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Professor & Chair Stephan F. Miescher  
Department of History  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

Greetings Chair Miescher and Members of the Search Committee,

Please accept this letter and attached materials as an expression of enthusiastic interest in the position of Assistant Professor in Environmental History at the University of California, Santa Barbara. With a Ph.D. in History from the University of Missouri (2024), graduate certifications in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Museum Studies, and a robust portfolio of interdisciplinary teaching and research, I am encouraged by the opportunity to contribute to UCSB's vibrant academic community. My research explores the intersections of environmental and economic history, with a particular focus on the role of transatlantic scientific exchange in shaping early American ecological and economic systems.

My book project *Reciprocities Market* examines the ways in which early American transatlantic scientific exchange fueled a period of rapid 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 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, I aim to complete my book proposal and secure a publisher for *Reciprocities Market* while also finalizing the article "Making the Market of Natural Knowledge" out of the dissertation's 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 19<sup>th</sup> Century Greenspace and Neighborhood" and four encyclopedia articles.

As an educator, I am dedicated to creating engaging, inclusive environments that emphasize diverse methods and sourcing, critical thinking, and hands-on engagement through field visits and source interactions. My courses, such as *Nature's Nation* and *Between the Borderlands*, integrate digital tools and varied history methodologies, encouraging students to engage with primary sources and multiple modes of evidence. I have taught a range of courses, from introductory surveys to capstone projects and senior seminars, across multiple delivery formats ensuring accessibility and adaptability to diverse student needs. My commitment to mentorship and student success is further reflected in my work with undergraduate research projects and guiding students through independent studies and capstone projects.

Such experience extends well beyond the classroom, having worked as an archivist technician with the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, as well as interned and volunteered at a Historical National Landmark and House Museum. At *Madison Historical*, I directed a team of undergraduate and graduate students for a digital archive that preserved and highlighted regional history through oral histories, digitized collections, and public programming. Since 2019 I have served as an executive board member of the Historic Preservation Commission in a city of 40,000 residents. My service and labor reflect a broad scope of applied knowledge and commitment to community as much as academy in alignment with UCSB's Public History program and its emphasis on community collaboration. Through such projects I have successfully engaged diverse audiences in historical preservation and education. At UCSB, I envision similar initiatives that incorporate local histories, ecologies and public archives to foster community engagement and broaden public access to historical knowledge.

In addition to my academic qualifications, I bring a proven track record of securing external research funding, with fellowships from institutions such as the Huntington Library, Florida Atlantic University, the American Philosophical Society, and the Winterthur Museum Garden and Library. I am also a strong researcher and writer; my article, '*Nature Much Improved*,' won the Missouri Humanities Council's Lynn R. Morrow Award and is published in Lindenwood University journal, *The Confluence*. Over the last five years I have also worked to develop longstanding relationships with the textbook publishing house, Bedford Freeman and Worth (McMillian) as a research assistant and pedagogy content specialist. I built assessments for their AP U.S. History text *Fabric of a Nation* (2019 1e, 2023 2e) and co-edited an annotated book project, *Legends of Mexico* (2020).

I hope to continue my community and university service roles in my position at UC Santa Barbara. I currently serve on the UM history department's Undergraduate Studies Committee and Speaking and Lecture Series Committees and as part of a team of four redesigned the learning objectives for the first half of the U.S survey, sophomore seminar and senior historical methods courses to align to new history program directives as part of the university accreditation and five-year review. I am also an active member of community development and service as an executive member of O'Fallon, Illinois Historic Preservation Commission, where I contribute to historic landmark nominations and public outreach. My combined experiences have taught me the importance of engaging in diverse perspectives and ensuring a safe and inclusive learning environment. I am committed to creating a classroom that emotionally, intellectually, and physically supports students from all backgrounds and learning perspectives. My experience in educational settings serving diverse student bodies—from rural, urban, and suburban colleges, with populations ranging from 2,000 to 35,000 students—underscores my experience, adaptive teaching strategies, and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. .

The sum of my varied and collective experience demonstrates a commitment to research, pedagogy, original scholarship, and service while teaching full-time. I am particularly drawn to UCSB's emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion in its faculty scholarship and teaching. My own pedagogical practices and research initiatives prioritize these values, as I strive to create an academic environment that supports underrepresented voices, spaces, and perspectives. I am eager to collaborate with colleagues across disciplines to enhance UCSB's mission of fostering an intellectually enriching environment. Thank you for considering my application. I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute to the Department of History at UCSB and welcome the chance to discuss how my research, teaching, and public history experience can support the department's goals.

Sincerely,  
Shannan Catherine Mason, Ph.D.