

African American Heritage in the Raleigh Fire Department

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Introduction

This document contains research notes from Historian Mike Legeros on the history of black firefighters in the Raleigh Fire Department. The majority of this content was created in February 2011. New additions added in January and February 2013 include an expanded history of the Victor Company, a list of volunteer firefighter names, information about black firefighter conventions in the late 18th and early 20th century, and two appendixes.

Volunteer Fire Companies, 1869-1912

The city of Raleigh was created in 1792. The first fire company was organized in 1819, upon the delivery of the first fire engine. The members were likely all Caucasian. The Raleigh Fire Department as a municipal organization of volunteer fire companies was created in 1852.

In 1869, the first “colored fire company” was organized. Named Fire Company No. 1, the citizen volunteers operated a hand-pulled, hand-powered fire engine. They used underground cisterns for water, and public or private wells.¹

One year later, Fire Company No. 1 changed their name the Victor Fire Company after winning a hand engine contest at the North Carolina State Fair. The company had about forty members.

¹ A second company of black firefighters served in Raleigh from 1872 to 1892. Named the Bucket and Ladder Company, they were housed in Metropolitan Hall. They operated a hand-pulled bucket and ladder truck. The fire company received a state charter on February 28, 1973.

The Victor Fire Company received a charter from the General Assembly on January 23, 1872. Their incorporators were:

- James H. Jones
- Jefferson Davis
- H. C. Jones
- H. P. Buncombe
- John E. Williams
- W. B. Mitchell
- Charles M. Hunter
- Samuel Stewart
- Sylvester Dunston

One of the incorporators was James H. Jones, who served as the fire company's Foreman. He was prominent citizen who worked as a servant in Raleigh for relocated Confederate President Jefferson Davis from 1862 to 1865. He served as Victor Fire Company Foreman from 1872 to 1882. He was also a Deputy Sheriff in Wake County from 1868 to 1876.

In 1873, the Victors received a new hand engine built by Rumsey & Company of Seneca Falls, NY. The hand-powered apparatus cost about \$1,700. It was the fifth and last hand engine delivered in Raleigh. By 1884 and probably a decade earlier, the engine was accompanied by a two-wheeled hose truck. Both pieces of apparatus were pulled by hand.

Beginning in 1870, the Victor Fire Company was housed in Metropolitan Hall on Fayetteville Street. Raleigh's three-story municipal building included an upstairs meeting room for firemen and "engine rooms" for fire equipment on the ground floor. The clock tower housed the city bell, which was used to communicate fire alarms.

In 1885, the Victors received horses to pull their engine and hose cart. By 1890, they were operating as a hose company. Three years earlier, fire hydrants were installed in Raleigh. The firefighters no longer had to pump their own water with steam or hand engines. The pressure from the hydrant was sufficient to fight most fires.

Around 1890, the Victors moved to a single-story engine house on the "city lot" at the corner of Davie and Salisbury Streets. The building was formerly occupied by the Phoenix Fire Company. On April 7, 1897, the building caught fire when the lamp on their hose reel exploded. The apparatus, their hose, and two horses were destroyed. The building was heavily damaged and the fire company was temporarily relocated to a warehouse.

On April 2, 1898, a new Victor engine house opened at the corner of Hargett and Blount streets. The two-story structure included a drive-through apparatus bay. The Victor Fire Company operated their horse-drawn hose wagon from that location until December 1912, when a career fire department was placed in service. The newly hired firefighters were all Caucasian.²

The assets and facilities of the volunteers were transferred to the paid department. The Victor engine house on East Hargett Street became Fire Station 3. The horse and hose wagon became the equipment of Hose Company 3. The hose company was later renamed Engine Company 3.

²Charlotte formed a career department in 1887, and retained a company of volunteer black firefighters. Wilmington formed a career department in 1897, including 18 black firefighters. They were employed until a government junta in 1898. Other early career departments, and which were all-white, include Durham (1909), Winston-Salem (1923), Asheville (1924), and Greensboro (1926).

See the web site <http://www.legeros.com/ralwake/raleigh/history> for extensive information on the history of the volunteer Raleigh Fire Department.

Volunteer Firefighter Names

These names were recorded on rosters of the No. 1, Victor, and Bucket fire companies. There may be duplicate entries:

Jas. J. Allen	Freeman Green	James H. Jones	S. G. Smith
J. J. Alston	Robert Hall	Madison Jones	Sol. G. Smith
E. Andrews	Thomas Hall	William Jones	W. P. Snow
John Baker	John Hardie	Junius Kelly	Henry Sorrell
L. C. Bell	Nat Harris	Frank B. Killibrew	Henry Stephens
E. Bevers	S. J. Hawkins Jr.	S. H. Lane	Samuel Steward
Dennis Branch	Stephen J. Hawkins	S. P. Mallett	Richard Stewart
George Brewer	Alfred Haywood	Silas Mallett	Samuel T Stewart
George Bryant	G. Haywood	James Manly	Dennis Taylor
T. B. Burgess	John R. Haywood	Sam McDonald	N. S. Taylor
Thomas Burgess	Mumford W. Haywood	Frank Milligan	R. S. Taylor
Charles Caldwell	Primus Haywood	William Mitchell	Sidney (Barber) Taylor
C. Cardwell	W. T. Haywood	William H. Mitchell	L. T. Tucker
Charles Chavis	William Haywood	Issac Moore	Van Tucker
Edward Chavis	Willis Haywood	James T. Palmer	Ben Wall
Eugene Chavis	James A Henley	William H Palmer	John Warren
Robert Chowder	Theo. Henly	James T. Pardue	Robert W. Watson
Hayes Drake	Frank Hooks	Joe Penny	G. W. Williams Jr.
C. Dunston	C. W. Hoover	Haywood Perdue	Hilliard Williams
Norfleet Dunston	C. H. Hunter	George Perry	John Edwin Williams
S. Dunston	C. M. Hunter	Henry Price	Charles Winters
Sidney Dunston	Charles M. Hunter	Marcellus Ransom	Sam Woods
Sylvester Dunston	Sonny B. Jeffries	Charles Rice	William T Wright
John B. Freeman	James H. Jones	Henry Richardson	
Mac H. Freeman	D. Jones	Charles Rix	
Arthur Gorham	Daniel Jones	Robert Smith	

State Conventions of Colored Firemen

One of the earliest recorded conventions of North Carolina firefighters was held in Raleigh on October 15, 1873. The meeting, called for all colored firemen in state by members of fire companies in Raleigh, Fayetteville, New Bern, and Wilmington, was held in the Victor Fire Company hall.

The goal of the meeting was conveyed in a newspaper announcement:

"The object of the Convention is to establish a unified understanding with all the colored firemen in the State, with regard to our future welfare and prosperity.

We believe it to be our duty to assist in extinguishing any and all fires that occur in any city or town in this State. We believe a good reliable fire company in any town is as good as an insurance company.

We further believe our movement will encourage those who are ready and willing to build up the good old North State.

We hope that all colored companies in North Carolina whose intentions are to protect property with their labor against fire will comply with the request for a Convention by sending delegates there to.

The said Convention will be composed of five delegates appointed from each colored fire company in the State, or each company is entitled to five votes on all questions in Convention. Also every company is solicited to attend in full as it is an important object."

A statewide organization of black firefighters was created in 1888 or 1889. Originally named the North Carolina State Volunteer Fireman's Association, the group was later known as the North Carolina Colored Volunteer Fireman's Association (NCCVFA). They were chartered in 1891 and the next year's convention and fireman's tournament in Raleigh on August 9-10, 1892.

Between 1891 and 1911, cities playing host to the state's "colored firemen" included Charlotte, Concord, Durham, Henderson, Monroe, New Bern, Raleigh, Rocky Mount, Salisbury, Warrenton, Washington, Wilmington, Wilson and Winston.

The NCCVFA conducted tournaments into the late 20th century. Their 67th annual conference was held in Wake Forest at DuBois High School.

See the web site <http://www.legeros.com/history/ecc> for extensive information about these tournaments.

Auxiliary Firefighters, 1941

After bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, auxiliary fire companies of citizen volunteers were organized throughout the United States. They were trained in skills related to wartime firefighting and rescue operations. In Raleigh, the first group of 154 auxiliary firefighters graduated from their training on July 12, 1942. These were likely all Caucasians. A company of black auxiliary firefighters was suggested, or asked about. Additional details or contextual information is not known. The program was discontinued in Raleigh by the late 1940s.

Black Fire Company Consideration, 1952-53

The 1952-53 fiscal year budget document contained the following message, likely from Fire Chief Alvin Lloyd:

We have had under consideration the setting up of Negro Company and believe that this should be considered and kept in mind as the department develops. I could find no way in this budget to make the changeover at this time. I believe after the new Central Station is set up and the equipment is rearranged that such a company could very well fit into the department.

This was likely a response to the formation of a black fire company in Winston-Salem in 1951.

Statewide, the career black firefighters hired in the 1950s and 1960s included:

- 1951 - Winston-Salem - Engine 4 - Eight firefighters
- 1958 - Durham - Engine 4 - Ten firefighters
- 1961 - Greensboro - Engine 4, Truck 4 - Twenty-eight firefighters
- 1963 - Raleigh - Six firefighters

See Appendix A for more information.

The First Black Firefighters - 1963-64

Order	Name	Start	Stop	Last Rank
1	Larry Gene Williams Called Larry by W. Jones. Called Gene by others ³	2/14/63 ⁴	11/16/65	Resigned as Firefighter with 2.8 years of service.
2	Welton Jones Nickname Deac, shortened from Deacon	3/1/63	4/1/88	Retired as Firefighter II/Engineer ⁵ with 25.1 years.
3	Ervin Louis Stephens Called Louis.	5/1/63	5/1/91	Retired as Firefighter II/Engineer with 28 years.
4	James Leon Giles Pronounced "Jiles"	5/1/63	8/30/69	Resigned as Firefighter with 6.3 years.
5	James Greene Jr.	5/1/63	8/12/81	Resigned as Captain with 18.3 years.
6	Norwood Matthew Peacock	7/8/63	3/1/90	Retired as Captain with 26.7 years.
7	Richmond Davis Jr.	3/18/64	6/1/94	Retired as Battalion Chief ⁶ (shift commander) with 30.2 years.

³ The fire department had 160 authorized positions in 1963: 150 in operations, four in prevention, and six in administration.

⁴ His start date has been incorrectly cited in prior versions of this document as February 1, 1963.

⁵ The current equivalent rank of Firefighter II/Engineer is Lieutenant.

⁶ The current equivalent rank of Battalion Chief is Division Chief.

Note: Hiring dates are based on information found in fire department records. Actual hiring dates of Jones, Stephens, Giles, and Greene may have been staggered.

No additional black firefighters were hired until 1969. Between 1969 and 1972, at least six black firefighters entered the department including C. F. Stewart, R. E. Thomas, T. Hinton, A. L. McAllister, C. McCullers, and W. Walters.

Six of the seven original black firefighters were assigned to Station 2, which was located in the rear of Memorial Auditorium. Davis, Jones, and Williams were assigned to "A" shift, and Giles, Green, and Peacock were assigned to "B" shift. They were supervised by and worked with white firefighters.

Though they were integrated into the department, they were segregated at the fire station. Partitions were added to some of the previously open areas, such as bathrooms and showers. In the summer of 1965, the black members of Engine 2 were dispersed to other stations.

Log Book Entries - 1963-1965

Station 1

Feb. 14, 1963 - Larry Williams came to work 2-14-63 @ 8 a.m.

Mar. 18, 1964 - 8:00 a.m. - Richmond Davis Jr. reported to duty. New man.

Station 2

Mar 20, 1963 - Welton Jones & Larry Williams transferred to this station at 3:00 p.m.

Jun 11, 1963 - J. L. Giles & J. Green transfer from #1 station to #2 station at 6:00 p.m.

Jul 23, 1963 - N. M. Peacock transfer from #1 to #2 station at 2:30 p.m. to work.

Apr 11, 1964 - R. Davis started working this station.

Shift composition in April 1964:

A shift:

- Williams
- Jones
- Davis
- James Kelly
- Robert Moody
- Capt. Calvin Bozeman

B shift:

- Peacock
- Giles
- Green
- Robert Upchurch
- Capt. James E. Carroll

Aug 2, 1965 - Last recorded day of Larry Williams at Station 2.

Aug 3, 1965 - 10:00 a.m. - James Green was transferred from #2 station to #7 station, N. M. Peacock transfer to #9 station, James Giles transfer to #8 station.

Aug 4, 1965 - 8:00 a.m. - W. Jones transferred to St. 4.

Station 5

Nov 16, 1965 - 8:00 a.m. - Larry Williams resigned fire dept.

Station 2 Activity - June 1964

These transcriptions of handwritten log book entries are presented as a representation of the typical fire calls answered and activities performed by Engine 2 during this period.

Date	Log Book Entry
June 1	Drill tower to wash out smoke house. Car fire, out on arrival - S. Saunders and Lake Wheeler. Smudge pot - Fayetteville and South.
June 2	Drill tower to work on smoke house. Box 214 - Martin and East - False. Returned en route - 1300 block Carolina Pines
June 3	No recorded activity.
June 4	Smudge pot overturned - Fayetteville and South.
June 5	Gasoline on fire, out on arrival - 1036 S. Saunders.
June 6	No recorded activity
June 7	Mattress fire - 163 Maywood.
June 8	Box 26 - Hargett and Swain - False.
June 9	No recorded activity
June 10	Box 234 - Bloodworth and Smithfield - House fire Box 26 - Hargett and Swain - False.
June 11	No recorded activity
June 12	Drill tower to work on smoke house. Trash fire - 2512 S. Saunders.

June 13	No recorded activity.
June 14	Truck fire - 1200 block Fuller.
June 15	No recorded activity.
June 16	Drill tower to work on smoke house.
June 17	Box 214 - Martin and East - Fire. Orphanage and Carolina Pines Avenue - Grass fire
June 18	Drill tower to work on smoke house.
June 19	Sprinkler leak - 419 S. Wilmington. Car fire - 2800 block S. Wilmington. Drill tower to work on smoke house.
June 20	No recorded activity.
June 21	Went to Sunday School. Box 551 - Marine Reserve Training Center on Western Boulevard - False alarm from lightning.
June 22	No recorded activity.
June 23	Investigation, no fire - 603 Poplar Road
June 24	Drill tower to work on smoke house.
June 25	Car fire - 700 block S. Wilmington. Mattress fire - 227 1/2 E. Lenoir.
June 26	Wash up gas - Maywood and Saunders. Car fire - 401 South at drill tower. Woods fire - Oak Road and Carolina Pines Avenue. Woods fire - Oak Road and Carolina Pines Avenue, again. Box 121 - Jones & Blount - False alarm.
June 27	Inspection, no fire - 1600 block S. Blount. Returned en route - 543 E. Hargett.

June 28	No recorded activity.
June 29	No recorded activity.
June 30	Car fire - Dawson and Cabarrus.

The Riots - 1968

On April 4, 1968, civil unrest erupted in south Raleigh just a few hours after the announcement of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Incidents included:

April 4 - Thursday

- Fifty to seventy-five students from Shaw marched north on Fayetteville Street and smashed store windows and overturned cars.
- Two fire bombs were thrown at Jeffrey's Grocery, 500 E. Martin Street. No serious damage. 9:25 p.m. and 9:45 p.m.
- Fire bomb thrown onto M. H.'s Grocerteria at 620 W. South Street. Minor damage. 8:50 p.m.
- Fire bomb thrown through the window of the Playboy Club in the 400 block of S. East Street. Slight damage. 9:45 p.m.
- Fire destroyed Raleigh Rescue Mission warehouse at 217 Lee Street. 11:48 p.m.
- Curfew ordered by Mayor from 1:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.
- Between 500 and 700 National Guard soldiers called into city.

April 5 - Friday

- Fire destroyed Dixie Motor Parts at 902 S. Wilmington Street. 1:58 a.m.
- Fire destroyed vacant house at 515 S. West Street. Evening.

April 7 - Sunday

- Fire destroyed Green Brothers Seed Company warehouse at 1431 S. Blount Street. 4:38 p.m.

April 8 - Monday

- Forty fires by midday Monday, since the unrest started on Thursday.

Sources: Forthcoming.

Discrimination Complaint - 1969

In the early summer of 1969, a "delegation of blacks" charged the fire department with failing to hire black firemen. The participating groups included the local chapter of the NAACP. The city asked for an outside investigation of that complaint.

City Council hired the Institute of Government in Chapel Hill to study the recruitment selection and promotion procedures of both the police and fire departments.

On March 6, 1970, the seventeen-page report was submitted to the council's law and finance committee. Among the findings in the report:

- "Conclusive proof of racial discrimination in selection and promotion of firemen or policemen had not been found.
- "However, the fact six black firemen were appointed in 1963, an additional black fireman was employed in 1964, and no black firemen were employed from February 13, 1964, until May 27, 1969, even though black applicants were certified for appointment, suggests that discretionary authority of the chief may have been used to discriminate against black applicants."
- Noted that the fire department has "actively" sought black applicants.
- Had high praise for the city's Civil Service Commission, calling it "more progressive" and "more __tive" and "open to change" than any other similar body in the state.
- Basic intelligence tests given to applicants contain questions of fact "which reduce the validity of the test for some cultural groups, including Negroes."
- Suggested lowering the passing score on the test for fireman from 100 to 90.

The report made several suggestions for changes to the fire department's employment practices, including:

- Applicants passing the entrance test should remain eligible for two years, not the one year eligibility currently in effect.
- The Civil Service Commission should be appointed directly by the City Council. The commission is currently appointed by a variety of groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the merchant's association.
- Promotional exams should be given by the city's personnel office. Currently they are given by the fire department's training officer.
- Oral promotional exams in the fire department should be given before a board including the personnel director and a "respected citizen," which is the present procedure in the police department. The current practice has only fire department officials sitting on the promotion board.
- Present rules require the Fire Chief to be appointed from within the department. This should be changed to include any qualified person, similar to the rules in the police department.
- Minimum age for firemen should be reduced from 21 to 19 years of age.

- The practice of requiring photographs on police and fire department applications should be abolished.

Reactions to the report included:

- Comments by Chief Keeter: "Here is what happened during that time. We went out and recruited six blacks in 1963. We hired another in 1964. From time to time after that, men—both black and white—would apply, be certified and be put on the waiting list until there were vacancies. If a black man was number 10 on the list, he couldn't be moved to the top of the list when a vacancy occurred just because he was black. That's discrimination too. That is what happened."
- Statements by fire department officials: There are ten black firemen out of about 200 firemen, out of 220 total personnel. The department hired twenty-four firemen between December 1969 and January 1970, four of which were black. The positions were authorized after the reduction of the work week from 72 to 66 hours.
- Petition with signatures of 189 firemen submitted to City Council stating that the quality of the fire department would be hurt if the city made all the changes in the report. The two-page petition was read to council by Raleigh Firefighters Association President Ned Perry. The petition objected to proposals to change the make-up of the city Civil Service Commission, lower the minimum age, and lower minimum entrance exam score. The petition also notes that the pay scale of the fire department was fifteen-percent lower than the police department.

Sources:

- "Fire Dept. Bias Said Possible," *Raleigh Times*, March 6, 1970.
- *Hose & Nozzle*, March-April 1970 and May-June, 1970.
- *Raleigh Times*, May 28, 1974.

Discrimination Complaint - 1974

In the spring of 1974, thirteen separate discrimination complaints were filed with the Charlotte office of the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The city was notified of the complaints in May 1974. The commission would investigate the complaints, though with a delay of several months to a year, due to their backlog of case work.

The charges were filed by ten current firefighters, one former firefighter, and two people who had applied but were turned down to be firefighters. Two women formerly employed with the city inspections department also filed discrimination charges.

In July, two EEOC investigators from Charlotte met with city officials, and conducted a briefing on how they planned to conduct the investigation. They would review several years of past city records, and conduct numerous interviews.

In December, a class action law suit was filed in U. S. District Court by ten black firefighters, on behalf of all blacks who had applied for or had held jobs in fire department since 1971.

The suit asked the court to "stop the allegedly discriminatory practices of the fire department" and also remedy past discrimination by enforcing "the promotion of then black firemen to rank of captain" and also preventing the thirty-three promotions of largely white firemen made the prior month from taking effect.

The suit was filed on December 3, 1971, after negotiations broke down between city officials and black firefighters. The negotiations were conducted by the EEOC. The suit named top fire department officials, City Manager L. P. Zachary, City Council members, and Mayor Clarence E. Lightner.

The suit said: "The action challenges a pattern—and practice of racial discrimination by the defendants and their agents and employees in hiring and promotion and assignment within the fire department of the City of Raleigh."

It alleged racial discrimination took place in the following ways:

- "Written examinations for both hiring and promotion discriminate against blacks and that the results of those tests do not adequately measure the competence of the person being tested.
- "The fire department recruits largely in areas where few blacks are likely to be found.
- "Greater weight is given to new applicants who have been recommended by white firemen than is given those recommended by black firemen.
- "Subjective personnel decisions often are stacked against blacks because the department's top officials are white."

The suit also said:

- "Discrimination against black applicants has been consistent and continuous since 1928 [1968?] and in the majority of the cases black applicants have only been hired when pressure of some kind was applied.
- "Of the fifty captains in the fire department, only one is black. Of the fifty-one drivers in the fire department only four are black. There are no blacks in the position of district chief, assistant chief, or chief.
- "As a remedy for past discrimination," all of the ten black firemen involved in the suit be promoted to captain "with the requisite training and orientation for said position to be given within a designated period.
- "Appoint for the next available positions as firemen only qualified black applicants until such time as racial composition of the Raleigh fire department reflects the same racial proportions as the average racial composition of blacks in the community"

At the time of the April complain filing, the department's 244 firefighters included fourteen black firefighters, or five percent. The city's population was twenty-three percent black. A subsequent minority recruitment drive increased the number of black firefighters to thirty in a department of 311, about eleven percent.

The suit was filed by

- Clesiastes McCullers
- Therman Hinton
- Cleveland F. Steward
- Ray S. Debnam
- Welton Jones
- Ervin L. Stephens
- Arthur L. McAllister
- Robert E. Thomas
- James Green Jr.
- Norwood M. Peacock
- James L. Giles (former)
- Lloyd Barnes (rejected applicant)
- Jerry V. Peebles (rejected applicant)

On December 22, a determination by the EEOC was made public, that their investigation found "reasonable cause to believe" that the Raleigh Fire Department had discriminated against blacks in recruitment, hiring, and promotion. It cited such points:

- Of the 294 organizations contacted when a vacancy in the fire department occurs, only ten are organizations of blacks.
- With one recent exception, only one black city employee has been used to recruit applicants for the fire department.
- At the time of the complaint, less than six percent of firemen were black, versus twenty-two percent of the general work force in Raleigh.
- "Despite the fire department's recent hiring of Negroes, the very low representation of Negroes in its work force indicates that the effectiveness, thoroughness and frequency of whatever efforts the fire department has made to inform Negroes that it is no longer going to discriminate against them has fallen short of what is necessary."

It provided examples of continuing hiring discrimination:

- Blacks are usually hired only after pressure.
- Hiring test, which have not been validated as being able to predict future job performance, disqualify a disproportionate number of blacks. e.g., "The city uses a pre-employment test that is not proven to measure probable job performance. The test disqualifies a disproportionately higher number of black applicants."
- High school requirements are enforced rigidly for black applicants, but not whites.
- "Blacks are required to meet medical qualifications not required of all whites."

It provided examples of continuing promotion discrimination:

- Blacks average 8.3 years before their first promotion, compared to average of 6.4 years for whites.
- Whites have been promoted when they were not on the eligibility list for promotions and before the list was established, while blacks were not.
- Whites have been assisted with passing a required driving test by being permitted to practice on fire vehicles, while blacks have not.

- "The evidence also revealed that a Caucasian was promoted who did not pass the required test."
- "The test used for promotion is not valid."

In December, the Raleigh Firefighters Association released a statement supporting the city, noting:

- "It is the opinion of the Raleigh Firefighters Association that the suit brought by these plaintiffs is misleading in that it implies that there is a studied policy of discrimination within the Raleigh Fire Department against black firemen."
- "No such discrimination exists and it did not exist in the time immediately preceding the filing of the lawsuit or the threat of such suit."
- That the promotion of the ten black firemen to Captain would be "arbitrary and unjust" and "unfair to all other career employees of the Raleigh Fire Department."

The suit was settled, with details approved by City Council in February 1979. One of the original plaintiffs, James Giles, did not join in the settlement. The claims of another, Jerry Peebles, were dismissed prior to the settlement. The details:

- The city pledge's to improve hiring of blacks over the next four years, so by January 1983, black firefighters will number sixteen percent.
- The promotion to Firefighter II of plaintiff McAllister and two others, John Breeden and Clinton Lee, who were not part of the original plaintiffs.
- The promotion to Captain off plaintiffs Debnam and Greene.
- The promotions took place Sep 29, 1978, before the settlement was reached.
- The city reaffirms its policies against racial slurs or harassment of any kind.
- Blacks be promoted to the ranks of Firefighter II and Captain at the same rates as whites until January 1983, provided they pass necessary tests and meet service requirements.
- Payment of legal fees, estimated at about \$18,000, and court costs by the city.

No damages were won by the plaintiffs.

Five-year goals for hiring and promoting women and minorities were established in December 1977, under order of the Federal Office of Revenue Sharing. They were to be met by Jan 1, 1983.

Sources:

- "Discrimination complaints name fire department" - *Raleigh Times* (RT), May 28, 1974
- "City Firemen Charge Hiring, Promotion Bias" - *News & Observer* (N&O), May 29, 1974
- "City dismayed EEOC got complaints first" - RT, May 29, 1974
- "Panel Opens Probe of City Hiring Bias" - N&O, July 10, 1974
- "Black Firemen File Bias Suit" - N&O, December 14, 1974
- "EEOC cites possible bias in city case" - RT, December 22, 1974
- "Fire Unit Accused of Hiring Bias" - N&O, December 24, 1974

- "City argues for promotions" - RT, December 27, 1974
- "Firemen's Unit Has Bias Suit" - N&O, December __, 1974
- "Black firemen sue city" - RT, December __, 1974
- "City Approach On Suit Is Hit" - N&O, January 8, 1974
- "Black leaders hit city position in firemen case" - RT, January 8, 1975
- "City eyes options on bias charge" - N&O, January __, 1978
- "City's hiring plan turned down" - RT, March 16, 1978
- "Settlement of '74 race bias suit gets tentative OK" - RT, January 2, 1980
- "Fire department lawsuit settlement OK'd" - N&O, January 3, 1980

Newspaper Articles

News & Observer, February __, 1963

City Hires Negro Fireman

First in Raleigh

The Raleigh Fire Department Thursday employed its first Negro fireman.

Larry Williams, 21-year-old farm youth of Apex, Rt. 1, was assigned to the No. 1 Station on Dawson Street.

Fire Chief Jack Keeter said Williams came to the department "highly recommended."

Williams said he needed a job and was asked to make application by Fire Capt. John Ennis. Williams was raised on a farm adjoining the farm of Captain Ennis's father on Apex, Rt. 1.

To Hire Five More

Chief Keeter said he hoped to be able to hire five more Negroes, but so far he hadn't had much luck with applicants.

Four other Negroes who applied for positions as firemen passed the Civil Service examinations and had good records, but they later changed their minds, saying they had decided not to quite their present jobs.

Other Negroes have passed the Civil Service examinations, Keeter said, but "we later learned they had police records which disqualified them as firemen."

Williams, who will receive \$282 as starting fireman, graduated from the Garner Consolidated High School and has had one year at North Carolina College in Durham.

Prior to applying for a position with the Fire Department, he passed the federal Civil Service examination and worked for a short time in the postal service in New York. He said he returned to North Carolina when he realized New York "was no place for a country boy."

Williams served three years with the Army paratroopers.

The Raleigh Police Department has been employing Negroes for over 20 years and now has six on the force.

Journal and Guide - February 23, 1963

Raleigh Fire Chief Seeks Negroes For Department

Has One, Wants Five More

RALEIGH, N.C. - Looking for a job as a fireman? In a city fire department?

Raleigh's Chief Jack Keeter is looking for five men to add to his department and he hopes they will be Negroes.

The first Negro fireman was employed here recently. He is Larry Williams, 21, a graduate of Garner Consolidated High School, who studied an additional year at North Carolina College in Durham.

Williams also worked for a period in the postal service in New York, but he doesn't think New York is a place for a country boy. He also served three years as a paratrooper.

The recruit, whose address is Route 1, Apex, was reared on a farm adjoining one operated by the father of John Ennis, Raleigh Fire Department captain.

When he informed the captain that he was looking for a job, Ennis suggested that he take the city civil service examination. He did so and was appointed.

Chief Keeter said that he had four other Negro recruits lined up for the department when they came up with good records and passed the city examination. They changed their minds about giving up their present jobs.

The chief stressed that applicants must not have police records. Some other applicants did have police records and were ineligible for appointed although they qualified otherwise.

Journal and Guide - March 23, 1963

Second Negro Made Raleigh City Fireman

Raleigh, N. C. - (ACNS) - Another Negro has been added to the Raleigh Fire Department, according to Fire Chief Jack Keeter.

Mr. Keeter said that the department has taken on Welton Jones as the second Negro to join the department recently. He also said that he hopes to find about four other qualified Negroes for the department.

Mr. Jones is a former dairy worker and has studied at Shaw University for two years.

News & Observer, January 11, 1974

Black Gets Promotion as Fire Captain

By Rob Christensen, Staff Writer

Richmond Davis Jr., 33, Thursday was named the first black captain in the history of the Raleigh Fire Department.

The announcement, made without fanfare or reference to race, said the nine-year veteran would assume duties as captain of the three-man ladder company at Station 6 at Fairview and Oberlin roads.

In a telephone interview Thursday, Davis said he was pleased with his promotion and said he worked hard to qualify himself for the job.

Davis also said his promotion had a special meaning to him because he will become the fire department's highest ranking black.

"I feel it's a milestone for all the city's black people and for the fire department," Davis said.

Davis, who lives at 2220 Sanderford Road, is now one of 51 captains in the Raleigh Fire Department.

Of the fire department's 260 men, 13 are black.

Davis had been a driver at Station 3 on East Street for the past 3 1/2 years. He was one of the first two blacks to be named drives in the Raleigh Fire Department in May 1970.

Davis said when he was first hired in March 1964, he was the fifth black to join the fire department.

Davis will assume his new post today. He replaces R. C. Lassiter, who retired as captain at the end of the year.

Other Newspaper Articles

- "Opportunity knocks for firemen" [Richmond Davis poster, recruitment, Chief Puryear and Chief May quoted] - *Raleigh Times* (RT), May 23, 1974.

- “Davis to become highest ranking black in Fire Dept.” [Richmond Davis] - RT, October 8, 1980.
- “City's hiring pattern shifts slightly” - RT, November 7, 1981.
- “City failing in goals for minority hiring” - News & Observer (N&O), December 2, 1982.
- “Out of the heat, into the kitchen” [Welton Jones retires] - N&O, March 17, 1988.

Appendix - Big City Black Fire Companies in North Carolina

Here's a chart comparing the big-city black fire companies in North Carolina, which originated in January 2014 as a blog posting: <http://legeros.com/ralwake/photos/weblog/pivot/entry.php?id=6400>.

Companies	Members	Start	Stop	Notes
Winston-Salem Engine 4	8 black 7 white	1951	1967?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight black firefighters hired in March 1951. • Raphel O'Hara Black, Willie James Carter, Lester Edward Ervin Jr., John Henry Ford, Robert Lindsay Grier, John Franklin Meredith Jr., George Waddell Penn, and John Roy Thomas. • Reported for duty on March 1, 1951 to Station 4 on Dunleith Avenue. • Received \$192 a month during their six weeks of training. • Company consisted of eight black firefighters and seven white officers. • Operated as integrated fire company, but with segregated living quarters. • City laws required separate sleeping quarters and kitchen. Cost \$10,000 to renovate fire station. • Company was limited to fighting fires in African American neighborhoods until June 2, 1951, when they were called to assist at the Wood Finishing Products Company Plant #652 on Waughtown Road. • Engine 4 became an all-black company by 1957. • Entire fire department integrated by November 1967.
Durham Engine 4	10 black	1958	1969?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight black firefighters hired in October 1958. • George Washington King, Walter Thomas, Elgin Johnson, Velton Thompson, Robert Medlyn, John O. Lyon, Nathaniel Thompson, Sylvester Hall, Thomas Harris and Linwood Howard. • Staffed a newly built Station 4 at Fayetteville and Pekoe Streets. • Station opened October 1, 1958, and served predominately black Hayti neighborhoods. • Used "hand me down" equipment, including an older engine. • Entire department integrated by 1969, and the now ten members of Engine 4 were working at fire stations throughout Durham.

Companies	Members	Start	Stop	Notes
Greensboro Engine 4 Truck 4	28 black	1961	1966?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twenty-eight black firefighters hired in 1961. • Largest academy of new firefighters in city's history. • Staffed a newly built Station 4 at 401 Gorrell Street. • Staffed a new ladder company, Truck 4. • Entire department integrated in or after 1966. • On April 12, 1966, the city's Human Relations Commission presented a plan to City Council to integrate all fire stations.
Raleigh Engine 2	6 black 4 white	1963	1965	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven black firefighters hired between February 1963 and March 1964. • Larry Gene Williams, Welton Jones, Ervin Louis Stephens, James Leon Giles, James Greene Jr., Norwood Matthew Peacock, and Richmond Davis Jr. • Six were moved to Station 2 at Memorial Auditorium between Mar. 1963 and Apr. 1964. Stephens was assigned to Station 1. • They staffed Engine 2, along with a white officer and driver. • Operated as integrated fire company, but with segregated living quarters. • Four of six members were transferred to other stations in August 1965, thus integrating entire department.

Appendix - Retired and Fallen Fire Department Members

This list of retired and fallen fire department members was created January 20, 2014. These are all Operations personnel (firefighters) unless otherwise noted.

First	Middle	Last	J/S	Start	Left / Retire	Years	Last Rank	Status	Notes
Michael	D	Allen		04/21/81	12/01/89	8.6	First Class Firefighter	Retired	
William	C	Artis		05/19/80	01/01/09	28.6	Lieutenant	Retired	
Lloyd	[none]	Barnes	Jr	03/01/76	07/01/91	15.3	Senior Firefighter	Retired	
Shirley	A	Boone		03/15/82	01/01/03	20.8	Senior Firefighter	Retired	
Ollie	L	Bridgers		09/18/78	08/01/00	21.9	First Class Firefighter	Retired	
Clarence	Gabriel	Briley		03/12/79	03/01/05	26.0	Firefighter	Retired	
William	E	Brooks		06/05/74	12/31/95	21.6	Captain	Retired	
Timothy	C	Brown	Sr	11/22/82	09/01/92	9.8	First Class Firefighter	Retired	
Wayne	Lamont	Burton		09/12/75	12/01/03	28.2	Captain	Retired	
Gregory	C	Buxton		12/14/83	01/01/13	29.1	Lieutenant	Retired	
Howard	C	Davis		03/03/75	12/01/93	18.8	Senior Firefighter	Retired	
Richmond		Davis	Jr	03/18/64	06/01/94	30.2	Division Chief	Retired	
Ray	S	Debnam		06/18/69	12/27/83	14.5	Captain	Retired	

First	Middle	Last	J/S	Start	Left / Retire	Years	Last Rank	Status	Notes
Wilbert	[none]	Dunn		07/10/74	04/01/03	28.7	Captain	Retired	
Wilbert	[none]	Dunn	Jr	04/13/81	05/01/08	27.1	Lieutenant	Retired	
Wilbert	E	Dunn		10/01/86	06/01/12	25.7	Lieutenant	Retired	
Bertram	V	Dupree		04/06/81	05/01/08	27.1	Lieutenant / Deputy Fire Marshal	Retired	Office of Fire Marshal
Tony	[none]	Edmundson		02/15/89	10/01/13	24.6	Captain	Retired	
Percy	V	Evans		04/06/81	12/01/10	29.7	Captain	Retired	
Leotha	[none]	Forte		06/05/74	06/01/89	15.0	Lieutenant	Retired	
Keith	D	Frederick		12/14/83	05/01/07	23.4	Lieutenant	Retired	
King	David	Harris	Jr.	09/18/78	12/01/08	30.2	Senior Firefighter	Retired	
Henry	[none]	Hinson	Jr.	02/01/78	06/01/97	19.3	Senior Firefighter	Retired	
Thurman	[none]	Hinton		02/16/70	01/01/96	25.9	Captain	Retired	
Halbert	W	Howard		06/04/74	04/01/86	11.8	First Class Firefighter	Retired	
Alvin	Nelson	Hunter		07/10/78	01/01/07	28.5	Lieutenant	Retired	
William	L	Jefferies		09/18/78	12/01/03	25.2	Firefighter	Retired	
George	Edward	Jones		04/04/77	09/01/89	12.4	Senior Firefighter	Retired	
Herman	S	Jones		05/05/80	01/22/08	27.7	Lieutenant	Duty Death	
Welton	[none]	Jones		03/01/63	04/01/88	25.1	Lieutenant	Retired	
Arthur	L	McAllister		10/26/70	04/01/82	11.4	Firefighter	Retired	
David	Mack	McCloud	Jr.	11/01/76	12/28/01	25.2	First Class Firefighter	Retired	
Clesiastes	[none]	McCullers		10/01/71	1984		Firefighter	Retired?	
Leroy	[none]	McRae	Jr.	12/14/83	01/01/13	29.1	Senior Firefighter	Retired	
Leigh	T	Merchant		05/05/80	12/01/10	30.6	Lieutenant	Retired	
Jasper	J	Mial	III	09/26/74	04/01/88	13.5	First Class Firefighter	Retired	
Elliott	R	Montague		09/04/74	09/01/00	26.0	Senior Firefighter	Retired	
Ricky	F	Moore	Sr.	09/18/78	12/01/08	30.2	Lieutenant	Retired	
Sherley	[none]	Moore	Jr.	12/14/83	01/01/14	30.1	Senior Firefighter	Retired	
Norwood	Matthew	Peacock		07/08/63	03/01/90	26.7	Captain	Retired	
Robert	L	Peacock		10/02/74	05/01/03	28.6	First Class Firefighter	Retired	
Reginald	D	Perry		09/18/78	05/01/00	21.6	First Class Firefighter	Retired	
Chester	L	Sampson		03/15/82	06/01/07	25.2	Captain	Retired	
Phyllis	H	Silver		03/15/82	05/01/88	6.1	Firefighter	Retired	
Denise	M	Smith		11/05/80	01/01/13	32.2	Sr. Staff Support Specialist	Retired	Office of Fire Marshal
Roney	L	Smith		06/14/76	12/01/06	30.5	Lieutenant	Retired	
Robert	W	Spence		11/22/82	06/01/02	19.5	Captain	Retired	
Wilbert	L	Spence	Sr.	09/26/74	09/01/85	10.9	Senior Firefighter	Retired	
Larry	[none]	Stanford		05/05/80	10/01/10	30.4	Asst. Chief	Retired	
Ervin	Louis	Stephens		05/01/63	05/01/91	28.0	Lieutenant	Retired	
Cleveland	F	Stewart		01/20/70	02/01/91	21.0	Lieutenant	Retired	

First	Middle	Last	J/S	Start	Left / Retire	Years	Last Rank	Status	Notes
Daryl	C	Strayhorn		12/14/83	04/01/12	28.3	Captain	Retired	
Terry	[none]	Usher	Sr.	06/07/76	10/01/05	29.3	Lieutenant	Retired	
Phyllis	H	Webb							See Phyllis Silver
Milford	L	Young		06/05/74	01/01/04	29.6	Captain	Retired	

Notes:

- Chief Davis is listed with the present-day rank of Division Chief. The position was previously titled Battalion Chief.
- Lt. Dupree is listed with the present-day rank of Lieutenant/Deputy Fire Marshal. The position was previously titled Lieutenant/Fire Inspector.
- Firefighters who retired as Firefighter II, also called Engineer or Driver, are listed with the present-day rank of Lieutenant.