

# ANTIQUÉ COLLECTIBLES

by Dale **Seymour** and Ken **Craig**

New finds of previously unknown gambling chips continue to surface. That's great because discovering a "new find" is one of the big thrills in collecting. The first listing of antique gambling chips appeared in 1983 in the book of that name. In 1997 a major revision of the book included several hundred new finds. This spring, at the chip convention in Las Vegas, a supplement to the second edition was introduced. The supplement contains pictures of more than 200 new ivory chips and their codes and over 80 new clay codes. It looks as though you can expect a new supplement every four or five years. We thought "we had found them all" back in the 90s.

Recall that we do not code numeral chips, monogrammed chips, nor do we code chips made later than 1960. It is not always easy to approximate the manufacturing date of a chip so we make a guess and sometimes we code a chip that was made in the 60s or 70s. Even though this article focuses on providing new chip codes for new finds, we welcome input from you on any old chips. Dale just purchased a very unusual chip on Ebay which was purported to have come from a gambling house in West Baden, Indiana. The square mother-of-pearl chip is coated in gold on the back and was supposedly used as a member identification for entry to the club. Hmmm? Mother-of-pearl chips in Indiana? Got more info for us?

Ralph Strandwold (CA), who seems to come up with more new finds than anyone, found some wood-

en hand-stamped chips depicting a standing eagle. He found them in four different colors. These were probably home-made by some enterprising individual so we won't code them. Collectors often assume that wooden and paper chips are not old. Not true. Wooden and paper poker chips were available for purchase at stores and through catalogs one hundred years ago.

Speaking of hand-made or altered chips, Rich Hanover (NJ) has an altered Tango chip with a four leaf clover on the reverse side. According to Allan Myers (KY), who is the authority on Tango chips, the color was probably changed slightly during the altering process. Another hand-made chip was found by Rick Robinson of Cheyenne, Wyoming. This "marriage chip" shows a photo of the groom on one side and the bride on the other. A possible gift to the couple from a chip-maker friend?

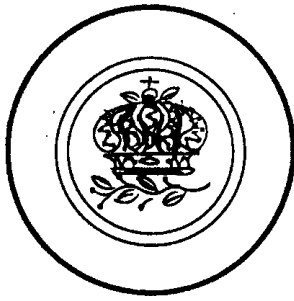
Mike Parr (AZ) and Rich Hanover both came up with a new Elk Head chip (PA-HW). It is an inlaid litho that is definitely different from PA-HV. This makes 13 different Elk Head chips. The chips were for sale to the general public, so we do not consider them to be club chips and have consequently coded them. The chips may have been used in various Elks Clubs until members started sneaking their Elk Head chips in the game. At that point, if discovered, the club may have decided to special order Elks chips with their lodge number on the chips. We know a few collectors who have nice Elks Lodge collections.

Doc Finstuen (TX) and his son Kevin own an unusual numeral chip. It is a "10" that is very similar in design to the paper chips found in Russian casinos. Doc's sources say the chip was from China, brought into the USA before World War II.

More than 25 years ago, when the senior author of this column was gathering clay chips for *Antique Gambling Chips*, he was told of a clay chip with an engraving of a railroad engine on it. One of those "they were here for months and we finally sold them last week" experiences. Sometime later, a similar "miss" happened with apparently the same chip. At least it was described identically by a different antique dealer in a distant part of the country. This seemed like enough evidence to assign a code to a never-seen chip. The code LOK - Locomotive was assigned to a chip in the transportation section of the 1983 edition of the book, even though no one had ever seen the chip. Finally, in 1998, one of you found a chip with a train engine graphic on it. The chip was assigned the new code PT-FT and the assumption was made that this was the railroad chip we had all been looking for. As Paul Harvey says "And now for the rest of the story". Recently Jim Myers (OH) found a beautifully engraved clay railroad engine chip in a "tray of stuff" in a Michigan antique shop. Which was the real chip described by the dealers in the 1980's? Maybe there is a Zepher chip out there somewhere.

A typical set of 100 old clay chips would contain 50 whites, 25

## New Ivory Finds



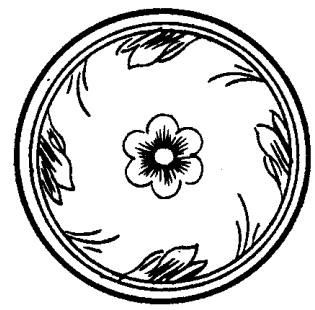
**ID-RN Crown**  
v:p



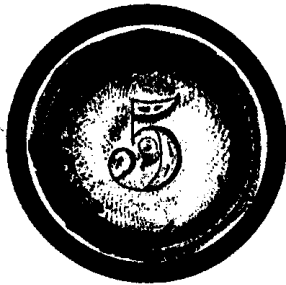
**ID-RO Crown**  
v:p



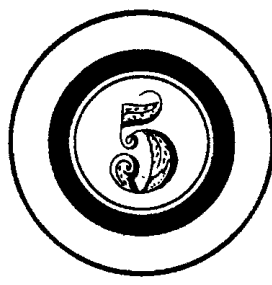
**IE-BZ Four Leaves**  
v:k



**IE-OB Blossom**  
v:k



**IO-FQ Five**  
v:m



**IN-CM Five**  
v:m



**IO-ME Five**  
v:m



**IP-SG Fifty**  
v:q



**IP-SH Fifty**  
v:q



**IP-ST Fifty**  
v:q

reds and 25 blues. Usually yellow or gold chips were available to purchase separately from a chip manufacturer. Some old poker chip designs, however, have never been found in a yellow or gold color so we are assuming they were never made in that color. A gold clay chip therefore is worth more than a red, white or blue because it is rarer. Colors that are very unusual are brown and green. Finding a new code in a brown or green color is a double thrill. Dave Woody (CA) made such a find recently of a chip sporting two concentric circles (PD-SW). Good find Dave.

Mike Cuddy (NJ) submitted two advertising chips for coding. One was an engraved chip (PY-DO) stating that the company specialized in administrative and financial relations and did manufacturing, marketing and engineering. By the time the company touted all of that and added a couple of slogans, there was no room to put the name of the company on the chip. What do we call it? We decided to call the chip Do-It-All. The other chip Mike found was an engraved Lockheed chip (PY-LJ).

We have no way of knowing whether the chip we are calling Box and Three (PD-HT) was a chip designed for sale to poker players for their home use or whether the design depicted a club or company logo. We decided to give it a code. Mike Spinetti (CA/NV) found this nice chip.

Fifty-dollar ivory chips have been exceedingly rare, but three new ones have turned up recently. Ken Craig and Tom French are responsible for finds that necessitated ten new ivory codes this issue.

For more information on the newly published supplement to *Antique Gambling Chips* write to Dale Seymour, 11170 Mora Drive, Los Altos, CA 94024 or e-mail [seymourdg@aol.com](mailto:seymourdg@aol.com).

New Antique Chip Finds



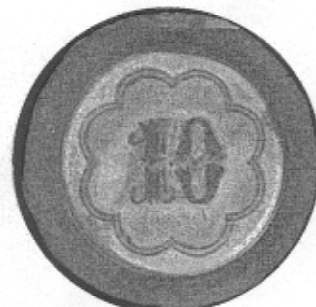
Mother-of-Pearl chip  
from Indiana Club



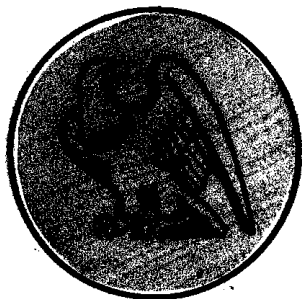
Tango Obverse



Tango Reverse



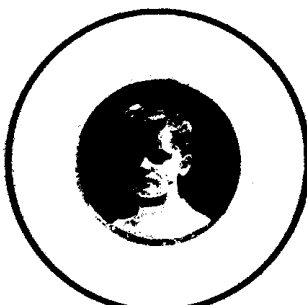
Clay chip from China (?)



Hot stamp on  
wooden chip



Marriage Chip  
Husband



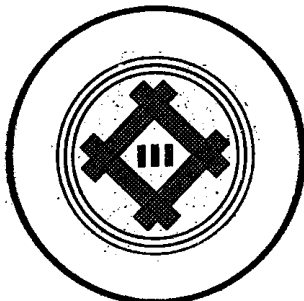
Marriage Chip  
Wife



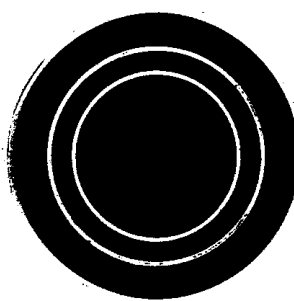
PA-HW Elk Head  
Inlaid Litho / v.f



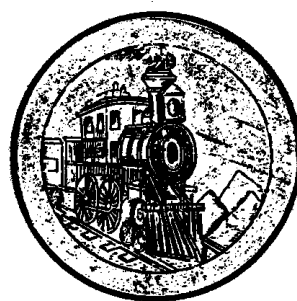
PA-TS Tiger Head



PD-HT Box & Three  
Engraved / v.g



PD-SW Two Rings  
Engraved / v:e



PT-FS Train Engine  
Engraved / v.g



PY-DO Do-it-All  
Engraved / v:f



PY-DO Reverse



PY-LJ Lockheed  
Engraved / v:f