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Ross Edwards, Ph.D.
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Dear Dean Edwards and Members of the History Search Committee,

Please accept this letter and attached materials as application to the position of Assistant Professor of History at Albertus Magnus College. As an Early American historian of science, communication, empire, and political economy who reaches into the 20th century, I bring a strong record of instruction, public scholarship, and inclusive pedagogy grounded in interdisciplinary and equity-minded teaching. I currently serve as a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in History at the University of Missouri, where I earned my Ph.D. in 2024 and was honored with the university's Distinguished Dissertation Award in the Humanities. With over a decade of experience teaching in in-person, hybrid, and online modalities, and a portfolio of student-centered, outcomes-driven courses, I would be proud to support Albertus Magnus College's liberal arts mission and contribute to the success of its students.

My teaching approach is informed by my background in digital humanities, museum studies, and public history. I have designed and taught more than fifteen distinct courses, including both halves of the U.S. survey, World History, Early Modern Europe, Historical Methods, Historical Geography, Environmental and Borderlands history. My classes emphasize experiential learning, interdisciplinary thinking, and diverse voices and sources. Whether through document-based inquiry, interactive exhibits, or collaborative mapping or video assignments, I work to help students think historically, write critically, and communicate clearly. I have taught in person, online, and in hybrid settings, both synchronously and asynchronously. Because of the range of my teaching and institutions, my students have included traditional undergraduates, adult learners, and dual-credit high school students. I am familiar with learning management systems such as Canvas, Blackboard, and Brightspace, and use them to promote transparent instruction, consistent communication, and strong digital engagement. My classes are designed to accommodate varied learning needs and include multimedia content, assignment scaffolding, and peer review components alongside project-based portfolios. I have taught a 4:4 load consistently while contributing to curriculum development, learning assessment, and student mentorship at both research and teaching-focused institutions, including McKendree University, a college whose size and student body closely resemble your own.

My research centers the cultural and material history of science across the early trans-Atlantic world. My book project, *Natures of Exchange: Communicating Natural Knowledge, Commerce, and Empire in John and William Bartram's Early America*, traces how eighteenth & nineteenth century American naturalists challenged and aided imperial hierarchies through social, intellectual, and commercial exchange. The

study integrates archival analysis, digital mapping, and material culture approaches to examine how knowledge was circulated, commodified, and politicized. My broader research explores the intersections of environmental change, economic thought, and public science in early America and has been supported by fellowships from the American Philosophical Society, the Huntington Library, Winterthur Museum, and Florida Atlantic University. My published work includes an award-winning article, digital exhibits and collections, four digital encyclopedia entries, and a co-edited annotated edition of the nineteenth-century serial print by George Lippard, *Legends of Mexico*, and an assistant and pedagogy specialist to the AP History textbook *Fabric of a Nation* (2019, 2024). I also recently began a three-year appointment as Social Media Editor for *The Journal of the Early Republic* and its digital companion *The Panorama*, where I lead strategic communication, public scholarship promotion, and collaborative editorial initiatives.

Beyond the classroom, I have contributed to institutional service, student mentoring, and public-facing humanities initiatives. I currently serve on the Undergraduate Studies and Lecture Series Committees at Missouri and have led projects in archival curation and community-based research. At the National Archives and Records Administration, I supported digitization and preservation workflows. As project lead for *Madison Historical*, I supervised undergraduate teams in producing oral histories, metadata creation, and documentation of regional heritage sites. These experiences reflect my commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, civic engagement, and student empowerment through the translation of hands-on activities like object handling, digitization and interviewing guest speakers.

In addition to my work within the history curriculum, I am deeply invested in the broader goals of general education. At both Missouri and McKendree, I have designed assignments and assessments that speak directly to core learning outcomes such as ethical reasoning, effective communication, and interdisciplinary problem solving. My U.S. survey and Historical Methods courses often include material culture labs, public exhibit proposals, or digital timeline and mapping exercises that build transferable skills in research design, source evaluation, and visual storytelling. I see general education and skills not as separate from historical training, but as an ideal space to model how historical thinking and media analysis contributes to public debate, civic responsibility, and career preparation across disciplines.

Albertus Magnus College's emphasis on student-centered education, diversity, and liberal learning aligns deeply with my values as an educator and scholar. I am especially drawn to your commitment to inclusive excellence, small-class engagement, and mission-driven pedagogy. I welcome the opportunity to contribute to your general education and history curriculum, mentor students from diverse backgrounds, and support interdisciplinary programming and civic initiatives. I am eager to participate in shared governance and campus life, advise students both formally and informally, and support the events and traditions that sustain your academic community.

Thank you for considering my application. I have enclosed my CV and would be happy to provide additional materials, including syllabi, teaching evaluations, or references, at your request. I look forward to the opportunity to speak further about how my teaching, research, and service can support the mission of Albertus Magnus College and its students.

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