

PERSPECTIVES ARTICLE GUIDELINES

BlackPast.org (www.blackpast.org)

Revised, January 19, 2012

Here are the basic guidelines:

1) Each Perspectives article should be approximately 1,500 words. The Perspectives article should be written for a broad, popular audience although your work will likely be seen by scholars as well. Your article should focus on a unique aspect of the historical event you are describing or your own special vantage point as its chronicler. If you are writing about an individual that you knew, you should emphasize your relationship with the person and the ways in which you were influenced by her or his values or actions. If you are writing as an eyewitness to an event, please recount the event as you saw it, taking into consideration your own attitudes (and biases) concerning it. If you are presenting the synopsis of a forthcoming or recently published book that you wrote, draw from the material in the book but also describe why you wrote it, the challenges you faced in the research and writing, and the insights that BlackPast.org visitors will gain from reading it.

2) Perspectives articles do not have footnotes or endnotes but you may list sources including your own work. List no more than three sources. Try to avoid Internet sources.

3) Avoid information that cannot be documented in your article such as “her career was destroyed by white racism” or “he was the greatest athlete, musician, artist, etc., of all time.” Do not use your article primarily as a forum for your own editorial comments about people or events.

4) Each article should follow the standard BlackPast.org website style. That means the entry title is in bold type at the left margin. Paragraphs should *not* be indented. Book or journal titles that appear in the body of your article or in the Sources section should be italicized.

Sources should follow this style:

For Books: John Smith, *Black History* (New York: New Publishing Company, 1999).

For Articles: John Smith, “Article in Journal,” *Journal Title* 54:2 (Fall 2004)

For Websites: <http://www.blackhistory.com>.

There should always be a semicolon between citations, e.g., John Smith, *Black History in the West* (New York: New Publishing Company, 1999); John Smith, "Article in Journal," *Journal Title* 54:2 (Fall 2004).

5) Always spell out the name of an organization/political entity when it is used for the first time in your article. For example, write the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). For all subsequent times in the entry, the NAACP is appropriate. Remember, website visitors are from around the world. Do not assume that they will automatically know abbreviations or even events that are familiar to those who study African American history or to an American audience. Do not, for example, use state initials such as KY for Kentucky. Spell out the name of the state each time it is used in the entry.

6) Please submit the article in a Word file. Single space your article and be sure to include your name and your institutional affiliation, e.g., college, museum, public school, or historical society at the **end** of your article after the Sources. If you do not wish to list an affiliation with any organization or institution, the staff will list "*Independent Historian*" in that space unless instructed to do otherwise.

Example:

Contributor(s):

John Smith

University of Washington, Seattle

7) Although there will be some copyediting, please do your best to provide an article that is free of typos, misspellings and grammatical errors.

8) Photos or other images are crucial to the success of your article. Please provide a photo of the individual, place, or event in a separate jpeg. File. Do NOT embed the photo in your article file. Do NOT send the photo in a Word document. When you send the photo make sure you have determined who owns the image as BlackPast.org must obtain copyright permission to use it. Do not provide an image **WITHOUT** that information. Always seek an image in the public domain since it will be free. That means the image should appear in a publication dated before 1925 or it should be from a federal government source such as the Library of Congress or the National Archives.

Avoid images from Getty Images or the Associated Press as they are exceedingly costly. Try instead to get images from universities, libraries, historical societies and especially federal governmental agencies. Here is a direct link to the enormous Library of Congress Collection. Begin your search for photographs here:

**Prints and Photographs Division Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.,
20540-4730, (<http://www.loc.gov.rr/print/>)**

If the only photo available is from the Web, be sure to include the Internet address. Also make sure the photo from the Internet is an adequate size. Anything smaller than 100 KB appears tiny on the website page. On the other hand the website's software cannot accommodate images that are larger than 1 meg. Search Yahoo Images <http://images.search.yahoo.com/> for greater visibility of the 1.5 billion images on the web.

Finally, please send the photo with a caption that shows what the photo is and lists the ownership in parenthesis. Thus an image caption will read:

Sojourner Truth, ca. 1865 (Library of Congress)

9) Send in your biography in a Word file and your photo separately in jpeg format. Your photo and bio will appear on your bio page and will be linked to your article. Your bio should have your email address and a URL for your website if you have one. Indicate whether you want your work or home email address to appear on the bio page. If you don't want either to be included, BlackPast.org will substitute the website address, blackpast@blackpast.org. If any website visitor wants to contact you he or she may use that address and we will forward the email.

Please send your own photo as a jpeg. It can be in color or black and white but it must be at least 50 kb so that the image shows clearly on the website but it cannot be more than 1 meg. You should send the *photo and bio* **before** you submit your article.

10) If your email address changes because you move or switch institutional affiliation, please let us know as soon as possible. In fact we recommend that you update your bio annually to reflect any changes in your status.

When your article is initially posted it will appear for one week on the home page as the Featured Perspectives Article. After that week it will be removed from the opening page but it will appear permanently with previously featured articles.

Finally, look to the existing Perspectives articles for guidance on style, tone, and form. Here is the link to previously posted articles:

<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=perspectives/list>

Thank you for agreeing to write for BlackPast.org (www.blackpast.org)

