

## Trudeau's Cafe

The Trudeau family became involved in the restaurant business during the early 1900's. While records are somewhat vague, it is known that brothers Leo Jr. and Frank Trudeau opened a saloon during 1905 in the Adler building. The saloon, along with a cafe, was known as the Palm Gardens. Leo and John E. Adler ran the saloon while Frank was in charge of the cafe. Leo and Frank's brother, William (Bill) Trudeau, was the chef for the cafe.

In approximately 1918, Bill branched out on his own to open Bill's Cafe located at 119 South Central Avenue. He remained at this address for 13 years and then relocated his business to 117 South Central Avenue. In 1932, he purchased the building at 236 South Central Avenue. At some point during the relocations, the name of the cafe became Trudeau's Cafe. During these years, Bill was associated with several local men. Among them were Adolf Schrieber, Frank Steinmetz and John Brockendorf.

An interesting story appeared in a local newspaper about an incident involving Bill and the cafe. The article indicated that Bill was returning to his home at 211 West Fourth Street, from the cafe early one Sunday morning, about 4 a.m., when he received the scare of his life. As he neared the corner of West Fourth Street and South Chestnut Avenue, a man came out of the shadows and shoved a revolver in Bill's face, telling him to "stick 'em up." At the time Bill was carrying two baskets with him. One basket contained eggs and the other held the previous day's receipts. Obeying the robber, Bill threw up his hands, dropping both baskets. As Bill started to yell, the robber grabbed one of the baskets and ran off. Fortunately for Bill, the robber grabbed the basket that had the eggs in it! The article went on to state, "In the future, when Trudeau wends his way home from the restaurant in the wee hours of the morning, he will not be carrying money or if he does he will have a body guard."



Trudeau Café at 236 South Central Avenue sometime after 1932.

During the 1930s, the Trudeau popcorn wagon was a familiar sight at the corner of West Third Street and South Central Avenue. It was operated during the summer months and would be seen at band concerts in the park and at the Marshfield Fairs. Popcorn, 5 cents a bag, was its primary product, but roasted peanuts were also sold. The wagon had its regular customers, one of which was Art Laemle. Some of the workers in the popcorn wagon included Bud Jirschele, Ray Dunn and Harry Steinmetz. One day, while Steinmetz was in charge, he saw something was amiss and went to call the fire department. Before he returned, the boiler or burner blew up shattering one side of the wagon and sending pieces of glass and tin in every direction.



*Trudeau Café at 236 South Central Avenue*

*Over the years, Bill's family was very involved in the operation of the cafe. His wife, Clara, was in charge of the waitresses and the front of the restaurant. Bill and Clara's son, Ermon, began helping his parents at an early age. Bill's brother George Trudeau also worked at the cafe. In May 1937, Bill, Clara and Ermon formed a partnership, which continued until 1944. At that time, Ermon became the sole owner of Trudeau's Cafe. Ermon, along with his wife Agnes and daughter Kathleen, operated the cafe during the World War II years. In 1946, after the war ended, Ermon and Agnes' son Jim returned from the service and joined his family in the restaurant business. Jim started working for his parents as a chef and remained at the cafe until its closing. Ermon's grandchildren also helped out at the cafe over the years.*

*On December 22, 1953, a fire started in the basement of Jerrold's Men's Clothing Store, located at 234 South Central Avenue. It spread to the buildings on either side of the store, which were the Hotel Blodgett and Trudeau's Cafe. All three businesses were extensively damaged. Trudeau's Cafe closed for about three to four months while the building was being repaired and remodeled.*

*Trudeau's Cafe closed in 1967 ending almost 60 years of a family tradition of providing the people of Marshfield with good food! The building*

*was sold to Dick Halle and later to Bill Gratzek, the current owner of The Daily Grind. A photograph of Bill, Clara, Ermon and employees in the newly remodeled Trudeau's Cafe hangs on a wall at The Daily Grind connecting the present to the past.*

*Submitted by Joan Trudeau for the Marshfield History Project*

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*If you have any additional information (including pictures) regarding this business or location, we would really appreciate you contacting us and sharing. We will add information whenever possible.*

*For questions, or for sharing additional information, please contact us at [schnitz1@charter.net](mailto:schnitz1@charter.net). Please include what story the information relates to. Attach your text information in the form of a word document, please no PDF's. Photos should preferably be in jpeg format.*

*For additional stories on the historical sights and businesses of Marshfield, visit our website at: <http://www.marshfieldgenealogy.com/OR-Codes-of-Historical-Marshfield.html>.*