right and left right
 down here at Virginia Beach--right in sight of the land.
 They had these submarines lying out here right off ^{the}
 Cape Henry-Cape Charles light, about where Chesapeake
 light is now, and they were just popping them off out there.

The Germans had some large submarines with rifles mounted on the deck. I didn't think they'd ever be strong enough to invade ^{us} here, but what I was fearful of is that they would come up and shell the cities and set them on fire and kill a lot of people and just create a tremendous commotion. We were on guard against that; ~~and~~ fortunately that never happened, but the loss of ships off the Virginia capes was awfully heavy. Till we got straightened out and got our naval forces they just laid out there and picked them off, just like you were shooting sparrows.

You don't realize it now to go down there on that you could stand and watch a ship being sunk out there two or three miles offshore.

Williams: As the veterans were coming back there was a tremendous influx into the colleges after the war.

Darden: It built up very rapidly.

Williams: And one of the expedients ~~at~~ at William and Mary was to open the school down here at Norfolk (the extension, St. Helena's). I wonder if you had anything to do with the planning for that?

Darden: I had something to do it in that I backed it ^{and helped it along,} I think the fellow that really did that was Charlie Duke.

Charlie was bursar, and he was very energetic and very effective. He got that space and opened that school and organized it and ran it for Pomfret.

Williams: Did you know Charlie Duke well? He's a person who crops up a lot in my talks with people.

Darden: I know Charlie very well. Charlie[#] was a great political fellow.

His father had been one of the great powers over in Norfolk County. Mr. Duke was a great friend of Harry Byrd's (old Harry). That's the reason, I think, that little Charlie got up to Williamsburg is that Harry helped him get up there. He Duke was in business here for some years, the insurance business over in Portsmouth. I worked with him a good deal. He was quite effective in getting things done; he knew the political machinery of Virginia, and also he was on good terms (personal terms) with ^{a great many of} the fellows in the General Assembly and the fellows in politics down in Tidewater here. His wife's still living. (Discussion of whereabouts of Mrs. Duke, now Mrs. Phelps.)

Williams: Another thing--I think this came up while you were governor. You may have to correct me or you may not even remember it. There was some sort of misunderstanding about the Eastern State land there in Williamsburg.

Now Eastern State was getting ready to move from in town out to Dunbar. What was all this row about?

Darden: Well, boy, I'm telling you it was really a row, a kind of low-key row. Eastern State was being moved out to Dunbar Farms, where it ought to have been moved. Kenneth Chorley* was bent on getting the Eastern State property for the Rockefellers, having in mind for one thing, a golf course, and ^{also} future expansion. And Kenneth was on my neck, up visiting me about selling it to them, to be delivered twenty-five years in the future or something like that, for \$50,000. George Coleman, who was a very distinguished citizen of Williamsburg, was also interested in trying to help them. I think he may have been on the Colonial Williamsburg board--might have been; I don't remember. But he was a first-rate person.

Well, we scuffled around about it, and I made up my mind not to do it because I felt that Williamsburg--the College of William and Mary--was by all odds the greatest single possession that Virginia has--or one of them, with the University of Virginia. And while Colonial Williamsburg (the idea) was a fine thing, the college was going on, young, vigorous, pushing along, educating these children. I wasn't going to do anything that I thought might prejudice them.

* President of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Then I got to thinking about it, and I concluded that if it got clear of me that they might get it from the state. So I talked to George one day when he was up in Richmond, and I told him that I didn't mind the state making some arrangement with Colonial Williamsburg to sell them a piece of that land for enlarging the golf course, but I was going to give it to the College of William and Mary. I knew if I anchored it in Williamsburg with the College of William and Mary that whatever was done in the long run more than likely would be done in the interests of the college (not absolutely necessarily because you get boards that get off on the wrong foot). Well, I got the legislature to transfer it to William and Mary, and that didn't go over very well. They Colonial Williamsburg thought I'd just bypassed them. I wasn't bypassing them; I simply did not feel that that property--after all, no one knew its value; I imagine it's worth a million of a million and a half dollars now. The idea of my selling it to them for \$50,000 to be delivered when the asylum moved out--it hasn't been out at Dunbar Farms over four or five years, has it? It would look utterly ridiculous today if I had done that thirty years ago. Now this center (law center)

is going out there, also the new law school. It's going out there simply because I ~~put~~^{deeded} that property over to William and Mary College. But I tell you, it was a time around there for awhile when we were scuffling around about that. You never knew Kenneth Chorley. He was a determined, aggressive sort of a fellow. He was bent on getting that ~~the~~ property for Colonial Williamsburg. Where'd you find out about that? I didn't know there was anything written down about that.

Williams: I think there was something in the board minutes some years later about the Eastern State property having been deeded to William and Mary. C.W. wanted to buy it, I guess, and that had to go through the board.

That must be where I found it.

Darden: They bought a slice of it for the golf course.

Williams: Right then?

Darden: No, when you saw it. No, I transferred the whole thing to William and Mary.

Williams: I'm glad to get that cleared up because it was not something there was ~~any~~^{any} background information on.

Darden: Yes, there was a lot of infighting on that. And of course, you could make out a pretty good case for it.

Colonial Williamsburg has been a grand thing for Virginia. It's of commercial value because it's brought a great many people into the state; they spend money on gas taxes and other things. It wouldn't have been a good thing to have dealt William and Mary College-- of course, William and Mary College was not as strong then as it is now. It's grown in stature tremendously in the last ^{twenty} years to where now it's taking its place in the front ranks of learning institutions. It was more difficult for the state to come by money for it when I was governor.

Williams: To what would you attribute this growth in stature that you're talking about?

Darden: I think two things: I think the ongoing industrial development of Virginia, ^{which has been sizeable,} and the desire of Virginians living outside of Virginia back here. Out-of-state people who come to visit Williamsburg want their children to go there to go to school. It's given it an almost impregnable position. Now it's had two good, forward-going managers: old "Pat" ^{*} did an awful lot of work for it. "Pat" knew the system ^{well}--he'd been superintendent of public instruction. And of course also Admiral--what do you call him--Chandler.

* Davis Y. Paschall.

(His father had been president up there when I was a boy.)

(Discussion of value of coeducation.)

Williams: Let me ask you this: near the end of your term as governor, I know that you were instrumental in bringing The Common Glory to Williamsburg. I wondered what your role was in that? Would you tell about that?

Darden: Well, I'll tell you now, that was another one of our ventures. And I did--I worked awfully hard on that--and I worked after I got out of the governorship. We didn't get it opened up until that next summer [1947], you see. And this will interest you: the night we opened I was down on the main stage painting the lattice work that went on the towers that the music is piped through. We were struggling to get the dog-gone thing finished, and we hadn't been able to get it finished. This wooden lattice work, which was quite attractive, as I remember it, I was down there working with some green paint, trying to get it done.

But Billy Wright, who ^{was} ~~is~~ one of the department heads up in Richmond and an old friend of mine (he's dead now) and ~~Alva~~ ^{Albert} Sidney Johnson from over here in Smithfield (who's now dead) and two or three more-- I'm not sure that I can remember them all--came

over to see me one day (that was while I was still governor) and wanted to know if we could organize a play. We thought that was a fine idea, so we went out and looked for somebody to write the thing. Then we had to find a site for it, and that was a terrible job. I went down with a friend of mine to Jamestown Island and walked over that. And Jamestown Island, of course, would be very pretty. The Park Service was just as helpful as it could be, but in order to get a site there was no end to red tape; it was just like taking a piece of United States property, like ^{detaching} West Point or Annapolis. I was in Richmond working on this thing; I was at the Commonwealth Club, and I came down to breakfast, Joe Hall was sitting there (he was the counsel for the Richmond newspaper; his brother, Channing Hall, was mayor of Williamsburg). We got to talking, and I told him what a helluva of a problem I was having trying to get a place for the show. He said, "Have you seen that old mill pond back there at Williamsburg?" I said, "No, I didn't know there was one back there." He said, "There's a mill pond back there. A ravine runs right down to the pond, and I believe it'd be a fine place." I said, "I tell you what I'm going to do: I'm going right downstairs and get in my car and go down to Williamsburg and look at it."

I went and drove down there and I walked over it; it was exactly ^{where} ~~what~~ he told me. I went down there to Jamestown Road, parked on the side of the road, and I picked out this ravine. We didn't build it in that ravine, but they built it in the one right next door to it (there're two ravines). It was thought that this next ravine was better; it was better; it was a little bit more accessible. Then we had Charles Major, who was the architect for the college and one of the nicest fellows, most cooperative fellows--and Charlie Duke was in on it, too. He helped us a lot.

So we set to work to put us on a show--an all-time stopper of all the shows. We went down and got ol' Paul Green, who wrote The Lost Colony, and set him to work on it; then we set to work to raise the money to build the theatre. And I used every kind of state gadget ^{I could} to do some work for them down there, [^] charge it to the state; I went just as far as I could without getting in jail about it. We went around together and raised money privately. For the seats for the amphitheatre we sold them ^{to everybody we knew} for \$5 apiece. [^] We'd write a fellow and see if he wouldn't buy two seats; maybe if we got a right prosperous fellow we'd get him to buy five seats for \$25. And we finally got it finished and opened it with a show, and as I said, when the ^{first} crowd [^] came through there I was down there painting the last of the scenery.

It's improved tremendously since then. The show has always been interesting, but it's been tightened up, and it's more accurate. Some of it was not accurate to begin with. (It was not intentionally misleading; you might say it was too partisan.) And it has done all right until last year* they had to replace a lot of stuff, had to rebuild a lot of stuff, and we got some money. I think we've raised about \$87,000 ^{as of now} (\$25,000 of it came from the commonwealth - Lewis McMurrin got that). I think this year ought to be the greatest year they've ever had with the bicentennial. So that's the story of The Common[#]Glory.

(Discussion of other aides in staging the production: Bela Norton of Colonial Williamsburg, Major, Miss Althea Hunt, Howard Scammon, Roger Sherman[#] and his first^{and} wife, Virginia Davis.) We had great fun; we did an awful lot of hard work, but we enjoyed it. It was a very involved thing--but not so involved as things are today. Life is so involved that you can hardly make it through the day--on any kind of venture.

* Summer 1974.

Williams: I wanted to ask you--at one point wasn't it discussed that after you retired as governor that you would go to William and Mary as a professor?

Darden: Yes, I came very close to doing it (teaching government up there). They were very nice about it; I gave a lot of thought to it. My children were in school down here, and I could have driven up there and back, but the ferries were running (there wasn't the fast road that you have now). I was just tired when I got out of the governorship: the weariness, the apprehension about the war. . . the war was over, but the effects of it weren't over.

So they (the W&M Board of Visitors) elected me chancellor. I was just thinking about it today; I don't know how they happened to do that. I don't know; I just don't know who rigged that thing up. I don't recollect ever being talked to about it. I believe they just up and elected me chancellor one day. I gave that up when I went to the University of Virginia^{as president,} which I reckon was about a year later.

Williams: Did you function in any capacity as chancellor?

Darden: No, it has not responsibilities at all; it's entirely honorary. You're available for advice, just as is any citizen you are--anybody that's been governor is under obligation to help out if he's called on.

I've done a number of things
 in connection with ~~William and Mary~~ at William
 and Mary simply because I called on so many people
 when I was governor and got them to help me that I've
 always felt an obligation to turn around and help them.

Williams: As you've said you became soon thereafter president
 of the University of Virginia. What, from that point
 of view, do you see as the special role that a presi-
 dent of a state-supported college has?

Darden: It's not much of a role, and it doesn't amount to much.
 I'm not talking about--and I think very highly of Mr.
 Graves. I think you've got a fine president--and his
 wife, Zoë. The only place in an educational insti-
 tution that amounts to anything is a full professor-
 ship in a field in which you're interested, and if
 you're not interested you ought not to be in there
 teaching. With a teaching load that's not too
 heavy, that allows you to do some research and
 reading on your own, that's one of the great places.
 Salaries have reached a point now where it's very
 much more attractive than it was years back.

But being president--now in my opinion; I'm
 sure there are a lot who wouldn't agree with me--
 you're always pushed and worried and pecked to death

by a lot of inconsequential things that don't amount to a whole lot. When I was up at the University of Virginia we did a lot of building; it'd be like being in the building supply business or running a construction firm. I wasn't especially interested in it, but I worked on it very hard. That role is important. I think the head of an institution can exert an influence of some consequence. Why anybody would want to be president of one of them is beyond me. I think that ^{was} true even of my day; I know it's true now. If ^{you} ~~they~~ monetized the federal debt you couldn't hire me to be president of one of them for a year. There's just no end to trouble: everybody's poking you about this and that. The faculty's all messed up and they've got no end to factions; they're running around and ^{hollering and} squalling and raising a disturbance. You can exercise some leadership, but not a great sight. Most of it is momentum. Now that's a right grim appraisal of the situation, but, in answer to your question, it's quite a truthful one.

Williams: Is it a harder job than being the governor? How would you compare it?

Darden: It was not anything like so hard, and I'll tell you why: the difficult thing about being the governor was apprehension about trouble--or disaster.

Then also I used to go down frequently when they had these little draftees in Richmond, ready to send them off to camps. They'd line them up on the south portico of the Capitol and have me come down and make a little talk to them. It just tore the heart out of you when you looked at them--really. There were a lot of little blacks and whites who didn't have the faintest notion of anything about the war. So far as Japan was concerned, it might as well ^{have} ~~as~~ been on the moon. You looked at them, and you just felt they were being fed into a gigantic machine of death, in a way, and it was ^{oppressive} ~~depressing~~ beyond belief to me. So there was hanging over the governorship a terror. I'd go to sleep at night and just wonder if I was going to be called in the night that something awful had happened somewhere. I was so glad to get out of office; I never was so happy to ^{leave} ~~get out of~~ a place. I enjoyed Richmond; the people were just as nice to my family, and my children enjoyed being in the schools up there. It's a lovely city, but I was so glad to put my hat on and come home, I didn't know what to do.

Now I know that part of that reaction that I'm giving you comes with old age; I know that

the appraisal of this is far bleaker now than it would have been (you see, it's been thirty years or more now; it's been fifteen or twenty years since I left the University of Virginia). I didn't have to go up there (Charlottesville) ; I wasn't in need

of employment--and I enjoyed it, ^{enjoyed both of the services,} But as to which was more difficult or ~~oppressive~~, the governorship was, by all odds.

You related to the casualty lists. The states ran the draft system. We were picking up these little girls and boys off the farms and creeks and coves and cities and piling them into these camps and shipping them abroad. The whole thing was a terrible thing. And then also I was very much more apprehensive than some of the others about the outcome; I think that was partly because I had served on the naval committee when I was in the House of Representatives, and I knew somewhat more about the armament and the military capacity of this country ^{and other countries} than did many of our people. It was a bleak kind of time.

None of that was true at Charlottesville--it was just worrying about the building program,

getting things done, fussing and fighting with the student body; they're never satisfied. It's a good sign; there's nothing in the world more dangerous than a student body that becomes absolutely quiet. If they reach that point they're brooding; they're dissatisfied about something. I had more people running the university when I was up there than you could shake a stick at--a lot of it's students. I had at least ^{half a dozen} students out there every morning who /said/ they knew how to run it, and ^{another} /a/ half a dozen from the faculty. All I was supposed to do was get the money for them; the rest of it they could handle themselves. But a student body that grows quiet is a dangerous thing; there's some trouble underfoot. You're far better /off/ having them a-wrangling and a-rowing and a-carrying on; it's a healthier thing. I don't know why that's true, but I ^{do} know it's true. (Description of students at U.Va. setting small crosses afire on the lawn of the President's House at U.Va.)

Williams: I have had people to grope for a definition of this is why I'm asking this: from your perspective as governor, as president of a state university, have you

been able to see a niche that each college should fit into?

Darden: No, there isn't one.

Williams: Because if so, I was going to ask you did you see a certain purpose for William and Mary within a state context?

Darden: No, there's not. There's only one niche, and that's to sharpen the human mind, and unless they ^[the colleges] do that they're wasting their time. It's not what you remember so much in facts and figures--whether William the Conqueror invaded England in 1066. . . . The question is whether or not you can ^{catch} get the imagination of a child to a point that will encourage him to go on and achieve a sense of discrimination. Life is essentially a matter of choices--the whole long journey--it's a long series of choices. Now that is only done by sharpening the mind, and if you do that the rest will take care of itself. How does that strike you?

Williams: It strikes me as a good answer. (Thanks to Governor Darden for the interview.)

Darden: William and Mary's a great school, and it's got greater days in front of it than it has behind it, notwithstanding the very distinguished Virginians that have been there in the student body. It's in the clear now, I think, if we escape some unbelievable tragedy of some kind. (Discussion of Carter Lowance's role in the state.)