

CACTUS JACKS
THE CARSON CITY CHIPCOS

By Eric S. Rosenblum R-173

When Cactus Jacks came out with a CHIPCO last summer, speculation was that it would be the first in a series of chips because it was titled, "1992 Collector's Edition". The obverse of the chip was the design of a hat on a cactus plant and the name Cactus Jacks superimposed on a map of the State of Nevada. The reverse was a drawing of the State Capitol Building with the notation underneath, "Nevada's Capitol 1875".



Sure enough, Cactus Jacks came out with a 1993 chip. The front was slightly different, but basically the same design and colors. The back however, had an illustration of Abe Curry with the dates of birth and death (1815-1873). Furthermore, there was a commemorative pamphlet distributed with the sale of each chip telling all about Abe Curry.



On a recent trip through the state, I stopped into Cactus Jacks and had the opportunity to meet with the Director of Operations, Bill Hissem. Bill explained that the two chips are part of a series of five, with the next three to be issued in 1994, 1995 and 1996. He then let me in on a little secret. Not only were all five chips already designed, but the three that have not yet been issued have already been manufactured and are sitting in his vault. Apparently it was more advantageous to have all five chips produced simultaneously than to have CHIPCO retool for each annual chip.

Despite my best begging and pleading, I could not buy one of the 1994, 1995 or 1996 chips. Bill explained that the Gaming Control Board was very strict in the regulations and that they had told him explicitly that he could not issue a dated chip until just before the date is accurate. Therefore, we can not expect to see the 1994 chip until late 1993, etc.

Although Bill could not let me purchase one of the "future" chips, he did give me a copy of CHIPCO's artwork for the three remaining chips, which is being published with this article. It was his intent to issue the five chip series depicting five different facets of Nevada history. The front of all five chips will be substantially the same as the original two. However, the back of the 1994 chip has a steam locomotive with the insignia at the bottom "Virginia and Truckee Railroad". The 1995 chip features a boxing match between Gentleman Jim Corbett and Fitzsimmons, dubbed "The Fight Of The Century", which took place in 1895. It is appropriate that it is a commemorative chip for 1995, exactly one century after the fight occurred.

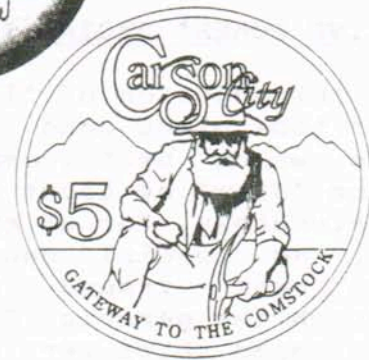
The 1996 chip shows a miner with a pick in one hand and a rock, presumably an ore nugget in his other hand, with the designation "Gateway To The Comstock".



1994



1995



1996

Well, we can't blame Bill Hissem for not wanting to jeopardize his gaming license. We also can't really fault the Gaming Control Board for not allowing chips to be issued in 1993 that say 1996 on them. However, it is nice to know what is coming out in the future so that we collectors know that we will be having something to look forward to on our annual trips throughout the State of Nevada. It is also nice to see that more and more casinos are recognizing chips as collectables and that they are portraying historical themes in their designs.