

The name “**Angono**” (pronounced as either ‘A-ngo-no’ or ‘Ang-go-no’) stems from various story sources. One such story describes the area of Angono as abundant in fish and animal life, with perennial grass and virgin forests, but infested with crocodiles.

The Spaniards who went there found a village of huts, consisting of 50 families and ruled by a Datu Biga. The Datu’s dwelling was located on a hilltop, a place that still presently bears his name “Biga”. Natives refer to their datu as “Ang Puno” or “Ang Uno,” which was carried on with the Spaniards, also attributing it to the place where the Datu and his followers resided.

Compared to other lakeshore settlements, Angono was seldom mentioned when the Spaniards came to the Philippines, suggesting that it was populated less than those which figured in historical documents.

Thus, it was to Cainta where Captain Juan de Salcedo started his pacification campaign of the lake region in 1571. Natives from other settlements nearby reinforced the defenders of Cainta, probably, some of them were from Angono. The natives were called “Moros,” suggesting the early stages of Islamization just as Lakandula and Sulayman were.

With the area pacified, Angono progressed as a “visita” starting in 1575. It was then one of the twelve “visitas” in the vicinity of Pasig, which was the mother parish. Turning to documents on descriptions of how lake-settlements looked like, a priest-historian, Father Pedro Chirino, described the lake region in 1603 as one of the most remarkable places in the world.

Other mother parish successively administered the “visita” of Angono. After Pasig, it was a “visita” of Taguig, then Morong, and finally Binangonan. When Angono was a “visita” of Binangonan sometime in 1737, both contained 100 “tributos” and taxpayers. Both were always written together as “Pueblos de Bay y Binangonan con la estancia de Angono.” Historical sources also refer to the Angono area, simultaneous with its growth as a “visita”, as an “estancia” (ranch) and hacienda. Sources point out that a Spanish general, Don Domingo de Otero Bermudez, purchased a hacienda in Angono in 1745. Documents often pertain to Angono specifically as both “hacienda y estancia”.

The land tracts changed ownership several times. Later, owners at the end of the Spanish regime subdivided them and sold to different owners, who secured their claims under the Torrens title system. The livestock brought by the owners multiplied in great number, opening up the world place of Angono for market and commercial opportunities. Angono soon became a middle-of-the-way market where the townspeople of Antipolo, Teresa, Taytay and Cainta met in direct trade and commerce. Balite was the specific part of Angono that became a natural open market during Fridays.

In 1751, Angono became a “capellana” which was entitled to a cura paroco or chaplain. After 15 years, Angono was created into a pueblo in 1766, although other sources place the date in 1751 or 1753. Be that as it may, Angono had a population of 1,739 in 1766. Juan Magbitac was its first gobernador-cillo. The Pueblo of Angono was then under the jurisdiction of Laguna Province. Later, under the Distrito delas Montes de San Mateo, which was renamed in 1857 to Politico Militar del Distrito de Morong. It remained part of Morong’s political-military district until the end of the Spanish rule in 1898.

On June 11, 1901, the Philippine Commission enacted Act 137 creating Rizal Province and incorporating Angono into it and a barrio of Binangonan. Another edict, Act 942 consolidated Angono and Cainta with Taytay, the seat of the new municipal government. In November 1903, Act 948 separated Angono from Taytay and returned it to Binangonan. It was in 1903 that Angono had a land tenure dispute that lasted up to 1909.

On August 19, 1938, through Executive Order 158 signed by Pres. Manuel L. Quezon, Angono became an independent municipality effective January 1, 1939 with five (5) barrios: Bagong Bayan, Poblacion, San Isidro, San Roque and San Vicente. By 1960 with another barrio added, Doña Aurora, the population reached 7,093. Republic Act 6469 of June 17, 1972 ratified Executive Order 158 and established legality of Angono’s status as municipality. In 1975, the town was classified as a 5th class town with an annual income of Php 520,000.00. It remains one of the 13 towns of Rizal out of the original 26 towns, the other 13 having been included as part of greater Metro Manila or developed as cities.

Angono today as a First Class municipality, is more well-known as a town with a unique cultural life and history, with a unique and cultural life and history, with its citizens having achieved much in the artistic fields of painting, music, sculpture and native artistic traditions. The town is dotted with art shops and galleries and ateliers. A household name is Carlos “Botong” Francisco, one of the Philippines’ most outstanding

post-war painters while Maestro Lucio D. San Pedro was a National Artist for Music. Fiestas and churches celebrations are special occasions when colorful traditions such as the making of giant paper figures and displayed for both tourists and local residents.

## **Political History**

### Angono as Pueblo during the Spanish Period

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The local government of Angono until about 1898, though civil in nature, had the Parish Priest as the supreme local authority – he being the more learned and acknowledged to be the representative of God Himself as prescribed then by the State religion (Catholic). The priest authorized all activities in the community and nullified all others not within the concept of propriety.

As Angono then was a “Pueblo”, it had for its executive the “Kapitan” (Gobernadorcillo) who was elected for a term of one year by the town “Maginoo” composing a board of all persons who had held office in the community. His election was subject to the approval or rejection of the Parish Priest. The Capitan received no pay but enjoyed some privileges that went with the exulted and respected nature of his office under Spain. He always carried the “Bacula” (sort of a sceptre) as a symbol of authority.

## Angono Katipunan

During the Philippine revolution in 1896, the beginnings of Angono Katipunan had already been organized in Angono long before the outbreak of the revolution in 1896.

According to Ayong Tiamson – based on Eugenio Lara’s unpublished book “Readings on the History of Angono” — Andres Bonifacio himself went to Angono in 1894 to organize the Katipunan. The Angono Katipunan had its Sangguniang Balangay whose “Pangulo” was Kapitan Rufino Villaluz.

There had been no disturbance nor any outbreak of violence in connection with that revolution against Spain, according to Lara.

The only other known involvement of Angono “insurrectos” against Spain, Lara noted, was in the second phase of the Philippine revolution at the siege in 1898 on the Spanish “Kuta” of Morong then located at the town church. The Angono insurrectos were armed only with bolos, and these bolos were used very extensively not in whacking away at well entrenched defenders of the garrison, but rather in cutting thousands and thousands of bamboos near Morrong. These bamboos were bundled and tied together into such sizes as to be sufficiently impenetrable by ordinary rifle shots.

On August 1, 1898, the “Acta de Independencia” was signed by representatives of the province of Morong in Bacoor, Cavite. Don Apolonio Villaluz was elected the President Local and signed the affiliation of the town of Angono to the Dictatorial Government of Emilio Aguinaldo.

## American and Commonwealth Period

During the early days of the American regime, the government of the United States in the Philippines adopted the policy of simplifying the administration of local governments by incorporating smaller communities to their bigger neighbouring communities.

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On October 12, 1903, in accordance with Executive Order No. 942 of the Philippine Commission, the two small towns of Angono and Cainta were attached to the bigger town of Taytay for administrative convenience. A few weeks later (also in 1903), Angono was detached from Taytay and transferred to Binangonan because of the very strong protest by the people of Angono against Taytay on the ground that in the past, some "manloloob" gangs that every now and then attacked Angono, usually emerged from the mountains in the general direction of Taytay and Antipolo.

The government of the Americans in Angono started with the designation of Venancio (Antoy) Reyes, who was Kapitan of Angono starting in 1897, as the first Presidente Municipal of the town, a position which former Gobernadorcillo Antoy Reyes held until 1903 when Angono became a barrio.

On August 19, 1938, Commonwealth President Manuel L. Quezon signed Executive Order No. 158 providing Angono as a separate town from Binangonan. It took effect on January 1, 1939 with Bagong Bayan, Poblacion, San Isidro, San Roque and San Vicente as its first five barangays..

Mr. Antonio Ibañez and Domingo Villamayor were appointed Alcalde Municipal and Vice-Alcalde Municipal, respectively.

## Japanese Period

Lara observed that during the initial occupation of Japanese forces, Angono had been sharing her homes and her food resources with thousands of civilians war evacuees from other localities; and also with the guerrillas from other places, and forcibly, also with the foraging Japanese, given through the national and municipal government of the Japanese in Angono.

Angono during the Japanese occupation had a government under the Japanese whose Chief of Police was Deogracias Medina.

The elected Mayor at that time, Domingo Villamayor, was missing so that people elected Simplicio Villamarin to be a representative liaison of the people that shall contact the Japanese, guerrillas and Americans should they come to liberate Angono.

The underground movement in Angono were represented by armed guerrillas of ROTC Hunters and The Markings. The patriotic sentiment against the Japanese and their collaborators in Angono, on the whole, was non-violent.

The Liberation of Angono from the Japanese happened on February 23, 1945 when the 302<sup>nd</sup> Reconnaissance Troop of the United States Army First Cavalry Division under Captain D. H. Wallton arrived and camped at the elementary school grounds. By that time, the Japanese and their Makapili trustees had left Angono.

## Post War

By 1960 with another barrio added, Doña Aurora, the population in Angono reached 7,093.

Lara said that many college graduates from Angono had been accorded very much more opportunities to travel to the United States by applying for further training in some American universities, in many cases employed while they studied.

Public Health and Sanitation likewise had considerably improved with cholera and small pox – two major health problems during the Spanish regime — were completely controlled. A municipal cemetery was also provided in 1961.

One major post-War issue was the relocation of the boundary of Angono. When surveyor Roman S. Reyes was elected Mayor of Angono in 1951, Lara narrated, he started the proceedings to redefine the territorial boundary of Angono which were deemed in conflict with those of Taytay and Binangonan.

On Laguna Lake, kanduli and aquatic resources depleted because of the presence of factories and farm lands, creating a post-war Angono generation of people who were mostly employees, factory workers and professionals.

These farm lands would eventually become subdivisions in the '70s and '80s providing homes to migrants coming from over-populated Manila and Quezon City.

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The People of Angono

Angono is notable to many as the Art Capital of the Philippines. Angono is the first district of Rizal. It is a dandy municipality in which the municipal hall, plaza, church, markets and the barangays were bound closely. It is like during the Spanish era that the church was the kilometre-zero.

Its original aborigines are mainly Tagalogs, while the Minority ethnic groups were Ilocanos, Bicolanos, Kapampangans, Pangasinenses and Cebuanos. Hence, the lingua franca of Angono is Tagalog.

The people are scattered in 10 barangays with Barangay San Isidro, MahabangParang, Kalayaan, San Roque, San Vicente, Poblacion Ibaba, San Pedro, Bagumbayan, Sto. Nino and Poblacion Itaas.

Residents' economic lifeblood are hinged on agriculture and fishery, commercial and manufacturing. The art tourism industry is one of the key sectors that Angono has identified as a promising source of growth and employment for the local government.

## Art Capital

The town is considered as the "Art Capital of the Philippines" because it serves as haven to more than 500 visual artists alone, based on a study by International Labor Organization. It is the birthplace of two National Artists – Carlos "Botong" Francisco (Visual Arts) and Prof. Lucio D. San Pedro (Music), whose creative genius were inspired by artists during the Spanish period namely Juan 'Tandang Juancho' Senson and Pedro Pinon.

Angono is likewise home of artist groups namely Angono Ateliers, Angono Artists Association, Neo-Angono Artists Collective, KUTA Artist Group, and Grupo Sining Angono as well as well-renowned painters and artists namely Moises Villaluz, Francisco Senson, Nemesio Miranda Jr., Jose "Pitok" Blanco, PerdigonVocalan, Pepito Villaluz, Vicente Reyes, Salvador Juban, Weweng Unidad, Glenn Blanco, Ember Crisostomo, Lito Balagtas and emerging artists like Wire Rommel Tuazon, Jovito Andres, Ambeth Lugtu, Charlie Val, Manny Bacani, Michael Blanco and the rest of the Blanco family painters, Keiye Miranda, Carlos "Totong" Francisco, Herbert "Ebok" Pinpino, Aaron



Bautista, Allan Alcantara, Isidro 'Manong Jon' Santos, Dolpee Alcantara, Arturo Sanchez, Michael de Guzman, Sarah Geneblazo and Kim Oliveros, among others.

## Galleries

Moreover, art galleries and family museums specifically Angono Petroglyhs in Binangonan, Blanco Family Museum and Nemiranda Art Gallery may also be the reason why Angono became the Art Capital of the Philippines. Besides, it is where most of the artists originated from. From an exemplary work of an ancestor, it was passed from generation to generation until today.

In addition, Angono is known for its exotic cuisine and fried itik. Restaurants like Balaw-Balaw offers mouth-watering and delicious recipes. On the other hand, different delicacies and snacks can be bought in Angono's public market.

Likewise, Angono is renowned for its religious celebrations. One of this is the Higtantes Festival or Feast of San Clemente which is celebrated on the 23rd of November, in honor of the patron saint of fishermen and gives prominence to a fluvial procession in Laguna Lake. Nevertheless, gigantic papiermâchés can also be seen during the parade. Next is the Carabao Festival held on May 15 in honor of San Isidro Labrador, where carabaos were pulled in carts and ornamented with flowers and bunting. Others are traditional practices during the Holy Week – the Cenaculo (Passion Play), Santo Entierro (Good Friday), Salubong or 'Sayaw ng Bati,' as well as secular Arts Month and Summer Arts festivals.

## **Angono's municipal building**

The municipal building was constructed in 1957 managed by Sebastian Construction with Pedro Dela Cruz acting as foreman. The municipal compound has an area of 10,067 square meters, the land donated by Don Mariano Santos and Doña Nieves Songco on November 2, 1939.

The building was constructed using the pork barrel funds of Senator Eulogio Rodriguez Sr. and Senator Lorenzo Sumulong and Rizal province representatives Francisco Sumulong and Serafin Salvador.

In 2011, under the leadership of Mayor Ms. Au Villamayor from 2007-2010, the building was rehabilitated based on the Development Plan outlined by Mayor Gerry Calderon in 2004.

At present, the newly furnished municipal building was designed by Mayor Calderon himself, which was inspired by edifices from Rome, Italy.

(With citations/reference from "Readings on the History of Angono" by Eugenio Lara. Unpublished, 1969).

By Richard R. Gappi

Information Officer I

Secretariat, Angono Municipal Committee on Cultural Heritage

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