

## ANDREW KIDDIE AND FAMILY

Andrew Kiddie, born in Dundee, Scotland in 1856, because of ill-health, emigrated to South Africa at the age of 23 in 1879. He joined the Jobsons, also from Dundee, in their business after arrival in Port Elizabeth. They operated a mobile bakery and shop providing services to the thousands of workers constructing the railway line from Worcester to Kimberley. Although the Jobson business settled in Kimberley in De Beers Road when the railway line was completed late in 1885, Andrew Kiddie already had a residence in Currey Street, Kimberley recorded in the Kimberley Directory for 1884.

In an advert in a 1902 edition of 'Kimberley Illustrated', it is stated "Among the names of those who have been associated with the baking trade of Kimberley during the last 20 years is that of Mr Andrew Kiddie, who came to the Diamond Fields to join Mr Roy. This business was established in the year 1894 by a Mr Shippard, on the same site at which it at present stands. Some time after Mr Roy took the business over, and seven years ago, it passed into the hands of Messrs Kiddie and Robinson. About 12 months ago Mr Robinson retired leaving Mr Kiddie the sole proprietor. Favoured by its convenient and central location, this establishment has always formed a conspicuous business feature of Kimberley's principal business thoroughfare, and possesses many attractive characteristics apart from those afforded by its inviting and well-arranged stock. Bread and cake baking form the principal part of the business and in pursuance of a family trade, Mr Kiddie has adopted every means towards providing for his customers with due dispatch, and there are eight horses, two wagons, and two carts in constant use delivering the bread and groceries. There are three large ovens, which are heated by steam, this keeping them much cleaner than the old system of putting the fire in the oven. Mr Kiddie holds a special licence from Mr W Montgomery of Glasgow, the inventor and patentee of the famous malt, 'Bermaline' digestive bread, and it is highly recommended by the medical profession. The firm also roast and grind their own coffee, therefore intending purchasers can rely upon getting the genuine article, and always fresh".

As can be seen from the accompanying photographs, the building on the corner of Currey and Jones Street (now renamed Phakamile Mabija Road), was transformed on a number of occasions but retained its trading name throughout this period. On the death of Andrew Kiddie in 1920, his two eldest sons, Andrew Cameron (Cam) Kiddie and Sydney George Kiddie were bequeathed the business, but not the building which they could buy from the estate for £12 000 or pay rental to the Estate of £50 per month. The bakery



*c1896*



*c1902*



*c1912*



*c1960*

later became Andrew Kiddie and Sons, in 1940 converted into a company as Andrew Kiddie (Pty) Limited and finally being sold to Bokomo in 1963 who retained the name 'Andrew Kiddie' but later moved to another address when the Absa banking group bought the site.

Andrew Kiddie had negotiated the contract for the supply of bread to the De Beers Diamond Mines and his business, about 500m from both the 'Big Hole' workings as well as the 'De Beers' Mine was ideally located. This stood him in good stead during the 'Siege of Kimberley' from 14 October 1899 to 15 February 1900, a period of 124 days, when the business worked long hours to ensure the provision of bread for the townsfolk. One of his horse-drawn carts was used solely for deliveries to the De Beers mine.

Although the family had always lived at various addresses in Currey Street, a new dwelling was built at No 11 Currey Street in 1911, about 30 metres away from the shop on the corner of Jones Street, which is now the Absa building. In 2021, when I visited Kimberley, this appears to be the only original structure in Currey Street dating from the early 1900's, other than the Kimberley Club at No 35, two blocks away where I had the opportunity of



staying for two evenings. The Club is a magnificent building of the Victorian era and one can just imagine the personalities passing through this Club over a hundred years ago during the height of the diamond rush. A photograph of the family house at No 11 Currey Street in 2021 is shown here; it is currently known as Pembury Lodge which has accommodation but is also a coffee shop.

During the First World War Andrew Kiddie's health started to deteriorate but this did not deter him to show his social responsibility during the Spanish Flu epidemic in October/November, 1918, when he locked himself in his bakery to avoid the influenza and worked day and night to ensure that the Kimberley residents did not run out of bread. A case of self-imposed isolation during lockdown.

He never seemed to have lost his contact with his roots and appeared to have travelled back to Scotland on a regular basis. So much so that all three his sons, after receiving their primary school education at Kimberley Boys High School, went to Scotland for their secondary school education. He and his family were active members of the Presbyterian Church with his daughter being a member of the church choir. He was a member of the Kimberley Chamber of Commerce and the Diamond Fields Scottish Association and was also a Director of the newspaper, The Diamond Fields Advertiser, which was later bought by the Argus group.



The family's service to the community is reflected in the eldest son Andrew, who was known as 'Cam' by family and friends. At the outbreak of the First World War he joined the SA forces and was involved in the South West Africa campaign against the Germans. He

then joined The Royal Flying Corps and became a flight commander, known by his nickname 'Dixie'. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross from Britain and the Belgian Croix-de-Guerre during his period of service.

Andrew Senior's failing ill-health required numerous operations but he sadly succumbed to his illness at 21h45 on Thursday 16 September, 1920. He was buried in the West End Cemetery with numerous dignitaries from all walks of life attending as reported in the Diamond Fields Advertiser. It was noticeable from the list of those present that his youngest son Norman was not at the funeral, most probably because he was at school in Scotland. He was survived by his wife Margaret Duncan, three sons, Andrew Cameron, Sydney George and Norman Anderson, and his two daughters Ethyl Maud and Alice Margaret.

He loved horses and bought the Table Farm on the Cape Colony/Free State Colony border where he bred pedigreed horses and donkeys, his knowledge of horses being such that he became a judge of horse flesh at the annual agricultural shows in Kimberley. Following in their father's footsteps, all three of the sons were horsemen and Cam and Sydney played Polo and were involved in the Griqualand West Polo club. (See the article following on his horse interests)

I have a personal connection with this article. My grandfather, a stone mason by trade, who travelled wherever a new stone building was being constructed, lived in Kimberley from 1905 to 1906 at 6 Hands Street, off Selby Street, Kimberley, neither of which streets still exist, because of property developments. In fact, my father was born in Kimberley in January 1906, hence my additional interest in researching this article. So, I am sure that my family enjoyed the bread and confectionary products of Andrew Kiddie; merely a few blocks away.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the following persons who provided me with invaluable advice and information and went out of their way to source articles, photographs and publications for this and the article following without whose help these articles could not have been complete:  
From the Africana Research and Sol Plaatjes Library, Kimberley: Bernice Nagel  
From the McGregor Museum, Kimberley: Yvonne Everson and Robert Hart

# ANDREW KIDDIE - TABLE FARM

