

Those boxes are part of the History!

by Howard W. Herz - CH-085

You have just made the discovery of the year at a local antique store. You are back at your home with a couple of dirty old boxes of gaming checks. The boxes were found in the basement of an old building, they are partly broken, and are just about ready to go into the trash can. Before you dump those old boxes in favor of some new containers for the chips, make sure that you are not destroying some of the most valuable evidence of your find - the boxes!!!



If the gaming checks that you have just bought are not to be found in a guide book, the boxes that they were in might just give you the necessary clues to their origin and date of manufacture.



For the past thirty years I have tried to save at least one of every different original chip box that I have found. My collection is not an exceptionally pretty one, takes up

lots of space and in some ways is quite ugly. A broken box, edges in tatters and the label partly missing is not what most people would consider an appropriate historical artifact - I disagree.



To start with, the molds on gaming checks can be a clue to the period of issue. Molds were the "registered trade mark" of the distributor that ordered the checks. As we continue to research the dates of operation of different distributors, we begin to determine with greater certainty the time periods when certain molds were issued.

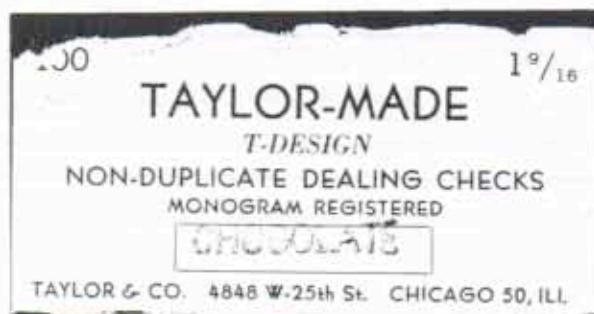


The box labels frequently have most of the clues for tracing a distributor. 4-digit phone numbers indicate a certain period of time. Addresses always are helpful if you want to trace business listings in directories in historical societies. Occasionally the boxes are the clue to link a mold to a distributor. A box label can be invaluable as a tool to attribute a check.

When you find a box of old gaming checks it doesn't hurt to make some notes about the box they came in if you can not keep or obtain the original box for your archives.



In more than one instance I have been able to confirm the era of a gaming check partly because of the box that the checks were found in.



And last, but not least, you might just be able to sell that dusty, broken down old box to some crazy old collector / researcher / gaming historian like me!

