

HISTORY OF THE MARSHALL FIELD'S WALNUT ROOM

By 1890, Marshall Field's had established itself as a place where women were welcome to congregate. There was just one thing missing: Food.

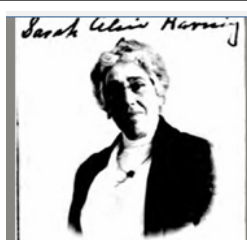
- When Mrs. Sarah Haring overheard two customers grumbling they had nowhere to eat, she offered them the homemade chicken pot pie she had brought for lunch.
- As a clerk in the Marshall Field's millinery department, Mrs. Haring was trained to "give the lady what she wants". The women were so grateful, they spread the word and soon Mrs. Haring was selling her pies at a counter in the millinery department.
- A young manager named Harry Selfridge (who would go on to found Selfridges Department Store in London, modeling it after Field's) quickly recognized the potential of serving food to hungry guests and thus keeping them in the store for more shopping.
- On April 15, 1890, fifteen tables were set up on the third floor. Selfridge's hunch paid off. "The South Tearoom," managed by Sarah Haring, became Chicago's first full-service dining establishment within a department store. It quickly expanded and within a year was serving five hundred guests a day. In the tradition of Mrs. Haring, many of the cooks in those early days prepared their specialties in their own home kitchens and brought them in each morning.
- In 1893 the South Tearoom was expanded to the entire 4th floor in the oldest section (Washington & Wabash) of the building – just in time for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition.
- While not the first restaurant in a department store, it was the first elegant, full-service dining establishment within a department store. Being Marshall Field's, of course it was.

In the 19th century, women were required to be accompanied by a man to dine in downtown Chicago restaurants. When shopping with only women, they would have to stop home to eat.

In 1890, after several years of coaxing, and based on the success of Mrs. Haring's Chicken Pot Pie, Harry Selfridge finally persuaded Marshall Field to open a formal restaurant in the store. The elegant Tea Room quickly became famous for its food, service, and decor and was serving more than 1,200 people per day just two years after opening.

Is it Mrs. Hering, Herring, Haring?

Sarah Alice Kevan Haring, (b. 5/2/1847, d. 5/14/1945), ran the tearoom in Chicago for 20 years. By 1910, she had left the tearoom and founded a girl's club on Wabash Avenue. She also had a restaurant on Monroe Street. Quite a life, Mrs. "Hering"!



Marshall Field was a major sponsor of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. The tearoom then served 1,500 people per day.



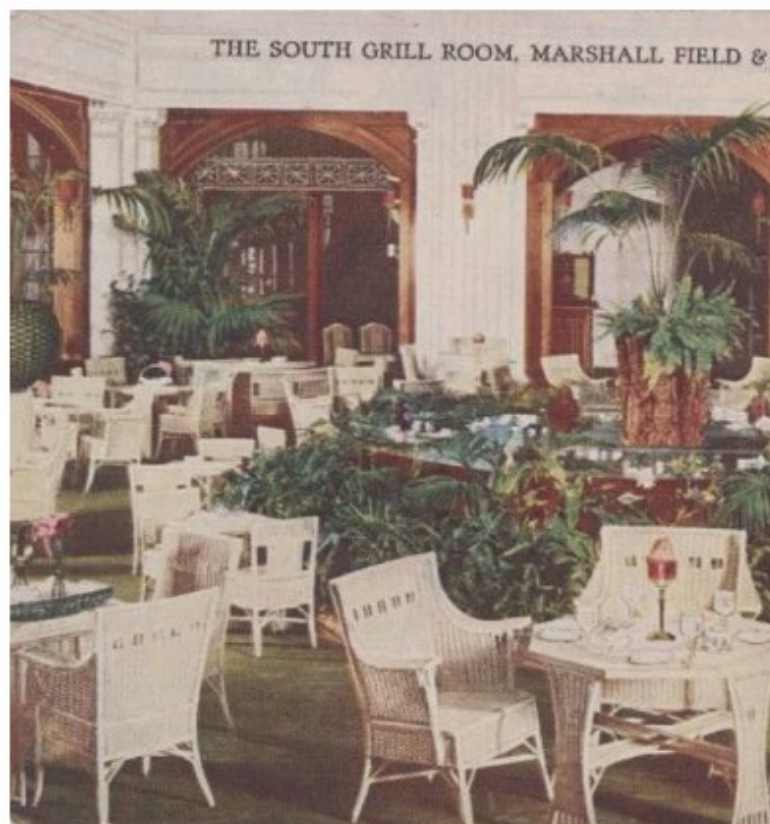
The four cooks of the "South Tearoom" at State Street Marshall Field's



The Marshall Field's South Tearoom in 1902. On the 4th Floor of the oldest part of the store.

A DINING LEGACY TRANSFORMATION

- A newly rebuilt south building at Washington & State opened in September 1907.
- When the Marshall Field's Walnut Room moved to its current location on the 7th floor, the tearoom expanded to 17,000 square feet and was renamed the "South Grill Room", to distinguish it from the daintier Tea Rooms.
- At the height of business, there were 6 tea and grill rooms that occupied the entire 7th floor.
- Eventually the space took its name from the Circassian walnut that was imported from Russia to panel the walls, initially as the "Walnut Tearoom", then the "Walnut Grill", and finally as the "Walnut Room" in 1937.
- The Great Depression (August 1929 – March 1933) took its toll on the store's restaurants. By 1941 only four restaurants remained. According to an advertisement, customers could enjoy their North Shore Codfish Cakes, Canadian Cheese Soup, French Bread, and Chicken Pie in either the "Stately Walnut Room, picturesque Narcissus Fountain Room, rose-carpeted English Room, or the serve-yourself Crystal Buffet."
- Sprawling, and yet still "nestled" on the 7th floor, dignitaries and celebrities, ranging from Carol Burnett and Julia Child to Eleanor Roosevelt and Amelia Earhart have sat down to afternoon tea or dined around the famed fountain focal point.



<i>Ready to Serve</i>	
Ham en Casserole, Baked Potato and Picoallili	65
Combination Dish of Creamed Dried Beef, with Rice, Escalloped Tomatoes, Watermelon Pickles	65
Combination Dish of Lamb Stew with Vegetables	60
Combination Dish of Fricassee of Chicken with Vegetables	75
Nut Loaf	35
Chicken Livers and Calves' Brains Baked in Cream	65
English Chicken and Ham Pie with Picoallili	45
Fried Chicken Legs, Stuffed	35
Curry of Chicken with Rice	45
Cottage Chicken with Macaroni	40
Cleveland Creamed Chicken	45
Chicken Pie, 40; all white meat	45
Chicken and Mushroom Patty	45
French Peasant Chicken, Baked, with Spanish Onions	40
Creamed Chicken Patty	45
Chicken Hash, Dark Meat	30
Chicken Croquettes	45
Chicken Noodles	30
Creamed Chicken	45
Chicken Cutlets with Tomato Sauce	45
Spanish Pepper Stuffed with Force Meat, Mushroom Sauce	45
Kidney and Beefsteak Pie	45
Breaded Lamb Chops with Mint Jelly	40
Creamed Sweetbreads and Mushrooms	30
Creamed Ham on Toast with Baked Potato	30
Sweetbreads with Peas	30
Creamed Sweetbreads with Tomato Sauce	40
Combination of Sea Foods in Ramekin	60

Later the restaurant was renamed for the warm wood paneling that surrounded diners: Circassian walnut. Austrian crystal light fixtures and a central fountain with palms completed the elegant atmosphere.

THE GREAT TREE

December 1907 and into the soaring restaurant space came the first Great Tree...delivered at night when the store was closed. For over five decades the Great Tree was a 45-foot real tree, hauled up the light well into the store, while monitored by firefighters and decorated by Field's design staff.

Once boasting the world's largest indoor Christmas conifer, the store made the switch to an artificial tree in the early 1960s.

