

Basic Steps in Conducting a Q.S.O.S. Interview

1. Find a good interview candidate. Ask them to choose one single touchstone quilt for the interview. Ask your interviewee to bring ONE quilt or quilted item to the interview that is significant to them and preferably also made by them. We call this their “touchstone object.”
2. Once you have scheduled the interview, contact the Alliance for American Quilts (qsos@quiltalliance.org) to receive an ID number for the interview and provide your contact information.
3. Write the Q.S.O.S. number in bold black marker (or via computer and printer) on a piece of cardstock, so the number will be included in your photo of the quilter.
4. Review quadrant questions (download from www.allianceforamericanquilts.org/qsos/manual/QSOSAAppendixHInterviewQuadrantQuestions.pdf) beforehand and possibly add questions that relate to this quilter’s circumstances
5. Before starting interview, get forms filled in and signed by the interviewee, make sure they understand how the interview is to be used and shared. Forms include the Quick Questions, Release Form, Quilt & Quiltmaker Information Form. On the day of the interview or before the interviewee should receive an Ethics Statement from the interviewer. All forms can be downloaded here: www.allianceforamericanquilts.org/qsos/manual.php.
6. Test all recording equipment before starting the interview, and make sure to have a backup recorder (digital recorders not required, but preferred). Check for tape/space available on recorder, batteries for camera and recorder, space on camera’s memory card for photos.
7. Before conducting the interview in a quiet spot, make sure the interviewee knows that all sounds and interruptions that occur during the interview must be indicated in the final transcript. (Barking dogs, a bathroom break, phone call, whatever)
8. Take a photograph of the quilter standing next to her/his quilt, holding their QSOS number. Try to get a full view, high quality (high resolution digital), well-lighted photograph of the entire quilt, as well as a few close-up detail shots to show embellishments, quilting, design detail.
9. Start and end the interview with a beginning and ending statement. At the beginning include your name, the full name of the project and the AAQ (“Quilters’ S.O.S. – Save Our Stories, a project of the Alliance for American Quilts”), the date and time, the name of the person you are interviewing, and the place. When you end the interview, say thank you, and don’t forget to give the time.
10. Follow protocol for transcribing in the Transcribers Tip Sheet.
11. When transcription draft is ready, mail or email to the interviewee with an introduction letter (template included in the Q.S.O.S. manual). Ask them to make any additions or changes in red ink if in print and if by email, instruct them on how you’d like to receive edits. Give them a deadline for sending back the transcription and check in with them as the deadline nears.
12. Send the corrected version of the transcript via email to qsos@quiltalliance.org. Q.S.O.S. staff will proof the transcript and email you back a final copy along with comments on any major changes made. This is an important step to ensure that the final transcript file you will be burning to a CD, printing and sending us is formatted correctly.

13. Mail the following to the AAQ, 125 S. Lexington Avenue, Suite 101, Asheville, NC 28801 (these items will be sent to the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress). No additional materials can be accepted or returned, so please adhere to this list:
- a. Completed and signed Release Form.
 - b. Completed and signed Quilt & Quiltmaker Information Form.
 - c. Printed copy of the final transcript (version emailed back to you by Q.S.O.S. staff) printed single-sided. Printed copy of the “red edited” version of the transcript (or the emailed changes from the interviewee), which allows us to confirm that all of the corrections requested by the interviewee have been made to the final transcript.
 - d. A CD labeled “Quilters’ S.O.S.- Save Our Stories,” the Q.S.O.S. ID number for the interview and “Transcript and Images”. This CD should contain the final electronic version of the transcript (Word file) and the digital images for the interview. Please limit the images to no more than four. Images should be in jpg format and saved in the highest resolution possible. All files should be named as follows: for transcript: IDnumberLastname (example: NC28803-001Milne.doc); for images: IDnumberLastnameA, B, C... (example: NC28803-001A.jpg, NC28803-001B.jpg...)
 - e. Audio recording. If recording is digital this should be saved to a separate CD labeled “Quilters’ S.O.S.- Save Our Stories,” the Q.S.O.S. ID number for the interview and “audio recording”. The digital audio file should be saved in WAV file format at the highest sound quality possible. If recording is done via cassette tape, please label the cassette tape “Quilters’ S.O.S.- Save Our Stories,” the Q.S.O.S. ID number for the interview” and be sure this label is visible through the cassette case (or add a separate label to the case).
14. When your final interview packet is received at the AAQ office, you will receive confirmation via email. Be advised that the process of registering and uploading the interview is mostly done by volunteers and can take a few months from the time we receive your packet until the interview is live on our website.
15. Once the interview is posted on the AAQ website, you, the interviewee and the transcriber (if we have their contact info) will be notified by email. We hope that all members of the interview team, including the interviewee, will help us spread the word when the interview is posted. We have special Q.S.O.S. graphics for your website, blog or social media space—just ask.

Questions? Ready to receive a Q.S.O.S. ID number for your scheduled interview?
Contact Q.S.O.S. staff by emailing qsos@quiltalliance.org or phone (828) 251-7073.