

**Working Text 4.7.2021**  
**Characters: 765**

**Stephen Bates**  
**Vermont's Earliest Known Black Sheriff and Chief of Police**

Stephen Bates (1842-1907) was born enslaved on the Shirley Plantation in Virginia. He escaped in 1862 and after the Civil War came north to Vergennes with U.S. Congressman Frederick E.

Woodbridge. Bates was first elected Sheriff in 1879 and served with distinction almost continuously for 25 years, until his death in 1907. He was also appointed Chief of Police. When his family home on North Street was damaged by fire, Vergennes citizens rallied around Bates, offering financial assistance. A respected city official and a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bates' commanding figure and distinctive hat were a familiar sight in the community. Sheriff Bates is buried in Prospect Cemetery.

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation--2021

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**Submitted 3.29.2021**  
**Characters: 751**

**Sheriff Stephen Bates**  
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Woodbridge. Bates was first elected Sheriff in 1879 and served with distinction almost continuously for 25 years, until his death in 1907. He also served as Chief of Police. When his family home on North Street was damaged by fire, Vergennes citizens rallied around Sheriff Bates, offering support. A respected city official and a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, his commanding figure and distinctive hat were a familiar sight in the community. Bates is buried in Prospect Cemetery.