



City of Port Phillip Living Heritage Project
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Interviewer: Sarah Rood, Way Back When Consulting Historian
8 September 2017

Please note that the interviewee has reviewed this transcript. Words in italics have been added at the request of the interviewee. Only material in this final transcript may be cited or used for publication or exhibition.

Cream puffs and penny pies

SR: Tell me about what you made, what you sold in the shop? Do you remember?

DE: Yes. I had a little girlfriend that lived opposite and I used to take over cream puffs - Dad was a wonderful cook, absolutely!

SR: What was in the shop?

DE: Well he made bread of course, Vienna bread, and tinned loaves, French loaves. He made pies, little penny pies those days. That's where I came in handy at the bakehouse; he'd have a special spoon and he'd have all the mixture and he'd say, "Now, Dossie, you fill the little pies," and I felt very important. And then he made cream horns.

SR: Describe a cream horn to me.

DE: They were made out of puff pastry and they were like a shape of a horn and they'd be filled with jam, raspberry jam, and then cream. They were beautiful. He made all sorts of things, especially his cream puffs.

SR: Describe one of them for me.

DE: Then he made matches - everything was puff pastry - with the chocolate on the top, and then you opened it up and you had the cream and the jam in between.

23:30

SR: Was a cream puff just the *Choux* pastry with cream in it?

DE: And jam. Very tasty actually. Then he made scones. But those days we didn't have shelves like they have in the modern thing. Mum would have dishes that stood on - and only a few would go out because in those days we didn't have a lot of refrigeration or anything.

SR: The penny pies, what was in those?

DE: Penny pies were full of mince meat and they were delicious. Oh he sold the threepenny ones or twopenny ones, whatever they were.

SR: What were they?

DE: Bigger. Same thing. He made pasties.

SR: So the penny pies cost a penny?

DE: Yes. The penny pies, kids would come in and buy those, and they'd get a great deal of tomato sauce on it. We didn't sort of save on things those days because money was very hard.

SR: Was your mum purely in the shop or did she often help with the cooking as well?

DE: She had to look after two children and she had everything - but no - while Dad was asleep - but he did help her a lot. I don't know how he got to sleep to be honest.

25:04

SR: Did he bake at night?

DE: Yes, baked all night. That's what I do remember, on special things like Good Friday, you didn't have the buns like you do at Woolworths or at Coles, you had them the night before and people would line up at six o'clock, seven o'clock, whatever, and that was when we had to get help, we got help in the bakehouse, a relative of some description.

SR: Other than those special calendar occasions was it just your family, no help in the bakehouse?

DE: Gosh no. Because it was hard to make a living. We had so many little shops - there'd be the fruiterer, and then there'd be the little shop that sold a bit of bread, a few groceries - mostly little ha'penny shops that you'd go in and buy some sweet that you could get those days.

SR: So lots of little speciality shops?

DE: Mm. There was nothing like we've got now.

SR: Who supplied all of the ingredients?

DE: In South Melbourne I do not know. In North Melbourne I was older and it was Kimpton's.

SR: And there was that story of Kimpton's.

DE: Yes, because Dad undercut somebody by a ha'penny. (laughs) Oh you didn't do those thing. But you had to make a living, you had to do it the best way you could.

SR: Do you remember where the supplies were kept in South Melbourne?

DE: I should imagine they'd be all kept in the bakehouse because we had great wooden troughs those days, that's where dad mixed all the ingredients.

SR: He'd mix in the trough?

DE: Mm. He was not a tall man. I don't know where I came from because I'm quite tall, but never mind. I did have an uncle who was tall. Uncle George.

27:14

SR: So you're baking bread and you're baking pastries. What do you remember about who was coming into the shop?

DE: Nobody. I wouldn't see them. I didn't start school until I was about seven - in those days you didn't send the kiddies - you kept them by your side. No, it'd just be the locals in the area I should imagine.

SR: Did you do deliveries as well? Obviously not you.

DE: No, no deliveries. I would say in the old days Uncle Harry may have had because I have heard that there was a manure pit at the back - that was where this fellow has built his home you see - and then there were places to keep the bakers' carts.

SR: At the bakehouse in South ?

DE: At the back. Because they had a cobbled stone -

SR: So maybe they used to do carting?

DE: My dad didn't do it.

SR: Isn't that how he met your mum?

DE: He was bread carting - he was too. Well who the heck did he work for? It must have been his brother!

SR: This is fantastic, and don't forget as well there are things like rate books and council records, we might be able to piece some of these things together. Although that ledger would have been great.

DE: Oh yes it would have been because that obviously went back. Lot of South Melbourne would've owed to Dad, I promise you.

29:08

SR: Do you remember having any ideas about money and whether or not the business was doing well, as a kid?

DE: No, not at all, but all I know is I never went without.

SR: You told me last time that you remember sleeping in the bakehouse.

DE: Yes I did actually but I was digressing. Thursday night for Good Friday, Dad, when he'd finished emptying a sack, a bag - it'd possibly be a little bit out of the bakehouse - he'd just, you know, they go up a bit, say there'd be 20 bags or something - because all the family were in helping with the hot cross buns they'd say, "Well bring the kid in," and the kid would be me of course, and I'd be asleep in the bakehouse on the sacks all night because they couldn't leave me in the front of the house. And as I was telling you, they'd be so hot, the hot cross buns. It'd be like Clarendon Street on Friday night with the fish and chip shop, we'd

be way out waiting to get served. It was a lot better, life was so much easier those days, and women were slimmer because they had prams to push everywhere.

SR: Why else do you think life was better then?

DE: Well it was okay for me, I was a child. The thing came when Dad retired - by that time I was working, just working.

SR: Who was helping your dad in the bakehouse on those hot cross buns Thursday nights?

DE: Well there was Fred, he was a nephew. Oh it'd be anybody that came in, like family. It'd be quite an occasion really.

SR: Do you remember the taste of the hot cross buns?

DE: I remember that they put a lot more in them than they do today. They'd even have lemon peel and everything in them, very, very tasty.

31:42

SR: Where did he get his recipes from?

DE: Now I can tell you that, that came down through the family. Could have even come down from Ireland for all I know.

SR: Could have been Plantagenet's recipes?

DE: Yes.

SR: They don't exist today anymore?

DE: If Dad was a carter in Korumburra Grandad must have had a bakehouse and he must have been fairly well off to send all the kids, different grades, to school, to the one master, he taught every one of them. We're living in a different era dear, a different era.

SR: This is why you're so important, so that you can share your story with us.

DE: I don't think I can share it too much. (laughs) I don't remember!

[pause in recording]