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WEHN Revise and Resubmit Guidance

Hello! We are Lisa Brady, former editor of *Environmental History* (2014-2019) and Diana Di Stefano, editor of *Montana The Magazine of Western History* (2018-present). As published historians and editors of peer reviewed journals we have been on both sides of the publication process. We recently had a conversation about our perspective on what it means when an author receives “a revise and resubmit” after their peer reviews. We came up with some pointers that we hope will be useful to you in your publishing journey.

Overview

The editor of a peer reviewed journal acts as a shepherd and filter prior to the actual editing of an article. The editor or editorial team will review a submission and determine its suitability for that particular journal. If they believe it meets the criteria, the article will be sent (usually) to two or three reviewers who have expertise in the topic under consideration. Some journals ask for narrative feedback, others use a form, or some combination of the two. When reviewers and editors recommend “revise and resubmit” they believe the article’s potential will be met with either minor or substantial revisions.

Interpreting the “Revise and Resubmit”

- 1) If you receive a “revise and resubmit” it means the reviewers and editor think your article should be developed further. It is not a soft rejection. It is an opportunity.

- 2) You will likely notice the negative comments first. Some might even be mean or condescending. Take a step back and give yourself time to process the comments.
- 3) It's okay to get more peer input. Engage trusted colleagues in helping you process the comments.
- 4) Look for the constructive comments that make sense to you. Ask: What's doable? What fits your vision for your article? What suggestions make it better?
- 5) If the editor hasn't provided any guidance on the revisions, set up a conversation with them or send an email. Clear communication about editorial expectations are key to a successful publication and can help you separate the constructive comments from the rest.
- 6) As the author you are entitled to push back against suggestions that don't make sense to you. For example, are you being asked to materially change your argument? Would a revision change the meaning of your interpretation in a way that is not supported by the evidence? It is appropriate to explain to an editor why you want to reject certain suggestions.
- 7) If you reach an editorial impasse consider whether the journal you are working with is the only one that aligns with the audience you have in mind and the impact you want your work to have. Consider a different home for your piece if it just isn't the right fit between editor and author.
- 8) Ultimately publishing should be a partnership between editors and authors with a goal in common: to produce the highest quality work.

We hope this helps as you travel through the publication process.

- Lisa and Diana