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Media Relations

August 28, 2015

UNH History Professor Wins NEH Grant for Book on Martin Luther King Jr.

DURHAM, N.H. -- Jason Sokol, associate professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, was awarded a \$50,400 Public Scholar grant from the National Endowment from the Humanities (NEH) for his book project, "Shot Rings Out: How King's Death Was Lived." The NEH awarded 36 grants (from 485 proposals) in a new initiative to bring nonfiction humanities books on important and appealing subjects to popular audiences, book clubs, and best-seller lists.

"NEH Public Scholar books will make important and exciting discoveries in fields such as history, literature, linguistics, and archaeology accessible to readers everywhere, and serve as an example of how humanities scholarship can benefit the common good," said NEH Chairman William D. Adams.

"Shot Rings Out" will explore the impact that Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination had in the short- and long-term following his death. Sokol contends that most King scholarship deals with his life and the events that led up to his last day in April of 1968. But research on the broader impact of King's death on individuals and the course of the nation is lacking.

"This is a book...that shows how his [King's] death unleashed a host of different emotions: devastation and despair, pain and guilt, shock and apathy, bitterness and even satisfaction," wrote Sokol in his proposal. "In addition, this book probes the long-term ramifications of the shot that rang out. I illustrate how King's death, and the responses to it, shaped the longer trajectory of race relations in America."

Sokol hopes his study will open up new dimensions of King's historical significance and offer a fresh look at this oft-written-about American leader.

"It is a great honor to have the support of the NEH, and also a great honor to be in the company of such an extraordinary group of scholars," said Sokol of his award. "I particularly appreciate the NEH's emphasis on writing for the public. I have always tried to write books that not only engage with the scholarly discipline of history, but that will hopefully be interesting and meaningful to the reading public. As such, I am excited and thankful to be a part of the NEH's Public Scholar initiative."

Sokol specializes in 20th century American politics, race, and civil rights. He is the author of *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights* and *All Eyes Are Upon Us: Race and Politics from Boston to Brooklyn*.

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