

**Wake Forest Fire Department #2**

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For your Thursday history fix, here's a picture of Wake Forest Fire Department #2, circa 1953. Same was scanned some years ago at the [Wake Forest College Birthplace Society](#). Pictured with their 1947 Chevrolet/American/Barton pumper are, left to right, Fire Chief Edward Alston, Matthew Williams, George Massenburg, and Robert Alston.

The truck was cited as a 1948 Chevrolet in one of my books, though my later records say 1947. It originally served the [Wake Forest Fire Department](#), which soon received a 1951 model. The slightly older engine was transferred for the town's second fire department. Hence the door lettering as No. 1 Click to enlarge:



Why did Wake Forest have two fire departments back then? Simply, they were segregated. Colored fire companies, as they were called, were formed throughout the state in the 19th and 20th centuries. Here's an excellent history about those groups and other [early black firefighters in North Carolina](#).

In Wake Forest, the Town Board approved creation of a "colored volunteer fire company" in 1942. They received a town-purchased fire truck in 1943, a Chevrolet truck with 800 feet of 2 1/2-inch hose. Or so said Sanborn Maps in 1946. The map showed the fire truck located in a building on a lot behind the drugstore on the south side of Main Street, west of Cross Street.

Later history of Wake Forest Fire Department #2 is ripe for research. Heck, the entire history would make a great essay, paper, thesis, or book. Maybe somebody is already working on that. Yours Truly has compiled a few facts, along with his [Wake Forest Fire Department history](#). But that web page hasn't been updated or expanded in a few years.

Anyway, WFFD #2 operated until around February 1982, when they merged with WFFD. The following year, the town and rural departments merged into the present WFFD entity. Perhaps our northern Wake County readers can share some memories of that period.

A couple years earlier, a reunion of former firefighters was held. This picture was made and shows left to right : J. Albert Perry, Hubert K. "Doc" Denton, Raymond C. Keith, Willis H. Winston, George Timberlake Jr., J. Bruce Keith, W.H. "Buddy" Holden, Woodrow Williams, W.W. "Bill" Holden, Oscar Smith, Mckinny Mitchell, and Edward "Ed" Alston. That's a handsome group! Click to enlarge:



Correction to above, believe that reunion is of former fire chiefs, or chief officers? Those would be some great oral histories to record, from those still living.

The history of black firefighters in Raleigh is on Mikey's to-do list. That's a segment of RFD history that hasn't been recorded or explored as of yet. Or at least has been found by him/me. We'll get there.

**Legeros** - 11/11/10 - 18:15

Tough group of dedicated men. Hats off to you and the work you do daily.

**dekalb Walcott** - 05/16/15 - 12:40

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**What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?**

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