

THE MYSTERIES OF THE ARROWDIE SOLVED!

WELL . . .

NOT EXACTLY

by Gene Trimble

The arrowdie mold is one of the most collectable chips in our hobby. One reason is, it is shrouded in mystery. The actual chips were made at the Burt Company in Maine. The distributor has generally been accepted to be Tommy Haines. Most new collectors will ask, who was Tommy Haines? I have been doing research on Tommy since about 1995, and could not really answer that question. The mystery caught my attention because of the Four Queens arrowdie delivered in 1966. Not all, but most collectors put distribution of the arrowdies in the 1950's only.

Earlier this year Jim Blanchard owner of poker-chips.com and Atlantic Standard Molding who also owns the old Burt molds, ask me to once again look into the arrowdie mystery. Jim had information previously unknown to me concerning an arrowdie connection to a Reno distributor. The name, Reno Game Supply, was on a Burt order card from 1953.

Here are the only known Burt records of inlayed arrowdie molded chips. There are no Burt records pre 1953. They were destroyed in a fire.

Reno Game Supply

orders: 1953 to 1956

- 1) Sands
- 2) Topaz Lodge
- 3) Wilbur Clark's Desert Inn
- 4) Horseshoe Club, LV
- 5) Cal-Neva Biltmore
- 6) New Boulder Club



Precision Inc.:

Starting 1956 ending 1958

- 1) Stockmens Hotel
- 2) Stardust Tahoe
- 3) Boulder Club
- 4) Horseshoe Club, LV

Tom Haines Co.: 1958 to 1967

- 1) Fremont
- 2) Horseshoe Club, LV
- 3) El Cortez Hotel
- 4) Las Vegas Club
- 5) Four Queens

Reno Game Supply

822 S. Virginia Ave
Reno, NV

1951 to 1954 (as best we can tell from phone book and Polk criss-cross listings) As you can see they received arrowdies as late as 1956. Owner HN Garrison One employee listed for RGS and only listed in 1952, was Tommy Haines. No phone number or residential listing in Reno for Haines. Larry and I believe, the RGS arrowdie chip is a business card chip for Reno Game Supply. I can not prove it, so you are free to disagree.

*Interesting item: from Las Vegas 1952 phone book and criss cross listings.

Nevada Club Room Supply
8 E. California Ave
Las Vegas



Owners Tommy Haines & Glen M. Anderson.

1952 is the 1st LV listing I can find for Tommy Haines in Las Vegas. Tommy's 1st telephone listing in LV is 1953. NCRS was in business for a number of years pre 1952. Haines is not listed as part owner nor an employee in pre 1952 criss cross directories. I am not saying Haines did not live in Las Vegas pre 1952. I just can not prove it.

Precision Inc
214 W. Wyoming
Las Vegas, NV
1956 to 1959

Owners HN Garrison president, ML Garrison secretary, and MC Barnes as part owner. No employees listed. HN Garrison seems to have closed Reno Game Supply in 1956 and opened Precision Inc in Las Vegas the same year.



At this point I feel it is safe to say that HN Garrison owned the Arrowdie mold and in all likely hood, designed and ordered the mold to be made. I feel that Tommy Haines as part owner of Nevada Club Room Supply acted as a salesman for sales of arrowdie chips in Las Vegas, for Reno Game Supply. Garrison's main business in Reno was the manufacturing of precision dice. His LV business name was changed to reflect this. The Burt Company records list our mystery mold only as "Dice". In my opinion, it is an appropriate name from the man who made a living from manufacturing dice.

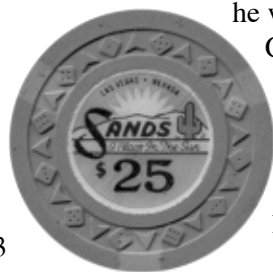
The Sands arrowdies, April 22, 1953 in 3 colors, \$5 blue/3 red, \$25 green/3 yellow, and \$100 white/3

black was the 1st known shipment of inlayed arrowdies and it came through Reno Game Supply. The Sands issue beat The Topaz Lodge issue in shipment by 1 day.

Interesting notes:

- 1953 to 1956, Tommy Haines is listed as pit supervisor at various clubs including the Golden Nugget and Western Club.
- 1954 (Only) Tommy Haines & Co – Casino Equipment. 1923 Sutro Las Vegas, NV. No known shipment of arrowdies to Tommy Haines & Co in 1954.
- 1956 Haines School Of Dealing
- 1956 to 1968 Tommy Haines listed as pit supervisor California Club, downtown LV.
- 1957, Glen M Anderson is now listed as sole owner of Nevada Card Room Supply and moves it to 1000 Nellis Blvd. This listing holds through the 1980's.
- 1976, March 28, Tommy Haines obit appears in the LV Review Journal. It says Tommy sold his share of Nevada Club Room Supply in 1952. Business records contradict that date.

The Burt records show Tom Haines Co receiving arrowdies from 1958 to 1967. I do not doubt the Burt records but there is no business records or phone book listings, that show this company existed in those years. In my opinion, when Precision Inc went out of business, Haines obtained the rights to the arrowdie mold and sold casino supplies on the side, without a business license, while he was working at the California Club.



Another mystery in the Burt records is this 1966 note.

1966 Four Queens record:" Telephone order from Thomas Callahan (Four Queens, Inc.)

note: refer letter 9/22 Hotel Fremont, Mr FJ Mooney granting the Four Queens permission to use the arrowdie mold. Letter attached 4 Queens order." Mr. FJ Mooney was the controller (chief financial officer) of the Fremont in 1966. Why did he have to give the Four Queens permission to use the arrowdie mold in 1966 if Tommy Haines owned the mold? How could Tommy Callahan phone in an order if Tommy Haines owned the mold? It looks like Haines gave the Fremont Hotel some sort of exclusive rights to the mold. The Burts always sold chips through a distributor. A Purchase Order should have been issued to a distributor. The distributor should have been the one to talk to Burt. The following from the Burt records, contradict this.

This is from a 1962 Fremont order. (PO #16372), "Ordered thru Tom Haines & Co." and "Shipped direct to: F. J. Mooney Fremont Hotel Inc., Las Vegas, NV.

When you factor in the phone order from Tommy Callahan, Four Queens, I suspect the Tom Haines Co name was being used, but Tommy Haines had very little to do with the ordering. I can find no business connection between the Fremont and The Four Queens. The Fremont was controlled from New York in those years. The best I can determine, The Four Queens was not controlled by the same people.

Tommy Callahan was the GM of the Four Queens and had points in the operation, when it opened in 1966. You can find more information about Tommy Callahan in my 5 part series of research on the Arrowhead Inn, Branch Hill, Ohio, circa 1937 at Chequers.com. Callahan started his

career as food and beverage manager at the Arrowhead. He went on to become a major player in the illegal casino operations in southern Ohio and northern Kentucky. The Cleveland Syndicates czar for northern KY, Sammy Schrader said that Callahan was the only man he ever made a call for, to be put to work in Las Vegas. Callahan started at the Desert Inn and at one time had a piece of the Pioneer Club.

The last recorded order for arrowdies, in the Burt records was a December 22, 1967 order for the Fremont totaling 88,000 chips. See scan of inlay on the chips in this order.

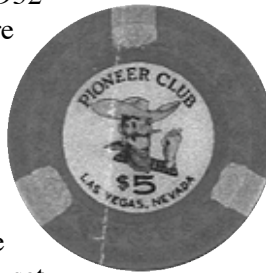


The last entry in the Burt records concerning the arrowdie mold (no date on the entry) indicates the mold is NG and returned to owner. NG meaning worn out. This would have been after the 1967 delivery of arrowdies to the Fremont. Although Tommy Haines did not start out with our mystery mold, it looks like he wound up with the actual unusable mold, or did he? Is it possible the unusable mold was returned to FJ Mooney at the Fremont?

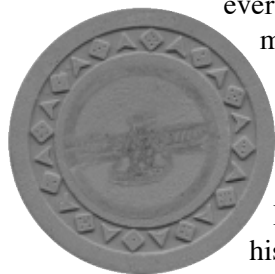
The facts presented here date our mystery mold from 1953 to 1967 for printed center (inlay chips) only. There are other factors. There are no records for hot stamped chips or the

shipment of blanks to produce hot stamped chips, to any of the distributors. Hot stamped arrowdies have been documented in Illinois, Arkansas, and now Texas. There are many initial UFC arrowdies, I doubt we will ever identify. Once again the mystery continues.

Now that I have dated the inlay arrowdies 1953-67, I need to mention a couple more little factors. The Pioneer Club Vegas Vic arrowdie is not on the distributors list. It is not in the 1953 Burt journal. Did someone forget to enter it? Could it have been made in 1952 or earlier? There was a shipment of hubs to the Pioneer in 1953. I have been told, only one of these are known. I had to settle for a scan of a bad color copy.



Jim Blanchard feels the arrowdie metal die cut with the Phoenix on it, is pre 1953. No records exist on this chip. As far as Jim can tell, metal die cuts were not made after 1950. Our mystery mold, remains a mystery. Will the mystery ever end? I have my doubts.



Special thanks to Larry Hollibaugh for his hospitality

and relentless Reno and Carson City research. We spent two days researching Reno Game Supply and The Reno Card Room. Thank you Allan Myers for making TCR and TGT database available for searches. Thank you to all the fellow club members, I pestered for information, Steve Cutler, Janice O'Neal, David Sarles, Jim Perlowski, Robert Eisenstadt and all others that have been lost in this poor old mind of mine.

Thank you to the dedicated public servants of the LV Library, LV Historical Society, UNLV Library, Reno Library, Reno Historical Society, NV State Historical Archives in Carson City, and last but not least NV Gaming Control. Make that a Special thank you to NV State Historical Archives. The lady brought tears to my eyes when she said, No, We do not have any old phone books, but "We do have the minutes from all of the Nevada Gaming Control meetings since its inception in 1955." Hollibaugh and I did a small high five and said, SHOW US THE RECORDS!

The biggest THANK YOU goes to Jim Blanchard. Without Jim's prodding me and searching of the Burt Company records, this article would not have been written. Jim is busy writing a book on the entire Burt Company records of Nevada chips. I think the book will be the biggest help our young hobby has ever received. This book will be a "Gotta Have" for Nevada collectors.