



T. PATERSON ROSS

Architect
(1872-1946)

Thomas Paterson Ross was born in Edinburgh, Scotland and came to San Francisco in 1890. Ross was a naturally talented artist and soon found work as a draftsman with architect John Gash. In 1891 they produced an unusual design for the California building for the World's Columbian Exposition to be held in Chicago in 1893. From 1895 to 1896 Ross was in partnership with Edward A. Hatherton. By 1896 he had opened his own office.

Between 1900 and 1906 he collaborated often with engineer Albert W. Burgren (1874-1951) and after the earthquake and fire of 1906 they set up the partnership of Ross & Burgren, first at 222 Kearny and from 1912 at 310 California. Ross designed over 250 buildings of many types during his career: single-family homes, flats, apartment houses, hotels, churches, and many different office and commercial buildings. His Sing Fat (1906) and Sing Chong (1907) buildings at the south-west and north-west corners of Grant and California are credited with instigating the pagoda-style of architecture which predominates in Chinatown today. Fine examples of his residential work include:

- Presidio Heights - 210 Spruce (1897), 223 Spruce (1899), 316 Spruce (1900),
- 3464 and 3637 Clay (both in 1902), 3823-27 Clay (1903),
- 3636 and 3898 Washington (1909), 21 Presidio Terrace (1910);
- Pacific Heights - 2368-72 Broadway (1902), 2210 Clay and 2121 Divisadero (1904),
- 2825 Broadway, 2209 Clay (3 apts.), and 3110 Clay (6 apts., 1905),
- 2452-54 Broadway, 2313 Webster (6 apts., both in 1908);
- Cow Hollow - 2924-26 Pierce (1903), 2496 Filbert (1904), 2626 Baker (1913),
- 2441 Filbert, 2700 Filbert/2901 Broderick (2 apts., both in 1911);
- Russian Hill - 2707 Larkin (1901), 1001 Chestnut (1904), 1720-24 Larkin
- (4 apts., 1905), 2264 Hyde/1095 Lombard (3 corner apts., 1914);
- Parnassus Heights - **100 Edgewood** (1902), 119 Edgewood (1904), 30 Woodland (1904),
- 87 Farnsworth, 1467 Willard and 34 Woodland (all in 1907).

The client for 100 Edgewood was travel agent Charles D. Taylor. Previously living on Russian Hill, Taylor signed for the water connection at 100 Sunset Avenue (as Edgewood was known until 1907) on June 20, 1902. At right is his 1905 Crocker-Langley City Directory entry.

TAYLOR CHARLES D., passenger agt
Pacific Coast American Line, Atlantic
Transport Line, Dominion Line, Hol-
land American Line, Leyland Line,
Red Star Line, White Star Line and
International Mercantile Marine Co,
21 Post, r 100 Sunset Av, College
Heights



100 Edgewood Avenue

Taylor sold the property in April 1909 to Charles H. Blinn, of the U.S. Customs Service, and his wife Vivian. Their son, Holbrook, was a prominent actor. The Blinns sold the property in July 1923 to public school teacher, Edith Bushnell, who lived there until she died in 1939. In October 1946 it was acquired by George King and his wife Evelyn, a noted dance teacher. She ran the Evelyn Dance Studio out of the high-ceilinged living room. Evelyn died in 1979 and the current owners acquired the house in July 1983.

In 1912 Ross began an association with developer William F. Chipman who pioneered the idea of ‘community homes’, now generally called cooperative apartment buildings. Chipman created six corporations in succession to build and sell ownership interests in Russian Hill properties. The first five were designed by Ross, starting with:

- Greenwich Terrace - 1105-35 Greenwich (completed in 1913, 16 apts.),
- 2164 Hyde (1914, 15 apts.); then after World War I continuing with:
- The Summit - 2222 Hyde (1920, 7 apts.),
- Union Terrace - 1020 Union (1921, 29 apts., he lived in #25 for a while), and:
- Capo di Monte - 2111 Hyde (completed in 1924, now 30 apts.), his masterpiece.



Capo di Monte - 2111 Hyde



Greenwich Terrace



Union Terrace



The view from Ross' Union Terrace apartment

In 1919 Ross received local publicity for humorously ‘autographing’ a building he had designed - the Shrine Temple at 650 Geary (now the Alcazar Theater). The phrase ‘Great is Allah and Great is Ross the Architect’ reportedly appears in Arabic script, among other mottoes, over the entry door!

His outstanding career was ended by a tragic construction site accident in October 1922. During an inspection of progress at 555 Post, the sudden movement of an open freight lift caused a load of bricks to fall onto Ross, fracturing his skull. He survived, but was unable to ever work again. In 1932 he and his wife Belle moved to Santa Cruz where he lived out the remainder of his life.