

Arnoldi Family

Guiseppe “Joe” Arnoldi (1897-1986)

Joe was born August 8, 1897 in Sueglio, Como, Italy. He was in the Italian Army (1916-1920) during World War I. He spent 42 months as a prisoner-of-war in Bohemia. He immigrated to the US in 1922, settling in Santa Barbara, and working for his future father-in-law, Gottardo Calvi (stonemason). His future wife, Ilda Calvi (born July 20, 1903 in Vestreno, Como, Italy) immigrated to the US on October 13, 1922. They married in Santa Barbara, October 21, 1922.

Joe was a stonemason working with his father-in-law; then with John Arroque. They worked on the repair of the Mission tower that was destroyed in the 1925 earthquake. He got his own construction license in 1932 and started Arnoldi's Masonry. Joe and Ilda opened Arnoldi's restaurant in 1936 at the sight of Mom's Italian Village. Ilda was one of four licensed female bartenders in Santa Barbara.

On May 16, 1941, they opened up Arnoldi's Cafe, in a building that Joe built. (The restaurant was sold in 1969. It is still known as Arnoldi's.) During the day, Joe worked as a stonemason. He quarried stone from his property in the "Windy Gap" area of San Marcos Pass. During the evenings, he bartended at Arnoldi's, and Ilda was the hostess. In 1977, Ilda became a "movie star" when Burt Reynolds asked her to be in the movie "The End" that was being filmed in Santa Barbara. Joe passed March 2, 1986. Ilda passed on February 3, 1998. Their son: Ugo also became a stonemason, like his Dad and Grandfather.



Sources: *Oral History notes from Santa Barbara Historical Society (Nov 1883),
Article written by Jeanette Arnoldi-Schall (granddaughter) on Arnoldi's Masonry*