

MESDA Journal



AUTHOR GUIDELINES

GENERAL INFORMATION

The *MESDA Journal* accepts manuscripts that treat virtually any facet of decorative arts, architecture, or material culture produced in the South before 1860. The area in the *MESDA Journal*'s purview includes Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The *MESDA Journal* publishes articles with a focus on an object or group of objects, research notes, and book reviews. It does not publish articles of a genealogical or technical nature. Manuscripts submitted for consideration should have a clearly presented thesis that adds to our knowledge of the topic and should reflect an awareness of current and past research in the area of discussion.

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Electronic Publishing

The editor and editorial board of the *MESDA Journal* believe that electronic journals constitute the future of scholarly publishing, as commercial publishers are increasingly reluctant to underwrite "paper journals" and libraries no longer have the space to store back issues.

We also believe that electronic journals will soon grow into interactive forms of communication that will be more exciting than traditional journals. For example, online articles should include tools such as hyperlinks and rich media (audio/visual). In due course, we intend to add other features that will make the journal more dynamic and fluent than existing paper journals.

To quote Hal Varian in *The Journal of Electronic Publishing* (<http://www.press.umich.edu/jep/04-01/varian.html>):

Each new medium has started by emulating the medium it replaced. Eventually the capabilities added by the new medium allow it to evolve in innovative, and often surprising, ways. Alexander Graham Bell thought that the telephone would be used to broadcast music into homes. Thomas Edison thought that recordings would be mostly of speech rather than music. Marconi thought that radio's most common use would be two-way communication rather than broadcast. The first use of the Internet for academic communication has been as a replacement for the printed page. But there are obviously many more possibilities.

Finally, and more mundanely, the instantaneity of electronic publishing eliminates the publisher's dependence on unreliable delivery systems and allows the money saved on postage and printing to be redirected toward enhancing the journal's quality.

ARTICLE DEVELOPMENT

1. Focus your topic. Be realistic about what you can tackle in a twenty-to-thirty-page article.
2. Be sure you have accessed all relevant published information about your topic.
3. In doing research, document everything as if you were going to publish it (recording objects; photography; listing sources, especially unpublished materials). You never know when some fact or image will be useful.
4. Have a point of view, and state it clearly in the introduction to the article.
5. Follow the style guidelines in the MESDA Style Manual first and then refer to the latest edition of *Chicago Manual of Style* (currently the 16th edition). Pay particular attention to the journal's documentary notes/humanities style: Do not use author-date format! This is useless for the range of materials we draw on—especially unpublished materials. Also, with full documentation in notes, a separate bibliography is unnecessary.

With documentation, more is better. If unsure about the correct format, include all available information to save the editor querying or having to do research. This is especially important for unpublished materials and reprint editions.

The journal uses *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* as a reference for spelling when a word does not appear in the MESDA Style Manual.

6. When possible, provide color photographs of the objects you discuss (quantity is flexible depending on what the article needs), including detail shots when warranted. See the section on illustrations in the MESDA Style Manual.
7. We like to include a map, preferably contemporary to the period, which shows the area under discussion. These can generally be found in state archives, historical societies, etc. We may have an appropriate map or photo of one on file, so ask.

8. Permissions. For all maps and illustrations, be sure to obtain permission (in writing) from private collectors to publish a photograph of objects in their collection. The journal's editor will help you obtain permissions from institutions.
9. Acknowledgments or dedications should be included in the first endnote.

Author Biographical Information and Acknowledgments

Authors should submit a brief statement regarding their training and current professional involvement, or ongoing research interest, in the field. Also provide an email address appropriate for readers to contact the author.

Agreements with Author and the Publishing Process

Once published, all articles are copyrighted by MESDA, and the museum retains all rights and privileges associated with copyright ownership. All articles undergo external, blind peer review before they can be accepted for publication. A one-time honorarium will be paid upon publication. Authors are responsible for reviewing the edited manuscript for any errors, both typographical and factual.