

Restaurant Ware Collectors Network®

Iconic Establishments

A series of articles about the china used by venues ranging from hotels and restaurants to burger joints and hospitals

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GREATER PITTSBURGH AIRPORT

On July 18, 1946, ground was broken for construction on a new airport to replace the old Allegheny County Airport. The new Greater Pittsburgh Airport opened May 31, 1952. It was designed by local architect Joseph W. Hoover, and cost \$33 million. The International Style, 4-story exposed concrete, steel and glass terminal building was constructed with stepped levels that allowed the roof of the ground level to be used as an open observation deck. The main lobby area featured a large compass as part of the green and yellow-orange terrazzo floor. A mobile sculpture, by Alexander Calder, hung above the compass. When it opened it was the largest in the world, and contained a 60 room hotel and a 300-seat movie theater. There was one flight every six minutes.

The fourth floor contained the **Horizon Room**, with a curved wall of large windows that overlooked the arrival and departure of airplanes. The **Horizon Room** could seat 550 diners on its three levels. Roof gardens with a service bar and cocktail lounge could serve 240 people. There was also a 450-seat coffee shop, and 300-seat cafeteria for the airport employees.

Jackson China, located just 137 miles from the airport, got the contract to produce the china. Arvan-Colonial China Co., of Pittsburgh was the distributor.

This china is decorated with an aerial view of the airport terminal building, with four planes parked outside the terminal, and one in the sky. The illustration is done with a transfer print in maroon (or purple?). Then a stencil was used to protect the transfer design while gray clouds were airbrushed around the plane in flight. Rim and verge lines complete the pattern. On some pieces a larger airplane is used. This is an illustration of the Lockheed Constellation, originally built during World War II for the United States Army Air Forces, and designated C-69. The Constellations were placed into passenger service by Trans World Airlines in October, 1945.

The 10 1/4" service plate has a full maroon border around the center of the well terminal scene.

The 10" dinner plate, and smaller plates, contain the terminal illustration with rim and verge lines. The airbrush cloud stencil changes on smaller plates. There are 7 1/4" and 5 1/2" plates.

A five-section compartment plate has the large Constellation plane in the upper compartment, and the terminal in the lower one.

GREATER PITTSBURGH AIRPORT

Platters were made in two known sizes, 9 1/2" x 6 1/2" and 12 5/8" x 8 5/8". Once again, different cloud stencils were used to adjust for the different sized platters.

Cups have an image of the terminal building on one side, and the Constellation on the reverse. The center of the saucer contains the plane.

On the celery tray, the approaching airplane is coming in on a different flight path.

There are two known versions of the tea pot.

The 4 1/2" diameter sugar bowl has the plane, with a bit of clouds behind it.

The creamer features the Lockheed Constellation, with clouds above.

See the RWCN IDwiki for information on this pattern.

A search of the usual suspects on the Internet did not turn up any smaller pieces, such as bowls or sauce dishes, with this crest. This indicates that those pieces may only contain the rim and verge lines, with possibly the Arvan-Colonial backstamp.

A matchbook with the terminal illustration has a shield logo with "A.C.C.O.", along with "House of Fine Foods". The Allegheny Conference on Community Development, founded in 1944, was the operator of the airport, so the initials are probably for the catering part of the Conference.

In 1972 the name was changed to Greater Pittsburgh International Airport.

In 1992 this building was closed and demolition began in July 1997.

Information sources: IDwiki, Historic Pittsburgh website, University of Pittsburgh Library System website, Allegheny Conference on Community Development website, Card Cow, Wikipedia, eBay, WorthPoint, AOL image search, Google image search, Pinterest.

GREATER PITTSBURGH AIRPORT



Aerial view of Greater Pittsburg Airport with both propeller and jet aircraft



Airport concourse with Calder mobile hanging above compass

GREATER PITTSBURGH AIRPORT

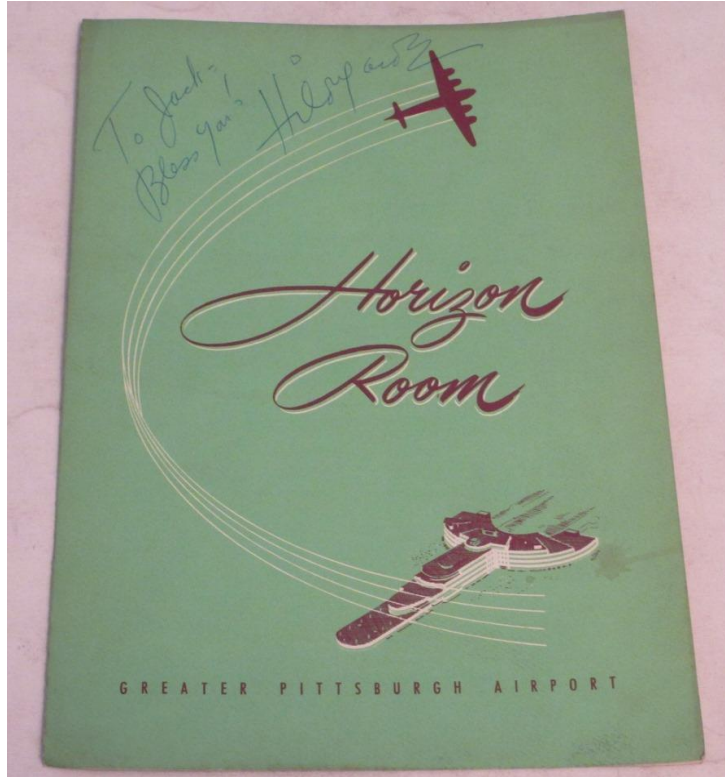


Exterior view showing the curved wall of windows in the Horizon Room

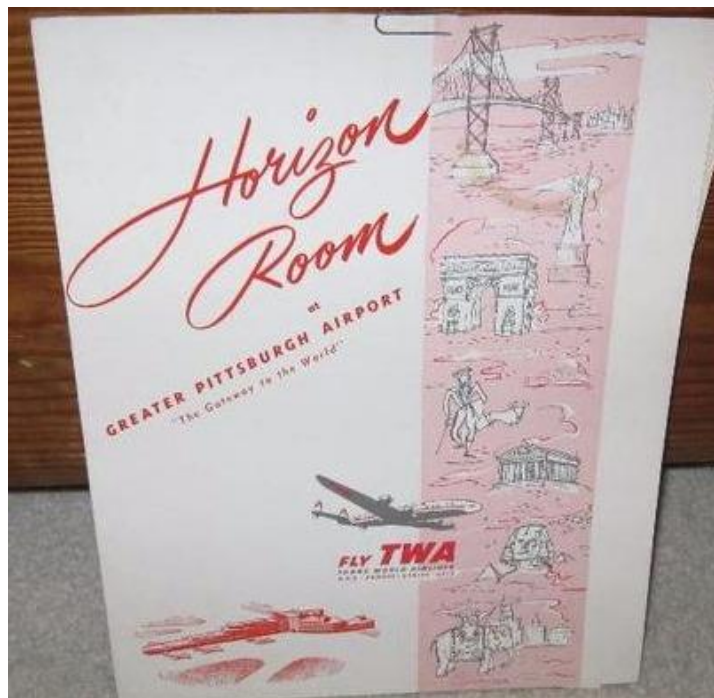


Interior of Horizon Room

GREATER PITTSBURGH AIRPORT

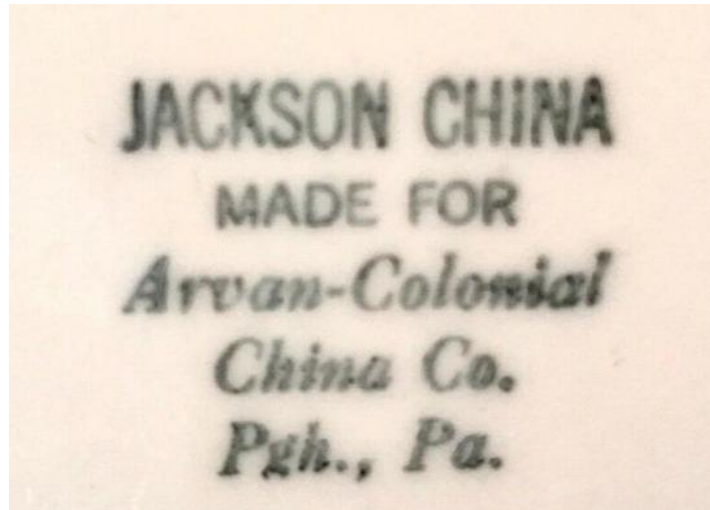


Menu cover



July 7, 1955 menu cover

GREATER PITTSBURGH AIRPORT



Jackson China with Arvan-Colonial China Co. backstamp



Airport terminal and cloud scene in center of well

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Lockheed Constellation airplane – detail



Photo of actual plane, military version, and yes they are propellers not jets

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Service plate

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10" dinner plate

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5 1/2" plate with change to the clouds



Compartment plate

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Detail of airport terminal on compartment plate



9 1/2" x 6 1/2" platter

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12 5/8" x 8 5/8" platter



Cup & Saucer with airport terminal

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Lockheed Constellation aircraft on coffee cup



Saucer

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Celery tray



Teapot

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Teapot in different shape



Sugar bowl

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Pitcher



Matchbook detail