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Dr. Michael Smith  
Chair, Search Committee  
Ithaca College | History  
953 Danby Road  
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Greetings Professor Smith and Members of the Search Committee,

Please accept this letter and CV as an expression of my sincere interest in the position of Assistant Professor of History at Ithaca College. My Ph.D. in history from the University of Missouri conferred in June 2024, graduate level certifications in Geographic Information Systems and Museum Studies, extensive teaching experience, funding and publication record, and emphasis in 18<sup>th</sup> century transatlantic communication and economic networks, 1680-1840, make me a strong candidate for this position at Ithaca.

My research and teaching expertise closely align with Ithaca's emphasis not only on Early American history before 1830, but Atlantic World history. Since 2016, I have taught a wide range of courses from U.S. History, Western & World History surveys to special topics courses in environmental and early modern European intellectualism. I have significant experience teaching in a variety of formats such as in-person, hybrid, and asynchronous, to class sizes ranging from eight to 120 students. Moreover, I am a dedicated faculty member serving on the Undergraduate Studies and Lecture Series committees in the History Department at the University of Missouri in my role as a post-doctoral teaching fellow on a 2:2 teaching load.

My upper-level Revolutionary Era course employs a middling-out and bottom-up approach, centering the land, political-economy, material culture and diverse actor-agents. I ground students with weekly readings, a semester-long cumulative research project, and near constant interactions with sources and diverse media elements. Readings provide a timeline and clear narrative, while lecture followed by in-class discussions introduce students to the importance of understanding historiography and its many debates, such as those surrounding Indigenous diplomacy, sovereignty, and constitution making as a local and active model for the American project versus those that argue for a sole classical Greek and Roman influence. Each unit lecture introduces a debate like the one above, alongside a reinforcing overall narrative. In subsequent classes students engage with curated collections of the source materials as they collaborate in small groups to negotiate a collective interpretation before moving into whole class discussion. This way students learn the context and content alongside the skills and methods of the historian.

Such experience however, extends beyond the classroom, having worked as an archivist technician with the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, interned and volunteered as a docent for a National Landmark and Historic House Museum, and led teams of undergraduate and graduate students for 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 in a city of 35,000 residents. My service and labor reflect a broad scope of applied knowledge and a strong commitment to community as much as academy. I hope to bring my commitment to historic and local preservation and service to Ithaca and its adjacent communities.

Ithaca and the department's dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion profoundly resonate with me, especially given my background in an educational settings serving a diverse student body at the college level in rural, urban, and suburban settings in schools with student body populations ranging from 2,000 to 30,000 underscores my adaptive teaching strategies. I am committed to creating an inclusive classroom. One that emotionally, intellectually, and physically supports students from all backgrounds and learning needs.

Defended in June, 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 examine the market and consumer revolutions through land use, botanical and agricultural exchanges within the broader context of Atlantic intellectualism, scientific and material exchange to argue for the concurrent emergence of the market and consumer revolutions by the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This year I plan to complete my book proposal as I continue working on my manuscript conversion. The book project is designed to be interactive and will have a digital database and story mapping component. One that allows readers as well as future researchers to visually trace my argumentation regarding material and intellectual exchange using the sizeable social network of John Bartram (1699-1777). The monograph as planned significantly extends my dissertation's argumentation both temporally and geographically regarding the significance of local knowledge and economies across North America and Caribbean to the broader trans-Atlantic. But more significantly, this project offers interdisciplinary career building opportunities for undergraduates through digital humanities training.

Dedication to research is also evident through a proven record of consistent external funding and research 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,' won the Missouri Humanities Council's Lynn R. Morrow Award and is published in the Winter 2021 edition of Lindenwood University's journal, *The Confluence*. I have worked to develop a longstanding relationship 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-editor of an annotated book project, *Legends of Mexico* (2020). My varied and collective experience demonstrates a commitment to research, pedagogy, original scholarship, and service while teaching full-time.

I am steadfast in adhering to teaching excellence and have ample experience in engaging students across a wide range of historical topics as the instructor of record for American, World, Environmental, and Early Modern European courses. My student-centered, evidence-based pedagogy is designed to create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment where students engage deeply with course material and each other.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my experience, research, and earnest commitment to student success at Ithaca.

Sincerely,  
Shannan Catherine Mason, Ph.D.