

Landmarks Preservation Commission
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LP-1977

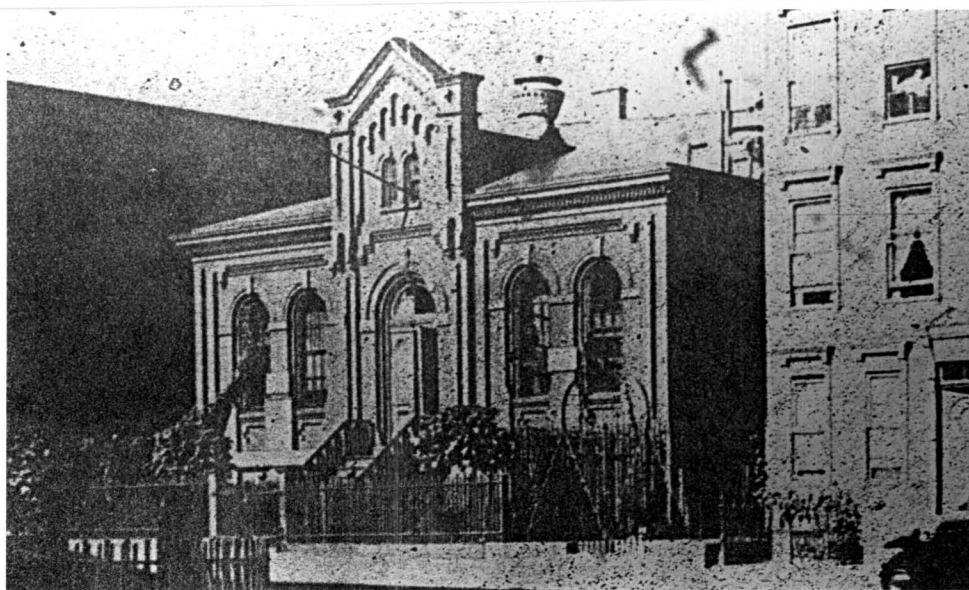
(Former) COLORED SCHOOL No. 3, later Public School 69, 270 Union Avenue, aka 270-276 Union Avenue, Borough of Brooklyn. Built 1879-1881; architect Samuel B. Leonard, Superintendent of Buildings and Repairs of the Board of Education of the City of Brooklyn.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 3031, Lot 5

On October 21, 1997, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the (Former) Colored School No. 3, later Public School 69 and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 3). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. One witness, a representative of the Historic Districts Council, spoke in favor of the designation. No one spoke in opposition to the designation. The owners have expressed support for the designation. The Commission has received letters and other statements in support of designation.

Summary

The former Colored School No. 3 schoolhouse is a one-and-half story red brick building located in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. Built in 1879-81, it was designed by architect Samuel B. Leonard, the Superintendent of Buildings and Repairs for the Brooklyn Board of Education from 1859 to 1879. The only known "colored" school building remaining in



Brooklyn, it evokes that city's policy of race-based school segregation during much of the nineteenth century. Romanesque Revival in style, the school building has arched window openings and a prominent entrance with large keystones, a raised central section with a gable and blind arcade, corbelled brickwork, and dentil courses. The exterior of the building remains largely intact.

Colored School No. 3 as an institution evolved from the town of Williamsburgh's original African Free School, which had been founded prior to 1841. The school was taken over by the Board of Education of the City of Brooklyn in 1855, when it was given the name "Colored School No. 3." It was renamed P.S. 69 in 1887, and was later absorbed by the school system of the City of New York after the consolidation of 1898. The Board of Education relinquished control of the building in 1934.

The History of Public Education in Brooklyn and New York¹

The system of public education in New York, supported and maintained by public funds, developed slowly from the initial establishment under the Dutch of free, public elementary schools. For the Dutch, education was an important factor in colonial life and the presence of a school was an inducement for settlers in the New Netherlands colony. Their schools were supported and jointly controlled by the civil authorities and the Dutch Reformed Church. The first school was established in 1638 on Manhattan Island. In 1649, the colonists, acting independently of Governor Peter Stuyvesant, brought grievances about the governance of New Netherlands to the States General of Netherlands. Among their recommendations to improve conditions was the creation of a public school. In Brooklyn, the Dutch colony consisted of six separate towns, and each had developed a separate though similar public education system. Bushwick, the town in which the Colored School No. 3 schoolhouse is located, erected its first school headed by a schoolmaster in 1662.² This was the second school built by the Dutch in Brooklyn.³

Under English rule, there was no system of publicly supported schools as there had been under the Dutch; rather, private academies, similar to those in England, were opened. These private academies were conducted in residences, rented rooms, or in a building erected specifically for that purpose.⁴ It was not until after the American Revolution that New York State undertook the task of creating a public education system. In 1789, the New York State Legislature set aside about 40,000 acres of public land for sale to provide funds for the support of schools in the state's townships. But it was not until 1816 that the Brooklyn Common School System was organized. This was replaced by the Board of Education in 1845. By 1851, nearly 1,000 pieces of legislation concerning education were passed by the state legislature, and the state's responsibility for educating its citizens, and carrying the costs of such education, was established.

Black Education in Nineteenth-Century Brooklyn and New York⁵

The movement to educate Brooklyn's African-American citizens began in 1815 when local religious leaders opened a short-lived day and evening school for recently freed slaves and

freemen. The following year, when Brooklyn's Common School System was established, black students were taught in the same schoolhouse as white students but in separate classrooms. By 1827, that space had been taken away, prompting Henry C. Thompson, the first black businessman in Brooklyn and president of the Brooklyn African Woolman Benevolent Society, and Abraham Brown to establish Brooklyn's first African Free School. In 1834, a number of blacks fleeing racial problems in Manhattan settled in Carrville in Brooklyn's Ninth Ward.⁶ A second African Free School opened there in 1839, which was taken over by the district trustees of the nearby Bedford school in 1841. That year, Brooklyn's mayor, Cyrus P. Smith, appointed three prominent African-American citizens as district trustees of the African School. In 1845, the state legislature authorized local governments to create separate school districts to educate black children. They were to be given "separate but equal" status with the regular public schools. In Brooklyn, the newly-established Board of Education absorbed the existing African Free Schools, which would be called the "Colored Schools."⁷ New school buildings were constructed by the Board for Colored Schools No. 1 and No. 2 in 1847 and 1853, respectively, but the staffing, maintenance, and equipping of these schools lagged far behind the public schools for white children. New York City (Manhattan) was operating its own system of separate schools for blacks that evolved from the "African Schools" of the Manumission Society. These were acquired by the Public School Society in 1834, and in turn were taken over by the New York City Board of Education in 1853. There were eight colored schools in New York City in 1861. As in Brooklyn, continuance of the colored schools had the support of many black residents, especially after the Draft Riots of 1863, in which mobs of whites murdered black citizens at random and burned black institutions, increasing the desire of black parents to shield their children from white prejudice.

In 1864, a stronger state law specified that the separate schools for blacks be funded at the same level and governed by the same rules as the other public schools and that the students be given the same level of instruction. Nevertheless, Brooklyn's colored schools had fewer grade divisions and staff than other schools.⁸ After the Civil War, school segregation in northern cities including Brooklyn was being challenged by numerous organizations,

such as the National Colored Convention and the African Civilization Society, and by individual parents who attempted to enroll their children in white public schools.

In 1873, the state passed the Civil Rights Act,⁹ which was intended to end segregation in public life, but it was not uniformly enforced. The black community itself was divided over the implementation of the law as it pertained to education. The supporters of integration argued that separate schools were a humiliation to their race, while the segregationists contended that the colored schools were beneficial to black students and the black community. One concern of the latter group was the fate of the black principals and teachers who staffed the colored schools. These positions were among the few professions available for African-Americans, who were generally forced into low-paying, low-status jobs, regardless of their qualifications. It was feared that this career outlet for African-Americans and the function of these professionals as role models in the community would disappear. Partly as a consequence of this division within the black community, the Brooklyn Board did not act on integration, and the school districts continued to bar black children from attending the regular public schools.

In spite of numerous court challenges, the Brooklyn Board of Education remained firmly committed to its segregation policy, and with the support of some black parents, began to rebuild obsolete colored school buildings. The Colored School No. 3 schoolhouse was replaced by the existing structure in 1879, and as late as 1883, a year before the Board of Education changed its policy on segregation, a new building for Colored School No. 1 in Fort Greene was opened. The New York City Board of Education ignored the Civil Rights Act of 1873, but in 1878 adopted an incremental desegregation plan that would have closed the colored schools by 1883; the limit was later changed to 1889. However, provisions were not made for the transfer of black teachers and principals to the regular public schools upon their closing. Black citizens and the Teachers' Association protested, obtaining state legislation in 1883 that protected the jobs of the existing black teachers and prevented the closing of the colored schools, while ordering that they admit pupils of all races. However, the Board only partially conformed to the law, and several of the colored schools continued to

be segregated. Nevertheless, the legislation had the practical effect of gradually bringing about the end of officially segregated schools as the "changing patterns of black residency left most of the schools . . . poorly located for serving black families."¹⁰

In 1882, Seth Low, the new mayor of Brooklyn and a reformer, appointed the first African-American to the Board of Education, Philip A. White,¹¹ who became chairman of the committee in charge of the colored schools.¹² White, who opposed forced segregation, was instrumental in implementing a change the following year which decreed that no public school could exclude black students but that the colored schools would remain open to children whose parents chose these schools. White also abhorred the term "colored school," and in 1887, the three colored schools were finally renamed to conform with the numbering system of the other public schools, Nos. 67, 68, and 69, respectively. However, they continued to serve black students only and to be categorized by the Board of Education as colored schools.¹³ By 1890, the number of black students attending Brooklyn's other public schools exceeded those in the "colored" schools. The first attempt to integrate one of the colored schools with an existing public school occurred in 1893, when P.S. 68, originally Colored School No. 2, was merged, after much debate, with the nearby P.S. 83 in Crown Heights. The school included "a white principal, a black head of department, and black and white teachers and students."¹⁴ While generally considered a success, the experiment was not repeated.

In 1898, Brooklyn became part of the consolidated City of New York. At that time, Brooklyn retained two colored schools, P.S. 67 and P.S. 69. The remainder of its public schools were legally integrated. Black enrollment in each school depended on the racial make-up of its particular neighborhood.

In 1900, the State legislature strengthened the anti-segregation law; at that time, New York City still had two colored schools in Brooklyn (P.S. 67 and P.S. 69), one in Manhattan (P.S. 81), and colored schools in the recently annexed areas of Jamaica and Flushing, Queens. Although legally integrated, these schools continued to be perceived by students, staff, and the public as 'colored' schools, and were exclusively attended by blacks. In 1901, P.S. 69 was eliminated as an entity due to the declining black population in the area. P.S. 67 as an

entity continues to this day, although the colored school building in which it was originally housed was replaced in the 1920s.

The Development of the Public School Building in Brooklyn¹⁵

In Brooklyn, it is possible to trace the architectural evolution of the public school as a building type from an early simple form which was an integral part of its surroundings to one which dominated its environment, thus indicating the prominent role education came to play in the community. During the 1850s, Brooklyn began to be transformed from a small, semi-suburban town dependent on the neighboring city of New York and the outlying farms of rural Long Island into a densely populated industrialized city. As it changed, so did the architectural character of its public institutions, such as public schools. The first schools were simple, modest structures closely related to residential architecture.¹⁶

Samuel B. Leonard (1821-1879),¹⁷ served as the Superintendent of Buildings and Repairs for the Board of Education of the City of Brooklyn from 1859 until his death in 1879.¹⁸ During his tenure, he designed forty public schools for the Brooklyn Board of Education. Besides Colored School No. 3, they include P.S. 34 (1867, 1870), P.S. 9 (1867-68), P.S. 65 (1870), and P.S. 39 (1876-77), all designated New York City landmarks. Prior to his association with the Board of Education, Leonard was a local Brooklyn builder.

By the end of the 1850s, particularly after 1858, the year in which Samuel B. Leonard was elected Superintendent of Buildings and Repairs by the Board, public schools began to acquire a readily identifiable character as public institutional buildings. The style Leonard preferred at the time was the *Rundbogenstil*, a style related to the Romanesque Revival as expressed in contemporary German architecture.¹⁹ Some of the qualities that recommended the style were: rapidity of construction, economy of material and workmanship, durability, ample fenestration, and the ease of adding extensions without gross violation to the original fabric. All these qualities made the style ideal for public schools. Former Public School 13 (1861) on Degraw Street in Cobble Hill, former Public School 15 (1860) on the northeast corner of Third Avenue and State Street, Public School 34 (1867, 1870, 1887-88), a designated New York City

Landmark, on Norman Avenue in Greenpoint, and Public School 111 (1867, 1888), also a designated Landmark, on Sterling Place and Vanderbilt Avenue in Prospect Heights are extant examples of Leonard's *Rundbogenstil* schools. Although they possess an institutional character, these buildings were in scale with their surroundings and did not overpower or overwhelm their neighbors; the schools blended with their environment rather than commanded it.

In the 1870s, Leonard changed his style for schools and began to design in the French-inspired Second Empire style whose prominent characteristics are pavilions which add plasticity and verticality to the facade, and mansards which enhance the pavilions and create bold silhouettes. A new feature introduced at this time was the tall, central entrance tower. The neighborhood public school was now a symbol of cosmopolitan modernity recalling the grand buildings and palaces of Napoleon III's newly redesigned Paris. The mansarded public school with its tower now vied with the church steeple as the most prominent element in the skyline of a nineteenth residential neighborhood. The change in architectural style also marks a change in the attitude toward public education. The idea of publicly supported universal education which took firm root in the 1840s, was now one of the most important responsibilities of government and this new importance was reflected in the new architectural prominence of the public school building.

It was also during the 1870s that changes in teaching methods caused important changes in the interior planning of schools. Early teaching methods required large, undivided assembly spaces with smaller, ancillary classrooms. In the 1870s, there was a shift in emphasis to specialized instruction requiring more classrooms and less assembly space.²⁰ Important advances were also made in fireproof construction and sanitary facilities. One of the first schools designed with this new plan was Leonard's Public School 24. Now demolished, it stood on the corner of Wall and Beaver Streets in Bushwick.

The History of the Neighborhood²¹

During the seventeenth century, Williamsburgh was a rural, sparsely populated section of the town of Bushwick, one of the original six towns that comprise what is now Brooklyn. The town center was located near the present intersection of

Bushwick Avenue, Metropolitan Avenue, North 2nd Street, Orient Avenue, and Maspeth Avenue. Its first school was erected near what is today Metropolitan and Bushwick Avenues in 1662. This was the second school built by the Dutch in Brooklyn. At the close of the Revolutionary War, the area that developed into the town of Williamsburgh was mostly open farmland. In 1802, Richard M. Woodhull, a prosperous Manhattan merchant, purchased a thirteen-acre tract at the foot of present-day North 2nd Street which he named Williamsburgh after its surveyor, Colonel Jonathan Williams. Although little development took place initially and Woodhull went broke in 1812, the village of Williamsburgh gradually developed, spurred by the opening of the Wallabout and Newtown Turnpike, which connected Williamsburgh with downtown Brooklyn. Williamsburgh's first public school was built in 1826 on what is today the south side of North 1st Street between Berry Street and Bedford Avenue, the year before the area was incorporated as a village. Williamsburgh was incorporated in 1827, and the village limits were extended to the east of Union Avenue, the location of Colored School No. 3, in 1835. Ferry lines provided connections to Manhattan, and industries established along the East River waterfront created jobs for local workmen and commercial opportunities for small businesses. The population of Williamsburgh more than doubled between 1840 and 1845 and grew at an even greater rate during the late 1840s and early 1850s when a large number of Germans began settling in the area. In 1843, three years after the state legislature passed an act separating Williamsburgh from the town of Bushwick and making the village an independent town, Williamsburgh was divided into three school districts.²² In 1850, a brick schoolhouse was erected in each district. The towns of Williamsburgh and Bushwick merged in 1851-52 to form the City of Williamsburgh which was subsumed by the burgeoning City of Brooklyn in 1855, after which time, public education was administered by the City of Brooklyn. In April 1851 the State Legislature granted Williamsburgh a charter as a city; at that time it had 35,000 inhabitants and was twentieth in population among American cities. It remained an independent municipality for only a few years before being consolidated with the City of Brooklyn on January 1, 1855.²³

In 1820, more than 20 of Williamsburgh's 58 black residents were enslaved. After 1827, when the State Legislature abolished slavery in New York, the area's black population increased dramatically. The number of blacks living in Williamsburgh increased 199 percent between 1830 and 1840, and 251 percent between 1840 and 1850. By 1855, Williamsburgh's 1,147 black residents represented the second largest black community in Kings County.²⁴ Williamsburgh's black population peaked at 1,679 in the year 1880. However, during that period, the proportion of blacks to Williamsburgh's total population decreased from 16.4 percent to 1.2 percent, due to the influx of a large white population.²⁵ By 1900, the number of blacks living in Williamsburgh had fallen to 965, a mere .5 percent of the population. Within Williamsburgh, blacks lived mainly in the 13th, 14th, and 16th Wards during the 1850s and early 1860s, after that shifting from the 14th to the 19th Wards, as the 14th became more industrialized and less residential. By 1900, two-thirds of Williamsburgh's black population lived in the 19th Ward, which was located to the west of the school and stretched to the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Among Williamsburgh's notable black residents was Peter W. Ray (1825-1906), the first black physician to become a member of the Kings County Medical Society. Educated at Bowdoin College and Vermont Medical College, he operated a pharmacy in Williamsburgh for fifty years, was a founder of the Brooklyn College of Pharmacy, and served as its treasurer for 23 years. Although Williamsburgh is not considered to have been a black sanctuary during the draft riots of 1863, hundreds of blacks were nevertheless given refuge from the violent mobs at the German Turn Verein Hall on Meserole Street near Union Avenue, and James McCune Smith, M.D., one of the most prestigious African-Americans of the time, moved to Williamsburgh after the riots.

Colored School No. 3

Colored School No. 3 had its origins in Williamsburgh's African Free School, which was founded prior to 1841 by local black leaders Willis Hodges, Samuel Ricks, T. Wilson, Jacob Fields, and William J. Hodges. When the Williamsburgh district school system was established in 1844, the black school was taken over by the trustees, and placed in a district school building on North 1st Street between Third Street (now Berry Street) and

Fourth Street (now Bedford Avenue). The following year it had 70 students. In 1850, enrollment grew to 145 students and the school was relocated to a building at Union Avenue and Keap Street. Upon Williamsburgh's consolidation with the City of Brooklyn in 1855, the school was moved again to old Bushwick District School No. 1 on Union Avenue near North 2nd Street (now Metropolitan Avenue). By 1868, the school had relocated once again to a building at its present site, Union Avenue between Scholes and Stagg Streets.²⁶

In early 1875, Samuel B. Leonard, the Superintendent of Buildings and Repairs of the Brooklyn Board of Education, declared the Colored School No. 3 building to be unfit, recommending that "...the old building be sold, and an appropriation of twelve thousand dollars be put in the budget for a new brick building built one story high, 27 feet wide, and 85 feet deep."²⁷ The Board did not act on his request, which he repeated in 1877²⁸ with the support of parents in the Eastern District, who submitted the following petition:

We, the colored citizens of Brooklyn, E.D., respectfully petition your honorable body for a new school-house, as the present building is inadequate for the purpose, there being a large and increasing number of children who all go to the one place provided in that district. Also, we are paying taxes on a large amount of property, which we think entitles us to some consideration.

We therefore trust our petition will be favorably received and our wishes granted, for which your petitioners will ever pray.

*Louis Napoleon, 380 South Fourth Street
W.C.H. Curtis, 254 South Second Street
Jno. M. Nixon, 281 South Third Street
and numerous others²⁹*

It was not until March of 1879 that the Board was to pass a resolution authorizing Leonard to draw up plans and specifications for a new Colored School No. 3, to be built on the Union Avenue site. Advertisements for construction were authorized in May and plans for the new school house were filed with the Brooklyn Department of Buildings in June.³⁰ Leonard is listed as the architect.³¹ The projected cost of the building was \$5,300, but the final price was \$8,963.³² The building, which consisted of four classrooms with a 220-seat capacity, opened later that year. The round-arched Romanesque Revival style alludes to many of

Leonard's earlier school buildings, while the centrally-placed dormer evokes the central tower form he used in many public school designs in the 1870s.

Several notable African-Americans were associated with Colored School No. 3. Maria Stewart taught there in the mid-1840s, and was later its assistant principal. Hezekiah Green was appointed principal in 1847, followed by Samuel S. Rankins, who served in that position until his death in 1874. Two outstanding educators, Sarah J.S. Tompkins and Georgiana F. Putnam began their careers in the school in the mid-1850s. Brooklyn's first black female principal, Catherine Clow, became head of the school in 1876 and served in that position for many years.

Subsequent History³³

Colored School No. 3 was renumbered P.S. 69 in June 1887 when the Board of Education integrated the numeration of the colored schools with the numbering system of the other public schools. Nevertheless, P.S. 69 continued to enroll an exclusively black student body. By this time, however, its enrollment had begun to drop as African-Americans moved from Williamsburg to other Brooklyn neighborhoods and black parents increasingly opted to send their children to the regular public schools. Public School 69 lost its independent status in 1896 when it was annexed to nearby P.S. 19, although it continued to be known officially as P.S. 69. Upon the consolidation of the City of Brooklyn with the greater City of New York in 1898, P.S. 69, along with all of Brooklyn's existing public schools, came under the jurisdiction of the New York City Board of Education. In 1901, it was officially renamed P.S. 19 Annex. In 1919, it became an annex of P.S. 18, another nearby public school. In 1924, an independent school, P.S. 191, opened in the building. The Board of Education closed P.S. 191 in 1934, relinquishing ownership of the property to the Public Works Commission, which used it for the federal Civil Works Administration during the Depression of the 1930s. Later it was occupied by the Department of Sanitation. It is presently in private ownership.

Description

The Romanesque Revival style school is a one-and-one-half-story, freestanding building with a raised basement. It has a hipped roof and a gabled

dormer extending to the line of the facade. The building, situated on a lot which is 75 feet wide and 100 feet deep, is set back from the property line and has a small front yard and garden enclosed by chain link and iron fencing. The narrow side yards,³⁴ which contain areaways with historic bluestone paving and steps leading to the basement entrances, are enclosed by corrugated aluminum partitions. The building is 46 feet wide, 57 feet deep, and 24 feet high. The facade is of Philadelphia brick with brownstone trim, stoop, and water table. Paired pilasters divide the facade into three sections: a central section, which contains the entryway and dormer facade, flanked by side sections with two window bays each. The doorway and the first-story windows have compound, round-arched openings with large keystones and impost blocks. The doorway has a round-arched transom light and non-historic wood and iron doors. The window openings, which are presently covered with plywood,³⁵ sit above brownstone sills and decorative brick panels. Brick moldings with corbelled ends extend above the

door and windows. The side sections are crowned by a wooden cornice with dentils. The dormer features paired round-arched windows, a blind arcade, corbelled brickwork, and heavy corner piers with decorative brickwork, supported by curving brownstone brackets. The dormer windows, which have wood sash, share a common sill and have prominent keystone and brick moldings following the curves of the arches. The gable is topped by stone coping. The less developed side elevations are of North River red brick and have segmental window openings covered by corrugated aluminum shutters. The side elevations are crowned by wooden cornices with curved brackets. Prominent vents with finials stand atop the roof. The building's exterior remains largely intact.

Report prepared by
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NOTES

1. This section is based on the following: Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Public School 86 (Irvington School) Designation Report* (LP-1808), (New York: City of New York, 1991); -----, *Public School 71K (now Beth Jacob School, part of the United Talmudical Academy Torah V'yirah)* (LP-2006), (New York: City of New York, 1981), and includes the following sources: Frank P. Graves, "Development of Education Law in New York," *McKinney's Consolidated Laws of New York, Annotated*, Book 16, Education Law, 1 to 558, XI-XXI; Elsie Garland Hobson, *Educational Legislation and Administration in the State of New York From 1777 to 1850* (Chicago, c.1918), 37-51, 171-179; Henry R. Stiles, *A History of Kings County Including the City of Brooklyn, 1683-1884* (New York: W.W. Munsell & Company, 1884), vol. 1, 276, 282, 292-304; and I.N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island* (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915), vol. 1, 19,31.
2. It was located near North 2nd Street (now Metropolitan Avenue) and Bushwick Avenue.
3. New York City still has an example of such a school, the Voorlezer House, a designated New York City Landmark, in Richmondtown, Staten Island. Built about 1695, it is the oldest elementary school building in the United States.
4. Erasmus Hall Academy in Flatbush, Brooklyn, although it was built in 1786 after English rule, is an example of this type of building. It is a designated New York City Landmark.
5. This section is based on the following sources: Brooklyn, N.Y. Board of Education, *Proceedings* (1879), 113, 173; David Martin Ment, "Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of New England and New York," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University (New York, 1975), 153-169, 171-185, 187-199, 212-213; and Robert J. Swan, "A Synoptic History of Black Public Schools in Brooklyn," *An Introduction to the Black Contribution to the Development of Brooklyn*, ed. Charlene Claye Van Der Zee (Brooklyn: New Muse of Brooklyn, 1977), 63-71.
6. This is now the neighborhood of Prospect Heights.

7. The African Free School near downtown Brooklyn became Colored School No. 1 and the Carrville school became Colored School No. 2.
8. The Brooklyn School Board's per capita spending for black schools was greatly in excess than that for white schools; however, modern educational standards, which included separate teachers for each grade level, were not achieved at the colored schools. Instead, pupils at different levels were taught in the same class. Enrollments remained relatively low. Colored School No.1, the largest of Brooklyn's colored schools, never had more than 200 students in the 1860s, while most public schools had several hundred pupils each.
9. It was proposed by William H. Johnson of Albany, who was the first black official in the State Legislature. Swan, 65.
10. Ment, 196.
11. White was a prominent Manhattan pharmacist and a Brooklyn resident.
12. In the prior year, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, which had supported Low's candidacy, and the *New York Globe*, a new black newspaper based in Manhattan exposed the deplorable conditions in the black public schools and called for black representation on the Brooklyn Board of Education.
13. *Proceedings* (1887), 545. While the colored schools were no longer distinguished from other public schools by their numbering, the Board of Education's official school directories retained the distinction as one of a number of categories, such as primary, grammar, colored, etc.
14. Ment, 185.
15. The following section is adapted from Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Public School 86 (Irvington School) Designation Report* (LP-1808) (New York: City of New York, 1991).
16. The earliest extant public school building is former Public School 8 (1846, 1860) on Middagh Street in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District. A plain brick building rendered in a vernacular combination of the Greek Revival and the Italianate styles, its stands three stories above a high basement, is three windows wide, and is crowned by a pediment. It is quite similar to contemporary rowhouses. However, a feature which distinguishes it from its domestic neighbors is its side yards. Unencumbered open space around a school was essential to provide adequate natural light and ventilation for the interior spaces. Due to the high cost of land in urban areas, the size of the school property was restricted. Whenever possible, the Board of Education at first would acquire corner sites for its schools which allowed for two facades to face the open space created by the streets. When larger schools were necessary, entire blockfronts were acquired.
17. This section is based on the following sources: Brooklyn, N.Y. Board of Education, *Proceedings*, (1876), 330; (1879), 362; Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Public School 34 Designation Report* (LP-1288), (New York: City of New York, 1983); Samuel B. Leonard obituary, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 26, 1879, p. 4; and New York State Census, 1855.
18. He died on October 24, 1879, at his home at 60 Greene Avenue, from injuries he received in a carriage accident on Bedford Avenue. James W. Naughton (1840-1898) succeeded Leonard as the Superintendent of Buildings, serving until his death on February 12, 1898. The schools designed during his tenure were in a number of styles and in a free combination of those styles current during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. His schools also have architectural references to earlier nineteenth century styles used by Leonard. Naughton was also responsible for enlarging many existing school buildings which had been constructed during Leonard's tenure.
19. The earliest example of the style in New York and one of the earliest examples in the country is in Brooklyn, Richard Upjohn's Church of the Pilgrims (1844-46) at Henry and Remsen Streets in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District.
20. Colored School No. 3 was based on the earlier practice, which was outmoded by the time the school opened in 1879.
21. This section is adapted from research by James T. Dillon, Betsy Bradley and Gale Harris for the following Landmarks Preservation Commission designation reports: *Public School 71K (now Beth Jacob School, part of the United Talmudical Academy Torah V'yirah)* (LP-2006), (New York, 1981); *(Former) 19th Police*

Precinct Station House and Stable (LP-1703), (New York, 1993) and *Williamsburgh Savings Bank* (Broadway), now *Republic National Bank* (LP-1910), (New York, 1996), respectively, and includes the following sources: Eugene L. Armbruster, *Brooklyn's Eastern District* (Brooklyn: the author, 1942); Harold X. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 23; Samuel Reynolds, *A History of the City of Williamsburgh* (Williamsburgh, 1852); Henry R. Stiles, ed., *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, New York from 1683 to 1884* (New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1884), 1, 282, 293-303; Robert J. Swan, "Some Historic Notes on Black Williamsburgh and Bushwick," *An Introduction to the Black Contribution to the Development of Brooklyn*, ed. Charlene Claye Van Der Zee (Brooklyn: New Muse of Brooklyn, 1977), 117-125; and *Higginson's Insurance Map of the City of Brooklyn, L.I.* (New York: J.H. Higginson, 1868); *Robinson's Atlas of the City of Brooklyn* (New York: E. Robinson, 1886); *Atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York* (Brooklyn: E. Belcher Hyde, 1904); and *Desk Atlas, Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York*, Vol. 2 (New York: E. Belcher Hyde, 1929).

22. The first district was the area south of Grand Street and west of Union Avenue, the second was north of Grand Street and west of Union Avenue, and the third district consisted of the remainder of the town.
23. After Williamsburgh lost its independent status, the "h" at the end of the name was dropped, becoming "Williamsburg."
24. Other concentrations of African-Americans resided in the downtown and Fort Greene areas, in Weeksville, and in Carrville.
25. The new residents were mainly German and Jewish immigrants, and the area was sometimes referred to as "Dutchtown."
26. The move possibly occurred in 1867, when the Board of Education acquired the property from Henry B. and Elizabeth Scholes of Brooklyn and New York City. The property became exempted from real estate taxes the following year. Kings County, Office of the Register, Deeds Liber 749, p. 509; Annual Record of Assessed Valuation of Real Estate, 16th Ward, City of Brooklyn, 1866-1869.
27. *Proceedings* (1875), 240.
28. *Proceedings* (1877), 158.
29. *Proceedings* (1877), 236.
30. New York City, Department of Buildings, Brooklyn, NB 230-1879.
31. This may have been Leonard's final design before his death that year. On November 11, 1879, the School House Committee of the Board of Education reported that the death of Leonard would not affect current projects. On December 2, 1879, Leonard's successor, James W. Naughton, was elected. *Proceedings* (1879), 319, 362.
32. *Proceedings* (1879), 219.
33. This section is based on the following sources: *Journal of the Board of Education of the City of New York* (1919) 962, (1924) 349, (1933) 1656, (1934), 10, 269; *Official Directory of the Board of Education of the City of New York, 1900-1935*; and *Proceedings* (1896), 175.
34. The north sideyard and the rear yard contain historic bluestone pavers, while the south sideyard is paved with concrete. In addition, one of two rear outbuildings, which originally contained toilet facilities, survives on the north side of the yard. The building has been converted to a storage shed.
35. Windows throughout the building, including the sealed front windows, contain either partially-rebuilt historic or matching replacement sash.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the (Former) Colored School No. 3, later Public School 69, has a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Colored School No. 3 was built in 1879-1881 to the designs of Samuel B. Leonard, the Superintendent of Buildings and Repairs for the Brooklyn Board of Education at the time; that it is the only known colored school building remaining in Brooklyn; that it evokes that city's policy of race-based school segregation and its efforts to end it during the course of the nineteenth century; that its Romanesque Revival style was popular for the design of Brooklyn's public schools at the time; that the building is important in the body of Leonard's work for the Brooklyn Board of Education; that the building occupies a prominent position in its neighborhood; that many early, important black educators were associated with the school; and that the exterior of the building remains largely intact.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the (Former) Colored School No. 3, later Public School 69, 270 Union Avenue, a/k/a 270-276 Union Avenue, and designates Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 3031, Lot 5, as its Landmark Site.



Former Colored School No. 3, 270 Union Avenue, Brooklyn.
Photo: Donald G. Presa, 1997.



Former Colored School No. 3, 270 Union Avenue, Brooklyn.
Detail of entrance tower. Photo: Donald G. Presa, 1997.



Former Colored School No. 3, 270 Union Avenue, Brooklyn.
Detail of entrance bay. Photo: Donald G. Presa, 1997.



Former Colored School No. 3, 270 Union Avenue, Brooklyn.

Detail of window bays.

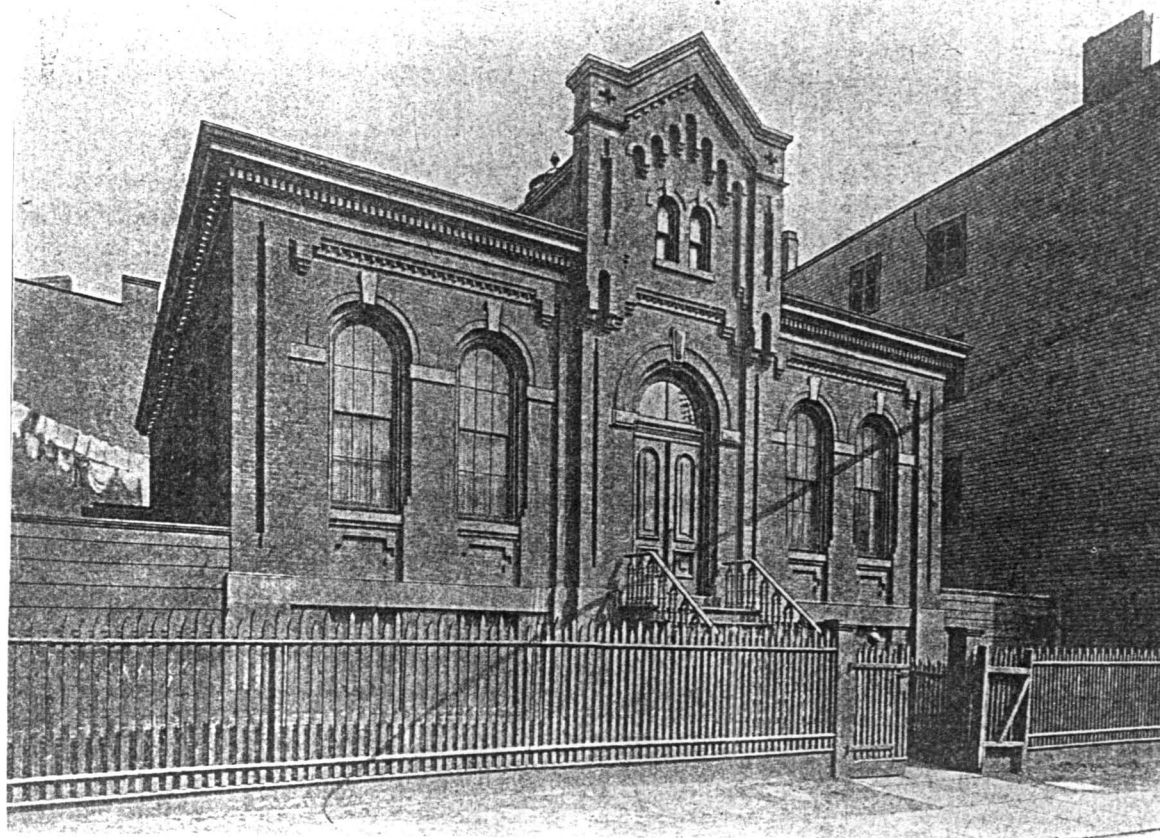
Photo: Donald G. Presa, 1997.



CATHARINE T. CLOW,

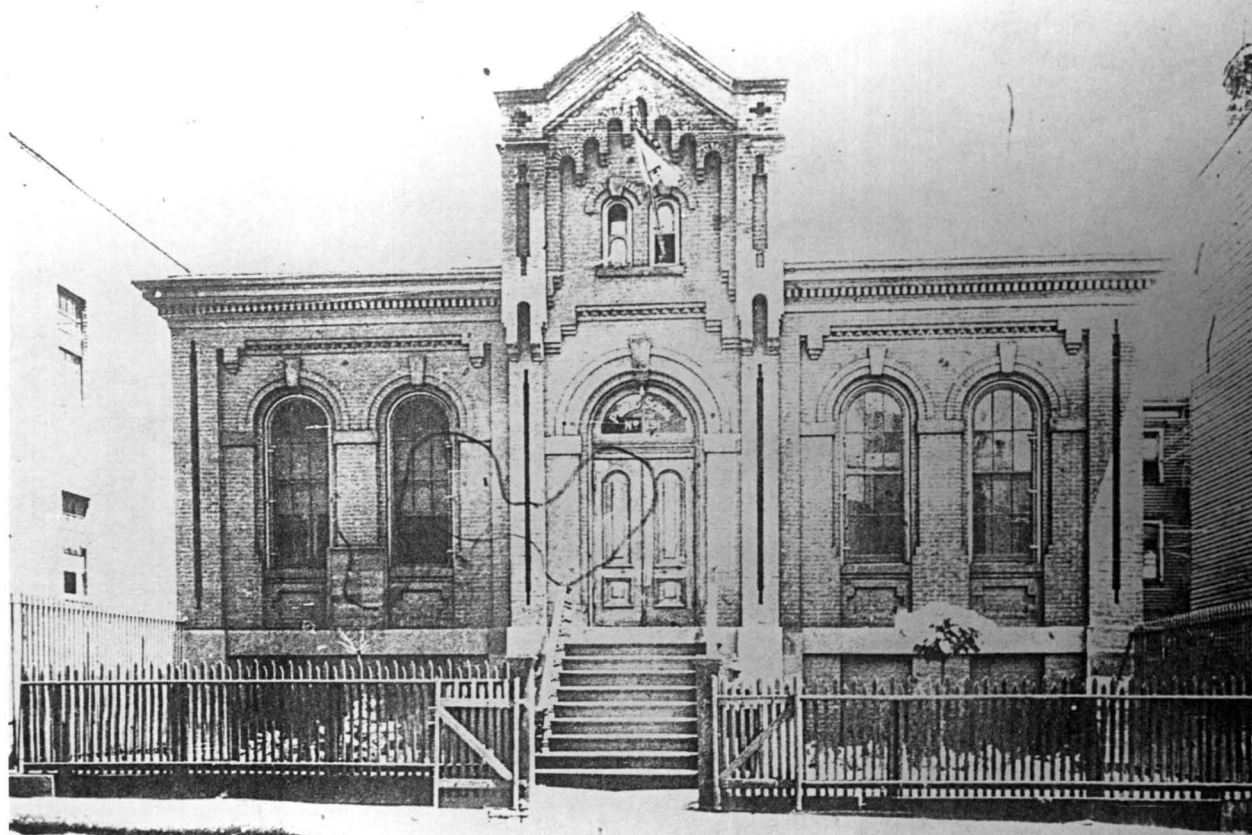
PRINCIPAL.

Catherine T. Clow, Brooklyn's first black principal, served Colored School No. 3 from 1876 until the turn of the century. Photo: *Souvenir of Our Public Schools, Brooklyn, N.Y.* (New York: L'Artiste Publishing Co., 1892).



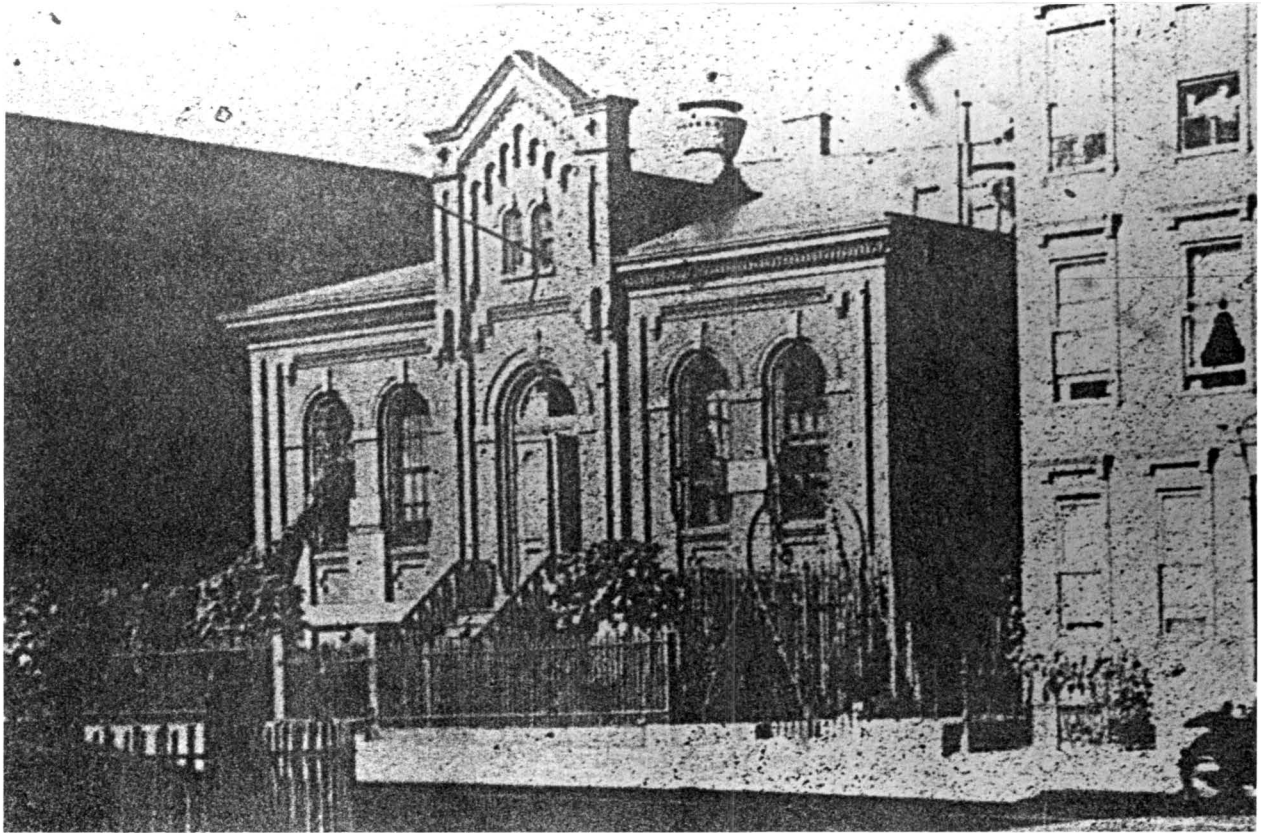
Former Colored School No. 3, 270 Union Avenue, Brooklyn, 1892.

Photo: *Souvenir of Our Public Schools, Brooklyn, N.Y.* (New York: L'Artiste Publishing Co., 1892).

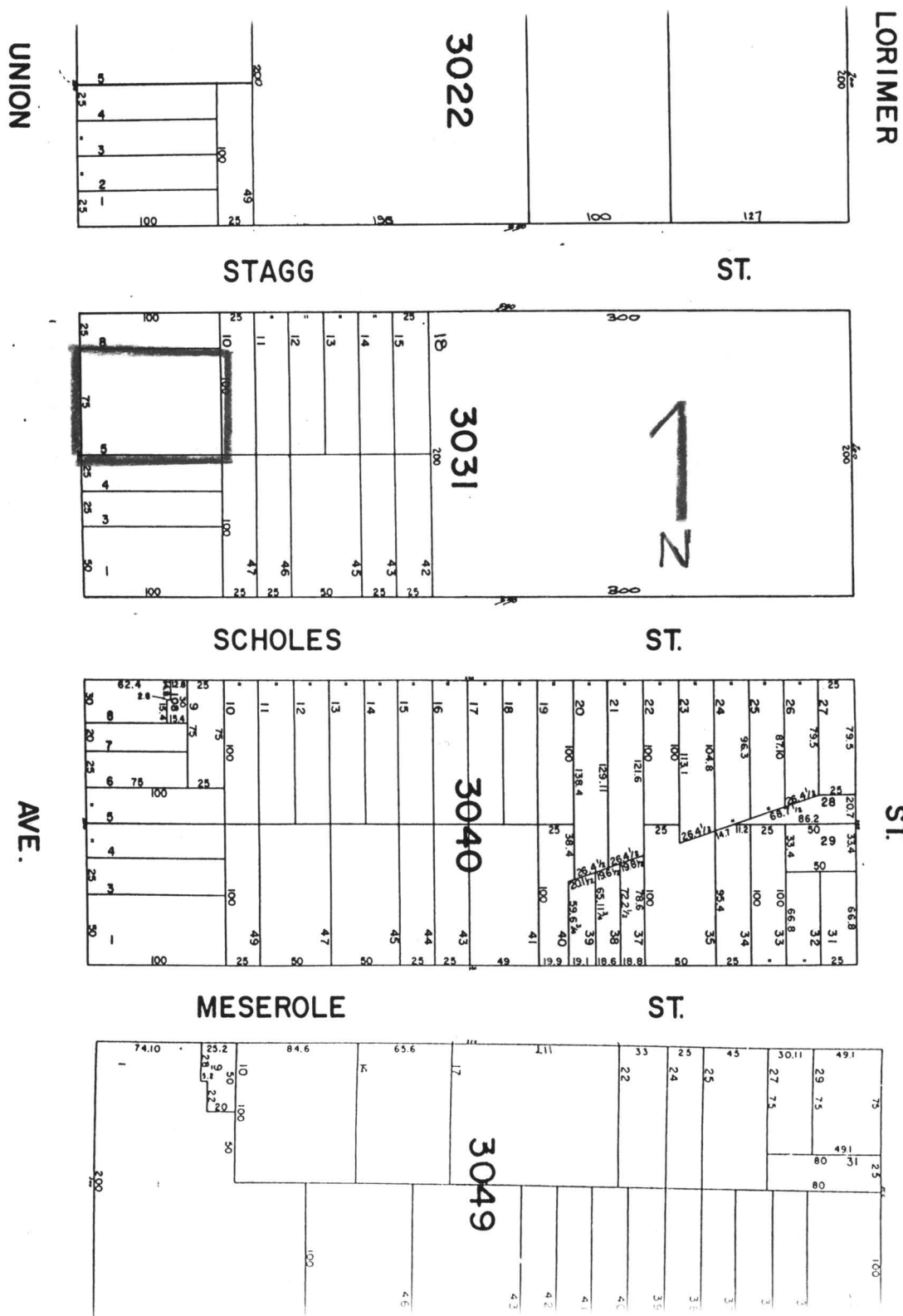


Former Colored School No. 3, 270 Union Avenue, Brooklyn, 1931, from *Photographic Views of New York City*, New York Public Library Collection, Microfiche No. 288.

Photo: Board of Education.



Former Colored School No. 3, 270 Union Avenue, Brooklyn, 1935, from *Photographic Views of New York City*, New York Public Library Collection, Microfiche No. 1390. Photo: P.L. Sperr.



(Former) Colored School No. 3, later Public School 69, 270 Union Avenue, aka 270-276 Union Avenue, Borough of Brooklyn. Landmark Site: Brooklyn Tax Map Block 3031, Lot 5. Graphic Source: New York City Department of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map.

