

Charlie's Café Exceptionale Collection

M/A 2000.185

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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Summary Information

Repository	James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library
Title	Charlie's Café Exceptionale Collection
Date	1933-1982
Extent	12.0 boxes
Collection Description	The collection consists of 12 boxes containing a variety of materials related to the café and its ownership. These include personal correspondence from both Charles and Louise Saunders, biographical materials, newspaper clippings, various photographs, audio tapes, and assorted artifacts. The collection is divided into 8 series which are as follows:Charlies Café Exceptionale; Photos; Menus; Newspaper Clippings; Saunders, Charles; Saunders, Louise; AV materials; Artifacts.
Language	English

History

Charlie's Café Exceptionale opened in December of 1933 at 716 4th Ave. S. in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It was started by Charles Herlin and Charles Saunders who were the head bartender and waiter respectively. Charles Saunders gained sole ownership of the café upon the death of Charles Herlin in 1933. The Café existed at the same location until 1948 when a new building was constructed across the street. Ten years later, in 1958, another addition was built to the restaurant. The building was described as being in the English Tudor style constructed of white brick with a slate roof. Outside the entrance there was a bronze statue of a nude woman that was dubbed Scherzo. This statue became a symbol of the restaurant, and generated a fair amount of controversy in its day. The restaurant consisted of four dining rooms, a bar, cocktail lounge, and three banquet rooms. In addition to the dining areas the restaurant also included several interesting facilities including: a butcher shop, bakery, laundry, wine cellar, and liquor room.

Charles proved to be a skilled restaurateur, and his café began to become a fixture of the Minneapolis social scene. It was written about by several columnists in Minneapolis papers gaining the restaurant even more prestige. It was also chosen to host the Les Amis D' Escoffier annual dinner in 1956. This was an annual event for people involved in the culinary profession, and was considered to be an important event.

In addition to being a restaurateur, Charles Saunders was an accomplished pilot and owned several planes during his lifetime. He served in World War Two as a cargo plane pilot. During this time he would give out cards to fellow airmen telling them to visit his "bar" when they returned to the United States. Those who took him up on his offer were often surprised to find that they had been invited to an upscale supper club.

Furthermore, He also owned a small farm in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, where he raised livestock. This included horses which he raced at various venues around the Midwest, including the Minnesota State Fair.

In 1959 Charles Saunders was married to Louise Herou, a lawyer, who had held several positions in the Minnesota State Bar Association. Before they met Louise had lead a very successful life. During her time at the University of Minnesota Louise had been a proficient speed skater and golfer. During her senior year she was assistant to Dean Stanly Kinyon of the law school. She graduated with a B.S. in law in 1948 and continued on to receive her Doctorate of Jurisprudence in 1950. In 1949, shortly before she graduated, she was elected as one of the 100 outstanding students of the University of Minnesota. After graduating she served as law clerk of Justice LeRoy Matson of the Minnesota Supreme Court. Thereafter she became an associate in the law firm of Larson, Loevinger, Lindquist, Freeman and Fraiser in Minneapolis Minnesota. Furthermore, she was admitted to practice in both state and federal court as well as before the Interstate Commerce Commission. In addition she was also permitted to practice before the Board of Immigration Appeals as well as the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

In 1964 Charles Saunders died of a heart attack, and ownership of the café passed to Louise H. Saunders. Although she was trained as a lawyer, and had no experience as a restaurateur, she chose to continue operating the Cafe. Under her leadership the Café continued to do excellent business, and they were the

recipients of several awards. The business became nationally known and attracted several celebrities such as Bob Hope and President Nixon.

In addition, Louise Saunders became a fixture of the Minneapolis business scene attracting both local and national attention to herself. She went on to serve on the board of directors for several organizations including: North American Life and Casualty Company, The Minneapolis Downtown Council, and Minnesota Restaurant and Foodservice Association. Also, she was president of the Minneapolis Downtown Council as well as Commissioner of the White House Conference on Small Business in 1979.

Louise Saunders continued to operate the cafe from the mid 1960's until the 1980s. In July of 1982 Charlie's Café Exceptionale ceased operation. The property was sold to the Turner Development Corporation which erected an office building on the site. However, several of the recipes continued to be served by other local restaurants. Also, the bar fixtures were purchased by the Monte Carlo Cafe and Restaurant in Minneapolis who used them to recreate the bar which once existed at Charlie's.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library

Related Materials

Related Collection

See Also: The Louise Herou Collection (M/A 1998.50.) Also in Minneapolis Collection, Special Collections.

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- Minneapolis (Minn.) -- Buildings, structures, etc.
- Minneapolis (Minn.) -- History.

Personal Name(s)

- Herlin, Charles, 1876-1934
- Herou, Louise, 1921-2003
- Saunders, Charles, 1902-1964

Subject(s)

- Business enterprises -- Minnesota -- Minneapolis.
- Businessmen -- Minnesota -- Minneapolis.
- Businesswomen -- Minnesota -- Minneapolis.
- Lawyers--Minnesota--Biography.
- Restaurants--Minnesota--Minneapolis.

Collection Inventory

Charlies Café Exceptionale	Box
	1
General Information	
Awards/Certificates	
1952,1971,1973	
1974	
1975	
1976	
1977	
1978	
1979	

Building Plans

1980

1981

Building Plans

1948

1957 Addition

Employees

Organizational Charts

Original Cafe

Promotional Materials (part 1)

Promotional Materials (Part 2)

Radio Advertising

Recipes

Restaurant Guides

Restaurant Guides

Scherzo Statue

Newspaper Clippings/ General Information

Letters

10,000 Lakes Speed Skating Championships 1978

Photographs

Box
1-3

Exterior

Photos 1-10

Photos 11-20

Photos 21-30

Photos 31-40

Photos 41-50

Statue and Billboard (Photos 51-60)

Statue and Billboard (Photos 51-60)

Billboards, Kitchen

Photos 61-70

Photos 71-80

Photos 81-90

Interior with People (Photos 91-100)

Interior

Photos 101-110

Photos 111-120

Photos 121-130

Photos 131-140

Eden Prairie Farm

Eden Prairie Farm Fire

Eden Prairie Farm Fire

Saunders, Charles

Photos 1-10

Photos 11-20

Airplanes

Horses

Saunders, Louise H.

Photos 1-10

Photos 11-20

Photos 21-30

Photos 31-40

Photos 41-50

Negatives and Transparencies

Negatives and Transparencies

Color Photographs

Employees

Employee Outings/Parties

Interior/Exterior

Interior With People

Misc. /Whitehouse Conference on Small Business

Employee Parties/outings

Oversize Photos

Newspaper Clippings

Box

4

Columnists

General and Promotional

Cedric Adams

Barbara Flanagan

Will Jones

Jim Klobuchar

Margaret Morris

Eddie Schwartz

Misc. Columnists

General and Promotional

1940's-1950's

1960's

1970-1971

1972

Menus

1973

1974

1975

1976

1977

1978

1979

1980

1981

1982

1984, 1994

Menus

Box
5-6

General

General

1930's-1950's

1960's

1970's

1980's

No Date

Luncheon Menus

1950's

1960's

1970's

No Date

Late Late Menus

Misc. Special Menus

Misc. Special Menus

Charlie's Butler (Take-out menus)

Coffee Menus

Dessert Menus

Dub Room/ Skyway Lounge Menus

Fireside Cocktail Lounge Menus

Menu Inserts

Holiday/ Anniversary Dinner

Seasonal/Monthly

Misc.

Special Event/Dinner

New Year's Eve Menus

Opera/Orchestra/Guthrie theater Menus

Opera/Orchestra/Guthrie theater Menus

Special Announcement Menus

Table Standees (Part 1)

Table Standees (Part 2)

Take Away Menus

Wine Lists

Saunders, Charles

Box

7

Aeroplane

Biography Materials, 1940's-1964 (died March 29, 1964)

Corrsepondence

1940-1959

1960-1964

Saunders, Louise H.

Box

7

Related Content

See Also: The Louise Herou Collection (M/A 1998.50.) Also in Minneapolis Collection, Special Collections.

Awards/ Certificates

1966

1969

1971

1972

1973

1974

1976

1978

Biography

1979

1980

1981

1982

Biography

Biographical Sketches

1955-1959

1960-1964

1965-1969

1970

1971

1972

Correspondence

1973

1974

1975

1976

1977

1978

1979

1980

1981

1982

Correspondence

1967

Correspondence

1969

1970

1971

1972

1973

1974

1975

1976

1977

1978

1979

1980

Speeches

1981

1982

1983

Speeches

1973

1977

1978

1979

1980

1982

AV Materials

Box
8-9

Slides

Audio Tapes (speeches, radio advertisements)

Assorted

Exteriors

Kentucky Restaurant Association Talk (Feb. 27, 1978)

Audio Tapes (speeches, radio advertisements)

Digitized items

A number of materials on audio tape in this sub-series have been digitized and included in box 7 on compact disk or DVD. Summaries of these materials are as follows:

Disk 1:

Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce Show, Louise Saunders guest. 30 Minutes. In this episode of the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce show Louise Saunders talks about several topics. These include various construction projects downtown such as the Greenway, expansion of Nicollet Ave, and skyway construction. In addition she discusses her time as an athlete and pilot. Finally, she talks about the founding and operation of Charlie's Cafe Exceptionale as well as their take out service "Charlie's Butler."

Disk 2:

Speech by Louise Saunders at the Minneapolis Women's Club 11-17-1977 47 minutes. In this speech to the Minneapolis Women's Club Louise Saunders relates tales of her and her associates' international fact finding mission. The trip took them to locations in the Middle East as well as Asia where they experienced the local restaurants and hotels. She discusses not only the experiences that she had in each location, but also the viability of American businesses to enter their markets. The places visited were: Tehran Iran, Kabul Afghanistan, New Delhi India, Nepal, Manila in the Philippines, and finally Tokyo Japan.

Disk 3:

Audio Tapes (speeches, radio advertisements)

Speech by Louise Saunders at Southwestern University Women's Career Day March 1978 25 minutes. In this speech to Southwestern University students Louise Saunders describes what she feels is necessary for one to be a successful and well rounded human being. She discusses love and charity as well as the definition of success. She also explains her belief that success can become a prison, and that failure should be treated as a way to learn and alter one's plans. In addition she speaks about the need for one to get a good education. While this is no replacement for real world experience it does help to prepare one for the real world. Furthermore she suggests learning about the world through travel even if it is to someplace nearby. Finally, she stresses the need to maintain ones health, and closes by saying that it is never too late to do these things.

Disk 4:

2 speeches by Louise Saunders 1 hour (each speech is about 30 minutes) Where Are We Going? (Speech about women in business October 1979) In this Speech Louise Saunders gives some of her views on where she believes women are heading in the workplace as business owners. She begins by giving some statistics on where women are in the business community, and where they will be heading in the near future. She continues by explaining the impact that women have had in the workforce, and the problems that are present in wage disparities. In addition she describes the lack of infrastructure for both men and women to cope with the challenges of women in business roles. She also explains the need for women to be able to maintain a normal social and home life in addition to their business life. She continues by describing the things that women will need to succeed in the future such as recognizing the needs of others, and compassion for those who are not as fortunate as themselves. She closes with remarks about the White House small business conference being held in 1980 and how women need to educate both sexes on the need for their presence in the business community. Managing Stress in a Restaurant Environment. In this speech Louise Saunders explains how the people in her organization deal with the stress of operating a restaurant. She begins by explaining the history and operation of Charlie's Cafe Exceptionale, and gives a description of the cafe's facilities. She then goes on to talk about how she learned the restaurant trade on the job, and several of the ways that she has learned to reduce both her and her employees stress. This includes a personal concern for the wellbeing of the employees on the part of management, and a need for good communication amongst all of the staff. She encourages listening to ones employees to earn their confidence. Furthermore, she stresses the need for organization and charts that show who is responsible for what. In addition, regular staff meetings are vital as well as passing on praise from customers to the staff. Finally, she stresses the need for owners to join professional societies so that they can influence lawmaking related to their businesses.

Audio Tapes (speeches, radio advertisements)

Disk 5:

The 60th Annual NRA Show "Women (Actually) in Business",

1 hour 30 minutes

In this recording of the panel from the 60th annual National Restaurant Association Show Louise Saunders and others consider women's roles as business owners. Each of the panelists comes from a different background with businesses of various sizes. Each of the panelists is first asked to describe their particular business, and then they continue to discuss various topics related to women in ownership roles. These include: the management of employees, the effects of the equal opportunity amendment, and the similarities and differences between the management styles of men and women.

Disk 6:

Commercials

1 hour 2 minutes

These commercials are included as a single audio track summarized as follows including time stamps:

Pat Lindquist, State Fair Grounds Sept. 2 1978 (0-3:35)

Improv radio spots WDGY 4 spots (3:35-9:35)

Improv radio spots WDGY for Saint Patrick's Day (9:35-14:18)

Charlie's Butler ad (14:18-17:23)

Two improv radio spots WDGY for Valetines Day (17:23-19:59)

Improv radio spots WDGY fo Saint Patrick's Day (19:59-24:47)

American Express ad with Louise Saunders (24:47-25:18)

Seven improv radio ads (25:18-32:52)

Hungarian lunch and dinner commercials (32:52-35:02)

Tropical meal commercials (35:02-36:05)

Charlie's ads Scripts 108-109 (36:05-38:10)

Charlie's ads Scripts 108-109 (Duplicates), 110, 111 (38:10-42:28)

Artifacts (awards, printing plates, other assorted small artifacts)

Charlie's ads Scripts 110-111 Revised (42:28-44:32)

Charlie's ads Scripts 112-113 (44:32-46:33)

Charlie's ads Scripts 128-130 (46:34-49:44)

Charlie's ads Scripts 125-127 (49:44-52:42)

Charlie's ads Scripts 130-131 (52:42-54:51)

Charlie's ads Scripts 133-134 (54:51-56:59)

Charlie's ads Scripts 135-137 (56:59-59:07)

Charlie's ads Scripts 138-140 (59:07-1:02:21)

Disk 7:

Interview with John Rimarcik (July 27, 2011)

37 Minutes

In this interview John Rimarcik describes his experiences with and impressions of Charlie's cafe Exceptionale as well as the restaurant business in Minneapolis Minnesota. He describes meeting Charles Saunders as well as his feelings about Louise Saunders and the closing of the restaurant. He also describes the Minneapolis restaurant scene and how it has changed over the years. This includes comparisons between Charlie's and his own restaurants. He explains the differences in service between them, and describes how he feels the atmosphere of a restaurant can affect the taste of the food. In addition he explains some of his feeling about being in the business. Note: This interview was recorded on July 27, 2011 by Heather Lawton and Benjamin Skinner. It took place at the Monte Carlo Restaurant in Minneapolis Minnesota of which Mr. Rimarcik is the owner. The interview starts and ends abruptly.

Artifacts (awards, printing plates, other assorted small artifacts)

Box
10-12