

By CATHY RIELY  
Reporter

The horrors of war are incomprehensible to most people, with their only knowledge stemming from the media. But the hardships of war are very real to a local woman who has become a successful restaurant owner despite facing many adversities.

On May 11, 1944, in the first of many air raids, a bomb dropped on Trudie Adams' home in Germany, killing her husband and destroying her house. She was left a widow at 26 with three children.

Adams retrieved one painting and some books from the debris. She packed the books in boxes and put them on a train but the books never made it.

"I was never sure if something happened to the train or if the books had been confiscated," Adams said. "Some of the books had been banned."

The painting of Mary and the infant Jesus is the only belonging she has from her home in Germany. The painting is displayed on the wall of The Black Forest Inn, the restaurant she now owns and runs.

Adams bought the restaurant in 1976 because she had invited some friends over for dinner and they said she was such a good cook she should open a restaurant.

"And do you know what?" Adams asked. "The very next day I opened the paper and saw this place for sale."

The restaurant is practically a one-woman operation, with Adams doing everything from the cooking to the bookkeeping. A typical evening has one person helping in the kitchen and one waiting tables.

The restaurant is located 20 miles east of College Station, on Highway 30 between Carlos and Roans Prairie. The restaurant is

in the front part of a house which sits on several acres. Adams lives in the back.

Adams attributes her success at finding customers, despite her location, to good food and good service. She makes the food from scratch, even down to the mayonnaise for the salad dressings. The sign out front states that the food is "continental cuisine" and the restaurant has an extensive wine list.

Adams was born in Wiesbaden, Germany on April 24, 1917, but when she was six her family was forced to move to Saarbruecken. They lost all their money during the inflationary years of 1921 and 1922 and had to start over.

Adams took university preparatory courses in high school, but was forced to give up her college plans when her parents divorced. At 19 she went to work to support her family. Adams and her brother and sister lived with their mother. She was the oldest child.

"That made me responsible for everyone," she said.

In 1938 Adams married "her first and only love." She met Hans Adams at a ball when she was 16 and they dated for six years before marrying. When her first child was three months old, the Adams moved to a second floor walk-up.

"With no water and no gas — which was difficult with a child," Adams said.

Shortly before her husband was drafted and sent to Poland in 1940, Adams found out she was pregnant with their second child. Her husband received a medical discharge and arrived home the same day she came back from the hospital with their baby.

Adams' parents died in 1940 and she took in her aunt and sister. She went back to work to help support her family.

"I couldn't ask my husband to support my family," Adams said. "Not that he wouldn't have, it's just that he didn't make enough money."

After her husband was killed in 1944, Adams sent her children and her aunt to stay with a relative, and went back to Saarbruecken. From there she held a variety of jobs, from digging ditches to doing American soldiers' laundry.

"I've done everything," Adams said. "Except for prostitution."

Adams said the ditches she dug were for a wall of fortifications on the Siegfried line.

"The Americans were 18 miles away and we could hear their artillery," she said. "They would fly over us and drop bombs in the area where we were digging."

It was when a woman was killed near her that Adams decided to leave.

"I decided I didn't want my kids to be orphans," Adams said. "So one night I got on a man's bicycle and took off to my children."

It took her two days to travel the 100 miles. Soon after that, the war ended and she came to America. Adams had married an American soldier she met while working at an air base in Germany, so they went to Indiana where his mother lived.

"The second day I was over here I had a job," Adams said proudly.

Two months later her husband got a job in Bryan, and they moved here. They were divorced five years later.

Adams worked as a technician at A&M from 1955 until 1977. To help make ends meet she worked as a waitress at nights and on weekends. She also went back to school, and although it took 10 years she now has a degree in modern languages. ♣



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