Seward Family Digital Archive

Editing Guidelines

Introduction

With editing, it is useful to think of the workflow as a "Transcriber and Collaborator Process." Editors are collaborators and "readers" of the transcriber's original work.

As each letter and personal transcription style is different, the editing process will always be unique, and as such, the purpose of this guide is to help bring order to the varying styles and unique circumstances of editing.

Editing encompasses two important foci: first, ensuring that the transcription is true to the manuscript text. Second, monitoring the transcriber's consistency with general Seward Family Digital Archive practices outlined in the Annotation and Transcription Guidelines.

Workflow Description

Transcribers will save their transcribed and annotated letters with a v1 at the end of the file name in the Version 1 folder under the transcriber's name in Box. Transcribers will tag their editors in the comments in Box or send them an email to alert them that there are files available to edit. To avoid confusion, be sure to only move files that are ready to edit into the main Version 1 folder.

Editors will make a new v1 file that is saved with their three-letter ID added to the end of the file name and upload their edits into the transcriber's Version 1 folder. For example, a transcriber would save a letter from Frances to William on November 11, 1832 as "18321111FMS_WHS1v1." After it is edited, the file that is uploaded will be saved as "18321111FMS_WHS1v1hmg."

Transcribers will review the edits and make changes to their original v1 files. This file will be saved with v2 replacing the v1 at the end of the file name and uploaded to the Version 2 folder.

At this point, the file goes to Professor Slaughter for further editing. Professor Slaughter will make changes on the hard copy of the letter he prints. Transcribers and editors are encouraged to review any changes he made after he edits the transcriptions, but there is no need to correct anything after the v2 file has been submitted.

Editing Functions

There will be two types of feedback offered by editors.

1. Track Changes: Any changes made to the text should be traceable through Track Changes. As soon as the editor saves the new v1 edited file, turn on the Track Changes function. Go to Review, and turn Track Changes "ON."

Use Track Changes to make edits that are certain and easily discernable as errors; for example, the transcriber wrote "I received you letter" when the author wrote "I received your letter." This can quickly be amended in Track Changes. Simply add the "r" to "you."

2. Comments: The editing process is also a chance for conversations between the transcriber and the editor about transcribing words and identifying people, places, and works of literature that remain uncertain. There may be many discursive comments between the transcriber and editor as they engage each other on a difficult-to-read word or a difficult-to-identify person. This exchange is encouraged and contributes to the collaborative nature of editing.

Editor Responsibilities

Editing is a critical part of the workflow. Editors provide a fresh perspective on a transcription and the annotations that is essential to maintaining accuracy and continuity throughout the project. These are some steps to follow when approaching a transcription to edit.

1. Save the file as a v1 with the editor initials at the end. (e.g. 18321111FMS_WHS1v1hmg)

2. Read the transcription for content and make note of any questionable spots in the transcription.

3. Compare the transcription to the digital image of the manuscript, checking for accuracy in the transcription.

4. Ensure that all people, places, and literary works are footnoted.

5. Check the annotations for accuracy, and if there are unknowns, try to identify or provide further leads for those individuals.

6. Ensure that the formatting meets the guidelines for transcription and annotation.

7. Ensure that the letter heading and the file name reflect the correct date, author, and recipient and that the transcriber added his or her three-letter ID.

8. Add your three-letter ID in brackets after the transcriber's ID.

9. Read the letter again for coherence. Pay attention to sections that do not make sense because there is likely a transcription error at those points.

Editing feedback is essential to transcribers, but the editor is only a collaborator in the transcriber's text. Do not complete the transcriber's work for her/him. If it seems that the transcriber has not tried very hard to identify a person, especially when it is not difficult to locate the information, editors may provide tips on where to look to locate

the information, but it is the transcriber's job to do the majority of the annotations. When a transcriber is legitimately stuck, editors are a wonderful resource, but if editors notice a trend of flagrant dismissal of the annotating responsibility, they should suggest places where the transcriber can look for the answer, rather than doing the work for the transcriber.

Transcriber Duties

When transcribers review their edited files, it is their final role in transcription and annotation.

1. Save the file as a v2. (e.g. 18321111FMS_WHS1v2)

2. Accept and make changes from the editor that you agree with.

3. Ensure that Track Changes is turned off and all comments are removed from the file.

4. Read through the transcription again for content and clarity, and compare any questionable words to the digital image of the manuscript.

5. Move the file to your Version 2 folder in Box. It will be forwarded to Professor Slaughter, who reads the transcriptions against the manuscripts, makes any necessary changes, and forwards it to the TEI team.

Please preserve the files created during the editing process in your folder in Box. At the end of the editing process, transcribers will have a v1, an edited v1, and a v2. Please do not delete any of the versions of the file, but you may use additional folders within your main Box folder to organize your files.