

Preface to 2000 Edition

The Library of Congress has been training braille transcribers since 1918. The early instruction manuals were written by the Red Cross. The first instruction manual published by the Library of Congress in 1950 was titled *A Manual of Standard English Braille* and was “compiled for the dual purpose of serving as a book of instruction for all students of Braille, and to establish uniform standards for both transcribers and embossers of Braille in the production of books for libraries and schools for the blind.” The *Manual* combined instructional materials with a copy of the official rules (the code) in an appendix. With the 1962 version the name was changed to *Instruction Manual for Braille Transcribing*, and the code was no longer included in the book. Rather, beginning with the 1962 edition, students were referred to the most recent version of *English Braille, American Edition* for all of the rules of braille that had been officially approved.

Revisions have been triggered by changes in the code, changes in the certification requirements, and comments from students and teachers. This edition reflects more of the same: new rules, modifications to the course, and an enhanced awareness of the principles of adult education.

The original plan was to slightly modify the 1984 edition of the manual to reflect code changes adopted in 1987 and 1991. Therefore, the basic organization of the material remains the same and many of the previous examples, drills, and exercises appear in this edition. During the development of the text, the need for other changes emerged. Consequently, explanations have been expanded and many more simulated braille examples added. Drills and exercises have been updated and new ones added. Some lessons have been modified to make it easier for local instructors to teach the material in two sessions while enabling correspondence students to continue sending in exercise materials all at once.

Many people contributed to the success of this revision. Constance Risjord, former member of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) literary technical committee and past-chair of the National Braille Association (NBA) literary technical committee; John Wilkinson, NLS literary braille advisor, member of the BANA literary technical committee and advisor to the NBA and California Transcribers and Educators of the Visually Handicapped (CTEVH) literary technical committees; and I spent many hours reviewing the 1984 manual and other materials that were being used with students, as well as comments that had been received over the years from students and local instructors. Mrs. Risjord drafted revisions that generated additional hours of discussion and additional revisions. Peer reviewers from several settings shared their comments. Experts in braille format reviewed the sections that rely on *Braille Formats: Print to Braille Transcription* for accuracy. Computer experts helped in creating the graphics, fitting in examples, and setting up search routines to verify that all concepts taught were tested in the drills and/or exercises. Editors fine-tuned the grammar and the format.

Sincere thanks are expressed to each of the many people who contributed to the *Instruction Manual for Braille Transcribing*. While some people truly defy categorization,

contributors are listed according to the primary expertise we utilized in conjunction with this project:

Transcribers and peer reviewers (including members of the BANA literary technical committee): Jane Backus, Stephen Bishop, Darleen Bogart, Phyllis Campana, Susan Christensen (formats), Jill Cooter, Mary Ann Damm, Dolores Ferrara-Godzieba, Nancy Field, Jeanne Horsey, Ann Kelt, Alice McGary, Julia Moyer, Martha Pamperin, Sandra Rowley, Norma Schecter, Elizabeth Schriefer, Barbara Sheperdigian (formats), Joe Sullivan, Joyce Van Tuyl, Joanna Venneri, Meg Wagner, Lindy Walton, Joan Yehl, Billie Anna Zieke

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The technical committees of the Braille Authority of North America are currently working to reconcile differences between *English Braille, American Edition, 1994*, the literary code book, and *Braille Formats: Principles of Print to Braille Transcription*, the primary source of format guidelines. As these differences are resolved and additional changes are made in the code, it will become necessary to make revisions to the instruction manual. As we move into the 21st century, one thing remains constant: just as English is a living language, braille is a living medium that will continue to change.

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April 2000