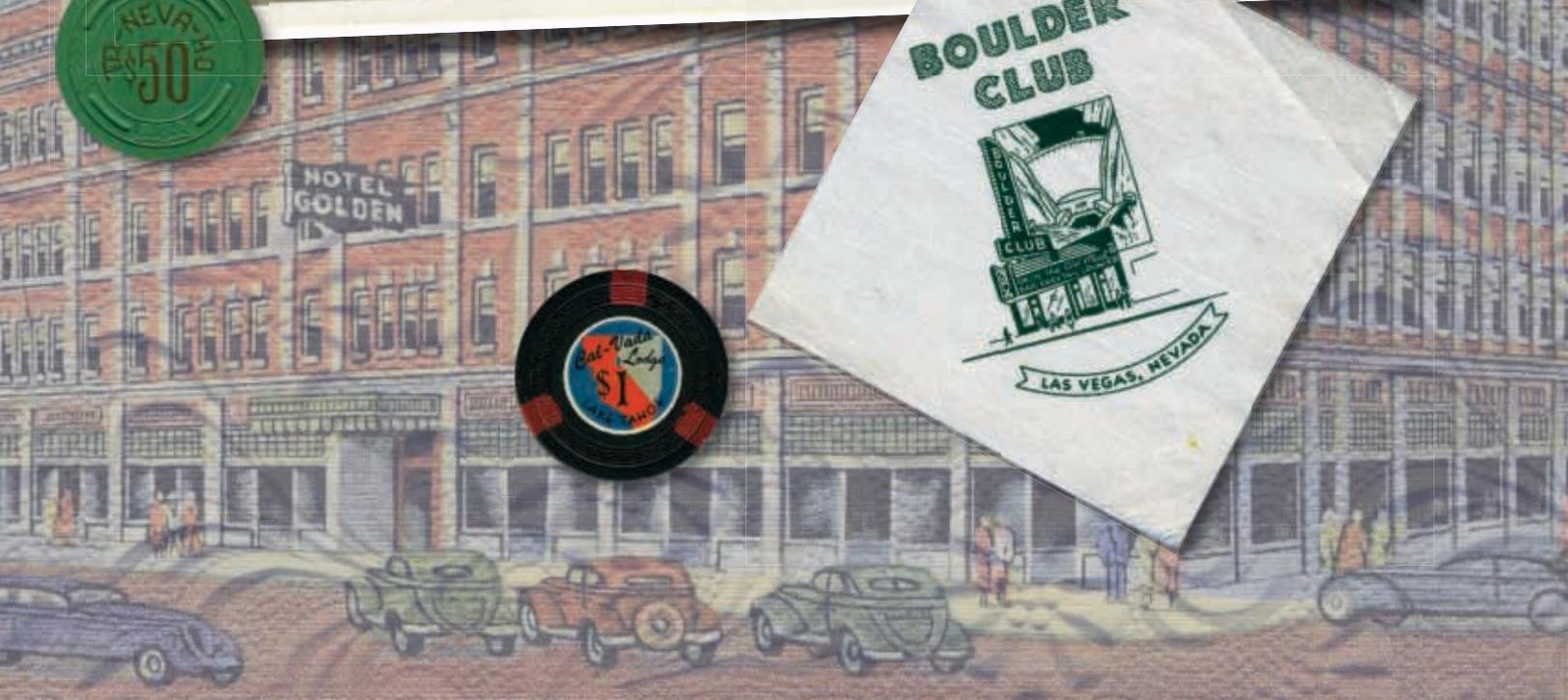
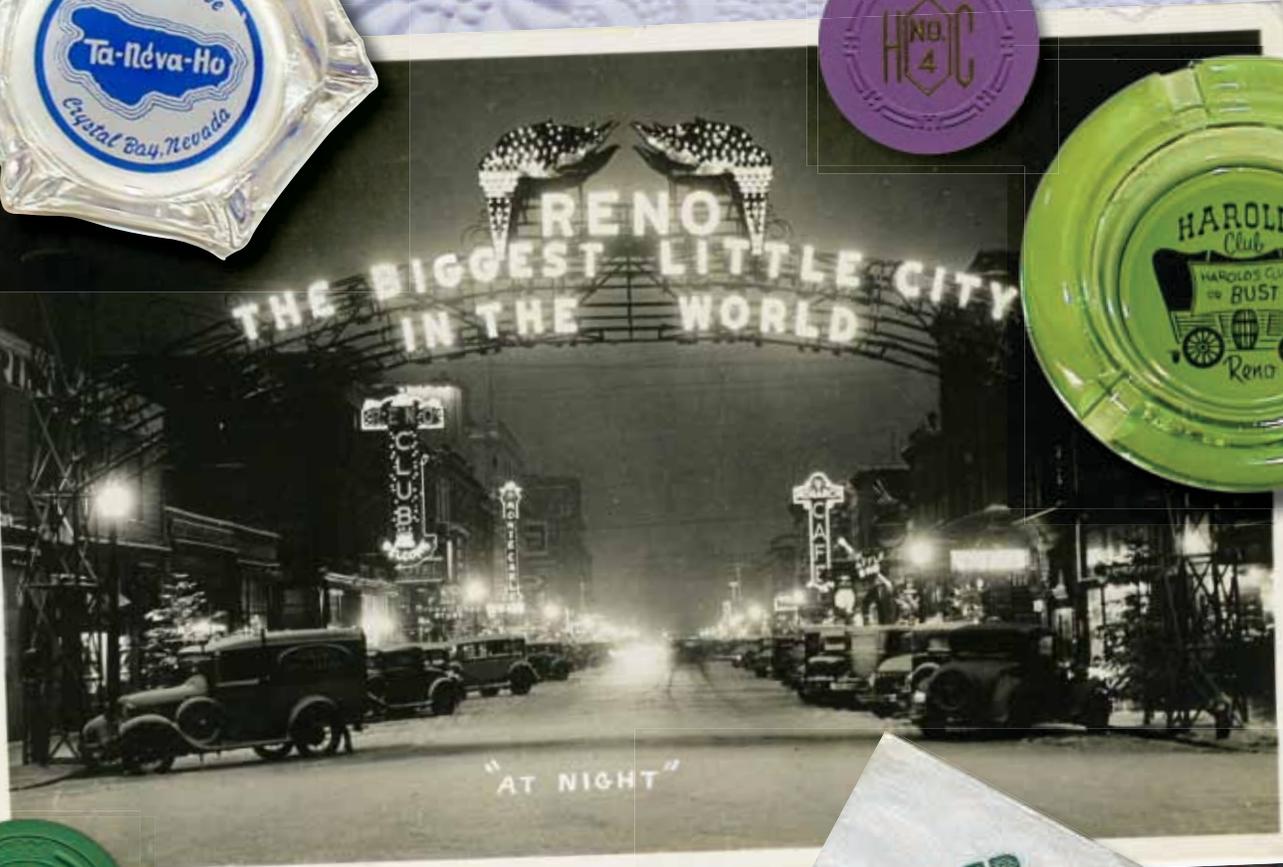


# AS TIME GOES BY

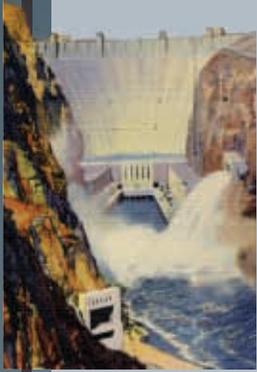
By Pam Goertler #R-3432

## PART TWO



# THE DECADE WAS THE 1930S...

## 1935



Hoover Dam was dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on September 30, 1935. Roosevelt introduced the second phase of his New Deal, which called for Social Security, better housing, fair taxation and farm assistance.

In Las Vegas, the Elks first Hellsdorado Parade was held. The board game Monopoly was introduced. Louisiana Governor Huey Long was assassinated. A chemist



employed by DuPont created nylon, the first totally synthetic fabric. Some 5,000 Shriners from Southern California held their convention in Las Vegas.



The United States was experiencing a drought. The overworked farmlands of Texas and Oklahoma, as well as parts of Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico were literally blowing away... a "Dust Bowl". Sunday, April 14, 1935 became known as "Black Sunday"; the day was clear and warm when suddenly a cloud appeared on the horizon, growing larger and moving at 60 miles per hour. The cloud was made up of dirt--it was a black blizzard that turned the day into night. The storm blew across the nation picking up more dirt and increasing in size. By the time it reached

Washington D.C. it was estimated to reach over 20,000 feet in the air, and was over 1,000 miles wide. Some of the dirt from the storm was deposited on decks of ships that were 300 miles out from the coast. Many of the people who experienced the storm thought the world was coming to an end...and for some, their world did end. Unable to farm the land that they had lived on for generations, and with few options available, many people headed west toward the "promised land" of California, where they hoped the streets were paved with gold.

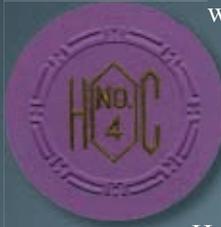
## HAROLDS CLUB AND THE SMITH FAMILY-RENO



On February 23, 1935, his 25th birthday, Harold Smith Sr. opened Harold's Club at 236 North Virginia Street, in Reno. Harold, his brother Raymond A., and their wives were the only employees at the small club (25' wide by 150' deep) that started with a penny roulette game and two slot machines. Unlike traditional roulette wheels, the wheel at Harold's Club was an eight-foot wheel that was vertically mounted on the wall. Before long, the wheel became busy enough to need six clerks selling chips and servicing the forty-three layouts.



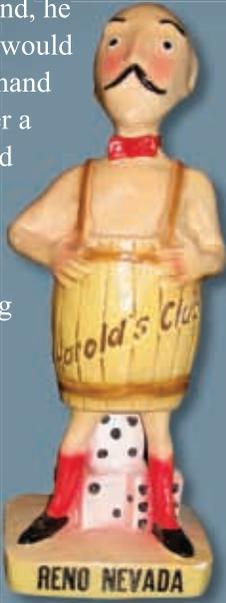
Harold's father, Raymond I. "Pappy" Smith, understood that people loved to gamble and play games. After years of operating carnival concessions, Pappy joined his sons in Reno and became the general manager of Harold's Club. Pappy is credited with many innovations in the gambling world, including "mouse roulette" (in 1938) and "mice dice" (in 1962)...neither of



which lasted long, but both brought publicity to the Club. Many also credit Pappy with establishing the first casino credit office and the first “eye in the sky”, but Pappy’s main concern was that people have fun while they were in

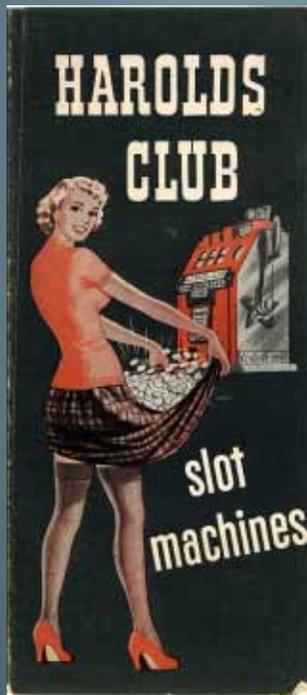
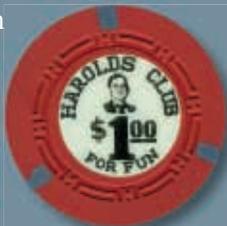
Harold’s Club. To this end, he often, while walking through the casino, would double a customer’s bet or would deal a hand that was guaranteed to make the customer a winner. Pappy himself never gambled and was opposed to drinking and smoking.

In the late 1930’s Harold’s Club began hiring female employees, including dealers. According to an article in Life magazine, the practice came about after Pappy overheard a woman making the comment “I don’t want to go in there—there aren’t any women in there!” Dorothy Smith and Dora Mae Pigeon Smith (Harold’s wife and his mother) were the first female dealers in the club. Dealers from the Bank Club and the



Palace Club would play at their tables, and give them tips on becoming better dealers.

As business grew, Dorothy and Dora Mae trained other females to deal craps, roulette and 21. During World War II, ninety percent of the employees at Harold’s Club were female.

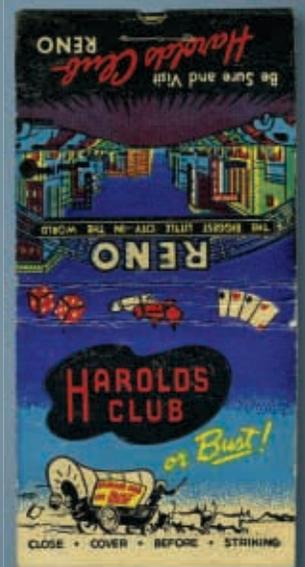


Harold’s Club continued to grow through the years, enabling the Smith family to give generously to the community. Many local churches, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, hospitals and day-care centers were benefactors of the Smith’s



charitable contributions. Over the years scholarships were awarded, at a cost to the Club of \$4,000 each, to 250 Nevada high-school graduates so they could attend the University of Nevada. The total cost to Harold’s Club was \$1 million.

Harold’s Club had over 400 employees in December of 1994, when it was announced that Harold’s Club, no longer owned by the Smith family, would be sold to a New Jersey gaming company. The final sixty-nine employees lost their jobs when Harold’s Club closed, on March 31, 1995.



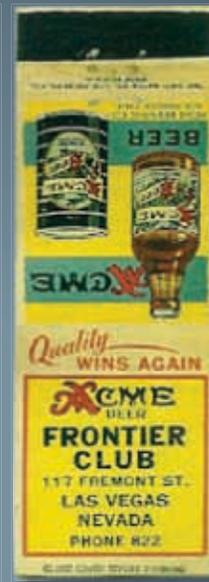
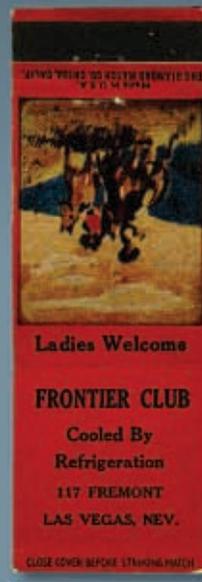
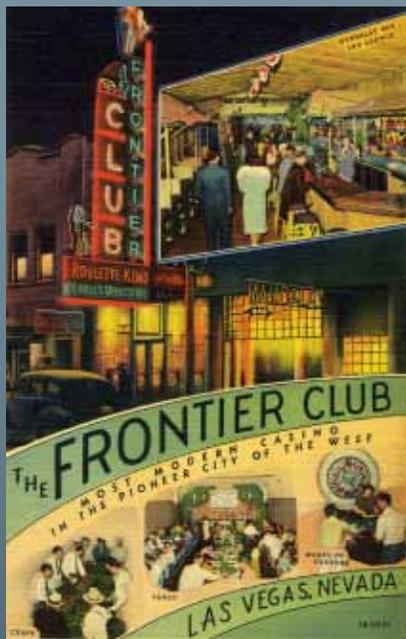
## FRONTIER CLUB-LAS VEGAS

The Frontier Club opened on May 11, 1935, at 117 Fremont Street. The 1944 phone book lists former LAPD vice squad commander Guy McAfee as the proprietor



of the club, which occupied the former site of a general merchandise store. McAfee, who came to Las Vegas in 1938, was one of the “colorful” figures in the early history of Las Vegas; allegedly he owned saloons and brothels, operated illegal gambling houses and had ties to organized crime...all while commanding the vice squad! In 1944 the Frontier Club was licensed for 41 slot machines and 17 table games.

Benny “don’t call me Bugsy” Siegel was a partial owner in the Frontier Club, as well as a couple of other downtown Vegas casinos. From early in the 1940’s Benny controlled the race wires, which transmitted race results from the out-of-state tracks to legal bookmakers in Las Vegas, and he collected huge fees for the service. Anyone



who didn’t want to pay the fees didn’t get the race results from Benny’s service...and there were no competitors allowed. Race bookies had complained to the D.A., but the complaints fell upon deaf ears. Even after Benny was killed in 1947, nothing was done.

Dave and Sam Stearns opened the Santa Anita Turf Club, next door to the Frontier Club. Unable to get their own race wire service, they hid a microphone in the Frontier Club. Thus, when race results were announced in the Frontier Club, they were heard in the Santa Anita. Discovering that, the Frontier Club complained to the Federal Communications Commission, as well as the U.S. Attorney’s office. The wheels started turning, and in October of 1948, legislation was passed allowing the Tax Commission to set the rates for race wire services and to prohibit wire operators from refusing service to a gaming licensee.

## DOG HOUSE-RENO



A wire-haired terrier named Poochy was the inspiration for the name of the Dog House, a combination dance-hall,

restaurant and casino that opened on North Center Street in June of 1935.

Divorcees were the target audience for the Dog House, which offered a dance floor, stage, a large bar and seating for 250 patrons, in addition to gambling. Round-the-clock entertainers included a variety of dancers, striptease artists, singers and magicians.

On January 1, 1939 the Dog House closed and it was soon demolished. On April 1, 1939 the new Dog House opened, featuring a western theme. In August of 1939 the Dog House's gambling license was revoked by the District Attorney. Shorty King and George Coppersmith, who operated the gaming, pled guilty to operating a crooked wheel. They were sentenced to six months in jail and fined \$1,000 each. Owners of the Dog House, Phil Curti and Al Hoffman, claimed no knowledge of the scam and started proceedings to get their licenses reinstated. Gambling resumed in January 1940. The Dog House closed in April 1944.

## CAL-VADA LODGE-CRYSTAL BAY



The Cal-Vada Lodge, on Stateline Road, was licensed on June 15, 1935 for slots, blackjack, craps and keno. The club operated until 1951, when it was rebranded

as the New Cal-Vada Lodge

and continued to operate until 1955.



## GOLDEN HOTEL-RENO

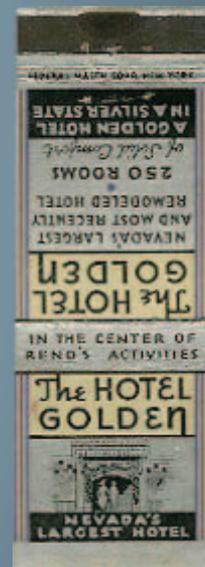


Built in 1906 by Frank Golden Sr., at 219 North Center Street, it would be many years before the Golden Hotel would offer a casino. When Frank Golden died in 1914 the ownership of the hotel went to the Wingfield bank group, who had provided the financing. The Wingfield family, who also owned the Riverside Hotel in Reno, took over the operations of the Golden Hotel.

From the mid 1930s until the mid 1940s, areas of the Hotel were leased out to various gaming operators including Virgil Smith, Bill Williams, Wayne Martin and Del Hammond. Gaming was conducted in the Golden Bar area of the hotel, under the lessees, from June 26, 1935 to July 1, 1947.

In 1946, to finance remodeling of the Riverside Hotel, the Wingfield family sold the Golden Hotel to a group of buyers that included Norman Biltz and James Lloyd Sr. The buyers only had control of the hotel rooms, as the ground floor was under lease to the Brunswick Club and the Bank Club. Early in 1947 Lloyd bought out the lease of the Brunswick Club, and used the space to open the Golden Gulch Casino. The Golden Gulch featured showroom entertainment, as well as bingo, slots, roulette and horse race betting.

In June of 1948 the Golden Hotel was sold to hotel man Thomas Hull. The Golden underwent extensive



remodeling, at a cost that exceeded \$300,000. The Hull Hotel Corporation filed bankruptcy early in 1949, and the Lloyd group was in control again, operating the Golden for the next three years.

In 1952 The Golden was sold to Frank Hofues; he negotiated a 20-year lease with Bill Graham who would then open the Golden Bank Casino. On May 26 Graham's license was approved for 272 slot machines, more than 30 table games, keno and a cabaret. The 40,000 square foot casino had the largest single gaming area in the world, at that time. (Harold's Club had more square feet, but it was spread out over three floors).



James and William Tomerlin bought the Golden from Frank Hofues in 1954. In 1955 the Tomerlins were granted a gaming license, and they bought out the 17 years that remained on the lease that was held by Bill Graham.

On April 3, 1962 a fire destroyed the Golden Hotel and killed six people.

In 1963 the Tomerlins opened a new Golden with a casino, bars, a showroom and a garage...but no hotel. Construction began on a hotel, but the Tomerlins ran into financial difficulty before it was completed. Bill Harrah purchased the property; he took possession on March 29, 1966, and closed the Golden on that day. On June 20 the property reopened as part of Harrah's.

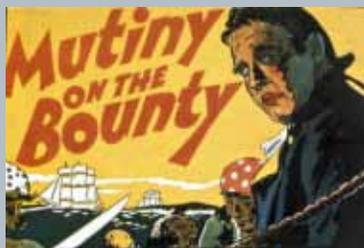


# 1936



King Edward VIII abdicated the throne on December 10, 1936, so he could marry American divorcee Mrs. Wallis Simpson. FDR was

reelected with an electoral vote of 523 to 8. Federal spending was up to \$8.23 billion; unemployment was down to 16.9%. "Mutiny on the Bounty"



picture.

Gone With the Wind was published.

The BBC

introduced the world's first television service, with three hours of programming per day.

## WANDER INN-RENO

The Wander Inn, at 220 North Virginia St., was licensed from April 1, 1936 until May 13, 1937 for one blackjack game. It originally opened in 1934 as a sandwich shop, and later operated as a nightclub and cabaret.

## INFERNO CLUB-RENO

In May of 1936 Vic Williams purchased the Comstock Club, located at 226-1/2 North Center Street, and turned it into an Inferno. No, not arson, he named the club the Inferno and the

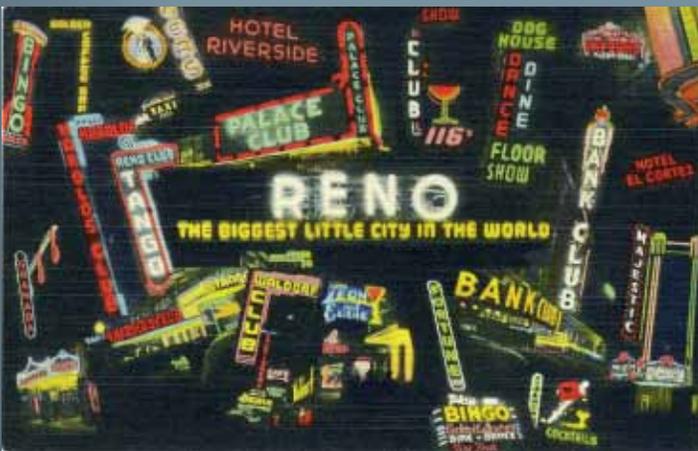
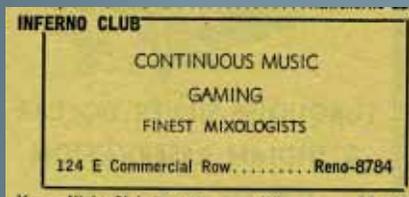


décor included a sheet of flame over the orchestra stands and red devils on black walls. He added faux stone walls and new chromium furnishings. The club with the unusual

# 1937



décor was popular with Reno nightclub patrons all through the years of World War II. In August of 1945 the Inferno was forced to close, to accommodate the expansion of the Greyhound Bus Depot. Ralph Owens, then owner, was granted permission to move his gaming license to 124 East Commercial Row. The Inferno lasted only a few months at that location.



The Hindenburg exploded at Lakehurst, NJ, killing 36 people. Amelia Earhart and her co-pilot were lost somewhere over the Pacific, during an attempted



round-the-world flight. Detroit won

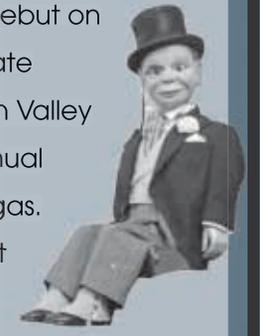


the Stanley Cup for the second consecutive year.

War Admiral won the Kentucky Derby. Edgar

Bergen and Charlie McCarthy

made their radio debut on



NBC. The Golden Gate

Bridge was completed. Death Valley

Scotty was sighted at the annual Hellorado parade in Las Vegas.

Bill Harrah arrived in Reno, got

a good deal on a lease and opened his first Reno bingo

parlor on October 30, at 124 North Center

Street...it closed two weeks later.

## CLUB FORTUNE-RENO

In October of 1936 Jack Sullivan and James McKay bought a two-story building at the corner of Second and Center Streets. In 1937 they leased the building to Robert Feder of Los Angeles, who announced that, after renovations, he would be opening one of the largest clubs in Reno. The new club would offer a variety of games, but the featured game would be Tango (similar to bingo).

With an estimated 5,000 customers on opening night, May 28, 1937, the Club Fortune had a modern tango parlor on the east side of the building, and a lounge, a bar and gaming tables on the west side.



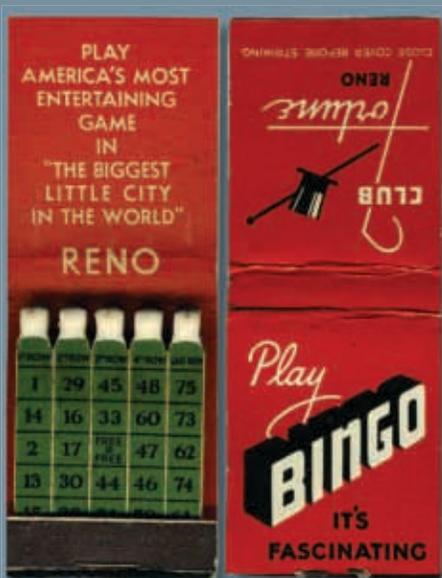
building to Sanford Adler and his associates, who would use the location for the Club Cal-Neva.

## TA-NEVA-HO-CRYSTAL BAY

The Ta-Neva-Ho, on Highway 28, at the North Shore of Lake Tahoe, was licensed on June 2, 1937. Built by Norman Biltz and Pete Bennett, it housed a bowling alley...which was later converted to a 1940s style ballroom where top-name entertainers appeared. The Ta-Neva-Ho operated until 1952, and then reopened as the Crystal Bay Club.



The innovative tango game used a moveable cart into which the players would throw baseballs. The balls would land in compartments which were wired to a large board that registered the number hit by each baseball. An operator would call out the number that was hit, and would switch on the lighted numbers on the board at the other end of the room. The customers enjoyed the baseball feature, feeling that their skill in throwing the ball could help them win the game. The Club Fortune was also one of the first clubs to use composition markers, instead of beans or kernels of corn, to mark the numbers that were called.



## COLBRANDT'S FLAMINGO CLUB-RENO



In the early 1930's Reno was a rough and tumble town. Dozens of small bars, businesses and clubs lined the streets and alleyways. One of the businesses on North Virginia Street was Colbrandt's, a cigar store that Mae Colbrandt opened early in the 1930s. In 1937 Virgil Smith, who leased table games at several Reno establishments, leased the



The Club also offered entertainment; on July 27, 1944, Sammy Davis Jr. and the Will Mastin Trio entertained the customers at the Club Fortune. It was Sammy's first engagement in Reno. Liberace was another of the three thousand entertainers to appear at the Club.

On January 18, 1947 it was announced that the Club Fortune's lease had expired and the Club would be closing. In June of 1948 McKay and Sullivan sold the

gaming concession at Colbrandt's. In 1940 Smith, with Ralph Austin, bought Colbrandt's from Mae. In 1946 they sold the club, which continued to operate (sometimes with gambling, sometimes as just a bar) under various owners, until 1957.



# 1938

Hitler marched into Austria. Douglas "Wrong-Way" Corrigan flew from New York to Dublin. The Fair Labor Standards Act established a minimum wage. People panicked when Orson Welles radio broadcast of "War of the Worlds" convinced them that aliens had landed in New Jersey. The ballpoint pen was



invented. Action Comics debuted. Heavyweight Joe Louis defeated Germany's Max Schmeling with a knock-out punch in the first round of the championship bout. Reno casino owners Bill Graham and James McKay

were convicted of mail-fraud and embezzlement; they served time in Leavenworth Prison from 1939-1945, leaving their associate Jack Sullivan to watch out for their casino interests.



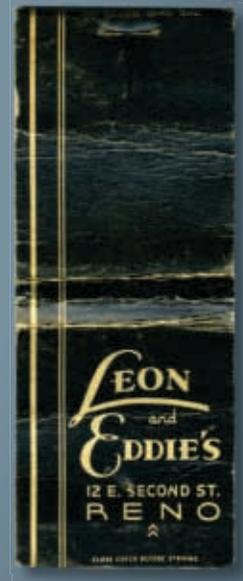
## LEON & EDDIE'S-RENO

Formerly Louie's Rendezvous, in 1935 the property at 12 East Second Street was taken over by Leon Harbert and Ed Harris; they renamed it Leon & Eddies. The club operated primarily as a cocktail lounge, with more than 50 cocktails, sours, egg drinks, liquors and cordials listed on the drink menu. In 1938 the partnership was dissolved and Ed Harris was the sole owner, though he retained the name Leon & Eddie's. On April 15, 1938, it was licensed for slots and 21.



In 1947 Leon Nightingale and Ed Silva took over the business, commenting that they wouldn't have to change the name! They were licensed for one craps game, one 21 game and three slot machines. The club would be sold several more times over the next decade, but continued to offer drinks, gambling and lounge entertainment. In 1956 Luther Cochran, in control at the time, was cited for improper operation of a 21 game. Cochran denied knowledge of any cheating, but surrendered his gaming license. The club was sold again.

In the 1970s the Club Cal-Neva bought the property for an expansion.



## CLUB 91-LAS VEGAS

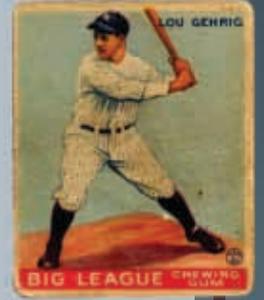
Former Los Angeles police officer Guy McAfee opened Club 91, on Highway 91 on the former site of the Pair-O-Dice Club. The Club would close in 1941; in 1942 the building would be incorporated into the Last Frontier Hotel. In the following photos you can see the Original Club 91 and the later Last Frontier Hotel postcard with the original Club 91 in the center of the photo.



Photo Courtesy of UNLV Special Collections



The average cost of a new house was \$3,800; \$1,730 was the average pay for a year. LaGuardia Airport opened in New York. Hewlett Packard was formed. Tina Turner was born on November 26. Lou Gehrig said goodbye to his fans, at New York's Yankee Stadium. The View-Master

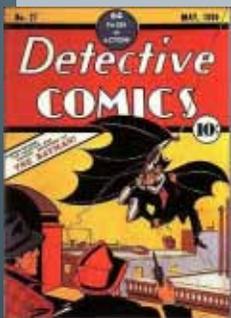


was introduced as a method of viewing popular tourist attractions; Carlsbad Caverns and the Grand Canyon were the main subjects. The Wizard of Oz movie was released on August 15.

# 1939

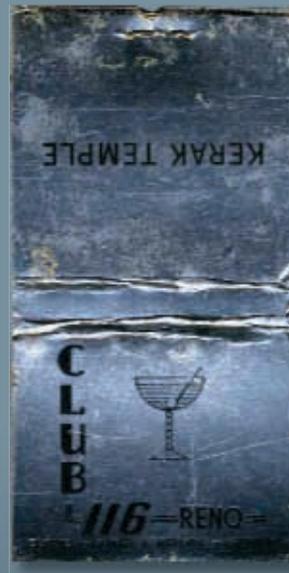
## 116 CLUB-RENO

Germany invaded Poland, World War II began. The New York World's Fair opened. Einstein wrote FDR about the feasibility of the atomic bomb. The U.S. Department of Agriculture began the first food stamp program. Gone With the Wind premiered in movie theaters and eventually grossed



over \$192 million. Madam Alexander introduced the Scarlett O'Hara doll; the first movie character ever made into a doll. The Batman cartoon was introduced.

On December 30, 1939, the 116 Club opened at 116 North Center Street, the former location of the Alpine Club. The Club opened as a restaurant, but in 1941 a new owner added slots, 21 and roulette to entertain the customers. In April of 1955, unable to renew the lease, the club closed.



## THE SWIZZLES-LAS VEGAS

No, The Swizzles isn't a club or casino that you never heard of. The Swizzles is a small collection of glass swizzle sticks (or stir-sticks), and a big part of the inspiration for this article. It isn't easy to find items from the Nevada casinos of the 1930s, especially when the items are made of glass, so I wanted to share some items that we've found... and the swizzles are some of my favorites.

Over the years my husband and I have spent a lot of hours searching online auction sites for additions to our collection of Nevada casino memorabilia (memorabilia sounds so formal, I usually call it "stuff"! ). We've found a lot of fun items that we've added to our collection... including glass swizzle sticks. The swizzles were in a couple of different lots, from two different sellers, several years apart, but all of them, we were told, came from Las Vegas estate sales. Most of them are listed in our Las Vegas telephone directory that was issued in January of 1939. So...the rest of this article listed casinos by the year that they were licensed, but the swizzles are all listed under 1939...because they're in the phone book!

The section header is what is printed on the swizzle stick.

### GOLDEN CAMEL



The Golden Camel was at 110 N. First Street and their phone number was 737. The Golden Camel was first licensed in 1931, for a year or so, to Fred Rumph from Colorado. As recalled by a long-time Vegas resident: "Las Vegas had its share of bootlegging establishments. Probably the most famous was the Golden Camel, which was located on the alley between Fremont Street and Ogden Street on First Street...This was the gathering place for the entire community on a Saturday night. Every Saturday night the Golden Camel used to provide the women with orchids, which was the forerunner of the various giveaways which the gambling casinos and hotels went in for at a later date."

Apparently the gambling license expired in 1932, but the club might have stayed open...I can't find the information to confirm or deny that. In 1938 Joe Morgan was licensed for slots, 21 and craps at the Golden Camel, which was next door to his Silver Club. While the Golden Camel is listed in Las Vegas phone books through 1952, Fuller's Index

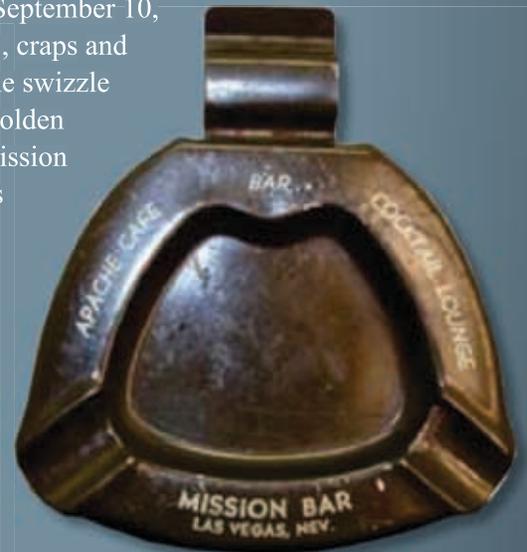
indicates that it might not have had a gambling license after 1939. In 1953 the Little Casino was listed at 110 N. First Street, with the same phone number that had belonged to the Golden Camel.

### MISSION BAR



The Mission Bar was located at 131 Fremont, and their phone number was 1062. They were licensed from April 8, 1939 through September 10,

1940 for slots, 21, craps and roulette. While the swizzle sticks from the Golden Camel and the Mission Bar don't say Las Vegas, I have no doubt that they were from the clubs in Las Vegas, if only because of the rest of the swizzles that were found with them.



### SAL SAGEV TAVERN-LAS VEGAS

The Sal Sagev Tavern was at 1 Fremont Street, their phone number was 609. At one time Sid Martin was the proprietor of the Sal Sagev Tavern, which was located in the Sal Sagev Hotel.

## BOULDER CLUB BAR-LAS VEGAS

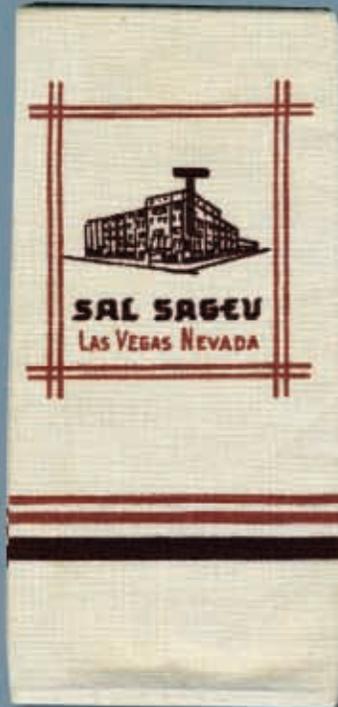
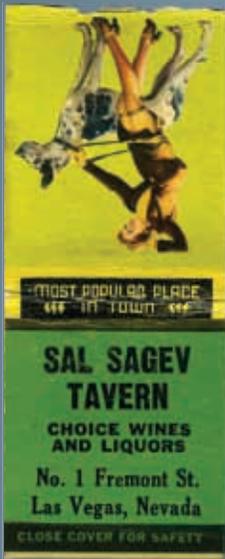


The Boulder Club Bar doesn't have a separate listing in the phone book, but I don't think I'm going too far out on a limb in guessing that it was located in the Boulder Club, at 118 Fremont.



## CACTUS GARDEN-LAS VEGAS-PAUL W. WARNER

This is the one I'm not so sure is in the phone book. The phone book lists "Cactus Beer Garden" on Winterwood Road, with the phone number 82. I'm not too sure that this is where the swizzle is from; current LV maps show a Winterwood Blvd. out near East Las Vegas, the rest of the swizzles are from the downtown area. The Gaming Table lists Cactus Garden at 2576 East Charleston Blvd., opened circa 1935, closed in 1939. That seems a more likely prospect. Then again...the Winterwood Blvd. of today might not be the Winterwood Road of yesterday.





Florence Boyer, daughter of Charles “Pop” Squires (who was one of the original settlers in Las Vegas) says there was a “nest of night spots” out near Tony Cornero’s Meadows Club, and The Cactus Garden was probably the fanciest of those clubs. It was owned by Paul Warner, who later served two or three terms as an assemblyman

## STOLEN FROM BARREL HOUSE & ANCHOR ROOM-LAS VEGAS



The Barrel House was at 22 Fremont, phone 528. The club was licensed from October 6, 1934 until December 31, 1938, for slots, 21, craps and roulette; they also had a full orchestra for dancing every night. The club was next to the State Café, and there was a hole in the wall between the two businesses so that Barrel House patrons could order food and coffee from the State Café. During prohibition, if the customer knew the right people, the coffee pot was often filled with something stronger than coffee. So far I haven’t found any reference to the Anchor Room, other than the swizzle stick.

## OVERLAND BAR-LAS VEGAS



The Overland Bar is listed at 6 Fremont Street, phone number 900. The Overland Hotel building was located at the corner of Main and Fremont Streets. It contained several other businesses in addition to the hotel, including

the Overland Bar and the Overland Café in 1939. There were numerous Overland Bars and Hotels, located throughout Nevada, that were licensed for gambling, but there’s only sketchy evidence to indicate that the Las Vegas Overland Bar might have had some slot machines. (We have a 1951 postcard that shows a bar/cocktail lounge, with slot machines, at the corner entrance of the Overland Hotel building. BUT...that business would have had the address of 2 Fremont Street. Was that the Overland Bar...???) Maybe...or maybe not.)



## FREMONT TAVERN-LAS VEGAS- “DON’T FORGET US”

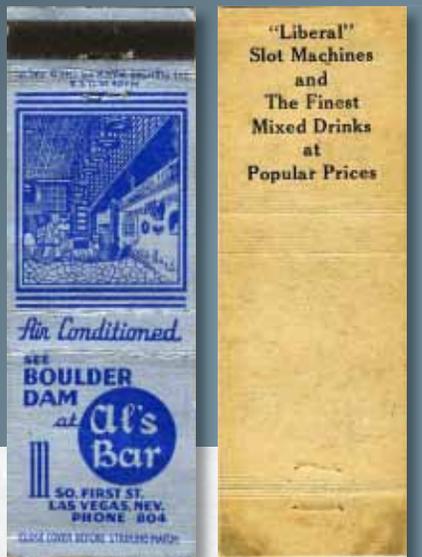


The Fremont Tavern was located at 101 Fremont Street, phone 722. Despite the motto on their swizzle sticks, they seem to be very nearly forgotten. Other than the swizzle sticks (we have 2 of them) and the listing in the phone book I haven’t found anything else about the Fremont Tavern. From the address I can tell you that, during the 1950s and 1960s, this was the location of the California Club, which used the bear as their logo. Not to be confused with the California Hotel & Casino that is still open.

## “SEE BOULDER DAM AT-AL’S BAR” 111 SO. FIRST ST.-LAS VEGAS

Al’s Bar was at 111 South First Street, and the phone number was 804. Al Salton was the manager, according to the 1944 phone book, and Al’s closed around 1944-1945.

From 1945-1951, the Ace Bar took over the location, and the phone number. Al's Bar doesn't show up in the usual casino reference books, but an informative matchbook tells us that Al's had "Liberal" slot machines.



Pictured on the far left, Al's bar became the Ace Bar in 1945.



Apache Casino, Apache Club, Apache Hotel and Apache Restaurant...but no individual listing for "Apache Bar". I think I like the swizzle with the white printing better than the one with the red printing... "snatched from" sounds so much better than "stolen from"!



**STOLEN FROM-APACHE BAR** (RED PRINTING)  
**SNATCHED FROM-APACHE BAR-LAS VEGAS ALL**  
**IS FORGIVEN-CALL AGAIN** (WHITE PRINTING)



We have two styles of swizzles from the Apache Bar, which was located in the Apache Hotel Building on the corner of Fremont and Second Streets. The 1939 phone book has listings for the Apache Beauty Salon,

In Closing, I hope you've enjoyed this trip into the past. Special thanks go out to Dwayne Kling who spent fourteen years researching and preserving the gaming history of Reno, in his book *The Rise of the Biggest Little City*. Most of the Reno information in this article came from that book. The Gaming Table, Harvey J. Fuller's Index of Nevada Gaming Establishments, and various Chip Chat auction catalogs also provided information...thanks to all of the authors for their work in preserving gaming history. Other information, including the miscellaneous facts and figures, came from different internet sites...so I hope they're accurate!

Frontier Club - Las Vegas matchbooks on page 43, Golden Hotel - Reno matchbook on page 44, Fortune Club - Reno matchbook on page 47, and Colbrandt's Flamingo Club - Reno matchbook on page 48 all courtesy of Jerry O'Neal.