

Jefferson County Historical Society Magazine Article Guidelines

By Jim Glymph, Editor

In my life before retirement I did a lot of writing, but it was not history. I was a database person and I wrote articles and gave presentations on database and data technology. I usually had a very diverse audience. For that reason, I tried to write at the eighth grade-level. When you do that, you can be sure that everyone will understand. I am not saying that you should write at that level, only that you want everyone to understand. If I have to look up a word in the dictionary, then I do not understand.

The really important thing is that your article is about Jefferson County or one of our people even if the County is just the birthplace. For example, Martin Delany left here when he was nine, but he is still from Jefferson County. Second in importance, it needs to be interesting to the majority of the readers. I know that might be hard to determine, but if you let some friends read it, you will probably find out.

I use Word 2000, so you need to give it to me in that or something compatible. I will not accept anything other than an electronic copy.

I will not mess with your style, but there are some things I do not like: "Cannot" looks a whole lot better than "can't." Please do not use contractions unless you are quoting a conversation. Abbreviations fall in the same boat. "Colonel" is much better than "Col." If you have a long name like Jefferson County Historical Society (JCHS) then do it like this and use JCHS from that point on.

Try not to end a sentence with a preposition unless it really sounds awkward to be compliant. Supposedly, Winston Churchill, mocking a critic who criticized him for ending a sentence with a preposition, said, "That is the sort of thing up with which I will not put!" I know that it is considered to be old fashioned to be compliant, but in a lot of cases your text is more readable. Sometimes, you do not even need the preposition. For example, "at" is often used at the end of sentence when it is not needed.

Footnotes are a must. There are a lot of conventions, but I like this one and would like for you to use it: <http://gatornet.chapin.edu/~library/footnote.html> I am not going to die if all the articles are not footnoted the same way, but it really looks nicer if they are.

Capitalization is another one of my peeves. I use this: <http://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/capital.asp>, but also use the Grammar Blue Book when I get stuck.

Those of you who have submitted before know that I am going to read your article at least three times. That does not mean that you should not proof read your work. I am reading it for grammar as well as historical accuracy. I will not change anything in your article without consulting you. The only time I will break this rule is if it is at the printer and I find something at the last minute. Generally, it is going to be something very minor.

I would like to keep the magazine in the eighty-page range with six or seven articles. (In 2009, the magazine was a very large 124 pages.) About twenty pages of the eighty consists of the table of contents, membership and society business. Last year, we had a two-page article and a twenty-seven page article. Somewhere in-between is ideal.

I like pictures. If you do not have pictures, I might be able to help. I have a connection in the Jefferson County Museum and there are a lot of pictures in their archives. If you give me pictures, it would be great if they are at least 300 dots per inch (dpi) resolution.

The deadline is August 31. I will not accept it after this date. I want to have the magazine at the printer before the holidays, so it will be printed before the end of the year.

I look forward to editing the magazine each year and hope to be working with you.