

Constables & Deputy Sheriffs, 1774-1955

The Constables & Deputy Sheriffs, 1774-1955 papers is a collection consisting of oaths, bonds, and reports requesting payment for duties performed. Constables and deputy sheriffs provided a similar role as police officers and had many of the same duties. Unlike police officers, constables only performed functions set by the state and local government and they mainly assisted with the administration of the court. Some of the duties executed by constables and deputy sheriffs included: serving subpoenas and summons, making arrests, transporting suspects and prisoners to and from the jail, and other duties.

Constables and deputies were required to take an oath when they were appointed or elected to the position. Most new constables and deputies were also required to secure a bond before they began performing their duties. The bond was a type of insurance that protected the public and ensured that restitution was available if the constable violated the terms of the position, committed fraud, or abused their position of power. In the latter half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, the constable and deputy oaths adopted a more professional and elaborate design. The following image is David C. Adams constable oath from 1870.

