

The Valentine Russ House Notes
616 West Wilson Street
Gary Tipler, February 11, 2019

After seeing Alder Rummel's notes on the house, I looked to see if I could easily find more about the Claude & Starck connection.

After checking City Directories, there was information to suggest that Valentine Russ lived in the house or very close since about 1873.

Since 1875, Valentine Russ was listed in the directories as a gardener, likely a professional landscaper, and maintained that listing as late as 1925 while living at that house.

It is possible that Valentine Russ was a friend or contractor known to Louis Claude and Edward Starck and that Claude, or the firm, designed a remodel of his house around the turn of the century, when they were designing large houses and mansions.

The bracket ornaments on the porch are found on several Claude & Starck houses, though much larger and expensive ones. It would be interesting to know if there are interior features -- trims and installations that are typical of those used by Claude & Stark. They should be documented.

The renovation date places it among the earliest of known houses by the firm, but in a vernacular style.

News stories:

Valentine Russ, 85, was a well-known "pioneer citizen", a resident of the fourth ward for 57 years. He was born in Bavaria, Germany and came to Madison in 1851. He died in his home where rites were held. He was a member of St. Raphael's Catholic Church.

Madison Capital Times January 9, 1928

Madison Capital Times January 10, 1928