



**PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO:** BUSHNELL FOTO, San Francisco

**SITTER:** GEORGE PLUMMER MCNEAR, SR. (1857-1947)

**DATE:** 1905

**FORMAT:** reprint of a scan of the original cabinet card, courtesy of the McNear Family

This portrait depicts George Plummer McNear and, dating from 1905, is one of the later portraits in the exhibit. George was the son of John Augustus McNear, Petaluma's most financially successful, early pioneer. George followed in his father's footsteps, expanding the family businesses while retaining its good reputation within the community.

Both father and son lost his first wife at a very early age. George's mother, Clara, portrayed on the display wall to the right, died at age twenty-nine when George was only nine years old, and George's first wife, Jennie Otis McNear, portrayed on the display wall on the left, died when George was twenty-six. George and Jennie had one child, and they named her in honor of George's mother. That child, Clara McNear (married name Leppo) is depicted along with her great, great grandmother, in the center portrait of this display wall.

George's portrait is far more sophisticated than the others in the exhibit. It was taken in the fashionable studio of Bushnell Foto in San Francisco. Portrayed at forty-eight years of age, George sits in a regal, hand-carved chair fit for a member of the aristocracy, and he is dressed in full, formal, dinner jacket attire typical of the American upper class at the turn of the century. With his legs crossed, his left hand, which is adorned with a large pinkie ring, sustains a stiff, peculiar gesture. In an unusual pose, George's body turns right, but his gaze and head turn left. This adds a twist to the composition which serves to heighten George's presence and lends an air of energy and dynamism to the portrait.