

Antonio Panettiere and Angelina Alaimo

My father, Antonio Panettiere, was born in Piscita, Stromboli, in 1902. At the age of 12 he set sail for New Zealand to join his father, Giuseppe, who had earlier left the island to seek a better future. Initially Antonio worked as a fisherman in Island Bay but, preferring a land-based occupation, he decided to open a fish shop in Newtown. Unfortunately, at the age of 18 he lost his hearing. With the hope of a cure, he and his father returned to Italy for an operation in 1921. The operation was unsuccessful and he became permanently deaf.

Antonio returned to New Zealand with his younger brother, Giuseppe, in 1923. Two years later, he moved to Cambridge on the advice of Domenico Russo who owned a dairy farm nearby

in Roto-o-rangi. He established the Victoria Café in Duke Street, where he and his brother operated a combined restaurant and fish retail business that guaranteed fresh fish daily (as displayed on the front window). The café prospered and he was able to purchase a house close to the shop in Anzac Street.

In 1931 Antonio returned to Stromboli. A year later he married my mother, Angelina Alaimo, who was born in 1911. He left Stromboli (alone) in 1933. My mother gave birth to my eldest sister, Mary, seven months later. Angeline and Mary left Stromboli to join my father in 1935. At the Anzac Street home, my mother gave birth to my twin brothers, Tony and Joe, in 1936, Vince in 1938, me in 1940, and

Jenny in 1942. The last child, Rosina, was born in hospital in 1944.

The café continued to prosper, mainly due to the construction of the Karapiro hydro dam which brought many people to the region.

In 1936 my uncle Giuseppe returned to Stromboli, leaving my father short-handed at the café. He employed Guy Di Mattina in 1938, then Guy's brother Vince in 1940, and finally my mother's sister, Concettina, who came from Australia in 1947. Although all of his family worked in the shop at one time or another, nobody seemed interested in taking over the business.

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*Antonio and Angelina
in 1962.*



The Panettiere family at their home in Cambridge in 1961.
From left: (standing) Jenny, Angelina, Peter, Antonio,
Mary, Tony, Ina, (sitting) Frouna and Vinca.

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The café stayed open six days a week, with my father taking on most of the duties: ordering, delivering, filleting, and cooking. He would leave home

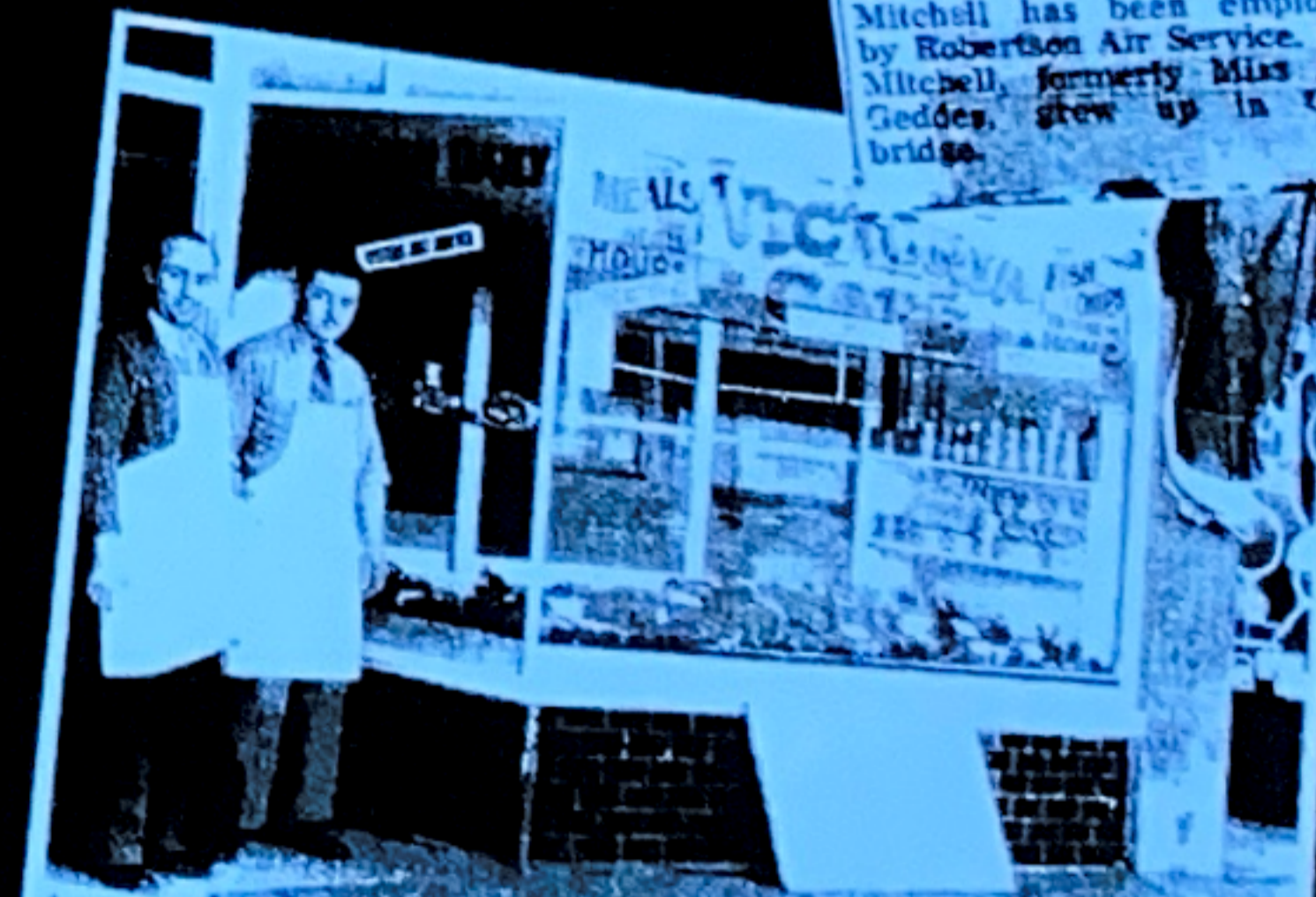
at 6am each morning and work through till 7pm in the evening. I remember my mother cooking a separate meal for my father after the rest of the family had eaten. On Sundays, he would often take one of us to a farm just outside Cambridge - we would hunt for rabbits either to sell in the shop or to cook at home. Every Friday he delivered free fish to the convent near the local Catholic primary school we all attended.

My father owned other properties in Cambridge, one of which was rented to

Guy Di Mattina and his family. On an adjacent property he had a house built and furnished for him and my mother to settle in, but she preferred to stay at home. He also owned a property opposite the café on which he had a large building rented out as a store.

Antonio made a brief visit to Stromboli in 1952 to settle an estate matter, and sold his business in 1969. He enjoyed reading the newspaper every night, and we would often play cards together. Whenever we had conversations with him our mother would have to translate what we said into Italian, as he could lip-read her Italian far better than he could our English. He later wore a hearing aid, but it did not help much. Despite his deafness, my father could still entertain us with his mandolin playing, and became a keen bowler

during his retirement. On several occasions he played in tournaments with his son Tony. My mother died in 1978, followed by my father two years later. They are survived by two daughters and three sons (Vince and Mary are now deceased), and eighteen grandchildren.



Antonio Panettiere and Guy Di Mattina outside the Panettiere fish shop in Duke Street, Cambridge, in 1933.

Mr A. Panettiere Sells Out After 44 Years

AFTER 44 years in the fish business in Cambridge, Mr Antonio Panettiere has sold his shop in Duke Street to Mr and Mrs E. A. Mitchell, of Bryce Street.

Mr Panettiere came to New Zealand as a young man and after a short time moved to Cambridge with his wife. For many years they have resided in Anzac Street, where their family has grown up.

At the present time Mr Panettiere is in the Waikato Hospital with a heart condition. He is improving and will be home shortly.

Both Mr and Mrs Mitchell have had a long association with Cambridge. Mr Mitchell first came to the district at the age of eight when his father was sharemilking at Taotaoroa. He was in the Post Office for some years with period in Korea in between. For the past ten years Mitchell has been employed by Robertson Air Service. Mrs Mitchell, formerly Miss Geddes, grew up in Cambridge.