

Guiseppe Angellotti
A San Rafael Pioneer Businessman

by Catherine L. Gowdy

Until now little has been known about San Rafael pioneer Guiseppe Angellotti, other than that he ran a hotel in town in the 1850s and that he was the father of Frank Marion Angellotti, a prominent and early judge in Marin County. Recent research has begun to paint a clearer picture of him and the early history of San Rafael.

The History of Marin County, California, published in 1880, describes the town of San Rafael in 1850 when it was first surveyed by McCullough & Myers: “About this time there were standing in San Rafael twelve structures, including stables, barns etc...” one of which structures was “...the old San Rafael Hotel, a house of entertainment kept by two Narragansett Indians from Connecticut, named Bennet and Fagan, and which they occupied for several years, but in the course of time they failed, when their cook, Joseph Angelotte, became its proprietor. He made additions to the original small building until it assumed the proportions which it now has, as may be witnessed as it today stands, on the corner of D street, across the bridge.”

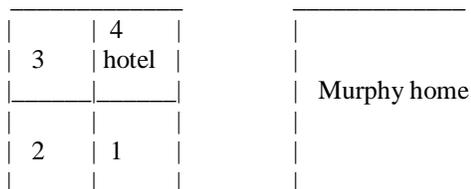
Another comment in the History of Marin County is a quote from a letter written in 1866 and referring to 1851: “When we first became a resident of this place, nearly fifteen years ago, San Rafael boasted of ten houses, besides the Mission buildings, one store, one boarding house and one whisky mill. The buildings were all make-shifts – not one substantial house among them except the residence of the late Timothy Murphy, now owned and used by the county as a Court-house.”

Here’s how the Daily Alta California newspaper describes San Rafael in June of 1853: “... about a dozen houses, in the centre of which stand the adobe buildings of the Mission, compose the town. A good hotel is kept by an Italian named Angelotti (*sic*), who will converse with you in any language (French, Spanish, or Italian) save the *barbare Anglais*.”

A trip to the Recorder’s Office revealed that on March 25th, 1850, “Jose” Angellotti purchased from Marie Daniel lot #4 in Block 24 in San Rafael, together with all buildings, appurtenances... furniture, fixtures and personal property. Marie occupied the property. Angellotti paid \$3,500, quite a sum in those days! I have read that one dollar in 1850 is equivalent to \$28.79 in 2016. This deed was not recorded until March 25, 1854. This is of interest because on October 5, 1852, Guiseppe purchased the same lot in Block 24 from Daniel Frink and Henry Willard for \$1000, together with all buildings and appurtenances belonging or thereon situated; this deed was recorded on the same day, October 5th. It appears that M. Daniel did not have clear title.

Two years later, on January 1, 1854, Angellotti bought lot #3, adjoining the hotel lot from Walter Skidmore for \$50. A week later, January 8, 1854, he bought from James L. Poindexter, lot #2 in the same block, again for \$50.

The area in question in San Rafael is shown in a sketch of the property which appears in Deed Book B on page 122. The hotel Angellotti purchased in 1850 was literally across the street from Timothy Murphy’s home which was directly across the street from the town plaza. The survey of this area was made in 1850 by McCullough & Myers.



street

| _____
| Ai Barney

| _____
| Plaza

A few days later, on January 19, 1854, the Sacramento Daily Union newspaper picked up a story:
“STABBED – An Italian, named Ginseppe (*sic*) Angelotti, stabbed Tate Parker in an affray at the Mission of San Rafael on Monday, Mr. Parker received six wounds, and his recovery is doubtful.”

I have not learned more about this incident, but apparently Angelotti was not convicted of a crime since he continued to actively buy and sell property and run his hotel. I believe Tate Parker is William T. Parker, a native of Virginia, who was living in San Rafael in 1850 and who died in San Francisco at the Metropolitan Hotel on March 16, 1861.

We next discover that on January 28th, 1854 Angelotti sold the hotel property where he was living back to Marie Daniel and for the same price he paid for it - \$3500. The lot is described as 50 “varras” square which equates to 137.5 feet on each side. This is totally confusing to me since he seems to have continued living in and running the hotel. In fact, ads ran in the newspapers in Sonoma, San Francisco and of course in Marin, mentioning the San Rafael Hotel and it’s billiard rooms, as well as a livery stable. The ads notify the public that upon the arrival of the steamer every day at Point San Quentin, a good two-horse coach would be ready to convey them to “my House” and also that the coach would leave “my House” for the steamer every morning at 9 o’clock, a.m.

Guissepe was not recorded on the 1850 Marin County census or on the 1852 state census, even though he should have been since he was a property owner and businessman; further, I have been unable to locate him anywhere else in California. It is almost certain that he was in South America for a few years prior to coming here, and since he was young, single and adventurous, he may have returned there or to Mexico now and again.

He was living in San Rafael at the time of the 1860 census, returning age 39, a hotel keeper, and born in Rome. On November 18, 1860, he married Fannie (Frances) L. Osgood in Novato. Gilbert Harvey married them and recorded the event in Book A on page 6 of the county records.

Two more land purchases are of interest. On March 28, 1855, Angelotti purchased at auction for \$400 the “Rancho del Corte de Madera de Novato.” The property, containing two leagues, was auctioned to satisfy a judgment against John Martin in Angelotti’s favor. He turned around and sold the said property back to John Martin on August 10, 1855 for \$413.

On Sept. 29, 1856, Ai Barney sold lot #1 in Block 24 to “Jose” Angelotti so now he at last owned the entire block.

Another interesting transaction took place on May 29, 1858 when Angelotti bought for \$86, again at auction, property belonging to the city of San Rafael, to wit the block house and lot on which it sat, formerly used as a jail.

Angelotti purchased 101 acres land at auction from Sheriff V. D. Doub on June 25, 1859 (a case of unpaid taxes, I think) which he then on the same date sold to Samuel P. Taylor for \$420. This land was a part of the grant from the Mexican government to Rafael Garcia, and was located adjacent to the paper mill property owned by Taylor and on which Taylor lived.

The California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences, issue date 14 Feb. 1862, tells us that “the town of San Rafael contains about 200 inhabitants. It has two churches, that of Rev. Mr. Gilbert, and the Catholic

church; a large hotel (brick) kept by Mons. Angelotti, who owns two hotels, one of which is closed. The Marin Hotel can well accommodate sixty visitors or boarders, and Mons. A. is ever ready to see his patrons are well cared for.” The article goes on to say “Mons. Angelotti ... has quite a garden laid out, which was destroyed by grasshoppers last year, and which the coming year he intends will be rejuvenated and greatly improved.”

Tax records in the 1860s mention income from hotel, retail liquors, billiard table, and slaughtered cattle, calves, hogs, sheep.

We know that Angellotti sold the first hotel which he purchased in 1850 back to Marie Daniel. I have not seen a deed indicating Angellotti again owned it. He did, however, build a new brick building which is called the Marin Hotel. A number of advertisements appear in the papers advertising it.



The fate of the first hotel is revealed in an article the 1880 History of Marin County, California. “On May 23, 1867, an informal meeting of Free-masons, residents in the town of San Rafael and vicinity, was held for the purpose of establishing a lodge; for this purpose, Mr. Angellotti offered to donate a lot of ground, and Mr. Short, the use of his hall, both of which were gladly accepted.”

The Marin Journal of February 29, 1868 adds to this:

“MASONIC HALL. Angellotti is now engaged in fitting up the second story of the old San Rafael Hotel, which will be used as a lodge room for the Masonic fraternity.”

Book B, page 351, of the Marin County court records lists Guiseppe’s naturalization on July 7, 1865 in the 7th District court. He declares himself 40 years of age and born in Italy.

The 1870 Marin County census records Guiseppe as Joseph Angellotti, age 49, born Italy, occupation market produce, and his family: wife Frances, son Frank and daughter Emma. Also living with them is a domestic servant and Louis Barnard who is a clerk in Guiseppe’s store.

The deed books reveal that Angellotti and some partners involved themselves in mining ventures and registered claims located on Deer Island, Novato, and in San Clemente Gulch, Sausalito township.

In the November 2nd, 1872 Marin Journal, we find that Guiseppe has discovered a lode of coal.

“COAL – We understand our townsman Angellotti, who has been so long boring for water in the side hill back of Mr. Hanson’s residence, has struck a deposit of coal, and taken out several specimens which burn well.”

In 1876, Guiseppe and his wife sell to Caspar T. Hopkins the Marin Hotel property for \$5,000. The 1880 census, however, records “Joseph” as a hotel keeper. It seems he was running the hotel for Hopkins. The family is recorded as living on Fourth street.

In the May 31, 1883 Marin Journal, we read that Guiseppe has left Marin and “...gone to the lower country.” Then, on October 4, 1883, the Marin Journal informs us that he has died at Guaymas, Mexico. The obituary reads:

ANOTHER PIONEER GONE – With pain we note the death of Mr. Joseph Angellotti, a very old and prominent resident of San Rafael. Mr. Angellotti was a native of sunny Italy, though he spent some years in the South American States before coming to California. He took his residence in San Rafael as early as 1850 or 1851, and here he remained until last spring. He was best known

as the host of the Marin Hotel, for many years the leading hotel of the county, though he was distinguished for enterprise and public spirit, and became possessed of a large property. In May last, his old spirit of adventure revived, and lured by the business extensions in the lower country, he went to Guaymas and engaged in merchandizing. He was successful, and friends received word from him that that country was good, and he was renewing his youth. It was therefore a dreadful shock to his family and friends here to learn, as they did on Monday evening last, by letter from Mr. Willard, the American Consul at Guaymas, that Mr. Angellotti had been attacked by the virulent fever epidemic there, and died on the 22d of September. Mr. Angellotti leaves a widow and a son and daughter in San Rafael. He was an old member of Marin Lodge, No. 200, I.O.O.F., and belonged to the Mutual Companions of Petaluma, and the Mutual Relief Association of Sonoma. His remains were buried in Guaymas.”

The San Francisco Bulletin of October 3, 1883 refers to him as an early pioneer of this coast. “He was at one time largely identified with real estate interests in Marin county, and well known to the traveling community as the proprietor of the Marin Hotel at San Rafael. He was a man of active brain and full of enterprise, participating in many business ventures. Mr. Angellotti recently left his State to open up connections in Mexico...”

October 18, 2016.