Tracking Volunteer Work in the Transcription Center

What is the Smithsonian Transcription Center?
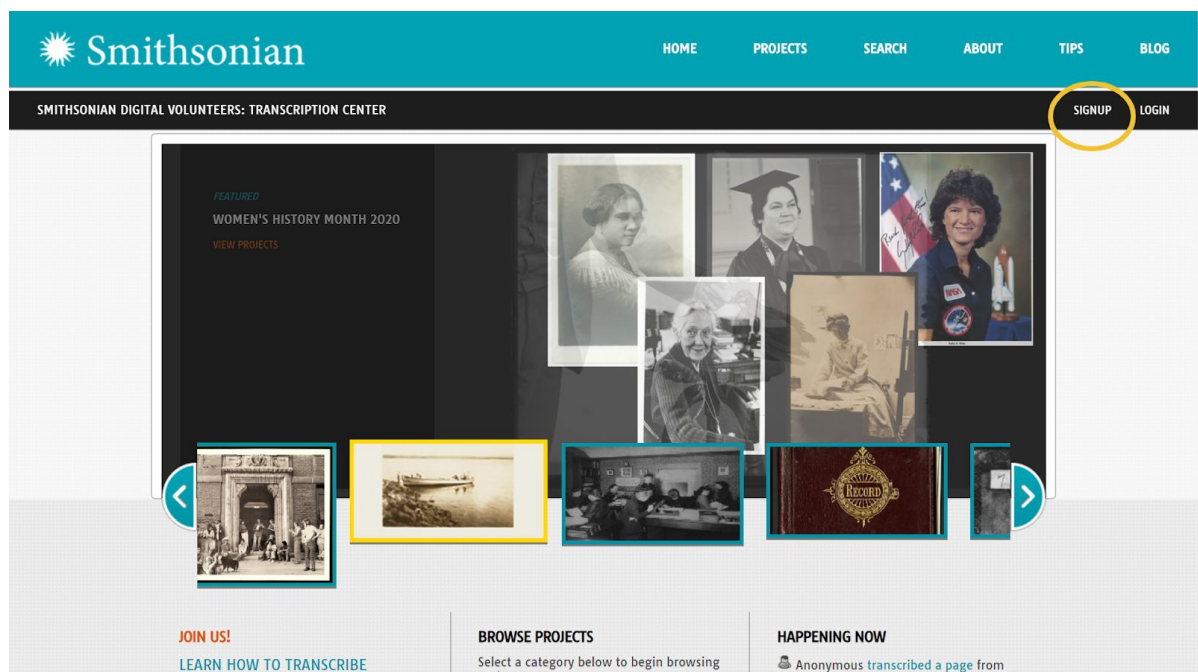
Started in 2013, The Transcription Center is a freely accessible website connecting volunteers across the world with digitized Smithsonian collections that need to be or already have been transcribed.

Why is transcription important?

Transcription increases accessibility by making digitized materials more readable and searchable. This means that researchers can go online and read primary source documents about art and history. It means that scientists can learn about plants and animals from historic field books and data cards. It means that the stories of women, people of color, and other under acknowledged and marginalized groups can be shared so that we all learn a more inclusive history.

How can I track my participation as a digital volunteer in the Transcription Center?

Sign up for a personal account with the Transcription Center. An account allows you to transcribe, review other volunteers' transcriptions, and keep track of your progress. You can create an account by clicking the *sign up* button on the Transcription Center's homepage. Enter a username and an email address. Once registered, you'll receive an email confirmation with instructions on setting up your account and choosing your password.

Note: You do not need an account to transcribe, but you do need one to review and to keep track of your progress.

Once you have confirmed your account and logged in, every time you transcribe or review ongoing projects, the system will automatically track your progress. Head to the "My Work" section in the upper right hand corner of the menu bar once you're logged in. There, you will be able to see how many pages you've transcribed and reviewed, how many total projects you have contributed to, and a dated list of individual project pages you've worked on. You can also narrow your results by selecting a specific time range. Click on the View or Download button to access your report as a pdf document.

*Note: The Transcription Center **does not record the number of hours a volunteer contributes,** but the "My Work" report does include dates and times that a volunteer participated on a project page.*

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Can I get my volunteer participation in the Transcription Center officially verified by a Smithsonian staff member?

Unfortunately, no. There are currently more than 15,000 digital volunteers registered in the Transcription Center, making it impossible for our staff to individually sign off on all volunteer participation. Transcription Center volunteers, however, are welcome to download the full PDF report of their activity via the "My Work" section of their account and submit this report to their schools or supervisors. We recommend consulting with your educator/school administration/supervisor, etc. when you begin transcribing to ensure the "My Work" report along with this document serves as a verified report for your time volunteering with the Transcription Center.

After I sign up for an account, how can I get started in the Transcription Center?

You're welcome to choose any project from the list of current and ongoing projects, click on a page needing transcription or review, and dive in!

The following resources may be useful:
- Transcription Center Community Guidelines
- Instructions for transcribing and reviewing Smithsonian collections
- FAQ's in the Transcription Center

Reach out to the Transcription Center team anytime with questions or discoveries on social media or by emailing us at transcribe@si.edu.