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Ronald A. Johnson, Ph.D.
Chair, Search Committee
Department of History
Baylor University
Waco, TX 76798

Greetings Dr. Johnson and Members of the Search Committee,

Please accept this letter and CV as an expression of my sincere interest in the position of Assistant or Associate Professor of Early American History at Baylor University. My Ph.D. in History from the University of Missouri, conferred in June 2024, alongside graduate-level certifications in Geographic Information Science and Museum Studies, extensive teaching experience, strong publication record, and focus on 18th-century transatlantic communication and economic networks (1680-1860s), make me a compelling candidate for this position at Baylor.

My research and teaching align closely with Baylor's emphasis on academic excellence and the integration of Christian values, especially in the context of American history. Since 2016, I have taught a wide range of courses, from U.S. History, Western and World History surveys to specialized topics such as environmental history and Early Modern European intellectualism demonstrate the scope and breadth of my knowledge of Early American to 20th Century history. I have experience teaching in various formats—including in-person, hybrid, and asynchronous settings—to diverse student populations ranging from eight to 120 students. As a post-doctoral teaching fellow at the University of Missouri with a 2:2 teaching load, I continue to engage in active service in my roles on the Undergraduate Studies Committee and Lecture Series Committee.

My courses employ a middling-out and bottom-up approach, focusing on land, political economy, material culture, and diverse actor-agents. Through weekly readings, semester-long cumulative research projects, and continuous engagement with primary sources and diverse media elements, I help students understand the context and content of historical events alongside the skills and methodologies of the historian. I encourage students to explore historiographical debates from an early stage.

Beyond the classroom, my commitment and service record extend to public history and community engagement. I have worked as an archivist technician with the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, as a docent for a National Landmark and Historic House Museum and led teams of undergraduate and graduate students in building a countywide digital archive and encyclopedia, Madison Historical. In 2019 and 2021, I was appointed by the mayor of O'Fallon, Illinois, as an executive board member of the Historic Preservation Commission, where

I actively contribute to the nomination and conferment of historic landmarks and promotion local history in a city of 35,000 residents. My public service record demonstrates a strong commitment to community as well as academia, reflecting Baylor's mission to educate individuals for worldwide leadership and service.

My dissertation, "Reciprocities Market: John Bartram's 18th-Century Botanical Subscription Service and the Seeds of Independence," contributes to our understanding of early American economic, communication, and scientific networks. I explore the market and consumer revolutions through land use, botanical, and agricultural exchanges within the broader context of Atlantic intellectualism, scientific inquiry, and material exchange, arguing for the concurrent emergence of market and consumer revolutions by the mid-18th century. This year, I plan to complete my book proposal as I continue working towards a manuscript and securing a publisher. The book project and research, in part based on the genesis of a digital database and story-mapping component, will allow readers and researchers to trace material, ecological and intellectual exchanges across the Atlantic. The project emphasizes and centers the role of local knowledge, localized economies and their connections across North America and the Caribbean to a broader transatlantic world. More importantly, this work provides interdisciplinary career-building opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students through digital humanities training.

My dedication to research is further evidenced by a consistent record of external funding and support from institutions such as the Huntington Library (2023), Florida Atlantic University (2023), the American Philosophical Society (2021), and the Winterthur Museum Garden and Library (2020). I am also an award-winning researcher and writer; my article, "Nature Much Improved," received the Missouri Humanities Council's Lynn R. Morrow Award and was published in the Winter 2021 edition of Lindenwood University's journal, *The Confluence*. Additionally, I have developed a longstanding relationship with Bedford Freeman and Worth (McMillan) as a research assistant and pedagogical specialist, contributing to their AP U.S. History text *Fabric of a Nation* (2019 1e, 2023 2e), and co-editing the annotated book project *Legends of Mexico* (2020). My varied professional and publication experience demonstrate a continual commitment to research, pedagogy, original scholarship, and service while teaching full-time.

Baylor's strategic plan, Illuminate, which emphasizes academic excellence alongside Christian values, resonates with my personal and professional experiences teaching at McKendree University, a private Christian university and other public St. Louis metro area schools like, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, which have taught me the importance of engaging with diverse perspectives and inclusive learning environments. I am committed to creating a classroom that emotionally, intellectually, and physically supports students from all backgrounds, beliefs and learning needs. My experience in educational settings serving diverse student bodies—from rural, urban, and suburban colleges, with populations ranging from 2,000 to 30,000 students—underscores my experience, adaptive teaching strategies and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. I look forward to the opportunity to bring my experience, research, and commitment to student success to Baylor University.

Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Shannan Catherine Mason, Ph.D.