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UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE.

OPEN FOUNDATION COURSE.

SUBJECT: Australian History

LECTURER: Margaret Henry.

ASSIGNMENT: Regional History, 3rd term.

DATE DUE: 5th, September, 1988.

STUDENT: Julie Guion

CLASS: Tuesday 1.00pm

TOPIC.

BAKERS BAKERY.
FRANK BAKER Jnr.

BAKING AND THE BAKEHOUSE.

The origin of the Baking Trade in the Bakers Family can be traced back to George Shoesmith, Hannah Baker's father who came to New South Wales in 1841 sponsored by William Walker and Company.

George had learnt his trade in Hastings, Sussex. He came here initially to search for his father Edward who was a convict on ticket of leave in Patrick Plains, Singleton area. George worked as a baker at Singleton, Morpeth then finally Waratah, where he died aged 42 years in 1864. The small business was then taken over by George's eldest son William Shoesmith. It was at Waratah that trade and family ties were to emerge with the Baker family.

Thomas William Baker lived with his parents, "Pioneers" William and Mary in Grove Street Waratah. At the age of 14 years he began working with his father in the old Waratah Tunnel coal mine. After a short time he left the mine and began his apprenticeship as a baker with William Shoesmith, who had decided to try his luck by opening a bakery in Elder Street Lambton. Due to so much competition in such a small town, William Shoesmith in 1870 went into bankruptcy.

LAMBTON .

ESTATE OF W. SHOESMITH.

Under a Bill of Sale.

MR W.K. LOCHHEAD will sell by public auction on the premises, Lambton, on Monday next, 12th December, at noon the whole of the HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE and EFFECTS, Bakers Tools, Troughs, &c. Together with the cart, horse and harness.

Terms cash. Unreserved.

This ~~the~~ original home and bakery was situated on the southern side of Elder Street, three from the corner of Grainger Street. It was a two storey wooden home with a small bakehouse behind. The bread carters used a rear entrance in Kendall Street. William Baker snr. purchased this along with plant, horses, cart, harness, etc., and so bread making began in 1873 when William married Hannah Shoesmith, William Shoesmith's younger sister, and from that time onwards the business was to flourish under the "Baker" name for nearly 80 years.

Julie Quian

The years progressed as did the business although William and Hannah Baker conducted the business in Lambton, Baptism records show that their early children were born at Waratah perhaps at William's widowed mothers home, Grove Street Lambton.

Thomas William born in 1877 was a very important figure in the story of the bakehouses. He was apprenticed to his father after leaving school around 1891. In 1894, William married Eleanor Stuart, apparently against his father's wishes with the result that differences between William snr. and daughter-in-law Eleanor existed at all times, so much so that early in their marriage they contemplated leaving Australia to live in England.

The occupants of the three premises from the original bakery, Grainger Street, have much bearing on its growth. There were next door two very small homes occupied by Mrs Clarke and Mrs Weaver, and on the corner of Grainger and Elder Street was a store and home where Mr John Middlemas Snr. conducted a green grocery business and behind it he had a building used as an indoor bowling hall, and finally a small German brick cottage on the corner of Grainger and Kendall Streets was the original butcher shop. All these properties came into the Baker families hands by 1900 and then 1920 to form the bakery complex.

Firstly the purchase of the wooden store, home and bowling hall from John Middlemass Snr. enabled Thomas William Baker Snr. to start a newer two oven bakehouse, and land on the corner of Grainger and Kendall Street, being the old Commercial Hotel (Snake Gully) to use as stables completed the arrangement.

~~To know the movements of the Baker and Middlemass families, electrol~~
rolls of Lambton ~~were used and they show-~~; ^{flat} 1903 Thomas William Baker (baker) Hannah Baker (home duties, Elder Street, - Thomas Willaim Baker Junior (baker) states Elder Street where as his wife Eleanor Baker (home duties) - address is given as Pearson Street Lambton. 1903 the Middlemass family John Jnr. and Florence (who was a daughter of William Snr. and Hannah Baker) were living in the home of the old original bakery in Elder Street Lambton.

These rolls show that William Snr. with Hannah were still residing as BAKERS in Elder Street until Hannah passed away in 1914. William Jnr. and Eleanor were listed living in De Vitre Street where their younger children Bill, Doris, Mary, and Frank were born.

FN

John Guion

In 1914, William Eleanor and family moved into the Elder Street home of the bakery after his mother died. This left William running the bakery whilst his widowed father had taken out the lease on the 'Gold Miners Home' Hotel opposite the bakery, although by this time he was 60 years of age, he still kept control of finances in both venues.

In 1916 the hotel changed hands to George Malbon Snr. who changed the name of the hotel to 'The Central Hotel'. George Jnr. married William and Eleanor's daughter Florrie. By now the two small homes occupied by Mrs Weaver and Mrs Clarke, were in the Bakers name. One of the houses became the home of newlyweds Arthur Baker, eldest son of William and Eleanor, and Catherine Pike. Sadly Catherine Baker passed away at the age of 20 years.

On vacating the hotel in 1916 it is assumed William Snr. went to live with his daughter Florence Middlemass in the original home in Elder Street. To live with William and Eleanor was impossible because of the rift which if anything had widened as a letter dated 26.4.1921 reveals:-

To Thomas William Baker

I hereby give you one months notice to quit my premises (house, shop and bakehouse) dated from 25th April to 25th May, as I intend to repair the premises and ovens.

Signed

Thomas William Baker Snr.
Elder Street, Lambton.

It seems the logical solution came about in 1922 when William Jnr. bought his father out and was at last the master. His father had built a new home in Kendell Street and was cared for by his daughter Amelia Gibbs.

With a free reign now William Jnr. got things on the move and with one success after another at bread shows, trade improved. A third oven was built and a second floor added for doughmaking and storing flour, but still the feud with William Snr. continued with him having the council make his son raise the chimney of the new oven as he was getting the smoke in Kendall Street.

Early in 1929 the old wooden shop on the corner of Elder and Grainger Streets was demolished, making way for a two storey brick home and shop, the small homes were also taken down. William and Eleanor with family, lived in the original bakery home while construction went underway. The elder William had his last say in making the new brick fence being built two inches away from his property, the feud was over as he died in Kendall Street, June 1929. The new home was completed in 1930 but sadly Eleanor was not able to enjoy peace in her new home as she died aged 52 years in May 1930.

After 73 prizes, 10 medals and 10 cups including Grand Champion- N.S.W. and Queensland (706 entries), William Jnr. was taken out of competition to become a Bread Judge. William Jnr. was known as 'Confusius' of the bread world. *By whom?*

To complete the purchases for the bakehouse, the small German brick cottage behind was bought, which had been George Baker Snr's home, also Frank Snr. and Maddie Bakers first home after their marriage. The cottage was pulled down to make way for the fourth oven, showers, dressing rooms, bread cooling room and store. Lastly, the old stables and loft were demolished for a new building erected by brothers William and Frank.

The whole of the Bakers family lives have revolved around the bakehouse with almost every member being found work there if required. After the death of William "BAKER THE BAKER" in 1951, the retirement of the elder brothers Arthur (Marney) and Bob, the youngest son, Frank Snr. under great difficulties kept the business going, but the lifting of bread zoning that had been introduced during the war, meant that all customers in outlying suburbs were too hard to regain and with the pressure of the large conglomerates, sadly the "Bakers' boys and girls finishing school" came to a close in the mid 1950's.

Juke Quion

FOND MEMORIES FRANK BAKER JNR. HAS OF THE
BAKEHOUSE AND HIS GRAND PARENTS.

Though forty five years have passed since I haved worked there, I still have vivid memories of- at five years of age walking barefoot to Lambton School and calling at the bakehouse seeing my "Grandma Baker" (Eleanor) as she sat checking bread onto the carts dressed in her black dress and white apron. I would pat that apron pocket where her money purse was, which most times got me a three penny piece, then at eleveen years while at Lambton School getting ten minutes early mark every day to go for my teacher "Starchy Hefners" lunch time vienna bread."At Baker's only" he would say.

At the age of 12 years, I can remember assisting my uncle Frank, making meat pies for counter lunches,these pies were free for the old Commercial Hotel (Snake Gully) run by my uncle, Ted Shipley and aunt Doris (nee Baker), then a short time later at 13 years of age when Thursday nights were set aside for making sweet buns, these nights were work but mostly pleasure with my father (William) in charge of the younger members in the family. I also remember my grandfather, William (Baker the BAKER) as a family man and the "best baker in the land", he was a mild man, I recall him sitting at the pianola, pedalling away as he had me sing for him alone for hours at a time.

I can still see him pottering around the place as a bush carpenter, his tools invariably were fruit boxes, saw, hammer, nails, axe and a piece of string, also him preparing currants, raisins, cherries and eggs for cake making. I can hear people saying,"put your smoke out here comes Grandfather"- My time on the carts, in the bakehouse with my father, brothers cousins and uncles and the happy times with my caring aunts, all good folks,everyone of them- these were my people "down at the Bakehouse" from 1870 to 1955.

COPIED WITH PERMISSION OF
Frank Baker Jnr.

BAKER'S BAKERY AND THE
FAMILY ORIGIN.

Summary

At times things were no doubt very difficult with all the problems in Newcastle during the years of depression. Not only small family businesses such as the bakery, the coal and steel industries shut down in the early 1920's put stress on the Newcastle community. During 1922 and 1923 recession thousands of families came close to starvation, particularly in the Minmi area. When arriving, Bill Baker intended on working at Minmi but on his voyage to Australia, he was told that there was no work at all. He and his wife then packed up and went to Gretta to work in a mine for a short while, but soon returned to Waratah.

"Confucius of the bread world" was who Thomas William Baker, master baker was quoted for many years in newspapers. Winning most bread shows in New South Wales and Queensland, he was champion of champions 1922/29, his name "Baker the baker" became a household name.

The depression brought severe hardships to most families in the Newcastle area, although the Baker family believed they were a lot luckier than other families, as they always had work at the bakehouse and they were able to rely on it for bread, flour, potatoes etc.

School years for Frank Baker Jnr. are full of happy, loving memories rather than bad unpleasant ones. School to him was fifty children in a classroom with one teacher. He would often "wag it" from school and go down to the bakehouse to watch his grandfather baking bread, though he was soon sent back to school. All the family, uncles, aunts and cousins would help out in the bakehouse from time to time when help was needed. Although this would sometimes be long hours of hard work, there is only but fond happy memories of these times.

Money was a big problem, not many people had jobs, so this left only one thing to do for survival, this was to go too the police station and apply for a chit for groceries and meat. Some men were able to find work with the council, building drains and gravel roads. In the years of depression people that were known as Hawkers were very valuable people as they would make in their backyard sheds things such as white shoe cleaner, cloths cleaner soap, some would come around to houses and help the women who were on their own by cleaning everything and doing any odd jobs that needed doing.

Families were very close, they would look forward to the family days on Sundays down at the local park, this would be a game of cricket between the bakers and bread carters, and the local butcher shop. There would be free bread rolls for the spectators and free saveloys from the butcher shop. In the evenings you could go to the pictures or a dance at the local hall. Activities such as these were great fun and entertainment to the people of Lambton.

The whole of the Bakers family lives have revolved around the bakehouse with almost every member being found work there if required. After the death of William "Baker the baker" in 1951, the retirement of the elder brothers Arthur (Marney) and Bob, the youngest son Frank Snr. under great difficulties kept the business going, but the lifting of bread zoning that had been introduced during the war, meant that all customers in outlying suburbs were too hard to regain, sadly the Baker's bakehouse came to a close in the mid 1950's.

Julie Quon

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW.

with

Mr Frank Baker Jnr.

Bakers Bakery.

This is a brief outline of the history of my family who lived in the Lambton, Waratah area. Our family had its origins in Staffordshire, England, arriving here in 1862 and the grandson of the Pioneer, Thomas Willaim Baker became the famous baker og bread and his name Baker the baker became a household name in New South Wales and Queensland breadworld. He won most bread shows in those states and was champion of champions in 1922 to 1929. He declined to become the head baker on the liner Queen Mary and to demonstrate on the Australian Flower Of England because of family ties. He was taken out of competition and became a judge of bread, and for many years he was quoted in the newspapers as the "confusius" of the bread world.

My name is Frank Baker, grandson of this Baker the baker. I was born 7th October, 1924 and I'm the son of yet another Bill Baker. There was about eight in a row called Thomas William Baker of when in effect, their name was only, they were called Bill yet their name was Thomas William. I have alot of memories of my grandfather, he was a very wonderful baker.

Interviewer: What memories do you have of your years at school with the depression?

Mr Baker: I can remember going to school vividly, but looking at records it was three weeks after my fifth birthday in October 1929, the start of the depression. We were living in Durham Road, East Lambton. This depression was to bring severe hardships to most of the people everywhere and these conditions were to last throughout my schools days.

Interviewer: What did you wear to school?

Mr Baker : It wasn't as if was today when every child you had school uniform, we were lucky to find a pair of shoes between fifty of us and incidentally there was fifty in the class. Now the teachers are going crook if they get thirty. It was just a shirt and a pair of short pants and no boots and socks. It was really great. We could have afforded them but it was a

wonderful excuse to go barefoot, so that's how I really liked it.

Interviewer: Do you recall many Swaggies or stories of them?

Mr Baker: Quite a lot of swaggies hung around the bakehouse looking for a free loaf of bread and they use to hang around the pub looking for beer. There was a lot of characters in Lambton in those days, I can remember when I was going to school and there was all of us other kids, what a wonderful time it was to come out of school and see Tomahawk Joe there and his wife Loanstar. He lived in Jesmond and he use to make a bit of a living in those days trying to get a penny out of the kids, but he never had much show though but he always had a Carpet snake around his neck and six shooters, and he had a whip he use to crack and he use to do a bit of lassoing and crack cigarettes at his wife Loanstar, they were done up like real Texas cowboys. Another character I can remember was a lady they use to call Gumtip Lil, she was a real star, she would go out to the bush incidentally I won't mention her name but she was the daughter of a very rich family from Hamilton and she would go out to the bush near Lambton and collect big bunches of Gumtips, go around the town and sell them. There was only one thing wrong with Gumtip Lil, she would go to the hotel and sell a bunch of gumtips the more she sold the drunker she got, by the time the day was over you would have to get the police to throw her in a horse and sully and get her out of the town. She was very funny that Gumtip Lil. Then we had another fellow, he lived in North Lambton. I suppose if you, there's another lady you have interviewed before that could tell you more about him because he is a very, you could go on forever but you haven't got time. I can remember the funny story of Sport Leatherbe he was another character, he never worked in his life, he use to play two-up which incidentally was

Mike Quon

the biggest two-up of Australia at one stage. It was run by Brock Medcalf and was that big he was able to pay the fines if anybody who was caught by the police. One day the police raided the two-up game and Sport, he went straight and got into the Black Maria, it's unbelievable, the two-up game said Sport "Why didn't you run and at least give me a chance. He said I wasn't going to do that he said, last time they caught me I had to stand up all the way.

Interviewer: Do you remember any Hawkers?

Mr Baker: Or by gee, anybody that was in the depression had to remember hawkers, there was, you would see some of these fellows, they would make in their back sheds, they would make white shoe cleaner, they would make clothes cleaner, they would make soap, there were two that would clean everything, do everything for you. There was also the fellow that use to come around with the horse and cart with the clothes props, they would sell them for about ninepence each, everybody would use a prop to prop their clothes line up in these days. There was another old fellow, Rabbits O'Brien, you could buy a pair of skinned rabbits for ninepence in those days, I don't know they reckon they were bad old days, I reckon it was pretty good.

Interviewer: What fond memories do you have of the bakehouse in your school years?

Mr Baker: Oh gee whiz, they were all fond memories, they were all wonderful times in the bakehouse because at least I had alot of good uncles and aunts. I use to hang around there alot, my grandfathers table even though with the depression it was pretty high class, I use to hang around with the rest of my cousins, get a free feed. I got a vienna loaf at lunchtime and I'd fill it up with chips for ourselves, get a pennies worth of chips, rip the middle out of the bread, just waste it, coming home from school we all would go to the ovens and get into the tins that had the boiled spuds, they used potatoes to mix with the yeast all the good bakers did in those days. They were sifted, there

was no ordinary salt, it was really good they would use common butchers salt. Get abit of bread and put a bit of margarine on it, not the margarine you buy now but just margarine, it was terrible but I don't know. Then we would get upstairs where the flour was, I don't know just play around till we all got caught and got hunted. Then we would go to the stables and slide down the feed shoots and ride the horses around the yard. I can remember Saturdays helping walk the horses down to Lambton Park where they use to graze all the weekend and taking them back on Sunday night, you wouldn't get a kid to do that these days, that was entertainment to us that was really good.

Interviewer: Who was Baker the bakers parents, and what was their start in the country..

Mr Baker: Baker the baker, my grandfather, he was born in 1887 at Waratah and he was the son of another Thomas William Baker who was also a baker and Hannah Shoesmith. Hannah Shoesmith was the grand-daughter of Edward Shoesmith who came here in 1829 on the Claude Eden as a convict, he was sentenced to death but he chose to change instead of the rope, and he arrived as I said in 1829. He settled in the Singleton area where he had received his ticket of leave and in the mean time whilst he was doing his ticket of leave term, his son George came to work in Australia, he was the fully fledged baker that really started it all off. He came out in search of his father in 1841 and he lived in the Singleton area where he ~~met~~ and married a lass by the name of Catherine Dunn and their youngest daughter was Hannah Shoesmith and she was to become my grandfathers mother, she married my great grandfather Bill Baker in Sydney and he himself ~~he~~ was nine years of age when he arrived in the colony on the Persian in 1863 he came with his mother, aunt anda few kids to join their husbands who had arrived the year before and was contracted, they had a contract as miners at Minmi but history tells us that when they arrived there that during the voyage all the coal owners had decided to drop the price that they'd pay the coal miners, so the crunch was when they got to Minmi there was no work and by the time his wife and kids had arrived, that's the original Bill Baker they packed up and left and went to ~~Grey~~ta to work in a mine for a while and then came back to Waratah where the original Bill Baker

Julie Guis

died at 39 years of age of Typhoid fever. Then my great grandfather had gone and worked as a baker with the Shoemiths,, ~~he~~ not only served as a apprentice there he married the youngest girl Hannah and thats how we all came to be. Incidentally, Baker the bakers father he was also a member of the Newcastle City Band, they won the australian Championship in 1901 and 1902 and all the old timers use to tell me they could hear him all over Lambton whe he use to practise, he use to ride a big black horse to go around and collect the bills, it was funny at the time this old fellow was about 83, he said " Don't you remember that," I don't think I could.

Interviewer: With money very scarce, or no money at all in those days, how did people survive and what did they do for entertainment

Mr BAKER: You say money, there was a few jobs but not many, I suppose 8 out of 10 were out of work. The people didn't really starve, what they had to do was some of them got a job working on the roads with the council, building drains and making gravel roads. but the average family would have to apply to the local police station and get a chit for groceries and meat, which was worth only seven and sixpence. The average family was about five, but don't forget you could get, I remember when you could buy half a sheep for three and sixpence. And if you bought five shillings worth of meat you were given a string of saveloys at least for nothing. Those who had money when you got your weekend grocery order you were always given a bag of lollies or something like this. It was very hard but they were happier people I think, they seemed to stick together more. And as for entertainment there was dances in the local hall, it use to cost sixpence, you would get a cup of tea and a milk arrowroot biscuit for supper, and to go to the pictures that would cost fourpence a afternoon, I only got sixpence a week, cost you fourpence to go to the pictures and buy a tuppence worth of chips and you would just about get a bag full of potatoes for tuppence in those days. But to go to the pictures on Saturday night it was sixpence and for adults it was a s shilling or ten cents as they call it now, there were picnics and sporting activities, things that are different know and there were things that everybody got together on, we really had a hot time. I can remember when my grandfathers bakers and bread carters, we would play a cricket match against the local A. L. Payne the butchers at Lambton Park, it would be good for

the spectators too, because there would be free breadrolls for everyone from the bakehouse and free saveloys from Payne's butcher shop. A funny thing there was never any grog but, because nobody could afford to buy grog. Talking about grog, I can remember when it was sixpence a pint, a seven ounce glass of port they used to call it was fourpence, they used to call it four penny long and darkand, they went alright and a quart of beer was only about ninepence but still people got there. I can remember one mate of mine he was a few years older then me, he can remember when they would buy a pair of dancing pumps for seven and six, by gee, that was alot of money in those days, and they keep them for dancing only, they would go to the dances and carry them so they walked barefooted and use them only for dancing, he told me the times that they, there were five of them, they'd put thripence in each, and buy a bottle of plonk to go to the dance and that was how they had their fun.

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1988

I, FRANK BAKER give my
permission to JULIE GUION

to use this interview, or part of this interview, for
research, publication and/or broadcasting (delete one of
these if required) and for copies to be lodged in
the NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

.....
for the use of other bona fide researchers.

Signed J. F. Baker

Date 5. 9. 1988

Interviewer Julie Guion

APPENDICES.

Page 1: Thomas William Baker- Champion baker.

Page 2: Thomas William Baker and Sons _ Championships 1930, Oakey
Queensland.

Page 3: Champion Baker Thomas and sons- William, Robert, Arthur, Frank.

Page 4: Advertisement from local newspaper.

Page 5: Residence Shop 1929-30.

Judge

Jack Price

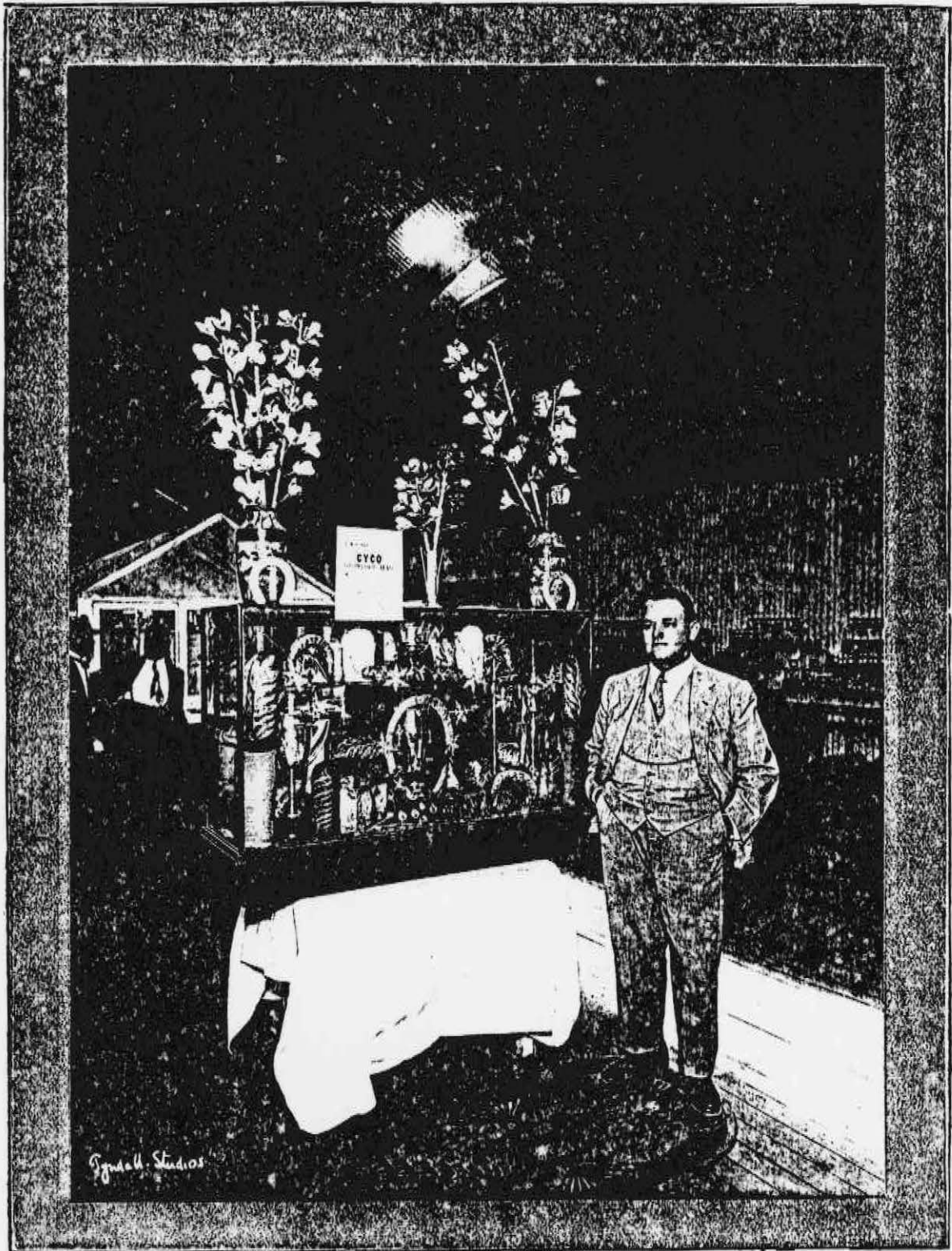
Apprentice bakers.

Page 6: Baker and Shoemith's Family.

Page 7: Busy day in Elder Street.. 1886.

Page 8: Newcastle City Band.

BAKER



THOMAS WILLIAM BAKER - CHAMPION



WINNER - N.S.W. QLD. CHAMPIONSHIP - 1930. OAKLEY - QLD. 706 ENTRIES





THOMAS WILLIAM BAKER(3) CHAMPION BAKER
SONS WILLIAM · ROBERT · ARTHUR · FRANK

FOR BETTER
BREAD

TELEPHONE 1 1111 1111

4



W. BAKER & SONS

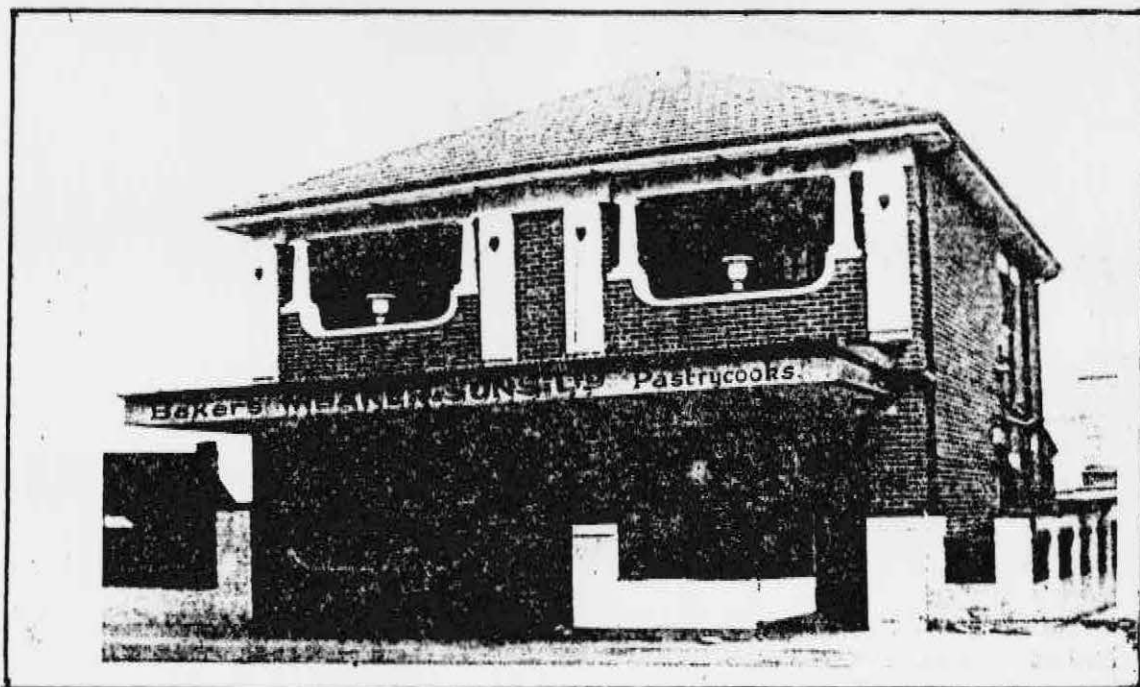


Champion Bakers & Pastrycooks
QUALITY FRUIT CAKE
WEDDING & BIRTHDAY CAKES

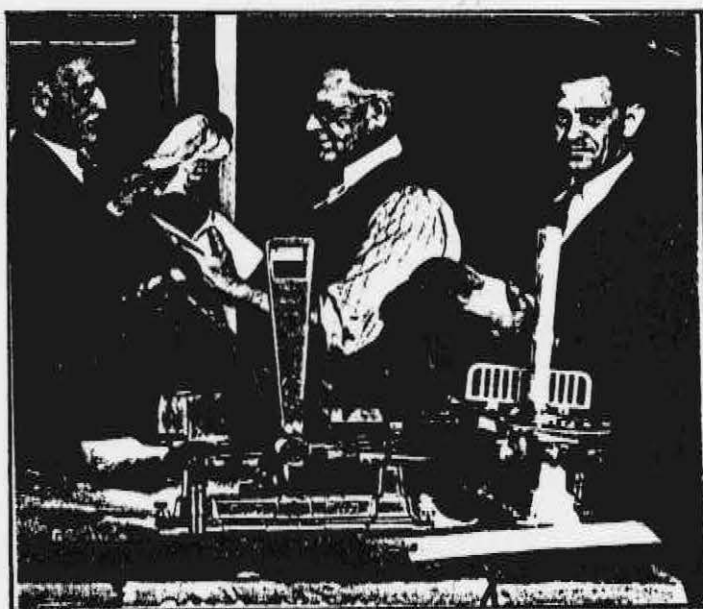
MANAGING
DIRECTOR:
T. W. BAKER
GRAND CHAMPION
BAKER
N.S.W. & O'LAND.
1928-29-32

39 ELDER STREET,
LAMBTON

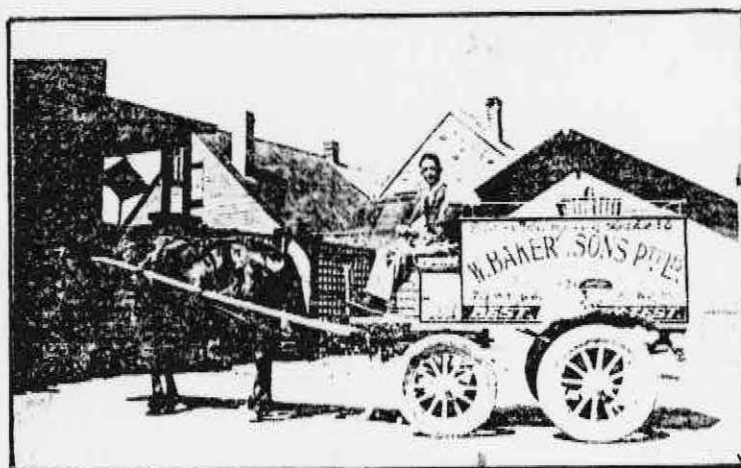




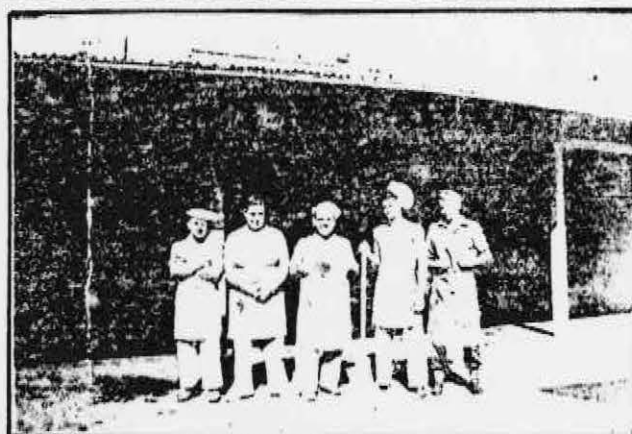
RESIDENCE · SHOP · 1929 · 30



JUDGE



JACK PRICE



BOB · HOWARD
MARNEY · J. BRATTEN



WILLIAM BAKER SR



HANNAH BAKER. NEE SHOESMITH

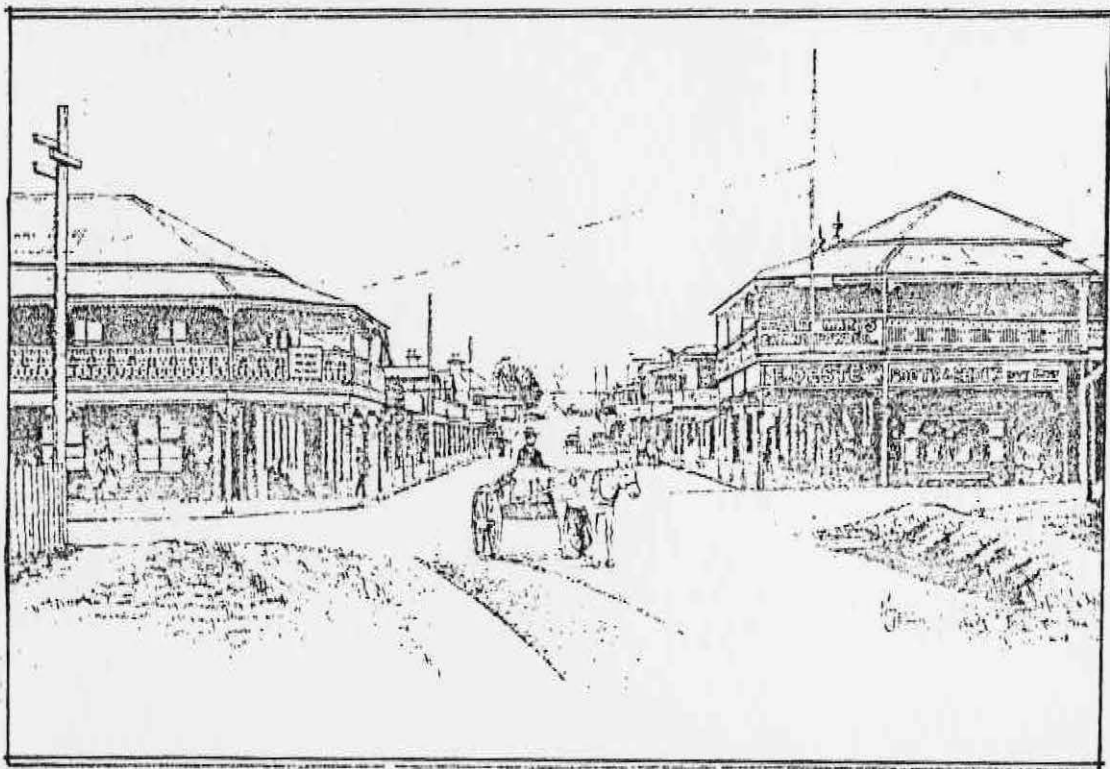


FLORENCE. AMELIA. HANNAH BAKER DAUGHTERS

Busy day in Elder St.



There was not much fear of being run down by traffic in Elder St. Lambton, in 1886.



Newcastle City Band.

WINNERS OF CHAMPIONSHIP OF AUSTRALASIA,
1901. & 1902.



Record of Contests Attended.

1899:
Bathurst.
First Prize, £200, and
Championship.

Record of Contests Attended.

1901:
Bathurst.
First Prize, £200;
First Prize Division, March,
£50.
And Championship, 1902.

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| E. BAKER,
Trumpet. | A. BOYD,
Bass Drum. | W. BAKER,
E♭ Horn. | C. BAKER,
Sax Horn. | W. BAKER,
Sax Horn. | R. BAKER,
E♭ Horn. | F. BAKER,
2nd Euphonium. | J. K. SHEPHERD,
Solo Euphonium. |
| R. AIDOO,
Trumpet. | A. MORRIS,
1st Horn. | A. GORTON,
Trumpet. | B. McBRIDE,
E♭ Horn. | W. HOLLIS,
Drum Major. | H. WALKER,
2nd Horn. | J. HORTON,
Euphonium. | W. PELL,
Baritone. |
| A. PAUL,
Tuba. | J. H. VANCE,
Soprano. | J. SHEPHERD,
Soprano. | P. HALLIDAY,
Solo Cornet. | W. BAKER,
Bandmaster. | G. MORRIS,
Solo Cornet. | J. LITTLE,
Baritone. | A. BAKER,
Trumpet. |
| | S. C. [unclear],
1st Cornet. | J. FAY,
1st Cornet. | | | | H. WALKER,
3rd Drum. | J. GORRETT,
Solo Drum. |

BAKER THE BAKER'S

FATHER.

HE ALSO WAS A

BAKER.

Wm. Baker