At *Modern American History*, we rely on the professional skill and subject-matter expertise of our readers to ensure that promising essays and articles meet the highest standards of scholarship. We are grateful to those who participate in this scholarly endeavor. In efforts to bolster the peer-review process, the editors of *MAH* invite readers to review the guidance below.

**Goals of a Report**

- To help the editor(s) determine whether a paper contributes to the corpus of knowledge in the field or provides an intervention.
- To share broad amendments that are necessary for the paper to be published.
- To provide the author with specific and helpful guidance.

**Length & Structure**

- Without being overly prescriptive, we ask for a review of approximately 500-1000 words. *Any attachments you provide should be in .doc form, not .pdf*
- It is useful to begin with a concise synopsis of the paper. Thereafter, some questions may help to shape your review:
    - What is the main argument of the essay?
    - What distinguishes it from other work on the same or similar topics?
    - Is the interpretation novel and original enough to justify publication?
    - Is the article based on substantial primary research?
    - Does it engage convincingly with the relevant secondary literature?
    - Has the author neglected important sources?
    - Are the references in this manuscript inclusive, and do they reflect scholarship by women and other underrepresented groups?
    - Would this paper be read with interest and profit by scholars across subfields?
    - Could you suggest specific changes that would make this piece more likely to appeal to a wider audience?
    - Is the manuscript written and organized clearly? What are your suggestions for improvements in style and structure?
- Please highlight areas of strength and weakness. Detail any concerns about the paper or possible lacunae in the logic or evidence for claims. As needed, provide comments about potential changes by listing them in order of importance with structural changes at the top. Subheadings and bullet points can help to organize your feedback.

**General Approach & Tone**

- Be tough, but fair in your assessments. Concentrate on the quality of the submission rather than what it might have been.
- While maintaining academic rigor, try to "unite civility and truth" (Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*). Any direct critiques should remain considerate. Refrain from remarks that reflect personal views or biases. *Ad hominem* criticisms of the author are inappropriate. In the event your report is rather negative, perhaps reflect on the feedback for a time before submitting.
- Maintain anonymity in your feedback. Please note: the author will be sent a copy of all comments not marked as confidential.
- Focus your commentary on substantive matters. A reviewer is different from both an editor and a proofreader. Copyediting changes can be suggested, but generally left to a minimum.

**Comments to the Editor(s) & Recommendation**

- Please share any comments for the editor(s) at the end of the report in a section labeled "Confidential".
- We ask that you provide one of the following recommendations regarding the submission: 1) "Accept," 2) "Accept with Revisions," 3) "Revise and Resubmit," or 4) "Decline." Please fully contextualize your decision and do not include it in the body of the report. *Acceptances with no revisions are rare*. Please note: the final decision to publish rests solely with the editor(s).

**Timing**

- We fully appreciate the time that our readers commit toward delivering a robust peer review. Our typical request for turnaround is 6 weeks, with extensions granted when needed.

**Resources**

Peer review is the foundation of quality in research, ensuring that published works are rigorous and ethical. Peer reviewers can access a number of resources to assist them with their reviewing duties:

- How to peer review journal articles: a practical introduction to conducting peer reviews, especially for those who are new to the process
- Ethics in peer review
- Online peer review systems, and how to anonymously annotate manuscripts
- Peer review FAQs

The editorial office at mah@cambridge.org is also happy to help with any queries regarding undertaking peer review assignments. Feel free to reach out with any questions.