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Courts: County Court
[Kings County]

1911-1912

County Court
Kings County
Brooklyn, N.Y.

CHARLES S. DEVOY
CHIEF CLERK

April 28th, 1911.



Ho. William J. Gayner,

Mayer of the City of New York.

My. dear Mr. Mayer:-

By direction of Judge Dike of this Court, I herewith transmit to you a copy of the Presentment of the Grand Jury of Kings County for the month of April 1911.

Very sincerely yours,

Charles S. Devoy

JUDGE NORMAN S. DIKE,

Honorable Sir:-

We, the members of the April Grand Jury, at your request, have made certain investigations by inquiry, visiting and inspecting a great number of buildings in our Borough, such as mercantile, manufacturing, storage, tenements and office buildings as to "General Safety and Prevention against Fire", being ably assisted and advised in many ways by cooperation of Fire, Building, Tenement House and Police Departments. The time we have had to spare in this matter has been very limited and we therefore cannot do full justice to so serious a cause. It deserves the most careful and mature and may be a lengthy consideration before arriving at any positive decision as to what is best for the public good.

It seems to us a special body should be appointed for the purpose of this work only if good results are to be attained. More immediate power should be vested in our Fire or Building Department, or both, to enforce our existing laws, or make new laws, giving them the power to call upon the Police Department to arrest under a misdemeanor for a violation of said law or laws unless complied with in a reasonable time after said notice of violation. This should also apply to the Tenement House Department. Sec. 157-A of Building Code ought to be amended to meet this requirement.

It is impossible for us to enumerate the very many serious conditions we have seen, and we therefore merely call your attention to a few suggestions which might better the present state of affairs.

Factory, loft buildings and mercantile buildings, whether fireproof or not, where owners or lessees employ over fifty workers a system of fire drills should be compulsory. Placards should be posted in one or more languages denoting where fire escapes, elevators and stairs are located. Access to fire escapes must be

free and clear. Exit doors to stairways or other exits left unlocked. Where electricity is used red lights should designate these doors, stairways and elevators. Doors to stairways or exits should open outwards.

We found a case in a fireproof building where over six hundred people were employed where the doors opened inwards.

The Building Law says that buildings over eighty-five feet high (whether provided with automatic sprinklers or not) should be supplied with a three and a half inch standpipe. In many cases they were not so supplied. This should be enforced.

Straight rung ladder fire escapes should be condemned. Good clear access to roof by proper stairs. The new smoke and fireproof stairway is a commendable acquisition. The Automatic Sprinkler System is good and should be more generally used in manufacturing concerns. More attention should be paid to the cleanliness of floors, especially so where garments are manufactured.

In a great many of our factories congestion is a bad fault. As to floor space more room should be given between machinery, work benches and stock.

Some of the buildings where paint is manufactured should have the attention of the city authorities; also certain shoe factories.

Where gas jets are used, same should be covered or protected. Iron bars or screens should be removed, unless absolutely necessary against burglary.

Give Fire Department in this Borough or other Boroughs control over conditions, as they may see them, pertaining to these buildings, as to fire escapes, exits, doors, stairways, covering of windows and general safety in case of panic or fire. Any demand made by said Fire Department within the limit of the law must be complied with at once or within a reasonable time to permit of such alterations. Such violations after due notice to be a misdemeanor.

We would recommend that an Assistant Corporation Counsel be located in Brooklyn for the use of the different departments in order to bring about quicker results in the prosecution of violators.

COUNTY BUILDINGS.

Inspected by twenty-two members of the April Grand Jury, Thursday, April 13th, 1911.

While we wish to compliment Commissioner Fogarty and his assistants as to the general condition of grounds and buildings, as to system, order, cleanliness, splendid care shown the inmates, discipline among those employed in various capacities, and recognizing the stupendous responsibilities resting on Commissioner Fogarty to keep the various institutions up to their present high state of efficiency, we would like to call attention to the following buildings:

Home for Aged and Infirm, Female Building, not enough fire escapes; none on west end of building. Inmates of third floor would have very little chance of getting out if fire should occur.

Neurotic Ward for nervous patients, three story brick structure, no fire escapes. This should be attended to.

Bakery; building not large enough.

As to Raymond Street Jail and the County Morgue we have no further comment to make except to say we found them satisfactory.

The Grand Jury wishes to thank your Honor for the courtesies shown us, and also to thank District Attorney John F. Clarke, and his Assistants.

Respectfully submitted,

FOREMAN OF THE GRAND JURY.

To the Honorable Norman S. Dike,

County Judge, Kings County.

Dear Sir:-

The Kings County Grand Jury for the month of April, 1911 made an investigation of conditions at the Brooklyn Disciplinary Training School for Boys located at Fifty-eighth Street and Eighteenth Avenue, and submits herewith its report on the same.

FIRE PROTECTION.

The school is conducted in two buildings. One is a brick structure, consisting of three stories, a high basement and cellar. This building is reported to be about seventy-five years old. The other building is a frame structure, consisting of two stories and attic, with a high basement. This building is reported to be about one hundred and fifty years old. These buildings are connected by a two story passageway. There are housed in them about two hundred children and about forty employees. Both buildings are very combustible.

There are three interior stairways in the brick building, and two in the frame building. These stairways are wooden. There are no fireproof stairways in either building. There are two outside iron fire escapes on the brick building; one of these is in need of repair, and the other needs remodeling. There is on the frame building a ladder escape. There are two standpipes in the brick building and one in the frame.

With this equipment the management is making every provision possible to safeguard the inmates. Fire pails and extinguishers are well distributed. Fire drills are regularly and frequently held and watchmen patrol the buildings throughout the night.

NEEDS.

The fire escapes need to be repaired and remodeled and a fireproof stairway should be installed. Such changes would reduce to a minimum the danger from fire, but no changes will ever make the present buildings a satisfactory place for the conduct of the school.

The Board of Managers has petitioned his Honor, the Mayor, and the Honorable Board of Estimate & Apportionment for \$350,000 with which to change the plan of operating the school from the present congregate system to the cottage system. This, the Grand Jurors believe, is in keeping with the advanced thought of the day on the conduct of such institutions, and the present dilapidated conditions of the buildings seems to the Grand Jurors a cogent reason for hastening the change. We believe that action this year is highly desirable.

Respectfully submitted,

FOREMAN.

County Court Chambers,
Kings County,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

NORMAN S. DIKE
COUNTY JUDGE

October 18, 1911.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,
Mayor, City Hall, New York.

Dear Sir:

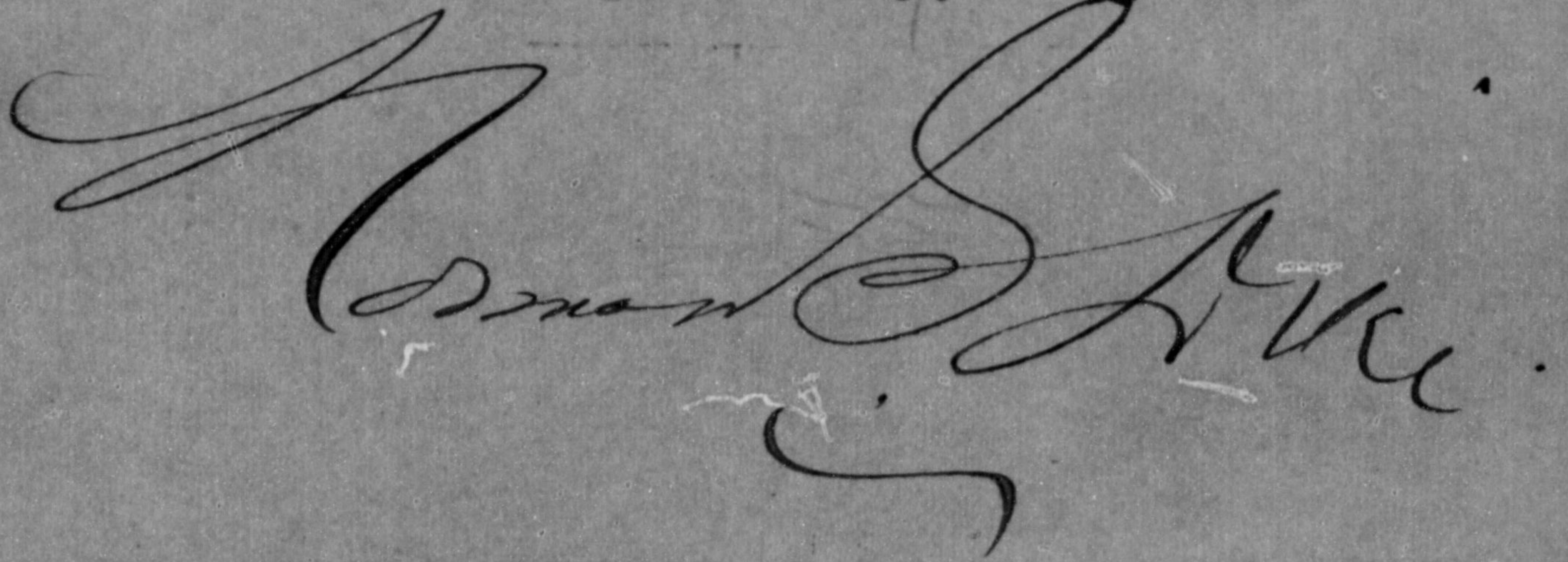
I have had called to my attention, during the term of service of the present Grand Jury, which has been an extraordinary one for Kings Co., the inequality in compensation between grand jurymen in New York County and those of several up-State counties, and the grand jurymen of Kings Co. The New York and some of the up-State county grand jurymen receive three dollars per diem, whereas in Kings County it is but two dollars. This would seem to me to be an entirely unjust discrimination, and especially is this a hardship in the case of the present Grand Jury, for they have served for two months, giving unusual time to matters of great importance presented to them, sitting often from ten o'clock until after six, and for two months having to give up their business.

I feel that you may be able to aid them perhaps, by sending to the Board of Aldermen a message asking for immediate action, so that this Grand Jury now in session may be enabled to receive for their extraordinary labors at least the added compensation, which will be equal then to that of New York County, -namely, three dollars per diem. I understand a committee

from the present Grand Jury will wait upon your Honor and present this matter more in detail. Anything I can do I am only too glad to do in this regard, as I feel that there should be equality in the question of compensation here and at once.

I remain,

Respectfully yours,

A large, elegant handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Samuel B. Duke". The signature features a prominent, sweeping initial "S" and a long, flowing tail that extends to the right.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE MAYOR:

Copy of presentment made by the Kings County Grand Jury, relative to conditions at the Brooklyn Disciplinary Training School for Boys, particularly with regard to inadequate fire protection. The Grand Jury recommends that new buildings be erected for this institution.

Attached are also copies of reports made to the Grand Jury by Deputy Fire Commissioner Farley and Superintendent of Buildings Thatcher as to inspections made by them, and suggesting that various safety appliances, new exits, etc. be provided.

County Court
Kings County, N. Y.
John T. Rafferty
~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
CHIEF CLERK.

Brooklyn, New York City.

February 5th., 1912.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,

Mayor,

New York City.

Dear Sir:-

At the request of the Grand Jury for the January term, 1912, I herewith enclose a copy of their presentment, together with reports from Deputy Fire Commissioner Farley, and Superintendent of Buildings Thatcher.

Very respectfully,



TO THE HONORABLE LEWIS L. FAWCETT,

County Judge, Kings County.

The Kings County Grand Jury for the month of January, 1912, visited the Disciplinary Training School for Boys, situated at 18th Avenue and 65th Street, and found it to be in a poor condition, particularly with regard to adequate fire protection.

We referred the question to Mr. John Thatcher, of the Building Department, and also to Mr. Philip P. Farley, of the Fire Department, and herewith annex their reports.

We trust that the proper City officials will take the reports under consideration for the improvements as suggested by them. We would also recommend that a new building be erected.

It is requested that a copy of this presentment with the reports hereto annexed be sent to the Hon. William J. Gaynor Mayor of the City of New York, and to the Hon. William A. Prendergast, Comptroller of the City of New York.

Respectfully submitted,

Geon Hanna
Foreman.

FIRE DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK,
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER,
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN.

February 1, 1912.

MR. GEORGE N. HANNA,

Foreman, JANUARY GRAND JURY,

Grand Jury Room, County Court House, Brooklyn.

Dear Sir:-

I herewith attach report made by an officer of this department who was directed by me to make an inspection as to the condition of buildings of the Brooklyn Disciplinary Training School for Boys, as requested by you in your letter of January 25.

Respectfully,

PHILIP P. FARLEY,

Deputy Fire Commissioner,

Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens.

Enclosure.

FIRE DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK,
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER.
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN.

January 31, 1912.

HON. PHILIP P. FARLEY,

Deputy Fire Commissioner,

Sir:

In compliance with your directions I inspected the Disciplinary Training School for Boys, situated on the east side of 18th Avenue between 57th and 58th Streets, Borough of Brooklyn, on the above date, relative to request dated January 25, 1912, from George N. Hanna, Foreman of the Grand Jury, January 1912, for information concerning the safety of occupants of said premises in the event of a fire occurring, also as to recommendations relative thereto, and I respectfully submit the results of my investigation:

MAIN BUILDING.

3-story and basement brick, 60 x 100', erected 1870; non-fireproof, owned by City of New York. Present accommodations: 207 boys, 20 employees, 16 day employees.

Fire escapes--two; one outside iron stairway on south side from third floor to yard; one balcony fire escape east side, taking in two windows on 3rd floor, with two sets of stairways to roof of 2-story extension in rear to two sets iron stairways to yard.

Interior stairways--three; one open wood construction east side, 46" in width from 3rd floor to basement outlet by hall, to rear door east side or by hall to rear door north side. One open wood construction 46" s. e. corner from 3rd floor to basement exit by door 1st floor or basement door 36" to yard. One open wood construction 50" n. e. corner from 3rd floor to basement exit by door 50" on 1st floor or basement door to yard.

Occupancy: Cellar--boiler and engine room.

Basement--kitchen, dining rooms, laundry and store room.

1st floor--Assembly room, class room, trade shop and offices.

2nd floor--Class room, two dormitories and small rooms.

3rd floor--All one dormitory.

Fire appliances, etc.: two 2" standpipes from cellar to 3rd floor with 50' canvas hose and one 3/4" shutoff brass nozzle on outlets, in good condition, on each floor, in wooden racks.

Water supply from 2" main connected to street main on 58th Street.

31 Fire pails, 3 hooks, 3 axes on 2nd and 3rd floors. No auxiliary fire appliances on first floor or basement.

Alarm system through building, consisting of 10" gongs on each floor, operated by hand, and 10" gongs, operated by electricity, from office.

Two night watchmen, one stationed in dormitory; one to patrol.

Time detector, Weidman pattern, stations on all floors; tours every 30 minutes, as shown by register.

Signs in halls indicating exits.

Special building fire alarm box #3-281.

Have squad fire drills in handling fire appliances, also in leaving building. I was informed that building can be vacated in one minute in day time and three minutes in night. Day drills one each week and night drills twice each month.

I tested the standpipe on third floor for water pressure and found stream was not sufficient to protect wood peak ceiling.

Lighting and heating: Gas and steam. Building is wired for electricity but the plant is shut down awaiting repairs.

Recommendations: That outside iron stairway 3'6" be erected on n. w. corner of building from 3rd floor to yard, with goose neck ladder to roof. This to provide exit on front of building from dormitories.

A 4' door to be cut through from basement to yard at foot of stairway on south side; have no direct exit at present.

Enclose open rack, cover over stairway in dormitory on 3rd floor.

Metal cover kitchen doors on inside.

Place one 3-gallon liquid fire extinguisher and three fire pails in kitchen.

Metal cover doors leading from dormitories, class rooms, dining rooms and laundry to hallways.

Self-closing metal doors leading to annex on basement and 2nd floor of both buildings.

Cover all outside woodwork of connecting bridge with metal and substitute wire glass and metal sills for present windows.

Wire glass and metal sills in windows on n. s. and two rows vertical on e. s. for protection from fire from frame annex.

Protect all woodwork around shafting with metal at basement connection to annex.

Metal cover side wall in laundry alongside of clothes dryer, also wire glass and metal sills in three windows in laundry on hallway.

4" supply main to be substituted for present 2" supply, which is inadequate. Also provide an automatic fire pump, capacity 1000 gallons per minute, to be attached to the 4" main. This will place standpipes in serviceable condition and with the fire drill squad properly trained could give excellent protection to the building. Present

fire companies are considerable distance from this school.

Two 3-gallon liquid fire extinguishers on each floor to provide streams, pending the installation of increased water pressure.

200' additional hose in cellar to lengthen line so same can be used around the outside of building.

All rubbish and worthless material to be removed from cellar, south compartment; same to be cleaned.

ANNEX BUILDING.

Three-story and basement frame, 40 x 100', erected (from information of Superintendent) about 140 years ago. Present accommodations: 16 boys quarantined in hospital on 2nd floor; six employees sleeping in attic.

Fire escapes--one: balcony fire escape south side, taking in two windows on 2nd floor with vertical ladder to roof and yards.

Interior stairways--two: one open wood construction 40" e. s. from attic to rear door 50" to yard. One enclosed wood construction 40" n. s. from attic to 2nd floor, then stair well covered with trap door and open gate to first floor, exit by 40" door on n. s. to yard.

Occupancy: Basement--Shower baths and toilet.
1st floor--Three trade shops, gymnasium.
2nd " --Three class rooms, quarantine room, dispensary and hospital.
3rd floor--Six sleeping rooms, one store room in dirty condition; stationery scattered around; old desks, chairs, etc.

Fire Appliances: One 2" standpipe (connected to the one in main building) with one outlet on each floor, with 50' 2" cotton hose and 3/4" brass nozzle attached.
Night watchman tours; time detector.
Seven fire pails and five hand grenades in attic.
Fire alarm box #3-279.
10" electric gong attic floor; 10" hand gong lower floors, one hook each floor.

Recommendations: Metal line door leading from basement to first floor.
Erect outside iron stairway with balconies taking in two windows in attic and second floor on n. w. corner of building, to provide safe exit for occupants on that side.
The rear rooms on attic floor exit by present rear escapes.
Store room on 3rd floor to be properly cleaned.
Two 3-gallon liquid fire extinguishers and one axe to be placed on each floor.

REMARKS.

The main building is an old time class of school structure with wooden stairways, lath and plaster ceilings, and nothing of fireproof construction. The general appearance regarding regula-

tion and care is good excepting as reported. The number of scholars are small in comparison with other schools, and with the additional exits recommended, together with the present stairways and fire escapes, will be adequate. The increase of water supply recommended is very necessary for the protection of premises.

The annex building is of Colonial type and extremely old and dilapidated, with considerable wood trim throughout the interior; alterations and partitions are made of rough boards and, therefore, inflammable. An additional stairway is recommended for egress from front of building. This with two stairway outlets remote from each other, and present fire escape in rear, will provide sufficient exits. In view of the above facts I would recommend that this building be used for sleeping purposes as little as possible.

Respectfully,

CHARLES E. FIELD,

Foreman detailed to office of
Deputy Fire Commissioner,
Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens.

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN.

MTD/HMK

BOROUGH HALL, Brooklyn,

Bureau of Buildings

Jan. 29th, 1912

John Thatcher, Superintendent.

William A. Coakley, Assistant Superintendent.

Mr. George H. Harned, Foreman,

Kings County Grand Jury for January, 1912.

% District Attorney's Office.

Dear Sir:-

Replying to your request of January 25th for a thorough inspection and complete report by this Bureau of the premises known as the Brooklyn Disciplinary Training School for Boys, 18th Ave. & 65th Street, Brooklyn, I am pleased to enclose herewith report of two Special Inspectors, which I trust will give you thenfull information desired.

Yours very truly,

JOHN THATCHER,

Superintendent.

BUREAU OF BUILDINGS OF THE BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN
CITY OF NEW YORK, BOROUGH HALL, BROOKLYN.

Borough of Brooklyn, The City of New York, Jan. 29th, 1912

John Thatcher,

Superintendent.

Dear Sir:-

The building located about 200' east of 18th avenue, between 56th & 58th Sts. known as the Brooklyn Disciplinary Training School for boys, is built of brick, about 97' front, 66' deep, three stories and basement in height.

In the cellar in which the boilers are located there are four exits: two by interior and two by exterior stairs. The basement contains dining room and kitchen, linen and laundry rooms; the linen room employs several persons, has but one means of exit; the windows of room are provided with fixed iron bar window guards. One of these windows should be arranged so that the iron bars swing outward toward the yard. On the first floor are located the chapel, school, library and offices.

On the second floor are the rooms of the Superintendent and male employees, dormitory and three class rooms. at the n. w. corner is an isolated class room containing twenty (20) pupils, which has but one exit. The entrance to the other rooms is gained by a door to each room; there is a connecting door in the partitions between these rooms which should be so arranged as to be readily opened.

The entire third floor is occupied as a dormitory. At the n. e. corner there is a small sleeping room partitioned off from the main floor from which there is an exit direct to stairs. There is also an open window in the partition, which is intended as an exit. This window should be converted into a door. This structure contains three interior stairways from basement to upper floors, each about 3'9" wide, and are remote from each other.

There are also fire escapes on the east and south sides of the building. All the above are located on the east and south ends, while the north and west sides are not provided with any means of exit. If an interior or exterior means of exit were installed at the north end, near the front, it would provide an additional exit from the unprovided portion of the dormitory on the upper floor, and also from the isolated class room on the floor below. The doors from dormitory floor leading to stairs should be made to open out where feasible.

The building adjoining, and connected with the main building or structure, is of frame, 44' front, 82' deep and two stories and attic and basement in height, and is occupied as follows:

Basement as a playground; 1st floor gymnasium & work shops;

Second floor, westerly end, which is connected with the main building, is occupied as a hospital.

On the attic floor are the sleeping apartments for the female help.

The interior of the building contains one main stairs from basement to attic; also from the first floor, an additional stairs (and not remote from the other) leads to attic story. On the south side, near the rear, there is a balcony and ladder fire escape, which is obsolete and inadequate.

The use of the second and attic floors for hospital purposes and sleeping apartments, in this structure, should be discontinued, on account of the means of exit being inadequate and the building unsuitable for the uses it is put to.

Owner, The City of New York.

Respectfully submitted,

HUGH O'DONNELL

P. H. SMITH.

County Court Chambers,
Kings County,
Brooklyn, N.Y.

NORMAN S. DIKE
COUNTY JUDGE

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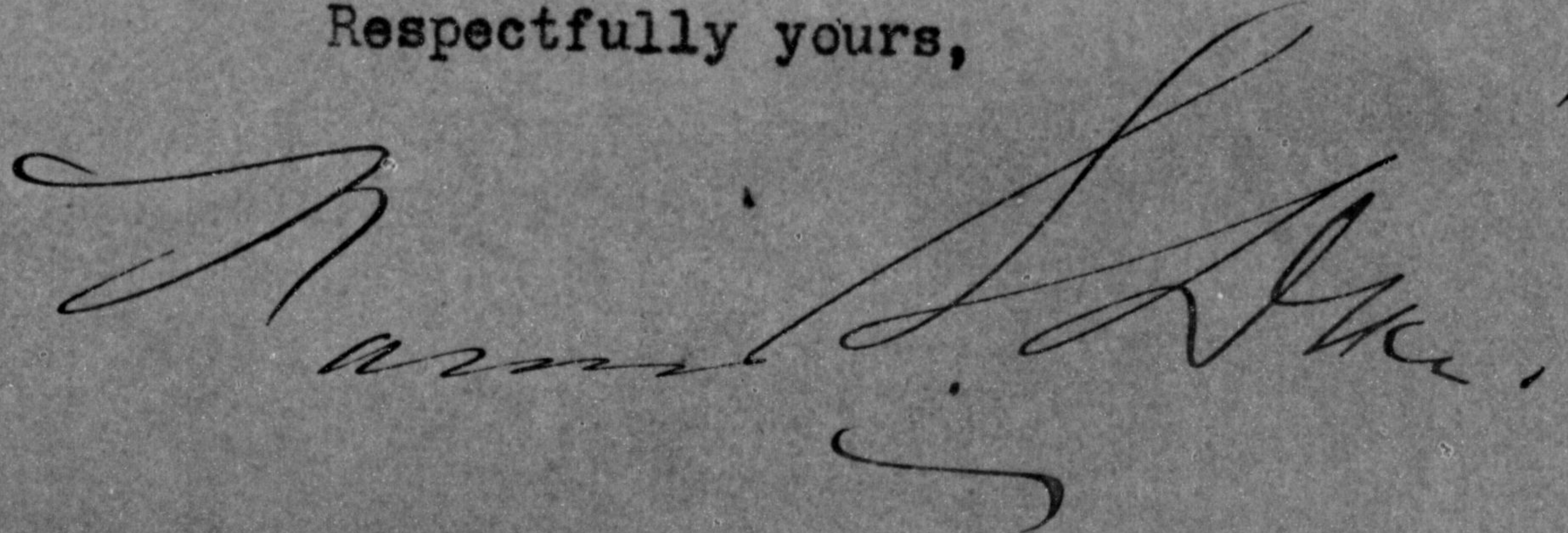
Hon. William J. Gaynor,
City Hall, Manhattan.

Dear Sir:

The photograph which has been sent to me by Bridge Commissioner O'Keeffe is a splendid exhibit in the move towards a centralization of our great public buildings. This one treating of the situation around the bridge seems to me splendid in every particular, and in commending this to the favorable action of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, I also wish to beg, as a resident of the Borough of Brooklyn, for an equal share of your official attention in the treatment of the civic center for this Borough including the new court house site and the plaza from the bridge to the borough hall. With these two civic centers joined by the Brooklyn Bridge, the State of New York will indeed have something of splendor and grandeur that will be impossible to equal anywhere in the world.

I remain,

Respectfully yours,

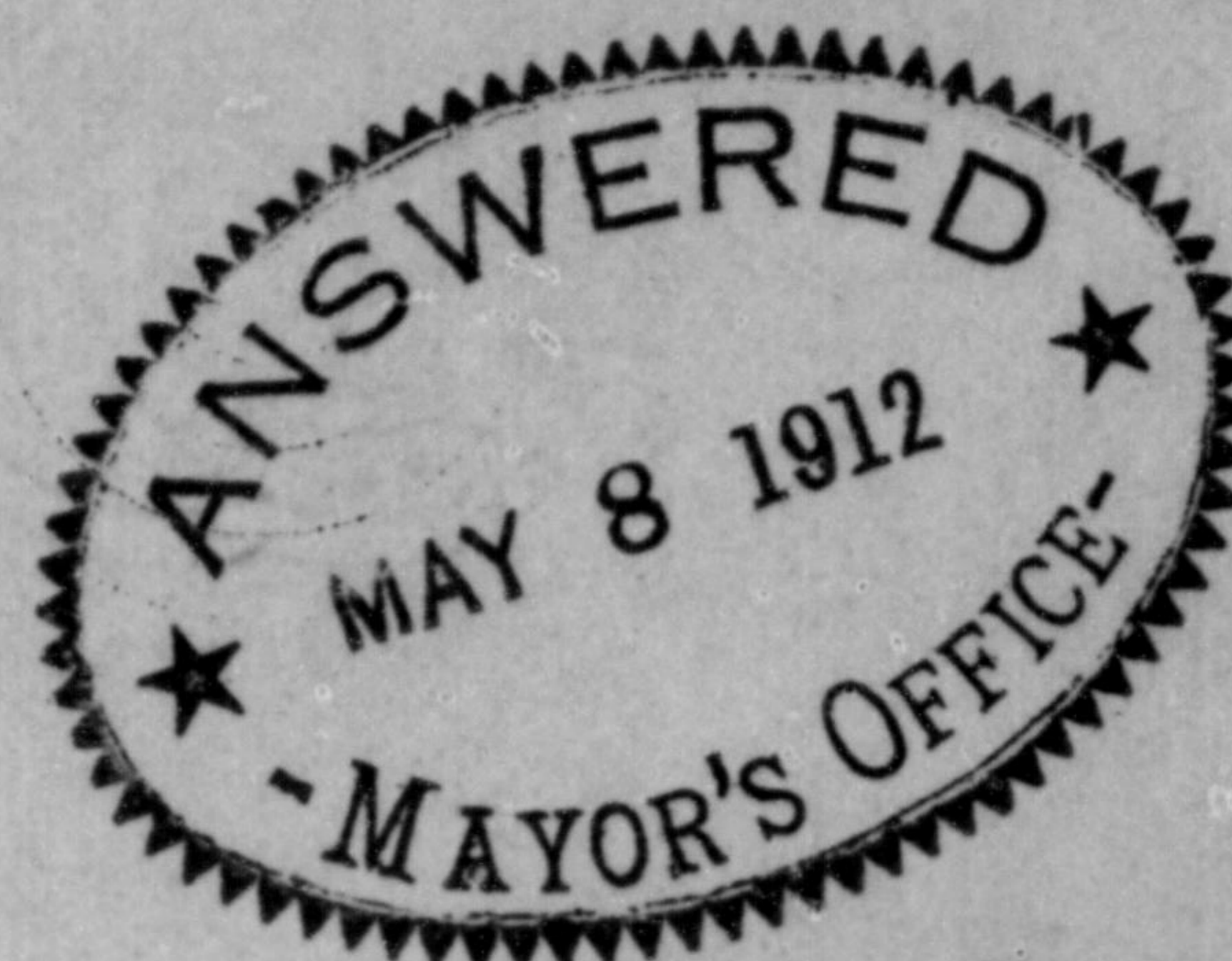


*County Court
Kings County, N. Y.*

JOHN T. RAFFERTY,
CHIEF CLERK.
D. H. RALSTON,
DEPUTY CHIEF CLERK.

Brooklyn, New York City.

May 6th., 1912.



Hon. William J. Gaynor,
Mayor, Greater New York,
New York City.

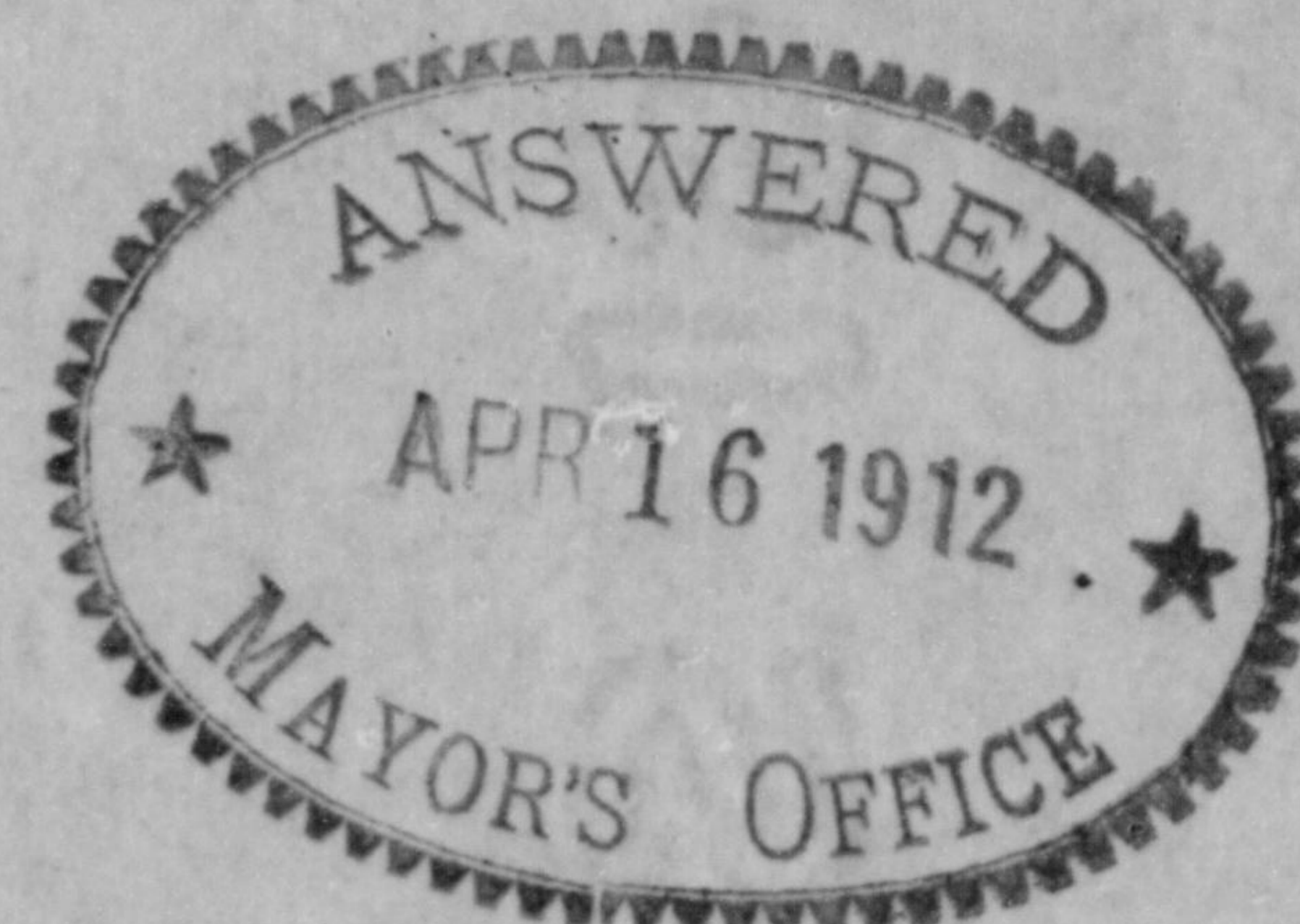
Dear Sir:-

I herewith enclose a copy of the presentment made by the Grand
Jury, April term, 1912, for your consideration.

Very respectfully,

John T. Rafferty

County Court, Queens County,
LONG ISLAND CITY, N.Y.
BURT JAY HUMPHREY,
COUNTY JUDGE.



April 15th, 1912.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,
Mayor of the City of New York.

Dear sir:

My attention has been called to an Act passed by the Legislature in relation to the office of the District Attorney of the County of Queens relating to the District Attorney's official staff and their salaries. It has been notorious for many years that in the various counties going to make up Greater New York the salaries paid to public officials have been far less in Queens than in the other counties where a like service is required of public officials. I have always contended that the salary for the same class of position requiring the same qualifications and attainments should be the same in whatever county the service is performed. For that reason I have always endorsed and approved every measure of the Legislature coming under my notice which brings salaries paid to officials in Queens County up to something near the salaries paid to them in the other counties of the City.

The administration of the criminal law requires

County Court, Queens County,

LONG ISLAND CITY, N.Y.

BURT JAY HUMPHREY,

COUNTY JUDGE.

that the District Attorney and all his assistants devote their entire time to the duties of their respective positions and no time is permitted any of the deputies or assistants, as I understand it, to carry on their private practice.

Under the present law the highest salary paid any assistant in the Queens County District Attorney's office is Three thousand dollars, and there is only one of the deputies who receives that sum. In Kings County there are ten assistant District Attorneys who receive Five Thousand Dollars per annum or more and in New York County there are ten who receive Seven Thousand five hundred Dollars per annum with thirteen others who receive Four Thousand Dollars or more, while the bill referred to provides for only two at not more than Five Thousand Dollars.

The District Attorney and his assistants are appearing before me the greater part of the time. They are doing their work efficiently and devoting their entire time to the duties of the office, and in my judgment they are entitled to the salary provided for in the Act to which I have referred.

County Court, Queens County,
LONG ISLAND CITY, N.Y.
BURT JAY HUMPHREY,
COUNTY JUDGE.

I am sure the people of Queens who are the taxpayers
would be glad indeed of an opportunity to see the official
staff of the public prosecutor more adequately paid.

Yours very truly,

Burt Jay Humphrey