



ARTIST: Unidentified

SITTER: **IDA LUCIA CODONI** (1874 - 1881)

DATE: c. 1881

**ON LOAN FROM SUSAN & WARREN
SALMONS**

This portrait was created in 1881 by an unidentified artist and depicts Ida Lucia Codoni, the firstborn child of Joseph and Rosa Codoni. She was born on May 24, 1875, and according to the *Petaluma Courier*, passed away on December 28, 1881, at the very young age of 6 years, 6 months and 24 days. Ida's parents were dairy and cattle ranchers in Tocaloma, an area which is now part of the Point Reyes National Seashore.

Ida and her family undoubtedly traveled often to Petaluma for supplies and entertainment, and her parents may very well have traveled to Petaluma to have Ida's photo taken for this portrait. It is all but certain that this image of Ida is based on a photographic print which the artist utilized as the foundation of the portrait. This was a very common practice, and examples of it can be seen throughout the exhibit. Often there is an extant copy of the original photograph, but it appears the original photo of Ida has been lost.

This portrait is a rarity. It has remained in its original frame and mat and is in very good condition. Ida is portrayed as a very sweet and demure child, dressed in a plaid cape with large side buttons. Given the fact that Ida died very young, it is difficult not to speculate that this may be a postmortem portrait. The artist has not captured Ida's eyes as competently as the other aspects of the composition. In the second half of the 19th century, postmortem portraits, especially of children, were very common. Today, we interpret this custom to be morbid, but, in reality, it was not. Often a photo of a deceased child would be the only visual memento possessed by the family.