**Transcription Guidelines for Oral Histories**

**Basic Formatting:**

* Font: Times New Roman, 12 pt.
* Spacing: Double spacing for transcript, single spacing for title page.
* Margins: Top – 1.0”; Bottom – 1.0”; Right – 1.0”; Left – 1.5”. Left justified.
* Pages Numbers: Page numbers should be located on the bottom right corner, starting on the second page of the interview after the title page.
* Header: The header should include the name of the interviewee and the date of the interview in the top left corner, starting on the second page of the interview after the title page.
* Use bold text for the entry of each speaker. Use the full name the first time the speaker appears and use initials each time afterwards.
* If the interview spans multiple tapes, discs, or files, indicate the beginning of each new tape with “START OF TAPE 1” and the end of each tape with “END OF TAPE 1.” (use appropriate terms for your media format)
* When the interview is over indicate “END OF INTERVIEW.”
* Enter in the name of the transcriber and the date of the transcription at the end.

**Summary:**

* After completing the transcript, create a brief summary of the interview. The summary should be 150-250 words, and is located on the title page.
* Include biographical information about the interviewee, such as birth place and year, significant achievements, and connection to the oral history project. Use the interviewee’s full name in the first sentence, and Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr. [Last Name] thereafter.
* Include an overview of major topics covered in the interview.
* The summary should be written in the present tense.

**Transcription Tips:**

* The transcript should be as accurate as possible. Take time to understand what is being said and how it is said. The context can be important for accurately transcribing what the speaker is saying. It may be necessary to listen to parts of the interview more than once to fully understand what is being said.
* Pay careful attention to the speaker’s rhythm of speech and mannerisms in order to transcribe the interview in a sensitive and meaningful way.
* Proofread each page of the transcript for mistakes. The spell check feature on your word processing software will not catch everything. Consult a dictionary as necessary.
* Record every word in the exact order it is spoken, including grammatical errors and false starts.
* Unnecessary phrases, such as “ums” and “ahs” can be edited.
* Run-on sentences can be broken up with appropriate punctuation. Do not break up run-on sentences using a series of commas in order to separate the thoughts. Use periods or semi-colons instead.
* If a word or phrase is inaudible, listen several times to try to figure out the wording. If you cannot figure it out, type [Inaudible].
* Use ellipses to indicate incomplete sentences: “We thought about...” The series of three periods should immediately follow the last letter of the word, and there should be a space before the start of the next word.
* Use dashes to indicate changes in thought that happen mid-sentence. There should be no space between the dashes and the words surrounding them: “He walked—ran across.”
* Use dashes to indicate brief interruptions: “He spoke at--.” (Another speaker enters). The first dash should go immediately after the last letter of the word, and the second dash should be followed by end punctuation such as a period or question mark.
* Use brackets around the word “pause” to indicate noticeable pauses: [pause].
* More distinct interruptions, such as laughter, phone calls, and when recording stops should be indicated with brackets, such as [Laughter] or [Phone call] or [Recorder turned off and then back on].
* Be careful not to overuse commas, ellipses, and dashes. Use exclamation points and underlining for emphasis sparingly.
* In common cases where words are not fully pronounced, such as dropping the “g” off of words ending in “ing,” write out the entire word.
* Do not use abbreviations, except for common titles, (such as Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr.). Always spell out the word “and” instead of using an ampersand (&).
* Spell out all acronyms in brackets the first time that they are used, such as FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation].
* Use a person’s full name the first time he or she is mentioned. If the interviewee only uses the first name, put the last name in brackets: Barak [Obama].
* If the name of a town is mentioned, include the state in brackets: Ocala [Florida].
* Spell out numbers one through one hundred, large round numbers, and fractions. Large complex numbers, times, ratios, and percentages should be written numerically. Spell out the word “percent” instead of using the symbol (%).
* Days of the month and years should be written numerically (September 15, 1960). In expressions such as “in the 1950s” do not use an apostrophe before the “s.”
* Use upper case for federal legislative bodies, such as “Congress.” Use lower case for state and local legislative bodies, such as “county commission.” When in doubt, use lower case.

These tips are adapted from the Southern Oral History Program Oral History Guide, available at: <http://www.sohp.org/site_images/csas/practical_guide_%28Apr-2009%29.pdf>, and the Worcester Women’s Oral History Project Transcription Tips, available at:

<http://www.wwhp.org/files/oral-history-project/Transcription_Tips_for_Oral_History.pdf>.

** SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

[Project Name]

Interview with [Interviewee Name]

[City], [State], [Month, Day], [Year]

Interview [Interview Number]

Interviewed by [Interviewer Name]

Recorded by [Recorder Name]

**Summary**:[Summary paragraph]

This interview forms part of the Institute for Public History (IPH) Oral History Collection, directed by Professor Gregg Bush from the History Department and curated by the University of Miami Libraries Special Collections.

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** SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

**Public Spaces in Miami: An Oral History Project**

Interview with Edward Trainer

Miami, Florida, December 3, 2000

Interview IPH-0056

Interviewed by Jeff Padgett

Recorded by Jeff Padgett

**Summary**: This interview with Edward Trainer was conducted in December 2000. He is a World War II veteran and worked as a pilot for Eastern Airlines. Mr. Trainer’s interest in public spaces goes back to the 1980’s when he started an environmental protection group, the Greater Panama Area Conservation Society (G-PACS). He describes his childhood in the small town of Panama City, his flight training in the army, the changes that occurred in Panama City after the war and his efforts to preserve the historical sites and public parks of his native town

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**Jeff Padgett:**  All right, today is December 3rd, 2000, around 8 o’clock in the evening, my name is Jeff Padgett and I am at the home of Mr. Edward Trainer. Today I am going to do an Oral History of Mr. Trainer and I’d like to get started if that’s ok with you?

**Edward Trainer:** Sounds good to me.

**JP:** First of all, could you please tell me when and where were you born?

**ET:** Well, I was born on July 6th, 1924, in Panama City, Florida. My family lived in a small two room house near the beach, and from what I remember my mother telling me is that I was born right there in that house.

**JP:** And how many years did you live there?

**ET:** I believe that we lived there for fifteen years, or at least until I dropped out of high school to get a job to help with our monthly bills. Then we moved to across town to a larger house that had a pond in the front with ducks in it. I am positive that we lived there until I came back from World War II.

**JP:** How large was your family?

**ET:** There was my mother and father, until he left. There was me, my older brother James Patrick, and my younger sister Patricia Ann. So together that would make five and that lasted until my father left in ’36.

**JP:** Why did you feel that keeping your little sister in school was more important than keeping yourself in school?

**JP:** I don’t mean to digress, but do you remember playing around the area you grew up in as a child?

**ET:** Of course I do… My older brother and younger sister and I used to go to the beach and hunt and swim and do everything normal kids should do. We were always outside because we had such a vast unexplored area around us.