

ANTIQUE COLLECTIBLES

by Dale Seymour & Ken Craig

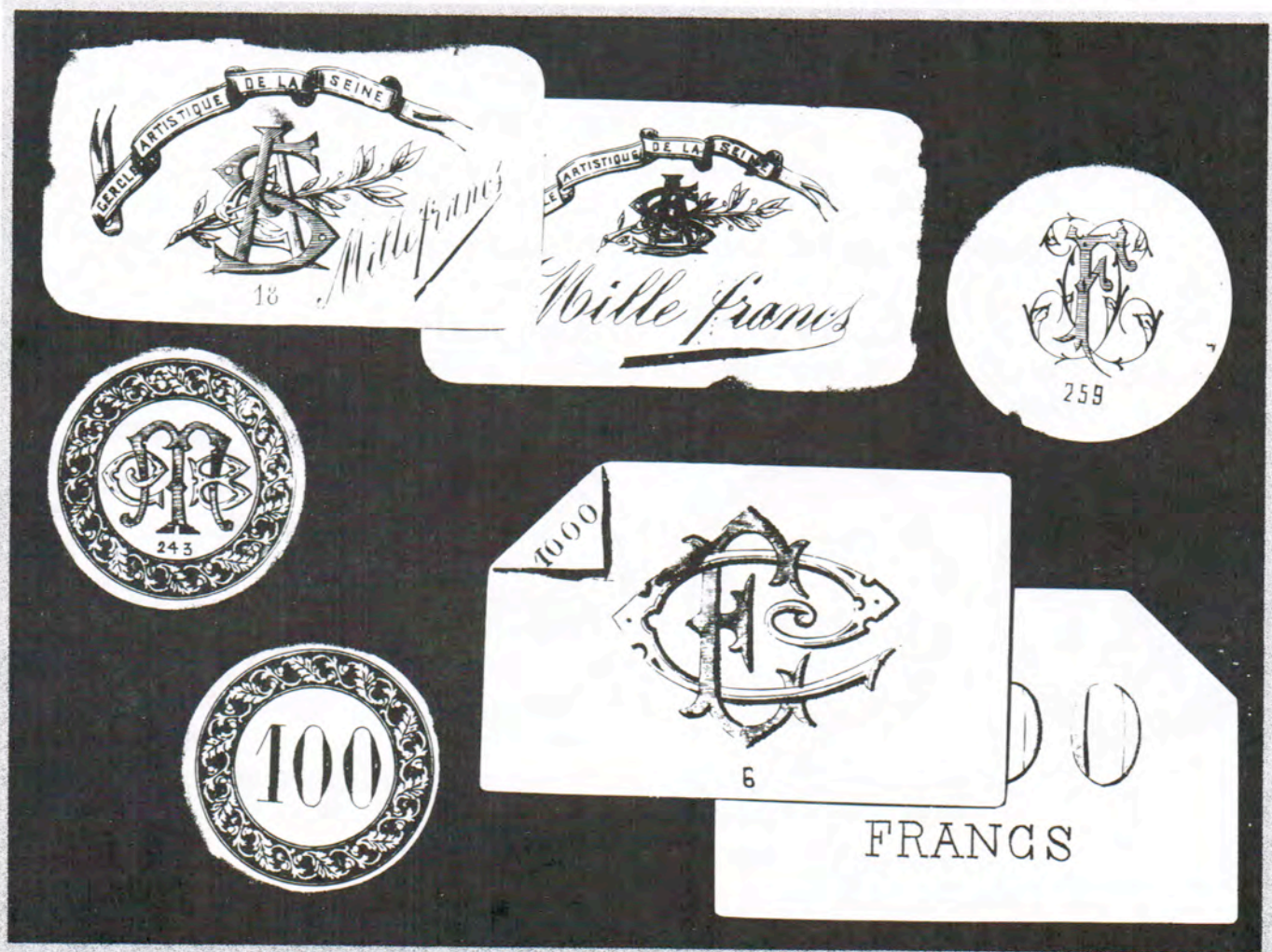
Were back! Sorry we didn't submit an article for the last quarterly issue. Too many personal deadlines conflicting. However, new finds of antique gambling chips keep surfacing. Collectors are still finding more ivories that haven't been seen than clay poker chips. Remember, in this column, we are addressing mainly ivories and early clay poker chips. We both like illegals and early club chips but we'll let someone else research those categories.

The elder member of this writing team (obviously Dale) has just returned from visiting the flea markets and antique stores in Paris. Lots of antiques in Paris --- but not much gambling paraphernalia. The highlight of the Paris trip was a visit to the Caro Company in East Paris. The company has manufactured gaming equipment for more than 150 years. In the show-

room, which contains all kinds of gaming tables, wheels and modern day French gambling equipment for sale, was a 6 foot by 8 foot framed display of the most beautiful gambling chips you have ever seen. (In France, you ask for *jetons*, not chips).

There were about 80 spectacular *jetons* in the frame. Most were large, thick, engraved mother-of-pearl pieces, but there were also maybe a dozen ivories. If you are ever in Paris, it is worth a subway trip to the National Palace (Nation Station) just to see this display. You will never see a more awesome display of gambling chips. The address is 252 Boulevard Voltaire.

Their 19th century ivory chips were quite different from the American or British chips. The ivories contained club logos or fancy monograms, but were not engraved. They were dyed a darker color, then the design was removed from the dyed jeton, leaving the white logo or monogram. Examples of the French-style mother of pearl chips are shown below.



French-Style mother-of-pearl *Jetons*

Four new discoveries of clay poker chips and their assigned codes are pictured below. The new **Elephant in Trap** is a beauty.



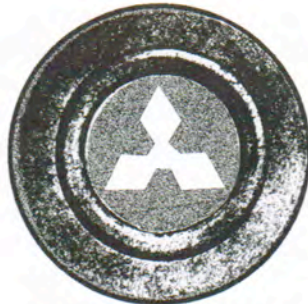
PA-FV Elephant in Trap
Engraved / v:h



PL-MC Maple Leaf
Engraved / v:f



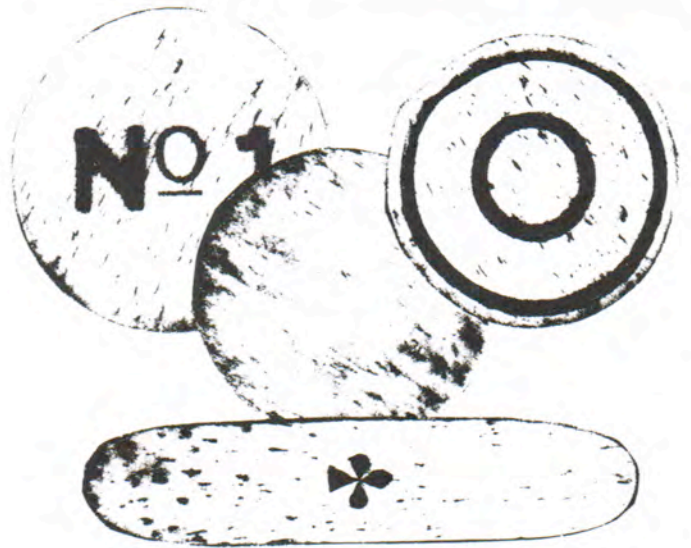
PS-HA Shoe, Cap & Whip
Engraved/embossed / v:g



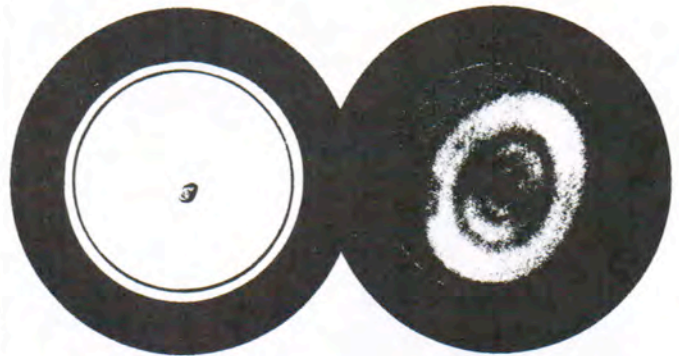
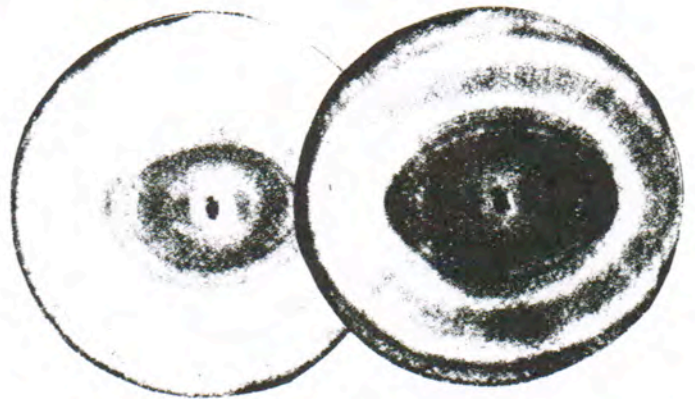
PW-VN Monarch Ideal
Inlaid/embossed / v:f

Ivory Chips

Collectors of ivory poker chips are often asked **"How can I tell ivory from bone?"**. The answer to this question can get a bit complex. There are several ways. But there are also different kinds of ivory --- elephant ivory, walrus ivory, and so on. Three of our senses, sight, feel and sound, are most helpful. Bone has a parallel grain that often looks like whiskers. while the grain on ivory is a complex curving reflected grain. Of course, what you see on a chip depends on whether the ivory was cut across the tusk or parallel to it. Remember that a tusk is like a tooth. It has a nerve hole in it. If the ivory was cut across the nerve hole, the hole will show. Many ivory chips contain nerve holes. The graphics shown on this page reveal how an ordinary photocopy machine will exaggerate the nerve hole and the structure around it. It becomes almost like an x-ray machine as the photocopy setting becomes darker. The curving doublespiral grain often does not show on the chip. Ivory is "slicker" and "smoother" than bone. If you tap an ivory chip on your teeth it will make a sharp "click", while the bone, will not produce as much of a "click".



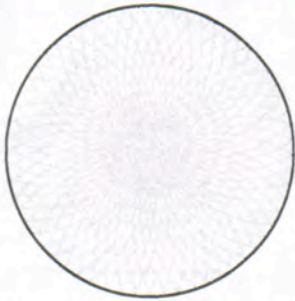
Parallel grain in bone chips.
(Chips enlarged 29%)



The two ivory chips (shown enlarged 29%) reveal more of their growth structure pattern when photocopied at different settings.

ANTIQUÉ COLLECTIBLES (Continued)

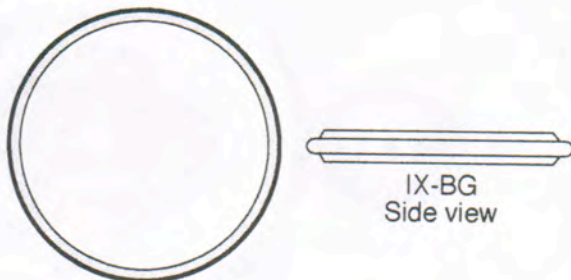
Sometimes on ivory chips you can see the intricate spiraling structure lines which are reflections of themselves. An attempt to show this pattern is shown in the illustration below.



Spiral structure in ivory cross-section.

Some ivory is very white and shows little or no signs of nerve holes or spiraling grain. Some bone is denser and whiter than other bone and is close to looking like ivory. Fortunately for collectors, for the most part, the design and style of bone and ivory gambling chips is quite different.

In Paris, Dale found a new style of plain ivory jeton which is shown below.



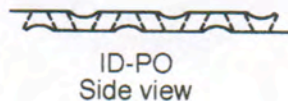
IX-BG
White (36mm) / v:k

IX-BG
Side view

John Benedict found the new star code ivory shown below at the Biloxi show. The 12 notches at the edge are evenly spaced on one side and the 12 on the reverse are also evenly spaced staggering on the other side. The engraving ink and the notches are brown.

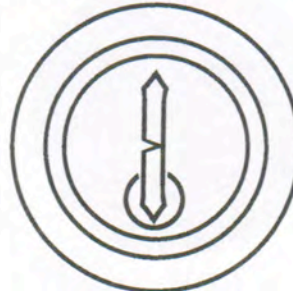


ID-PO
Star / v:p

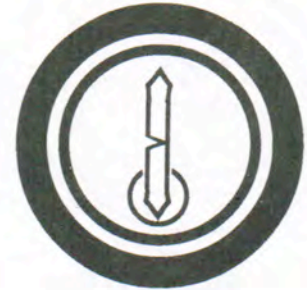


ID-PO
Side view

John Benedict also submitted the two ivories shown below. We redrew the graphics on the computer as the photocopy was not too legible. These chips do not have that graphic on the reverse side. The recent "Mather" monogram chip was engraved on one side only. Very few ivory chips were done on one side only.



ID-RF
Logo / v:k



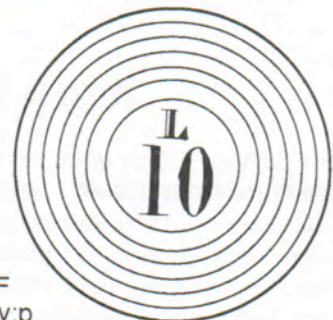
ID-RG
Logo / v:k

Colin Narbeth submitted graphics and data on the three British ivories and the Roman-Greek bone gaming counter shown below. The five and ten pound pieces are part of the Montague Guest collection housed in the British Museum since 1907. The chips could be 18th or 19th century pieces. The five pound chip is white with black lettering while the ten pound chip is olive green with black lettering. Both sides of both chips are the same. The ivory containing the engraved horse also belongs to the museum. The three chips are shown actual size.

The bone counter, dating to the 4th century, is inscribed with the Latin "VIII" (No. 8) and also the Greek 8 (letter H). This piece was obtained in Cairo by the Rt. Hon. Robert Erskine.



IN-CF
0/0/0 / v:p



IO-QL
0/0/0 / v:q



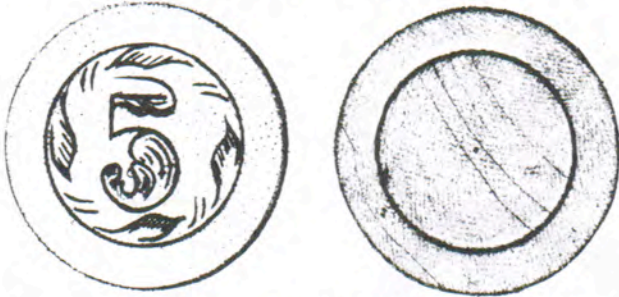
ID-CI
Horse / v:v



Bone chips are not coded.

ANTIQUE COLLECTIBLES (Continued)

Michael Richter from Boca Raton has a five dollar ivory chip that is blank on the back side. Collectors have found quite a few ivories that vary from front to back even though they weren't supposed to. Those carvers back in the 1880's were often trying to beat the New York horse and buggy traffic home on Friday nights and didn't finish their task. Maybe when they picked up an unfinished chip on Monday they omitted a second ring.



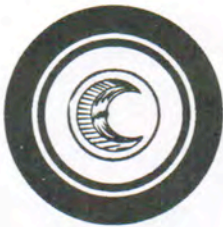
Ivory engraving error where back side was not engraved.

For those of you that like to identify the place where a given chip was supposedly used, Robert Butterfield is certifying that ivory chip coded IN-FC was used at the Owl Tavern located at 134 Mill Street in Grass Valley, California. He estimates the time of use to be around 1883.



Chip used in the Owl Tavern in Grass Valley, California.

New Ivory Chip Codes



ID-IC
Crescent / v:l



ID-ID
Crescent / v:l



ID-IE
Crescent / v:l



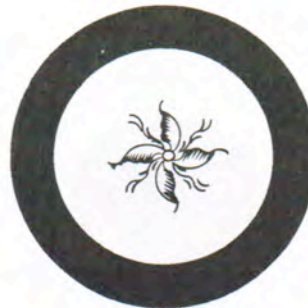
ID-PL
Star / v:p



ID-RT
Acorn / v:l



ID-RU
Acorn / v:l



ID-WP
Four Leaves / v:k



IE-KC
Three Leaves / v:k

New Ivory Chip Codes



IE-WL
Tulip / v:l



IM-CP
C / v:p



IM-CP
Reverse



IM-HL
Mc / v:l



IM-IB
P / v:l



IM-IGa
R / v:l



IN-SH
3/3/3/2 / v:l



IN-ZR
S/S/3/2 / v:l



IO-BN
3/7/4/2 / v:l



IO-IO
Gr cnt/ rd outside / v:o



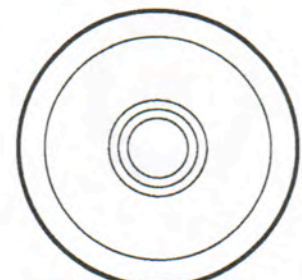
IP-FR
S/2/2/2 / v:m



IX-DC
1B 1W (26/20) / v:i



IX-LP
2B 2W (30/26) / v:i



IX-CZ
4B 4W (37/30) / v:i

ANTIQUE COLLECTIBLES (Continued)

Finally, in the area of new finds, we have some more new creations or fakes. Someone is trying to take an old 35 dollar ivory concentric chip, put on some fancy engraving and sell it for \$200. Won't work Buster! We can tell. Give up! We won't buy them.



IZ-FP
Crown



IZ-FQ
Crown & Scepter

Colin Narbeth reports from England that the small ivory discs from the Clifton Club in Bristol are not hat check pieces. The club still exists in Bristol. The officials at the club were somewhat indignant at the suggestion and said "We are not that sort of club sir". However they could not recall them being used at the club "during their lifetimes". I always thought a club that had lots of class had a hat check room. I wonder what kind of club they think has a hat check room?



Clifton Club in Bristol, England.



Clifton ivory counters.

In case you haven't heard, avid collector Jim Reynolds of Tucson, Arizona passed away in May. Jim collected nearly every category of gaming chip. We offer our sincere sympathy to Mrs Reynolds and his family. Jim will be missed.

Besides Colin, John Benedict, and Michael Richter, we would like to thank Don Lueders of Lake Oswego, Oregon for sending in the new Maple Leaf find. If you have clay or ivory chips that haven't been seen by other collectors, please send clear photocopies of them and share you finds with other collectors. Send information or questions to Dale Seymour, 11170 Mora Drive, Los Altos, CA 94024, tel: (650) 948-0949, fax: (650) 941-3695 or Ken Craig, 3927-H Waring Road, Oceanside, CA 92056, tel: (760) 945-9722, fax: (760) 726-8904. If you are a beginning collector and want to know more about antique gambling chips, you may want to order the book *Antique Gambling Chips* from Past Pleasures, PO Box 50863, Palo Alto, CA 94303.

Once again we give you the Antique Gambling Chips Value Rating Codes. These price values are consistent with those in the book and have not been adjusted for two years.

Antique Chips Value Rating Code*

a: 50¢ b: \$1 c: \$2-3 d: \$4-5 e: \$6-7
f: \$8-9 g: \$10-14 h: \$15-19 i: \$20-29
j: \$30-39 k: \$40-49 l: \$50-69 m: \$70-89
n: \$90-109 o: \$110-149 p: \$150-199
q: \$200-299 r: \$300-399 s: \$400-499
t: \$500-699 u: \$700-999 v: \$1000-1999
w: \$2000-2900 x: \$3000-3900
y: \$4000-4999 z: \$5000 and up

* It is important to remember that the unit value of a single chip find will have a much higher value than the unit value of a set of chips.