

DISCLAIMER

This biography is a rough draft and a work-in-progress.
The research has not been completed, so there may be errors and omissions.

This document lacks 1950 census data.
Please return to Tuscania1918.org in the future to see if a revised and
finalized version is available.

Abbreviations:

b = born

d = died

F: = Find A Grave (www.findagrave.org)

NOK = next-of-kin

The logo for Tuscania, featuring the word "TUSCANIA" in a stylized, black, serif font with a drop shadow effect, set against a solid red rectangular background.

McNear, Ezekiel Denman
1889 CA – 1984 CA



Ezekiel Denman McNear – left: Find A Grave 105763310 – right: “San Francisco Chronicle” 9 Feb 1918 p 2



Ezekiel Denman McNear – Left: “Petaluma (CA) Argus-Courier” 16 Mar 1984 p 1 – Right: “Santa Rosa (CA) Press Democrat” 5 Feb 1989 p 2



Ezekiel Denman McNear – “San Francisco Examiner” 9 Feb 1918 p 2

FICHA DE TURISTA CIDADÃO DE PAIS AMERICANO PARA UMA ESTADA DE TRINTA DIAS NO BRASIL
(Tourist Card for Citizens of American Countries for A Thirty-Day Stay in Brazil)

Esta ficha, expedida em duplicata, uma via será entregue ao passageiro, para uso da autoridade competente por ocasião do desembarque, e uma via será enviada pela transportadora à Repartição consular brasileira a qual caber o despacho do navio ou aeronave.
This card will be issued in duplicate; one copy will be delivered to the passenger for use by the competent authority at the time he disembarks, and one copy will be sent by the carrier to the Brazilian Consular Office clearing the ship or aircraft.

Nome por extenso E. DENMAN MCNEAR
Name in full

Admitido no Brasil em caráter de **TURISMO** Nos termos da Lei No. 2528, de 5 de Julho de 1955
Admitted to Brazil under tourist status Under the terms of Law No. 2,528 of July 5, 1955

Lugar e data de nascimento PETALUMA CALIF. USA DECEMBER 20 1, 1889
Place and date of birth

Estado civil SINGLE Nacionalidade USA
Civil status Nationality

Filiação (nome do Pai e da Mãe) G. GEORGE MCNEAR
Parents (name of the Father and Mother)

IDA DENMAN Profissão RETIRED
Profession

Residência no país de origem 617 G STREET PETALUMA CALIF. USA
Residence in the country of origin

Nome (Name) Idade (Age) Sexo (Sex)

FILHOS MENORES DE 18 ANOS
CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS

Passaporte No. 1684596 expedido pelas autoridades de NEW YORK U.S. DEPT. OF STATE
Passport No. issued by the authorities of
WASHINGTON, D.C. on (date) JULY 23 1959

Remetida ao PORT OF SPAIN por PAA em APR. 01, 1963
Sent to the Consulate of Brazil in by on

ASSINATURA DO PORTADOR (SIGNATURE OF HOLDER)
E. Denman McNear

NOTA—Esta ficha deve ser preenchida à máquina pela companhia transportadora, sendo as duas vias em original.
NOTE—This card should be filled out in the typewriter by the carrier and the two copies should be original.

FORM 9212-5187



Brazil immigration card - <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-95YJ-8Q8?i=69&cc=1932363&personUrl=%2Fark%3A%2F61903%2F1%3A1%3AKXQ2-HRL>



McNear Family Home Petaluma about 1900

 about 1900

 Petaluma, CA

This shows a family gathering outside the home "Bellevue" which was build in 1881 for John Augustus McNear. It was located on Petaluma Boulevard South in an area known as "McNear's Hill". John A McNear is in the front center with the white beard. His son George Plummer McNear is on the left of the photo (his right side). Frank Denman is on the other side, and slightly up the steps with bent knee is Dr John McNear.

Bellevue was the birthplace of Ezekiel Denman McNear - <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/6988085/person/597068194/media/7463cb60-0d8b-4cdc-b841-6e3667c66223>

Death:

E. Denman McNear, Petaluma patriarch, dies

Ezekiel Denman McNear, known as "the patriarch of Petaluma," died Tuesday at the age of 95.

Born on Dec. 20, 1889, at his family's home, Bellevue, at the south edge of town, Mr. McNear's life was to be inextricably woven into the history of his native Petaluma.

The son of George P. McNear and Ida Bell Denman McNear, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ezekiel Denman, a Two Rock ranching family, Mr. McNear graduated from the Hitchcock Military Academy. He then attended the University of California from 1904 to 1908 where he was a charter member of Alpha



E. Denman McNear

Delta Phi.

During World War I, he was senior captain in a regiment raised at the university. Sent to the war zone, he was aboard the transport, Tuscania, when it was torpedoed by a sub off Lorne, Ireland. He was among the many who made it to shore by lifeboat or rescue boat.

He became one of the first 100,000 Americans in France and served there throughout most of his military career. He was discharged a first lieutenant.

After the war, Mr. McNear returned to Petaluma to take part in the family business.

The G.P. McNear Co., which specialized in grain and hay, was

founded by John A. McNear who arrived here Nov. 6, 1856. He was soon joined by his brother, George W. McNear, and in partnership they shipped produce to San Francisco from a Washington Street headquarters. Together they built what was the largest warehouse in California in 1864.

They divided the business in 1874, with George going to take care of interests in San Francisco. Eventually the large mill and headquarters for the business were established at Main and B streets where the Great Petaluma Mill is now.

In 1930, Mr. McNear married and the couple had two children, a

(Continued on page 2, col. 7)

E. Denman McNear dies

(Continued from page 1)

son, Denman Kittredge McNear of Geyserville, chairman of the board of Southern Pacific, and a daughter, Mary McNear McNab, a resident of Marin County.

Over the years, the town has named many a landmark after Mr. McNear and his family: McNear Park, McNear Avenue, McNear Elementary School. The family also donated the land where Fire Station 1 is now and the land for the Petaluma Golf and Country Club.

Mr. McNear was a charter member of the Petaluma Rotary Club which was organized on March 23, 1923, and became a Paul Harris Fellow, a principal honor among Rotarians.

He is survived by his daughter and son, his sister, Mrs. Howard C. Naffziger and six grandsons.

Interment services will be held at Cypress Hill Memorial Park at 4 p.m. Sunday. Memorial services are still being arranged.

The family prefers that gifts in memory of Mr. McNear be made to Katherine Branson-Mount Tamalpais School or to a favorite charity.

"Petaluma (CA) Argus-Courier" Friday 16 Mar 1984 p 1

Tribute to Petaluma's E. Denman McNear

PETALUMA — A final tribute will be paid May 4 to the last member of the famed pioneer McNear family to live in this city.

He was E., for Ezekiel, Denman McNear, a grandson of John A. McNear, who came here in 1856 to start building a business empire in a small town with muddy streets, and he was the son of George P. McNear, who followed in his father's footsteps.

The tribute will be in the form of a memorial service at his home at 617 C. St. McNear died March 13 at a Tiburon convalescent hospital after a long illness. He was 94.

Many landmarks in Petaluma are named for the McNears, including the McNear buildings on lower Fourth Street, the McNear Canal, McNear Park and McNear Elementary School.

John A. McNear, a native of Maine who came here via Mississippi and was 86 when he died, founded the Cypress Hills Cemetery when searching for a place to bury his first wife. Son G.P. gave land for the the school and park.

The family started in the livery stable business and soon branched into the grain business, building

the Golden Eagle warehouse, which before the turn of the century was the largest of its type in California.

The family went into banking and railroads, and the G. P. McNear Company, incorporated in 1913, is credited with giving the egg industry its start here by backing farmers and others who wanted to get into the business after the invention of the first incubator by Petaluman Lyman Byce.

As a young man, Denman McNear was associated with his father, who died at 90 in 1947, in the McNear Company, but left to attend the University of California at Berkeley and serve in France in the Army during World War I. He returned and was associated in the business until he became ill about five years ago.

He was active in community affairs and a member of Petaluma Rotary Club.

He is survived by his son, Denman K. McNear, Kentfield; daughter, Mary McNear McNab, Ross; sister, Louise Naffziger, San Francisco, and six grandchildren.

Inurnment was in the family plot at Cypress Hills Cemetery.

When Denman McNear reached the age when his baby locks were to be sacrificed at the barber's, he said to Bob Adams: "Cut my hair just like papa's, smooth and shiny on top with a fringe around the edge."

Said when he was a "tot" - "Petaluma (CA) Argus-Courier" Thursday 28 Nov 1901 p 4

SEVENTY TO-DAY.

BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY AT J. A.
McNEAR'S HOME.

Four Generations Were Present at the
Dinner in His Honor.

At his home in Petaluma today John A. McNear Sr. celebrated his seventieth birthday anniversary.

The home was decorated for the occasion with Christmas berries, smilax, red and green paper lavishly used. In the dining-room Indian baskets filled with bunches of hollyberries were novel and unique. Large streamers of red and green crepe paper were stretched over the table, forming a canopy. Here and there a bright bunch of berries were gracefully placed. The table was decorated with hollyberries and smilax, covers having been laid for twenty. At each plate were placed dainty souvenir beaten silver spoons of antique designs, with the inscription 1832-1902.

At 2 o'clock p. m. the following guests sat down to a dinner which was beyond criticism: Mr. and Mrs. G. P. McNear, Miss Miriam McNear, Denman McNear, George McNear Jr., Dr. and Mrs. Leppo, Dr. and Mrs. John McNear Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Erskine B. McNear, Miss Lucretia McNear, Erskine McNear Jr., Laurence McNear, Mrs. M. J. Miller, Mr. and Mrs. G. W. McNear, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. McNear.

At the table four generations sat together. Mrs. Miller, mother of Mrs. John McNear Sr., Erskine McNear and his children completed the generations. A couple of hours were spent around the board, and the genial, whole-souled husband and father was repeatedly toasted and congratulated. He was the recipient of a number of gifts from relatives.

John A. McNear was born on December 23, 1832, at Wiscasset, Lincoln county, Maine, and came of a family of mariners. He was reared within the sound of the sea, and naturally looked forward to the time when he should himself command a vessel. At first he took frequent trips with his father, picking up as he went a store of nautical information that should later be put to good use. In the spring of 1852, when nineteen years of age, he shipped before the mast on the new ship Cape Cod on a voyage from Boston to St. John's, thence to Liverpool, and returning to New York in the fall. On this voyage he studied seamanship so diligently that he felt capable of attaining to something better. He took a course of study in the Pittston academy, graduating therefrom in 1853, after which he accepted the position of master of the brig Tiberius, while

only twenty-one years of age. He continued on the sea until 1854, when he purchased a one-third interest in the sawmill business of Messrs. Plummer, Williams & Co. of Pascagoula, Miss., where he remained until 1856, when he came to California by way of the isthmus, coming directly to Petaluma upon his arrival at San Francisco on November 3d of that year.

Mr. McNear, with a cash capital of \$3,000 immediately started in business in Petaluma and has been one of the leading spirits in every enterprise that has started since that time. He first dealt in real estate. In 1857 he bought the Washington livery stable property in partnership with P. E. Weeks, to whom he sold out in 1860. In 1859 he erected a warehouse, which stood upon the site where the woolen mills were burned some years ago. There he conducted a general warehouse and shipping business, which prospered exceedingly.

In the fall of 1860 his brother, George W., came out from the east, and they entered into a partnership, J. A. running things in Petaluma and George conducting the business in San Francisco. From 1862 to 1865 they dealt in hardware and machinery, but disposed of these interests to give their attention to grain and shipping.

In 1874 the firm was dissolved, G. W. taking the San Francisco end of the business and J. A. continuing in Petaluma. Since that time both of the gentlemen have been successful in their undertakings beyond expectations.

J. A. McNear is greatly surprised, when he looks back over his past life, to think that he should have passed his seventieth milestone on life's journey. He said he feels very much like he was only seventeen instead of seventy.

He has had many hairbreadth escapes by land and sea. When the engine that drew the train between Petaluma and the Haystack landing blew up and several were killed, Mr. McNear miraculously escaped. He thinks he has always been too busy to die, and says he wants to see Petaluma further advanced before he goes to his long rest.

The 70th birthday celebration of his paternal grandfather, John Augustus McNear – "Petaluma (CA) Daily Morning Courier" Tuesday 23 Dec 1902 p 1

HONORS FOR LOCAL BOYS

At the Hitchcock Military Academy in San Rafael Friday night George Jr., and Denman McNear, sons of Mr. and Mrs. G. P. McNear of Petaluma, were among the list of young men who graduated from the academy. Denman McNear was the valedictorian of the class and the honor was indeed a high one.

The bright young Petalumans is receiving congratulations for his excellent work. Gerge Jr., and Denman McNear received three of the five gold medals offered for high standing in their classes.

The parents of the students are delighted with their success. The Messrs. McNear arrived home this afternoon and will spend their vacation at home. In the fall they will enter the University of California.

After the exercises at the academy Friday night the annual dance followed. Mr. and Mrs. G. P. McNear were present at the commencement exercises.

Valedictorian of Hitchcock Military Academy - "Petaluma (CA) Daily Courier" Saturday 23 May 1908

p 1

WILL WINTER IN SAN FRANCISCO

Mrs. Geo. P. McNear and Miss Miriam McNear will leave about the first of November for San Francisco where they will make their home for several months during the winter. Denman McNear is attending U. C., Miss Louise is at Miss Hamlin's and Mrs. McNear will stay in San Francisco in order that they may all be together.

"Petaluma (CA) Argus-Courier" Wednesday 20 Oct 1909 p 1

Military:

E. D. M'NEAR IS COMMISSIONED LIEUTENANT

In the list of commissions announced officially at the outcome of the United States Officers Training Camp, at Presidio, San Francisco, Ezekiel Denman McNear, of this city, was honored by being named first lieutenant in the field artillery. The young Petaluman was the only local representative in camp and passed with high honors, being among the Class A officers which ensures his assignment at an early date in the National Army. The appointment was expected by the friends of Mr. McNear, who were

confident of his ability to secure an office. Mr. McNear has had military training at the University of California, during his college days, but did not expect to put it into practice at such an early date. Before entering the training camp he spent some time at the Hitchcock Military academy. He has worked hard and devoted his entire time to the work while in training and has been rewarded with the commission.

Mr. McNear, who is the second son of Mr. and Mrs. G. P. McNear to enter the U. S. service is one of the most popular young men in the city, and has friends among people in all stations of life. He will be wished every success in his military career.

"Petaluma (CA) Daily Morning Chronicle" Tuesday 27 Nov 1917 p 1

LIEUT. E. D. M'NEAR WAS ON TUSCANIA; NOW SAFE AT LARNE

Larne, Ireland, Feb. 7.

Geo. P. McNear,

Petaluma, Cal.

Arrived safe and well.

E. D. McNEAR.

The above cablegram received by Geo. P. McNear at 10:27 on Thursday morning brought happiness to the whole community and relieved the minds of relatives and countless friends of First Lieut. E. Denman McNear, son of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. P. McNear of this city, for from the first news of the torpedoing of the Anchor liner Tuscania with American troops on board, it was known that the esteemed young Petaluman was on board. The news of the torpedoing of the Tuscania had been kept from Mr. McNear by Mr. and Mrs. L. V.

father, it was ascertained that the son had sailed on an Anchor line steamer as the back of the envelope which contained the letter was embossed with a small emblem of the Anchor line. This was probably overlooked by the censor and yet was sufficient to betray the line to which the transport belonged, making it easy for the relatives to know when the news of the disaster was received that the Petaluman was on board.

The whole city is rejoicing in the glad news and Mr. McNear and his relatives are overjoyed. All day they were being congratulated by friends while the Argus telephones were kept busy by inquiring friends who sought to confirm the news.

Mrs. Geo. P. McNear and Miss Louise, who went to New York some time ago to see Lieuts. Geo. P., Jr., and E. D. McNear sail for

ter and that they will be greatly worried over the safety of Lieut. McNear (and they probably know that he was on the Tuscania). Mr. McNear has kept the wires red hot all day in an effort to intercept the travelers and inform them of the young officer. Mr. McNear stated that he would not cease his efforts until he has informed them of their good fortune.

When the news was placed on the Argus bulletin board that the Petaluman was heard from at Larne, a crowd immediately collected and all day the Argus was kept busy confirming the news of his safe arrival in Ireland.

Lieut. McNear had written that he had been assigned a stateroom on the upper deck. His description of the Tuscania exactly fitted the printed photos in the San Francisco dailies.

Korbel at whose home he is residing during the absence of Mrs. McNear, until Thursday morning and then the father was almost overcome, but the cablegram thoughtfully sent by his son at apparently the earliest opportunity,

Europe are now homeward bound and are speeding across the continent, being due here Saturday.

Knowing that they will learn through the papers of the disas-

Relatives and friends will anxiously await the arrival of such details of the experiences which the officer will be permitted to tell later.

nity, soon relieved the worries of the father.

For some days Mr. McNear has been worrying, but has said nothing. He knew that his son had sailed two days after his other son, Geo. P., Jr., had left the east and the non-arrival of the officer in Europe worried him.

When Denman McNear went on board the transport, he wrote to his father telling him all about the ship, but not being allowed to give the name. He described the Tuscania, however, to the letter and to add to the fears of the

LIEUT. M'NEAR EN- JOYING IRISH HOSPITALITY

Sunday morning George P. McNear received an official telegram from the war department at Washington, telling of the safe arrival of his son, Lieutenant E. Denman McNear, in Ireland. The telegram was signed by H. P. McCain, Adjutant-general.

Almost immediately after receiving the message a cablegram, sent by the young officer was received here. The cable follows.

Some where in Ireland
G. P. McNear,
Petaluma, Cal.

Saved from the Tuscania. Enjoy-
ing Irish hospitality. Am Well.

E. DENMAN McNEAR.

The cable was the second received
by relatives of the young Lieutenant
since the Tuscania was divered.

The McNears have friends in Ire-
land and Mr. McNear is of the opin-
ion that his son is being entertained
at the home of his old friend, A. O.
Milligan, who lives about twenty
miles from Larne. Mr. Milligan was
a resident for years of Cotati and is
also an old friend of W. McDowell,
who resides east of this city. Of late
years Mr. Milligan was engaged in
the hay business in San Francisco,
but retired and left for Ireland, his
old home

In 1913, when G. P. McNear went
to London, Mr. Milligan made a trip
from Ireland to London to see him
and Mr. McNear is quite sure that
he would look up his son when he
heard Californians were aboard. Mr.
McNear and Mr. Milligan have cor-
responded since the latter left for
Ireland.

Many Petalumans will remember
Mr. Milligan.

EXPERIENCES OF LIEUT. M'NEAR

A letter received from Lieutenant Denman McNear describes his experience when the Tuscania sank and how he escaped. As is already known to all, some of the boats were destroyed by the torpedo while others were put out of commission by the list of the ship. In case of such a calamity all on board know to which boat they are to go to be rescued. The boat which Mr. McNear was to take was one of those damaged. He stood with others at the station until assigned to another boat. When all got in this boat, it was plainly seen that it was entirely too full and that it must be relieved. Even after this, one man was pulled in from the water and another was taken in on his sliding

down a rope. At this juncture, the Captain of the Tuscania sent up rockets calling for more help, and a second destroyer appeared. One of the destroyers took a number of men out of the boat in which Mr. McNear was seated and thus relieved it so that it could stand the wind and waves. It was then a case of rowing and bailing for several hours, until being picked up at 11:30 p. m. Part of the letter which describes the struggle in the boat and the scene as the Tuscania went down follows:

"I never was tempted to jump off, but you can see why some did. Being confident about the suction, I did not want to get into the cold water any sooner than I had to. Well, once

in the boat began a painful hour. We wanted to get away from the ship, we were leaking, we were so crowded we could scarcely row, and had no oarsmen, Lieut Thall (the paper called him Hall) stood by the green oarsmen, and tried to tell them which was rowing ahead, and which was backing water. (We did not have a single member of the ship's boat crew with us.) I was glad for what I learned around Pedro. I got a long oar and put it out astern through a lock—and with Thall coaching the absolutely green oarsmen—and an assistant and myself working this long oar—we tried to get away from the boat, and also keep headed up so the waves would not come over our sides. We would get her strait and start to row ahead and she would swing right around into the troughs again (due to the wind and boat heavy with water and men), and we would ship water.

It was always a hard job straightening her up—for one side would have to pull and the other back water. And all the time the water was gaining on the bailers and we were becoming more unmanageable. Our boat's lantern had been used for giving light on the boat deck, so we had no strong red light the trawlers could see to find us with. We did have two flash lights and earnestly and vainly did we use them on distant ships that first hour. Our struggles with the oars were so nerve-racking and futile, the water was gaining, wind and sea rising, that we finally gave up rowing, and got additional men to bail with hats. The men thought we were too close to the Tuscania and feared suction—but I had been posted. Finally, about an hour after we had put off, and before we stopped rowing, the Tuscania began to sink faster and in a

minute or two the little of her that was left above water had been submerged. I watched her go down, gently it seemed to me—sans any explosion, buckling, or breaking in two, which some report—and as she went down a gentle glow was seen in the shape of a bowl over the spot where she sank. That must have been something from the engine room which the water forced up through the smoke stacks. The papers tell of what a fine ship she was. We had been on her so long she was familiar to us—and we could not believe such a splendid ship would ever go down. She had become a floating home—we knew her so well.

As near as I can place the time—we were hit a few minutes to 6.

Our boat left 7:30 —8.00

The Tuscania sank about 9.

We were picked up at about 11.

“Petaluma (CA) Daily Morning Chronicle” Sunday 31 Mar 1918 p 6

GAYE LeBARON'S NOTEBOOK



Petaluma man may be the last Tuscania survivor

Finally, after much scrambling, many men managed to get aboard two destroyers or into lifeboats that were not damaged. McNear decided to get into the last lifeboat. “When we got all the men in who kept coming down the ropes, we had maybe 60 men just jammed in, no room to move. A man in the water signalled us and we picked him up. We then called to see if there was anyone left aboard. Lo and behold, there appeared Lt. Pattison, my roommate, whom I had left hours ago before either destroyer came even . . . We got along side and he soon came down a rope, another man was picked up in the water and then started a fierce hour’s work.”

From his spot on the lifeboat, McNear could see the second destroyer that took off so many men “there was room in this last lifeboat for me. The first destroyer had taken a couple or three hundred (survivors) . . . This second one filled up inside then she began covering her decks. (It was probably on this second destroyer where Stewart, one of the last men to leave the ship, ended up.) Finally, the captain had all he could hold up, but there was a stream he did not want to shut off, so that splendid men and capable sailors started pumping oil overboard, and in all he pumped over forty barrels. It took a fine bit of seamanship and daring for him to come along-side and lay there . . . when he pulled off it

On the evening of Feb. 5, 1918, only hours away from safe landing in Liverpool, England, the German submarine UB-77 fired three torpedoes at the British transport ship *Tuscania*, one of which buried itself between the engine room and the stoke hole and exploded at 6:45 p.m. . . .

So begins a story of escape from a watery grave, an account of gallantry and adventure, as written by Lee Torliatt, who came upon the tale while compiling a family history from Petaluma's archives. Torliatt, a Petaluman by birth, is a former journalist and a long-time social studies teacher at Piner High School. Alden Stewart, who was on the Tuscania, is his uncle.

Today is the 71st anniversary of the sinking of the *Tuscania*, which was carrying 2,179 members of the American Expeditionary Forces to England to fight in World War I. The ship was torpedoed off the coast of Ireland. It stayed afloat in the cold waters of the North Channel for nearly three hours before it sank. The following day, 310 men, mostly American soldiers and members of the ship's crew, were reported dead or missing.

Among the men who survived were a Sebastopol soldier named Edward Herbert (Hook) Edgeworth, and an officer and an enlisted man from Petaluma, Lt. E. Denman McNear, scion of the George P. McNear family. McNear joined the Army a few days before the draft went into effect in December, 1917.

There were substantial differences between the backgrounds of the two men. McNear was born in the family mansion at the south end of town in 1889, graduated from Hitchcock Military Academy and attended the University of California. When World War I began he was a senior captain in a regiment raised at the university although he was a lieutenant in active service. Stewart was born, also in Petaluma in 1896. His parents were William and Elizabeth Hickey Stewart, the latter a teacher-superintendent of Lincoln Primary School on B Street. He was a "bucker and feller" for a logging company before joining Company F of the 20th Regiment of Engineers.

The troops aboard the *Tuscania* that stormy winter evening were in a good mood, having sighted land off Ulster after a rough trip. One survivor wrote: "We were safe now, we thought, and the next morning we expected to arrive in the harbor of Liverpool." Alas, it was not to be. The *Tuscania* would be the first troop ship to be sunk while carrying Americans overseas.

• • •

SONOMA COUNTY newspapers reported the activities of local boys who had gone off to war and the sinking of the *Tuscania* created a major stir. It made

come alongside and lay there . . . when he pulled on it was a wonderful sight. That low ship with her decks a mass of humanity."

The ship with its overload of 600 or more men faced more danger from the German U-boat. A torpedo barely missed the ship, with estimates ranging from a mere two to six feet. "Had that torpedo struck as the one at 6 p.m. did, nearly all of those men would have been lost, for the destroyer had few or no life boats, and we could have never gotten off in our boat. What that destroyer's daring, and that torpedo's missing, had to do with me! My, but these British have earned their laurels on the sea!"

More adventure lay ahead for McNear and his shipmates. " . . . once in the boat began a painful hour. We were leaking, we were so crowded we could scarcely row and had no oarsmen . . . I got a long oar and put it out astern through a lock . . . (a Lt.) Thall coaching the absolutely green oarsmen, and an assistant and myself working this long oar. We would get her straight and start to row ahead and she would swing right around into the troughs again, and we would ship water . . . the water was gaining, the wind and sea rising, . . . we finally gave up rowing and got additional men to bail with hats . . ."

The people in McNear's lifeboat made an attempt to transfer men from the overcrowded craft to another boat, but the jagged end of the other boat jammed a hole or two into our canvas top sides . . . water poured through the new holes." There was a seemingly endless session of bailing in rough seas, followed, at last, by the sighting of a British trawler. A group of "fine Britishers . . . lined the side of the trawler" and there were husky men in rubber coats and hats waiting "with open arms."

"As the seas would toss our boat up and down, these men would grab men from our boat, when we were on a crest, and haul them into the trawler. My mother's arms have always looked mighty good to me, but never have I seen the outstretched arms of a man look better than these did from where I sat up to my waist in water in this little boat."

The captain of the trawler had picked up people from six other boats before finding McNear and his mates. In all, he picked up some 340 men from the seas.

• • •

THE LETTER from Stewart is not so dramatic. He reported: "I was below deck when it happened and the crash lurched us all down and there was an explosion . . . there was a grand rush for the deck and we all lined up from the life boats . . . we were the last company off the boat and picked up by a destroyer . . . We were landed in northern Ireland and at three in the morning." Stewart reassured his mother

headlines in Santa Rosa's two newspapers, The Press Democrat and the Republican, and in Petaluma's Argus and Courier. In Santa Rosa, the news was announced in the movie theaters. When word came from Edgeworth's Sebastopol family, The Press Democrat reported him "safe in Ireland." Both the Argus and the Courier printed Lt. McNear's dramatic letter on the disaster at sea. The Courier ran Pvt. Stewart's letter to his mother. McNear's letter ran in two installments, including the following:

"We had been out so long — nearly two weeks — and finally sighted land, followed by land on both sides, and with port the next morning things seemed surer than before and, too, darkness was falling. We were well-protected . . . and no convoy had ever been attacked and a troop ship sunk except in the Mediterranean . . . I was sitting as much absorbed as I am right now when all of a sudden there was an explosion, and immediately, darkness; my thought was that it had really happened."



McNear at 89

McNear tells of groping in darkness to his stateroom to pick up two items, his long underwear and a Brooks Brothers suit which "had always been kept right in front of the door under the wash basin." He was assigned to lifeboat #9 with 69 other officers and enlisted men. When he went on deck to find the boat, he learned that the force of the explosion had lifted the boat up two decks and wedged it onto the boat deck "in such a manner than no amount of work could budge it." The #9 boat

blocked three other boats as well.

McNear continued: "Where can you find greater courage than those fine men showed who, knowing that their life boats would never come, stood there in rank, in order, on that sinking ship. There was no panic as was expected from untrained troops." The lieutenant, thinking quickly, had to decide his future course of action. He worked his way to the boat deck with his roommate, whose name was Pattison. "I knew I had no place in a boat. Every man was assigned and I was not going to try to get another man's place so I thought to get up on the Boat Deck to see what progress was being made and also be in a position to float off when she went down. I had learned from one of experience that a big ship sinking slowly had no suction to speak of and . . . I was going to hope to be picked out of the water."

that he was well and admitted to losing everything "except what I had on my back." Some 40 men in his unit were lost and he ended by saying that "if anything happens I won't kick, as about forty of our bunch are gone and the rest of us are going to do our bit."



Stewart

McNear and Stewart both landed in northern Ireland and were impressed with the "royal" welcome they received. The sinking of the Tuscania caused great rage against the Kaiser in the U.S., especially among loggers. The Argus reported that two days after the disaster, seven "husky lads" from Humboldt County boarded the Eureka Express train and headed south to enlist. The Humboldt boys, said the Argus, were "mad clean through."

The torpedoing of the Tuscania was as close as either of the Petalumans got to serious injury during the war. McNear became an instructor of troops in France, although he visited the front, where he observed the action of artillery and airplanes. Stewart, who did not get to the front, came home in June, 1919, after having given "valuable aid in building bridges, railroads, etc."

Some 1,900 men survived the Tuscania. A National Association of Tuscania Survivors was formed and, in 1976, as the membership number dwindled, one of the men bought a bottle of quality Scotch and organized an informal "Last Man's Club." The bottle, it was decided, would go to the last man to survive and he would drink a toast to his comrades. Scotch replaced the traditional brandy in this agreement because of an incident aboard one of the rescue destroyers when the British captain of the Tuscania produced a bottle of Scotch, broke the seal and took a long drink, then handed it down to one of the Americans saying "Pass it around to the boys. It will cheer them a bit."

The bottle is in the custody of the Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Vernon, Texas. There are very few survivors. In 1986 the number was eight. One of them is Alden Stewart. Stewart returned to Petaluma in the 1930s after several years as a policeman and several more as the owner of a Detroit hardware store. In Petaluma, he worked as a carpenter until he retired. Denman McNear died in 1984 at the age of 95. Efforts to contact other survivors recently have failed. Perhaps the final toast of the "Last Man's Club" more than 70 years after that dark and stormy February night, will be drunk in Petaluma.

The last survivor of the Tuscania – Edwin Clark Lewis - died 1 Apr 2001 at the age of 101 – "Santa Rosa (CA) Post-Dispatch" Sunday 5 Feb 1989 p 2

12B—PETALUMA ARGUS-COURIER, Petaluma CA, Tuesday, April 25, 1995

Denman McNear, Tuscania survivor



Denman McNear with Bill Soberanes

By **BILL SOBERANES**

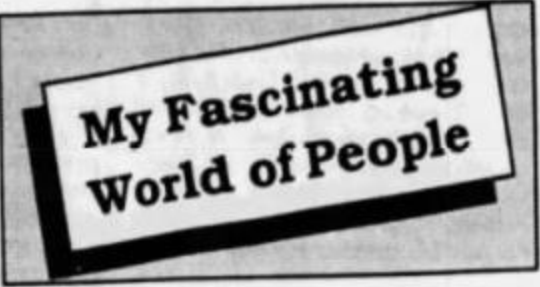
Columnist-Peopleologist

I'm constantly searching for survivors, and today's story is about Denman McNear, whose father, George P. McNear, was as close as Petaluma ever had to being a king. It took Petaluman Lee Torliatt, a former journalist and teacher, to refresh some of my memories of a wonderful gentleman, Denman McNear.

During his twilight years, McNear sent me a number of letters about the Petaluma he knew, in a time when our city was still very young. But today's yarn is about his survival of the sinking of the ship *Tuscania*, the first troopship to be sunk in World War I while carrying Americans overseas. The troops aboard the *Tuscania* that stormy winter evening were in a good mood, having sighted land

be in a position to float off when she went down. I had learned from one of experience that a big ship sinking slowly had no suction to speak of, and I was going to hope to be picked out of the water."

Finally after much scrambling, many men managed to get aboard two destroyers or into lifeboats that had not smashed. McNear decided to get into the last lifeboat. McNear went on to tell about the



**My Fascinating
World of People**

rescue of between 200 and 300 men by a destroyer.

In his letter McNear told about the dangers they faced in the

off Ulster after a rough trip. One survivor wrote, "We expected to arrive in the harbor of Liverpool, but it was not to be."

The report about the *Tuscania* created quite a major stir, and the *Press Democrat* and *Argus-Courier* carried headlines about it. And the news was even announced on the movie screens. At the time, Denman McNear's dramatic letter appeared in the *Argus* and here is some of it.

"We had been out so long — nearly two weeks — and finally spotted land, followed by land on both sides. With port the next morning, things seemed surer than before and, as darkness was falling, we were well-protected — and no convoy had ever attacked and a troopship sunk except in the Mediterranean — I was sitting as much absorbed as I am right now when all of a sudden there was an explosion, and immediately, darkness; my thought was that it had really happened."

McNear told about groping in the darkness in his cabin to pick two items, his long underwear and a Brooks Brothers suit. He talked about being assigned to a lifeboat with 69 other officers and enlisted men. He also said that when he went on deck to find the boat, he learned that the force of the explosion had lifted the boat up two decks and lodged it onto the boat

deck in such a manner that no amount of work could move it. McNear's number 9 boat locked three other boats as well.

McNear continued, "Where can you find greater courage than those fine men showed who, knowing that their lifeboat would never come, stood there in rank, in order, on that sinking ship. There was no panic as was expected from untrained troops." Lt. McNear had only a short time to decide his future course of action. He traveled his way to the boat deck with his roommate, whose name was Pattison. McNear said, "I knew I had no place in a boat. Every man was assigned, and I was not going to try to get another man's place so I thought to get up on the boat deck to see what progress was being made and also

be in a position to float off when she went down. I had learned from one of experience that a big ship sinking slowly had no suction to speak of, and I was going to hope to be picked out of the water."

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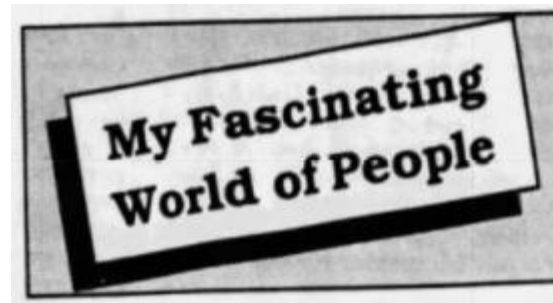
rescue of between 200 and 300 men by a destroyer.

In his letter McNear told about the dangers they faced in the

lifeboat. He talked about the water gaining, as the seas rose and he said, "We finally gave up rowing and got additional men to bail with hats." The lifeboat McNear was in was almost destroyed when the jagged end of another boat jabbed a hole or two in it.

McNear said, "At last a British trawler came to the scene. A group of fine Britishers—lined the side of the trawler and their strong men waited with open arms." McNear went on to say, "As the seas would toss our boat up and down, their men would grab men from our boat when we were on a crest and haul them into the trawler. My mother's arms have always looked mighty good to me, but never have I seen the outstretched arms of a man look better than these did from where I sat up to my waist in water in this little boat."

Denman McNear came back to Petaluma where along with his father he operated the largest busi-



ness in the history of Petaluma. Denman loved to walk around Petaluma, talk to the working men, but he seldom spun yarns about being a survivor of the Tuscania.

I spent many hours chatting with Denman McNear, and I never met a man with more humility, or more love for the Petaluma he and his father helped build into what eventually became the Egg Capital of the World.

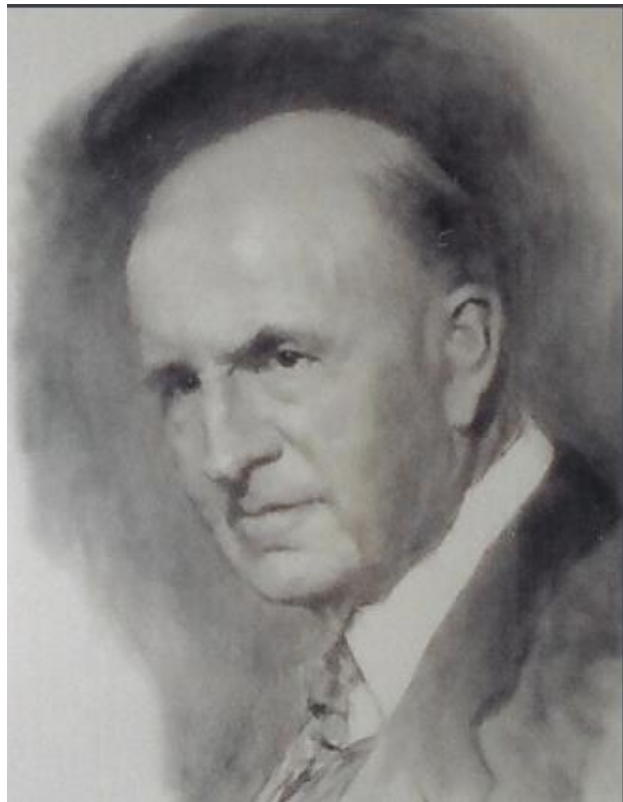
At the time of his death (he was in his nineties) Denman was believed to be the last survivor of the Tuscania. I'm sure that Lee Torliatt, whose uncle Alden Stewart, was aboard the Tuscania, will expand on the story in the book that he's now writing. It will be of historic significance to this area.

My last contact with Denman was a telephone call in which he said, "My eyesight is failing, but I have a person who reads your column to me."

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Father:



Father George Plummer McNear Sr. (1857-1947) – Left: Find A Grave 105717995 – Right:
<https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/6988085/person/597068194/media/88b3b51b-c8b0-4788-9a9e-b36ee286eb76>



His father George Plummer McNear – at McClure's Military Academy -
<https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/6988085/person/597068194/media/cd013366-5b65-4d05-9217-914cbb2833ea>

G. P. McNear's Birthday Is Observed

Once again the center space in the office of the G. P. McNear Co. on Third and B streets was filled with baskets and bouquets of home-grown mixed flowers, the gifts of employees in honor of the 85th birthday of their employer, George P. McNear.

While Mr. McNear officially will observe this important date with a family reunion and dinner at his spacious home on the highway, south of town, on Sunday, the employees arranged their floral tributes in the office on Saturday.

For the occasion Mr. McNear was present at the office as usual and during the day he was kept busy receiving the congratulations of his friends and business associates.

Mr. McNear is a leader in the business life of Petaluma. He was born in this city July 26, 1857 and at the age of 19 began his business career, taking over the operation of his father's feed mill on north Main street on April 29, 1876. He has been actively engaged in business ever since that date, building the hay, grain, seed and feed business to a great concern handling thousands of tons of produce every year. During his career he has taken time to serve as president and member of several boards of directors of banking institutions and he is a prominent member of the Petaluma Rotary club, being a charter member of the organization. His philanthropies and gifts mark him as Petaluma's most outstanding benefactor.

Twenty-seven members of Mr. McNear's family are expected to gather here Sunday for the annual reunion and birthday dinner. The guests will include: Mr. and Mrs. Harrison and two children and Dr. and Mrs. Howard Naffziger and three daughters, of San Francisco; Mr. and Mrs. George R. Leppo, of Santa Rosa; E. B. McNear and daughter, Mrs. W. H. Thomas, of San Rafael;

Mrs. Clara Leppo, of Santa Marino; Mr. and Mrs. E. Denman McNear and daughter, Mary, of Petaluma; Denman Kittredge McNear who will come here from Yosemite and Mr. and Mrs. Leo V. Korb and daughters, the Misses Mary, Georgia and Frances Korb.

Due to the exigencies of war Mr. and Mrs. George P. McNear Jr., of Peoria, Ill., will be unable to be present.



Find A Grave 105784417

CHAPTER EIGHT

The McNears of Petaluma

Know your business, like your business, and attend to your business.

— G.P. McNear's company maxim

For more than eighty years, a frugal Scottish-American family named McNear were Petaluma's richest and most powerful citizens. To sense their impact on the town, we have only to imagine Petaluma without the McNear buildings on lower Fourth Street, without the McNear Canal, McNear Park, McNear School, without the Petaluma Golf & Country Club, Cypress Hill Cemetery, the neo-Baroque bank building at the intersection of Main and Washington Streets, without the Great Petaluma Mill and the old Petaluma & Santa Rosa Railway tracks running behind it.

Even before he came to Petaluma, the tall, bearded John Augustus McNear had great hopes for his own future. He was born December 23, 1832 in Wiscasset, Maine. Six generations of McNear men had all been sea captains there, and John grew up in the same tradition. He shipped out as an ordinary seaman at age nineteen, then rose in one year to become master of a square-rigged schooner that traded along the East Coast. In 1853 he accompanied a family group from Maine to Mississippi to set up a steam sawmill on the Pascagoula River, a hundred miles northeast of New Orleans.

John's younger brother, George Washington McNear, was there, serving as the skipper of the mill schooner. Several cousins had also trooped along, including sixteen-year-old Clarinda Damsen Williams from Wiscasset. Her father, George B. Williams, had gone west with the Gold Rush and was putting up a

hotel in the California town of Petaluma. John and Clara were married in Pascagoula in 1854. He was able to save \$3000 from his third of the profits of the mill, and was looking about for a new project when a letter arrived from Clara's father early in 1856, urging the young couple to come out to California. Folded up in the letter was a sketch of the Petaluma Creek. Williams wanted to impress his nautical son-in-law with the creek's potential as a sheltered, navigable shipping link between the rich farmlands of Sonoma County and the bustling world port of San Francisco.

McNear thought it was worth a gamble, and he and Clara set out that fall. Nineteen-year-old George W. begged to be allowed to go with them, but his brother left him to take charge of the sawmill. If all went well, he would be sent for.

John and Clara arrived in Petaluma on November 6, 1856. If Williams expected his sober young son-in-law to be howled over with admiration at his first sight of the little riverside community, he was probably disappointed. The muddy streets, the small, rather crude houses, the inordinate number of saloons (the McNears were teetotalers) might have put off someone used to a neat New England village. But at least the young couple could hear the sounds of a town in progress—the ring of axes and hammers splitting the crisp November air, the creaking of heavily loaded farm wagons, the shouts of exasperated drovers and the answering squeals of pigs or bleats of sheep being herded down Main Street.

More pages of this story available on Ancestry.com -- <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/6988085/person/597068194/media/82993ede-27aa-4c09-8372-5eac39cf9c00>

Father:

George P. McNear, Pioneer Merchant, Dies in Petaluma

**90-Year-Old Business Leader Had Been Failing
In Health Since Murder of Son Last March;
Founded Grain, Feed Firm 70 Years Ago**

George P. McNear, who was born in Petaluma 90 years ago, and who built a small feed store into one of northern California's greatest industries, died yesterday following an illness of several months.

The Petaluma business leader and public benefactor had been in failing health since the murder of his son, George P. McNear Jr., Eastern railroad magnate, by mysterious assailants who waylaid him as he walked near his home last March.

For 70 years George P. McNear had personally directed the extensive feed and grain business that bore his name. He also had banking interests dating back to 1894 when he became president of the Sonoma County National Bank, of which his late father, John A. McNear was one of the founders.

During the years that he built up his business interests, McNear acquired vast holdings of real property in Petaluma and throughout Sonoma county.

In recent years he made several generous gifts to the city of Petaluma, including McNear Park and other properties for the enjoyment of his fellow townspeople.

Despite his advanced years, McNear enjoyed golf and other sports, and until a few years ago when he was forced to curtail his activities due to a sick spell, the Petaluman played 18 holes of golf

at least three times a week.

He celebrated his 90th birthday anniversary July 26, and in 1937 he and his pioneer wife, Mrs. Ida Denman McNear, who survives him, observed their golden-wedding anniversary.

Survivors include the widow, three daughters, Mrs. Clara McNear Leppo of San Francisco, Mrs. Leo V. Korbell of Petaluma; Mrs. Howard Naffziger of San Francisco; and a son, E. Denman McNear of Petaluma. A brother, E. B. McNear of San Rafael, 18 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren also survive.

In addition to his Petaluma business properties, McNear owned orchards at Sebastopol and at Fullerton and Orange in southern California. He had served as vice-president of the Petaluma Savings Bank and the First National Bank at Sebastopol, and as director of the Bank of California.

Funeral services will be held from the Petaluma Congregational Church at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning. Friends may call at the chapel of Blackburn & Sorensen in Petaluma until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. Private inurnment at Cypress Hill Cemetery will follow the church services.

McNear Estate Appraised at \$1,370,655

The estate of George P. McNear, Petaluma banker, merchant and landowner who died Aug. 12, 1947, yesterday was valued at \$1,370,655.

An inventory and appraisal of the McNear holdings filed with Sonoma county superior (probate) court listed personal property, including stocks and bonds, valued at \$873,394, and 25 parcels of real estate worth \$497,265.

Also in the estate are \$26,532 in bonds under co-ownership with other parties.

The inventory was filed by Lewis H. Cromwell, Petaluma, attorney for the estate, for the appointed appraisers, Thomas M. Brownscombe, Arthur G. Wright and A. P. Behrens.

Mr. McNear, who was 90 years old when he died in Petaluma last year, in 70 years built a small feed store into one of northern California's greatest businesses.

At various times, he was president of the Sonoma County National Bank, of which his father, the late John A. McNear was a founder; vice president of the Petaluma Savings Bank and the First National Bank of Sebastopol, and director of the Bank of California.

In addition to his Petaluma business properties, Mr. McNear owned orchards and ranches in Sonoma county and southern California.

He left the vast estate to his family, bequeathing \$350,000 free of taxes to his widow, Ida B. McNear, and the remainder in outright grants and trusts to their two daughters and one living son, 18 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

A second son, George P. McNear, Jr., an Eastern railroad magnate, was shot to death in a still unsolved murder at Peoria, Ill., five months before his father's death.

Estate of father George Plummer McNear Sr. - "Santa Rosa (CA) Press Democrat" Saturday 4 Sep 1948 p 2

His father's 1st wife Jennie Otis McNear:



His father George Plummer McNear Sr.'s 1st wife, Jennie Otis McNear (1857 MN – 1883 CA) -
<https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/6988085/person/597070888/media/f48819c4-396a-4bdd-a459-b4c2e96d240f>

Mother – his father's 2nd wife:



Passport photo of mother Ida Belle Denman McNear 23 Mar 1921 -
<https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/6988085/person/597078024/media/006ca7c0-b16e-440f-aae7-7fc2c59ec75b>

Mrs. Ida McNear, Member Of Pioneer Sonoma County Family, Succumbs at Home

PETALUMA, July 9—Mrs. Ida B. Denman McNear, wife of the late George P. McNear, Petaluma financier and founder of the G. P. McNear Co. grain and feed milling industry, died early this morning at her home on Redwood Highway South. She was 89.

She had been in failing health since the death of her husband in August, 1947, and of her stepson, George P. McNear Jr., owner of the Toledo, Peoria and West-

ern Railroad, who was ambushed and killed during a labor dispute in March, 1947.

She was a member of one of Sonoma county's pioneer families. Her father, the late Ezekiel Denman came to California from the east in 1851 in the wake of the gold rush and in 1852 established himself as a rancher in Two Rock on a section of the old Bojorques rancho. It was on the Denman ranch in Two Rock that Mrs. Mc-

Near was born.

SHE RECEIVED her early schooling here and upon graduation from Petaluma High School entered Mills College. She was one of the Oakland college's first graduates.

On June 2, 1887, she was married to George P. McNear, son of John A. McNear, one of the founders of the Sonoma County National Bank (now the Bank of Sonoma County).

Her husband, a native Petaluman, built a small feed store into one of the Petaluma areas greatest industries and for 70 years he personally directed the extensive feed and grain business that bore his name.

He also had banking interests dating back to 1894 when he became president of the Sonoma County National Bank. He also served as vice president of the Petaluma Savings Bank and the First National Bank at Sebastopol and as director of the Bank of California. In addition to his Petaluma business properties he owned orchards at Sebastopol and at Fullerton and Orange in southern California.

Mr. and Mrs. McNear celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1937 and their 60th wedding anniversary in 1947, two months before Mr. McNear's death at the age of 90. In the last years of his life Mr. McNear made several gifts to the City of Petaluma, including McNear Park and the land on which the Petaluma Golf and Country Club is located.

IT WAS ON the 50th anniversary of the founding of his grain and feed business that he gave McNear Park and \$20,000 for its maintenance to the city. He also donated land for a school site opposite the park and a site for the city's main firehouse.

Always active in club and social circles of the city, Mrs. McNear was the first president of the Petaluma Women's Club, in which capacity she served from 1896 to 1903.

An enthusiastic gardener and
(Continued on Page 2A, Col. 4)

Mrs. McNear Dies at 89 In Petaluma

(Continued from Page 1)

tree lover, she started a plan in 1913 to beautify the city's streets by donating trees to all residents who wanted to plant them between the sidewalk and the street in front of their homes.

Both she and her husband were interested in world affairs and were extensive travelers, making frequent trips to Europe.

Mrs. McNear is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Leo V. Korbel of Petaluma and Mrs. Howard C. Naffziger of San Francisco; a son, E. Denman McNear of Petaluma; a stepdaughter, Mrs. Clara McNear Leppo of San Francisco; two sisters, Mrs. J. E. Allen and Miss Catherine Denman of Petaluma; and two brothers, Frank H. Denman of Petaluma and John R. Denman of Olema.

ALSO SURVIVING are 13 grandchildren, Mrs. Louise Schwein, Mrs. Murrey Johnson, Mrs. Ralph E. Ferguson, Jr., Miss Georgia Korbel, Mrs. James McNab, Denman Kittredge McNear, Clinton McNear, James Graham McNear, Miss Elizabeth H. McNear, John Williams McNear, Mrs. William H. Orrick Jr., Mrs. Nicholas Thacher and Mrs. W. E. Stern; and seven great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. tomorrow at Sorensen's Funeral Home, 400 Washington street, Petaluma. Friends are asked to omit flowers. Private inurnment services will follow at Cypress Hill Memorial Park.

Death of mother Ida Bell Denman McNear – the obituary erroneously describes George Plummer McNear Jr. as her stepson; he is her son – “Santa Rosa (CA) Press Democrat” Sunday 10 Jul 1949 p

2 -<https://www.newspapers.com/image/265202922> &
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/265202925>

Wife:

Mary H. K. M'Near Dies at 56

PETALUMA—Mrs. Mary H. K. McNear, wife of E. Denman McNear, died yesterday at her 617 C St. home in Petaluma after an illness of several months.

Mrs. McNear, the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. George W. Kittredge, Yonkers, N.Y., was born Oct. 1, 1897, in Cincinnati, Ohio. She attended the Brearley School, New York, and St. Timothy's School, Cantonsville, Md.

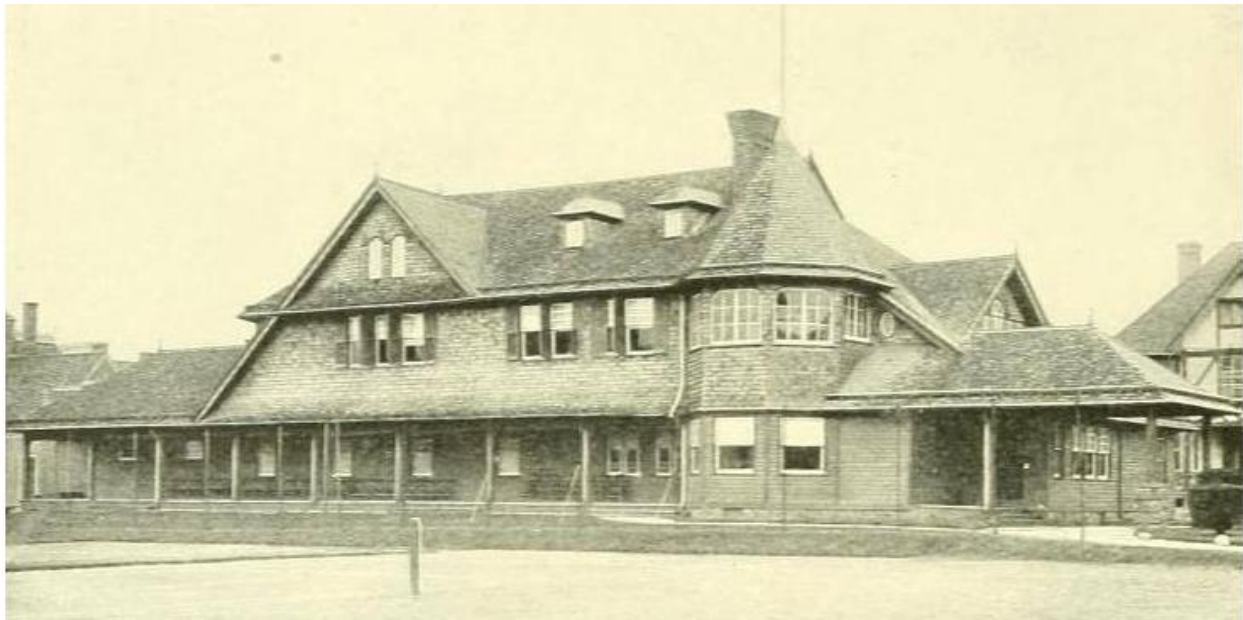
She was married in 1920. Mr. McNear is president of the G. P. McNear Co., feed dealers.

Mrs. McNear was a member of the Colonial Dames of America, the Century Club, Town and Country Club, the Junior League of San Francisco, and the Petaluma Women's Club.

In addition to her husband she is survived by a daughter, Mrs. James McNab, Ross; a son, Denman Kittredge McNear, Tucumcari, N.M.; three grandchildren, James McNab III, Alexander McNab and Stewart McNab II, and a brother, George D. Kittredge, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. tomorrow at Sorensen's Funeral Home. Burial will be in Cypress Hill Memorial Park.

Obituary of wife Mary H. Kittredge McNear (1897-1955) – "Santa Rosa (CA) Press Democrat" Sunday 15 May 1955 p 8



The Amackassin Club in Yonkers-on-the Hudson, where Ezekiel & Mary were married - <http://www.amackassinclub.com/>

Kittredge-McNear

Miss Mary Henrietta Kittredge of Yonkers, N. Y., and Mr. E. Denman McNear of California to Be Married.

MRS. AND MRS. GEORGE WATSON KITTREDGE McNEAR of Yonkers, N. Y., have issued invitations to the marriage of their daughter, Miss Mary Henrietta Kittredge, to Mr. E. Denman McNear of Petaluna, Calif. The wedding will take place Saturday, April 17, at 4 o'clock, at the Amackassin Club at Yonkers-on-the-Hudson, N. Y. Miss Kittredge is a graduate of St. Timothy's School at Catonsville, Md.

Mr. McNear is the son of Mr. and Mrs. George Plummer McNear of Petaluna, Calif., is a graduate of the University of California and served sixteen months with the Field Artillery in France.

The bride's mother was formerly Miss Georgia Davis of Louisville.

Marriage of Ezekiel Denman McNear to Mary Henrietta Kittredge on 17 Apr 1920 in Yonkers-on-the-Hudson NY - "Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal" Sunday 28 Mar 1920 p 14

Children:

Parent-Sorensen Mortuary
MAGNOLIA & KEOKUK STS., PETALUMA
FOR INFORMATION PHONE 763-4131 or 763-1963
MARTIN D. (BUZZ) RODGERS Director/Owner • JAMES M. SMITH Director/Owner

McNAB, Mary McNear — Memorial service Monday, 5:00 P.M., at The Branson School, Ross, Ca.

McNAB — In San Francisco, Ca., July 10, 1985. Mary McNear McNab, wife of the late James McNab. Mother of James McNab III of San Francisco, Alexander McNab of East Norwalk, Conn., and Stewart McNab of Denver, Colorado. Sister of Denman K. McNear of Kentfield.

A native of Petaluma, California. Aged 62 years.

Friends are invited to attend the Memorial Services Monday, July 15, 1985, at 5:00 P.M., at the Branson School in Ross, Ca. Contributions are preferred to the Dr. Victor Richards Endowed Chair of Surgical Education and Research, c/o Victor Richards, M.D., 3838 California Street, Suite 612, San Francisco, California 94118.

Obituary of daughter Mary McNear McNab – "Petaluma (CA) Argus-Courier" Friday 12 Jul 1985 p 2



The McNear era

The death this week of Mary McNear McNab and Mrs. Elizabeth McNear, wife of the late George P. McNear Jr., brought back a lot of memories about the days when George McNear Sr. was Petaluma's most powerful citizen.

George P. McNear Jr. was the son of this mighty Petaluman, and Mary McNear McNab was his granddaughter.

The McNear family helped build Petaluma, and to this time no one has filled the shoes of George P. McNear as a Petaluma businessman.

Few cities have had a citizen who stood out as prominently as George P. McNear Sr., did in Petaluma.

I can remember the late Congressman Hubert Schudder saying, "It was George P. McNear who started the campaign that sent me to Washington D.C."

Most of the old timers who knew George P. McNear are gone, but I can remember them referring to him as an empire builder.

Many of Petaluma's early businessmen received the money that put them in business from McNear.

Many old timers referred to Petaluma as McNear's town, and at one time it really was his.

Denman, the last of the McNear family (he was George P.'s son) to live in Petaluma, died a couple of years ago, and his death brought a fabulous Petaluma era to an end.

In the picture at the top of today's column you see George P. McNear surrounded by the following employees: Roy Reynolds, Marian Barnett, Angus McAskill, P. Hoffman, Lellian Bonter and Mable Wilder. The photo was taken in 1905.

Column by Bill Soberanes "Petaluma (CA) Argus-Courier" Wednesday 17 Jul 1985 p 8

The McNears on Isle Honeymoon



MR. AND MRS. DENMAN McNEAR SAILED YESTERDAY ON THE LURLINE
Former Susan Anderson to honeymoon in Hawaii after Saturday wedding

MR. AND MRS. Denman Kittredge McNear (Susan Anderson) sailed yesterday aboard the Lurline for a honeymoon in Hawaii. The couple was married Saturday at St. Clements Episcopal Church, El Paso, Tex.

The bride is the daughter of Mrs. Paul Hopkins Anderson and the late Mr. Anderson of El Paso. Wearing an ivory satin beaded gown, she was given in marriage by her uncle, H. M. Daugherty. Tana Horwitz, maid of honor, was in emerald green chiffon.

Denman is the son of E. Denman McNear of Petaluma and the late Mrs. McNear, members of a pioneer Bay area family. James McNab was best man for his brother-in-law.

Among those attending from San Francisco were Denman's aunts, Mrs. Leo Korbel and Mrs. Howard Naffziger, and the McNabs of Ross.

Susan attended Texas Western College and was graduated from Katharine Gibbs School in Boston. She is a member of the Junior League of El Paso.

Denman, until last weekend a member of the Bachelors of San Francisco, is an alumnus of the Tamalpais School for Boys, MIT and the Stanford Graduate School of Business. He is a member of Chi Phi fraternity.

Wedding of son Denman Kittredge McNear & Susan Anderson – "San Francisco Examiner" Tuesday
30 Jan 1962 p 20

MARIN'S SOCIAL WHIRL

McNear Newlyweds Given Reception

By FLORENCE DONNELLY

More than 300 guests, including many Marinites and members of the far flung McNear clan, were present at the reception Thursday night honoring the newly married Mr. and Mrs. Denman Kittredge McNear (Susan Anderson). The party was given by the new benedict's father, E. Denman McNear of Petaluma and his brother-in-

law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. James McNab (Mary McNear) of Ross.

The party was held at the Town and Country Club in San Francisco. The young McNears, who were married in January in Susan's home city, El Paso, Tex., had an extended honeymoon in Hawaii and are now living in San Francisco.

The bride's mother, Mrs. Paul Anderson flew from El Paso for the reception. For it Mary McNab wore a muted flowered print silk sheath on which she pinned a cluster of cream-colored cymbidium orchids. The bride, who wore a blue flowered sheath, had a corsage of white cattleya orchids. The club was decorated with arrangements of pink snapdragons, blue Dutch iris, pink tulips and pale pink fruit blossoms.

MANY MEMBERS of the McNear family were present at the wedding at Chapel of Grace at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco Thursday afternoon when Marion Cook became the bride of Frederick Thomas Tilton, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Glen Tilton of Orinda. Marion is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Cook Jr. of Rio Vista. Her gown of peau d'ange was appliqued with rosepoint which belonged to her grandmother, the late Mrs. Peter Cook. The latter was a sister of the late Mrs. E. B. (Lucretia) McNear. The latter's son, Lawrence McNear of McNear's Point, could not attend the wedding or the reception following at the Francisco Club as he recently had a bout in Marin General Hospital. It is good news to his many friends that he is improving rapidly and is now home.

“San Rafael (CA) Daily Independent Journal” Saturday 3 Mar 1962 p 5

Denman Kittredge McNear, Marin railroad executive, dies

By [ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ](#) | arodriguez@marinij.com | Marin Independent Journal

PUBLISHED: February 7, 2021 at 12:23 p.m. | UPDATED: February 8, 2021 at 7:24 a.m.



Denman Kittredge McNear died on Jan. 5. He was 95. (Courtesy of George McNear)

Denman Kittredge McNear, a longtime Kentfield resident who was the last chairman and chief executive of the Southern Pacific Transportation Co., died at an assisted living center in Bethesda, Maryland. He was 95.

Mr. McNear started with Southern Pacific as a rodman in the Sacramento division in 1948. He climbed through the ranks to the top post, staying with the company through the acquisition by Rio Grande Industries, becoming vice chairman and working in El Paso, Texas. He retired in 1990.

In the 1980s, as chief executive of Southern Pacific, Mr. McNear worked with Marin County Supervisor Robert Roumiguere, Golden Gate Bridge district manager Carney Campion and U.S. Rep. Doug Bosco for the public acquisition of the mostly dormant tracks and plans to bring back trains. The tracks would become part of the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit network.

Mr. McNear was born in Petaluma on July 20, 1925, to Ezekial Denman and Mary Kittredge McNear. He is the grandson of George P. McNear and the great grandson of John A. McNear, who in 1968 purchased land at Point San Pedro in San Rafael. Today, the land includes the Glenwood and Peacock Gap neighborhoods, McNears Beach county park, China Camp State Park, Miwok Meadows and Back Ranch. The McNear family has been known in Sonoma and Marin counties for businesses in the food and grain, banking and brickyard industries.

After graduating from Tamalpais Academy in San Rafael in 1942, Mr. McNear attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His schooling was interrupted when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1944 and served as radio technician in the Pacific at the end of World War II.

He returned to MIT and graduated in 1948 with a degree in civil engineering. He began his career at Southern Pacific the same year. Two years later he attained a master's degree in business administration from Stanford University.

He married Susan Anderson in 1962. They lived in San Francisco and then Kentfield, where they raised their three sons, Denman Jr., Stephen and George.

The couple divorced, and Mr. McNear married Barbara Gaillard, an old friend and the widow of a college fraternity brother. They split time between Kentfield and Maryland, where Gaillard had a home. She died in 2012 and he remained in Maryland.

Mr. McNear was longtime supporter organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, the California Chamber of Commerce, the Yosemite Conservancy and others.

"I respect and value our family's long connection to Marin and Sonoma," his son George said. "As a father he was very caring, dedicated, and working as much as he did, he did a tremendous job being there for all of our life events. He was a warm-hearted person."

Jay McNab, Mr. McNear's nephew, described Mr. McNear as a "consummate railroad man."

"He knew the industry backwards and forwards," he said. "But above all, he was a family man."

Mr. McNear died on Jan. 5. In addition to his children and first wife, Mr. McNear is survived by his grandchildren, Sam and Rachel McNear, and a large extended family.

Obituary of son Denman Kittredge McNear (1925 CA – 2021 MD) -

<https://www.marinij.com/2021/02/07/denman-kittredge-mcneare-marine-railroad-executive-dies/>

Denman Kittredge McNear

1925 - 2021



Denman Kittredge McNear
Denman Kittredge McNear, a devoted father, a caring husband, a lifelong employee and eventual Chairman and CEO of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company, and third generation Californian from Petaluma, died of natural causes on Tuesday, January 5th at his assisted living residence in Bethesda, Maryland. He was 95 years old and is survived by his three children, Denman McNear Jr, Stephen McNear, and George McNear, his grandchildren, Sam and Rachel McNear, his first wife Susan Anderson McNear, and the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild of his deceased second wife, Barbara "Babs" Stanton Gaillard McNear. His sister Mary McNear McNab passed in 1985, and Denman was a proud uncle to his three nephews, Jay, Alex, and Stewart McNab.

Denman, or Mac, DK, Denny to his various friends and colleagues, was born on July 20, 1925 in Petaluma California to Ezekiel Denman and Mary Kittredge McNear. He was the great grandson of John McNear who moved to Petaluma in the 1850s and the grandson of George P McNear: both who helped create and build an array of successful businesses and local institutions in early Sonoma county.

In 1942, he enrolled in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to pursue a degree in Civil Engineering. But after two years, he enlisted in the United States Navy in 1944 and served as a Radio Technician, 2nd Class, where he was deployed in the Pacific as the war ended. Upon completing his service with the Navy in 1946, he returned to MIT to complete his BS in Civil Engineering and graduated in 1948.

In 1948, he applied to and went to work for Southern Pacific Railroad, the company for which he would work his entire career. He began as Rodman in the Sacramento Division while attending and completing his MBA at Stanford University in 1950. He moved his way up and around Southern Pacific until 1961, when he was transferred to San Francisco, SP's headquarters. In 1976 he became the President of the Transportation Company, and in 1982 he became Chairman and CEO of Southern Pacific Transportation Company until it was

acquired by Rio Grande Industries, when he became Vice Chairman of Rio Grande Industries. He retired in 1990. While working and living in El Paso, Texas in 1958 to 1961, he was introduced to Susan Anderson. They married in 1962 and moved to San Francisco and then Kentfield, in Marin County, where they would live and bring up their three sons and many dogs until their divorce in 1991. During these years in Kentfield, Denman and Susan greatly enjoyed raising their sons. Denman was an active, involved, supportive father, going on family hikes and bike rides, attending myriad school and sporting events, and social occasions with great friends. He and his family also relished countless trips, ranging from Lake Powell to Alaska, Hawaii to an East Coast tour, as well as summer and winter vacations in Sonoma and Tahoe.

After his divorce and retirement, he reconnected with Babs Gaillard, an old friend and widow of a college fraternity brother. An instant bond and affection developed between them, and they soon began a cherished late chapter in their lives, marrying in 1995 at Babs' home on Gibson Island in Maryland. For the next 17 years, they enjoyed their wonderful marriage, spent their time living in Kentfield and at Babs' family homes in Maryland and Cape Cod, and they treasured time with both his and her children and their families, as well as many wonderful travels to Scotland, the Galapagos, Canyonlands, Yosemite, Africa, Iceland, the Panama Canal, and numerous others.

Babs passed in 2012, and Denman decided to live fulltime in Bethesda Maryland at Fox Hill, an assisted living community, where he would be near two of his children and other friends in the area. He still enjoyed trips to California to visit his oldest and dearest friends, time with Babs' family along with Thanksgiving with his three sons, their partners, and his grandchildren.

Throughout his life, Denman supported many organizations and charities. Especially important to him were his alma mater, MIT and his fraternity, Chi Phi, along with The Boy Scouts of America, Junior Achievement, and the Bohemian Club. With Babs, he also became an active supporter of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Mount Vernon, the Yosemite Conservancy, and Colonial Williamsburg. In his free time, he loved tennis, skiing, and golf with his many friends and family. In Memory of Denman, please consider making a gift to MIT, Woods Hole, or the Yosemite Conservancy. His remains will be interred with his second wife, Babs, in both East Dennis on Cape Cod, as well as in Petaluma in the McNear family plot. Memorial services in California and Cape Cod are to be determined and planned when travel and gatherings become safer and more practical.

Published by Press Democrat from Jan. 31 to Feb. 4, 2021.

Obituary of son Denman Kittredge McNear,
<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/pressdemocrat/name/denman-mcnear-obituary?id=15919017>

McNEAR, Barbara Gaillard

Babs passed away at home in East Dennis, MA on August 15, 2012. She was born December 13, 1925 in Cohocton NY, daughter of The Rev. John H Stanton and Helen MacMurray Stanton. She grew up in PA, graduating from Westminster College. In 1947 she married David DuBose Gaillard II, who died in 1990. They had five children. On May 6, 1995 she married Denman K. McNear (Mac), David's 1942 MIT

Freshman roommate and Chi Phi Fraternity brother. Babs was a longtime resident of Washington DC, Gibson Island MD, and East Dennis MA. She was a well-known artist in the Baltimore/Washington area. She enjoyed needlework, skiing, sailing, hiking, travel and photography and was a longtime member of The Mount Vernon Ladies Association, Jr. League of DC, The Colonial Dames and many other social and charitable organizations. Babs and Mac most loved to travel, visiting many countries and states. Babs is survived by her beloved husband, Denman K. McNear; four children and their spouses, David and Ruth Gaillard, Peter and Hyun Gaillard, Annie and Loui Pulver-Gaillard, all of VT, and Helen and Chip Gaillard-Schumm, of GA; six grandchildren and partners; one great-grandchild; siblings Priscilla Waters, Helen Seward, and John and Marcy Stanton; three stepsons and spouses, Denman and Karen McNear, Steve and Michelle McNear, and George McNear; two step-grandchildren, many cousins, nieces and nephews. She was also predeceased by her first child David DuBose Gaillard III who died in infancy in 1949.

Services were held on Cape Cod, and a second memorial will be Wednesday, October 17 at 11 AM at St. Christopher by the Sea on Gibson Island, MD. Donations may be made to: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, All Hallows Guild, or Hammond Harwood House of Annapolis, MD.

Obituary of son Denman Kittredge McNear's 2nd wife, Dorothy Stanton Gaillard McNear – "Baltimore (MD) Sun" 2 Sep 2012 p A25

Siblings:

KNOT IS TIED UNDER OAKS

Two Hundred at McNear Wedding

[Special Dispatch to The Call]

PETALUMA, Sept. 7.—Miss Miriam McNear, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George P. McNear, was married here today to Leo Victor Korbel of San Rafael. Rev. E. H. McCollister, pastor of the Episcopal church of Santa Cruz, read the service. The wedding guests numbered about 200.

The large grounds and house of "Fairview," the McNear home, were decorated elaborately, the color scheme being pink. The ceremony was performed under the oaks. The bridal party was led by little Marda Leppo, the flower girl, and George Leppo, the ring bearer, who proceeded the maid of honor, Miss Amy Scoville. Miss Louise McNear, sister of the bride, led the bridesmaids, who were Miss Christine McNab, San Francisco; Miss Amy Lita Talbot, Washington, D. C.; Miss Ila Sonntag, San Francisco, and Miss Elsa Korbelt, San Rafael.

The bride was given in marriage by her father. She wore a robe of white charmeuse, heavily trimmed in pearls and lace. Her tulle veil was caught with a spray of orange blossoms and she carried a shower of orchids and lilies of the valley.

Arleigh Lemberger was best man, while the ushers were Almy Seabury, Berkeley; Dudley Cates, San Francisco; Claude Mellerish, San Francisco, and George P. McNear Jr.

Korbelt is a son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Korbelt, residing in San Rafael. He is a graduate of the University of California with the class of 1904 and a member of the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity.

Marriage of Miriam McNear to Leo Victor Korbelt in Petaluma, Sonoma CA on 7 Sep 1912 at "Fairview" (the McNear home) – "San Francisco Call" Sunday 8 Sep 1912 p 33

Leo V. Korbel Is Dead

Leo V. Korbel, 76, member of a prominent Petaluma family and vice president of the G. P. McNear Co., grain and feed dealers, died at 1 p.m. yesterday at the University of California Hospital in San Francisco following an illness of several weeks. He had been hospitalized for the last seven weeks.

He lived with his wife, the former Miriam McNear, at the old home of the latter's parents, Mr. and Mrs. George P. McNear, on the Redwood Highway, near the south city limits.

Funeral services will take place at 11 a.m. tomorrow at Sorensen's Funeral Home, with the Rev. George Otto and the Rev. Noel J. Breed of Stockton, formerly of Petaluma, officiating. Private inurnment will be at Cypress Hill Memorial Park Crematorium. Those who prefer may contribute to the University of California Surgical Cancer Research Fund.

Mr. Korbel was also a member of the California pioneer Korbel family, makers of champagne since the 1860's, who in 1954 sold to Adolph and Paul Heck of St. Louis their 345-acre vineyard and winery near Guerneville in Sonoma County.

HE WAS A NATIVE of Santa Rosa but received his early schooling at the Lincoln Elementary School in San Francisco and attended high school there. He was also a graduate of the University of California and had for many years been a member of the Lincoln School Boys.

Mr. Korbel was married in 1912 to Miss McNear, and became affiliated with the G. P. McNear Co. years ago. He enjoyed a wide circle of friends and acquaintances in Northern California.

At the time of his passing he was a member of Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity, Santa Rosa Lodge No. 57, F. & A. M.; California Commandery No. 1, Knights Templar, in San Francisco, and of the Bohemian Club.

Besides his wife, Mr. Korbel is survived by four daughters: Mrs. Herbert C. Copp Jr. of Oakland, Mrs. Murrey M. Johnson of Lafayette, Mrs. Robert Ferguson of Stockton and Mrs. William J. Wood of Portland, Ore., and three sisters, Miss Olga and Elsa Korbel and Mrs. T. C. Mellersh of San Rafael.

He was also the brother of the late J. F. and Martha Korbel. Seven grandchildren survive.

Obituary of **Miriam McNear Korbel's** husband, Leo Victor Korbel – "Petaluma (CA) Argus-Courier"
Friday 23 Aug 1957 p 1

Miriam McNear Korbel



MIRIAM McNEAR
KORBEL

Miriam McNear Korbel, daughter of Petaluma pioneers Mr. and Mrs. George P. McNear, died Tuesday in Greenbrae at the age of 89.

Mrs. Korbel was born and raised in Petaluma, and spent most of her life here and in San Francisco, living in Greenbrae the past few years.

She attended the Sarah Dix Hamlin School of San Francisco and Miss Scovill's School of New York before marrying the late Leo V. Korbel of the Korbel Winery family in 1912 in Petaluma.

Mrs. Korbel was a past president and member of the Womans' Club of San Francisco and the Towne and Country Club of San Francisco. She was a founding member of the Petaluma Woman's Club and a founder of the former Congregational Church of Petaluma.

She is survived by her daughters, Louise K. Hart of Piedmont, Mary K. Johnson of Lafayette, Frances K. Ferguson of Stockton and Georgia K. Wood of Phoenix, Ariz. She was the sister of E.D.

(Denman) McNear of Petaluma, Mrs. H.C. Naffziger of San Francisco, Clara McNear Leppo of Marin County and the late George P. McNear Jr. She was the grandmother of nine and the great-grandmother of one.

Friends are invited to attend the Memorial services Tuesday at 11 a.m. at the United Church of Christ in Petaluma. The Rev. Herbert Bauck will officiate. Inurnment will be in Cypress Hill Memorial Park.

Those who prefer may make contributions to their favorite charity.

Sorensen FUNERAL HOME

969 Petaluma Blvd., North

For Information Phone 763-1963

KORBEL — In Greenbrae June 20, 1978. Miriam McNear Korbel, wife of the late Leo V. Korbel. Daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. George P. McNear. Mother of Louise K. Hart of Piedmont, Mary K. Johnson of La Fayette, Frances K. Ferguson of Stockton and Georgia K. Wood of Phoenix. Sister of E.D. (Denman) McNear of Petaluma, Mrs. H. C. Naffziger of San Francisco, Clara McNear Leppo of Marin County and the late George P. McNear Jr. Also survived by nine grandchildren and one great grand daughter. A Past president and member of the Womans Club of San Francisco, the Towne and Country Club of San Francisco, A founder of the Petaluma Womans Club and the former Congregational Church of Petaluma. A native of Petaluma, aged 89 years. Friends are invited to attend a Memorial Service Tuesday June 27, 1978 at 11:00 AM at the United Church of Christ, Petaluma. Rev. Herbert Bauch will officiate. The inurnment will be private at Cypress Hill Memorial Park.

Peoria Railroad Head Slain

★ ★ ★ ★
George McNear



PRESIDENT of the Toledo, Peoria and Western railroad, George P. McNear, 56, was fatally shot by an unknown assailant near his home in Peoria last night. (AP Wirephoto.)

Shot in Gangland Style Near Home

**George McNear Was Center of
One of Nation's Longest,
Most Bitter Strikes.**

PEORIA—George P. McNear Jr., adamant foe of the railroad brotherhoods in a prolonged strike, was assassinated last night and the state's attorney announced today he would question brotherhood officials "and anyone else who might throw light on the case."

State's Attorney Roy Hull said he would begin an intensive search for information about the shotgun slaying near McNear's home on Moss avenue as the 55-year-old president of the strike-crippled Toledo, Peoria & Western railroad was taking a walk.

Since 1941 McNear had defied 13 railroad brotherhoods whose strike against his line is one of the longest major disputes.

His slaying climaxed increasing unrest marked by two shootings reported to Peoria police within the last two weeks. On one occasion shots were fired into an automobile carrying non-union workers near the T.P.&W. yards at East Peoria. On the other, shots were fired into the cab of one of the line's locomotives near Hollis, Ill. These shootings have not been solved.

Detective Chief Fred Nussbaum

SON LIVES HERE.

Clinton McNear, son of the murdered railroad president, is employed as a record clerk at East Moline works of International Harvester company. He has been with the local implement firm since 1943. Since last August he has resided with his wife in the Speck apartments at 264 Seventeenth avenue, East Moline. Mrs. McNear has been visiting her family in Peoria for several weeks where she was joined last night by her husband, who left immediately for that city upon receipt of word of his father's death.

Near, a mechanical engineering graduate of Cornell who moved from railroad construction work into Wall street investment circles.

He improved the line steadily and turned red ink into black. After claiming to have won in 1929 the first strike ever lost by the railroad brotherhoods, McNear was outspoken and active in defying their demands.

He rode on trains through picket lines and vigorously denounced the strikers. Federal seizure by President Roosevelt in 1942, after the 1941 strike continued into war-time, followed three months of violent incidents. After the road was returned to McNear the strike was resumed and there was more violence.

said he was rechecking all witnesses to the McNear assassination to determine whether his killer fired from an automobile or was on foot.

McNear's walking stick, he said, was found across the street from where his bullet-pierced body lay. Nussbaum said McNear, a powerfully-built man, might have been shot where the cane was found and staggered across the street, or he might have flung his cane at his attacker.

Dr. Robert Sutton, who resided nearby, and two Bradley university students who reside with him, said they saw an automobile speeding away after they had heard the shot and "several groans." Cornelius O'Brien, a private watchman, had just spoken to McNear and was more than a block away. He said he heard the shot but saw no automobile.

Street Lights Out.

Police said that the fact all lights were out and the streets were dark added to the confusion over what happened. Flood said the area had been cast in darkness when an electric transformer burned out earlier in the evening. He said police were convinced this incident had no connection with the shooting.

The 239-mile feeder railroad across Illinois from Effner, Ind., to Keokuk, Ia., has been crippled continuously for the last 17 months by a strike. The company-union dispute has been marked by litigation, shootings, fires, and obstruction of trains. Two pickets were killed and three were wounded.

ed at Gridley, Ill., Feb. 6, 1946. Four railroad guards later were acquitted of manslaughter in that shooting.

McNear, father of four children, was wounded by six shots. Police said pea-sized pellets from an automatic type weapon were found in the chest, neck and right arm of the 6 foot, four inch railroad president.

McNear died at 11:15 p.m. at St. Francis hospital. His widow, Elizabeth, said he had attended the Bradley university-Colorado State college basketball game earlier and was taking a walk, which he did frequently before retiring.

The T.P.&W. was purchased in 1926 at a receiver's auction by Mc-

The current dispute began Dec. 28, 1941, when 104 engineers and trainmen among 600 employees quit work in protest against a new wage scale and new working rules. During government wartime management after March, 1942, operation was normal, but negotiations failed and the strike was renewed Oct. 1, 1945, when the road was returned to McNear's management.

The brotherhoods have sought working rules similar to those in effect on other railroads. McNear proposed to eliminate what he termed "feather-bed" rules and to cut unit costs but increase workers' annual income through more work. He contended the unions would not give "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay" and said they encroached in management affairs. The brotherhoods denied his charges and said he refused to grant what other lines had given.

McNear is survived by his widow, three sons, Clinton, 23; Graham, 20, and John, 10; a daughter, Elizabeth, 15; and his parents George and Ida McNear, reported residing at his birthplace, Petaluma, Calif. Clinton McNear lives at East Moline, Ill., an older son, George III, was killed in World war 2 navy service.

He outbid the Burlington and the Pennsylvania in acquiring the short-line T.P.&W., a freight bypass south of Chicago, for \$1,300,000. He put up \$65,000 of his own and \$65,000 borrowed from his father. As general manager he soon put the road on a profitable basis—even through the depression—and took it out of receivership.

ASK FBI AID.

WASHINGTON —(P)— Chairman Hartley (R., N. J.) of the labor committee told the house today he will ask Attorney General Tom Clark to order an FBI investigation of the ambush-slaying of George P. McNear Jr., president of the Toledo, Peoria and Western railroad.

Saying that the committee had received evidence of violence in labor disputes in Detroit, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Hollywood since it began sitting five weeks ago, Hartley shouted on the floor:

"What are we going to do about it? . . . Where is law and order going?"

Assassination of brother **George Plummer McNear Jr.** in 1947 – "Moline (IL) Dispatch" Tuesday 11 Mar 1947 p 1 -

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/339532853/?terms=%22george%20mcnear%22&match=1>

Peoria Railroad President Slain in Gunman's Ambush

Close Range Blast At Chest Fatal to George P. M'Near

Sheriff Says 'Imported' Killer Apparently Trailed
Victim for Several Days.

Washington—(AP)—Chairman Hartley, Republican, New Jersey, of the labor committee told the house today he will ask Attorney General Tom Clark to order an F. B. I. investigation of the ambush-slaying of George P. McNear, Jr., president of the Toledo, Peoria and Western railroad.

Peoria, Ill.—(UP)—A single shotgun blast fired by an assassin whom he tried to beat off with a cane has ended the turbulent career of George P. McNear, fiery president of the strike-bound Toledo, Peoria & Western railroad.

McNear was slain last night while taking a late evening walk along a neighborhood street darkened by a city power failure.

Police said McNear's murderer apparently stepped from behind a bush directly into the 56-year-old railroad executive's path and leveled the shotgun at his chest. A cane carried by McNear during his regular nocturnal walks was found a short distance from the spot the shooting occurred, and police Lieutenant Frank Flood said McNear must have thrown it at his assailant.

Sheriff Earl Spainhower said the slaying "definitely was an imported job."

"The slayer must have followed McNear for several days. He knew his habits and he knew about the evening walks. When the street lights failed last night, he had his opportunity," the sheriff said.

"If there had been no power failure McNear probably would be alive today, but he might have lived only a few days more because there is no doubt that he was a marked man."

Spainhower said McNear had scorned a bodyguard. He was described by his friends as "absolutely fearless." Once he rode the cowcatcher of one of his locomotives when it crashed through a picket line.

Threatened "Many Times."

McNear's widow said his life had been threatened "many times."

When told of McNear's slaying W. C. Keiser, national negotiator for the striking railroad brotherhoods, said:

"I am sorry to hear of Mr. McNear's death. I am sure that no union member had anything to do with it. But I am also sure the brotherhoods will not offer a reward for the apprehension of the assassin."

(State's Attorney Roy Hull according to other dispatches, said he would question officials of the striking railroad brotherhoods "and anyone else who might throw light" on the killing.)

Police Detectives Harry Schultz and George Gridley said the failure of the city's residential power supply at 6:25 p. m. and the absence of street lighting in the neighborhood prevented identification of the automobile, and may have led the killer to choose last night as the "perfect time" for the slaying.

Gridley said McNear's nocturnal walks were well-known and that the killer apparently followed the railroad executive home from a basketball game, waited until he had parked his automobile in the family garage, and then followed

(Continued on Page Two.)



SCENE OF MURDER—This is a general scene of the Peoria, Ill., street where George P. McNear, Jr., president of the Toledo, Peoria & Western railroad, was slain last night. No. 1—spot where his cane was found and he presumably was shot. No. 2—spot where body was found. Arrow points to McNear residence. (AP wirephoto; addition photos on page 20.)



SLAIN—George P. McNear, Jr., above, 56, president of the Toledo Peoria & Western railroad, who was shot to death near his home in Peoria last night. (AP wirephoto.)

SHOTGUN BLAST FATAL TO HEAD OF PEORIA ROAD

(Continued from First Page.)

him again the short distance between his home and the assassination spot.

The strike of the 13 railroad brotherhoods against the T. P. & W. began Dec. 28, 1941, when McNear refused to carry out a mediation board's order granting wage increases to all railroads.

Since that time, with the exception of a 3½-year period of government operation, the railroad has been beset by company-union strife. In February, 1946, two union pickets were shot and killed by guards riding an armored train. On numerous other occasions railroad employees have complained of shotgun blasts aimed at equipment of the partially operating railroad.

The shooting occurred at 10:40 p. m., and McNear died 25 minutes later on a hospital emergency table without making a statement.

Pellets from the shotgun blast struck McNear in the neck and tore away the right side of his chest.

After the shooting, McNear staggered 100 feet towards his home, just a few houses away, before sitting down on a low stone wall across the street from the Dr. Robert M. Sutton residence.

See Car Speed Away.

Two Bradley college students, Robert Cheek, 23, and William Johnson, 21, told officers they heard a "backfire" and looked out from their rooms in the Sutton home and saw McNear fall from the parapet onto the grass. They summoned Sutton and police.

McNear's assailant was believed

to have made his getaway in an automobile driven by a companion. Cheek and Johnson said they saw a car traveling at a high speed career around a corner and head for the Peoria business district immediately following the shot.

The road, an important connecting link for transcontinental freight traffic, serves a 239-mile route between Effner, Ind., and Keokuk, Iowa. Trains now operate over the eastern section from Effner to Peoria under a federal court order issued on behalf of shippers.

The violence which has accompanied other operations of the line was the outgrowth of union complaints that McNear insisted on running "test trains" over the system, using armored cars and armed guards to "bait" pickets.

Besides his widow, McNear is survived by three sons, Clinton, 23, Graham, 20, and John 10, and a daughter, Elizabeth, 15. A fourth son, George P. McNear, III, was killed in a navy plane crash during the war.

SON URGES HUNT FOR GREEN AUTO IN SLAYING CASE

East Moline Resident Tells Of Mystery Car.

Information given Peoria police by Clinton McNear, 23, East Moline, led today to the search for a mysterious green sedan as a clue in the ambush slaying of his father, George P. McNear, Jr., 56-year-old embattled president of the strife-ridden Toledo, Peoria and Western railroad.

McNear was cut down by a shotgun blast last night in Peoria as he took his customary constitutional before retiring.

The younger McNear hurried to Peoria last night immediately upon being informed of the death of his father.

"My father often told me of his 6-year war with the railroad brotherhoods," the younger McNear said, according to International News Service.

"We discussed the threats against his life.

"He mentioned several times that whenever there was trouble, a certain green car was much in evidence.

"You should locate that car.

"I feel it's entirely possible it carried the cowards who killed my father last night."

The younger McNear is a record clerk at the East Moline works of the International Harvester company.

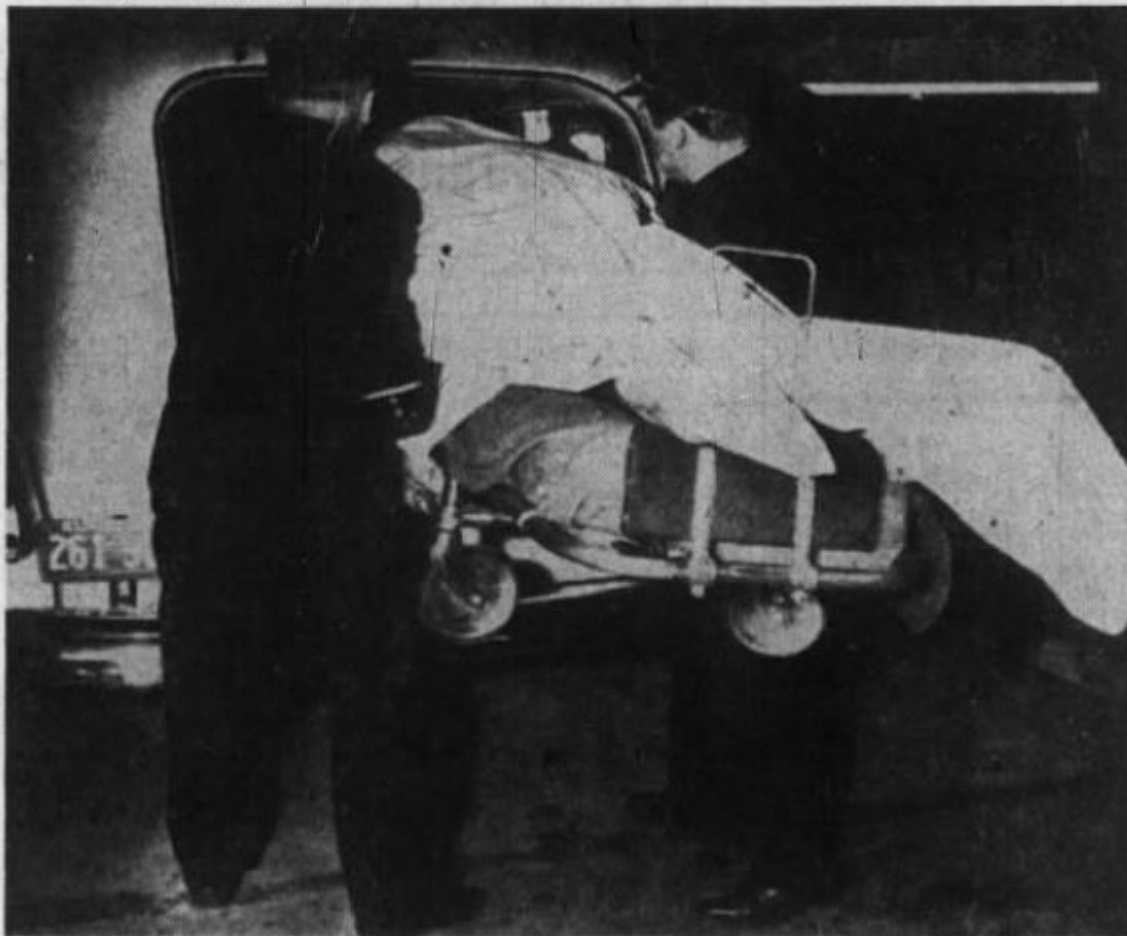
He has been employed by the Harvester company since 1943. Since last August he and his wife, Nancy, 23, have resided in the Speck apartments at 264 Seventeenth avenue, East Moline.

Mrs. McNear has been visiting her family in Peoria for several weeks. She was joined there last night by her husband.

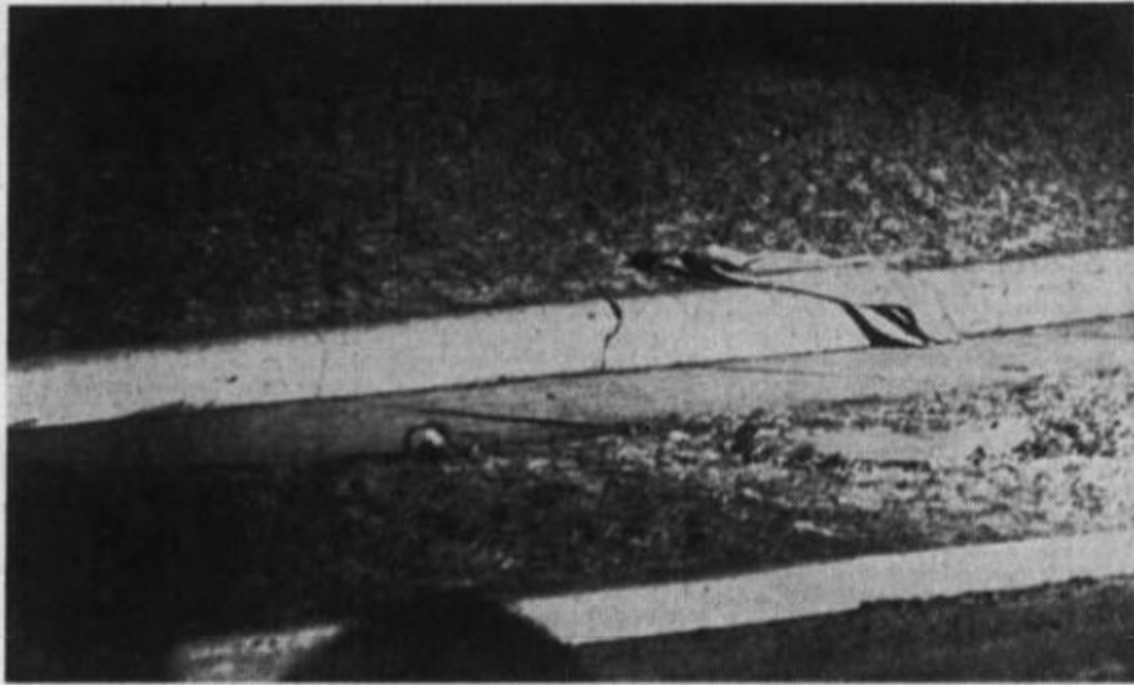
Both stories appeared on p 1 & p 2 of the "Rock Island (IL) Argus" Sunday 11 May 1947 p 1



The family of Ezekiel Denman McNear's brother George Plummer Jr., who is murdered in 1947 – George Jr.'s son George III had been killed in the South Pacific on a US Navy plane. Son Clinton (middle, back row) will die in the flaming wreckage of a small plane he was piloting in 1954. Son James (front, left) will fall to his death off Mont Blanc in Italy on 18 Aug 1949. Story of Clinton's death in "Freeport (IL) Journal-Standard" Tuesday 21 Dec 1954 p 3



BODY REMOVED—Ambulance attendants are shown removing the body of George P. McNear Jr., from St. Francis hospital, Peoria, after his death from gunshot wounds last night. (AP wirephoto.)



WHERE BODY WAS FOUND—A view showing coat in position body of George P. McNear, Jr., was found last night after shooting of the railroad president at Moss avenue and Sheridan road, Peoria, (AP wirephoto.)

Photographs from page 20 of the "Rock Island (IL) Argus" Sunday 11 May 1947 p 1

No Worries Expressed, Say Bay Area Kin

Relatives in the Bay 'area' said today they had had no intimation of worry from George P. McNear Jr., former Petaluma man who was murdered last night in Peoria, Ill.

His parents, Mr. and Mrs. George P. McNear Sr., pioneer Petaluma residents, were in Palm Springs when they were informed of the slaying. A sister of the slain man, Mrs. Leo Victor Corbel, of Petaluma, said her brother had expressed no worry in recent letters home.

In addition to Mrs. Corbel, McNear has a brother, E. Denman McNear, in Petaluma, and two other sisters, Mrs. Clara McNear Leppo and Mrs. Howard C. Naffzeger, both of San Francisco.

McNear left Sonoma County in 1913 to attend Cornell University and had lived in the East ever since.

He leaves three sons and a daughter as well as his widow.

"Oakland (CA) Tribune" Tuesday 11 Mar 1947 p 1

Born In Petaluma

SAN FRANCISCO, March March 12.—George P. McNear was a member of one branch of the fabulous McNear grain family of California. The fortunes of both sides—George Washington McNear and his brother, John A. McNear — were founded in the sixties.

McNear was born in Petaluma in 1891. He was a graduate of the Hitchcock Military Academy in San Rafael and studied at University of California before 1909 when he went to Cornell. He later remained in the East except for visits here.

He was the grandson of John A. McNear and the son of George P. McNear, Petaluma's first citizen, a banking and grain power in the northern part of the state.

He was the brother of Mrs. Leo V. Korbel, E. Denman McNear, Mrs. Howard Naffziger and Mrs. Clara McNear Leppo.

The McNear family developed from the grain and flour business until their present interests also cover banking, shipping and oil.

"Fresno (CA) Bee" Wednesday 12 Mar 1947 p 3



Brother George Plummer McNear Jr. – passport photograph, 13 Apr 1920 -
<https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/6988085/person/597068203/media/8c35ad34-35d2-4041-8be0-18fde978e748>



The home of George Plummer McNear Jr. – from YouTube video



George Plummer McNear Jr. – from YouTube video



His cane, which police think was thrown at his assassin, but may also have been flung by the effects of the shotgun blast – from YouTube video

Still photographs taken from YouTube video of
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yaCaS_6r94

Louise McNear Naffziger

Louise McNear Naffziger, the last of one of Petaluma's most influential families, died in her San Francisco home of heart failure Sunday. She was 101.

Mrs. Naffziger was a third-generation Petaluman. She was born here on May 28, 1894, the youngest child of George and Ida Belle McNear. She attended boarding school in New York.

In 1919, she married Dr. Howard Naffziger. The couple made their home in San Francisco, where she was active in numerous charitable and educational organizations.

In 1974, she was awarded the Bishop's Cross for her contributions to the Episcopal Church and inducted into the Knights of St. John.

She is survived by a daughter, Jean-Louis Thacher. She was the grandmother of 10 and the great-grandmother of 16.

A memorial service is scheduled for 3 p.m. Thursday at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

Memorial contributions may be made to Grace Cathedral, California and Taylor streets, San Francisco 94109.

Obituary of sister Louise McNear Naffziger (1894-1995) – "Petaluma (CA) Argus-Courier" Friday 8 Dec 1995 p 4



Wedding party of Louise McNear & Dr. Howard Christian Naffziger on 18 Jun 1919 -
<https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/6988085/person/597068194/media/6c215586-e834-4f49-99e8-89e60cc51667> -

Half-sister Clara McNear Leppo –



Ezekiel's half-sister Clara McNear Leppo with her husband Dr. David Harrison Leppo & children - <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/6988085/person/583309127/media/54b0c093-56c7-47d7-9c7e-dc188101087d>



Clara McNear Leppo - <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/6988085/person/583309127/media/d9ea58fe-203f-46b1-934c-2c0391cadb0d>

LEPPO — In Tiburon, Calif. June 11, 1979. Clara McNear Leppo, wife of Dr. David Harrison Leppo. Loving sister of Martha Hereford Leppo, Clara Belle Leppo Anderson of Houston, Texas, Harrison McNear Leppo of Mill Valley, Calif., the late Virginia and George R. Leppo, Louise McNear Naffziger of San Francisco, Calif., E. Denman McNear of Petaluma, Calif., the late George P. McNear and Mariam McNear Korbel. Also survived by ten grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. A native of Petaluma, Calif. Aged 98 years.

Private services have been held on the direction of RUSSELL & GOOCH FUNERAL CHAPEL. Interment Cypress Lawn Cemetery.

CHEDA &
MATTEUCCI

Obituary of half-sister Clara McNear Leppo – “Petaluma (CA) Argus-Courier” Wednesday 13 Jun 1979 p 2



1886 and 1911 McNear Buildings

100 block of 4th Street and Petaluma Boulevard North

This High Victorian Italianate was built in 1886 by John A. McNear. It is a double-sided building which fronts on both Fourth Street and Petaluma Boulevard North. This view is of the Fourth Street side.

The McNear Building is a brick structure which is faced with sections of iron facade. For decades until the mid-1970s, the building was boarded up and painted a beige color which caused the building's exquisite detail to completely disappear from view. In 1976 the building was purchased by Jeff Harriman and Wallace Lourdeaux,

who applied nine distinct colors of paint to accentuate the building's many features. A close up view of the tops of the windows, pictured above, shows sculptured heads and flowers which are now easily visible from the street level.

The opposite side of the building fronts on the Petaluma Boulevard North side near Center Park and is the location of McNear's Restaurant and Saloon. An adjoining building, built by George McNear in 1911, flows between the two streets in a similar fashion. It is of a more modern design, and includes the Mystic Theater, which was one of the first silent

movie houses in California. The original Mystic Theater was renamed the State Theater, then renamed the Plaza Theater in the 1970s, and now retains its original 1911 title. Both McNear buildings have been completely restored to their original grandeur both inside and out, and the upper floors consist primarily of office space in a historic setting.

Pictured above is the 1886 side of the building. To the right is a close-up view of the building's architectural detail.



<http://www.chillybin.com/petaluma/mcnear.html>

Petaluma (Miwok: *Pé̌ta Lúuma*)^{[8][9]} is a city in Sonoma County, California, located in the North Bay region of the San Francisco Bay Area. Its population was 57,941 according to the 2010 Census.^[6]

Petaluma's name comes from the Miwok village named *Pé̌ta Lúuma* (Coast Miwok for "backside of the hill"), that was located on the banks of the **Petaluma River**. The modern city originates in **Rancho Petaluma**, granted in 1834 to famed Californio statesman **Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo**, considered to be the founder of Petaluma.^{[10][11]} Today, Petaluma is known for its well-preserved historic center and as a local hub for the Petaluma Valley region of Sonoma County.^[12]

With its large stock of historic buildings, Petaluma has been used as the filming location for numerous movies set in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s (see list of movies below). The historic **McNear Building** is a common film location.

Petaluma pioneered the time-controlled approach to development. After Highway 101 was re-aligned as a freeway in 1955, residential development permits tripled, from 300 in 1969 to 900 i

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petaluma,_California

Name: Ezekiel Denman McNear

Name variations: Denman McNear

Military:

On *Tuscania*: Officer Reserve Corps (1938 NTSA, Saumur Artillery School, 11th Ammunition Train) – 1st lieutenant

Serial number: Army officers in WWI were not assigned serial numbers

Entered service from: Petaluma, Sonoma CA

Sailed on "*Tuscania*" as: Ezekiel Denman McNear

Next-of-kin on "*Tuscania*": father G.P. McNear, Petaluma CA

First tried to sail home: listed as Ezekiel D. McNear, was to have sailed on "*Arcadia*" Feb 1919,

handwritten note: transferred to 61st FA Brigade HQ SO 53 26 Feb 1919 (1st Lt, FA, Co. E)

Returned from war on: "*De Kalb*" Feb 1919

Sailed on return ship as: Ezekiel D. McNear

Next-of-kin on return ship & rank: father George P. McNear, Petaluma CA (1st Lt, 111th Ammunition Train)

World War I draft registration (1917): as Ezekiel Denman McNear - b. 20 Dec 1889 Petaluma CA; res: Petaluma, Sonoma CA. Single. Vice president, grain & feed business, G.P. McNear Co., Petaluma, Sonoma CA., Tall height, medium build. Note: "have filed application for captain, Officers Reserve Corps, did not apply for first Officers Training Camp as more applications than places and needed in business. At suggestion of Major Bottoms U.S.A. wrote him letter stating my readiness to serve when needed."

National Tuscania Survivors Association (1939): 617 "C" St., Petaluma CA

World War II draft registration (1942): as Ezekiel (Ezekial?) Denman McNear - b. 20 Dec 1889 Petaluma CA; res: 617 C St., Petaluma, Sonoma CA. NOK Mrs. E. Denman McNear, same address. Employed at G.P. McNear Co., #2 Main St., Petaluma, Sonoma CA. "scar on 3rd finger of left hand" Height: 6' 1 1/2" – weight: 195 lbs.

Veterans Administration Military Index:

Enlisted: 24 Aug 1917 / 27 Nov 1917

Discharged: 28 Mar 1919

Address: Petaluma CA

Rank/unit: 1st lieutenant, Field Artillery

Birth & death:

Born: 20 Dec 1889 Petaluma, Sonoma CA (in his family home "Bellevue" on the south edge of Petaluma)

Died: 13 Mar 1984 Tiburon, Marin CA

Find A Grave record: 105763310 – photo – presence on Tuscania indicated in flower

Burial location: Petaluma, Sonoma CA

Cemetery: Cypress Hill Memorial Park

Tombstone:

Father: George Plummer McNear, Sr., 26 Jul 1857 Petaluma, Sonoma CA – 12 Aug 1947 Petaluma, Sonoma CA. Son of John Augustus McNear & Clarinda Damsen Williams.

First wife was Jennie Otis, b. 1857 Cannon Falls, Goodhue MN, d. 27 May 1883 Petaluma, Sonoma CA. Jennie was the daughter of Charles Wesley Otis & Cynthia Eliza Sackett. George & Jennie married on 13 May 1880 in CA. Jennie is buried in Cypress Hill Memorial Park, Petaluma, Sonoma CA, F: 105784417. They had 1 daughter, Clara McNear, born in 1881.

After Jennie's death, George married Ida Belle Denmen. They had 4 children: Miriam, Ezekiel, George Jr. & Louise.

When he dies, his estate is worth \$1.3 million. Buried in Cypress Hill Memorial Park, Petaluma, Sonoma CA.

Find A Grave: 105717995

Mother: Ida Belle Denman McNear, 18 Nov 1859 Two Rock, Sonoma CA – 9 Jul 1949 Petaluma, Sonoma CA. Daughter of Ezekiel Denman (1827-1894, F: 50819905) & Nancy Louisa Hardenburgh (F: 50820296). Buried in Cypress Hill Memorial Park, Petaluma, Sonoma CA.

Find A Grave: 105727685

Parents' marriage: 2 Jun 1887 in Petaluma, Sonoma CA

Spouse: Mary Henrietta Kittredge McNear, 1 Oct 1897 OH – 14 May 1955 Sonoma Co. CA. Daughter of George Watson Kittredge & Georgia Davis. Her father, an engineer, oversaw the construction of Grand Central Terminal in NYC. Buried in Cypress Hill Memorial Park, Petaluma, Sonoma CA.

Spouse Find A Grave: 105763010

Marriage: 17 Apr 1930 at the Amackassin Club, Yonkers-on-the-Hudson, Westchester NY.

Children:

- Mary McNear McNab, 25 Apr 1923 San Francisco, San Francisco CA – 1 Jul 1985 Ross, Marin CA. Wife of James McNab (1914-1980, FP: 107092985), the son of Stewart James McNab & Minerva B. Jones. Buried in Cypress Hill Memorial Park, Petaluma, Sonoma CA. F: 107093368
- Denman Kittredge (DK/Mac/Denny) McNear, 20 Jul 1925 Petaluma, Sonoma CA – 5 Jan 2021 Bethesda MD. His 1st wife was Susan Anderson, whom he married on 27 Jan 1962. Susan survived him. After their divorce in 1991, Denman married Barbara (“Babs”) Stanton (13 Dec 1925 Cohocton, Steuben NY – 15 Aug 2012 East Dennis, Barnstable MA, buried in Quivet Neck Cemetery, East Dennis, Barnstable MA, F: 130716429. Barbara was the daughter of the Rev. John H. Stanton & Helen MacMurray. Her 1st husband was Denman’s freshman roommate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology & his fellow Chi Phi fraternity brother. Denman & Barbara married 6 May 1995. Was chairman of the board of the Southern Pacific Railroad when his father died in Aug 1947.

Siblings: Ezekiel Denman McNear was the 2nd child.

- Miriam McNeal Korbel, 30 Oct 1888 Petaluma, Sonoma CA – 20 Jun 1978 Marin Co. CA. Married 7 Sep 1912 to Leo Victor Korbel (1881-1957, F: 105883287). Leo was the son of Anton Francis Korbel & Theresa Victoria Tressinger. Anton Korbel, along with his 2 brothers, Francis & Joseph, were immigrants from Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) who began a business making cigar boxes in San Francisco CA & then turned to wine, becoming the founders of the large Korbel Winery, now one of the largest in the U.S. Buried in Cypress Hill Memorial Park, Petaluma, Sonoma CA. F: 105883373
- George Plummer McNear Jr., 1891 Petaluma, Sonoma CA – 10 Mar 1947 Peoria, Peoria IL. Husband of Elizabeth Graham McKenzie (1897-1985, F: 105727844). President of the Topeka, Peoria & Western Railroad. Killed by a shotgun blast while walking in his neighborhood (at Sheridan & High) in a murder that remains unsolved. Ideas about the perpetrator lean toward his being a professional “hit man” – but hired by a wealthy man who hated George? A result of a recent strike against his railroad with resulting violence & deaths for which he was blamed but not indicted? – “Mattoon (IL) Journal Gazette” Wednesday 31 Dec 1958 p 3 – Edgeville Farms Inc., a home development company, purchased the 247-acre estate of George P. McNear Jr. in suburban Peoria IL for \$1.2 million, to build expensive homes there. “The murder has not been solved.” – In Sep 2016, a YouTube video discussed the unsolved murder. – George Jr.’s son George III, a US Navy fighter pilot, had died 28 Jan 1945 in the South Pacific during WWII. His son James fell to his death on 18 Aug 1949 while climbing Mont Blanc in Italy. Son Clinton died at age 30 in Dec 1954 when the plane that he was piloting crashed shortly after takeoff & burned. - Buried in Cypress Hill Memorial Park, Petaluma, Sonoma CA. F: 105727844
- Louise McNear Naffziger, 28 May 1894 Petaluma, Sonoma CA – 3 Dec 1995 San Francisco, San Francisco CA. Wife of Dr. Howard Christian Naffziger (1884-1961, F: 87664197). They

married on 18 Jun 1919 in Petaluma, Sonoma CA. Buried in Cypress Lawn Memorial Park, Colma, San Mateo CA. F: 87664199

Half-sister: by his father George Plummer McNear Sr.'s 1st marriage, to Jennie Otis

- Clara McNear Leppo, 27 May 1881 Petaluma, Sonoma CA – 11 Jun 1979 Tiburon, Marin Co. CA. Married in 1902 to Dr. David Harrison Leppo (1876-1928, F: 199564736). Buried in Cypress Hill Memorial Park, Petaluma, Sonoma CA. F: 106047686

Notes:

There are thousands of articles at Newspapers.com about Ezekiel Denman McNear and his family. Some selected ones are included in this document.

A YouTube video of 24 Sep 2016 discussed "The 1947 Murder of George P. McNear, TP&W Railroad Tycoon." Found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yaCaS_6r94

Host Harry Canterbury of Adventure Sports Outdoors (ASO) interviewed historian Norm Kelly about the 10 Mar 1947 murder of Ezekiel's brother George Plummer Jr. in Peoria IL. The murder occurred in George Jr.'s neighborhood of High Street & Moss Street.

Kelly said in 1946 that a murder in Peoria IL made people begin to think it was a "gangster town" which was reinforced when McNear was murdered in 1947. As for a motive, lots of people had one. There were 333 union members who could be suspects. Kelly thinks that it was probably a professional "hit man," perhaps from St. Louis, who was hired. George was a "big, rough" man who treated his workers poorly and a lot of people disliked him. He himself worked from dawn into the night, allowing only 30 minutes for his lunch, and he expected his workers to work as hard as he did.

George walked everywhere. Newspaper stories of the time said he took a nightly walk, but Kelly said George had walked downtown to attend the Bradley University basketball game versus Colorado College. After the game, he walked on Main Street & talked with a friend Cornelius O'Brien. During their general conversation, O'Brien told George that streetlights were out near his house.

George walked on, turning onto High Street, where he waved at a guard. He stopped at Sheridan & High where he stepped off the curb, then turned right (in response to a noise? A call?) and was hit by a shotgun blast. Early reports said he threw his cane, which he always walked with, at the shooter, but Kelly figures it was knocked from his hand & went flying due to the shotgun blast. As a car came down the street & turned right, its headlights showed the body lying in the street. Dr. Sutton, who owned an apartment building, which had two tenants, Bob [Robert Cheek in newspaper accounts] & Bill [William Johnson), who were Bradley University students. They & Dr. Sutton ran to George, who was lying on his stomach, and they turned him over. Meanwhile, the car driver drove to City Hall & told a police sergeant about the body.

Photographs on the video were taken the next day by the police.

A year before, George's railroad was involved in a strike that became violent. Union members blamed McNear for working conditions; he considered other railroad owners "spineless."

One of George's employees, Irwin Pashon (nicknamed "Pants") was liked by George, and he felt betrayed when Pashon left his employment to become the railroad union treasurer. A group of union protesters had begun their protest trip in East Peoria, where they harassed railroad employees and "scabs." Along each stop, the union members would get off & yell & fight. When they got off in Gridley IL, they were walking on the railroad track when a flatcar holding 14 armed men neared them & opened fire. Pashon & Arthur Brown were killed; others were injured. A judge

stopped the union from picketing – and a trial was held for the 4 armed military veterans who had been hired as strikebreakers. Their trial led to a hung jury. Many felt McNear should have been indicted for his role. The railroad was returned to his control.

Other family tragedies included the death of George's son, a US Navy fighter pilot in WWII and another son in a plane crash in 1954 (which Kelly himself had viewed and urged listeners not to ever do so).

Investigations continued into McNear's death & there are large files in the Peoria IL police department. A reward of \$52,000 was offered. Kelly said it is easy to say the union did it but "nobody knows." He thinks it was probably the work of a wealthy man who really hated George.

The Cypress Hill Cemetery, in which many family members are buried, was established when George Plummer McNear Sr. donated land as he looked for a place to bury his first wife, Jennie Otis McNear.

Pre-war:

"Petaluma (CA) Daily Morning Chronicle" Wednesday 15 May 1912 p 5 – there were 679 degrees conferred at the 49th annual commencement of the U of CA (Berkeley). Among those from Petaluma CA: Ezekiel Denman McNear, son of Mr. & Mrs. George P. McNear, who received a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of Commerce. His parents attended the ceremony & returned home in the evening.

"Petaluma (CA) Argus-Courier" Thursday 16 May 1912 p 6 – Ezekiel Denman McNeare received a captain's commission in the University Cadets at University of California, Berkeley.

Wartime:

"Petaluma (CA) Daily Morning Chronicle" Sunday 12 Aug 1917 p 3 – The draft exemption board has issued a call for 226 more young men. Called to report in Sebastopol CA on Friday, 17 Aug 1917, is Ezekiel Denman McNear.

"Petaluma Argus-Courier" 7 Feb 1918 p 1 & 9 Feb 1918 p 6 - copy of his telegram. His mother & sister Louise had gone to NYC to see off Denman & his brother George P. Jr. & they were traveling back by train. His father was staying with Mr. & Mrs. L.V. Korbelt who kept the news of Denman's being on board from him until a telegram arrived the morning of 7 Feb 1918. George Sr. sent loads of telegrams trying to reach his wife & daughter on their transcontinental journey & caught them in TX. Denman had described the ship in great detail (but could not use its name) in a letter home, which was in an envelope with the Anchor Line emblem. The details matched the photographs printed in newspapers, so his family knew he was on Tuscania.

"San Francisco Examiner" 9 Feb 1918 p 2 - photo - lieutenant., son of Mr. & Mrs. George P. McNear. U of CA graduate, commissioned at the Presidio. A cable from him at Larne, Ireland, reached his father 8 Feb 1918.

"Petaluma (CA) Argus-Courier" 29 Mar 1918 p 2 - lengthy story of the Tuscania

Post-war:

"Santa Rosa (CA) Press Democrat" 5 Feb 1989 p 2 - long article with photos about the 2 Petaluma survivors of Tuscania: Alden W. Stewart & McNear. McNear was born in the family mansion. Attended Hitchcock Military Academy & U of CA graduate. The article quotes his lengthy letter on the Tuscania sinking, McNear got to visit the battlefield in France but was an instructor of troops,

Obituary:

"Petaluma Argus-Courier" 16 Mar 1984 p 1 & 2 - photo - "the patriarch of Petaluma" – died at age 95. His life was woven into the city of Petaluma's history. Son of George P. & Ida Bell (Denman) McNear. His mother Ida was the daughter of Ezekiel Denman, a Two Rock rancher. Graduate of Hitchcock Military Academy. Attended the U of CA 1904-08, charter member Alpha Delta Phi. In WWI, senior captain in a regiment raised at the U of CA. Went in a lifeboat off Tuscania. Was one of the 1st 10,000 Americans in France.. Was discharged from the Army as a 1st lieutenant. Returned to Petaluma to work in the family business.

G.P. McNear (grain & hay) was founded by Denman's uncle John A. McNear on 6 Nov 1856. John was joined in the business by his brother George W. (P.?) & they shipped produce to San Francisco, operating the largest warehouse in CA in 1864. The brothers John & George divided the business in 1874, with George going to San Francisco to oversee interests there. A large mill & headquarters were established at Main & B streets in Petaluma, Denman married in 1930 (wife not named). His son Denman Kittredge McNear (Gaynesville CA) is chairman of the board of Southern Pacific & daughter his Mary McNear McNab lives in Marin Co. CA. Namesake of McNear Park, McNear Avenue, McNear Elementary School in Petaluma. He donated the land for Fire Station #1 and the Petaluma Golf & Country Club. Charter member of the Petaluma Rotary Club (23 Mar 1923). Survived by his children & a sister. Burial in Cypress Hill.

Social Security number: 552-03-8064

Censuses:

1900 Petaluma, Sonoma CA

George P. McNear, 43 CA, Jul 1857, parents b. ME, married 13 years, grain dealer

Ida Belle, 40 CA, Nov 1860, parents b. NY, gave birth to 4 children, 4 are living

Mirian [sic], 11 CA, Oct 1888, at school

Ezekial [sic] D., 10 CA, Dec 1889, at school

George P., 8 CA, Jun 1891, at school

Louise, 6 CA, May 1894

Clara, 19 CA, May 1881, student [George Sr.'s daughter by his 1st marriage]

& 2 female servants & 1 male servant

[For all the children: parents b. CA]

1910 Petalum, Sonoma CA

George P. McNear, 53 CA, parents b. ME, in 2nd marriage, married 38 years, merchant, own store

Ida B., 51 CA, parents b. NY, in 1st marriage [her length of marriage not stated], gave birth to 4 children, 4 are living

Miriam, 21 CA

Denman, 20 CA

George Jr., 18 CA

Louise, 15 CA
 & 2 female & 2 male house servants

1920 Petaluma, Sonoma CA – 139 San Rafael Rd.
 George P. McNear, 62 CA, parents b. ME, merchant, grain & feed
 Ida Belle, 60 CA, parents b. NY
 E. Denman, 31 CA, single, merchant, grain & feed
 & hired man

1930 Petaluma, Sonoma CA – 617 “C” St. – conducted 7 Apr 1930
 E. Denman McNear, 40 CA, parents b. CA, merchant, grain, WWI veteran
 Mary H.W. McNear, 32 OH, father b. MA, mother b. KY [wife]
 Mary McNear, 6 CA [daughter]
 Denman K. McNear, 4 years 8 months CA [son]
 & boarders:
 Elizabeth Oler, 70 MD, parents b. MD, widow
 Bessie K. Oler, 35 MD, parents b. MD, single
 Ann Brown Oler, 33 MD, parents b. MD, single
 & servants:
 S. Marie Paulsen, 26 Denmark
 Pauline Henderson, 32 Germany

1940 Petaluma, Sonoma CA – 617 C St. – same place in 1935
 E. Denman McNear, 50 CA, merchant, grain
 Mary, 45 NY
 Mary, 16 CA
 Denman, 14 CA
 & servant Andeline Madsen, 50 Denmark