Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission

HISTORIC PROPERTY DATA FORM

TOWN Newport
VILLAGE

ADDRESS 65 Friendship Street
PLAT/LOT

NAME(s) Louis and Sarah Walker House/Eleanor Walker Keys House

PROPERTY TYPE Bld
OWNERSHIP Priv

STATUS

NR DISTRICT

USES: Select terms from National Register table
CURRENT Multiple Dwelling
HISTORIC Multiple Dwelling

SITING: SETBACK 10 ft
LOT SIZE 2,178 sq ft

STORIES 2
ROOF(s) Gable

MATERIALS: Select terms from National Register table
ROOF Asphalt
WALL Vinyl

FOUNDATION Concrete
OTHER

WINDOWS 1/1 double-hung vinyl

ALTERATIONS:

PORCH Material Maj Mod
Configuration

WINDOWS Material Maj Min

TRIM Maj None

OVERALL Mod None

INTEGRITY Excellent X Good Fair Poor Destroyed

PROPERTY COMPONENTS: List & number in order of importance. Include the primary component of the resource as number 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component Type</th>
<th>Code</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) House</td>
<td>B-C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Garage (Shared)</td>
<td>B-C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(5)</td>
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</tbody>
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EVENT DATE SOURCE NAME (person/firm/organization) ROLE

Original Construction 1907–1921 Maps Louis and Sarah Walker Owners

Shared Garage Built 1921–1950 Maps Louis and Sarah Walker Owners

ARCHITECTURE: If more than one, list & number in order of importance

TYPE Side Hall
STYLE(s)

SURVEYOR PAL DATE March 2019 REVIEWER DATE

Use reverse for comments, history, and bibliography

Form version 200702rev161101
This form was produced as part of a survey of resources associated with the twentieth-century African American Civil Rights Movement in Rhode Island and provides a summary of information relevant to that historical context. The surveyed property may have associations with additional historical contexts that are not discussed.

History:

The house at 65 Friendship Street was built by Louis and Sarah Walker between 1907 and 1921 (Richards 1907; Sanborn 1921). The Walkers also owned the houses at 63 Friendship Street (where Louis had previously lived with his Virginia-born parents and his siblings) and 98 Kay Street, just around the corner (U.S. Census 1910). In 1925, Louis and Sarah lived at 98 Kay Street (originally designated 100 Kay Street) with their son Louis Jr., daughters Sarah and Eleanor, and Louis’ brother Edwin (Ancestry.com 2013). Their other houses were partially occupied by family members and may also have been used as rental properties.

Beginning in 1945, or possibly earlier, Louis and Sarah lived in the house at 65 Friendship Street with their daughter, Eleanor Walker Keys (1922–2012), and her husband John (Newport Mercury 1945; Eastern Publishing Co. 1950; CNRPR 2250/27). Eleanor and John purchased the house from Eleanor’s parents in 1958 and continued to live there until 2012, when Eleanor sold it to the current owner (CNRPR 195/173). John Keys worked as a mechanic at the City Garage. Eleanor worked as a draftsperson at the Naval Central Torpedo Office on Goat Island in Newport until 1946, then at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center until her retirement in 1986. In 1963, she was awarded $15 for suggesting that working conditions could be improved by the installation of pull-down utility shelves (Newport Daily News 1963).

Eleanor was involved in various civil rights organizations in Newport, including the NAACP and the Women’s League Newport. In 1960, she was a chairperson for the local NAACP branch and by 1970 headed the branch (Newport Daily News 1960; Newport Mercury 1970). Eleanor was active in promoting the understanding of black history in Newport, delivering presentations about black historical figures to Newport classrooms. She also belonged to the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society and the Newport Historical Society. Eleanor received numerous awards for her civic work, including the City of Newport “Medal of Honor” Award, the Newport Daily News Community Service Award, and the 1978 George T. Downing Award (Memorial Funeral Home 2012).

Bibliography:

Ancestry.com

City of Newport Real Property Records (CNRPR)
1958  Book 195/Page 173  Louis and Sarah Walker to John and Eleanor Keys
2012  Book 2250/Page 27  Eleanor Keys to Daniel Foley

Eastern Publishing Co.
1950  City Directory of Newport. Eastern Publishing Co., Newport, RI.

L. J. Richards & Co.

Newport Daily News
1960  “NAACP Chapter Starts Member Drive.” 19 May, p. 3.
Newport Mercury

Sanborn Fire Insurance Co.

United States Bureau of the Census (U.S. Census)