

OXFORD AMERICAN

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CONTACT: **Kelsey White** kwhite@oxfordamerican.org 501-416-6525

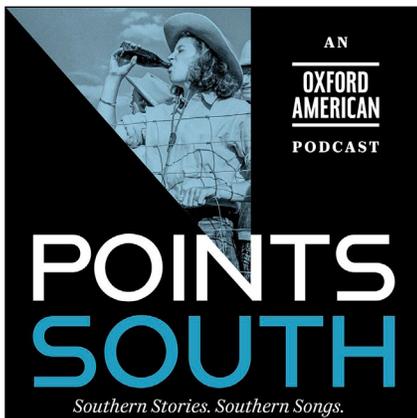
National Endowment for the Humanities Awards \$350,000 to the *Oxford American*

Grant supports the magazine's *Points South* podcast

April 7, 2020—LITTLE ROCK, AR—Today the National Endowment for the Humanities announced a grant of \$350,000 to the *Oxford American*, a nonprofit arts organization primarily known for the publication of the *Oxford American* magazine. The *Oxford American* is published in partnership with the University of Central Arkansas.

The grant will fund a series of feature-length reported segments to air within *Points South*, a podcast hosted by *OA* executive editor **Sara A. Lewis**. With each segment, the *OA* seeks to further its organizational mission of exploring the complexity and vitality of the American South, which requires meaningful interrogation of the region's history, values, and cultural and political landscapes as they have evolved over time.

"This grant is a vote of confidence for the *Oxford American's* mission," Lewis said. "As the *OA*, like so many arts organizations, adapts to these uncertain times, we are grateful for the NEH's support, which enables us to tell more important, underreported stories of and about the South."



Points South launched in September 2019. Previous reported segments told the story of Ruth Coker Burks, who provided end-of-life care for patients with AIDS in Hot Springs, Arkansas, during the height of the crisis, and of Clyde Kennard, the first person to attempt desegregation at the University of Southern Mississippi. The most recent episode, which was released on March 19, featured a dispatch from Dilley, Texas, home to the largest immigration detention center in the United States.

Future segments will engage the South's most important and promising writers, scholars, poets, and artists to reflect our diverse region, as well as collaborate with institutional partners such as **Smithsonian Folkways**, the nonprofit record label of the Smithsonian Institution.

NEH grants are highly competitive and involve a rigorous peer-review process to ensure that the projects represent the highest level of humanities quality and public engagement. The *OA* is proud to have the NEH's support, which will enable the organization to grow and deepen *Points South*.

"As the fine staff at the *Oxford American* launches the *Points South* podcast, it is thrilling to know this important new chapter of their publication will be supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities," said **William R. Ferris**, Senior Associate Director Emeritus of the Center for the Study of the American South at UNC-Chapel Hill and a former chairman of the NEH, who will be a humanities consultant on this project. "The podcast will deliver

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the region's humanities resources to the *OA*'s fans around the globe with technology that is increasingly important in our lives.”

Kidada E. Williams, an internationally recognized expert on African Americans' lived experiences of racist violence and associate professor of history at Wayne State University, will also advise the project. “Today, we need expertly researched African American and American history that is comprehensive, publicly accessible, and impactful,” she said.

John Biewen, audio program director at Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies and host of the podcast *Scene on Radio*, will serve as executive producer. “Given its rich and renowned history of exploring the South and its complexities on the page, *OA* is well-positioned to tell equally illuminating stories in sound,” he said. “I'm delighted and honored to be part of the *Points South* team.”

Based in Little Rock, Arkansas, the *OA* encourages artists across disciplines to present work that creates a deeper understanding of the South. The magazine has won four National Magazine Awards—including the 2016 Award for General Excellence in the category of Literature, Science and Politics—and other high honors since it began publication in 1992. In February 2020, the *Oxford American*, edited by **Eliza Borné**, was again named a finalist for a National Magazine Award. In 2019, the *OA* was a recipient of a Governor's Arts Award in Arkansas.

“Central Arkansas is fortunate to be home to the award-winning, world-class arts organization *Oxford American*, one of Arkansas' most far-reaching cultural exports and an important interpreter of the American South,” said **Congressman French Hill**. “As we all seek new ways of connection and celebration of our shared humanity, the *Oxford American*'s mission has never been more vital.”

To listen to episodes of *Points South*, visit OxfordAmerican.org/pointssouth.

The *OA* is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and relies on supporters to carry out its mission. To support diverse, high-quality Southern writing, art, and music, please make a donation today at OxfordAmerican.org/donate.

The *Oxford American*'s Spring 2020 issue is now available for purchase at OxfordAmericanGoods.org, and readers can subscribe to the magazine by visiting OxfordAmerican.org/subscribe.

Points South host Sara A. Lewis is available for interviews.

ABOUT THE OXFORD AMERICAN

Founded in 1992, the *Oxford American* (*OA*) is a nonprofit arts organization whose mission is to explore the complexity and vitality of the American South through exceptional writing, music, and visual art.