



The Color Of Night: Race, Railroaders, And Murder In The Wartime West.

By Geier, Max G.

Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, 2015. Softcover. Condition: New. 384 pages. Softcover. New book. CIVIL RIGHTS. On an unusually cold January night in 1943, Martha James was murdered on a train in rural Oregon, near the Willamette Valley town of Albany. She was white, southern, and newly-married to a Navy pilot. Despite inconsistent and contradictory eyewitness accounts, a young black cook by the name of Robert Folkes, a trainman from South Central Los Angeles, was charged with the crime. The ensuing investigation and sensational murder trial captured national attention during a period of intense wartime fervor and extensive black domestic migration. Folkes's trial and controversial conviction—resulting in his execution by the state of Oregon—reshaped how Oregonians and others in the West thought about race, class, and privilege. In this deeply researched and detailed account, Geier explores the attitudes of local town-folk, law officers, and courtroom jurors toward black trainmen on the West Coast, at a time when militarization skewed perceptions of virtue, status, and authority. He delves into the working conditions and experiences of unionized black trainmen in their "home and away" lives in Los Angeles and Portland, while illuminating the different ways that they, and other residents of Oregon...



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