



PATIO ENTRANCE TO "VILLA MADONNA"

The Home of Madam Ida Hancock Ross



MADAM IDA HANCOCK ROSS

Madam Ida Hancock Ross

With Views of her home, "Villa Madonna."

By G. Allan Hancock

This article is dedicated to my beloved mother as a token of my affection for her and my devotion to her memory. — G. ALLEN HANCOCK.



ADAM IDA HANCOCK ROSS, born in Imperial, Illinois, was the daughter of a Hungarian count, Agostin Haraszthy, and Eleanora de Dedinskyi, a noblewoman of Polish descent. Count Haraszthy was exiled in 1840, and his estates confiscated for leadership in Kossuth's first effort to obtain freedom from Austrian rule. He purchased large tracts in Wisconsin with his wife's dowry, and took an active part in the formative period of the state. In 1849, County Haraszthy, with his father, wife, and five of his six children (the eldest son being in the Annapolis Naval Academy), set out across the plains for California via the Santa Fe Trail.

Madam Ross was too young to remember much of the trip, but she recalls that a Comanche chief encountered en route first offered to buy her for four squaws and eight ponies, then attempted to kidnap her, and finally raised his bid by twelve ponies. Soon after their arrival at San Diego, Count Haraszthy was elected sheriff of the county and marshall of the city; while his father became the first justice of the peace and president of the first city council. In 1852, Count Haraszthy was sent to the Legislature from San Diego, and was a member in the same term with Major Hancock, his daughter's future husband. Later he removed to Sonoma county, and there established the largest vineyard in the state. In 1860, he was sent by Governor Downey to Europe to collect cuttings of the finest winegrapes to use in developing the California industry; this he did, but at his own expense. In 1867, he removed to Central America, and died there the following year.

In 1851, the children, with their mother, went to New York by sailing vessel around Cape Horn, and remained in the East five years for educational purposes. Again, in 1860, Madam Ross and her mother went to Paris for further study, remaining there two years. Married to Major Hancock after the Civil War, and coming to Los Angeles at once, her first sight of the neighboring country was at the end of a 500-mile night-and-day stage-ride, and disclosed it strewn thick with the carcasses of cattle destroyed by the awful drouth of 1863-64. A more pleasant recollection of those early Los Angeles days is of the habit the young American men had of moon-light serenading with aid secured from "Sonoratown."

Upon the death of Major Hancock, in 1883, his widow assumed entire management of the *Rancho La Brea* and other properties, and moved to the old ranch house with her sons. Here she struggled for years doing every or any part of the rough farm work which fell to her hand, until at last the mortgage was cleared. These hard years developed the wonderful character which has been such an inspiration to other strugglers, and enabled her to understand so well the sufferings of others; also the privations endured at this time had a great deal to do with her years of bounteous charitable work.

In June of 1909, Madam Hancock married Judge Erskine M. Ross, of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, with whom she lived happily until her death on March 15, 1913.

In 1911 Madam Ross built her beautiful residence, "Villa Madonna," at the northeast corner of Wilshire Boulevard at Vermont.

Madam Ross possessed a genius for art, as the accompanying pictures show; and, together with Mr. John C. Austin acting as architect, she planned the house, scrutinized every detail, and worked in her artistic ideas in such a manner that her personality is shown at every point. Three years were consumed in building this house, and neither labor nor money were spared in its construction.

Her funeral was held on Tuesday morning, March 18, 1913, and in accordance with her last wishes sacred music was rendered on the pipe organ at her home prior to the services at the cathedral.

Madam Ida Hancock Ross

Rt. Rev. Bishop Conaty gave the Absolution. The Bishop then said:

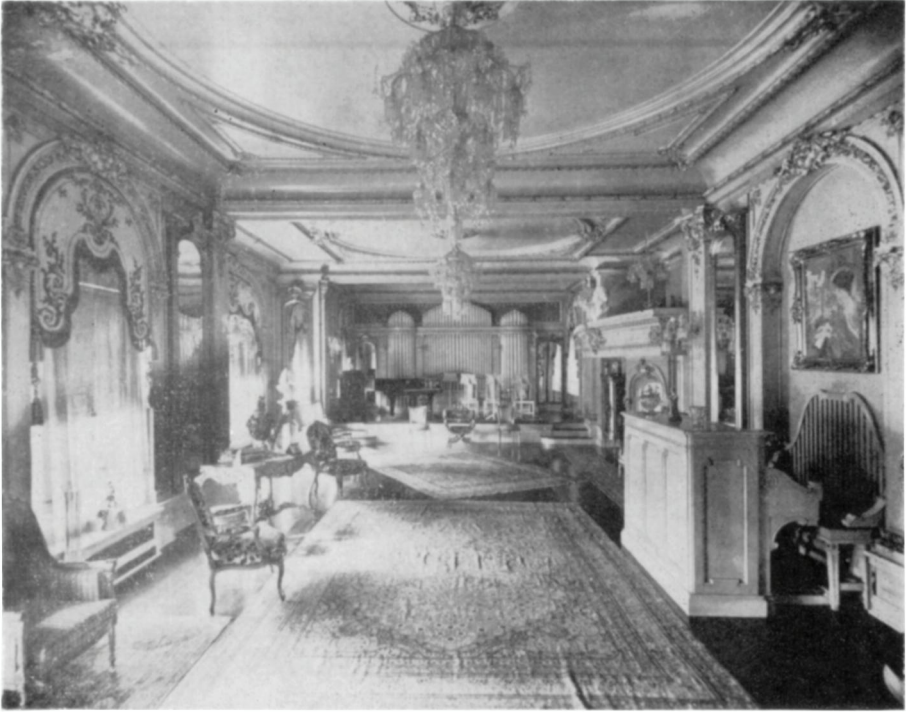
“We are gathered before this altar in this Cathedral Church today, where for many years of a long life Madam Ross was a faithful worshiper and where many times she received the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. We gather here today to have the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered for her eternal repose, and to pray that God with His choicest blessings may bring her soul to that glorious eternity in which she believed, in which she hoped, and in blessed consciousness of which she died.

“Her loved ones have lost their best beloved, this community is poorer by reason of her death, for she was a good woman, and the goodness of a noble womanhood is the best asset of a community. God gave to her a long and an active life, and blessed her with an abundance of the world’s goods, but the greatest treasure that she possessed was the strong unflinching faith and her devotedness to all that stood for Christian character and fidelity to life’s obligations. She forbade me to speak of her works, but this community recognized her as a noble woman, a devoted wife and mother, a loving sister, and a kindly generous friend. To those who mourn her loss in the home, in the family circle, there is consolation in the good name which she has left to them as her most precious gift.

“Death is the common lot of all mankind. Sin brought death into the world and with sin comes the penalty which has to be paid. The loving Savior, Who redeemed us, has provided the ransom for His precious blood; and happy the one who blessed with faith realizes the bountiful mercy of God through the Sacramental system of the Church. Death seems to be bitter, but after all our dearly beloved departed, like many another Christian dying, fully realizing that all of death was not sorrow and bitterness, for it opened to her the way to the fullness of the enjoyment of God’s eternal reward. She would

bid us not praise her, but pray for her, knowing full well as she did the value of prayer for the dead as well as for the living; knowing that by prayer and sacrifice, and particularly by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass there comes to the soul that has departed the help to pay that last farthing which human life owes to the Justice of God before it can enter upon the eternal joys of Heaven purchased for it by the Divine Savior.

“A long life of active service ends in the sweet consciousness of life’s duty done and in the blessed hope of Heaven, where as our faith teaches us, we shall know one another and be known; we shall love one another and be loved, and the ties that bind upon earth shall be made eternal in the glory of our Heavenly Father’s Home. We gather here today to pray for the repose of her soul, that God in His Infinite Mercy may give her the happiness in the hope of which she lived and died. Her life is one to be proud of; her death was more of happiness than sorrow, for ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.’ In all the sincerity of our love for her let us never cease to implore God’s Mercy upon her soul that she, with all the souls of the faithful departed, may rest in peace.”



MUSIC ROOM



DINNING ROOM

Interior Views of the Madam Hancock Ross Home