

Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten



DESIGNATION REPORT

Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten

LOCATION

Borough of Brooklyn
236 President Street

LANDMARK TYPE

Individual

SIGNIFICANCE

This Beaux Arts structure was the first purpose-built free kindergarten in Brooklyn and was commissioned by Elmira E. Christian as a model kindergarten to serve an immigrant enclave in this section of South Brooklyn.



Southwest View of President Street between Clinton and Court Streets
2018

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Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten

236 President Street, Brooklyn

Designation List 510 LP-2611

Built: 1897

Architect: Hough & Deuell

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn, Tax Map
Block 351, Lot 10

Calendared: April 10, 2018

Public Hearing: June 26, 2018

On June 26, 2018, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten as a New York City Landmark and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. Twenty-two people testified in favor of the proposed designation, including a representative of United States Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez, Councilmember Brad Lander, New York State Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon, representatives of the Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Association, the Norwegian Immigration Association and American Scandinavian Society, St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Brooklyn, Historic Districts Council, and fifteen individuals. One person, a representative of the owner, spoke in opposition to the proposed designation.¹

Summary

Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten

Designed in 1897 by architects Hough & Deuell, the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten was the first purpose-built free kindergarten in Brooklyn and is a notable work of Beaux Arts style civic architecture. It was commissioned by Elmira E. Christian as an archetypal “model kindergarten” in memory of her late husband. In 1897, Elmira Christian bought the pre-Civil War residence at 238 President Street, renovated it as the Brooklyn Deaconess Home of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and built the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten on the adjacent site.

The Christians were residents of President Street and longtime members of the First Place Methodist Episcopal Church. After Hans Christian’s sudden death in 1894, Elmira sought to create a memorial to honor his charitable works and commitment to education, and became known in her own right as a pioneering kindergarten founder in Brooklyn.

Elmira Christian was instrumental in establishing the first free kindergarten in Brooklyn when the concept of kindergarten was somewhat new to the area. For the purpose-built Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten, she gave particular attention to the building’s function: the architects’ plans were “submitted to expert kindergarteners for criticism before they were finally adopted”² and included a visitors’ gallery for observers to see the kindergarten experiment in action.

The term “kindergarten” was coined in 1840 by German philosopher and educator Friedrich Froebel, to whom childhood education was an extension of mothering.³ Popularization of the kindergarten concept reflects the work of progressive female reformers who

were Froebel’s disciples and who established the first kindergartens in the United States in the 1830s-1850s. While kindergartens in churches and homes had come to New York as early as 1866 and the kindergarten system was in use in some Manhattan public schools by 1893, the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten was the first purpose-built free kindergarten in Brooklyn: “It is the only building of the kind in Brooklyn, so far as known, and one of the very few in existence in any city,” and “so far as known, the only one expressly and solely for the use of a kindergarten” wrote the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1897 and 1901.⁴

In the midst of the Second Industrial Revolution (c.1870-1914), with more mothers and children at work in factories, kindergarten came to be seen as a social and moral imperative to ensure that children learn basic skills, to enable immigrant children to learn English, and to instill in them the values of citizenship. The immigrant cause was of particular significance to Elmira Christian as Hans, a Norwegian immigrant,⁵ had come to the United States as a sailor in advance of an economic depression and maritime crisis in Norway. The establishment of a Norwegian enclave in South Brooklyn brought carpenters, shipbuilders, sailmakers, and dockworkers from coastal Norway to the area from the 1870s to the 1910s. Both the kindergarten and the adjacent Deaconess Home at 238 President Street House were meant to serve this immigrant enclave.

In c.1949, while a resident of the adjacent 238 President Street House, the Reverend Alberto Baez began to use the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten for services of the First Spanish Methodist Church—Brooklyn’s oldest Spanish-language Protestant church and the forerunner of dozens of others in the Metropolitan area. A private residence since 1974, the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten remains a testament to Elmira Christian’s dedication to education reform and immigrant aid, and is a remarkable example of Beaux-Arts architecture in this residential section of Brooklyn.

Building Description

Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten

Description

The Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten is a two-story, three-bay, Beaux Arts style structure that was purpose-built as a memorial kindergarten. The primary facade features buff brick laid in a common bond with buff brick quoins, belt course, and lintel course; crosstetted entrance surrounds and first floor window surrounds; ornate keystone, scroll, and cartouche details and column capitals; a modillion cornice with Rococo-inspired details; and portions of an intricate, original wrought iron gate. Secondary facades are red brick laid in a common bond.

President Street Elevation

Historic: The two-story, three-bay-wide Beaux Arts style building features a buff brick common bond facade with buff brick quoins at the corners, ground floor entrance surrounds, and second floor balcony window. The facade is further defined by a paneled lintel course above the basement windows, a buff brick belt course between the ground floor and first floor, and a buff brick lintel course above the first floor windows. Decorative window elements include crosstetted first floor window surrounds with scrollwork keystones and cavetto stools; molded second floor window surrounds with cavetto stools; and segmental-arched, eared second floor balcony window surrounds with acanthus keystone and haunch details, bellflower drops, fructiform ornament, and foliate scrolls with egg-and-dart-molded caps at the base.

The first floor entrance portico consists of an eared and mitered architrave and a foliate cartouche

with laurel bundle and bellflower drop details above the entrance door. The columns that define the portico feature inverted cavetto- and torus-molded bases on plinths, granite shafts, and Scamozzi capitals with bead-and-reel necking, egg-and-dart molding, bellflower pulvinus details, and shell-shaped bosses. Above the columns are exaggerated guttae, cyma reversa moldings that extend below the frieze panel, scrolled console brackets with fruit festoons, and ovolo moldings that extend above the frieze panel. The frieze panel above the entrance bears the visible imprint of letters reading “CHRISTIAN MEMORIAL.” The second floor balcony consists of a bead-molded concrete base with scalloped corners and a filleted cap.

Cornice and roof details consist of a filleted modillion cornice with ovolo corners; a balustrade with a filleted cap above the cornice line; and an open pediment with Rococo-inspired details including scrollwork, a shell-shaped boss, and brackets with bellflower and fruit festoon details. At the center of the roofline is a crest with feather details, a shell crown, and a cartouche with date 1897 AD.

Alterations between c.1940 and 1978: One-story, single car garage with concrete roof and metal balcony installed at rightmost bay; wrought iron second floor balcony replaced; cornice and crest at roofline painted; balustrade painted and balusters covered or removed; all original paired casement windows replaced; metal grilles installed on basement windows; entrance stairs, stoop, and banisters replaced; original French entrance doors replaced; lamppost flanking east side of entrance installed.

Subsequent alterations: Mailbox; buzzer; electronic devices installed on east side of stoop.

West Elevation (Towards Clinton Street)

Historic: A red brick common bond facade is partially visible and features projecting stone sills and flush lintels. The buff brick quoins and belt course from the President Street elevation terminate on this elevation.

Alterations: Drainage spout installed.

East Elevation (Towards Henry Street)

Historic: A red brick common bond facade is partially visible and features projecting stone sills and flush lintels. The buff brick quoins and belt course from the President Street elevation terminate on this elevation.

Alterations: Drainage spout installed.

Site

Historic: Wrought iron portions of the original lot line fence on President Street, including its foliate finials, remain intact. A wrought iron gate sits between the westernmost exterior wall (towards Clinton Street) and the adjacent structure at 234 President Street.

Alterations: Partial replacement of lot line fence on President Street, including removal of wrought iron palmette finial, bellflower drops, and banner reading “HANS S CHRISTIAN MEMORIAL KINDERGARTEN”; wrought iron bars installed above gate and wrought iron gate door reinforced with semicircular metal plate; buff brick pavers installed; landscape plantings.

Site History

Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten

Carroll Gardens⁶

Prior to European settlement, vast portions of Long Island, including present-day Brooklyn, were inhabited by the Lenape, or Delaware, people. About 15,000 Native Americans lived in loosely organized, relatively autonomous groups in seasonal campsites and farming communities within the current bounds of New York City. Lenape trails ran southward and eastward from Wallabout Bay and what became Fulton Ferry on the East River waterfront; these trails later evolved into colonial “ferry roads” and, ultimately, two of Brooklyn’s main transportation axes: Fulton Street and Jamaica Avenue. A subsidiary trail, beginning southeast of Fulton Ferry, extended through Carroll Gardens toward Gowanus Bay. Further developed by settlers in the colonial era, this trail would become known as Red Hook Lane and serve as one of Brooklyn’s major arteries into the 19th century. Lenape cornfields existed along this trail near Carroll Gardens’ northern boundary with Boerum Hill and near Second and Third Places west of Court Street.

In 1637, Joris Hansen de Rapelje of the Dutch West India Company “purchased” about 335 acres from the Lenape around Wallabout Bay; by 1640, Dutch and English settlers claimed title to nearly all of Kings and Queens Counties. Bounded by Degraw Street to the north, Hoyt Street to the east, and 9th Street to the south, Carroll Gardens was considered a section of South Brooklyn, which also included present-day Boerum Hill, Cobble Hill, Gowanus, and Red Hook. South Brooklyn was primarily agricultural—farmed by laborers including

enslaved African American men and women—into the early 19th century.

Development in Carroll Gardens began in earnest in the 1840s, after the construction of the Atlantic Docks in Red Hook in 1841 set the industrialization of the waterfront in motion, and the Hamilton Avenue Ferry began to operate between Lower Manhattan and Hamilton Avenue in 1846. At the same time, an act of the state legislature in 1846 redrew Summit, Woodhull, Rapelye, Cooper, and Coles Streets between Henry and Smith Streets as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Places, each with 24' carriage pass-throughs, 13' sidewalks, and setbacks of 33' 5¼". Shown on surveyor Richard Butt's *Map of the City of Brooklyn and Village of Williamsburgh* in 1846, the unusual setbacks that distinguish these streetscapes became the area's eponymous front "gardens" and were inspiration for setbacks from 25' to 39' throughout the area.⁷ The acquisition of Carroll Park in 1850, the introduction of new horsecar lines in the 1850s and 1860s, and the drainage of swamps and marshes for construction of the Gowanus Canal from 1853-1874 further encouraged the area's transformation into an upscale commuters' enclave. From the late 1860s to early 1880s, developers built substantial row houses with brownstone facades and deep front "gardens" on a number of blocks east of Smith Street, and on First through Fourth Places between Smith and Henry Streets.

Like other historic row house districts, Carroll Gardens began to attract working-class residents as transportation improvements and changing architectural trends drove merchants and other professionals to newer, more fashionable areas of Brooklyn. By the 1890s, significant numbers of Italian immigrants began to settle in Carroll Gardens alongside established, Irish-, Norwegian-, and German-American communities; by 1910, the blocks around the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten were home to immigrant families from Puerto Rico,

Cuba, Spain, Syria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, with a significant number at work on the waterfront.⁸ For a number of decades from the 1930s on, investment in the area was curbed by redlining policies, a form of discrimination in which banks, insurance companies, and other agencies refuse or limit loans, mortgages, insurance, and other services within specific areas—often ones with significant African American or immigrant populations, or which are industrial in character.⁹

Carroll Gardens was considered part of South Brooklyn—in particular, of Red Hook—until the Gowanus and Brooklyn-Queens Expressways cut it off from the waterfront after World War II. In the 1960s, young professionals drawn by Carroll Gardens' shops and restaurants, quiet historic streets, and proximity to Manhattan, began relocating there from other areas of the city.¹⁰ The neighborhood traces its name, in part, to Carroll Park, itself named after the early American patriot Charles Carroll of Maryland as a tribute to the Maryland soldiers of the Battle of Long Island and their sacrifices in defending the "Old Stone House" of Gowanus. Carroll was the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence, and when his name was adopted for the neighborhood in the 1960s, the local population was predominantly Italian American and Roman Catholic. In 1964, the Carroll Gardens Association was founded to advocate for the neighborhood's preservation and revitalization. From that point on, residents began to refer to the area as Carroll Gardens to distinguish it from other areas of South Brooklyn by evoking its verdant front gardens and nucleus at Carroll Park. In 1973, two blocks of row houses with characteristic deep front gardens between Smith and Hoyt Streets east of Carroll Park were designated the Carroll Gardens Historic District.

Hans S. Christian (1824-1894)¹¹ and Brooklyn's "Little Norway"

Hans S. Christian was born December 4, 1824 in Farsund, Norway, and came to the United States as a sailor in the 1840s.¹² When he was eighteen, his work brought him to New York Harbor where, sometime before 1850, he went to work as a carman in the pharmaceutical trade.¹³ Christian converted to the Methodist Episcopal Church on the *Bethel Ship*, a church-boat in the Red Hook harbor that ministered primarily to Scandinavian seamen under the direction of the eminent Swedish Methodist pastor Olof Gustaf Hedström.¹⁴

Between 1801 and 1855, Norway's population grew from 883,603 to 1,490,047, a 59% increase which, for much of that time, was the highest growth in Europe. An informal primogeniture system meant that, in the face of such a dramatic rise in population, Norwegian men without the prospect of inheritance either chose to migrate or accept a lower social status, fewer opportunities, and a lack of land to own or work.¹⁵ These conditions set in motion an internal migration from inland communities to the coast, where farmers without plots to inherit became fishermen, shipbuilders, merchants, and sailors. The repeal of the British Navigation Acts of 1651 in 1849 sparked a shipping boom that drew in these coastal seafarers and set Norway on course to become a major transport economy;¹⁶ by 1880, Norway was home to the third-largest commercial fleet in the world.¹⁷ At the same time, Norway was more vulnerable to international economic fluctuations than the rest of Europe because of its narrow domestic market and dependence on other nations' exports for its shipment and transportation industries. A depression from about 1875 to the 1890s, the abrupt deflation of the Norwegian krone, and the transition from sailboats to steamships sent Norway into a maritime and economic crisis in the last quarter of the 19th century. As a result, Norwegian sailors began to

desert their ships in international harbors to search for greater economic opportunities abroad.¹⁸

While Hans S. Christian's emigration from the Norwegian coast was typical of Nordic migration patterns at the time, his immigration to New York City in the 1840s was highly atypical. At that time, Norwegian immigrants in search of religious freedom typically continued inland, upstate, or to the Midwest from New York harbor via the Erie Canal and Great Lakes;¹⁹ in the 1850s and 1860s, most Norwegian emigrants did not come through New York but went from Liverpool to Quebec aboard Norwegian lumber ships. Norwegian immigrants did not settle in New York City in significant numbers until the late 1860s, when Norwegian sailors began to desert their ships in the face of economic hardship at home. Even in 1865, the New York state census identified fewer than two hundred Norwegian residents of Brooklyn and Manhattan, one of whom was Hans Christian, then a boarder in Brooklyn after a time in Lower Manhattan.²⁰ It is unknown whether Christian's settlement in New York was due to satisfaction of his employment contract or desertion of his ship;²¹ he was nonetheless one of few permanent Norwegian settlers in New York City at the time of his arrival.

The establishment of Norwegian enclaves drew carpenters, shipbuilders, sailmakers, and dockworkers from coastal Norway to the eastern shore of Lower Manhattan from about 1850-1890. The first wave of mass Norwegian immigration to New York, from 1866 to 1873, was attributable to both conditions in Norway and the lure of American opportunities, including a post-Civil War economic boom and industrial expansion; improvements in transit; inexpensive, developable lots; and advances in commerce and communication like the advent of emigration agents and prepaid tickets from immigrant relatives.²² With reliable ferries and in advance of the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883, the Norwegian population began to migrate

across the East River and to settle near the docks in South Brooklyn and Greenpoint. Access to these areas from Manhattan came via the Hamilton Avenue Ferry, which began operation in 1846; Hamilton Avenue became the axis of the nascent Norwegian settlement with warehouses, businesses, boarding houses, and other establishments for transient mariners. From the early 1860s to the mid-1880s, the Norwegian settlement in Brooklyn bore the characteristics of a dockside “sailor town” rather than a permanent residential enclave.²³ All but one of its institutions were transplants with staff, an organizational model, and financial support imported from Norway; most were organizations meant to improve the morals, health, and living conditions of transient seamen. Once the Norwegian maritime crisis brought an immigrant population significant enough to produce a permanent settlement, churches, benevolent societies, and charitable institutions were built to serve a more stable Norwegian population. Among these were the Norwegian Seamen’s Church (Den Norske Sjømandsmission), at 111 William Street (now Pioneer Street) from 1878-1928;²⁴ the Bethelship Norwegian Methodist Episcopal Church, in various locations from 1879 to the present; the Norwegian Deaconess Home and Hospital on Fourth Avenue from 1883-1956; and the Scandinavian Sailors’ Temperance Home (Norwegian Sailors’ Home) at 440 Clinton Street (a designated New York City Landmark) from 1887 to c.1942.²⁵

As a recent immigrant, Hans S. Christian “worked hard and earned little”²⁶ for some time in Manhattan but went on to become “one of South Brooklyn’s most influential citizens.”²⁷ Sometime before 1850, he wed Elmira Christian (née Stuart); their son, Harry L., was born in 1850. Between 1850 and 1860, like other Norwegian and Norwegian-American families in Lower Manhattan, the Christians moved across the East River to South Brooklyn.²⁸ In 1863, Hans bought out the business of Hiram Travis, a construction materials salesman with

a warehouse at the intersection of Degraw Street and Hamilton Avenue.²⁹ In 1870, he co-founded Christian & Clark, a lime and brick supplier near the Gowanus Canal at 2nd Street.³⁰ At the time, a significant share of construction in Gowanus was of ships and boat basins, and Christian’s experience as a sailor might have been advantageous to his work.³¹ As a prominent Brooklynite, Christian was a member of the Nassau Lodge No. 536, Free and Accepted Masons of Brooklyn, and Clinton Commandery No. 14, Knights Templar.³² He ran for (and lost) Brooklyn’s Sixth Ward aldermanship in 1870 on his reputation as “an honest and self-made man, who has risen to the position he now holds in society by his own manly endeavors. . . . He is honest, capable, and true; a man of sterling integrity; of uncompromising honor; and powerful mental caliber.”³³

In 1878, Hans S. Christian was one of 82 incorporators of the Brooklyn Church Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the church assistance organization to which his widow Elmira Christian later deeded the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten and adjacent Deaconess Home at 238 President Street.³⁴ Christian, Elmira, and their son were residents of 251 President Street and were active, longtime members of the First Place Methodist Episcopal Church, where Hans was president of the Board of Trustees and Sunday school superintendent.³⁵ Both Hans and Elmira Christian were charter members of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Association (later Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society), an organization that advocated for and established free kindergartens in Brooklyn, in 1891.³⁶ After Hans’s sudden death on his walk home from church services in December 1894, Elmira sought to create a memorial to honor his charitable works and commitment to childhood education, and founded the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten as a monument to him.³⁷

Hans Christian’s conversion to Methodism and support of Methodist causes rather than

specifically Norwegian, Scandinavian, or immigrant ones gave some Norwegians the impression that he was an unsympathetic miser; as a result, his obituary in the Norwegian-language Brooklyn newspaper *Nordisk Tidende* (*The Nordic Times*) includes an assortment of local grievances against him, noting, “Oddly enough, he has never given a thought to countrymen in need here, or even once offered one cent to fund drives or Scandinavian charitable institutions.”³⁸ Other publications note that he “gave liberally to all philanthropic work”³⁹ and “was remarkable in his generosity.”⁴⁰ It is possible that the creation of a memorial to Hans Christian with a mission of immigrant service was meant to counter his unsympathetic reputation in immigrant circles.⁴¹

By 1890, the Norwegian enclave in the Red Hook-Gowanus area—known as Brooklyn’s “Little Norway”—was the largest Norwegian settlement in the New York metropolitan area and the sixth largest in the United States. Norwegian presence in the area began to decline c.1910 as the immigrant population became more prosperous and sought to distance itself from the sordid reputation of Hamilton Avenue and the pervasive odor of the Gowanus Canal. The extension of new docks and warehouses to 59th Street and the completion of the Fourth Avenue Subway in 1915 set the relocation of this Scandinavian enclave to Bay Ridge and Sunset Park in motion.⁴² Through the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten, the section of South Brooklyn known as Carroll Gardens retains a connection to its Scandinavian immigrant past in the kindergarten’s namesake, “an honest and self-made man” with a commitment to service.

Elmira Christian (1832-1899)

Although the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten bears her husband’s name, it was Elmira Christian who gave a material form to the kindergarten concept in her commission of this purpose-built structure. Because of the lack of

representative coverage of women’s accomplishments, however, less is known about Elmira Christian than about her husband, and several of her obituaries pivot to discussion of his prominence and works rather than her own.

Elmira Christian was born Elmira Stuart in New York on November 4, 1832, and was the daughter of Scottish immigrants.⁴³ She married Hans S. Christian, a widower, before 1850, when Hans was a carman and recent immigrant. Consistent with expectations of the time, Elmira Christian was a housewife and mother. As a member of the Brooklyn Woman’s Club, Elmira Christian was instrumental in establishing “the first free kindergarten in Brooklyn” at the Warren Street Methodist Church in 1884, when the concept of kindergarten was somewhat new to Brooklyn;⁴⁴ the Warren Street kindergarten was later adopted by Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society, of which the Christians were charter members and to which Elmira later gave use of the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten.⁴⁵

In press about the Hans S. Christian Memorial kindergarten, Elmira Christian spoke about her preoccupation with children’s welfare and her engagement with contemporaneous discourse on the subject of kindergartens:

I was for a number of years interested in church work, and often put upon committees to visit the poor in our parish. I found a great deal of poverty and wretchedness and my heart went out to the little children in the homes of the destitute, seeing that they had so little sunshine in their lives, and I felt anxious to better their condition and do what I could for them. I came across an article in one of the daily papers telling of Froebel’s system of teaching, and I was very much impressed ... A few years later I attended a lecture where a member of the Chicago Board of Education spoke on the

kindergarten work and the good it had done in that city. ... I then and there made up my mind that at some future day I would do something for it. ... Ever since the death of my husband I have thought what I could do in honor of his memory, and I came to the conclusion that the grandest monument would be a kindergarten, as it would be productive and reproductive of good in laying the foundation of the children's education physically, mentally, and spiritually.⁴⁶

By 1896, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* lamented: "It is unfortunately true that Brooklyn is even now far behind nearly all other cities in the introduction of kindergarten training. The notion has not yet become popular and, consequently, fashionable."⁴⁷ Under that circumstance, Elmira Christian made substantial contributions to education in Brooklyn. Her involvement in the first free kindergarten in Brooklyn brought a commitment to free kindergarten education to the soon-to-be borough. Her dedication of the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten was a significant contribution to free education in Brooklyn and emblematic of the recognition among Brooklyn education reformers of the importance of early childhood education.

Elmira Christian commissioned the construction of the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten and established the Brooklyn Deaconess Home of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the adjacent building at 238 President Street in 1897.⁴⁸ She deeded both buildings to the Brooklyn Church Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In articles about this donation, the estimation of Elmira Christian as a person of fine taste and insight emerges. These include a description of 238 President Street as "a commodious house, greatly improved,"⁴⁹ and of the kindergarten as "finished in excellent taste and ... provided with all the modern

improvements."⁵⁰ Together, the structures were described as "two handsome buildings, built at her own expense and according to her own ideas."⁵¹ Even in Elmira Christian's lifetime, there was acknowledgment that her tribute to Hans in founding these institutions was a testament to her own benevolence: "All who partake of this bounty will have reason to bless the memory of her who made it possible, as well as the name of Hans S. Christian, which she has so beautifully and blessedly honored and preserved."⁵²

Elmira Christian became ill at about the time of the kindergarten's construction and was unable to attend its inaugural events. Her death on March 28, 1899, after two years of illness, left Brooklyn Methodism without "one of the most charitable women in its membership."⁵³ At the time of her death, Elmira Christian was well known for her commitment to charitable causes and as an advocate for children's education. To commemorate her, the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society made a statement in admiration of her character, works, and activism:

By the death of Mrs. H. S. Christian, the General Committee lost one of its most valued members, and the free kindergartens one of their most generous and sincere friends. ... The kindergarten founded to perpetuate the name and memory of her husband is no less a monument to Mrs. Christian's intelligent sympathy and simple devotion to duty. ... by her sudden death the Society has suffered the irreparable loss of a woman of unassuming character, nobility of life, and self-sacrificing devotion to duty, whose memory and example will be an inspiration to us in our future labors for the children.⁵⁴

Development of Kindergartens and Role of Female Reformers

The term “kindergarten” was coined by German philosopher, educator, and inventor of the kindergarten system Friedrich Froebel. In 1837, Froebel and his associates founded the *Pflege-, Spiel- und Beschäftigungsanstalt* (Care, Play, and Activity Institute) at Bad Blankenburg to test and implement their hypotheses about education;⁵⁵ in 1840, Froebel began to call the institute “Kinder-garten” out of a belief that children, like flowers, thrive with careful cultivation.⁵⁶ Unlike earlier education modes reliant on strict discipline and treatment of children as disobedient proto-adults, Froebel’s kindergarten system was holistic, child-centric, and built upon children’s innate inclination towards play. To Froebel, play was “never trivial” but rather “serious and deeply significant” and “the highest level of child development”;⁵⁷ as a result, his mode of instruction was “a form of directed entertainment in which the children are unconsciously developed physically, mentally, morally.”⁵⁸ To correspond with what he saw as six stages of development between birth and age six, Froebel devised a sequence of materials, exercises, and activities—known as “gifts” and “occupations”—to teach cognitive, motor, and communication skills as well as moral tales.⁵⁹ Within Froebel’s system, complex ideas became accessible to children through imagination and intuition rather than stern instruction. The Froebel gifts are known to have been formative for architects like Frank Lloyd Wright and for generations of schoolchildren; an image shows students of the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten at work with the iconic wooden spheres, cubes, and cylinders that were the second gift in Froebel’s sequence.⁶⁰ Later child-centric approaches to education, like the Montessori Method, show the influence of Froebel’s methodologies.⁶¹

Although built on the successive philosophies of male educators and authors, the

kindergarten concept became a focus of female education reformers through the direct involvement of Friedrich Froebel and the influence of other Romantic reform movements. Participation in various Age of Reform movements—in particular, abolition, temperance, and education reform—gave women a voice in the public arena and drew attention to inequalities between free white males and enslaved, persecuted, and marginalized Americans. Like his mentor, educator Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi, Froebel saw childhood education as an extension of mothering and began to train female educators in his methods.⁶² Popularization of the kindergarten concept reflects the work of progressive female reformers who were Froebel’s disciples and founded the first kindergartens in the United States. His student Caroline Louisa Frankenberg ran “A School for the Active Instincts of Childhood and Youth” in a Columbus, Ohio home from 1836-1840 and 1858-1862.⁶³ Another student, Margarethe Meyer Schurz, ran a German-language kindergarten for her daughter and daughter’s playmates in her home Watertown, Wisconsin from 1856-1858. After a transformative encounter with Margarethe Meyer Schurz and her daughter, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody—sister-in-law to Horace Mann—opened the first English-language kindergarten in the United States in Boston in 1860. Kindergartens after Froebel’s methods were in operation in New York in 1866, in St. Louis in 1873, Chicago in 1874, and San Francisco in 1878.⁶⁴ Significant attention was brought to the kindergarten concept at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, where private, charitable, and municipal kindergartens gave presentations in the Women’s Building while demonstration kindergartens served as daycare facilities in the adjacent Children’s Building.⁶⁵ The diffusion of the kindergarten concept gave female educators opportunities to work outside the home, a measure of independence, and a broader sphere of influence.⁶⁶ In the midst of the Second Industrial Revolution

(c.1870-1914), with more mothers and children—often immigrants—at work in factories, kindergarten came to be seen as a social and moral imperative to ensure that children learn basic skills, to enable immigrant children to learn English, and to instill in them the values of citizenship.

Memorial Kindergartens and Early Kindergartens in New York City

Before the introduction of the first free public kindergarten in Manhattan in March 1893, private kindergarten “departments” in houses and other institutions brought Froebel’s methods to New York City.⁶⁷ Kindergarten advocate and German immigrant Adolph Douai was known to have run a children’s school in a home from 1866-71; in operation until 1890, this “German-American day and boarding school with kindergarten” at 640 Seventh Avenue and 1509 Broadway (both demolished) became known as the Douai Institute under the direction of his sister, Eleanor Schmidt Douai.⁶⁸ The 1867-68 Poppenhusen Institute (a New York City Landmark) in College Point, Queens, became home to the first free kindergarten in the United States in 1870. The structure was built to house a number of functions “for improving the moral and social condition of the working classes of College point, and more especially the workmen of the large India-rubber manufactory at that place”; among these functions were “a free library, reading-room, smoking-room, and chess-room,”⁶⁹ as well as spaces for lectures and skills workshops. German-American ethics professor Felix Adler founded the New York Society for Ethical Culture in 1876 to offer moral direction without reliance on religious doctrine or mysticism; in 1878, the Society began to operate a kindergarten as a social welfare service in a low-income immigrant area from a concert space and lecture hall at 344 West 44th Street (demolished). At the time, the concept of kindergarten was unfamiliar enough that the Ethical Culture Society kindergarten

teachers went door-to-door to convince parents to enroll their children.⁷⁰ To Adler, kindergarten had the “advantage of taking little children from the streets where they would otherwise be exposed to bad companionship and pernicious influences of every kind.”⁷¹ Further downtown, All Souls’ Protestant Episcopal Church (destroyed by fire, 1931) at Fourth Avenue and 20th Street became home to the first church kindergarten in Manhattan in 1878.⁷² From 1895-1901, activist and challenger to streetcar segregation Elizabeth Jennings Graham ran the first kindergarten for black children in New York City from her home at 247 West 41st Street.⁷³

As in Manhattan, the earliest kindergartens in Brooklyn were run from extant, adaptable spaces. A number of kindergarten departments in Brooklyn houses and churches predated the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten and underscore its uniqueness as the first custom, purpose-built kindergarten structure in the borough. Brooklyn’s first for-cost private kindergarten, the Froebel Kindergarten, was founded in 1876 after two Brooklynites became aware of the kindergarten system at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia and familiarized a mothers’ association with the concept.⁷⁴ Twelve mothers pooled funds to hire a kindergarten teacher to educate children in two members’ homes, and the kindergarten became known as the Froebel Academy on its incorporation in 1883. The Froebel Society, its parent-teachers’ association, began in 1884.⁷⁵ The Astral Apartments (a designated New York City Landmark), which were built in Greenpoint from 1885-1886 to house American oil tycoon Charles Pratt’s employees, introduced a free kindergarten in 1894.⁷⁶ A kindergarten department began at Pratt Institute in 1892 with three children in attendance, after the institute had operated a small kindergarten on behalf of the Adelphi Academy on Vanderbilt Avenue from 1889-1892. A purpose-built Pratt Institute kindergarten (demolished) was built at Willoughby

Avenue and Ryerson Street in 1903 with interior features “of Lilliputian height and size” to suit children, and exterior gardens in accordance with Froebel’s vision of rural kindergartens in which children were able to learn from nature.⁷⁷

Among earlier kindergartens held in adapted rooms of Brooklyn homes were Mrs. E. Simonson’s German, English, and French School and Kindergarten (1879-1887) at 254 Warren Street and Miss Heartt’s School (1883-1885) at 333 Adelphi Street (in the Fort Greene Historic District); the latter operated “an attractive Kindergarten department after Froebel’s method” from a two-and-a-half story, 25’ wide frame house.⁷⁸ The Ministers’ (later Prince Street) Kindergarten ran the first Brooklyn kindergarten for African-American students in the Siloam Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn between 1896 and 1907 and gave black educators—who were forbidden to teach white students—unique career opportunities as teachers and administrators.⁷⁹ At the time of construction of the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten in 1897, the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society ran fifteen other private kindergartens throughout Brooklyn, all of which were held in adapted religious, residential, or institutional spaces; among these were the Ministers’ Kindergarten and the Woman’s Club Kindergarten at the Warren Street Methodist Episcopal Church, which Elmira Christian was instrumental in founding.

The concept of commemorative kindergartens appears to have originated with the Leland Stanford, Jr. Memorial Kindergarten, which was thought to be “the first memorial kindergarten in the world” on its establishment in San Francisco in 1884.⁸⁰ In the next decade, fourteen other memorial kindergartens were formed under the direction of the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association, an organization with “seventy per cent of the leading ladies of San Francisco” as its members and a known inspiration for the women of the Brooklyn Free

Kindergarten Society.⁸¹ Like the San Francisco memorial kindergartens, which were run from extant residences and estates, the earliest memorial kindergartens established in Brooklyn in the 1890s operated from adapted spaces in homes, churches, and institutions.⁸²

The constellation of kindergarten departments across Brooklyn brought wider awareness of the kindergarten system and was essential to its acceptance and eventual adoption by the Board of Education. In April 1896, a \$12,000 appropriation for the establishment and maintenance of free kindergartens was introduced to the Brooklyn Board of Education budget; by October 1897, thirteen public kindergarten departments were in operation in Brooklyn.⁸³ In their earliest iteration, public kindergartens were subject to limitations like narrow age restrictions due to resource constraints, which advocates saw as “a provision which seems to be inevitable from the crowded condition of the present primary schools, but which can hardly be permanently satisfactory to the friends of this movement.”⁸⁴ In 1898, when the borough of Brooklyn was consolidated into Greater New York City, kindergarten departments for black students were introduced at Public School 67 and Public School 69 (former Colored School No. 3, a New York City landmark).⁸⁵ By the time of the consolidation, there were seventeen public school kindergarten departments and sixteen private Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society kindergartens;⁸⁶ of these, the Hans S. Christian Memorial was the only purpose-built structure, built as it was on the cusp of the Board of Education’s introduction of kindergarten departments to its extant facilities. Still, the vastness of the new borough and distance between its settlements meant that the nearest public kindergarten to the Hans S. Christian Memorial was at Second Street near Sixth Avenue, east of the Gowanus Canal, and several articles discuss the urgent need of kindergarten in the area prior to the Christian Memorial’s establishment.⁸⁷

The Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten

In September 1896, Elmira Christian founded an interim Hans S. Christian Memorial kindergarten department in the basement of the Christians' longtime place of worship, the First Place Methodist Episcopal Church: "So urgent was the need for a good kindergarten in this district that the church decided to begin even in the present rather inconvenient quarters."⁸⁸ This iteration of the Hans S. Christian Memorial became the twelfth kindergarten department under the direction of the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Association.

After an initial plan to demolish a portion of the First Place Methodist Episcopal Church to construct a kindergarten annex, Christian and her agent sought a separate lot with at least a 25' frontage on which to dedicate a structure "satisfactory as a memorial."⁸⁹ When the Currie Mansion and its site at 238 President Street—diagonally across from the Christians' home—became available in January 1897,⁹⁰ Christian bought the 75'x100' lot with its 38-foot-wide mansion and 37-foot-wide unbuilt garden frontage.⁹¹ For a short time in 1897, the Hans S. Christian Memorial relocated to the first floor of 238 President Street;⁹² once Elmira Christian became aware that "accommodations for the deaconesses were thought to be insufficient,"⁹³ she commissioned a kindergarten building on the garden adjacent to the mansion, and dedicated 238 President Street for full use as the Deaconess Home of the Methodist Episcopal Church.⁹⁴ Her endowment of \$10,000 to the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society, which was in addition to her commitment of \$10,000 to cover the construction cost of the school building, was "the first large endowment which the society has received. No more important contribution to education or to any other purpose in our city has been ever made, because it gives permanent strength to this movement at a time when such

encouragement is of the greatest value. These endowments for kindergartens have been frequently made in other cities, but never before in ours."⁹⁵

Designed by architects Hough & Duell, the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten was the first purpose-built kindergarten in Brooklyn. Several articles emphasize its uniqueness in Brooklyn and elsewhere: "It is the only building of the kind in Brooklyn, so far as known, and one of the very few in existence in any city" and "so far as known, the only one expressly and solely for the use of a kindergarten" wrote the Brooklyn Daily Eagle in 1897 and 1901.⁹⁶ The kindergarten's dedication on February 5, 1898 was written about as "an occasion of unique interest, for, so far as known, no other building intended expressly and solely for the use of a kindergarten exists elsewhere in the metropolitan district. ... The building has amply fulfilled the expectations that were entertained regarding it, and stands a beautiful and useful memorial of a living interest in the welfare of the children of the district."⁹⁷

Against its red brick and brownstone residential context, the elegant Beaux-Arts design of the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten drew attention to its purpose and importance. Original state-of-the-art features underscored the degree to which Elmira Christian's vision of a custom-designed, purpose-built, "model kindergarten" was realized. Among these features were a reception room near the entrance; a "large, airy, sunny classroom" with abundant natural light from "a large bay window, the upper part of which is stained glass"; a visitors' gallery from which observers were able to see the kindergarten experiment in action and mothers were able to share in activities; and basement sculpture rooms in accordance with the final and most complex of Froebel's "occupations."⁹⁸ Outside, a rear garden gave children an area in which to learn from nature—consistent with Froebel's vision of rural kindergartens and despite the challenges of an urban

site. The harmoniousness between its function, innovative features, and fine Beaux-Arts exterior made the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten a notable work of design: “This building is said to be one of the most perfect of its kind in the United States.”⁹⁹ A number of articles written at the time of construction hail the Hans S. Christian Memorial as “the model kindergarten”¹⁰⁰ and acknowledge its significance as an archetype: “The [Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society] is to be congratulated on possessing a model building for kindergarten purposes and all who are interested in this form of education should take pains to visit it.”¹⁰¹

Even with purpose-built features, the large, sunlit spaces of the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten proved to be adaptable for other uses that benefitted the community. By 1901, the structure was used by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Resurrection for services outside of kindergarten hours, as the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* wrote: “The building is in every way well adapted for the holding of church services, the exterior especially having a churchly appearance.”¹⁰² On Saturdays, needlework courses were taught in the Christian Memorial under the direction of Pratt Institute students.¹⁰³

Architects Hough & Deuell¹⁰⁴

Prior to April 1897, initial plans for the kindergarten were drawn by Henry Hough, the architect of a number of warehouses on the Atlantic Docks and industrial academies for Brooklyn banker Henry W. Maxwell.¹⁰⁵ Under unknown circumstances, the commission went from Henry Hough—then ill at age 74 and a retiree for two decades¹⁰⁶—to the firm of his only son, William C. Hough.

William C. Hough and Edgar Deuell, Jr., entered into partnership in 1897, at about the time that they were given the commission for the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten. Hough, a charter member of the Brooklyn Chapter of American Institute of Architects, is known for his institutional

work in Brooklyn. He was an architect in Manhattan from at least 1886, with offices at 115 Broadway and 18 Cortlandt Street. In 1890, at 280 Broadway, he went into partnership with Halstead Parker Fowler (1859-1911) as Fowler & Hough. The firm of Fowler & Hough was active from 1890-1897 and was responsible for the design of the Renaissance Revival Throop Avenue Presbyterian Church (1889-1891, destroyed by fire 1910), the Brooklyn Homeopathic Hospital at 109 Cumberland Street (1890, demolished 1910),¹⁰⁷ the 23rd Regiment Armory at 1322 Bedford Avenue (1891-95, a designated New York City Landmark), the Bushwick Avenue Congregational Church and Sunday School at 1170 Bushwick Avenue (1895), and other structures in Brooklyn. William C. Hough designed the French Renaissance Revival Dudley Memorial Building at 110 Amity Street (1902, in the Cobble Hill Historic District) for Henry W. Maxwell as a home for student nurses at Long Island College Hospital.¹⁰⁸

In 1897-1898, while the Hans S. Christian Memorial was under construction, Hough & Deuell designed the (Former) Jamaica Savings Bank at 161-02 Jamaica Avenue (a designated New York City Landmark) in Queens. After a short partnership of two or three years, the firm of Hough & Deuell dissolved. William C. Hough maintained an independent practice in Manhattan through 1934. Edgar Deuell, Jr., was in partnership with Theodore Mason Smith as Deuell & Smith for a time and is known to have been in practice as late as 1931.¹⁰⁹

Architectural Influences

While a source from the time of construction notes that “the architectural style of the building is the French renaissance of the Louis XV period,”¹¹⁰ this and other revivalist movements have since come under the umbrella term of Beaux-Arts architecture. In the United States, the term Beaux Arts came to refer to the works of American architects who were alumni of the École des Beaux-Arts and to elaborate

works built between c.1890-1920 that drew inspiration from historic and eclectic paradigms on monumental scales. Though the architects Hough & Deuell are not known to have been students of the École des Beaux-Arts, their work shows the influence of its curriculum built on the interpretation of French and Italian Classicism.

French architecture in the reign of Louis XV (1715-1774) began as an outgrowth of the French classicism in fashion under his predecessors Louis XIII (1610–43) and Louis XIV (1643–1715) but underwent an evolution from exuberant Rococo to more sober Neo-classical forms with the discoveries of Roman antiquities at Herculaneum and Pompeii in 1738 and 1748. Facades became more austere even as interiors became more elaborate. Typical Louis XV (Louis Quinze) features include: a characteristic emphasis on centers through projection or ornamentation; emphasis on corners through quoins; facades, often limestone or brick, with less tonal contrast and movement than their Baroque predecessors; pediments, columns, or rustication to accentuate entrances; belt courses to mark stories; delicate, curvilinear wrought iron features like balconies and entrance gates; and classical pediments or balustrades on the roofline. Versions of these features are visible on the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten and recall Louis XV (Louis Quinze) antecedents like the Petit Trianon (1762-1768), a château of modest scale at Versailles that was the inspiration for a number of Beaux-Arts mansions and halls throughout the United States. Built as a retreat for Louis XV’s mistress, Madame de Pompadour, the Petit Trianon became an emblem of ambition and elegance and an exemplar of the transition from the riotous Rococo to the chaste Neo-classical style.

For its practitioners in the United States, Beaux-Arts architecture became a symbol of stability in uncertain times, an appropriate emblem of American dominance through its references to

ancient empires and Classical societies, and a paradigm for grand civic structures.¹¹¹ The Beaux-Arts design of the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten set it apart from the red brick and brownstone residences of Carroll Gardens and drew attention to its civic purpose as a bastion of free early childhood education.

Kindergarten Closure and Subsequent Educational Uses

Through Elmira’s endowment, the Hans S. Christian Memorial was given to the Brooklyn Church Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for use by the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society. The terms of the agreement were that the Brooklyn Church Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church “maintain, heat, and clean” the structure and that the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society “have the use thereof until the system of kindergarten teaching should generally be adopted as a part of the public school system of the city of Brooklyn, the installation of kindergarten departments in over 75 per cent of the elementary schools of the borough of Brooklyn.”¹¹² In December 1910, the Brooklyn Church Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church sought to reclaim the kindergarten from the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society out of a belief that the terms of the agreement had been met; in 1914, its lawsuit against the Kindergarten Society over the latter’s use of the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten was brought to the Kings County Supreme Court. Because the basis of the case was whether the kindergarten system had been “generally adopted and used” within the public school system of Brooklyn, the judgement provides a snapshot of the rapid adoption of the kindergarten system in Brooklyn between the 1897 establishment of the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten and 1910:

In December, 1897, there were in the then city of Brooklyn 120 elementary schools in

the public school system, in 14 of which were provisions for kindergarten teaching, with an attendance of 574 children; while in December 1910, there were 166 elementary schools in the borough of Brooklyn, in 124 of which was the kindergarten system taught, with an attendance of 12,473 children; and it was also shown on the trial that all school buildings erected in Brooklyn since 1910 have, by direction of the board, facilities for kindergarten instruction.¹¹³

For its part, the Church Society made its frustration with the use arrangement clear: “The Deaconess Home and Kindergarten on President Street have had to depend largely upon us, and thousands of dollars have gone to keep this property in repair and in the way of taxes and insurance.”¹¹⁴ After the lawsuit, the Church Society retook possession of the structure and the kindergarten function relocated to Christ Church at Clinton and Harrison Streets (now Kane Street, in the Cobble Hill Historic District) from September 1915 through 1921.¹¹⁵ In 1921-22, the kindergarten underwent another relocation to the Little Italy Neighborhood House, a settlement house at 146 Union Street (demolished), to serve an Italian immigrant enclave with the support of the Adelphi Academy:

The HANS S. CHRISTIAN MEMORIAL KINDERGARTEN was moved in 1921-22 to the Little Italy Settlement House. A large public school being opened nearby made it unnecessary to continue the kindergarten in Christ Church where it had been located for some time. None of our kindergartens meets a greater need than this one. The children come from poor homes, where there is little in the way of cleanliness and right living condition—and no training in habit formation.¹¹⁶

Under the direction of the adjacent Deaconess Home of the Methodist Episcopal Church at 238 President Street, an industrial school ran seventeen courses in “basketry, shirt-waist making, calisthenics, plain sewing, card stitching, and fancy work” in the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten from 1908 to 1938. The industrial school sought to educate the area’s immigrant population in religious studies and technical skills as a bulwark against outside influences: “Too much praise cannot be said regarding the industrial school next door to the home. With its classes for young and old, in religious and missionary education, sewing, homemaking, clubs, bible school, and trips during the summer for mothers and children who otherwise might not get away from the heat, it has been of splendid influence in this most congested community.”¹¹⁷ In 1938, the Brooklyn Deaconess Home and Industrial School left these adjacent structures for a single address at 902 President Street (in the Park Slope Historic District).¹¹⁸

**Alberto Baez (1888-2007),
Thalia Baez (1884-1951), and the
First Spanish Methodist Church**

In c.1949, the Reverend Alberto Baez and his wife Thalia began to use the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten for services of the First Spanish Methodist Church. Alberto and Thalia Baez were champions of Hispanic heritage, pioneers of Spanish Methodism, and the founders of New York City’s oldest Spanish-language Methodist church—the forebear of dozens of other Spanish Methodist churches throughout the Metropolitan area. Through their son Albert Vinicio Baez (1912-2007), a prominent physicist, Alberto and Thalia Baez were the grandparents of activists and folk musicians Joan Baez (1941-) and Mimi Fariña (1945-2001).¹¹⁹

Born on February 27, 1888, in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, Alberto Baez came in contact with Methodism through the *Instituto Metodista Mexicano*

while he was a student in Puebla. After his studies at the institute to become a teacher and Methodist minister, he and his wife, Thalia—the daughter of institute President Dr. Pedro F. Valderrama—became teachers at the Methodist Institute of Querétaro, Mexico and co-founders of a Methodist church in Alice, Texas in 1915.¹²⁰ Alberto and Thalia’s dedication to Methodism made them outcasts among the predominantly Catholic Mexican immigrant population of Alice; in 1917, the Baezes left Texas and, in their son’s words:

... went to Brooklyn on the free passes supplied by my *tio*, Fernando Carrera. ... Brooklyn ... was completely alien for my father. It turns out that an American woman heard about my parents. She started inviting Spanish-speaking people to her house on Sundays and then invited my father to act as minister. After a while, my father went to the local Methodist church in Brooklyn ... and said, ‘Here’s a group of Spanish-speaking people, they need a place to worship, would you let us use your church on Sunday afternoons?’ In less than a year, the Spanish congregation exceeded the American congregation, and that began a 40-year career for my father in Brooklyn.¹²¹

Alberto and Thalia began their time in Brooklyn as volunteers at the Sands Street Church (demolished in 1930), where Alberto led Spanish-language services on Sundays. In 1920, the congregation was organized as the First Spanish Methodist Church and Alberto was made its pastor, a position he held until his retirement in 1961.¹²² With its services in the Sands Street Church at the intersection of Clark and Henry Streets, the congregation drew from Brooklyn’s largest Hispanic enclave,¹²³ in 1925, about half of the 80,000 Hispanic inhabitants of New York City were thought live in

Brooklyn, most in an area on the waterfront between Gold Street, Union Street, and Front Street.¹²⁴ The First Spanish Methodist Church was the first Spanish-language Protestant church in Brooklyn. By 1928, it had grown from a small number of worshipers to “a membership of 500 drawn from the colony of 3,000 Spanish-speaking people.”¹²⁵

Thalia Baez was an active and essential figure in the recognition and celebration of Hispanic heritage in this section of Brooklyn. In her work for the Young Women’s Christian Association’s International Institute, an immigrant outreach organization, she was the director of, and participant in, showcases of Latin American music and culture for broader audiences; among these were a dramatization of Latin American folk music, a performance by the Hispanic Orchestra—in which Thalia played the *salterio*—and Mexican dances that, the *Eagle* wrote, brought “the audience out of Brooklyn and into more southern climes,” as well as numerous children’s productions.¹²⁶

The First Spanish Methodist Church flourished under the direction of Alberto and Thalia Baez, who were known to their congregants as “Father B.” and “Mother B.” Alberto Baez performed hundreds of baptisms between 1922 and 1930, a time in which “almost all Latin American countries were represented” in his church.¹²⁷ The congregation outgrew its facilities at the Sands Street Church and, in 1928, began to use 161 Clinton Street (1849, within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District) as its new Spanish Mission House for events and activities.¹²⁸

By the 1930s, the First Spanish Methodist Church had found a new home at the Warren Street Methodist Church (demolished). From 1939 to 1961, the Baezes were residents of 238 President Street and began to use the adjacent Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten for services of their First Spanish Methodist Church in 1949.¹²⁹ The Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten was then used as

the church with a sanctuary, chancel, and pastor's room on the first floor, the upper sanctuary on the second floor, and special activities in the basement. A memorial service for Thalia Baez was held in the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten in 1951; in the words of Alberto's successor, the Reverend Ernesto Vasseur, "The death of Mrs. Baez ... was a great blow for Alberto and for First Spanish. ... Limited by his solitude, his age, and his declining health, he still carried on faithfully and was able to maintain the life of the congregation."¹³⁰ The First Spanish Methodist Church is thought to have used the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten for services until about 1966, when the congregation merged with that of the Immanuel Methodist Church—the descendent of the *Bethelship* on which Hans S. Christian had become a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the 1840s.¹³¹

The Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten has been a private residence since 1974.¹³²

Conclusion

The Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten represents significant cultural and architectural contributions to Carroll Gardens' history. It was the first purpose-built free kindergarten in Brooklyn. It became known as an exemplary "model kindergarten" due to the cohesion between its innovative features, noble exterior, and civic function. An unusual example of Beaux Arts architecture in Carroll Gardens, it is a notable contributor to its streetscape. It is an elegant work of civic architecture among the area's brick and brownstone residences. Built on the cusp of the Board of Education of the City of Brooklyn's introduction of kindergarten departments to its extant schools, it is a rare example of a standalone kindergarten structure. It is an architecturally significant work from the brief partnership of architects Hough & Deuell. As a memorial to Hans

S. Christian, it represents an enduring connection to Carroll Gardens' Scandinavian immigrant past. It remains a testament to Elmira Christian's vision, dedication to education reform, and commitment to immigrant welfare. Built as a free kindergarten, it represents expanded opportunities for female educators, greater access to education, and the promotion of education reforms in the nineteenth century. In its subsequent use as an industrial school, it represents a sustained commitment to education and immigrant aid. Its later use by the First Spanish Methodist Church represents the significant contributions of Alberto and Thalia Baez as champions of Hispanic heritage, pioneers of Spanish Methodism, and the founders of New York City's oldest Spanish-language Methodist church.

Endnotes

¹ Before the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten was proposed for the Commission's calendar on April 10, 2018, the Commission received 303 pieces of correspondence in support of the proposed designation including letters from Senator Brian Kavanagh, representatives of Brooklyn Community Board 6, the Cobble Hill Association, and the Brooklyn Kindergarten Society, and musician Joan Baez.

² *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 21, 1897, 16. During the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, female kindergarten teachers were known as "kindergarteners," a term which has since come to refer to kindergarten pupils.

³ Throughout this report, the term "German" is used to refer to citizens of the German-speaking states in Central Europe which existed in various confederations until the reunification of Germany in 1990.

⁴ "Free Kindergartens," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 21, 1897, 16, and "Ten Years' Work in Free Kindergartens," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 22, 1901, 10.

⁵ Throughout this report, the term "Norwegian" is used to refer to citizens of both the United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway (1814-1905) and the subsequent Kingdom of Norway.

⁶ This section is adapted from Michael Caratzas, *238 President Street Designation Report* (LP-2612) (New York: City of New York, 2018), which draws from Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Carroll Gardens Historic District Designation Report* (LP-0696) (New York: City of New York, 1973), 1-3; and Jessica Baldwin and Margaret Herman, "The Historical and Architectural Development of the District," *Boerum Hill Historic District Extension Designation Report* (LP-2599) (New York: City of New York, 2018).

⁷ "With the spacious court yards thus to be formed, this vicinity when finished will present a delightful aspect, and a relief from the usual naked brick walls," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 22, 1846, 2.

⁸ *1910 United States Census*, Brooklyn, Kings County, New York: Ward 5, Enumeration District 78), 1910.

At the time, Syria was a vast territory within the Ottoman Empire and encompassed present-day Syria, Lebanon, Israel, the Palestinian Territories, and Jordan. Most "Syrian" immigrants at that time were from present-day Lebanon. For additional information, see *(Former) St. George's Syrian Catholic Church Designation Report* (LP-2167) (New York: City of New York, 2009), prepared by Michael Caratzas.

⁹ In 1938, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation gave Carroll Gardens a "D" rating, its lowest investment grade. Appraisal Department, Home Owners' Loan Corporation, *Residential Security Map* (New York: Hagstrom Company, 1938).

¹⁰ Landmarks Preservation Commission, *440 Clinton Street (John Rankin) House Designation Report* (LP-0628) (New York: City of New York, 1970); LPC, *South Congregational Church, Chapel, Ladies Parlor, and Rectory Designation Report* (LP-1245) (New York: City of New York, 1982), prepared by Andrew S. Dolkart.

¹¹ In various publications, Hans S. Christian is referred to as Hans S. Christiansen, his apparent birth name, or as Henry or Harry S. Christian. See David Mauk, *The Colony That Rose from the Sea: Norwegian Maritime Migration and Community in Brooklyn, 1850-1910* (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 80.

¹² *Ibid.* Birth and death dates for Hans S. and Elmira E. Christian are taken from their grave marker in Greenwood Cemetery, Section 26123, Lot 143, Grave 8-9.

¹³ *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 27, 1894, 1. A carman was a driver of a cart, wagon, streetcar, or other mode of transport.

¹⁴ The first service on the *Bethel Ship* was held in 1845 and Hans S. Christian's conversion took place sometime thereafter. Hedström is known to have met incoming ships from Scandinavian countries, given out bibles and other religious texts, and invited the sailors or immigrants onboard to visit the *Bethel Ship*. See: Wade Crawford Barclay, *History of Methodist Missions 3: Widening Horizons, 1845-95* (New York: The Board of Missions of The Methodist Church, 1957), 271-273.

¹⁵ After 1845, the Kingdom of Norway and Sweden (1814-1905) was subject to a Swedish inheritance law that required equal treatment of all children. Primogeniture became a custom rather than a law, though it was more common in northern and western Norway—areas further from the Swedish seat of power in Stockholm and, incidentally, areas with a greater dependence on the sea. Ran Abramitzky, Leah Platt Boustan, and Katherine Eriksson, "Have the Poor Always Been Less Likely to Migrate? Evidence from Inheritance Practices During the

Age of Mass Migration,” *Journal of Development Economics* 102 (May 2013): 2-14. See: Martin Dribe and Christer Lundh, “Finding the Right Partner: Rural Homogamy in Nineteenth-Century Sweden,” *International Review of Social History* 50 (2005), 149-177.

¹⁶ Among other restrictive conditions of the British Navigation Acts of 1651 were requirements that imports from Europe arrive in England and English colonies on English ships or on ships direct from the producer nation; that fish, whale, and other marine products brought to England or English colonies be caught by English ships; and that English ships were defined as those with English owners or with a crew that was at least half of English citizenship. Because of its narrow domestic market, reliance on fish and lumber exports, and dependence on other nations’ exports for its shipment and transportation industries, Norway was subject to severe limitations in its trade with England and English colonies while the Navigation Acts were in effect. See: Lewis R. Fischer and Even Lange, *New Directions in Norwegian Maritime History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹⁷ Mauk, *The Colony That Rose from the Sea*, 27.

¹⁸ Between 1866 and 1915, the Norwegian merchant marine lost almost 70,000 seamen through both legal and illegal immigration to the lure of higher wages in more industrial nations. Johan Nicolay Tønnesen, “Rømning 1850-1914 fra norske skip i fremmede havner,” in Jacob S. Worm-Müller, *Den Norske Sjøfarts Historie* (Oslo: Steenssk Forlag, 1935), 2:150, summarized in Mauk, *The Colony That Rose from the Sea*, 4.

¹⁹ Fifty-two passengers from six families set sail from Stavanger, Norway, in the sloop *Restaurationen* in 1825 and came to New York harbor after an arduous and highly publicized fourteen-week voyage. These “sloopers” went on to settle in Kendall, Orleans County, New York. See: Rasmus Björn Anderson, *The First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration (1821-1840)* (Madison, Wisconsin: Rasmus B. Anderson, 1896), 54-76.

²⁰ The Christians moved from Ward 1 in Manhattan to Ward 6 in Brooklyn. *1865 New York State Census*, Brooklyn, Kings County, Ward 6, Page 58, Lines 39-41.

²¹ A Hans Christian from the United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway filed a renunciation of his foreign citizenship and declaration of his intention to become a citizen of the United States in 1846. This Hans Christian was naturalized on September 26, 1850, though whether this is the same Hans S. Christian as above is unknown in the absence of birth date or origin information. At the time, a lawful entrant to the United State above age eighteen was able to file a Declaration of Intention to set his

naturalization process in motion; after satisfaction of a time requirement—for Hans Christian, a minimum of five years in the United States and one in New York—that person was able to file a Petition for Naturalization. National Archives and Records Administration; Washington, DC; ARC Title: *Index to Petitions for Naturalizations Filed in Federal, State, and Local Courts in New York City, 1792-1906*; NAI Number: 5700802; Record Group Title: Records of District Courts of the United States, 1685-2009; Record Group Number: RG 21.

The 1850 Federal Census records the Christians living with a twelve year-old Andrew Christian, likely Hans S. Christian’s younger brother Anders, who later moved to Chicago. *1850 United States Federal Census*, New York, New York County, Ward 1 Western Division, Roll M432-534, Page 171, Line 42, and Page 172 Lines 1-3.

²² Mauk, *The Colony That Rose from the Sea*, 29-30.

²³ *Ibid.*, 15

²⁴ The Norwegian Seamen’s Church was an outgrowth of Den Norske Sjømandsmission begun in Norway in 1864 and later known as the Dutch Reformed Church. See: “The Benefits and Trials of the First Transplanted Norwegian Institution,” Mauk, *The Colony That Rose from the Sea*, 100-104.

²⁵ The Norwegian Sailors’ Home began as the Scandinavian Sailors’ Temperance Home in 1887. Its founder, Captain Magnus Anderson, intended for it to offer a wholesome environment for the scores of Scandinavian sailors who came through the ports of New York City. Mauk, *The Colony That Rose from the Sea*, 137-138.

A remnant of the Norwegian influence on the area exists in the Norwegian-language Frelsesarmeen (Salvation Army) sign at 380 Court Street, a Salvation Army from at least 1933-1951, if not for a lengthier duration prior to 1974. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 9, 1933, 13 and July 7, 1951, 4; New York City Department of Buildings, *Certificate of Occupancy*, 211066 (August 7, 19, 1974).

²⁶ “Hans S. Christiansen,” *Nordisk Tidende*, January 5, 1895.

²⁷ “Mrs. Christian Dead,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 28, 1899, 1.

²⁸ *1850 United States Federal Census. 1860 United States Federal Census*, Brooklyn, Kings County, District 3 Ward 6, Liber 884, Page 38, Lines 1-6.

²⁹ *Brooklyn City Directory for the Year Ending May 1, 1863* (Brooklyn: J. Lain and Company, 1863) 468; “The Storm Killed Him,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 27,

1894, 1, which misspells the name as Hiram Travers.

³⁰ *Brooklyn City and Business Directory for the Year Ending May 1, 1871* (Brooklyn: J. Lain and Company, 1871), 118.

³¹ Mauk, *The Colony That Rose from the Sea*, 80.

³² “The Storm Killed Him,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 27, 1894, 1; “Died,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 28, 1894, 5.

³³ “The New Alderman of the Sixth,” *Brooklyn Daily Union* (Brooklyn, New York), November 5, 1870,

³⁴ *Report of the Brooklyn Church Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Year Ending April 1, 1884* (New York: Charles S. Hamilton & Co., Printers 1884), 6-8, 24.

³⁵ At the time, the First Place Methodist Episcopal Church was on the southwest corner of the intersection of Henry and Summit Streets, west of First Place, and about a quarter mile from the Christians’ home. Hans was a member of the First Place Methodist Episcopal Church for thirty-six years and was the recipient of a church honor a short time before his death. “The Storm Killed Him,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.

³⁶ *First Annual Report of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Association for the Year Ending June, 1892*, (New York: Albert B. King, 1892), 8.

³⁷ Hans Christian died of heart failure that was the result of a known illness. His final charitable act was to escort another churchgoer to her door after services in the midst of a snowstorm. He fell unconscious en route to her home and was brought to a stable on Clinton Street, where he died. “The Storm Killed Him,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.

³⁸ “Hans S. Christiansen,” *Nordisk Tidende*.

Nordisk Tidende cited an incident in which affiliates of the Norwegian Lutheran Deaconess Home and Hospital petitioned Hans Christian for construction materials to build a stable for a new horse-drawn ambulance but were denied his aid. *Nordisk Tidende*’s outrage was perhaps a factor in his widow’s decision to establish and fund a deaconess home, although at the time, *Nordisk Tidende* was known for its sensationalist reports.

³⁹ “Hans S. Christian Memorial,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 26, 1896, 1.

⁴⁰ “Mrs. H. S. Christian Dead,” *Standard Union* (Brooklyn, New York), March 28, 1899, 1.

⁴¹ On the death of Hans’ son Harry L. in 1900, donations were given to the Hans S. Memorial Kindergarten, the Brooklyn Deaconess Home, and the Norwegian Lutheran Deaconess Home and Hospital, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*,

January 10, 1900, 3.

⁴² Lois Berseth, “Norwegian Brooklyn,” Norwegian Immigration Association, July 7, 2015. <https://www.norwegianamerican.com/heritage/norwegian-brooklyn>.

⁴³ Her father was Alexander Stuart, about whom no other information is known. *1880 United States Federal Census*, Brooklyn, Kings County, Enumeration District 41, Roll 843, Page 439; New York City Marriage Records, 1829-1940, Elmira E. Stuart in “Harry L. Christian and Adeline A. Davenport,” June 13, 1877; New York City Municipal Deaths, 179501949, Alexander Stuart in “Elmira E. Christian,” March 28, 1899, New York Municipal Archives, Brooklyn.

⁴⁴ “When in the eighties the Woman’s Club took up the work I was very much pleased, and contributed my mite.” Elmira Christian quoted in *Fifth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Free Kindergarten Society for the Year Ending October, 1896*, (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Daily Eagle Book Printing Department, 1896), 19-20. At the time, the Warren Street Methodist Episcopal Church was at 303 Warren Street.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 20

⁴⁶ *Fifth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Free Kindergarten Society for the Year Ending October, 1896*, (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Daily Eagle Book Printing Department, 1896), 19-20. “I have always been interested in children and in plans for their improvement and I consider that kindergarten the best means toward that end.” Elmira Christian quoted in “Hans S. Christian Memorial,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 26, 1896, 1.

⁴⁷ *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 10, 1896, 18.

⁴⁸ Plans were filed with the Department of Buildings in June 1897 (NB 928-97).

⁴⁹ *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 30, 1897, 8.

⁵⁰ *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 21, 1897, 16. The kindergarten is also described as “splendidly equipped,” *Kindergarten Review* 8, no. 2 (October 1897), 446, and as “beautifully fitted up” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 27, 1897, 7.

⁵¹ *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 28, 1899, 1.

⁵² *Fifth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Free Kindergarten Society*, 20.

⁵³ *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 28, 1899, 1.

⁵⁴ *Ninth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society*, (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Daily Eagle Book Publishing Department, 1900), 17.

⁵⁵ Ann Taylor Allen, *The Transatlantic Kindergarten: Education and Women's Movements in Germany and the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 25.

⁵⁶ Froebel spent five decades on the experimentation, implementation, and refinement of his ideas. Elizabeth Jenkins, "How the Kindergarten Found Its Way to America," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 14, no. 1 (1930): 54.

⁵⁷ Froebel's predecessors included John Locke (1632-1704), who believed that education was most effective when attuned to children's abilities and interests, including their love of play, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), for whom a belief in man's inherent goodness meant that the role of an instructor was to stimulate children's innate capacities to learn rather than to discipline them for their limitations. Allen, *The Transatlantic Kindergarten*, 12. See: John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, or, On Education*.

⁵⁸ Quoted in *First Annual Report of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Association for the Year Ending June, 1892*, (New York: Albert B. King, 1892), 12. In Froebel's words, "It is intended to exert an influence over the whole being of the child in correspondence with its nature; to strengthen his bodily powers; to exercise his senses; to employ the awakening mind; to make him acquainted with the world of nature and man." Friedrich Froebel quoted in the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association, 1892*, (San Francisco: Geo. Spaulding & Co. Steam Book and Job Printers, 1892), 142.

⁵⁹ In German, *Spielgaben* ("play-gifts") and *Beschäftigungen* ("occupations"). The gifts were a series of objects given in a sequence from geometric forms to planar shapes, and from whole to component pieces. In the occupations, which began after the final gift was given, the objects were put to use in structured activities meant to stimulate the imagination and teach spatial, quantitative, philosophical, and moral concepts. The first gift, a ball, was meant to hone a child's sense of observation, introduce basic ideas of "presence, absence, return, seeking, finding, clasping, rolling, sliding, and falling," and to represent Divine Unity and pureness of form; six balls in six colors taught the effects and combinations of form and color, and basic arithmetic and geometric concepts. The second gift, a wooden sphere, cube, and cylinder, taught variety, contrast, and synthesis. The third through sixth gifts were a cube divided into eight smaller cubes, a two-inch cube divided into eight oblong blocks, and two other cubes divided more intricately to teach

concepts of relationships and dependence between parts and whole, and to encourage the imagination. The seventh gift, a one-inch square and four different triangles made of thin pieces of colored wood, broke down solid forms into planes. The eighth and ninth gifts were small sticks of varying lengths and wire rings and half rings of different sizes to introduce endless design possibilities. The tenth and final gift was any object symbolic of a point, like a seed or pebble. After the tenth gift was presented, the occupations began and taught the child to work with a variety of solid forms and textures by perforating thick paper stock with a needle to make geometric or random designs; sewing with bright wool; embroidering in silk; drawing freehand and in outline; twisting, weaving, cutting, and folding paper; and finally, clay modeling. While such carefully-directed activities restricted a child's freedom, they also provided outlets for self-expression and opportunities to develop motor skills and teach geometric, social, and natural relationships. Elizabeth Dale Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade: The Establishment of Preschool Education in the United States* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1976), 5-6.

⁶⁰ The photograph, captioned "The Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten," appears in Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society, *Twenty-Third Annual Report*, (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society, 1914), n.p.

⁶¹ Allen, *The Transatlantic Kindergarten*, 27. At age 88, Frank Lloyd Wright noted that, "The maple wood blocks are in my fingers to this day." Earlier, he wrote about the formative impact of the Froebel gifts on his development: "That early kindergarten experience with the straight line; the flat plane; the square; the triangle; the circle! If I wanted more, the square modified by the triangle gave the hexagon—the circle modified by the straight line would give the octagon. Adding thickness, getting 'sculpture' thereby, the square became the cube, the triangle the tetrahedron, the circle the sphere. These primary forms and figures were the secret of all effects which were ever got into the architecture of the world." Frank Lloyd Wright quoted in "The Froebel Gift Takes Form Again," *New York Times*, October 13, 1985, 87; Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1943), 182.

⁶² At the time, other male education theorists saw men as their intellectual peers and as intellectually superior to women, and the education profession was largely male-dominated. As historian Ann Taylor Allen describes in *The Transatlantic Kindergarten*, the association of women with motherliness was not a timeless or universal idea but a new development of the time. Earlier laws and customs upheld the father's role as educator in religion, ethics, and

trades, and relegated mothers to subordinate roles out a belief in women's inherent weakness. In the era of industrialization, it became more common for a male breadwinner to work outside of the home to support his dependent wives and children; women then took on a greater share of child care and domestic tasks. See: Allen, *The Transatlantic Kindergarten*, 10-14.

⁶³ Although Frankenberg's creation was kindergarten-like in its basis on Froebel's principles, it predated the coinage of the term "kindergarten" by four years and is sometimes excluded from lists of first American kindergartens on that basis. Nonetheless, Froebel himself wrote about it as among those kindergartens built on his principles. Ruth M. Baylor, *Elizabeth Palmer Peabody: Kindergarten Pioneer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), 32. Jürgen Eichhoff, "Kindergarten and its Progeny in American English," *Monatshefte* 80, no. 1 (1988): 82. Sylvester L. Quam and William Jannke, III, *Handi and Pussy Go to Kindergarten* (Watertown, WI: Watertown Historical Society, 1990), 2.

⁶⁴ The Chicago founder was Alice H. Putnam who was known "the pioneer of the kindergarten" there and an important figure in the dissemination of the kindergarten concept. Allen, *The Transatlantic Kindergarten*, 73-85.

⁶⁵ "Kindergarten Representation at the Columbian Exposition," *Kindergarten Primary Magazine* 5 (1892): 402-405.

⁶⁶ Allen, *The Transatlantic Kindergarten*, 2

⁶⁷ In 1889, at the height of the proliferation of for-cost private kindergartens in Manhattan, Robert Watson Gilder founded the New York Kindergarten Association to establish free kindergartens and implore the Board of Education of the City of New York to make free kindergarten education available in its public schools: "The kindergarten method of instruction is no longer an experiment, but a practical and established success. Why was it, then, that in the list of fifty cities of the United States that have a least one kindergarten in connection with their system of public instruction, the name of New York did not appear?" *The Critic* 17, no. 363 (December 13, 1890): 313.

In 1892, the Board of Education of the City of New York made a \$5,000 appropriation to establish its first public kindergarten, which began at Public School No. 10 in March 1893. An earlier attempt to introduce the kindergarten system to the Board of Education had been made by Adolph Douai in 1870. Under Douai's influence and with the Board's assistance, "a course in kindergarten theory" was given at the Normal College of the City of New York (later Hunter College) with an initial lecture by

Boston kindergarten pioneer Elizabeth Peabody. After a few months, the Board withdrew its support and its impulse to establish kindergartens went dormant until the 1890s. Hortense May Orcutt, "The History of the Kindergarten in the New York Public Schools," *Kindergarten Magazine and Pedagogical Digest* XIX (September 1906-June 1907): 434, 441; *Tenth Annual Report of the New York Kindergarten Association 1899-1900* (New York: American Fashion Press, 1900), 9.

⁶⁸ Earlier, Douai was headmaster of the three-class Deutsch-Englische Schule in Boston, which added a kindergarten in 1859. Douai began a German workingmen's organization in Boston which operated a kindergarten from 1860-1861, before Douai's "atheistic pronouncements" undercut his support. Douai also published *The Kindergarten: A Manual for the Introduction of Fröbel's System of Primary Education*. "Obituary of Dr. Adolph Douai," *Workmen's Advocate* 4, no. 4 (January 28, 1888): 1-2.

⁶⁹ *New York Times*, May 9, 1870. Although the Poppenhusen Institute is sometimes written about as a kindergarten, these descriptions, among others, make it clear that a kindergarten was one of several functions of an institute meant to serve the College Point workforce. The kindergarten ceased operations in 1901. "Kindergarten Discontinued," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 15, 1901, 9.

⁷⁰ Harry Willekens, Kristen Scheiwe, and Kristen Nawrotzki, *The Development of Early Childhood Education in Europe and North America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Houndmills, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 294-299.

⁷¹ "Free Kindergarten and Workingman's School" in Henry Barnard, ed., *American Journal of Education* 31 (Hartford, Connecticut: Henry Barnard, 1881): 201.

⁷² Orcutt, "The History of the Kindergarten in the New York Public Schools," 439. This portion of Fourth Avenue is now known as Park Avenue South.

⁷³ Katherine Greider, "City Lore: The Schoolteacher on the Streetcar," *New York Times*, November 13, 2005.

⁷⁴ The Froebel Kindergarten began on Fulton Street in 1876, after which it relocated to 76 Montague Street from 1877-1879; Clinton Street and Atlantic Avenue from 1879-1890; and 686-690 Lafayette Avenue, 110 Montague Street, St. Mark's Avenue, Putnam Avenue, and 176 Brooklyn Avenue at later dates. "Froebel Academy Was Brooklyn's 1st Kindergarten," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Educational Directory Section, August 30, 1934, 33; Henry Ward Beecher Howard and Arthur N. Jervis, eds., "Kindergartens," in *The Eagle and Brooklyn: The Record*

of the *Progress of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle II* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 1893) 755.

⁷⁵ Ibid. Charles Pratt purchased the Froebel Academy in 1890. It became a function of Pratt Institute in 1892.

⁷⁶ “Happenings in Pratt Institute,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 5, 1894, 6.

⁷⁷ The Pratt Institute Kindergarten operated until 1917. “Alice E. Fitts, 87; Headed Old Pratt Kindergarten School,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 20, 1943, 15.

In 1953, the redevelopment of fourteen “blighted” blocks between Myrtle Avenue, Lafayette Avenue, Hall Street, and Classon Street into three superblocks became the focus of New York City Slum Clearance Committee director Robert Moses. The Pratt Institute Kindergarten, which sat within these boundaries, was demolished sometime before 1965. See: *Slum Clearance Plan under Title 1 of the Housing Act of 1949: Pratt Institute Area* (New York: Committee on Slum Clearance, July 1953).

⁷⁸ *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 13, 1884, 2. The house’s generous 25’ frontage might have been inspiration for Elmira Christian’s insistence on a minimum 25’ frontage for the construction of the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten: “I require 25 feet,” Elmira Christian quoted in *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 26, 1896, 1.

F. E. Heartt, a teacher, appears in the New York State Census in 1892, but articles also give her surname as Heurtt and Heaths. *1892 New York State Census*, Ward 20, Election District 15, Page 14.

⁷⁹ While there was an earlier African Free School in Williamsburg, it did not have a kindergarten department. *Pratt Institute Monthly* (Brooklyn: Pratt Institute, 1902) vol. X, no. 212 (November 1901-June 1902): 212. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 5, 1896, 12; “Work of the Free Kindergarten,” *Annual Report, Help to Self-Help: One Year’s Work of the People’s University Extension Society of New York, 1904* (New York: J. J. O’Brien & Son, 1904), 105-106.

Siloam Presbyterian Church was founded by Reverend James N. Gloucester, the son of a former slave, in 1849. Gloucester was an active promoter of the Underground Railroad, a notable supporter of John Brown, and a friend and colleague of Frederick Douglass. Numerous articles note that the Siloam Presbyterian Church was a station on the Underground Railroad, and that John Brown was a visitor there en route to his raid on Harper’s Ferry, Virginia. The church locations were at an unknown address on Myrtle Avenue, 1849; 106 Prince Street, 1850-1907 (demolished); 404 Lafayette Avenue, 1910-1944;

and 260 Jefferson Avenue, 1944-present. “Siloam Presbyterian Was ‘Underground’ Station,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 7, 1954, 22. See: Stanley M. Douglas, “The History of the Siloam Presbyterian Church,” in *Centennial Yearbook of the Siloam Presbyterian Church (1849-1949)*.

The Ministers’ Kindergarten was under the management of a black female director, Miss Fannie M. Perkins, who appears in the 1900 census with the occupation “kindergartener.” *1900 United States Census*, Brooklyn, Kings County, District 12, Ward 7, Sheet 18, Page 256, Line 11.

⁸⁰ The kindergarten is referred to as Stanford Memorial Free Kindergarten No. 1 when written about in the context of later San Francisco kindergartens. *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association*, 49.

⁸¹ *Fifth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Free Kindergarten Society*, 36. “The news of these Memorial Kindergartens spread all over the Country, and in Foreign Countries; and acted as an inspiration to similar deeds.” *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association*, 1892, (San Francisco: Geo. Spaulding & Co. Steam Book and Job Printers, 1892), 52.

⁸² The Maxwell Memorial Industrial School at 23 Fourth Street (demolished) was built to educate children from low-income families in vocational tasks but ran a kindergarten department from 1892-c.1917. The Slocum Memorial Kindergarten (1894-1916) operated from the first floor of a residence at 352 Livingston Street (demolished). The Edward Richardson Memorial (c.1895-c.1916) began as the Vanderbilt Avenue Kindergarten in a home at 608 Vanderbilt Avenue and later relocated to 491 Park Avenue and to 124 18th Street. Lastly, the Bethany Memorial Kindergarten was held in the Bethany Chapel of the Reformed Church on the Heights at 377 Hudson Avenue (demolished) from 1895 to 1919. “A Charity Memorial,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 17, 1891, 18 and December 19, 1915, 15; “The Slocum Kindergarten,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 16, 1894, 11 and “Sign Petition to Public to Continue Slocum Memorial Kindergarten on Schermerhorn Street,” September 16, 1917, 16; *Fifth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Free Kindergarten Society*, 16. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 7, 1895, 8; *New York Times*, December 8, 1895, 20; “Saloon Now Free Kindergarten,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 13, 1919, 16; *Fifth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Free Kindergarten Society*, 17-18.

⁸³ *Sixth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society*, 33; *Fifth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society*, 25; *The Critic XIV*, No. 363 in

Jeannette Leonard Gilder, Joseph Benson Gilder, *The Critic*, Volume 14; Volume 17.

⁸⁴ *Sixth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society*, 33.

⁸⁵ Colored School No. 3 was an outgrowth of the town of Williamsburgh's pre-1841 African Free School. It was given the name Colored School No. 3 in 1855, when became an asset of the Board of Education of the City of Brooklyn. It was renamed Public School 69 in 1887 and the Board of Education relinquished control of the building in 1934.

Public School 67 continues to operate, although the building in which it was originally housed was replaced in the 1920s. Donald G. Presa, (*Former*) *Colored School No. 3, later Public School 69 (LP-1977)* (New York: City of New York, 1998), 3-4.

⁸⁶ *Seventh Annual Report of the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society*, (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Daily Eagle Book Publishing Department, 1898), 22, 27.

⁸⁷ "Pulpit and Pew," *Daily Standard Union*, October 10, 1896, n.p.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* Elmira Christian was listed as a "visitor" of this church basement kindergarten. *Fifth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Free Kindergarten Society*, 9.

⁸⁹ Elmira Christian quoted in "Hans S. Christian Memorial," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 26, 1896, 1.

⁹⁰ *New York Times*, January 8, 1897, 12; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 8, 1897, 16

⁹¹ "Gift to the Church Society," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 8, 1897, 16. Mrs. R. P. Currie was on the First Place Methodist Episcopal Church's Committee of Arrangements with Elmira Christian, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 15, 1870, 3.

⁹² *Sixth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society*, 12.

⁹³ "Woman's Work," *Northwest Christian Advocate*, November 24, 1897, 26.

⁹⁴ *Sixth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society*, 22, which announces that "the Christian Memorial will soon remove to the model building, described elsewhere in this Report, which is only a short distance from the quarters previously occupied."

⁹⁵ "Kindergarten Work," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 10, 1896, 18.

⁹⁶ "Free Kindergartens," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 21, 1897, 16, and "Ten Years' Work in Free

Kindergartens," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 22, 1901, 10.

⁹⁷ *Seventh Annual Report of the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society*, 20-21.

⁹⁸ *Kindergarten Review* 8, no. 2 (October 1897), 446.

⁹⁹ "Mrs. H. S. Christian Dead," *Daily Standard Union*, March 28, 1899, 1.

¹⁰⁰ "The Coming Summer Exhibition of the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society," *Standard Daily Union* (Brooklyn, New York), May 22, 1904, 12.

¹⁰¹ *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 21, 1897.

¹⁰² "Among the Churches: Lutheran," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 1, 1901, 3.

¹⁰³ "Free Kindergarten Society," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 10, 1901, 42.

¹⁰⁴ The information in this section is based on Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979); James Ward, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1900-1940* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989); and LPC, *23rd Regiment Armory Designation Report (LP-1950)* (New York: City of New York, 1977), prepared by Nancy Goeschel.

¹⁰⁵ *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 8, 1897, 16. Henry Hough was co-founder of Durkee & Hough, one of the first firms to build warehouses on the Atlantic docks. Hough grew up at 450 Henry Street, in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 17, 1894, 10; "Kindergarten Work: What Has Been Accomplished by the Brooklyn Association," *Second Annual Report of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Association* (New York: Albert B. King, 1893), 5.

As a fellow education reformer, philanthropist, Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society member, and area resident, Henry W. Maxwell might have been known to the Christians or an endorsement for his architect.

¹⁰⁶ *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 6, 1899, 2

¹⁰⁷ Fowler & Hough, "A Beautifully Detailed, Original Plan of the Brooklyn Homoeopathic Hospital, New York," in *American Architect and Building News*, March 8, 1890; *Medical Visitor* 5 (Chicago: John Morris Company, 1889), 112.

¹⁰⁸ "Addition to L. I. Hospital," *New-York Tribune*, April 24, 1902, 5; "Maxwell Dormitory to Long Island College House," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 10, 1902, 10.

¹⁰⁹ Hackensack, New Jersey, City Directory, 1931, 118. *The Trow (Formerly Wilson's) Copartnership and Corporation Directory of the Boroughs of Manhattan and Bronx 50* (New York: Trow Directory, Printing & Bookbinding Co., 1902), 133.

¹¹⁰ *Sixth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society*, 29.

¹¹¹ The Fontaine des Quatre-Saisons (1745) and Place Louis XV (now Place de la Concorde, 1763–83) in Paris, and monumental squares and structures in the centers of Nancy, Bordeaux, and Rennes were among Louis XV commissions meant to provide services to French citizens and to advertise the and benevolence and influence of their sovereign.

¹¹² Kings County, Office of the Register, Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 7, Page 268 (April 10, 1897); *Brooklyn Church Society of Methodist Episcopal Church v. Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society*, Supreme Court, Kings County, December 31, 1914 in *The New York Supplement* 152 (April 5-May 31, 1915): 41-45.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹¹⁴ *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Church Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Year Ended April 30th, 1914* (n.p., 1914), 28.

¹¹⁵ *Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society Twenty-Fifth and Twenty-Sixth Annual Reports July 1, 1915-June 30, 1917* (n.p. 1917), 19. "Christian Kindergarten Goes to New Quarters," *Daily Standard Union*, September 18, 1915, 14.

¹¹⁶ *Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Brooklyn and Long Island Church Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Year Ended May 31st, 1925* (n.p., 1925), 31.

¹¹⁷ Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, *Fifty-Sixth Annual Report for the Year 1936-1927* (Cincinnati: Woman's Home Missionary Society Methodist Episcopal Church, 1937), 239-240.

¹¹⁸ *Annual Report of the Brooklyn Deaconess Home of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Year Ending April 30, 1909* (n.p., 1909), 2.

¹¹⁹ "Albert Baez, 94, Scientist and Singers' Father, Dies," *New York Times*, March 27, 2007, B7.

¹²⁰ Ernesto Vasseur, "Biography of the Rev. Alberto B. Baez," in *101st Anniversary of the Temple at 424 Dean Street, 56th Anniversary of "First Spanish"* (Brooklyn, New York: Immanuel-First Spanish United Methodist Church, 1976), 13-15.

¹²¹ "Excerpts from the Testimony of Albert Baez, Greenbrae, California," in Rodolfo F. Acuna and

Guadalupe Compean, *Voices of the U.S. Latino Experience*, 2 (Wesport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2008), 747.

¹²² Clemente A. Mayo, the earliest-known Spanish Methodist minister in New York City, held services in Manhattan's Washington Square Church and in Brooklyn's First Methodist Episcopal Church, later known as the Sands Street Church. At Sands Street, he began the first Hispanic Methodist congregation in New York City in 1893 with nine active members and 35 probationary members. Jean Miller Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient: A History of Women in American Methodism, 1760-1939* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 256.

¹²³ Sands Street Memorial Church, officially First Methodist Episcopal Church of Brooklyn, was built in 1889 and demolished in 1947. It succeeded the congregation's previous home, which was constructed on Sands Street in 1810 and demolished for the approach to the Brooklyn Bridge, constructed between 1869 and 1883. See "Wreckers Soon to Demolish Historic Church," *Brooklyn Eagle*, January 19, 1947, 7.

¹²⁴ While their origins and experiences were diverse, some immigrant women went to work as seamstresses and embroiderers in factories while a significant number of immigrant men undertook waterfront occupations like "stokers, oilers, stevedores, cigar makers, sugar refiners, and general factory workers." "40,000 Latins in Brooklyn, Welded by Common Tongue, Ignore Cosmopolitan Urge," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 5, 1925, 24D.

¹²⁵ "Spanish Methodists Open Mission House," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 15, 1928, 33.

¹²⁶ "Bit of Latin America Finds Its Way to Central Y.W.C.A.," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 1, 1929, 11.

¹²⁷ *101st Anniversary of the Temple at 424 Dean Street, 56th Anniversary of "First Spanish,"* 14.

¹²⁸ "Spanish Methodists Open Mission House," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 15, 1928, 33.

¹²⁹ When the First Spanish Methodist church relocated in 1949, the Warren Street Methodist Church was under threat of condemnation. "South Brooklyn: Miracle on Warren St.," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 15, 1951, 27; "2,000 Youngsters at Opening of Warren St. Center," *ibid.*, April 20, 1951, 7.

¹³⁰ Vasseur, 14-15.

¹³¹ "Deaths," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 3, 1951, 5, and "Deaths," February 4, 1951, 23.

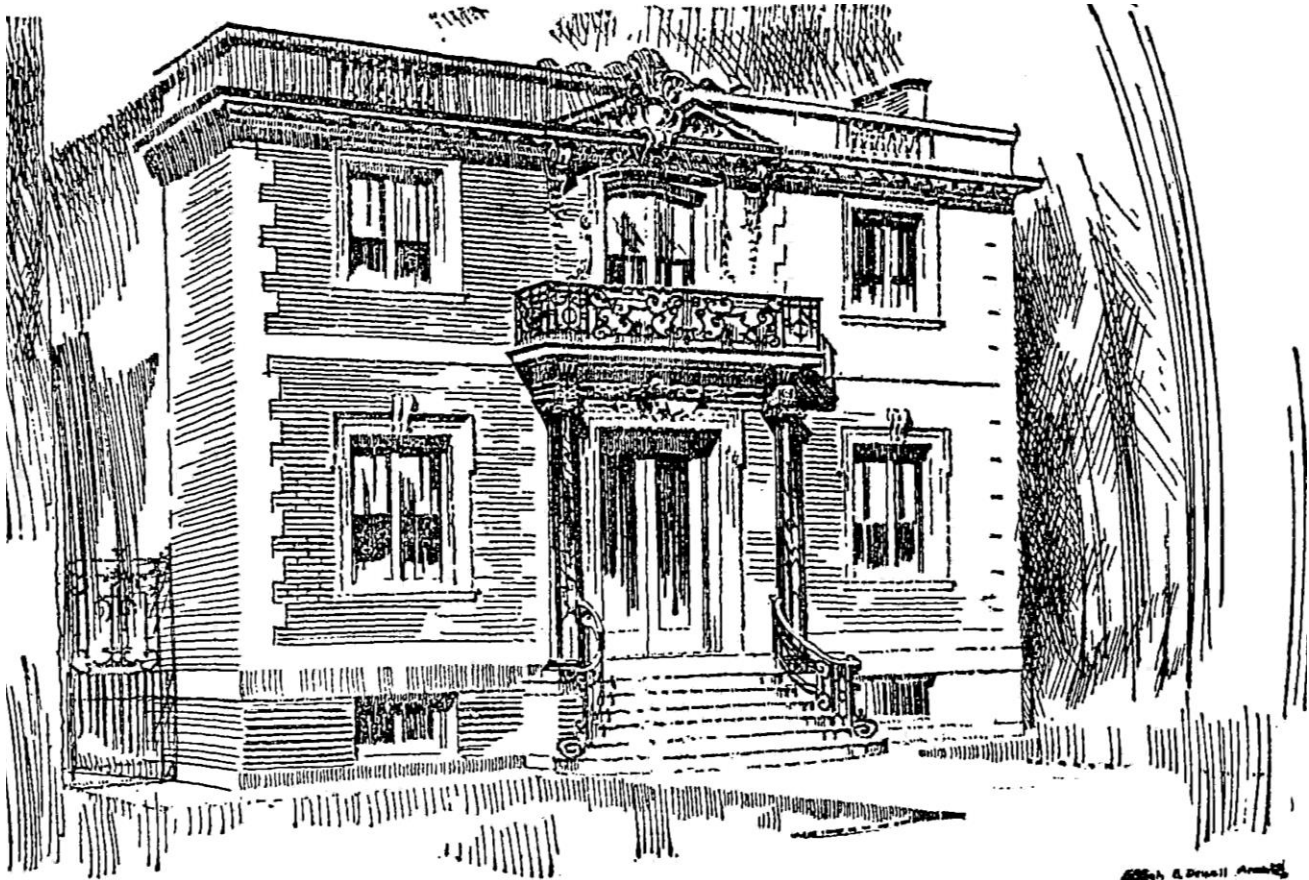
¹³² New York City Department of Buildings, Borough of Brooklyn, *Certificate of Occupancy*, November 4, 1974, #211387.

Findings and Designation

Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and culture characteristics of New York City as described in this designation report.

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 Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten and designates Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 351, Lot 10 as its Landmark Site.



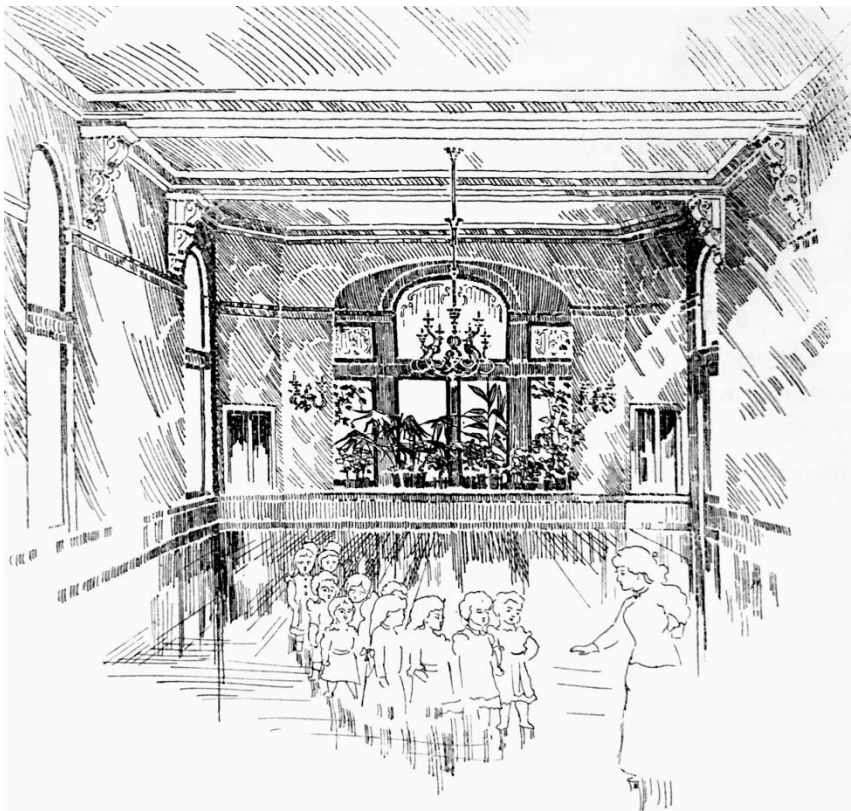
THE HANS S. CHRISTIAN MEMORIAL KINDERGARTEN BUILDING.

Hough & Deuell Rendering

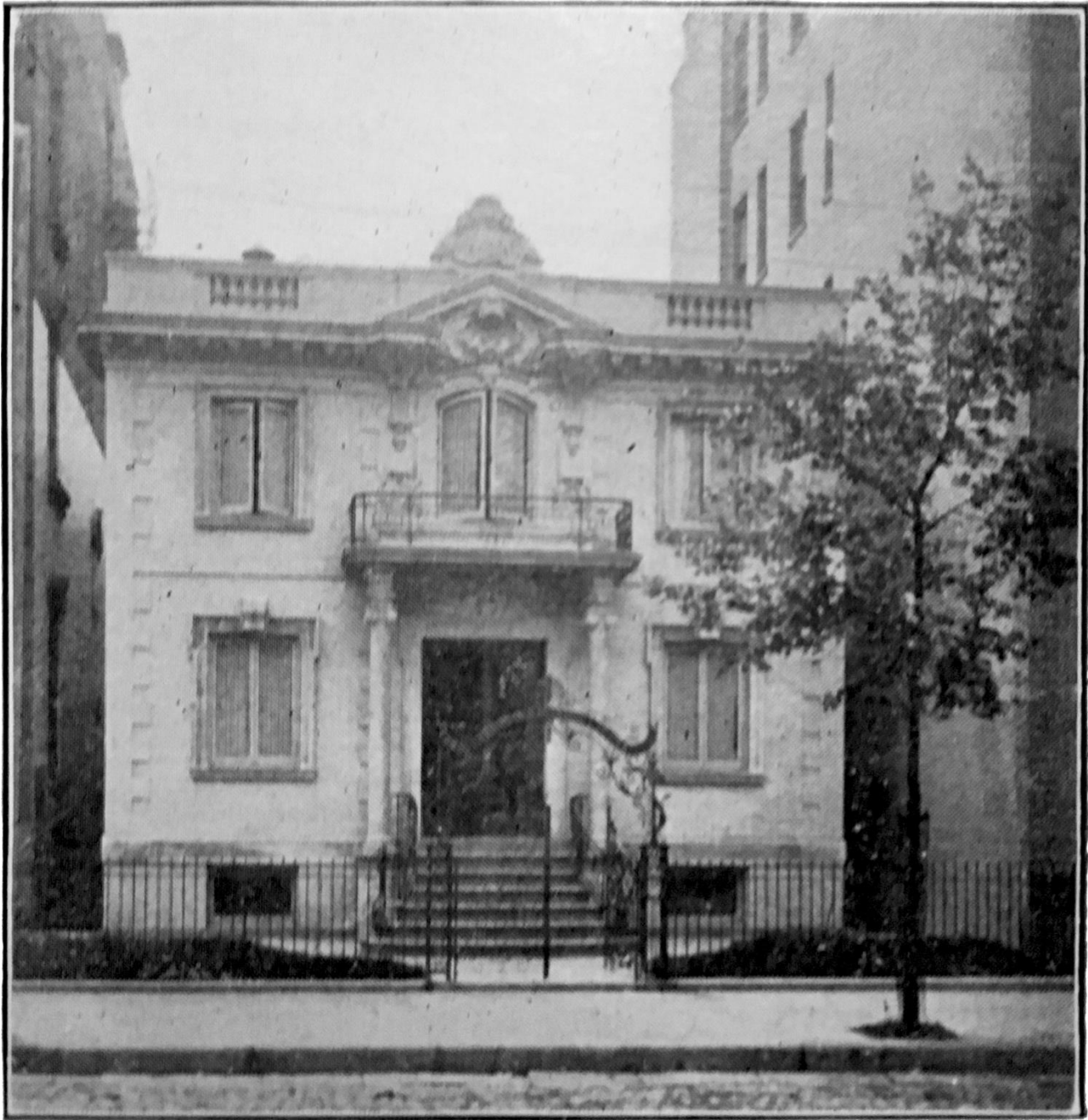
Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society, 1897



Hough & Deuell Gate Rendering
Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society,
1897



Hough & Deuell Interior Rendering
Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society,
1897



“Kindergarten Memorial”

Brooklyn Church Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1903



THE HANS S. CHRISTIAN MEMORIAL KINDERGARTEN

Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten students at work with Froebel "gifts"
Brooklyn Free Kindergarten Society, 1914



Hans S. Christian



Elmira E. Christian

Portraits of Hans S. Christian and Elmira E. Christian
Brooklyn Church Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1903



Tax Photograph
Municipal Archives, c. 1938-1943



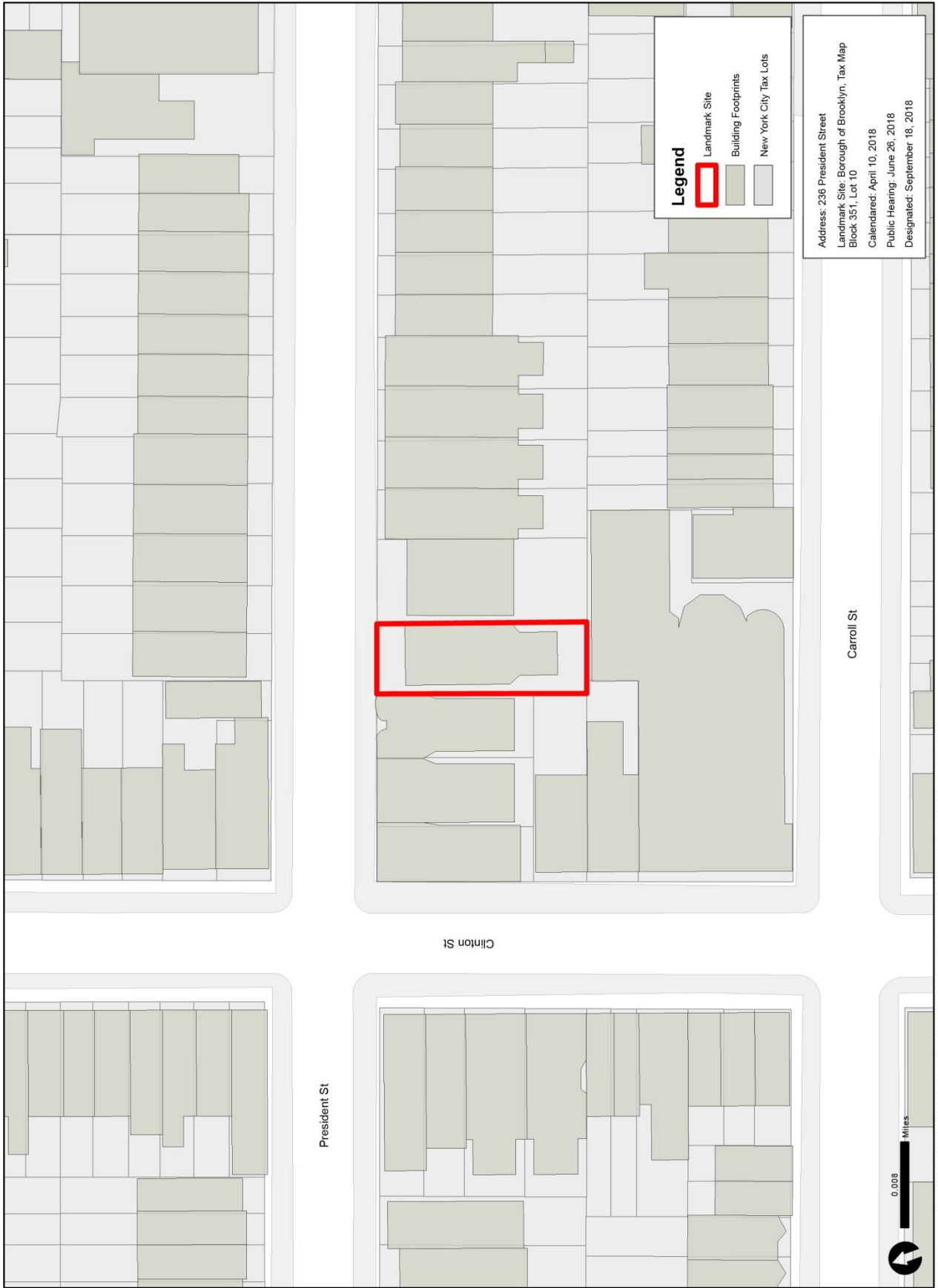
Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten
September 2018



Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten
September 2018



Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten
September 2018



Graphic Source: MapPLUTO, Edition 17v1, Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, EBR Date: 8.31.2018