

Exit Interview
With
SANFORD L. FOX
On
September 27, 1974



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Exit interview with Sanford L. Fox
conducted by Terry Good
in Room 487 of the Old Executive Office Building
on September 27, 1974

- TG: I'll just sit here and throw questions at you. To start with in terms of how long you have been on the White House staff, you told me that you came in 1945. Could you again just touch briefly on how you came over in 1945.
- SF: Well, it began actually in 1943 when I was one of the crew selected to fly with President [Franklin D.] Roosevelt to Cairo and Tehran for the meeting with the Big Three of [Joseph] Stalin, [Winston S.] Churchill, and Roosevelt, and at the completion of that mission I came back to Washington and I had a few things that the President's son-in-law, John Boettiger, wishing me to bring to his wife Anna, who was President Roosevelt's daughter, of course, and during that time on coming over with the various things I called Mr. A.B. Tolley, who was head of the office, who incidentally came to the White House in 1915.
- TG: How do you spell his name?
- SF: T-O-L-L-E-Y, Adrian B. Tolley, he came in 1915 to assist in the wedding preparations of President Woodrow Wilson when he married Edith Galt and sort of a typical man who came to dinner in 1915 and remained here for 45 years. I think that's a great tribute to his dedication and his ability, both artistically and administratively. On bringing the things that I mentioned to Ann [Anna] Boettiger, I called Mr. Tolley, he said fine, come over and I'll take you over to the Usher's Office and he said, "You have an appointment?" and I said yes I have, tentatively at 11:00. So I came in and he and I went over to the Usher's Office around that time and he introduced me to the Chief Usher, who was then Mr. [Howell G.] Crim, and Mrs.

Boettiger came down and we met in the Red Room and we had a very nice chat about the mission and trip and she was interested in how her father enjoyed the various places that we had gone and it was a very nice visit with her and then upon leaving Mrs. Boettiger, I went back to the office which was then and still is the Social Entertainments Office.

TG: That was the name?

SF: Yes, it was known as the Social Office and I think perhaps later they added Entertainments to make up a comparison there with the Social Correspondence and the Entertainments still with printing, engraving and protocol. Then I went into the service following this particular mission, in fact I was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Air Corps for this mission with President Roosevelt and received the Air Medal for that trip. Then having been in the service, of course, in 1945 when President Roosevelt's last inaugural was held on the South Portico of the White House, I was detailed in to assist in the preparations of the invitations, and normally the invitations for an inaugural are handled by the Inaugural Committee but due to the fact that this particular inauguration was being held at the White House it was then handled by my office, of course, Mr. Tolley's office then, and that was a very interesting experience and I enjoyed it very much. Then that was just for a detail and as I recall I was detailed for approximately 90 days and then following the 1945 detailment it came along to 19--later on in 1945, that I came back detailed under President [Harry S.] Truman and was here for 2 years.

TG: Again in the Social Entertainments Office.

SF: In the Entertainments Office--this time I was in the Navy and see, we were honorably discharged after the trip with President

Roosevelt, but this time I was in the Navy and I was detailed under Commodore [James K.] Vardaman [Jr.], who was Naval Aide to President Truman and later Clark Clifford became Naval Aide, so I worked under those two gentlemen. And then from 1945 to 1947, I was detailed to the White House as I said, and then I was discharged from the Navy and was accepted again, accepted position, like you are here, at the White House with the Central Intelligence Agency. It was then CIG, known as Central Intelligence Group and Admiral [Roscoe H.] Hillenkoetter was the director then, and in that particular time--1947 through the Truman and [Dwight D.] Eisenhower administrations--I was detailed occasionally back to this office to assist in times when they had exceedingly a greatly amount of work that warranted extra personnel, and of course the office was smaller in those days and it was understandable that they did need assistance. Then in 1959, Premier Nikita Khrushchev made a state visit to the United States when President and Mrs. [Mamie D.] Eisenhower occupied the White House, and I was called over to assist in the preparations of their visit and at that time I was approached on the possibility of staying permanently. And I gave it consideration and accepted and I became the Assistant Chief of the Entertainments Office. At the end of the Eisenhower administration, my predecessor Mr. Tolley retired and I became head of the Entertainments Office. At the beginning of the John F. Kennedy administration and from then on, I headed the office through the Kennedy, [Lyndon B.] Johnson, [Richard M.] Nixon, and now [Gerald R.] Ford administrations.

TG: That's very interesting. There are a number of other questions I would like to go into--just the thought of you being on that

flight to Tehran and Cairo really intrigues me but I'll postpone that for another time, that's very fascinating. So from that period of time from 1959 to the present you have been the Chief of the Social Entertainments Office?

SF: That's correct.

TG: Has the responsibility of that office changed to any great extent, Sandy--you mentioned at some point there that responsibilities included printing and engraving and protocol, (SF: Yes.) are those essentially the responsibilities that office has held during the time you have been affiliated with it?

SF: I must say that over this time it's like most every office operation through the years, various things are added and we have really and truly taken on many more things--for instance in the line of graphic arts, and there is a wide range of requests in that area alone with the preparation of invitations and keeping accurate up to the minute lists of those people who are invited by the First Family--and that's another reason for the increase in personnel because of the volume of work having increased.

TG: You mentioned before I turned on the tape recorder that you have a staff of seven now, is that correct? Three clerical and four illustrators--is that the term you used?

SF: That's correct.

TG: The title Social Entertainments Office is not all that clear to me and I don't know perhaps it--how would you describe the job of Social Entertainments Office? You mentioned printing, graphic arts, protocol, preparation of invitations, let's take a--a White House event, perhaps you could describe what your office does in conjunction with others to see that the event is

carried off.

SF: Perhaps it would have been misleading to say printing and engraving because this is a thing--being responsible for it isn't done in the house as such--the responsibility of having copy and layout or illustration whatever needs to be put together by those people capable of doing so--would have to have programs printed at the Government Printing Office.

TG: You would design those programs, right? Tell 'em what kind of format, what kind of print, what kind of paper.

SF: That's right. Type of stock, type of--and style of type to use, the layout and illustration if there be any. The invitations, of course, are hand engraved which to me is perhaps and is really the finest type of invitation in the world, having seen many invitations of other countries, ours far and above exceed quality of those used in other countries.

TG: And that is what is done by the four illustrators, is that right?

SF: They are responsible for duplicating, it's almost like forging the same type of script that is hand engraved on the invitations, this is a quality standard that we try to maintain, I like to say that you won't find any place in the world like one of these, one of a kind, and therefore you do look for people who are talented and capable of performing specialized things of this nature.

TG: These people come to you already experienced in this field--it's not anything you learn on the job.

SF: To a degree that's true, but in many cases we've had to--to have a training period on some of 'em. Two in particular at the moment came to me as illustrators and hadn't lettered at all, but I could tell by their samples they could be trained

and it was a time--there was a need that we just had to train them.

TG: For the sake of my understanding, is there a difference between an illustrator and a letterer?

SF: No--yes--I'll tell you in graphic arts you will have people who specialize in illustrating, layouts, lettering--and lettering is a branch of, or a form of, the entire graphic arts course--such as portrait painting would be one but actually that again would not follow the line of graphic arts, fine arts. There are people who have had fine arts, these people hold AB degrees, one is from Carnegie Tech and one is from Philadelphia Museum School, and they're people who are capable of a variety of abilities--

TG: They tell me a general degree in graphic arts--

SF: Lettering is one form of the overall graphic--

TG: That helps clear up--

SF: There are many people who are very good in graphic arts, who have never branched off in the specialized line of lettering.

TG: Well then, let's say a social function is coming up, a dinner or something; they would come to you and say we're going to have a dinner, so many people are going to be invited--would they give you a list of the invitees?

SF: When we say they--this is where we are responsible to directly to the Social Secretary, whoever she may be and she is the person who is the responsible one of receiving those guests from the President and First Lady that they wish to have invited and they are then given to my office for the technical end of seeing that the names are all checked out, that they are the exact people they wish because many names are the same. We have had occasions where, with sometimes the small amount of

information we had, it was actually--for instance two people at the Pentagon with the same name but it turned out that one wasn't the one and this is the diplomatic thing to request the invitation back and, of course, some people when they receive the invitations say, "What, oh I knew the President wasn't inviting me," so this, in most cases, they're very understanding and it's something for them to really reflect back on.

TG: Well, then you would check out the spelling, correct title, and all that.

SF: That's correct.

TG: And then prepare the invitation.

SF: Those lists are then made up, the invitations are ordered from the bureau, recently we've been having because of the volume, we've been having the line engraved at the time and the date and black tie and the admit cards that we have for each of the entrances engraved, and then brought back and then the names are put in in script. In cases of dinner, luncheon and selected invitations for receptions, right now we're in the process of having the diplomatic reception and that, of course, is one that requires quite a lot of work because of the heads of diplomatic missions being invited and all those names are, of course, lettered in--that takes quite a while to do.

TG: Do you on occasion have to go outside of your office to bring in temporary people much as yourself was once--

SF: I haven't recently, but I have had it in the past. One satisfying thing is that in the Nixon administration, they were very much aware of needs of various offices and we weren't pressed in trying to find people and detail them as much as trying to find people who were capable of doing it and then

staffing the office properly, that's a great help and understanding.

TG: I once--on one occasion when I visited you in your office--you were in the process of preparing for a sit-down dinner and I was surprised when I discovered that you were the office and you were the person who had to make the seating arrangement. Now is that a responsibility of your office or was this something unusual for you?

SF: No, this has always been my responsibility at the office and, of course, in many cases in almost all cases not everyone but the majority, I worked right with the Social Secretary on the seating. If it is a small dinner or a breakfast or something of that sort, why generally, I just seated straight protocol. Always I say submit the seating arrangement for the President or First Lady as a suggested seating and then they can change it any way they wish.

TG: Where did you develop your knowledge and expertise in protocol, I am always overwhelmed by the rules and regulations of protocol, it just seems like it must be a terribly involved and complex center. Is it something you picked up in the course of the years or--

SF: It is true, yes. It is something that came about just learning as I was there, technically doing the mechanics of the office starting out and working on up through and over a period of years why I--this is just something that you gradually absorb. Even today, there are people that we actually, on President's protocol as we call it, listing pretty much the same and we work closely with the Office of Protocol, Department of State, and as you well know, that in each administration there is a generally a new Chief of Protocol appointed by the President

and he in turn is the meeter and greeter of the visiting dignitaries and for straight down line of ranking and listing and all he has people he must rely on and it's really, it isn't a difficult thing--it's just being diplomatic as possible.

TG: Do you attend these social functions yourself, staying to make sure everything goes off all right or you simply the man behind the scenes whose face is never seen?

SF: Well, actually, the majority of the time--the man behind the scenes, we are responsible for instance--dinners and luncheons, when the seating is arrived at, we're responsible for putting the cards on the table as we have seated it and, of course, we have the menus already lettered and printed up in advance. And we give those to the maître d' to put on and then we are responsible for staying nearby which, of course, is the Usher's Office, to make sure all the guests have arrived and if they haven't, then it is up to us to check--if possible--if they are here locally, to find out if they are on their way or, because we try always to avoid having empty places at the table and our office being--working so closely with the Usher's Office and all--this is one of the things that shows us how smoothly things should run when you are coordinating with other offices, especially Usher's Office.

TG: What do you do if a half hour before a sit down dinner someone unexplainably...

SF: Well, this just happened a couple evenings ago--one of the guests, a Congressman, hadn't shown up, so I asked the White House operator to call his office and he answered the phone and I said, "Congressman"--I forget who it was--"are you not coming to dinner, we have your acceptance, with the President," and he said, "Oh, you know I've had a delegation in here visiting me"

and he said they just left and he said, "I have a friend who I was going to take home with me to dinner--is it really necessary that I come?" I said, "Well, I'll tell you, I'll get Mr. Bill [William E.] Timmons to come to the phone and answer the question." He was wondering if this particular meeting and dinner would perhaps be repeated and it wasn't, but Mr. Timmons came and he explained to him that no, it wasn't, but if it was impossible for him to come, why he understood, and he would relay it to the President. So right there the dinner was supposed to be at seven and this is, of course, the President is meeting with his guests for a half hour so we went in immediately and removed that place so that when they all came in we wouldn't have this vacant chair.

TG: In other words, you just spread out the chairs a little further.

SF: Yes, the maître d' and the butler take out a place and moved all the others in to equally distribute them.

TG: But it wasn't a case of trying to get someone else to come in and fill in.

SF: No, we don't do that.

TG: That's interesting. I wasn't aware of that, that responsibility. So you are always present--on the spot?

SF: On the spot until they are all in. Now that is, of course, seated affairs, luncheons, and dinners. If it is a reception, that's a different thing. We can't be as concerned about everyone showing up, it's more of a thing that if you have an acceptance, well, you expect that person to be there.

TG: Your office sends out the invitations, the responses are sent back to your office?

SF: That's right. There's a card engraved in the invitation which

says, "Please respond at your earliest convenience to the Social Secretary at the White House" and all the replies come in our office. There we keep a list of all the people that were invited and in front of their name we have little boxes marked off showing accept or regret and then we have a running account of how many we are going to have, generally you have a pretty much accepting as opposed to many regrets, but naturally you are going to have regrets because there are always things that people perhaps are out of the country or illness and there are times when people have been invited that they have had a previous engagement where they are being honored at a dinner out of town and this is understandable that they are just unable to make it, and therefore other guests are added to bring the number up.

TG: Now the other guests that would be added--those are people who would be selected by the Social Office, right? Or would your office select them?

SF: No, no, when the lists are submitted they are generally given more guests than we could possibly accommodate and then we realize there are some being held in reserve for the possibility of, you know, having a full house.

TG: That's interesting.

SF: And people who are invited are those people who would have something of interest or ethnic background with the foreign dignitaries invited along with those people--officials of government and all relating to that particular area of the world.

TG: Presidents have been holding diplomatic receptions and dinners ever since George Washington. Have the responsibilities of your office increased in any way or they pretty much the same

throughout the years, the type of thing that you have to do in preparation for a dinner or something?

SF: Increased in what--

TG: Well, perhaps in--have you received additional assignments, have people decided that in addition to what we have been doing--let's do this and this and this, or has it remained pretty much the same, the invitations to prepare, the seating charts to prepare, the cards...

SF: That's generally--a general run, but in each Administration naturally I think it is a good thing and it's understandable that all people having their different likes and dislikes would be in the different understanding that some things would run a little differently.

TG: Yeah, they might have a little different way of doing something. Your organization of your office, Sandy, you are in charge of it, you have one assistant and I take it that assistant could, could be one of the many illustrators?

SF: That's right, that's precisely one of the reasons for selecting people who are capable of doing most everything and the more talents they possess, why the more valuable they are and in this way you can do with a smaller staff and create more things. Some of the fun things we are given occasionally would be like birthday, anniversary cards, and we just prepared one for President Nixon and sent him in the hospital and I hope he enjoys it because I think it is a thing that will lift his spirits, and I hope so.

TG: Well, that's an interesting thing--I wasn't aware that you might be asked to prepare special cards.

SF: Birthday cards, anniversary cards and, I might add, many types of commendations certificates and one in particular that is now

being used quite a bit is the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

TG: You designed that?

SF: Yes, and the--I didn't design the medal but the citation we did and, of course, I received the medal from the Military Aides Office and I take it to an engraver and have the recipients name and date engraved on the reverse side of the medal.

TG: You know, one of the questions I failed to ask you and I am embarrassed--are you a graphic artist by training or experience or background?

SF: Yes, true.

TG: During those times when you came over here, prior to joining the staff, you came over as an illustrator or graphic artist?

SF: Yes, actually when you are assigned, you are not particularly given a particular title or position, but it's rather obvious that if you were detailed for a specific job, why--whether it be in other offices, an analyst or a clerical or assistant, administrative assistant, whatever it be, they wouldn't necessarily give you a title at that time but just sort of fill in.

TG: So, you are a graphic artist by education, a chief by experience?

SF: Yes, and you know for the longest time the title has been changed over a period of time because at one time as I recall, the head of the office was Administrative Assistant and then, I think this is correct in the Truman administration, they started using that title for some of the administrative people so therefore it had to be changed and the one title was given, was Head of the Social Entertainments Office, but now it is called Administrative officer.

TG: So, that's your official title now, Administrative Officer?

SF: Administrative Officer and it was suggested by one of the staff in this past administration, which I thought quite good--the title should be Director of Graphics and Coordinator of Protocol, and that covers the whole thing. Frankly, I think that is an excellent way of putting it, it is just like the Chief Usher, people--this is the whole title, people expect him to be ushering people around but he really is such an important person, like he is the manager and director of the President's house, responsible for all those many people, the gardeners, the painters, electricians, on and on, the butlers, the maids.

TG: Well, that's interesting. The documentation of your activities in your office, based on what I've seen during the last five and a half years, you are able to document on your index cards everyone who has come into an official First Family event.

SF: Correct, that's been invited by formal invitation.

TG: That would include both sit down affairs, receptions, breakfasts, luncheons, the worship services, and the Evenings at the White House. Are there any I forgot that are frequent, well at least that gives us an idea.

SF: Yes, that's true. Well, you see, administrations of past, they had garden parties, that was the category, they had a picnic at Eisenhower's farm, they had a picnic at Hyde Park, but--all those things that guests would be invited to the White House, yes.

TG: Now you mentioned before we turned on the tape recorder that you were also responsible for the Apollo dinner in California, as well as the Head of State dinner that followed out there.

SF: For President and Mrs. [Chung Hee] Park.

TG: Were there other affairs during the Nixon years outside of the White House that you had to be responsible for, perhaps they

won't come to mind now, but are those two examples of the type of thing you might do outside the White House, or perhaps a total sum?

SF: That was the first time we had a State Dinner away from the White House and it was a great experience. I suppose having my past year's travel as far as Tehran--I'd never been to California and I loved it, especially San Francisco. I really loved it and the dinner with its astronomical amount of guests for the Apollo 11 astronauts. The guest list was almost as thick as a small book and much of this was prepared in advance and now that I look back on it, I only wish that I had taken a couple of extra people along, because I am afraid I was a little understaffed--never ever in the history had we ever seated a number like 1,465 people. We could just as well had place cards so they could have all gone to their respective places because they were seated, but as the dinner was drawing to a point of entry we had a logistics problem of running these guests lists off with the table number in front of each person's name and here we had volunteers at the last minute, for instance, some of the military aides wives, we were all sitting around the table, and they were taking these names and I broke into a cold sweat. I was almost ready to pray, in fact, I'm sure I did! Of all these people coming in and we couldn't get all these numbers in front of these names as we would officially do it here as quickly and you have to have people who are accustomed to lists and alphabetizing and flipping over and of course, I imagine there must have been twenty people around this long table with each one with three or four pages and they would say, "Colyer" and someone would say, "Oh yes, I just caught a Coyler," and this--well there was

a small delay and unfortunately, the President said, "What's the hold up?" And oh, as hard as we had worked to seat everyone because there was one thing we did do that the President specifically specified--he did not wish to see all the ranking people up front, but when he called their names (this was where I was very proud of the seating), he wanted to see the governors all over the room and he wanted to see ambassadors all over the room, not in front at the head table and the ambassadors, the foreign ambassadors, the governors, the Cabinet and many of the dignitaries, he wanted them all over the room and they were and I was very happy about that, but all in all, it ran quite smoothly and we did get all the people in. See, there wasn't the main thing the tables, numbered--they were all numbered and gee, I think we had about 140 some tables and this fabulous Century Plaza Hotel, a beautiful place, three ballrooms separated by two partitions that actually will open into one and it was really fantastic-- State Dinner.

TG: How long in advance did you start preparations?

SF: Oh, a month because you see, in getting invitations to people and having responses returned and keeping the list accurate as to how many were coming because you have a logistics problem here, how much food, wine, what have you and how much you will need in the way of butlers and a tremendous amount of things that you must know in advance.

TG: That must have been a massive coordinated job.

SF: It was, it really was. And of course following that dinner, in fact in the same month, I think it was around about the 13th, the other was the 16th, I'm not certain of that, the 23rd of August we went to San Francisco and had a State Dinner there,

of course, it was more on the par of the size we had here and even though we had to go over and over and over the [St. Francis] hotel as to how we would have guests coming in and were we would have the entertainment and how they would enter and all.

TG: Is that part of your job?

SF: Yes, I was working with Lucy Winchester, Social Secretary, and Rex Scouten, Head [Chief] Usher.

TG: Would you three people be the ones that generally would be involved in coordinating?

SF: True, true, because it is so important to work together in that respect and you just have to otherwise you would be stumbling over each other.

TG: One of the questions I was going to ask you later on is--you probably answered in that response--the other offices in the White House that you worked most frequently with--would probably be the Social Secretary and the Head [Chief] Usher. Would that be right?

SF: Usher's Office, yes.

TG: How about Military Aides Office?

SF: Yes, they at various times--true.

TG: But not nearly as frequently as the Social Secretary and Usher's Office.

SF: That's true, that's correct.

TG: Are there other offices in the White House that you spend a lot of time with?

SF: Well, not a lot of time with. The Curator's Office, the Carpenters Shop, this would be--the Electrical Shop, Gardener--well, not especially the gardener, but Florist Shop, and this, of course, would be in connection with any thing doing with

entertainment. I'll tell you another fascinating thing that-- this will be the third wedding that we had the privilege and pleasure of helping with and of course, one part was getting the invitations engraved and issued and the marriage booklet and the big challenge here is trying to do something different than has been done before and you know there are times when you can pretty well run out of ideas but then somehow another new idea comes in which I'm delighted has happened and even though you look back on many of the hard, much of the hard work that went into these things, but it is rewarding when things--that was a beautiful wedding, it was just a beautiful wedding.

TG: In spite of the slight amount of rain.

SF: It seemed like it was just holding back the heavens until the wedding was over and then came and it was just beautiful. Helping to--I always enjoy doing things for Mrs. [Patricia] Nixon and I love her so much and Julie [Nixon Eisenhower] and Tricia [Nixon Cox] and the President. And once in a while, for instance, the wedding we had to make a mock-up of the cake-- this was a huge cake--and of the various tiers, you know, and we had a problem of trying to show how the decorative swirl should be from each layer to the other. We took very thin wire and masking tape and made these curved parts in between each layer and I forget at the moment what else we used to make a mock up of how the cake would look.

TG: This was done by your office?

SF: Yes, well actually, not my office. I went over personally with the Chief Usher and he, of course, had the Carpenter Shop and electricians--in fact, the metal shop came in play here cutting out metal disks to make the various tiers and using a pipe center and it was quite a lot of ingenuity went into making the

mock-up.

TG: You've got an amazing job, you really do.

SF: It is very fascinating. It's been very rewarding and the thing I've loved about it so much is the coming in contact with the First Family and knowing the tremendous job that they have to do--that you want to do all you can to make their life as relaxing if that's at all possible, living in the White House, and as helpful as you possibly can. That's really the main reason for our being there.

TG: Out of curiosity, did you have a regular routine, you came to work at the same time every day and you leave pretty much at the same time. Did you have meetings you attended?

SF: We tried, we tried, however, this has to be flexible because you see when you have dinners and all, you're responsible to be there, so therefore your time would not be regularly on schedule. On evenings of the dinners you would perhaps be there, oh, up until nine o'clock, even though we said dinner is at eight, unfortunately, there will be people who will arrive a little late and as I say you have to be on hand to make sure they are all there and if not, why not, and close in on the sitting or whatever.

TG: Did you do any traveling at all, Sandy, in connection with the job in addition to let's say, to the affair in California?

SF: No, no, I didn't, but I did send a young lady in my office, Kathleen Beery, on a couple of foreign trips. Generally the Office of Protocol, State Department, is supposed to handle these things and they rely many times on the Embassy personnel. Of course, they are kind of a loss because things would be handled respectively different within. You would find here and there, back here for instance, I've had very good reports of

her able assistance and all and I was very happy that I did have someone who would be able to give all the assistance they possibly could.

TG: Your contacts outside the White House, you mentioned the office of Protocol, State Department, were there other offices, other departments you had contact with on a regular or routine basis?

SF: Yes, well of course, the Government Printing Office, there we would have contacts with the Planning Service Division, and the Office of Type and Design.

TG: At GPO?

SF: At the Government Printing Office. Then at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, yes, I dealt with the Chief of Engraving and occasionally I called the Director.

TG: Any contacts up on Capitol Hill?

SF: No, other than those that the girls in the office had contact perhaps on a basis of the telephone for a dinner, I mean a luncheon, or something of that sort of maybe a breakfast, that's about the limit of it.

TG: One of the other questions we ask people is how about contacts with private interest groups? I'm not even sure that question applies to your office, but I'll ask it anyway, let's say--I can't even think of a possibility so I'd have to defer to you.

SF: In what way?

TG: Well, an organization or something--let's say--I'm really stretching now, a group that might be invited to the White House for some sort of affair, would they have any reason to call you or would you have any reason to call them, I would guess not.

SF: Well--

TG: My question is perhaps poorly phrased, as I say the question is

more designed towards those people on the staff who are in contact with people outside the White House.

SF: Yes--

TG: As I just threw it out.

SF: No, no actually say--an organization like the National Bar Association, the only contact there we would have would be those people who were responsible for helping run their convention and they were going to attend a reception and the person responsible would be sending lists in. Of course, you see that would come to the Social Secretary and then we would prepare them for them. People I have contacted occasionally would have been, yes, various companies. For instance, here again in a specialized way and these are some of the interesting things I like to do--in having French mats produced. Now, these are colored cardboard mats that have a wash border around the open area that's cut on a bevel and then a gold metallic line that with a few lighter lines around this--this is known as a French mat--that would go around perhaps old engravings and lithographs that were used occasionally by the First Family, [the] First Lady particularly, for perhaps gifts and then framed. And some of the little things you encounter is getting a gold foil that you can stamp and mass produce these because generally speaking when a person has French mat created, the framing shop, this is made up special for this particular print. Where we have many of the colored lithograph engraving of the same general size, we can therefore standardize our French mats and therefore make them up by the hundreds and this, of course, finding a company in the United States that produces foil paper and contacting them and they send you samples and all and then obtaining this material for

people to use.

TG: Then you do have to maintain fairly good, let's say a catalog of what's available and who makes it?

SF: Yes, that's about true and for instance, oh a--naturally, dealing with wedding these things had to be handled on a personal basis with the family and it wasn't like going to let's say, the [Bureau of] Engraving [and Printing], [the] Government Printing Office, you have to have a quality printer to do this sort of thing, and we have used a very old firm-- Judd and Detweiler--who did the setting of the, no, they didn't set the type, I'm sorry, but they did the printing of the booklets and the binding of it and it's there selecting the papers and the type. The type came from another firm and coordinating this together, the type of booklet, because this is a great keepsake and memento of a very wonderful occasion, very historic occasion.

TG: The Christmas portraits that were sent out by the Nixons, were you involved in that also?

SF: Yes, true. Here again in each administration, "what will we do for Christmas?" and you always look to do something differently than has been done before and always try to do something a little better and we--having the advantage of knowing what past administrations chose, trying to come up with another new idea, we hit upon the President's portraits which was really different and it turned out to be a beautiful memento--a gift, really, a gift I should say.

TG: Was that your idea?

SF: I'll have to take part credit for it. Yes, I think, I used to sit down and talk to Rex Scouten a lot. A very fine person, I will say, excellent, and he was a great aid to me many times of

kicking ideas around of what could we do and he, of course, had the advantage of knowing some of the likes and dislikes of the First Family and those are things that I like to know so I can work to the point of trying to do something that they would like rather than do something they wouldn't and you start all over again--this just wastes time and energy, and it's much better when you have an idea what a person likes, so this was one of the suggestions and fortunately, they liked that very much.

TG: They are beautiful, they really are.

SF: Then, in turn, our contact Hallmark--and Hallmark has been doing the prints, the cards, and they are very nice people to work with, very particular that's one wonderful thing I loved about the Nixons--they were particular people and I like people who are particular because I try to do things myself that are particular.

TG: Well, let's see--back on the question of documentation of your activities. Will the files that we have picked up from your office fairly well document what your office has done during the Nixon--

SF: Yes, yes it would. And one thing we keep in the office is a running book--I call it a record book--it's like a scrapbook and we keep one for the office, one for the Social Secretary, and our main one for the First Lady and as of right now, Mrs. Nixon hasn't received hers, but I know when she does--this went into a few volumes...and incidentally, as I recall we had a hundred and forty-seven dinners and a hundred and twenty-eight receptions and twenty luncheons in this past administration. Now these are the large dinners that I refer to and not the small types and so you see in that amount of dinners you would

have quite a bit of record to have and I'm sure that she is going to enjoy looking through the book and we keep the things, and guests lists and programs and menus.

TG: I know I looked through those I think back in 1969 when I came over there, you've got them as far as what, Teddy Roosevelt?

SF: Yes, Theodore Roosevelt, unfortunately the records before that had been destroyed in the fire they had in the West Wing.

TG: Is that right? Otherwise, you'd have them going back even further?

SF: Yes, that would be really fascinating, wouldn't it?

TG: This covers I think, Sandy, all the questions that I would like to touch with you on this point. Oh, if we want to get back in touch with you in a couple of years, your Washington, D.C. residence, would it be fair to assume that your mailing address now will still be the same?

SF: Alexandria, Virginia, yes.

TG: So we could look you up in the phone book--

SF: Absolutely.

TG: If we want to try and send something to you. Well, is there anything that I haven't covered in this that you would like to add that might help--help us pursue the activities of your office, could we do that in years to come, keeping in mind that we'll probably be back in touch with you to go into some more details on some of these things?

SF: Offhand I can't think of any particular thing.

TG: I think I've taken more of your time than I promised, for that I ask your forgiveness.

SF: It's been a pleasure.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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to exit interview with Sanford L. Fox
conducted by Terry Good
in Room 487 of the Old Executive Office Building
on September 27, 1974

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