

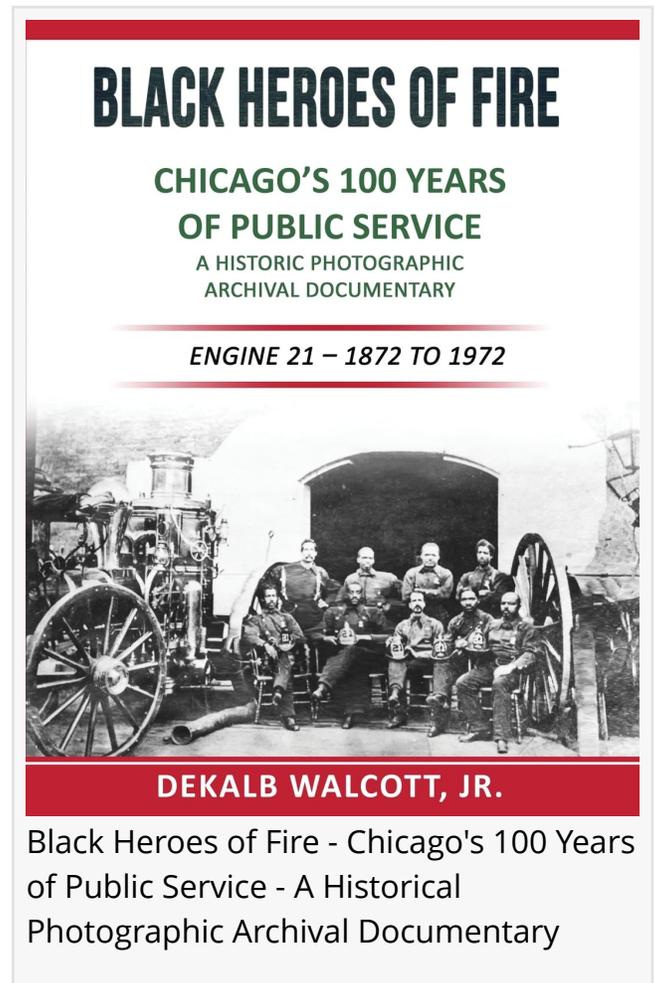
Dekalb E. Walcott Preserves A Century Of Courage In 'Black Heroes Of Fire – Chicago's 100 Years Of Public Service'

An unprecedented photographic and archival documentary honoring Black firefighters who shaped Chicago's history from 1872 to 1972.

NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, January 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Historian and author Dekalb E. Walcott announces the release of *Black Heroes of Fire – Chicago's 100 Years of Public Service: A Historical Photographic Archival Documentary (Engine 21 – 1872 to 1972)*, a powerful and meticulously researched work that preserves the legacy of Black firefighters who served the City of Chicago for a full century. Featuring never-before-seen photographs and rare archival materials, the book offers a once-in-a-lifetime historical view into public service, resilience, and community-building.

Drawing from historic news clippings and photographs sourced from major publications including the Chicago Daily Tribune, Chicago Daily News, Chicago Sun-Times, and the Chicago Defender, Walcott documents the lives and service of Black men who risked everything for the public good. These materials are paired with contextual historical analysis that traces the evolution of the Chicago Fire Department and the city itself through the lens of Black public servants.

The book situates these firefighters within the broader story of Chicago's development as a sanctuary city during the Great Migration. As Black families moved north seeking better housing, education, and opportunity, many found work in public service while facing systemic housing and employment limitations. Walcott highlights how Black Chicagoans were often forced into low-income and marginalized neighborhoods, including unincorporated rural areas such as Robbins and Phoenix, even as they contributed directly to the city's safety and growth.



Black Heroes of Fire also reaches back to Chicago's earliest foundations, acknowledging Jean Baptist Point Du Sable—recognized as Chicago's first citizen—and the presence of Black residents from the city's inception. By tracing the period from 1872 through 1972, Walcott reveals how Black firefighters were integral to Chicago's transformation through industrial expansion, population growth, and civic modernization.

Accessible to historians, educators, public service professionals, and general readers, the book serves as both a documentary record and a tribute. It provides invaluable insight into the intersection of race, labor, and civic duty, while honoring those whose service protected lives and property across generations.

The book is now available — secure your copy here: <https://a.co/d/0n5F3VS>

For review copies, interview requests, or additional information, please contact:

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