

German Heritage Research Group seminar
10 May 2014
Ira Raymond Room, Barr Smith Library,
Adelaide University

Our Daily Bread – from paddock to table

The Pastor's Bakery at Coober Pedy

Rhonda Traeger's Vignette of 'The Pastor's Bakery at Coober Pedy'

As a 5 minute pictorial presentation

'A brief glimpse of a wheat farmer in the early 20th century, as a Pastor in mid-century, who then became a Government Welfare Officer and Church Missionary; with a storekeeper/wife providing wholesome food to Aboriginals; a transition then to a bakery/grocery store, providing bread to the whole community – Aboriginals and European.'

It apparently is the UN Year of the Family Farm

02. TITLE The Pastor's Bakery at Coober Pedy

03. Fred Traeger, a farmer, harvesting his wheat at Trungley Hall, near Temora NSW 1923. He sold up everything in 1938, and enrolled at Concordia College. In the early 1940s, as a mature-age student, he graduated from the Concordia Seminary at Unley as a Pastor. During those years, with five children to support, his wife Gertie ran firstly 'The Maypole Cafe' in Unley, then a Cake Shop, the 'Fullarton Food Store' at 52 Fullarton Road, with residence and bakehouse. Fred helped his wife with the baking, at nights and Saturdays. *He was then assigned to the parish in Whyalla, in that busy shipbuilding town. In 1947 the first of the Displaced Persons arrived there - the Baltic people. He then served as Chaplain in the Balthurst migrant Camp, followed by several years in Wollongong, again with hundreds of migrants. His, and his wife's childhood smattering of 'High' German was replaced by the migrants' modern language and expressions.*

04. Pastor Fred, and his wife Gertie, in the 1960s. He was appointed as a Pastor/Missionary to the Aboriginals by the Lutheran Church – and by the DAA as a Government Welfare Officer, part-time appointments. He was to encourage locally the provision of a school; and was required to learn the value of opal, in order to buy the small amounts which the Aboriginals daily 'noodled' from the dumps – the overburden (*dirr*) which white miners discarded. Mrs Traeger was asked to 'open a small shop' - to supply groceries such as tea, sugar, tinned meats, bread and nutritious food, particularly fruit and vegetables for the Aboriginals.*

05. The scene which greeted them on arrival at Coober Pedy April 1959, looking north from the top of what was Hutchinson Street. Gertie Traeger was the eighth white woman on the opal fields.*

06. An aerial view of Coober Pedy in the same year.*

07. The newly-created Government Reserve and its headquarters, and residence - 2 unlined 'tin sheds' – their living quarters one side, and in the other shed a shop, store room, facilities for clothing, bathing the school children daily, and a doctor's consulting room. Dr. Merrin Mueller, from the Anglican Bush Church Aid base at Ceduna, came monthly by plane and also for medical emergencies.*

08. Roy Smith, his ute, the school children, (all clean, washed and ready for school), picked up from, and delivered back to their camps every day. *

09. The same view in 2013. In 1959 Gertie cried, sitting on a step, at the desolation surrounding her. 'Who will ever find us here!'

10. After about 2 years, the Pastor relinquished his Governmental duties, to concentrate on his 'church' work, and consequently shifted to premises which he bought in the valley of the lower part of the main street. After renovation he called this the 'Lutheran Mission and Store'. *This was all demolished in the 1980s etc.*

11. Preaching out in the open. A few years later a church did eventuate – again, a 'tin shed'...

12. Visiting at Coober Pedy Jimmy's camp.

13. Aerial view of the growing town of Coober Pedy, about 1964. In the upper part of the town note the new school, the Community Hall where school was opened in 1960; and also a new Besser-brick building. Members of the Traeger family had come to help in the shop, with the Community transceiver, sending telegrams, and also operate an agency of the Commonwealth Bank. *Conditions were fairly primitive – but there was electricity – a wind-driven 'Freelite' which supplied 32 volt electric lights.*

14. In 1965, after the church was built, The Lutheran Mission part was no longer relevant at the Store. The Besser brick building was for sale - consisting of a General Store, with ample living quarters attached – and the most inviting part – a diesel Southern Cross 240V lighting plant which supplied lighting, ran a shop counter freezer, and a large cool room. The attached bakehouse with a solid brick-domed oven, was diesel-fired. The Traegers bought this shop and shifted. It became the Coober Pedy Store. * Also has a Bakery sign up top. *Point to the sign and various rooms*

15. Baker/Storekeeper Fred Traeger. He partly retired as a Missionary in 1965 when he turned 70.

16. Bread in the oven – high top loaves in tins. Bread was baked daily, 300-350 loaves, *depending on the variety.

17. Fresh bread from the oven. - *Description of the loaves. Mix 2x150 lbs bags of high protein flour, 3 lbs. of yeast, bread improver - salt, etc., mixed with 10 gallons of cold water which cooled overnight in the cool room. Oven temp. rises up to 600°F, bread put into oven when it drops back to 450° and baked for ½ an hour.*

18. Oven was used for other purposes after the bread came out - 300°F for some hours after. *Pasties, pizzas, and other pastry smallgoods baked then. We roasted chickens for sale, beef, legs of mutton for our meals.*

19. View of Hutchinson Street from outside the bakery. *Point to the hills*

20. The same view in June 2013. *Point to same hills. Explanation of why we visited last year, invited by the local Historical Society, preparing for the town's Centenary in 2013. We visited the well-equipped Special Rural School and told Class V about the "old days" when we had no bitumen roads or kerbing, no 240V "town" electricity or street lights, no running water, showered with 2 dipperful of water in a bucket shower. All communication with the outside world was by radio transceiver, and many telegrams sent. One lad raised his arm vigorously and asked "How did you send your emails?"*

X 21. *Finis* - This is Daily bread from paddock to table then but no longer does the aroma of freshly-baked bread waft over the valley every morning.

5/26/2014



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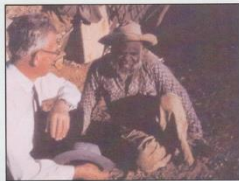


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5/26/2014



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15

Bottom Shop



Top Shop, the Bakery



19

20

same spot
1966 — 2013