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Dr. Jacob Steere-Williams
Search Chair, Department of History
165 Calhoun Street, Office 204
Charleston, SC 29424

Dear Dr. Steere-Williams and Search Committee Members,

Please find this letter as enthusiastic expression of interest in the tenure-track position of Assistant Professor in the History of the United States and World at the College of Charleston. With a Ph.D. in History from the University of Missouri conferred in June 2024, graduate certifications in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Museum Studies I bring a rich interdisciplinary approach to history. Generous experience in the material world of public history, geography and world history has offered ample opportunity to finetune my research and teaching approaches. With four years of teaching experience in world history from the ancient to contemporary world I am well practiced at incorporating ecological, economic, intellectual and transnational history into my research and classroom. My work explores the intersections of these fields across the 18th and 19th century and aligns with the departmental emphasis on interdisciplinary scholarship. opportunity to contribute to the field of history at Charleston while engaging students in experiential learning. As my transcripts and comprehensive exam fields and teaching experience in US and global history make me a strong candidate for the position of Assistant Professor at Charleston.

My research has been greatly shaped by my diverse teaching experiences at Southern Illinois University and McKendree University, where I instructed a range of courses in both American and world history. At both the University of Missouri and McKendree, I developed a comprehensive teaching portfolio, spanning from world history surveys to specialized topics in environmental history, ancient studies, early modern Europe, and U.S. history. My approach to teaching centers on active, student-driven learning, which I achieve through experiential and project-based methodologies. For instance, I regularly engage students in creating argumentative podcasts and digital posters based on primary environmental and cultural sources. In my world history and geography courses, I guide undergraduates in developing digital story maps that visualize historical events and relationships between physical geography and historical change. These project based hands on methods help students connect historical content with spatial and cultural understanding, fostering critical thinking and a deep engagement with the material.

My book project *Reciprocities Market* examines the ways in which 18c transatlantic scientific exchange fueled a period of rapid early American 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 in

Europe and the Americas. Utilizing John and William Bartram's (1734-1812) epistolary record alongside publications I explore the ways local knowledge physically and intellectually 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, goods and new economies across the Atlantic. In my remaining time as a post-doctoral teaching fellow at the University of Missouri, I aim to complete my book proposal and secure a publisher for *Reciprocities Market* while also finalizing an article length version of "Making the Market of Natural Knowledge" the third chapter of my dissertation-monograph project for publication. I am also using this year to 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 and more broadly Atlantic botanical, economic, and cultural landscapes. Previous publications include a co-edited annotated book project, a journal article, "Nature Much Improved: The Curation of a 19th Century Greenspace and Neighborhood" and four digital encyclopedia articles.

My public history and archival experience also align with the College's mission to combine teaching and community engagement. As a project lead for the Madison County Digital Archives, I supervised undergraduate and graduate students in digitizing oral histories and developing digital exhibits for local museums. I believe that public history is a powerful tool for making historical research accessible, and I would love to involve students at the College of Charleston in similar projects that link classroom learning with local history. I am particularly excited by the College of Charleston's location and its direct relevance to my research. As the southern travels of John and William Bartram and their role in shaping the botanical and intellectual landscapes of the 18th-century Atlantic world are central to my book project. I look forward to this research to experiential learning for students as well, as it directly relates Charleston's rich history through field trips, site visits along the Bartram trail and heritage corridor, and archival research. which I plan to integrate into my courses and student projects in collaboration with local institutions.

I have a strong record of external funding that underscores my ability to secure financial support for research, including fellowships from the Huntington Library, Winterthur Museum and Library, Florida Atlantic University, and American Philosophical Society. I am confident in my ability to continue to self-fund in my role at Charleston. I look forward to engaging students in research projects that utilize in-demand tools and mixed methodologies. In my service role as a teaching fellow at the University of Missouri, I have contributed to similar initiatives, such as redesigning the U.S. history survey to better reflect diverse perspectives and serving on department committees focused on undergraduate education and curriculum development. I am eager to participate in the College's diversity and inclusion efforts, both in the classroom and in public history projects that engage the community of and surrounding Charleston.

I am thrilled by the prospect of joining the faculty at the College of Charleston. I am confident that my interdisciplinary research, commitment to diversity, and experience in U.S. and world history will make me a valuable addition to your department. I would be honored to contribute to your mission of academic excellence and public engagement, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how my skills and experiences align with the needs of the College of Charleston's History Department.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to speak further.

Sincerely,
Shannan Catherine Mason, Ph.D.