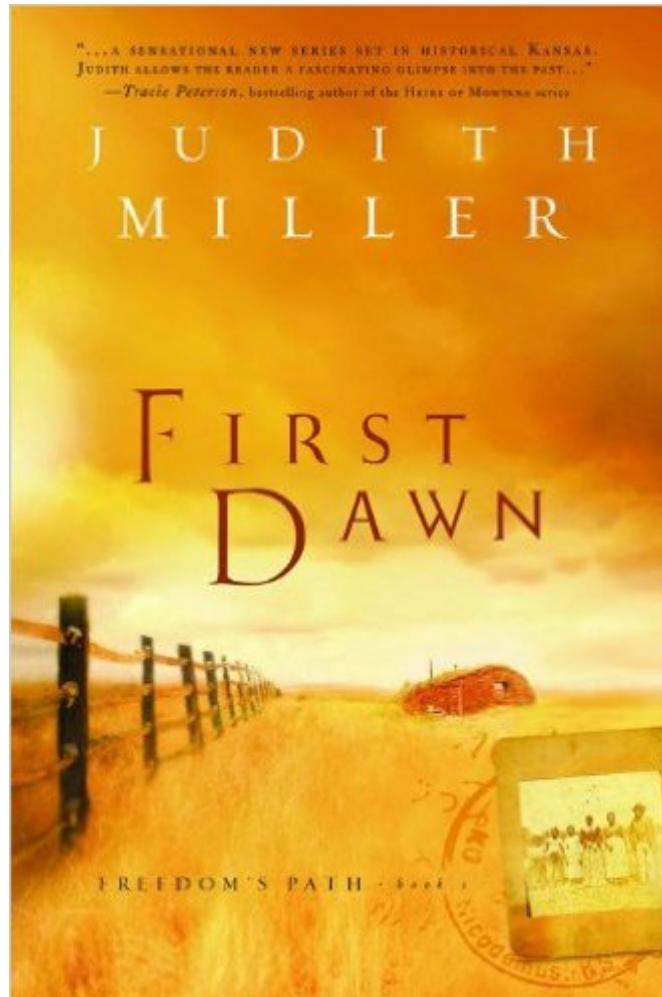


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# First Dawn (Freedom's Path Series #1)



## **Synopsis**

Lured by the promise of "real" freedom and a new town to call their own, sharecroppers Ezekial Harban and his three daughters leave behind remnants of slavery in the war-torn south and set off for Nicodemus, Kansas. When they arrive, they are shocked to see that little of what they were promised actually exists. Many head back home, but Ezekial and his daughters are determined to build a new life in the stark territory. Dr. Boyle, a newly arrived doctor in neighboring Hill City, is called to deliver a baby in Nicodemus. He and his family are moved by the plight of the settlers there and vow to help. But the white pioneers of Hill City face problems, too. When the lives of these two families intersect, neither town will ever be the same. Freedom's Path Book 1.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I didn't like the book ending with the story so incomplete. The only reason I bought the second book was because I purchased it before reading/finishing the first. Good story lines but a book should be able to stand on its own without requiring the reader to purchase another.

In 1877 Kansas, two new segregated towns are formed out of the Great Prairie: The former slaves are to live in Nicodemus while the whites settle in Hill City. Many former slaves hearing about the new opportunity take their family to relocate, but arrive to find a tent city with abject campsites to call home. Most are disappointed and return to their former homes. One of the newcomers Ezekiel Harban decides stay although his three daughters have doubts. Former Kentucky physician Samuel

Boyle brings his family to Hill City, but his new home is devastating as there is not much more than a few abodes and "several sad-looking buildings." His accompanying family members miss their old Kentucky home with the social atmosphere especially potential boyfriends. Though going back is quite the temptation, their faith in the Lord by the Boyle family and others provide them with the encouragement to make their new home work. Meanwhile Boyle's provides medical care to both towns and soon he and his family form friendships with black settlers like Ezekiel. Christian historical readers will enjoy this fine Reconstruction Era tale with its insightful look at the period and especially the obvious parallels to the Exodus. The story line overuses improbable happenstances to move the plot forward, but sub-genre fans will not care because the cast is solid especially the lead males whose friendship bonds starting with the birth of a newborn and solidified by their beliefs in God. Judith Miller in her solo debut (see Lights of Lowell series co-written with Tracie Peterson) opens her Freedom's Path series with an entertaining Americana saga. Harriet Klausner

Eighteen-year-old Jarena Harban didn't want to leave Kentucky. Her father was a sharecropper, and by moving to Kansas, he saw an opportunity to own land and give his family a real future, but for Jarena, this was moving from the monster you knew to one you didn't know. When the Harbans and the other black settlers arrive in Kansas, the land is not as promised. There is no town, no settlement, only barren land. Winter is quickly approaching, and the settlers have no choice but to make do. With next to no money, no shelter, and no idea what to do next, Jarena and the others must fight to survive in their promised land. Thomas Grayson is on the run when he falls in with the Harbans. As he works with the Harbans to ready for the winter, Jarena catches his eye, but she has eyes for someone else. By the time Jarena notices Thomas, the men searching for him arrive in the neighboring town. My main complaint with many historical novels is that they sound and feel much like a contemporary novel in a historical setting. This was not an issue with FIRST DAWN. As I read FIRST DAWN, I was warped back in time to 1877 Kansas. Ms. Miller captured the dialect, culture, sights, smells and sounds of the time period expertly. The plot rolled smoothly and characters became real. I even found myself wanting to shake Jarena occasionally to get her to see Thomas. This is the first book by Judith Miller I have read, and definitely not my last. Reviewed by Deatri King-Bey of The RAWSISTAZÃ™ Reviewers

I wanted to like this book. The premise was intriguing, and it sounded like I might learn some fascinating history into the bargain. But it had some major believability issues. It was a stretch to believe at least some of the former sharecroppers did not recognize the doctor's name, given that

they came from the same place and he was known for being sympathetic to the blacks. The doctor's son and daughter went from unlikable, self-serving brats to compassionate, thoughtful human beings with no arc and little explanation. Those are just two examples. The plot got very draggy in a number of places. And the writing style was full of explanations and so much "telling" vs. showing ... I trudged ahead through 80% of the book trying to give it the benefit of the doubt, but I finally had to throw in the towel. I don't like to give negative reviews but there was really no way not to on this one.

Perhaps it is only the Kindle version that has this problem, but the book was full of jarring and sudden shifts in point of view and location. Usually, such a shift is indicated with a break in text, a sub-heading, or some visual marker to indicate that the story is shifting. Not so in the version I read. Without any warning, the story leaped from the point of view of Jarena in Nicodemus to another figure, sometimes even another figure in an entirely different location. I was surprised to find such a rookie mistake in a book by an established author like Judith Miller, and from a reputable publisher such as Bethany House. Nevertheless, it was there, and it made the book difficult and unpleasant to read. The story itself was adequate.

I enjoyed the story line but was put off by the gaps in the story. The Drs. Children were self centered and then in a new chapter they were not..there was nothing to explain the transition. The homes of the settlers were burned and nothing was ever mentioned about what they did to overcome that, the story just went on as if it hadn't happened.

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