

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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Editing and layout by Phillip Lord

MARSHALL FIELD & COMPANY CHICAGO, IL 12 April 2019

Marshall Field (1835 - 1906) was a pioneer in the department store business, and his retail operation was among the finest. It is a very complex history that is described in detail on the Department Store Museum website (<http://www.thedepartmentstoremuseum.org/>), so, being lazy, I will just skip on down to around 1914 when the Chicago flagship store was composed of several buildings, with a total sales space of 2.25 million square foot.

If you watched the BBC Masterpiece program on Harry Gordon Selfridge, you probably know that he worked for Marshall Field before moving to London and opening his own store. Selfridge's wife, Rosalie, got Harry to persuade Field to open a tea room with five tables in 1890. In 1893 it was expanded to occupy the entire fourth floor, in time for the World's Columbian Exposition. During the Exposition, it served 1,500 customers per day. When it opened in September 1907 the Washington & State Street section's 7th floor was devoted to feeding the customers with several dining rooms that underwent name changes over the years. What began as the *South Grill Room* later became the *Walnut Room*. The *Walnut Room* had a two-story atrium topped with a Tiffany glass dome. This is where the "Great Tree" was placed every Christmas season. There was also an *English Room*, *Wedgwood Room*, *Narcissus Room* and a *Crystal Buffet*.

To isolate his women customers from having to put up with men's habit of smoking, Field opened one part of the complex as The Store for Men. It had a male-only grill on the 6th floor that seated 750, and included seven private party rooms. It contained a central fountain below the Tiffany glass domed ceiling.

The employee cafeteria was located on the 12th floor.

The thing that complicates any attempt at trying to show the china used in the Marshall Field dining rooms is that the store was a major supplier of restaurant china through its Contract Division. They represented Fraunfelter, Lenox, Maddock & Scammell, Rosenthal, Shenango, Syracuse, Warwick, Wellsville, and Theodore Haviland, that I know of. Much of this china was backstamped "Made For Marshall Field", or similar wording. That backstamp wording does not mean that the china was made for use in one of Marshall Fields' dining rooms. Being a distributor did allow the store to buy china for in-store use at wholesale and then to sell it to themselves at retail (all done as fancy bookkeeping work).

There are two early patterns that are known to have been used within the store. One of these is crested with the "MF & Co" monogram logo in coin gold outlined in black. It was made by Scammell and Syracuse.

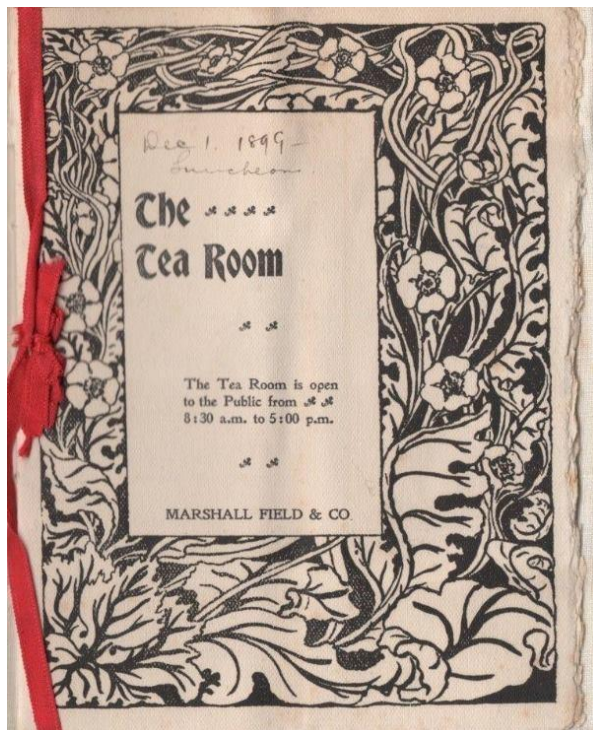
Maddock's pattern sample book shows border # 2294 as "Marshall Field Tea Room Pattern". These are a combination of multi-color and coin gold decal ornaments that could be combined to form a continuous border on any size or shape piece of china. Theodore Haviland also produced this pattern for Marshall Field. These are the only two patterns that I know of that can be documented as used in Marshall Field dining rooms.

The Syracuse pattern sample book contains underglaze 67703 "Field's Pompeian." There is a pencil notation on it dated 2/1/32, which would date its usage to around that time. Scammell made a version of this decal ornament design, with added green border sections. The problem is Marshall Field did not have a Pompeian Room, but the Congress Hotel in Chicago did, so this china would be for the hotel, not the store.

In 1928 Marshall Field opened the first of their branch stores. This was a small children's store located in Lake Forest. A number of the branch stores contained dining rooms. Expansion extended into other states. There was also a Marshall Field-operated Cloud Room at the Chicago Municipal Airport.

But by the late 1970's, the Marshall Field empire began to come apart. In the 1980's it was sold to the retail division of British-American Tobacco Co. (BATUS), which had acquired Gimbel Brothers and Saks Fifth Avenue. BATUS sold the stores to Dayton-Hudson, which then sold them to May Co., which became part of Federated and so Marshall Field ended up as just another Macy's.

Information sources: Department Store Museum, AOL image search, eBay.com, WorthPoint.com, Pinterest, Windy City Chicago website (address unknown).



Home-made Corned Beef Hash with Poached Egg	35c
Home-made Corned Beef Hash, Tartar Sauce	40c
Macaroni and Cheese	15c
Southern Sweet Potatoes	20c
Potatoes a la Tea Room	15c
Creamed Potatoes	15c
Egg Dishes	
Shirred Eggs	20c
Creamed Eggs	20c
Poached Eggs on Toast	20c
"Four-minute" Eggs	20c
Salads	
These Salads are made expressly for the Tea Room, from special recipes, by The Home Delicacies Association.	
Chicken Salad	35c
Lobster Salad	35c
Potato Salad	25c
Fresh Tomato stuffed with Sweetbread Salad	35c
Plain Lobster, Tartar Sauce, whole 60c, half	35c
Lettuce with Mayonaise Dressing	35c
Sliced Fresh Tomatoes	35c
Relishes	
Pickles	10c
Salad Dressing	15c
Olives	10c
Salted Almonds	10c
Cold Dishes	
Cold Roast Turkey with Cranberry Jelly	45c
Roast Duck with Apple Sauce	45c
Pressed Chicken	35c
Cold Tongue, Ham or Chicken	35c
Roast Beef	35c
Sardines	35c
Cottage Cream Cheese	10c
Ice Creams	
These Ices and Creams are made exclusively for the Tea Room, from special recipes, by The Home Delicacies Association.	
Vanilla Ice Cream	15c
Vanilla Ice Cream with Hot Chocolate Sauce	25c
Chocolate Ice Cream	15c
Nesselrode Pudding	20c
Coffee Ice Cream	15c
Maple Mousse	20c
Punches	
Orange Punch	15c
Ices	
Lemon Ice	15c
Pineapple Ice	15c
Mixed Ices and Creams	20c
Desserts	
Home-made for the Tea Room.	
Assorted Cakes	10c
Fancy Home-made Cake	15c
White Nut, Fresh Coconut, Marshmallow, and Chocolate	
Macaroons	15c
Parisian Meringue with Vanilla Ice Cream	25c
New England Indian Pudding with Wine Sauce	20c
New England Indian Pudding with Vanilla Ice Cream	25c
Caramel Gustard with Whipped Cream	20c
Gream Puff	10c
Chocolate Eclair	15c
Charlotte Russe	20c
Bananas and Cream	10c
Oranges, Sliced or Plain	10c
Fruit Salad	15c
Apple Sauce	15c

Above and page one image: 1899 menu from the "The Tea Room" at Marshall Field & Co.



1902 view of the dining room



Detail view of the "Tea Room" 1904



1907 view of the "South Grill Room"



View of the fountain in the "South Grill Room"



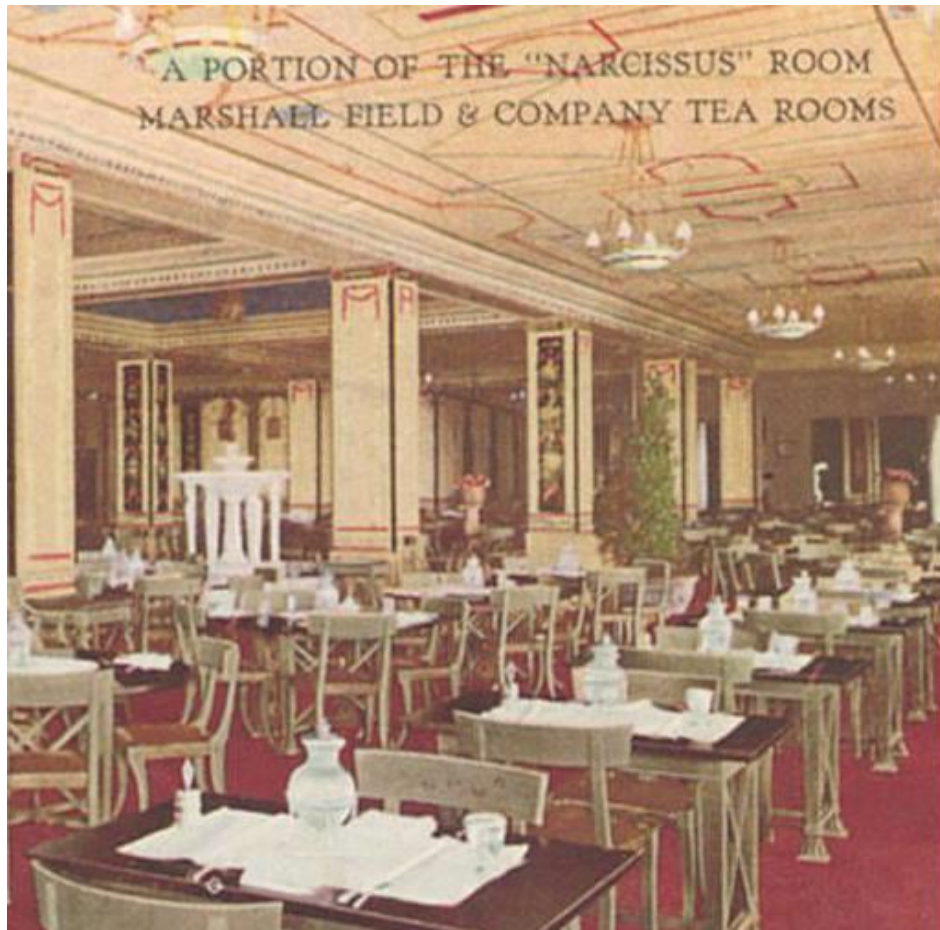
MARSHALL FIELD & COMPANY, RETAIL STORE. SOUTH GRILL ROOM. SEVENTH FLOOR

"South Grill Room"

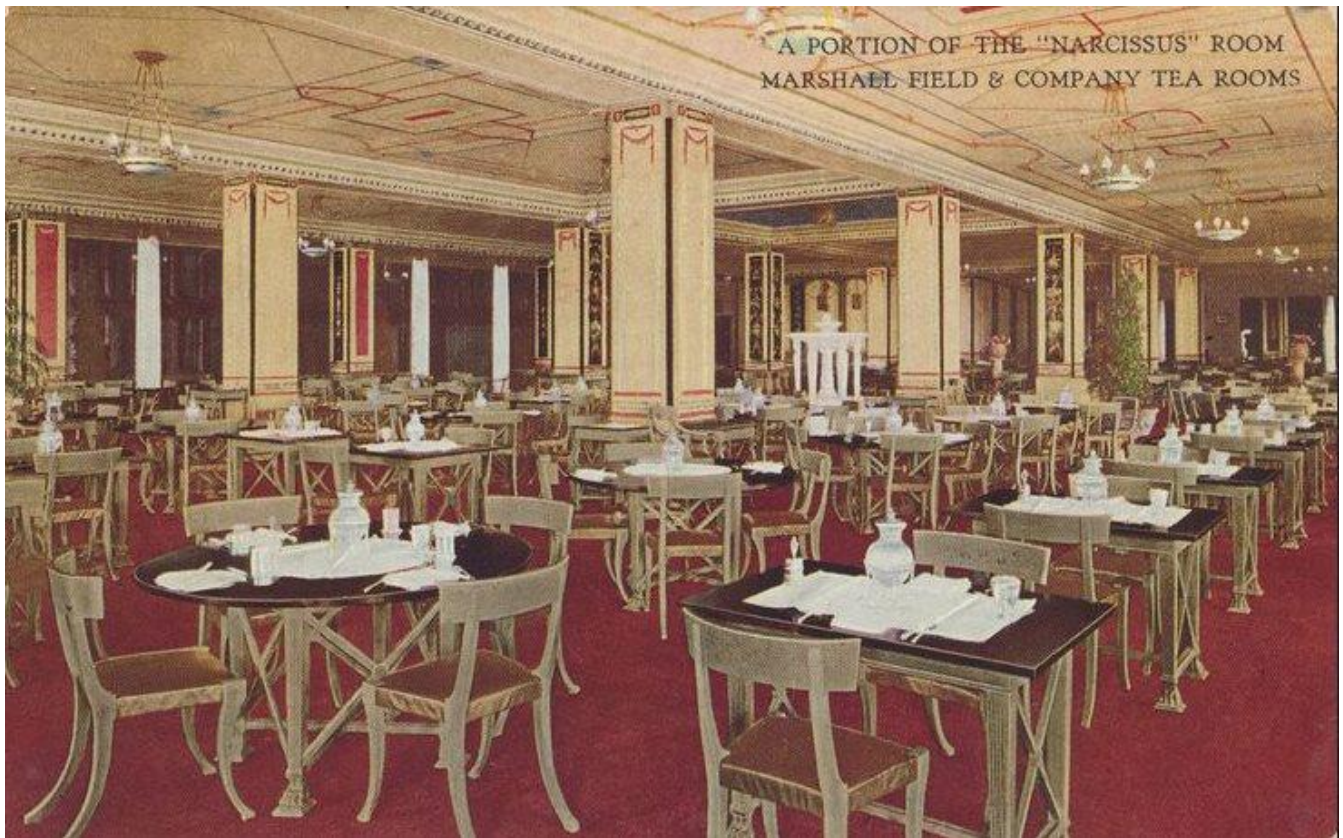


The Walnut Room

"Walnut Room" at Marshall Field & Co.



Above and below: views of the "Narcissus Room"







MARSHALL FIELD & COMPANY. STORE FOR MEN. MEN'S GRILL. SIXTH FLOOR

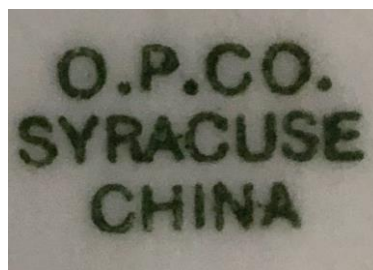
"Men's Grill" - sixth floor



Platter with "Marshall Field & Co" monogram



Top: detail view of “Marshall Field & Co” monogram
Below: backstamp







Above: detail from Maddock pattern book- "Marshall Field Tea Room Pattern".











View of the Marshall Field & Co. "Cloud Room" restaurant at the Municipal Airport, Chicago, IL
(Note: Midway Airport after 1942)



View of the dining room as operated by Macy's

MARSHALL FIELD & CO.'S RETAIL STORE, CHICAGO



Early 20th century view of the store

The following comments were posted to this article.

Graham Hueber

Interesting information. So the small shell dish I have in the Indian Tree pattern marked as made for Fields may have been something they supplied to another establishment.

Reply: Larry Paul

Indian Tree is one of the patterns that may have been used in the Fields dining rooms, but I have not seen any photos of it on the tables. Without a dining room being listed on the backstamp it is hard to say for sure where it was made to be used.

Reply: Graham Hueber

Larry Paul mine does not have a specific room marked on it

Reply: Larry Paul

The ones I have seen are marked "Expressly". That can be interpreted to mean 'use in the store' or 'for distribution by' ?



Carlos Talavera

A while back I had this creamer with both a top mark and the mark you see below. I could not make it out but someone messaged me about it and identified it as being from the Walnut room/Marshall Field. I suppose that it having the MFco stamp would mean that it may have been used in more dining rooms than just the Walnut Room.



Susan Marie

Wonder how many Pompeian rooms there were. We have this piece from Hotel Baltimore Pompeian Room. Maybe part of the neoclassical revival that went into early 20th century? Like Egyptian stuff in the 20s when the pyramids were opened, and tiki in the 50s after soldiers came back from Pacific.





Reply: Larry Paul
I have 15 Pompeian Rooms on my hotel database.

Kathleen Bergstrom

Larry, what an interesting post! I enjoyed all of the photos. I love the flowered dishes. There are several things on the tea room menu that looked really good to me. I bet the desserts were out of the world.

Kathleen De La Torre

Wonderful write-up with great photos - thoroughly enjoyed!

Rebecca Jensen

And for those of us who grew up "in the Chicagoland area" MF&Co downtown was a much-loved destination throughout one's childhood. The Walnut Room was where they put the giant Christmas tree, so having breakfast "under the tree" was a yearly ritual. You'd get your own, small RW pot of hot chocolate to pour for yourself. Who knows - maybe that's what has triggered me to react viscerally to RW as an adult? A special, special store.

Edward Babcock
Christopher Riggs