

## Murray's Restaurant

1886, 1946

The three-story building standing behind Murray's Restaurant turquoise façade dates to the late 1800s, housing a variety of businesses prior to Murray's. The building at 24-26 Sixth Street South has been a hotel, ballroom, saloon, shoe store, and other restaurants. Most noteworthy was the Hankow Café, which was located on the second and third floors, and claimed to be "the finest and largest Oriental Café in the Northwest", and Delaney's bar.

GIRLS—21-55, experienced or willing to learn, cafe work. Delaney's, 24 6th st S.

*Minneapolis Star, October 14, 1942*



1945 Menu,  
Hennepin County  
Library

Murray's Restaurant was a local fine dining establishment long before the current restaurant was built in 1946. Art and Marie Murray's first restaurant, the Red Feather Cafe opened in the mid 1930s and was located at 2209 West Broadway Avenue. The building was torn down in 2011 after incurring damage from a tornado that struck North Minneapolis. In 1939, the Red Feather moved from North Minneapolis to the Russell Hotel on South Fourth Street in downtown Minneapolis. Six years later, Art and Marie purchased the building at 24 South Sixth Street.

The three-story building that the Murray family purchased on Sixth Street had two entrances; one for the first-floor tenant and to the left, another for the upper-level tenant. The second and third floors had three-bay windows, with half-moon windows at the top that are vertically aligned with the windows below. Ornate parapets at the top add height to the building. The building was in need of a renovation inside and out. In early 1946, the work began.



Art and Marie Murray

Art and Marie began working on their menu for the new restaurant. Marie's cousin was brought over from Germany to be the restaurant's master baker and oversee the kitchen. After extensive remodeling, decorating, and the installation of air conditioning, Murray's opened on August 5, 1946. A Streamline Moderne style that was popularized in the 1930s was extended across the first floor of the building. Long horizontal lines, curving forms, square porcelain

**HANKOW CAFE**  
OPPOSITE DYCKMAN HOTEL.

**AN EATING PLACE FOR PARTICULAR PEOPLE**

You will find quality of food, service and courtesy. Our Chow Mein is delicious.

Noonday Luncheon, 50¢  
Table d'hôte Dinner, 75¢

Special attention given to private parties and banquets.

Hear the Famous Gadbois Original Orchestra. Special Entertainment.

Tuesday and Thursday, Mardi Gras Nights. Free favors. Auto Show Visitors: The Hankow invites you to make this your dining place while in the city.

**HANKOW CAFE**  
24-26 South Sixth Street, Opposite Dyckman Hotel.

TOM LEE, Manager. KARL HIRTZ, Supt. Formerly with Dyckman Hotel.

*Minneapolis Tribune,  
February 8, 1921*

**CAFE MAN BUYS LOOP BUILDING**

**Murray to Open New Restaurant**

Purchase of a three-story building at 24-26 Sixth street S., by Murray's, Inc., Arthur J. Murray, secretary-treasurer, and Mrs. Murray, president, was disclosed Sunday.

The building was purchased from Minneapolis Shareholders Co. for a reported \$75,000.

Present tenants of the building, Delaney's bar, at 24 Sixth st S., and Weil's toy shop at 26 Sixth street S., have been ordered to vacate by March 15, when extensive remodeling and air conditioning of the building will begin, Murray said.

Murray, who formerly operated the Red Feather cafe, 18 Fourth street S., said he would open a restaurant at the Sixth street address after the remodeling has been completed.

*Minneapolis Tribune,  
January 7, 1946*

panels, and a neon sign gave the impression of sleekness and modernity. A large “Murrays” sign extended the height of the building, with “Dine / Dance / Cocktail Lounge” spelled out at the top and “Steaks / Good Food” at the bottom. The 19<sup>th</sup> century brick remained visible above the first-floor façade.



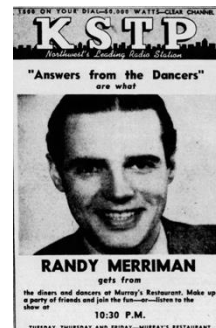
*Minnesota Historical Society*

Marie is credited with creating the seasoning for the Silver Butter Knife steak and developed the recipes for the house salad and garlic toast. In 1960, Art and Marie’s son Patrick assumed management of the restaurant. Patrick began as a bus boy, eventually became owner and never held a job outside of Murray’s Restaurant. Today, Tim Murray, a third generation Murray, manages the restaurant.



*Minneapolis Tribune, January 25, 1948*

In the 1950s, diners could be found dancing to the Murray’s Orchestra on weekend evenings. KSTP radio announcer Randy Merriman broadcasted live from the restaurant on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday nights, providing entertainment as he quizzed diners and dancers on the air during his radio segment, “Answer from the Dancers.”



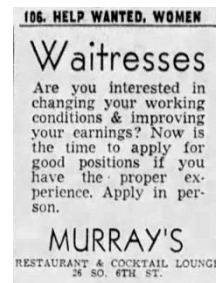
*Minneapolis Tribune, January 16, 1948*

In early 1951, Murray’s Restaurant was awarded the Silver Butter Knife Award, a recognition given by Maurice Dreicer, a food critic and self-proclaimed steak expert. Dreicer bestowed the award based on specific criteria, including that the steaks needed to be served on time, at the perfect temperature, of a specific portion, and “should be so tender that it can be cut with a silver butter knife.” The signature 28-ounce strip sirloin continues to be known as the Silver Butter Knife Steak on the menu today.



*The Minneapolis Star, October 6, 1957*

A few years later, an exterior remodel provided the opportunity to promote the Silver Butter Knife award. The square porcelain panels on the face of the building were extended to the top. A larger-than-life image of the Silver Butter Knife Steak, along with a bottle of Grand Vin de Chateau Latour graced the front of the restaurant, along with signage, “The Home of Silver Butter Knife Steak”.

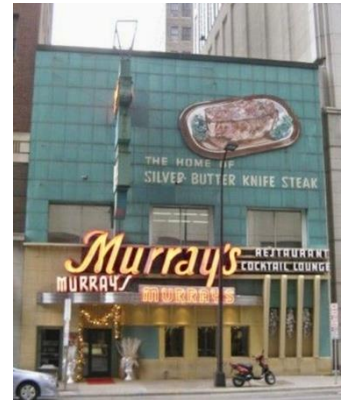


*The Minneapolis Star, October 6, 1957*

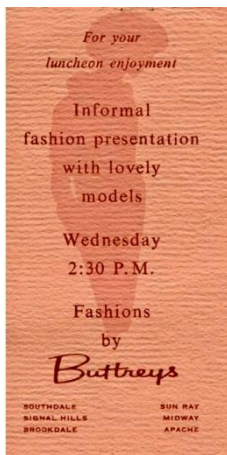
A new vertical sign was installed which reads “Murray’s” in neon at the top, “Dine/Dance” in the middle on one side and “Cocktail Lounge” on the other.

In 1957, it was reported that Murray’s was the largest user of butter in the region. The restaurant used 30,000 pounds of butter in 1956. The buttered garlic toast alone used 30 pounds of butter per day.

In 1958, Art and Marie were both elected to American Restaurant magazine’s Hall of Fame, a top honor for restaurateurs at the time. Murray’s had gained a national reputation for delicious food and exceptional service.



Historic Minneapolis Signs.com



The Murray's Steakhouse History

In the 1960s, Murrays set aside Wednesday afternoons at the restaurant for fashion shows and cocktail luncheons, in collaboration with Buttreys women’s apparel store.

In the 1980s, local advertising agency Fallon McElligott Rice designed an ad campaign for Murray’s that featured three of the restaurant’s longest-tenured servers—Gussie, Della, and Donna.



The Murray's Steakhouse History

In 1984, the three windows in the first level bar were opened to the street.

In 2012, the restaurant underwent its first major renovation in almost 30 years. The dining room layout was redesigned, with booth seating providing a more intimate experience. Seating capacity was reduced, resulting in more room between tables, and two private dining rooms were added. A gallery of historic photographs was added to the restaurant lobby.

Murray’s dining room has tables dedicated to Star Tribune columnist Barbara Flanagan and sportswriter Sid Hartman.

When Murray’s first opened in 1946, South Sixth Street consisted of small buildings with street level storefronts. Today Murray’s Restaurant is surrounded by taller buildings, including the Embassy Suites to the west, the 50 South Sixth Street tower to the east, and City Center across the street.

In 1967, the building next to Murray’s was torn down for the building of a parking facility. Nearly 35 years later, the 50 South Sixth Street tower was completed.



Star Tribune, August 23, 2012



Murray's continues -- after nearly 80 years at its current location -- to serve delicious food and provide impeccable service. Murray's Restaurant is a true Minneapolis institution and its building is a downtown landmark.



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