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THE ARCHITECTURAL CAREER OF AUGUST BEINKE

by David J. Simmons

Focusing on the German community in St. Louis, local architect August M. Beinke practiced from 1873 until his death in August, 1901. Born in Franklin County, Missouri, on September 30, 1845, Beinke trained with local architect Edward Illsley between 1869 and 1872. During his twenty-eight-year career, he worked on more than 170 commissions representing mostly moderately sized projects and reflecting a wide range of building types. Stylistically he followed the dictates of the period. His expressions of simple Romanesque Revival and modern Renaissance Revival found favor with clients, local critics, and the general public.



August M. Beinke, as depicted in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 7, 1896: "When 11 years old his father sent him adrift in the world with 50 cents and a pair of jeans pants." On January 19, the paper reported "August Beinke will have to shave off his mustache if he fulfills his part of a bet made recently with Henry Schulte, the builder. He bet his mustache that St. Louis would get the Democratic convention." That year the Democrats went to Chicago.

Architect John Wees associated with Beinke's firm starting in 1885 as a draftsman, progressing to chief draftsman, and finally to partner in the firm of Beinke and Wees between 1890 and September 1893. A native of Alsace-Lorraine, Wees received



his education in Heidelberg, Germany and Paris, France, before migrating to the United States in 1879. Most of Beinke's designs reflected a picturesque quality sustained by fine detail, imaginative arrangement, careful integration of materials, and frequent inclusion of the unexpected. Three distinct periods defined Beinke's work: Development (1873 to 1884), Refinement (1885 to 1893), and Late Maturity (1894-1901).



GERMAN PROTESTANT ORPHANS' HOME.

German Protestant Orphans' Home (now called Evangelical Children's Home), 8240 St. Charles Rock Road, 1877; from M. M. Yeakle, The City of Saint Louis of To-Day, 1889

In 1874 the German Evangelical Protestant Orphans Home offered Beinke his first important architectural commission. He remodeled and expanded their current facility to accommodate 150 children at a cost of \$75,000. Located on St. Charles Rock Road six miles outside St. Louis' central business district, his new expanded facility displayed a frontage of 225 feet by a maximum depth of 68 feet. Composed of two floors, mansard attic, and basement, this structure featured a central clock tower 86 feet high placed on a base 18 feet square. Its interior accommodated two large dorm spaces, a chapel seating 500, a gym, office, dining area, kitchen, ample bathing and toilet arrangements, and classrooms. He furnished the structure with steam heat, hot and cold running water, and gas lighting (250 burners).

Fire consumed this structure two and a half years after its completion. Beinke designed its replacement at the same location in 1877 for \$125,000. Conceived in the French mansard style, this 42-room orphanage of three floors and a basement was brick with stone trim and a slate roof. Its 160-foot front divided into a center section of 100 feet by 50 feet deep and two wings, each 30' by 70'. Among its many rooms were four dorms, four school rooms, two sick areas, and a chapel.

Three years later two local religious congregations ordered plans from Beinke for their new houses of worship. The Union Methodist Episcopal Church relocated from its downtown location to the southwest corner of Lucas and Garrison, building a limestone Gothic revival building measuring 80' by 103', with a height of 90'. A large stained glass window 20' by 26' and a short tower distinguished the church's front. This \$60,000 building housed the church auditorium (82' by 70') seating 800 people on its upper floor.



United Hebrew Congregation, 21st & Olive, 1879

The United Hebrew Congregation erected their new brick Romanesque-Moorish synagogue (63' by 97') at the southeast corner of 21st and Olive, spending \$40,000. Two towers, each equipped with an outside entrance, framed the front façade with its gabled roofline and rose window 20' in diameter. The 100' west tower had a modified onion dome punctuated with dormers and the smaller east tower a battlement arrangement. Seating 800 people, the audience room on the upper level consisted of 24'-high walls and a barrel vaulted ceiling rising to a height of 40' above the floor. On the synagogue's lower level, four separate classrooms formed a large meeting hall 60' square when the partitions between the classrooms were removed.



Eden Seminary, St. Charles Rock Road at Lucas & Hunt, 1882-83

The board of trustees for the German Evangelical Protestant Theological Seminary at Marthasville, Missouri, voted in 1882 to move their operations to St. Louis County. Having purchased a 13-acre site for \$9,500 at Eden railroad station, where Lucas and Hunt Road meets St. Charles Rock Road, they hired Beinke's firm to design their new seminary building. The three-story brick seminary building, with mansard roof, measured 465' by 92' or 19 by 6 bays. A clock tower at the center of the front contained the building's main entrance. With more than 60 rooms, its interior allowed for a chapel seating 250, a dormitory serving up to 86 students, 5 classrooms, 18 study rooms, office, library, museum, refectory, servants quarters, and many other assigned spaces. Completed at a cost of \$110,000, it opened for training in the fall of 1883.

Between 1882 and 1888 the Beinke firm prepared plans for five important projects in the popular Romanesque style. Three of these commissions were moderate-sized Protestant churches in north St. Louis. The First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, left its odd-looking downtown building at Eighth and Washington in 1883 for a new church at Glasgow and Dayton. It was completed for \$30,000 and dedicated that September.

St. James German Evangelical Church (50' by 72') went up at 1505 East College in 1888, and the Salem Evangelical Reformed Church (52' by 66') was erected at the northeast corner of Fourteenth and Sullivan the same year. Each church cost about \$18,000 to build.



St. James German Evangelical Church, 1507 East College Avenue at Blair, 1887. Photo by Cynthia Hill Longwisch

The Missouri Tabernacle, located at the southeast corner of Seventh and Cass, was built in 1887 by the Niedringhaus family as a memorial to Walter Niedringhaus. It served inner city youth as a center for recreation, basic education, moral training, and religious experience. Measuring 70' by 100', the brick center had two floors and basement with space for a gym,

bowling alley, dining facilities, library, classrooms, office, and most important, an assembly hall (30' by 50') situated on the second floor. The Romanesque structure cost \$25,000.

Representing a \$30,000 expenditure, the three-story Northside German YMCA was built in 1888 at Nineteenth and St. Louis Avenue. Measuring 48' by 111', it was red stock brick trimmed with granite and Lake Superior red sandstone. Retail space flanked either side of the central staircase hall, accessed by the main entrance. In the rear of the basement, the gym (48' by 44') rose two floors or 24' with connecting shower and locker rooms. Library, reading room, office, lounge, and a two-story entertainment hall occupied the second floor. On the floor above were four classrooms, kitchens and janitor quarters.



Beinke & Wees, West End Hotel, Vandeventer & West Belle Ave., 1892

During the brief partnership of Beinke and Wees, the firm executed five major architectural commissions, the most important being the West End Hotel. Designed for Sam Bowman and George Sauerbrunn, this five-story hotel was located at the southwest corner of West Belle and Vandeventer opposite the west end of Vandeventer Place and was intended in part for guests of that exclusive enclave. Measuring 104' by 93', it was brick and brownstone trimmed in terra cotta in Renaissance style. Its main entrance on West Belle opened into a hall 28' wide and running the full length of the building for 90'. This space contained the hotel office and rotunda and connected to the main dining room (27' by 65'). The facade on Vandeventer had four retail stores and an auxiliary hotel entrance, which opened into a 14'-wide hall linking the main corridor and a private dining area. A pair of elevators and staircases gave access to the 106 guestrooms with connecting baths on the hotel's upper floors. Besides guest rooms, the second floor had a ladies' sitting room and a gentlemen's parlor. A separate service building in the rear furnished the hotel with a kitchen, laundry, boiler and furnace rooms, and the servants' dining and sleeping rooms. Cost of the hostelry ranged between \$175,000 and \$225,000. The hotel received its first guests in the fall of 1891.

During the same period Chris Von der Ahe, owner of the St. Louis Browns Baseball Team, placed his dream for a new baseball park in the care of Beinke's firm. Situated on a leased 7.5-acre tract at the southwest corner of Vandeventer and Natural Bridge, the new ball park needed a grandstand,

pavilion, club house, and ticket office in addition to the playing field. Seating 3,000 fans, the grandstand (300' by 60') had a wooden superstructure built on a stone foundation. Underneath the grandstand were the restaurant and restroom facilities. A wood and stone pavilion seated another 3,500 people and openair seating in front of the pavilion accommodated 2,000 more. Both the ticket office and the clubhouse had two floors. Costing a total of \$75,000, the New Sportsman's Park opened in 1893, replacing the earlier park at Grand and Dodier. The new park was later called League Park, Robison Field, and Cardinal Field until the Cardinals moved back to the Dodier site in 1920. Beaumont High School now occupies the site.



Meramec Highlands, detail of a panorama showing the hotel and some of the cottages. Note the train in the foreground.



One of the surviving cottages of Meramec Highlands

Early in the 1890s Marcus Bernheimer formed the Meramec Highland Summer Resort Improvement Company and purchased a 438-acre site overlooking the Meramec Valley on the south side of Big Bend west of Kirkwood. As a previous satisfied Beinke customer, he chose Beinke and Wees to make his resort plans reality. Using the Queen Anne style, they built the five-story wood and stone Highland Inn, furnished with 125 rooms, including 75 sleeping rooms. In addition, the resort offered twenty single two-story shingle residences, each containing from five to ten rooms. Several of these survive on Barberry Lane, Ponca Trail, and West Ponca. Other important resort structures included the dance pavilion, the bath house, and a store & post office combination. When the resort opened on May 15, 1895, construction costs had already exceeded \$150,000.

Newsletter



St. Louis College of Physicians & Surgeons, Jefferson & Gamble, 1890

The St. Louis College of Physicians selected Beinke and Wees to erect their new school building after acquiring a lot (89' by 119') at the corner of Jefferson and Gamble. Construction of this three-story brick building (60' by 100') commenced in the summer of 1890. The design placed a reception room, free dispensary, apothecary, small lecture room, consulting area, and janitor's office on the first level. A large lecture room (60' by 75') semicircular with skylight, a small lecture space. and the Dean's office occupied the second floor. Anatomical space, faculty offices, and the museum occupied the top floor. Completed in 1892, the school cost \$60,000.



Beethoven Conservatory, 2301 Locust, original 1891 design, courtesy of Landmarks Association

The most artistic effort of the Beinke and Wees collaboration remains the Beethoven Conservatory Building at 2301 Locust Street. Constructed in 1892 for August Waldauer, the conservatory director, this restrained two-story musical temple of brick, stone, and terra cotta employed Renaissance Revival approach imitating some aspects of another recently completed neighborhood structure, the St. Louis Club of 1885 designed by Boston's Peabody & Stearns. Its interior arrangement locates the recital hall, reception area, and studio rooms on the second floor and the practice hall, office, reception room, and more studio space on the first level. After twelve years, the conservatory left these premises in 1904. At first an elevator company and later a printing firm made these premises their home, erecting two separate rear additions (1929 and 1949) and changing its interior configuration without destroying its architectural integrity.

Throughout Beinke's architectural career, his firm developed and maintained a reputation for excellent residential design, be it for personal use or rental property. Most of these efforts concentrated on middle class housing, of which little has survived. An exception is the row of seven attached houses in the mansard style located on the south side of Lafayette Avenue just east of Compton. Erected in 1884 for J. G. Zimmerer at a cost of \$30,000, these two-story and attic residences composed of brick with stone fronts offered an eight-room package of living space.



3128-3140 Lafayette, between Michigan and Compton, 1884

Combination structures placing retail stores on the street level and middle-class apartments on the upper floor accounted for several dozen Beinke projects. Two excellent examples of this combination arrangement have survived from the last period of Beinke's practice. At the southwest corner of Vandeventer and Laclede, the Gerhart Block (117' by 50') is buff brick with wood, stone, and terra cotta trim. It makes available for rent eleven adjacent retail stores and ten second-floor apartments, accessed by five separate street entrances. Finished in 1896 at a cost of \$40,000, this building is in the Renaissance Revival spirit, with fine detailing, bay windows, and a hipped/gabled roof giving it a picturesque quality.



Gerhart Block, Vandeventer and Laclede, 1896

The building at the northeast corner of Euclid and Maryland Avenues, crossroads of the Central West End, is another example of this building type and perhaps the best known building by Beinke. Erected in 1897 and financed by the Gerhart Realty Company for \$50,000, this two-story L-shaped structure of grey brick trimmed in cream colored terra cotta and limestone accommodates thirteen retail spaces on the street level and twelve apartments above. Like its sister building on Vandeventer, it uses Renaissance Revival ideas but expressed more lavishly and on a more imposing scale. Measuring 230' by 160', it links the two floors with six staircase halls. Its most striking aspect is the fine classical detail of the terra cotta.

Some of the finest local mansions constructed in the late nineteenth century originated from Beinke's firm. His first residential commission to catch public attention was the home of Mayor Henry Overstolz on Washington Avenue, built in 1875. By the early 1880s Beinke had emerged as one of the top four local residential designers, the others being George I. Barnett, Henry Isaacs, and Alfred Grable. A short list of his elegant residences reveals some of the important clients he worked for and the prestigious locations of their homes:

1875, Mayor Henry Overstolz, 3439 Washington 1875, John P. Meyer, 2002 Lafavette 1877, August Gilye, 2004 Lafayette 1877, Charles Gage, 3638 Washington 1881, Charles G. Stifel, 2013 St. Louis Avenue 1882, J. G. Zimmerer, 2213 South Grand 1884, William M. Horton, 3227 Lafavette 1887, August Gehner, 4496 Lindell 1887, Martin Lammert, 4490 Lindell 1887, Claus Vieths, 4482 Lindell 1887 Henry Linneman, 307 North Taylor 1888 George Walker, 4355 Lindell 1888, Mrs. D. G. Cook, 3828 Washington 1888, G. W. Nieman, 4472 Lindell 1893, Henry Benestock, 3838 West Pine 1891, G. Niedringhaus, 3745 Lindell 1892, Henry Petring, 4428 West Pine 1892, T. Niedringhaus, 79 Vandeventer Place 1893, Henry Laumeier, 2201 South Grand 1899, Christian Peper, 4448 Washington



T. K. Niedringhaus House, 79 Vandeventer Place, 1892

A photograph from 1890 shows three Romanesque houses completed by Beinke in 1887 on the south side of the 4400 block of Lindell, ending at Taylor. Moving from right to left were the residences of August Gehner (\$30,000), Martin Lammert (\$18,000), and Claus Vieths (\$25,000). Although the houses seem be similar in massing and materials, each has contrasting detailing, demonstrating the firm's seemingly inexhaustable supply of architectural ideas.



The south side of Lindell Avenue, looking east from Taylor. All four houses were designed by Beinke in 1887 and 1888.

The fourth house, shown in the distance on the left is also by Beinke, the twelve-room house for G. W. Nieman, built in 1888 for \$30,000. It is one of only two of Beinke's mansions to have escaped the ravages of time. An entrance tower crowned with an onion-shaped dome, a striking central dormer, imaginative fenestration, constrasting shapes, and elegant detail transformed this Renaissance Revival design for the house of 1888 into a masterpiece, its \$30,000 price tag justified. In contrast, the 1892 ten-room Benestock house cost only \$17,000 and used more modest means to express its Romanesque plan.



G. W. Nieman House, 4472 Lindell, 1888

During the last years of practice, the firm concentrated on the construction of commercial buildings – factories, warehouses, and some office space. Various historical resources attributed 18 factories and machine shops to the Beinke firm's total career achievement. A listing of this total includes five furniture factories, four carriage manufacturing operations, and three shoe plants. About half of this career total was executed between 1894 and 1901.

Henry Timkin Carriage Co, Second and Broadway Kregel Casket Co., 18th & Cass C. C. Menge Jr. Co., 19th & North Market C. G. Stifel Shoe Co., Jefferson & University Gold Seal Realty Co., 2017 Dickson Landis Machine Co., 2500 Mullanphy Mound City Coffin Co., 2000 North Second Peters Shoe Company, 12th & North Market Koken Barber Supply Co., 2516 Olive F. H. Logeman Furniture Co., 2022 North Main

Of the thirteen warehouses attributed to this firm, two were built for the Niedringhaus St. Louis Stamping Company, makers of Graniteware. He completed one warehouse (26' by 80') with five floors at Second and Cass in 1888 and the other (75' by 124') with three levels at Tenth and Franklin four years later.



Christian Peper Building, 701-707 N. First, Laclede's Landing, 1898-1901, now headquarters of Metro, the Bi-State Development Agency

In 1895, C. G. Stifel asked Beinke to build his new five-story brick warehouse (115' by 125') at the northeast corner of Seventh and Clark. It had a plain modern exterior and cost over \$100,000. Three years later, Christian Peper secured Beinke's services for building two modern warehouses. One three-level brick warehouse (95' by 123') was located at Eleventh and Market. The other storage facility (116' by 135') is still standing at 701-717 North First Street at Lucas in Laclede's Landing. Peper spent \$80,000 on the construction of this sixstory brick warehouse in a modern style.

Six years prior to his death, Beinke put together his only downtown tall office building,, situated on the south side of Pine west of Ninth and next to the Hagan Theatre. Constructed for C. G. Stifel at a cost of \$150,000, this six-story grey brick and terra cotta building (165' by 109') was inspired by the Chicago School of Architecture. On the street level it offered six retail spaces and two building entrances. On the floors above, it accommodated fifty offices accessed by three sets of stairs and four hydraulic elevators. Over a 25-year association C. G. Stifel supplied Beinke with at least six different commissions, including several major undertakings. The eighth and final Beinke church came in 1897 with the German Zion Methodist congregation at 7427 Virginia, at the corner of Koeln, in Carondelet. Its simple Gothic exterior and plain interior accounted for its modest cost of less than \$9,000.



The Stifel Block, from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Feb. 16, 1896

On November 22, 1896, the *St. Louis Republic* reported about Beinke's plan for a twelve-story brick hotel in the range of a half million dollars, to be built at the southwest corner of Twelfth (now Tucker) and Olive. Lacking sufficient funding, this project was abandoned. If it had been built perhaps its presence would have conferred on Beinke the public recognition his success and talent deserved. Like several other talented architects of the period, Beinke operated in the shadow of the rising local architectural superstars as the golden age of St. Louis architecture evolved. The dazzling achievements of such firms as Eames & Young and Barnett, Haynes & Barnett completely eclipsed the work of less prominent local architects.

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A HOSPITAL PROPOSAL BY LEE & RUSH, CIRCA 1927

The picture below is a proposal for a site at the northwest corner of Union and Page that was never built. The building to the left is St. Ann's Hospital (originally the Lying-in Hospital and Foundling Asylum), and at the left edge of the picture is the side of the former Emerson School by William B. Ittner, now Better Family Life.



"New Mullanphy Hospital, St. Louis, Lee & Rush Architects." Photo of a drawing from the Gloria Simpson Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center St. Louis

The Mullanphy Hospital was the earlier name for the present DePaul Hospital, named in honor of its early benefactor, John Mullanphy (and not to be confused with the Mullanphy Emigrant Home founded by his son Bryan Mullanphy). The hospital was founded by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in 1828. First located on Spruce between 3rd & 4th, it moved to Montgomery & Coleman, east of Grand, in 1872. Discussions about moving the Montgomery Avenue hospital began in 1922, and after the building was damaged in the tornado of 1927, the need became urgent. This drawing must have been made about that time. Eventually the sisters decided to move to 2415 North Kingshighway between Wabada & Highland, which was then being redeveloped as a World War I memorial boulevard. The new DePaul Hospital was opened there in 1930, designed by O'Meara & Hills, a regional firm specializing in Catholic institutions.



A closer view of the proposed Mullanphy Hospital

J. Sidney Lee and Henri Rush designed several notable Catholic churches, including Pius V at South Grand & Utah (1916), Holy Name at East Grand & Emily (1916), and St. Roch's at Waterman & Rosedale (1921). Not much is known about Lee, but Rush was born in Cape Town, South Africa in 1874 and came to St. Louis before the World's Fair. After the firm broke up in the late 1930s, Rush became chief engineer for the city's building commissioner. He retired to Harburg, Germany, where he died in 1959.



St. Ann's Hospital, Page Avenue, 1904, Barnett, Haynes & Barnett

St. Ann's Hospital was a sister institution to Mullanphy, as were St. Vincent's Hospital and Marillac College in Normandy. St. Ann's opened in 1904. At first it was a maternity hospital and foundling asylum, but in later years it was a home for aged women. In 1975, St. Ann's moved to the new De Paul campus in Bridgeton, and the Union Avenue building was demolished.

Barnett, Haynes & Barnett were here inspired by the Collegiate Gothic style of Cope & Stewardson, whose Brookings Hall was under construction as St. Ann's was being designed. The Barnett firm had designed Visitation Academy nearby on Belt near Cabanne in 1892, and in 1910 they designed St. Philomena's Technical School at Union & Cabanne, another institution run by the Daughters of Charity. With the Principia School a few blocks west on Page, the new Mullanphy Hospital would have cemented the area's position as one of the premier institutional centers in the city.



A closer view of the Rush & Lee drawing of St. Ann's Hospital

GET THE MAUL, LEO! by Gary Lehmann

Editor's note: Gary Lehmann is a writer and historian in Rochester, New York. John Foster Warner (1859-1937) of Rochester was the son of an architect and became a leader in his profession. The University of Rochester, which holds the Warner family papers, says J. Foster was one of the first automobile owners in New York State.

- J. Foster Warner was a Victorian architect with very high standards. He would discuss
- each project patiently with the workman until what was needed was quite understood.
- But if the work was found wanting upon completion, J. Foster Warner turned to his
- assistant, Leo Ribson, and cried out in a commanding voice, *Get the maul, Leo!*

The workman knew the time for discussion was at an end. J. Foster Warner,

an avid automobilist, kept the dreaded instrument in the trunk of his car.

Whether it was a poorly installed fireplace or a misplaced doorway, Leo destroyed it,

and the workman learned to his peril what it meant to work for a perfectionist.

RESERVE NOW FOR THE ANNUAL GATHERING

Sunday, February 10, 2013, 6 to 9:30 The Restaurant at the Cheshire 7036 Clayton Road, Hi-Pointe

Join us in celebrating the long-awaited reopening of the Cheshire. We'll be in the upstairs banquet room. Cost \$30, payable at the door. Renew your membership for 2013 at the same time for \$10. Please RSVP to Esley Hamilton at 314-615-0357 or <u>ehamilton@stlouisco.com</u>. The deadline for reservations is Wednesday, February 6.

Bring a few slides of a building or place for our traditional slide show. Unillustrated announcements are also welcome. To use PowerPoint or other computer visuals, please contact John Guenther at 314-560-1493 or

john.c.guenther@gmail.com. We'll be sticking to our fourminute rule to accommodate everybody who wants to speak.

Parking at the Cheshire is now by valet only, @ \$4, with separate drop-off points for the restaurant and hotel. You may park free on Clayton Road or on Ethel, the first street south of the Hi-Pointe Theater and west of McCausland.

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News Letter

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