

Learn about slavery in pre-Civil War Oregon

Author R. Gregory Nokes to speak at Astoria Public Library on Jan. 15

ASTORIA — For Astoria Public Library's next Library After Hours event, R. Gregory Nokes' will give the presentation "Slavery at the End of the Oregon Trail" at 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 15.

This event is co-sponsored by the Lower Columbia Diversity Project. The library is located at 450 10th St. Admission is free.

Nokes' presentation is based on his recent book, "Breaking Chains: Slavery on Trial in the Oregon Territory," which tells the history of slavery and racism in early Oregon. The book, a fi-

nalist for the 2014 Oregon Book Award for non-fiction, focuses on *Holmes v. Ford*, the only slavery case adjudicated in Oregon's pre-Civil War courts. 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 the couple's children. Holmes took

his former master to court and, in the face of enormous odds, won the case in 1853.

A native of Oregon, Nokes spent a 40-year career in journalism with the Medford Mail Tribune, The Associated Press and The Oregonian. He was a foreign correspondent for The AP in Latin America, with postings in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Buenos Aires, Argentina. He also covered the State Department for The AP during the Reagan Administration. During his career, he traveled to more

than 50 countries on reporting assignments. After retiring from journalism in 2003, Nokes began a second career as an author and lecturer on Northwest history.

The mission of the Lower Columbia Diversity Project is to engage pro-actively with diversity issues in the local region, educate the community on the benefits of diversity, tolerance and inclusion, and provide a forum through which individuals, groups and organizations may address concerns relating to diversity in the community.



Submitted photo

Author R. Gregory Nokes retired in 2003 after 43 years in journalism and now has a second career as an author.

Library After Hours is a free series of cultural events that take

Library After Hours

6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 15

Astoria Public Library

450 10th St., Astoria

503-325-7323

Free

place at the Astoria Public Library after regular hours of operation. For more information, contact library staff at 503-325-7323 or visit astorialibrary.org

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