



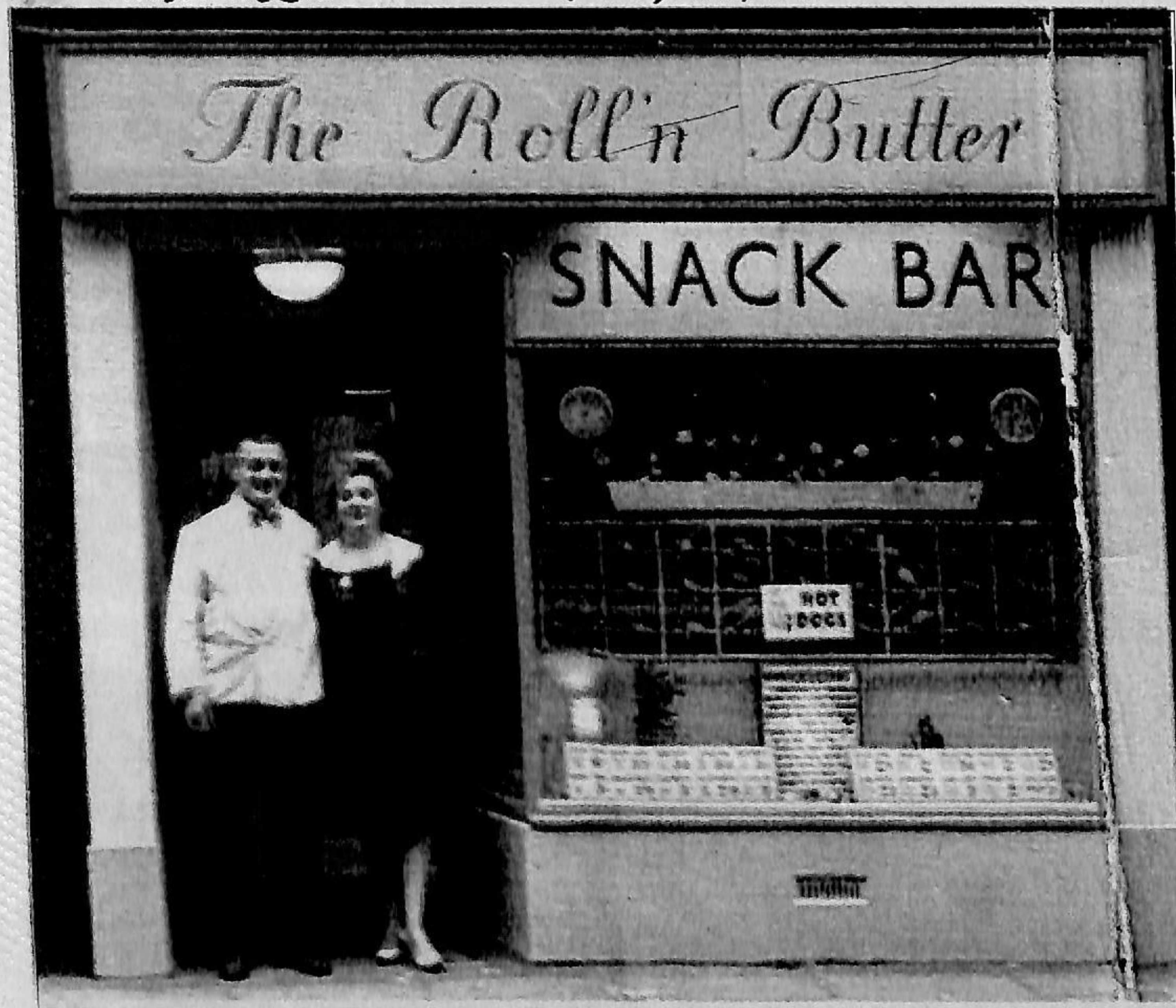
Len's paternal grandparents Eugenio and Angela D'Agostino pose with their two eldest children Guy and Filomena just after the turn of the 20th century.

CHRONICLE



Off on leave, Len relaxes in his British Navy uniform.

JULY 31/08



Len's friend, Sean Connery, was a customer at Len's dad's shop pictured above.

World War I broke out in 1914. Eugenio knew Angelina couldn't run the shop by herself. He managed to hurt his arm with a gas cylinder to avoid service.

The ice cream competition continued after the war.

Eugenio's shop was altered and called The Royal Cafe. Giovanni's became Alfresco. By now, both shops had adopted a new style - they were American Ice Cream and Soda Parlours with jazz bands providing nightly entertainment.

In his memoirs, Guy remembers his father's Royal Cafe had beautifully coloured lampshades hanging from the ceiling and a fountain of water in the middle of the store. The rivalry became so intense between the brothers-in-law, Giovanni sent someone to drop a stink bomb to chase the customers over to his place.

Guy writes, "I remember my father gave me a notebook and pencil and told me to stand near the Alfresco and write down how many customers entered Uncle John's shop."

An undated newspaper obituary now in the family records noted the passing of great uncle Giovanni, the family competitor in the Edinburgh ice cream trade. It is a curious throwback to another era.

A paragraph in the obit reads, "When the making and selling of ice cream was prohibited, in 1918, Mr D'Agostino organized the trade throughout the country, helped to found local associations, and was instrumental in securing a respite from Lord Rhondda, then Food Controller."

The eclectic Italian/Scot who died in Picinisco back in his native Italy was known for his improvised Italian poetry and passion for astronomy and music.

As the generations continue to tumble forward, Guy falls in love and marries Catherine against his family's wishes. She was a waitress and the daughter of a bookbinder. He was 19; it was time to move on with his life. Then, Feb. 5, 1929, Leonard Domenico D'Agostino was born.

#### The first drive-through?

By 1928, Guy's father had opened up the Corner House Café at 9 West Register Street. To make it more attractive for his evening customers, he lit up the street with the electricity from his shop. But, the noise was too much for hotel patrons. The family was on the move again - to St. Andrew Square where there was plenty of

parking and an attendant served people in their cars.

The Italian Scottish families of Edinburgh and Glasgow were thriving. Len has footage of movies his Uncle Joe took with an 8 mm camera at games days they held halfway between the two cities. It was more than a day of games; it was a matchmaking experience with families encouraging inter-marriage in the Italian community.

On the Scottish side, his grandmother, Jane Simpson, had one claim to fame. She was born in Edinburgh Castle, the daughter of a sergeant major in the Seaforth Highlanders.

Len has the military records which show his Scottish great-grandfather fell asleep on duty and was reprimanded.

As a boy, Len had a kilt and chummed with Sean Connery. The lads called the future movie star "Tam" in those days.

Children sometimes recall the most unusual occurrences. It is no different for Len.

He remembers his Uncle Bertie, a big man who owned a restaurant and was a bookie. They say the bookie never loses - Bertie did too often and went bankrupt. Len says he even lost money on a match race between two horses.

In another of his memories, people knock on the door of his father's shop, open the door and let an Alsatian in to chase the rats away.

On another occasion, Len remembers his cousin Olivia approaching some men setting up some scaffolding on a building they were going to clean. The sign hanging off the scaffolding read, "Open in December".

The precocious child asked them how they could promise to be open when they hadn't even started work.

The reply: "We didn't say what year."

#### Fascist Italy

Holding onto his Italian connections, Guy sent his eldest son Len to Italy in 1937 to a summer fascist boy scout camp. There were kids from all over - even from Canada. Len recounts two memories. In one, he wakes on the train as it travels through the mountains enveloped in clouds like islands in the sky.

The other recollection is far more practical. He didn't take to the fascist training and chuckles that his Scottish-born father wasted his five pounds on the resort.

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