

Shannan Catherine Mason
109 Betty Lane
O'Fallon, IL 62269
618-616-9717
Shannan.Mason@mail.missouri.edu

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Trish Gudeman
Department of History
Illinois State University
Schroeder Hall, Room 301
Normal, IL 61790

Dear Search Committee,

It is with great enthusiasm that I am responding to the opening for the position of Assistant Professor of History in the U.S. Colonial Era at Illinois State University. This spring, I will complete my Ph.D. in History with an emphasis on Colonial America and a Graduate Certification in GIS at the University of Missouri, Columbia. In 2014, I successfully defended my Master's Thesis in History, alongside a Certification in Museum Studies from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. My current dissertation project discussed below employs mixed methodologies to explore the complex relationship between socioeconomics and Anglo-American scientific communication networks across the 18th century. More broadly, I have developed interests in and experience as a researcher and lecturer in a wide range of topics, such as the colonial landscape, westward expansion, early industrialization, science, and the role of communication and exchange networks in economics and land development. My qualifications as a Colonial Americanist, alongside my research, teaching, and service record, are evidence of my strong candidacy for the Assistant Professor in History role.

My decade of teaching experience at universities and colleges of comparable size and student demographics across southern Illinois and Missouri will make me an invaluable asset at ISU. Teaching at Southern Illinois University, and the University of Missouri has prepared me to teach at schools and in classrooms of comparable sizes to ISU. While my experience at Southern Illinois & McKendree Universities, and Lincoln Land Community College have made me a stronger educator through varied experiences teaching and interacting with a broad array of students from urban and rural situations and with a wide gap in individual college readiness. I stand out not only for my substantial time at the head of a classroom but also for my certifications in online education in addition to the breadth of my content knowledge, having taught classes ranging in subject matter from the ancient world to the 21st century. In conjunction with my two years of special education experience, this wide range of teaching responsibilities has challenged me to diversify my technical skills while fostering an inclusive and engaging learning environment that emphasizes developing students' soft skills, such as historical empathy and effective communication. I am confident in my ability to generate high student learning outcomes and satisfaction in the classroom.

In addition to teaching, my publishing and research experience has varied across multiple mediums. For example, I have published several encyclopedia articles for the Madison Historical Encyclopedia and Archive, collaborated on *The Legends of Mexico*, a book annotation project; and written an article entitled "Nature Much Improved: The Curation of a 19th Century Greenspace and Neighborhood," attached as a writing sample. The article, published in the winter of 2021 highlights my knowledge and ability to reconcile with manifest destiny and complex land trends in the colonial period and beyond. Furthermore, I have worked for textbook and publishing companies, like Bedford, Freeman, and Worth as a developer for pedagogical and testing materials for *Fabric of a*

Nation 1e (2019) and 2e (2023), an AP US History textbook designed around the College Board framework. My ability to publish while completing my degree program highlights my dedication to the field and my understanding of the continued research expectations at a school like ISU.

As a demonstration of my leadership skills and ability to work as a community member, I have headed several research teams on historic architecture and digital archive projects. My ability to lead has consistently generated quality work with limited resources and manpower, such as the 2019-2020 digitization and transcription of more than 70 oral histories related to the institutional history of SIUE. The project was a joint initiative by the SIUE History Department, the Madison County Historical Encyclopedia and Archive, and the SIUE Campus Archives. I take such service obligations seriously and have continually engaged with my community in regional history fairs, workshops, and community-centered student projects. For example, I have served as an executive board member of the Architectural Historic Preservation Commission for the city of O'Fallon, Illinois since 2019 and, in that capacity, my team and I successfully designated three local and one national historic landmark. In doing so, I helped teach my local community the basics of historic home preservation, maintenance, and fellow board members basics of grant writing. I aim to bring my diverse experience to the classroom and community of Normal.

My dissertation defense is scheduled for Spring 2024; the project explores Philadelphian John Bartram's (1699-1777) transformation from a self-educated naturalist to the manager of a successful subscription service of North American flora. I examine Bartram's relationship with overseas patrons, transitioning from an exchange bound by the social conventions of patronage to an emphasis on fixed market conventions. By the middle of the 1750s, Bartram no longer only supplied botanicals to English aristocrats, but by then supplied some of London's largest nurseries and seedsmen as something akin to a wholesale distributor. I analyze Bartram's westerly and southern expeditions, landscape and scientific knowledge, and sales to explore the connection between the rise of a market economy and the decline of traditional reciprocity. Following graduation, I plan to edit and publish my dissertation as a monograph while developing a companion website and digital database to accompany the text. The opportunity to work alongside ISU's history faculty while converting my dissertation into a monograph project is particularly heartening. Dr. Keith Plummers' work, for example, has informed my own. It is also encouraging to see several faculty members list their publications alongside nominations for teaching excellence and service awards. I look forward to working with a team that emphasizes traditional research and publication demands alongside a clear emphasis on pedagogy and historical methodology for graduate and undergraduate students.

The prospect of joining the Department of History at Illinois State University as a teaching faculty member in Colonial History is exciting. My robust student evaluations, peer teaching observations and diverse syllabi are a testament to my teaching capabilities, all available upon request. My attached CV demonstrates a strong research and publication record from the colonial era to beyond. I am passionate about research and writing, as well as teaching historical skills to students and my community through meaningful and creative projects. I am happy to provide additional materials and sincerely appreciate the history department's consideration of my application. From the ISU history faculty interests and publications to the familiar red clay brick façade, the campus, and Bloomington-Normal already feel like home. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Shannan C. Mason