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## Peer review

Throughout its existence, *Minnesota History's* editors have consistently upheld a two-fold mission: sound scholarship and readability. In 1925 this mission was expressed as “scholarly contributions to knowledge with some material designed to have a wider popular appeal.” In 1952 it was described as “authenticity, accuracy, and readability.” And in 1970 it became “readable, reliable information on the myriad facets of Minnesota’s heritage.” As *Minnesota History* moves through the twenty-first century, nothing essential has changed.

Maintaining the balance between scholarship and readability is a delicate process. Once an article is accepted for publication, readability is the product of the author/editor collaboration. Yet how are feature stories deemed appropriately scholarly and reliable for publication? The answer is peer review.

*Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (11th edition) defines peer review as “a process by which something proposed (as for research or publication) is evaluated by a group of experts in the appropriate field.” As experts in the topic of the article under consideration, the reviewers are considered peers of the author (hence “peer review”).

*Minnesota History*, like many, but not all, state historical society magazines, is peer-reviewed. The editor seeks out suitable content experts for manuscripts she deems promising. The process is “double blind.” This means the reviewer does not know the identity of the author, nor does the author know the identity of the reviewers. Those who review an article submitted to *Minnesota History* are asked to evaluate whether the article:

- Contains innovative information
- Shows responsible scholarship
- Evidences familiarity with the subject
- Has a pertinent subject
- Has good organization, structure, and style

(The full description can be found at [mnhs.org/mnhistory](http://mnhs.org/mnhistory) under “Author Guidelines.”)

The decision whether to accept outright, provisionally accept pending revisions, or decline ultimately rests with the editor, based on her reading of the peer reviews. Constructive feedback is shared with authors, who, like *Minnesota History's* readership, range from tenured professors to independent scholars, journalists, and citizen historians.

Journals owe an immense debt to the peer reviewers, who perform their task without compensation (as do most of our authors). If you have been a peer reviewer or have submitted an article to *Minnesota History*, here is a grateful public shout-out to you!

—Laura Weber



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