

Okie Heritage Tours
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Okieheritage.com

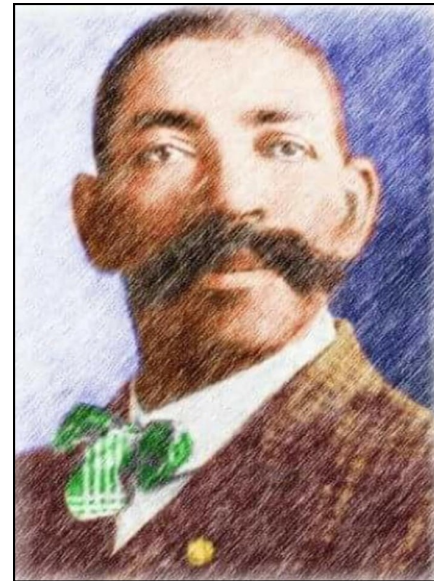


Okie Heritage Tours, based in Muskogee, Oklahoma, can provide your group with several days of activities that can be customized to fit your group's specific interests. Muskogee has been called the epicenter of the true Wild West with a history of cowboys and Indians, lawmen and outlaws, soldiers, politicians and musicians. This small, friendly town sits near the mid-point of the Jefferson Highway in Oklahoma (Hwy 69) and is just 30 minutes from I-40 and I-44 making it very accessible by motorcoach.

Tour Itinerary

Bass Reeves: Behind a Mask of Black

U.S. Deputy Marshal Bass Reeves is today considered one of the greatest marshals to serve on the western frontier. With thirty-four years in law enforcement as a marshal and a Muskogee police officer, Reeves made over 3,000 arrests during his remarkable career. The newspapers of his day frequently reported on his exploits. But for the entertainment industry, a Negro marshal was the invisible man. No dime novels and no old Hollywood Westerns spoke of the courage, commitment and integrity of a former slave.



But today you can explore the life and times of U.S. Deputy Marshal Bass Reeves from Fort Smith to Muskogee where he lived, raised a large family, served his church and served the law. One biographer of Reeves believes he was the inspiration for the fictional Lone Ranger - a man hidden behind a mask of black. Come see if you agree. A half day to two-day tour will let you ride with one of the greatest lawmen of all times.

Half Day, Full Day and Two-Day Itineraries

Day 1 Morning or Half Day

As you arrive in town or after a continental breakfast at your hotel, travel to **downtown Muskogee** to recreate the police beat of Bass Reeves who spent his last two years in law enforcement as a Muskogee police officer. Your tour guide will lead you to sites, past and present, where Bass worked, lived and worshipped.

Muskogee's downtown history museum is your next stop. **Three Rivers Museum** remembers Bass Reeves with a tombstone kept in a featured exhibit. The grave of Bass Reeves is unknown today, so he is memorialized at the museum. See also Belle Starr's saddle, a vintage fire truck, a 1940s diesel train engine and other fascinating exhibits. Located in the Midland Valley Railroad Depot, this museum tells the story of Muskogee as the seat of the federal government for Indian Territory.

Next, enjoy a good homestyle meal at **Mama C's Soul Food Restaurant**. This family-owned eatery honors a well-known local cook known to everyone as Mama C. It just might be that you'll also get to visit with some "family and friends" of Bass Reeves. Local re-enactors can tell you more of this hero's story while you dine.

Day 1 Afternoon

After lunch you'll cross the Arkansas River on the **Bass Reeves Memorial Bridge** to visit Oklahoma's oldest town. Your first stop here will be the **Fort Gibson Historic Site**. This re-created frontier fort will show you how soldiers on the untamed prairie lived 200 years ago. Several stone structures at the fort survive from the Civil War era when the fort was occupied by both Confederate and Union forces (but not at the same time!). Bass Reeves is believed to have served as a scout for the Union Army which included the first black soldiers to see action during the Civil War.

Continue next to the **Fort Gibson National Cemetery**, a beautiful and solemn reminder of sacrifice and courage. This cemetery, established in 1868, gives rest to soldiers who fought in every American conflict. The Officers Circle includes graves of some famous individuals such as the fort's first Sutler John Nicks, Talihina, wife of Sam Houston and Vivia whose ghost is said to haunt the cemetery. Bass Reeves' daughter Alice is also buried here.

From Fort Gibson you'll cross the river back to Muskogee then take a brief tour past historic sites such as old **Fort Davis** and the **Blackstone Switch** at Wybark. Your tour guide can tell the stories of Civil War battles and the foiled train robbery at the railroad switch.

After checking into your hotel, some may want to rest while others could use a little shopping therapy. Visit **McClain's**, an antiques and vintage furniture extravaganza.

For supper . . . yeah, it's called supper here in the Wild West . . . you'll want to try some of the barbecue Muskogee is famous for. Enjoy a wonderful meal at **Cowboy's Restaurant**. This locally-owned eatery will offer you the unique flavor of Oklahoma barbecue where the meat is smoked with pecan wood, a long-standing Native American way to prepare home-grown Angus beef.

Follow your wonderful meal with an evening of entertainment – perhaps an outlaw movie at the historic **Roxy Theater** or a concert featuring local talent at the **Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame**.

Day 2

Get the second day of your visit started with a hearty chuckwagon breakfast at the **Spaulding Park Tourist Camp**. This renovated 1922 camp building has been updated with modern amenities while keeping the spirit of its origins. Before the days of motels, cities along the first highways built camps to accommodate the motoring public. The Spaulding Park Tourist Camp is the only remaining facility on the 2300 miles of the Jefferson Highway. Muskogee's oldest park is full of history your guide will share with you including how the marshals used the park as their own campsite.

From here you will travel to another, even older campgrounds known as **Honey Springs**. Located along the old Texas Road, this was the site of the most significant Civil War battle in Indian Territory. An interpreter at Honey Springs will share how America's first black troops played a pivotal role in the Union victory here.

From Honey Springs you'll return to the crown jewel of Muskogee – beautiful **Honor Heights Park**. This 130-acre park is a wonderland of flowers, trees, walking trails and a butterfly house. Enjoy a catered lunch at the Papilion a teaching garden focused on providing habitat for butterflies.

You will follow lunch with a visit to the **Five Civilized Tribes Museum**. With both history exhibits and an art gallery, this museum features some of the greatest artists among the five large Indian Nations who were removed to Indian Territory from the southeastern states. Learn more about their Trail of Tears and their triumph over the tragic events that brought them west. Bass Reeves lived and worked among these tribes during his long career as a lawman.

Your final visit while in Muskogee will be at the **Thomas-Foreman Home**. This house, built in 1898, was the home of Judge John R. Thomas, Sr., Muskogee's own hanging judge. Bass Reeves worked for the court in Muskogee presided over by Judge Thomas and might have visited this home in the course of his duty. A knowledgeable docent will give you a guided tour of this old house.

Finally wrap up your visit to Muskogee with a souvenir stop at the **Amish Country Store**. This shop offers authentic products from a nearby Amish community that has been in existence since Bass's day. You'll find some *wonderful-gut* food items to enjoy and remind you of your visit.

Day 1 or Half Day

- 9:00 a.m. Bass Reeves Walk Downtown (Guide)
- 10:00 a.m. Three Rivers Museum (\$4 per person)
- 11:30 a.m. Mama C's Soul Food Restaurant (\$15 per person; \$30 for Re-enactors)

Day 1 Afternoon

- 1:00 p.m. Fort Gibson Historic Site (\$4 per person)
- 2:00 p.m. National Cemetery (free; Guide)
- 3:00 p.m. Site of Shootout at Wybark (free; Guide)
- 4:00 p.m. Shopping at McClain's (free)
- 5:30 p.m. Barbecue at Cowboy's Restaurant (\$18 per person)
- 6:30 p.m. Outlaw Movie at the historic Roxy Theater (\$5 per person)
Or other entertainment

Day 2

- 8:00 a.m. Chuck Wagon breakfast at Spaulding Park (\$15 per person)
- 10:00 a.m. Honey Springs Battlefield (\$5 per person)
- 12:00 p.m. Catered picnic at Honor Heights Park (\$14 per person)
- 1:00 a.m. Five Civilized Tribes Museum (\$5 per person)
- 2:00 p.m. Thomas-Foreman Home (\$3 per person)
- 3:30 p.m. Shopping at Amish Country Store (free)

**All costs are estimates until confirmed reservations are made.*

