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The Life of Mary Adams Balmat, Black Hills Benefactor

Few people make a lasting positive impact on the world in which they live. Mary Adams Balmat managed to do so and found a way to continue her contributions after her death, as well. The Adams-Mastrovich Family Foundation, which she founded in 1957, awards millions of dollars annually, funding programs in education and the arts, especially music. Though inheriting only a fraction of his estate, this widow of a millionaire had the foresight and business acumen to invest what she had been given and turn it into a fortune far exceeding that of her late husband. The philanthropic examples of both her mother and her wealthy husband, William E. Adams, influenced Mary Adams Balmat's life, helping her not only to rise above her original social status but also to touch the lives of countless people via the foundation she created. Through scholarships, grants, and other donations, the Adams-Mastrovich Family Foundation has been a driving force for charity and generosity for the last fifty-seven years, both in South Dakota and the greater Los Angeles area.

Mary Adams Balmat began life as Mary Ann Mastrovich in the working-class "Slavonian Alley" neighborhood of Lead, South Dakota, on 22 January 1898, the youngest of four children born to Croatian immigrants Eli Mastrovich and Anna Nozica. Mastrovich hailed from Dubrovnik and Nozica from Janjina, two villages separated by less than fifteen miles on the Adriatic coast of Croatia.[1] The first appearance of either spouse in the public record is in the 1900 federal census, which shows the Mastrovich family residing at 479 Gwinn Avenue in Lead, with Eli Mastrovich's occupation listed as gold miner. In addition to

1. Interview of Mary Adams Balmat, Deadwood, S.Dak., by Dorothy Delicate, 28 Sept. 1972, audio recording, Adams House Collection (hereafter cited as AHC), Deadwood History, Inc., Deadwood, S.Dak.

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Mary and her parents, the census lists her three brothers: John (born 1891), Chris (born 1892), and Nick (born 1895).[2] In a 1972 interview, Mary stated that her father did not work as a miner but instead owned a saloon in Lead with his brother Charlie and operated a "transport business."[3]

Mary was only ten years old when her father died at home under suspicious circumstances. On 24 June 1908, the *Lead Daily Call* reported that Eli Mastrovich had killed himself with two shotgun blasts, one to the abdomen and another to the face. Eli and Anna Mastrovich were

2. Lead, Lawrence Co., S.Dak., in U.S., Department of the Interior, Office of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, National Archives Microfilm Publication T623, roll 1551, p. 25A.

3. Interview of Balmat.

Croatian and Austrian immigrants in Lead exhibited their community pride by forming a neighborhood band, pictured here around 1906. John Mastrovich, the eldest brother of Mary Adams Balmat, appears fifth from the left in the front row, and her cousin Anton Nozica is at far left in the second row.

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separated at the time, and she and Mary were living with relatives at another location in Lead. Seeking a divorce, Anna had already hired a lawyer to file the petition. The newspaper report asserts that Eli's sorrow led him to suicide but also mentions that neighbors claimed he was abusive and even threatened to kill his wife on more than one occasion.[4]

The next day's issue of the *Daily Call* sheds further light on the incident. A coroner's jury concluded that Eli's death was not a suicide, stating, "It would have been utterly impossible for him to have mustered sufficient strength to have inflicted the second shot." This verdict seems accurate because three shots were fired in the home, meaning that a seriously wounded Eli would have had to empty two spent shells from the double-barreled shotgun, reload, and shoot himself again.[5]

Despite the couple's estrangement, Eli had named Anna beneficiary of a life insurance policy worth $4,800. Due to inflation, this sum would be the equivalent of $115,000 by today's standards. The proceeds enabled Anna to buy property and loan money to neighbors. The insurance company's payout further suggests that Eli's death was never officially ruled a suicide. Unfortunately, there was no further newspaper coverage of the matter.[6]

Mary always spoke of her mother with the utmost fondness, citing her nursing of the sick, sometimes during life-threatening epidemics, as evidence of Anna's humanitarian spirit. She further recalled that Anna cared for many people doctors considered too far gone from illnesses such as pneumonia and saw them through to a full recovery. Anna Mastrovich worked as a baker, supporting her own family and others in the community, as well. She frequently loaned money to struggling families, and, because she could not read or write, asked Mary to help her in these endeavors. At the age of seventeen, for example, Mary drew up a promissory note documenting a loan from her mother to John Mantalico and acted as a witness for the transaction.[7]

4. *Lead Daily Call*, 24 June 1908.
5. Ibid., 25 June 1908.
6. Ibid.
7. Interview of Balmat; Promissory note signed by John Mantalico and witnessed by Mary A. Mastrovich, 21 Dec. 1915, AHC.

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Eli Mastrovich was estranged from his wife at the time he died under mysterious circumstances in 1908.

Anna invested a sizable sum in a large parcel of land near Woodville, South Dakota, with the hope that her sons would use it to start a cattle business. Although Woodville does not appear on modern maps, Black Hills historian Watson Parker identifies it as Lake Station, or "the Lake," in Lawrence County. The town was originally a woodcutting camp that supplied fuel for trains running between Englewood and Piedmont.[8]

Anna Mastrovich sent her daughter to California at the age of sixteen to begin her higher education. Mary attended Southwestern University (now Southwestern Law School), where she received cer-

8. Interview of Balmat; Watson Parker and Hugh K. Lambert, *Black Hills Ghost Towns* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974), p. 206.

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This undated photograph is believed to be the earliest surviving image of Mary Adams Balmat.

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tificates in law, business, and commerce. She then earned a degree in education at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). While attending school in 1914, she lived in a boarding house at 114 North Main Street in Los Angeles. There she met Antoni ("Tony") Bonacich Vicich, who managed the house at the time. A courtship ensued, and the two were married the following year, though Mary's mother originally objected to the union. Tony eventually gained her approval, assuring Anna that he possessed the means to take care of her daughter and would encourage her to finish school.[9]

Only two years into the marriage, tragedy struck as the couple fell ill with influenza in 1917. While both of them lay sick in separate bedrooms, Mary could hear Tony constantly gasping for air. She later remarked in an interview that the sound gave her a strange comfort, for it served as an indication that he was still alive. Father Cox, a priest from nearby Saint Alicia Catholic Church, would come by regularly to check on the couple. During one of his visits on 2 November 1917, Mary heard her husband's labored breathing stop. She recounted the memory for interviewer Dorothy Delicate: "Of course, I heard the gasping for air because the bedrooms were separated by a bathroom . . . and then it seemed very quiet . . . and in a little while, Father Cox came in and sat on the edge of my bed and said, 'Mary, he's gone.' If anyone in the world could describe the depth, the profound feeling of aloneness, I wish I could because I experienced it . . . I never felt so alone."[10]

With Tony gone and Mary still sick, her brother Nick traveled from Lead to Los Angeles to attend to her. As soon as she recovered, she packed up her things and moved out of the house she had shared with her husband. Mary stayed a short time with a friend, a Mrs. Miller, earned her education degree from UCLA, and began teaching at a Catholic school in downtown Los Angeles, possibly Our Lady of Loretto Grammar School.[11]

The 1920 federal census listed the young widow as residing in a boarding house at 1918 Miramar Street in downtown Los Angeles and

9. Interview of Balmat.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.

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Mary and her new husband Antoni ("Tony") Vicich, center, posed for their wedding portrait in 1915 with Mary's brother Nick Mastrovich, left. The fourth member of the wedding party is unidentified.

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working as a teacher.[12] Even while working, she furthered her education with private French lessons. She also read to an elderly woman, a Mrs. Blair, whom Mary credited with teaching her "to speak properly through readings." Though living in California, Mary made annual visits to her mother in South Dakota. Upon her return to Los Angeles from visiting home in 1921, she resigned her teaching job and entered the "business world."[13]

In the fall of 1921, Mary began work as private secretary to John J. Schumacher, the founder and president of Southwestern University. A few years later, a friend who worked at a placement agency asked her to interview for a position as secretary to local businessman Emery Chase Brace, hoping to discover why he had rejected several qualified applicants. Things did not go quite according to plan, as Brace offered Mary the job. She declined at first but went to work for him shortly thereafter.[14]

Among his other business endeavors, Brace owned several large, upscale country clubs in the Los Angeles area. Mary's job was to screen new membership applications, and, since Brace was often absent, she took on the additional role of office manager. In the spring of 1926, Brace tried to convince her not to visit South Dakota that summer as his offices were extremely busy. However, since she had never missed a year visiting her mother and had already made travel arrangements, Mary refused to cancel her trip. She could not have foreseen that her decision would have a profound impact on her life. She would meet her next husband on this journey, putting forces into motion that would create the Adams-Mastrovich Family Foundation, the instrument of her later philanthropy.[15]

While changing trains in Denver, Colorado, Mary was in one of the Pullman cars waiting for her train to depart when a stranger sat down

12. Los Angeles, Los Angeles Co., Calif., in U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*, National Archives Microfilm Publication T625, roll 108, p. 13B.

13. Interview of Balmat.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

unexpectedly in the seat next to her. Irate, Mary went to the conductor and complained that she had reserved the lower berth of the car for her own use. He, in turn, offered her the drawing room, but she refused. The conductor then apologized but informed Mary that he had to insist that the man be allowed the seat because he was the employee of a "gentleman that the company defers to."[16] The gentleman to whom the conductor referred was William E. ("W. E.") Adams of Deadwood, South Dakota, a self-made millionaire who owned a wholesale grocery business in Deadwood and citrus groves in California. A prominent Black Hills resident who had served as Deadwood's mayor for six terms,[17] Adams was called the "King of Deadwood" by Mary's mother. The title was not meant as a compliment.[18]

Mary grudgingly relented and took her new seat, surrendering her reserved berth to Adams's valet.[19] She later recounted her first meeting with Adams. "A tall, dignified, aristocratic gentleman walks down the aisle, and he stops . . . and said 'good evening miss,' and I looked up and I said 'good evening.' . . . And I was somewhat disappointed because then I knew that was the gentleman that had my car." Once Adams introduced himself, Mary immediately knew who he was. Her brother, John, regularly sent her the Lead newspaper, and she recalled an article relating how Adams had lost his wife, daughter, and newborn granddaughter in the span of forty-eight hours. With knowledge of these events and sympathy for his plight, she invited Adams to sit down.[20]

In Edgemont, South Dakota, as Mary switched trains, Adams offered to have his valet carry her luggage to her new car. She agreed and thanked him. Upon boarding the next train, Adams asked to sit next to her, and the two visited for the next few hours. As they approached their final stop, Adams informed Mary that he had ordered his car to wait at the depot in Pluma, a small town located between Lead and

16. Ibid.

17. Mary A. Kopco, *The Adams House Revealed* (Deadwood, S.Dak.: Adams Museum & House, Inc., 2006), pp. 24–26.

18. Interview of Balmat.

19. Kopco, *Adams House Revealed*, p. 27.

20. Interview of Balmat.

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Deadwood. He offered to have his driver take her home, which she politely declined because her mother had a car waiting for her.[21]

As the two said goodbye, Adams asked whether he might have a chance to see Mary again before she returned to Los Angeles, to which she indifferently responded that he might. Near the end of her two-month visit, she returned to her mother's house one afternoon to find a letter addressed to her on the porch. The letter was from Adams, asking to see her before she returned home. Mary wrote back apologizing for not having gone to visit him but stating that since she was to leave soon, there would not be time. Adams then telephoned and invited Mary and her mother to dinner. Upon hearing the story of what had happened on the train ride two months earlier, Anna refused to dine with Adams. Mary told her mother that she would not go alone, and Anna ultimately relented. Adams picked the women up at Anna's home, treated them to dinner at the State Game Lodge just outside of Custer, and saw them home afterward. The next morning, as Mary and Anna returned from church, they were greeted with two dozen American Beauty roses Adams had delivered from Denver via overnight train, effectively beginning a courtship.[22]

The couple caused quite a stir in the area. Gossip quickly circulated through the small towns of Deadwood and Lead, stemming mainly from the fact that Adams was seventy-three years old and Mary but twenty-nine at the time of their eventual wedding. The age difference was further accentuated by their differences in religion (she was Catholic and he Episcopalian), not to mention the obvious difference in social status. Regardless of public opinion, Adams had become quite taken with Mary and continued to pursue her even after she returned to California. He had apparently obtained her itinerary, because on her way back to Los Angeles, she was greeted with flowers, candy, and telegrams at every stop.[23]

After countless gifts, letters, and telephone calls, Adams proposed to Mary. She declined, citing their age difference and the fact that she

21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Kopco, *Adams House Revealed*, p. 28; Interview of Balmat.

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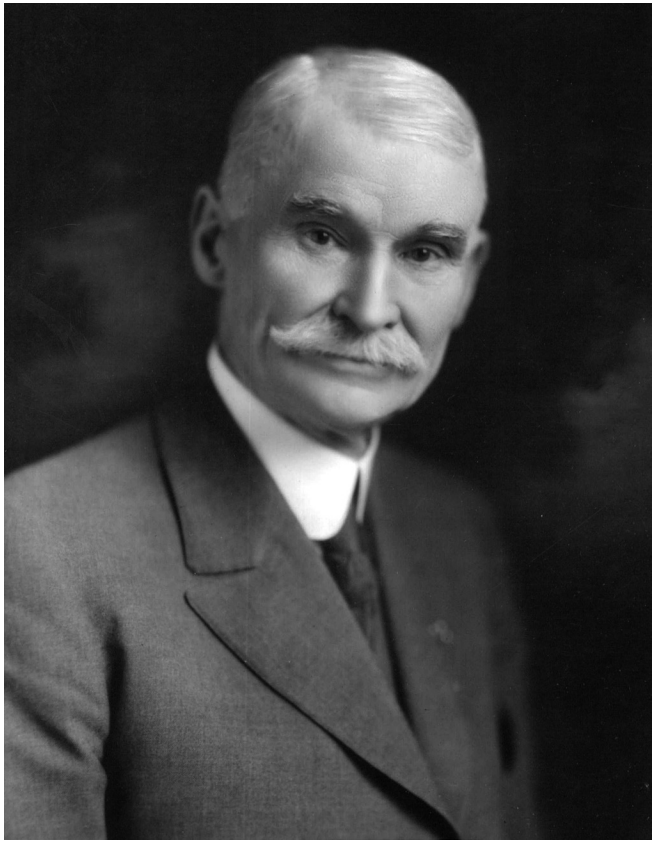
was proud of her independence. Her answer did nothing to deter him from showering her with more gifts, letters, and marriage proposals for the next year. His persistence paid off, however. Mary finally accepted Adams's proposal over lunch at his house in Pasadena, and the two were married on 30 June 1927 in the rectory of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Los Angeles.[24]

24. Kopco, *Adams House Revealed*, p. 28.



William Emery Adams, perhaps the most prominent citizen of Deadwood at the time, created a local sensation with his courtship of the young widow Mary Mastrovich Vicich in 1926–1927.

Perhaps due to his business and community responsibilities in the Black Hills (Adams served as president of the First National Bank of Deadwood, the Franklin Hotel Corporation, and the Deadwood cemetery board, as well as on the Deadwood Chamber of Commerce), the newly married couple moved into his home at 22 Van Buren Street in Deadwood. Though the marriage would last only seven years, the couple led an enjoyable life traveling, entertaining guests, and working together on many charitable causes, such as providing American flags for churches and schools in the Black Hills and building playgrounds for the children of Deadwood. Perhaps the most notable act of philanthropy the two worked on was the initial funding and construction of the Adams Museum, located at 54 Sherman Street in Deadwood. When Adams first discussed the idea with Mary, she insisted that he build it not only for the citizens of the Black Hills but also as a memorial to his daughters and deceased first wife.[25]

On 7 June 1934, Adams suffered a stroke while attending a board meeting at the First National Bank of Deadwood. He was taken to his home and passed away nine days later. Mary said in 1972 that her only regret concerning her marriage to Adams was that she had taken so long to marry him. She lamented that had she accepted his proposal immediately, they would have had one more year together.[26]

Mary resided at the Adams home in Deadwood for the next year and a half, after which she packed a few suitcases, locked the house with its contents intact, and moved back to Los Angeles. Thereafter, she would return to Deadwood once a year to maintain her South Dakota residency, which, according to her nephew Harry Meader, Jr., saved her a large sum of money over the years because South Dakota, unlike California, had no income tax.[27]

Shortly after her relocation, Mary wed William Balmat, a dentist from Rapid City, South Dakota. The two were married in San Fran-

25. *Deadwood Pioneer-Times,* 29 May 1928, 16 June 1934; Kopco, *Adams House Revealed*, pp. 28–29; Helen Rezatto, *Mount Moriah: "Kill a Man—Start a Cemetery"* (Aberdeen, S.Dak.: North Plains Press, 1980), p. 185.

26. Kopco, *Adams House Revealed*, pp. 29–30; Interview of Balmat.

27. Kopco, *Adams House Revealed*, p. 41; telephone interview with Harry Meader, Jr., San Clemente, Calif., 10 July 2011.

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The Adams Museum, founded in 1930, is William E. Adams's lasting legacy to the city of Deadwood.

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The historic Adams residence has been restored to appear much as it did when Mary Adams moved to Los Angeles after William E. Adams died. Steve Babbitt photographed the restored sitting room in 2000.

The restored Adams home at 22 Van Buren Street, built in 1892, is one of Deadwood's historic gems and is open to the public.

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cisco on 3 February 1937. No one close to Mary seemed to know why she made the decision. Popular opinion paints Balmat as nothing more than a male gold digger, who, upon realizing that he was not going to be able to control her fortune, simply left. The relationship lasted less than two years, ending one evening in 1938 when Balmat left their Los Angeles apartment and never came back. Balmat resurfaced in 1968 when he filed suit against Mary for spousal support. A Los Angeles judge ruled that since he had deserted Mary, he was not entitled to a share of her accumulated wealth. She responded to the suit with a petition for divorce, which was granted. She did, however, have to pay five hundred dollars for her ex-husband's attorney's fees.[28]

28. "Reunion as Bad as Parting 30 Years Ago," newspaper clipping, possibly from *Rapid City Journal*, [22 Mar. 1968], AHC.

This 1936 photograph of Mary Adams with her future third husband, William Balmat, may have been taken in Spearfish Canyon.

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This outdoor portrait of Mary was taken in 1936, likely at the same time she posed for the photograph with William Balmat.

According to W. E. Adams's will, Mary inherited sixty thousand dollars; the house at 22 Van Buren Street in Deadwood, along with all of its contents and the land on which it was situated; and his automobiles. The will also specified that Mary could keep securities she had previously been given, which exceeded forty thousand dollars in value. Not including the house or cars, Mary's inheritance of around one hundred thousand dollars would be worth roughly $1.6 million by today's standards. Following the final distribution of her husband's estate in 1936, she began investing with the Northwestern Bank of Minneapolis, Minnesota, opening her original account with a check for seventy thousand dollars. Halsey H. Halls, who later worked in the bank's trust and development office, recalled that some of the initial transactions

in Mary's account were purchases of IBM and Walt Disney stock. Her portfolio gained substantially in value over the next twenty years.[29]

In 1957, Mary changed her will. Under the new document, she would effectively have no assets to pass through probate. Almost all of her holdings, aside from a single checking account for her personal use, were now the property of a trust. According to Halls, there was a good reason for this arrangement. William Balmat had attempted to contact Mary about twelve years before their divorce, and she feared that he might try to take part of her assets. Mary's lawyers went to California and advised her to close her accounts and transfer the proceeds to the trust. Under this new arrangement, Balmat could not touch anything that belonged to the trust, regardless of the circumstances. Mary's action marked the official beginning of the Adams-Mastrovich Family Foundation.[30]

Halls joined Northwestern Bank as an investment officer in the early 1960s. Later in his career, he became responsible for handling Mary's personal expenses, wiring money to her personal account, securing travelers checks, and making her travel reservations.[31] He is now the head of the foundation's board of trustees. Under his leadership, "the foundation continues to fund organizations that [Mary] supported in her lifetime as well as those meeting the foundation criteria," among which is that "only charitable organizations located in the state of South Dakota and the greater Los Angeles area" will receive the foundation's grants. Recipients are generally organizations involved in "education, religion, health and the arts," or "social service organizations and programs serving the needs of women, particularly victims of domestic violence and women who are mentally ill." Music and theater programs for high schools and colleges are given "special consideration." Political causes, "fundraising campaigns, endowment campaigns, [and] individuals (except for scholarships)" are not funded.[32]

29. Last will and testament of William Emery Adams, 14 Feb. 1933, AHC; interview with Halsey H. Halls, Deadwood, S.Dak., 16 June 2011.

30. Interview with Halls.

31. Ibid.

32. "Adams-Mastrovich Family Foundation Funding Guidelines," [2000], pp. 2–3, AHC.

It would be impossible to list all of the charities to which the Adams-Mastrovich Family Foundation has awarded grants. Hundreds of programs and organizations have been awarded monies from the foundation over the last fifty-seven years. However, some of the recurring recipients are as follows: Saint Ambrose Church (Deadwood), Saint Patrick's Church (Lead), Saint John's Church (Los Angeles), Saint Anthony's Church (Los Angeles), Saint Brenden's Church (Los Angeles), the University of California, Los Angeles, the University of Southern California, and the Lead/Deadwood schools. In the foundation's bylaws, Mary directed that certain organizations and programs be funded in perpetuity, receiving first priority when grants are dispensed at the end of each year. These preselected organizations are the Adams Museum/Adams House Museum (now part of Deadwood History, Inc.), Marycrest Manor (Culver City, California), and Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles).[33]

Since its inception, the foundation has operated solely with the investment income it generates and has never accepted outside contributions. It is safe to assume that the trustees never give away more than the organization's investments generate in a year, while setting aside a portion of the gains to build up the foundation's investment portfolio. The foundation's tax returns, which are public records, lend weight to this assumption. Some contribution totals from 1982–1985 can also be found in the Adams House Collection at Deadwood History, Inc. The foundation's contributions over that time span averaged approximately one hundred fifty thousand dollars per year. Tax forms from 2008–2010 show that the foundation awarded an annual average of approximately $1.5 million in grants during that period, a tenfold increase over the earlier era.[34]

Mary personally selected the foundation's original board of trustees. The board has five trustees, several of whom are retired investment officers of Northwestern Bank (now part of Wells Fargo). To prevent conflicts of interest, no one can work for the bank and the foundation

33. "Mary Adams Balmat Contributions, 1982–1985," AHC; Interview with Halls.

34. Interview with Halls; "Mary Adams Balmat Contributions"; Adams-Mastrovich Family Foundation, Internal Revenue Service Forms 990–PF for 2008–2010, obtained from www.guidestar.org.

simultaneously. Furthermore, trustees are volunteers and receive no compensation other than reimbursement for travel expenses incurred on foundation business. The bylaws also provide that if the trustees should fail to make grants in any given year, the bank is allowed to facilitate that particular year's awards itself. The foundation board meets once per year, in the second week of September, and grants are paid out each year in October and November.[35]

The majority of Mary's fifty-seven years in Los Angeles were spent in her apartment at 320 South Manhattan Place. She did not own the dwelling but instead paid rent for fifty-two years, raising the question of why a millionaire would rent an apartment for so long in what Halls called an undesirable part of town. After her move to California in 1936, the Northwestern Bank sent employees to visit her whenever papers needed to be signed. In the 1970s and 1980s, that task often fell to either Halls or his boss, Ed Libby. On more than one occasion, they asked why she refused to move to a better location. Mary's response was a testament to her generosity. "The more I save," she told them, "the more I can give away."[36]

Her giving was apparently of great importance to Mary's self-image. During visits with his aunt in the late 1960s, Harry Meader, Jr., noticed that she made it a point to show him the thank-you letters and gifts she received from the organizations funded by the Adams-Mastrovich Family Foundation. Commenting on this experience in a 2011 interview, he said, "I think in many respects the gratitude that was given to her replaced an empty part in her life."[37]

Though Mary's neighborhood was once fashionable, it had become quite a rough place by the 1970s, and she was mugged more than once while walking out of her building. According to Meader, building management had to chain down the furniture in the lobby to keep it from being stolen. Meader once installed an extra lock on Mary's apartment door at her request following a mugging.[38] Perhaps she refused to leave

35. Interview with Halls; Adams-Mastrovich Family Foundation Forms 990–PF, 2008–2010.

36. Interview with Halls.

37. Interview with Meader.

38. Ibid.

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This undated photograph of Mary Adams Balmat was taken during the years in which she made Los Angeles her principal residence.

because she associated so much of her life with that neighborhood. All of Mary's Los Angeles addresses (her apartment, both boarding houses, and the home she shared with Tony Vicich) are located within twenty minutes of one another.

While it is evident that Mary did not like to spend her own money on herself, she appears to have had few qualms about spending other people's money. Patricia and Margret Kljunak, Los Angeles residents whose family was related to Mary's mother, described their relationship with Mary as somewhat one-sided. Interviewed in 2012, they recalled with amusement that Mary would frequently show up unannounced for dinner at a family member's home and expect to be driven home afterwards. If treated to dinner at a restaurant, she never felt inclined to reciprocate. The Kljunaks also noticed Mary's frugality, recalling that she would bring back hotel soaps and shampoo bottles from her travels abroad and give them to family members as souvenirs. Sometimes, she would purchase wine with coupons from the corner store, put it in an attractive decanter, and present it to guests as "imported."[39]

Halsey Halls recalled the first time he took Mary out to dinner. As they pulled up to the restaurant and Halls moved to get out of the car, Mary stopped to inform him that whenever "Ed or Roger" (his fellow Northwestern Bank employees) took her to dinner, "they didn't spare the horses!" Halls knew that she intended to order the most expensive item on the menu and not give it another thought. The story is one that Halls tells often, as it sums up Mary's own attitude toward helping others. For the foundation's current trustees, "Don't spare the horses" has become an unofficial mantra, used to remind them of all the good that Mary made possible during her lifetime.[40]

Early in 1988, Margret Kljunak became worried when she called Mary without any response for several days. Going to her apartment building, she had the superintendent unlock the door. Inside, she discovered Mary in a bath of ice-cold water where she had lain for three days, unable to move or speak. She had suffered a stroke.[41]

39. Telephone interview with Patricia and Margret Kljunak, Los Angeles, Calif., 1 Jan. 2012.

40. Interview with Halls.

41. Interview with Patricia and Margret Kljunak.

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Transported to a hospital nearby, Mary was stabilized and then transferred to a long-term care facility. When Libby and Halls went to visit her, they were appalled at the substandard care she was receiving. Father Don Merrifield, president of Loyola Marymount University, recommended her transfer to Marycrest Manor in Culver City, California, where she received first-rate care and began to improve, although the stroke had lasting effects on her mobility and speech. The Marycrest Manor administration allowed the foundation to hold board meetings there so that Mary could attend and express her approval or disapproval in matters before the trustees.[42]

Mary Adams Balmat died on 6 June 1993 at Marycrest Manor. She was laid to rest in a mausoleum at Mountain View Cemetery in Pasadena, California, with her second husband, William E. Adams, and his family. Several years after her death, the administrators of Marycrest Manor applied for a grant to construct a new building, a proposal that met with unanimous approval from the foundation board. At its opening, the building was named in honor of Mary Adams Balmat.[43]

As Mary had directed in the foundation bylaws, her trust automatically became a charitable trust upon her death and was thus exempt from federal estate taxes. Halls commented that her thinking in this regard probably ran along the lines of "Why pay the government to build a B-1 bomber, when we can build the H.A.R.C.C. instead?" Halls referred to the Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center in Deadwood, which opened its doors in 2011 with major financial support from the Adams-Mastrovich Family Foundation.[44]

Mary Adams Balmat was born into a lower-class family, but through her mother's example, she was instilled with the values of charity and beneficence from a young age. Already possessing a benevolent spirit, she married W. E. Adams, and, with the inheritance he provided, she was able to put her ideals into practice on a much larger scale. Her passion for education, music, religion, and art, in particular, focused her endeavors. With the help of men like Halsey Halls, Ed Libby, and

42. Interview with Halls.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.

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The Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center in Deadwood is one of Mary Adams Balmat's lasting legacies.

C. Roger Bailey, she was able to push her vision further and higher than she may ever have thought possible. She lived in near-poverty of her own volition so that she could give away a few more dollars each year. Put plainly, Mary Adams Balmat was a magnanimous spirit who had a tremendous impact on thousands of lives and will help thousands more as the Adams-Mastrovich Family Foundation carries on her legacy. Sister Kathleen Newell of Marycrest Manor summed up her life well, writing, "Mary Adams was a great lady, blessed by God with a compassionate heart, endowed by circumstances with a substantial amount of worldly goods and possessing the wisdom not to allow her wealth to become her master, but to be her servant."[45]

45. Sister Kathleen Newell, "Remembering Mary Adams at Marycrest," enclosed with Sister Margaret Mary FitzSimons to Mary A. Kopco, 14 June 1999, AHC.

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On the covers: In this issue, Joe P. Kirby writes about Frederick Henry Morse, an artist who served time in the South Dakota Penitentiary and went on to paint the portraits of several prominent Sioux Falls residents such as former United States Senator Richard F. Pettigrew (front).