

Name _____

Date _____



Bass Reeves

His name was Bass Reeves—1838, born into slavery

In Arkansas but grew up in Texas.

After enlisting with his enslavers

To fight in the Civil War, Reeves found a way to

Plan his escape and managed to run away.

It's unknown how he escaped—a mystery to this day.

What we call Oklahoma in modern-day

Was called the Indian Territory.

Bass Reeves found his way there

While many Indigenous nations, due to westward expansion, were forced there,

Including the Seminole, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and the Cherokee.

Reeves found refuge in the Indian Territory.

He picked up different Indigenous languages, learned the landscape,

Learned how to track, learned firearm skills—an ambidextrous marksman, could shoot with both hands.

Then in 1863, after the Emancipation Proclamation, Bass Reeves was finally and officially free.

So as a free man, he chose to move back to Arkansas, where he became a farmer and started a family.

On the American frontier, Bass Reeves brought down many, many criminals.

He was the best of the best, a lawman with principles.

Over 3,000 outlaws brought down by Bass Reeves.

Some of the most notorious outlaws were no match, best believe.

On the American frontier, Bass Reeves brought down many, many criminals.

A US marshal, a lawman with principles—

Over 3,000 outlaws brought down by Bass Reeves.

Some of the most notorious fugitives were no match, best believe.

The population of the frontier grew and grew as more settlers moved west.

To keep the peace and enforce the laws, US marshals had to be sent

To patrol these regions, capture outlaws—the Old West, what you expect?

In these new lands of the US, they needed law and order in full effect.
Then lo and behold,
In 1875, Reeves was appointed
US marshal to the Indian Territory.
One of the first Black US marshals—
A long way from his days enslaved, making history, and this is his story.
For the next 32 years,
He brought down many, many criminals.
He was the best of the best, a lawman with principles.
Over 3,000 outlaws brought down by Bass Reeves.
Some of the most notorious outlaws were no match, best believe.
Then in 1907, Oklahoma became a state.
That's the year that everything changed,
Same year that Reeves became
An officer—officer of the Muskogee Police.
He served for two years, but he had to cease.
His health declined; soon, he was deceased.
January 12, 1910, Bass Reeves rest in peace.
Bass Reeves rest in peace.
He died a hero. When the world called, he took his cue.
The man, the myth, the legend
Of the American West—true, true.