

Black Gun, Silver Star



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In The Story of Oklahoma, Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves appears as one of "eight notable Oklahomans," the "most feared U.S. marshal in the Indian country." That Reeves was also an African American who had spent his early life as a slave in Arkansas and Texas made his accomplishments all the more remarkable. Black Gun, Silver Star tells Bass Reeves's story for the first time, sifting through fact and legend to discover the truth about one of the most outstanding peace officers in late-nineteenth-century America--and perhaps the greatest lawman of the Wild West era. Bucking the odds ("I'm sorry, we didn't keep black people's history," a clerk at one of Oklahoma's local historical societies answered to a query), Art T. Burton traces Reeves from his days of slavery to his soldiering in the Civil War battles of the Trans-Mississippi Theater to his career as a deputy U.S. marshal out of Fort Smith, Arkansas, beginning in 1875 when he worked under "Hanging Judge" Isaac C. Parker. Fluent in Creek and other southern Native languages, physically powerful, skilled with firearms, and a master of disguise, Reeves was exceptionally adept at apprehending fugitives and outlaws and his exploits were legendary in Oklahoma and Arkansas. Black Gun, Silver Star restores this remarkable figure to his rightful place in the history of the American West. Art T. Burton is a professor of history at South Suburban College in South Holland, Illinois. He is the author of Black, Buckskin, and Blue: African American Scouts and Soldiers on the

Western Frontier and Black, Red, and Deadly: Black and Indian Gunfighters of the Indian Territory, 1870-1907.

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