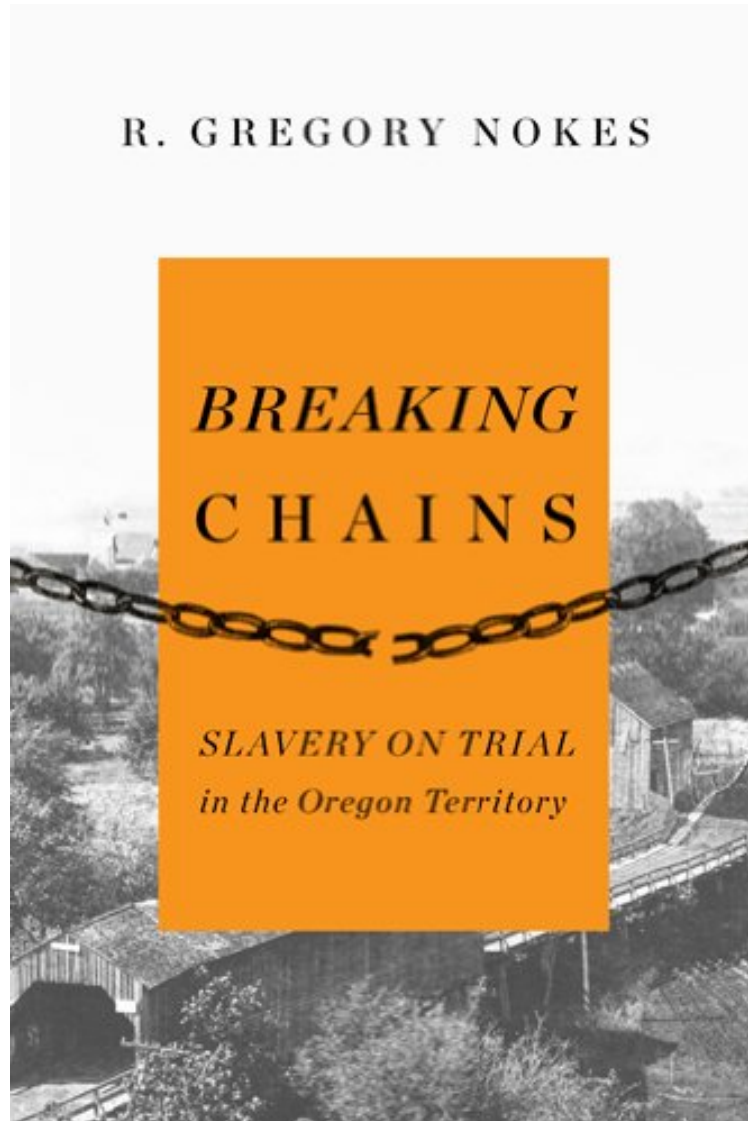


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Breaking Chains: Slavery on Trial in the Oregon Territory

R. Gregory Nokes

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R. Gregory Nokes : Breaking Chains: Slavery on Trial in the Oregon Territory before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Breaking Chains: Slavery on Trial in the Oregon Territory:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. We Should Learn From Our Past By Q. Huang Nokes books on the history of Oregon Blacks and Chinese (Massacred for Gold) are wonderful. The stories are surprising and his style is

clear and engaging. I agree with this saying from his prologue: while we don't have to apply today's standards to events of the past but we definitely should not hide our past either. Let me quote Nokes prologue: I would want to understand the real history of our state, not a sanitized version that misleads us into myths and misplaced self-satisfaction. We can learn from our past. We should.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An easy, informative read. By Pacerpapa This is a detailed and very well-documented account of more than a dozen early settlers in the Polk and Benton County areas of Oregon. Its primary focus is on the attitudes and behavior of early settlers toward the negro slaves they brought with them to Oregon on wagon trains. The the personal and political lives of many white and black settlers are outlined in easy-to-read snippets, and tied together to provide the reader with an historical view of the land rush caused by the Donation Land Claims. The book touches on the formation of the States of Oregon, Washington and California, and most particularly on early race relations and pioneer life in the Willamette Valley of Oregon.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Breaking Chains A true tell it like it was story By Nora E. Hinchcliff The story told a true history of Oregon that I had not heard before and I believe schools in Ore. should have it in the class rooms. was raised at Philomath and lived in Rickreall From 1979 to 2006 and bought a parcel of land that was part of the Ford donation. also know Gus and Jane Quiring so this was of special interest to me. Well written and detailed.

When they were brought to Oregon in 1844, Missouri slaves Robin and Polly Holmes and their children were promised freedom in exchange for helping develop their owner's Willamette Valley farm. However, Nathaniel Ford, an influential settler and legislator, kept them in bondage until 1850, even then refusing to free their children. Holmes took his former master to court and, in the face of enormous odds, won the case in 1853. In *Breaking Chains*, R. Gregory Nokes tells the story of the only slavery case adjudicated in Oregon's pre-Civil War courts—*Holmes v. Ford*. Through the lens of this landmark case, Nokes explores the historical context of racism in Oregon and the West, reminding readers that there actually were slaves in Oregon, though relatively few in number. Drawing on the court record, Nokes offers an intimate account of the relationship between a slave and his master from the slave's point of view. He also explores the experiences of other slaves in early Oregon, examining attitudes toward race and revealing contradictions in the state's history. Oregon was the only free state admitted to the union with a voter-approved constitutional clause banning African Americans and, despite the prohibition of slavery in the state, many in Oregon tolerated it and supported politicians who advocated for slavery, including Oregon's first territorial governor. *Breaking Chains* sheds light on a somber part of Oregon's history, bringing the story of slavery in Oregon to a broader audience. The book will appeal to readers interested in Pacific Northwest history and in the history of slavery in the United States.

About the Author R. Gregory Nokes is the author of *Massacred for Gold: The Chinese in Hells Canyon*, an Oregonian Pacific Northwest "Top 10" book. He travelled the world as a reporter and editor for the Associated Press and *The Oregonian*. He is a graduate of Willamette University and attended Harvard University as a Nieman Fellow. He and his wife, Candise, live in West Linn, Oregon.