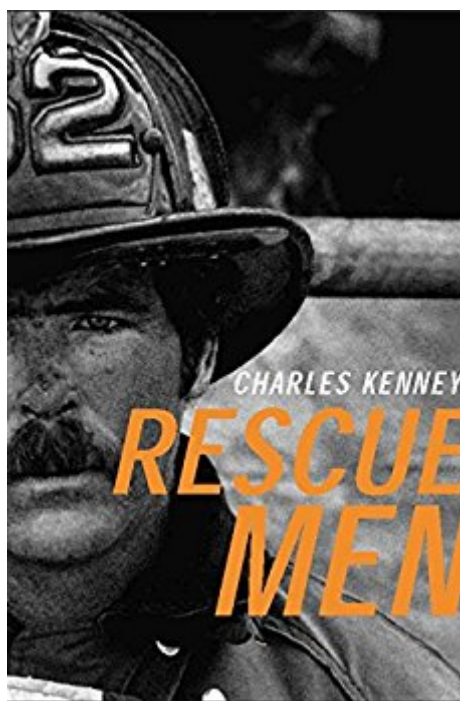


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# Rescue Men



## Synopsis

The men in Charles Kenney's family have been drawn to firefighting since his grandfather Charles "Pops" Kenney joined the Boston Fire Department in 1932. In his working class, Irish-Catholic neighborhood, there were other jobs that offered a decent wage, but none had the sense of belonging that comes with being a fireman, or the purity of purpose that comes with saving lives. Pops was on the scene of the notorious Cocoanut Grove fire in 1942; the author's father, "Sonny" served with distinction until an explosion blew him from a third-story window; and two of the author's brothers were "sparks" as children, amateur firefighters, whose career goals were thwarted by a court order integrating the Boston fire department and changing the rules for employment forever. One became a cop, the other a paramedic and rescue man with an elite squad sent to Ground Zero in the aftermath of the collapse of the World Trade Center. Spanning sixty years of firefighting history in America, *Rescue Men* captures what it's really like to be a fireman.

## Book Information

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Sociology > Urban

## Customer Reviews

First let me say this I did not pay the cover price for this book and that helped with my review. As a

firefighter for a city just north of Boston; I found this book to be very good for many reasons. First it was about fires I remember hearing about. I was not alive for some of them, but I did hear about them from men in the fire service. I am also intrigued by the local nature of this book. I know many of the locations described throughout the book. I can remember the scenes that he paints. As some other reviews indicate there is some jumping around but then again Kenney does a decent job of staying on track. I viewed it more of parallel stories. He would talk about something happening in his actual family and then tell a story about a major event happening in the "other" family the BFD. So as a member of the fire service and the local community I can offer a somewhat bias opinion. The book is good and even better if you get it for a bargain.

Why would anyone, ever, run into a burning building, and why would a retired firefighter care about how a decades-old fire that killed 492 people started? Charles Kenney, in his story about generations of firefighters and rescue men, offers a rare and compelling look at some of these special people, their motivation, their families, their lives. This book gives us a glimpse of the hearts and souls under the uniforms. It is a sympathetic tribute to some of our communities' first responders, and all the more meaningful in our post 9/11 world.

This is a very insightful and interesting read. It gives the reader a chance to actually follow the lives of a true firefighter family, the trials and tribulations of life surrounding the job. Hard to put it down as it begins to really take shape.

I did not buy this earlier because it was published along with a string of poorly written fire service memoirs. I decided to try it recently and could not put it down. Equal to the classic Report from Engine Company 82.

I am not sure if Charles Keeney is trying to write a history of Boston, his family or developments in firefighting, but what ever he is trying to do, he accomplishes a lot along the way. This is as much a family memoir as it is anything else, yet it also manages to offer a fascinating view on the history of firefighting in the late 20th century. He offers stunning views of some of Boston's major fires including the infamous Coconut Grove. His father's struggles both with alcohol and his desire to solve the mystery of the origin of the Coconut Grove fire are particularly fascinating and heart breaking at times. He does keep himself out of the story but as he is a reporter that actually works to the benefit of the story in my opinion. If you want to read a book written from the heart and that

doubles as good history read this book.

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