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Dr. Brooks Blevins
Search Chair, Professor of History
Missouri State University | Department of History
901 S. National Ave. | Springfield, MO 65897

Dear Dr. Blevins and Search Committee Members,

I am writing to enthusiastically express my interest in the tenure-track Assistant Professor position in American History, focusing on the American Revolution and Early Republic, at Missouri State University. I will be completing my Ph.D. in History at the University of Missouri in June 2024, with additional certifications in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Museum Studies. My interdisciplinary expertise bridges public history, digital humanities, and early American history, making me an ideal candidate for this position. I am thrilled by the opportunity to contribute to Missouri State University's commitment to academic excellence, student engagement, and community-centered historical scholarship.

My book project *Reciprocities Market* examines the ways in which 18c transatlantic scientific exchange fueled a period of rapid early American economic and social transformation. Specifically, using ArcGIS, NVivo, Gephi, and traditional text-based analysis, I explore John Bartram's (1699-1777) 18c botanical subscription service to explore the collapse of hierarchical exchange systems and the rise of market-based knowledge economies. Utilizing John and William Bartram's (1734-1812) epistolary record alongside publications I explore the ways local knowledge shaped colonial society. This research project contributes to a growing body of scholarship on the commercialization of knowledge, commodification of natural resources, and flow of knowledge and goods across the Atlantic. In my remaining time as a post-doctoral teaching fellow at the University of Missouri, I aim to complete my book proposal and secure a publisher for *Reciprocities Mark*et while also finalizing the article out of the projects third chapter for publication. As I finetune my incorporation of digital humanities tools such as ArcGIS and social network analysis using NVivo and Gephi, I trace transatlantic exchanges that shaped early American botanical, economic, and cultural landscapes. Previous publications include a co-edited annotated book project, a journal article, "Nature Much Improved: The Curation of a 19th Century Greenspace and Neighborhood" and four digital encyclopedia articles.

I similarly bring a robust teaching portfolio developed at the University of Missouri and McKendree University. Over the last several years, I have designed and taught a variety of courses, ranging from

large introductory surveys to upper-level, writing-intensive capstone seminars and historical methods. I am well-prepared to teach both the U.S. History survey and upper-level courses At Missouri State. My teaching philosophy emphasizes student initiative, experiential learning, and inclusivity which aids in fostering a collaborative environment where students engage with primary sources, develop critical thinking skills, and work on independent research projects. In my course *Between the Borderlands*, students create digital story maps that demonstrate the complex relationships between geography, economy, and politics across early America. In *Natures Nation*, students learn about the history of the US from an environmental perspective, and as a final project students work collaboratively to create and contextualize a digital exhibit.

Since 2019, while completing my Ph.D. I have had the opportunity to serve as the primary instructor of all western and non-U.S. history courses at McKendree University, where I developed a dynamic teaching style focused on interdisciplinary approaches. And incorporate methods such as digital mapping, social network analysis, and source-based research, equipping students with valuable skills that extend beyond the history classroom. My experience with both seated and online instruction has also provided me the flexibility to engage students through multiple platforms, ensuring that all students, regardless of learning style, thrive.

Beyond the classroom, I have extensive experience in public history and archival work. My early role as an archivist technician at the U.S. National Archives and subsequent position as project lead for Madison Historical, a countywide digital archive, allowed me to lead a team of undergraduate and graduate students in the digitization and curation of over 70 oral histories and image collections. These projects emphasized my ability to combine historical research with public engagement, skills I look forward to bringing to Missouri State University. Additionally, I have served on my department's Undergraduate Studies and Lecture Series committees, where I have contributed to curriculum redesigns.

My strong record of external funding, including fellowships from the Huntington Library, Winterthur Museum, and American Philosophical Society, demonstrates my ability to secure research support. I am confident that my experience in obtaining research grants will benefit both my scholarship and student mentoring at Missouri State. I am excited by the potential to involve students in collaborative projects that engage with digital humanities tools and public history initiatives.

I am particularly drawn to Missouri State University for its dedication to combining academic rigor with student-focused initiatives. I am eager to contribute to your department's intellectual community, fostering both undergraduate and graduate students' engagement with history through innovative teaching and collaborative research. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to discussing how my teaching, research, and public history experience can benefit Missouri State University.

Sincerely,
Shannan Catherine Mason, Ph.D.