

Bass Reeves - Oath of Office as U.S. Deputy Marshal

-OATH OF OFFICE.------, Bass Reeres , do solennly succer that I will fai sts, directed to the Marshal of the United States for the Western District of Arbanans under the endorsity of s returns make, and in all things well and truly, and without similar of partiality, perform the duties of Dam sas during my continuance in said affice, and take only my lawful fees, so kelp me God. Bass Reves to and subscribed before me this 29 day of Inter Suit Comt west Sid an

This image depicts an Oath of Office which Bass Reeves took during his career as a Deputy U.S. Marshal. As this document indicates, Reeves worked for the Federal District Court for the Western District of Arkansas. Although he could neither read nor write—since he was born a slave and American slaves were generally not allowed to have an education—Reeves was able to do his job because others would read arrest warrants to him. Reeves would then memorize the words of the warrant before he went after the outlaw.

In addition, Reeves knew five different Native-American languages, which significantly benefitted his employer (since Reeves' jurisdiction included "Indian Territory").

Speaking of Reeves' employer ... note that this Oath was also signed by "I C Parker." That is Judge Isaac C. Parker (of the District Court for the Western District of Arkansas).

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