

## Transcriber's Tip Sheet

**Please read the following before beginning the transcription process then again before you send it. Also review the transcription section of the Q.S.O.S. Manual.**

For questions contact Q.S.O.S. staff: [qsos@quiltalliance.org](mailto:qsos@quiltalliance.org).

The Basic Rule for transcribing interviews is – **Get everything down exactly as it is on the tape.**

- Margins: One inch margins at left, top and bottom and at least half inch on the right side of the page
- Justification- Left
- Font: "Times New Roman," size 12 point
- Double spacing between each person's passages, otherwise single space.
- NO BOLD ANYWHERE!
- NO TABS ANYWHERE!
- No page numbers

### **Follow the following format to begin:**

The Alliance for American Quilts  
Quilters' S.O.S. – Save Our Stories  
Tape Number  
Name, Interviewee  
Name, Interviewer  
Name, Transcriber  
Event  
Town/City, State  
Date  
Time interview begins

- Each speaker's first passage regardless of when she/he speaks in the interview, use their full name and include their initials in capital letters, enclosed in parentheses. After the first passage, use only initials to indicate who is speaking so you don't have to write out their names again and again.

Examples:

Karen Musgrave (KM): When were you first introduced to quilting?

Mary Smith (MS): My grandmother made quilts.

KM: Where did she live?

### **Other important things to remember:**

- We recognize quiltmaker and quilting as words.
- Titles should have double quotation marks but quilt patterns like Log Cabin, Nine Patch, etc. do not.
- Use two dashes or hyphens to show where an informant breaks off or was interrupted.
- Single quotation marks are used when a speaker is quoting something or someone.
- Anytime there is a pause, the amount of time of the pause should be put into the transcription.  
Example: [pause for 10 seconds.]
- Magazine titles should be put into italic.

- If you cannot identify a person speaking, use Unidentified Person (UP).

### **Some Don'ts:**

- Don't record what you think the informant meant to say.
- Don't correct grammar, usage or sentence structure. We talk in phrases.
- Don't include 'uh's,' 'um's,' 'you knows,' or 'okay' at the beginning of a sentence or false starts.
- Don't represent dialect or local accents or mispronunciations by altered spelling.
- Don't use commas to signify pauses.
- Don't use exclamation marks. Underscoring can be used for emphasis if needed but keep this to a minimum.
- Don't use a series of spaced periods to indicate anything on the transcription. These are standard ellipsis marks indicating that something has been left out. The only exception to this is when the beginning of the interview was not caught on tape.
- Don't hyphenate words like hand quilting, machine quilted, wall hanging, etc. We also recognize quiltmaker and quilting as words.

### **Brackets:**

For all information on the tape that is not part of the interview itself enclose the information in brackets.

**Everything inside brackets except for names is in lower case, underlined and has a period at the end.**

Examples:

- [laughs.]
- [inaudible.]
- [speaks to her daughter who was seated at the interview table.]
- [KM and MS speak at the same time.]
- Naperville [Illinois.]

Uses for brackets:

- laughter, crying, etc.
- gestures
- mechanical problems, time out for breaks, tape turned off because of noise, etc.
- amended information like full names, state if a town is mentioned, etc.
- to explain that two people are talking at the same time
- to explain initials (Example *QNM* [*Quilter's Newsletter Magazine.*])

### **How to Handle Background Noises or Inaudible Passages:**

Many of the interviews have been conducted in public places so there may be noise or you may not be able to understand. Remember your job is to transcribe everything exactly as it is on the tape so if a loudspeaker announcement was made and can be heard, describe it as such [announcement over the loudspeaker.].

If there is a passage or word that you cannot understand, try listening three times, then if you cannot understand it clearly, put [inaudible.]. It can also be helpful to invite another listener or two to listen to the passages that you cannot understand. Also the informant will have the opportunity to fill in the passage.