

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Oral History Program

Proofreading Instructions for Interviewees

We at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library want to insure that the transcript of your oral history interview is as accurate as possible and that you are pleased with the final product before it is made available to the public. Please edit the attached document, making all corrections in either pencil or pen, preferably in red. Resist the temptation to add substantially to the transcript, or to do major revisions on the text. Keep in mind that the actual recording of the interview is considered the “master” interview. Typically, however, researchers will use the transcript rather than actually listen to the interview.

As you read the transcript, also keep in mind that most people use language differently when they speak in conversation, and when they write. We tried to retain the spontaneity and informality of conversation while at the same time making your words clear to the reader. You may feel a little uncomfortable and surprised by the way your words look, but please resist the temptation to “fix up” what you said.

Make your changes / corrections directly on the document using either a pen or pencil, preferably in **red**. (This helps our editors spot the corrections.) It is very important that your handwriting is clear and legible. Place a ✓ in the right-hand margin next to each correction.

1. Pay special attention to the spelling of the names of people and places, and of technical terms. Words/phrases in the transcript that are underlined and followed by (??), indicate names or information on which our transcribers and editors were unsure. Indicate either that the information is correct, or make the necessary changes.
2. If you discover that you made a mistake during the interview – that you gave a wrong name, an incorrect date or place, etc. – please make that correction.
3. Clarify any sentences for which we have included notes in brackets. You may use a separate sheet of paper if you need more space. If you wish to change the text a little to clarify something, please do so.
4. Fill in any blanks. Because of background noise or a transcriber’s lack of familiarity with the subject matter, we may have been unable to hear or recognize some words. If so, we have left a blank. Make your corrections directly on the transcript whenever possible. Write on a separate sheet of paper if you need more space, providing the page number on the extra sheet.
5. If you feel strongly that some information should not appear in the final copy, please indicate this as such, clearly noting the material for which you have a concern, and inform the oral history office of the same. Remember, that information will still be in the audio version of the interview.
6. Once you review each page, please initial at the bottom to indicate you have approved it.

We are very pleased with the content of your interview, and appreciate that you were willing to share this important slice of history with the citizens of Illinois and the world. We appreciate your taking the time to see that it is accurate, and hope you’ll be pleased with the final product.