

ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

January 2023

Dining tables that used to feature extravagant sets of plates, bowls, cups, and saucers like this month's featured artifact have become reduced to Styrofoam, paper or plastic in the modern home. The only time we see tableware such as this saucer (below), is at high-end restaurants, or hotels which is exactly why this piece was made. This saucer has an interesting history. Even with two "maker's marks" present on the bottom it was not easy to figure out just how old this piece of tableware is, but the Collections team has pieced together some clues to provide a date range.

This double green banded or striped saucer manufactured by the D.E. McNicol China or Pottery company, was created for a classic streamlined look often used in restaurants. The D.E. McNicol company, founded in 1874 was originally manufacturing ceramic tableware in East Liverpool, Ohio ([East Liverpool Historical Society](#)). After finding success with patterned yellow ware in the mid-west, the company expanded by building seven kilns, for white ware development, in Clarksburg, West Virginia in 1914. Finally in 1927 the company fully moved its operations to the city of around 28,000 and focused on restaurant, hotel, and railroad tableware ([1951 McNicol Pottery Catalog](#)).



The Albert Pick Co., established in 1857, quickly became one of the most popular hotel chains and merchandising groups in the hotel industry. The company offered supplies such as chinaware, bedding, kitchen equipment, table linens, furniture, etc. Expansion of the company after World War I led to a merger in 1926 with New York's L. Barth Company, and came with a new logo ([Albert Pick & Co., est. 1857](#)). Instead of the logo stating Albert Pick Co. Inc. and Chicago Illinois (as it does above), the logo changed to say Albert Pick-Barth, and Illinois was changed to New York to represent both giant companies.

Due to this visible logo change, and knowing when D.E. McNicol began creating china and pottery in Clarksburg, WV, we can reasonably narrow down the creation of the saucer to somewhere between 1914 and 1926. McNicol is the manufacturer, Albert Pick is the distributor. In 1934, the D.E. McNicol company supplied its sales teams with a booklet to assist them in selling china to different restaurants. According to booklet, the company's goal was to "assist the enterprising restaurant manager to interpret the attitude of the present-day public toward restaurants" ([The McNicol Decoration Pattern Series](#)).

The McNicol manufacturing building can still be found in Clarksburg, West Virginia. The company, which became the McNicol-Martin China company in 1966, shut its doors by 1969 ([Poshchicago.com](#)). Similarly, the Albert-Barth company started to fail in the 1960s with a string of outdated hotels and was sold to a Texas oil company in 1976 ([Albert Pick & Co., est 1857](#)). There are still avid collectors of the original McNicol China and Albert Pick/ Pick-Barth pieces with many pieces for sale online. It is suggested however, to make sure not to use china/pottery that is cracked or chipped and made before 1971 due to the potential lead content.

