



OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION
CONSERVATORS OF THE PEACE

330 HOOD STREET N.E.

SALEM, OR. 97301

(800) 624-4405

SALEM (503) 364-4204

FAX (503) 364 -2059

THE OFFICE OF SHERIFF

Thomas Jefferson, in his work called "The Value of Constitutions", wrote "the office of Sheriff is the most important of all the executive offices in the country"

After two hundred years, experience has proven that the perspective of Jefferson and our founding fathers is just as valid today as it was when they first perceived of how a free society could be structured.

The office of Sheriff is certainly significant, and was in fact the first county office established in the United States. Some very outstanding Americans have held the office of County Sheriff, from the earliest days down to our present era. George Washington's father was an early Sheriff in Colonia Virginia.

The first person to read the Declaration of Independence publicly was John Nixon, the Sheriff in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1776.

According to tradition, the framers of the Declaration of Independence could not decide who should read the document publicly. After a lengthy discourse, it was decided that John Hancock should have the honor.

Hancock declined saying that he would already be number one on the blacklist of King George because of his emboldened signature.

After more discussion it was decided that the Sheriff of Philadelphia, John Nixon, would be the first man to read the Declaration of Independence publicly.

Nixon accepted the honor in somewhat the same spirit of Nathan Hale and is reported to have said that he would be happy to lose his life in order to have that distinction.

The Sheriffs of America have indeed played a significant role in the history of our Nation, and the Sheriffs of Oregon are certainly no exception to this heritage.