

"CHIP OR TOKEN?"  
By Vince Mowery R-360



At a recent show, a little-old-lady approached our table, curled her knobby fingers in the shape of an O and said, "I have this do-dad from the Mint. What's it worth?"



After determining it was not the U.S. Mint that she was referring to, I asked, "Is it a chip or a token?"

"I dunno", she said, what's the difference?" "Well, this is a chip", I replied, pointing to the Aladdin blue \$1 with house mold and round inlay with the genie lamp, "and this is a token," pointing to the Aladdin 1987 \$1 NCM type II with small hotel.

Obviously bemused, she glanced around our showcase and blurted out, "but this chip says TOKEN on it", pointing to the tan New China Club \$1 small crown (shown above left). I tried to explain something about exceptions-to-every-rule as the little-old-lady walked away mumbling something about, "- - - - stupid dealers".

My puzzlement was further heightened when I spied the Caesars purple large key from South Lake Tahoe (illustrated above right) which says TOKEN in large letters on both sides! While pondering our predicament, up strolled our good friend Bruce Landing to do a little bit of horse-trading (even though he knew we didn't have horses).



When I absentmindedly offered some tokens to Bruce during the trading he sternly reminded me, "Vince, you know I collect only chips!" Attempting to apologize, I asked, "Why is that?" "Well," he said, "from two feet away all tokens look alike!" "Gee," I lamely said, "how about this Bally's red, white, pink, grey and black CHIPCO token pointing to the 7-7-7 Wild token (illustrated to the left and right)?"



While Bruce was saying something like, "well maybe I'll have to change my mind, "I was thinking of the time I walked up to a crap table, threw down my bill and said, "I want to buy some chips" to which the stick-man smugly said, "Chips you get over there," pointing to the roulette table. After a pause that seemed an eternity, it dawned on me what he was getting at and I said, "Well then how about some checks?" And then I remembered the first time a dealer called my \$5 check a nickel!

About then, Bill Axone joined the conversation and began telling us about his most important poker lesson, where the instructor said, "First check your hole cards. Then if you have a good hand bet your check.... and if a bad hand check your bet."

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**"CHIP OR TOKEN".... continued**

While trying to fathom all this hold-em and fold-em philosophy, Skip Pouron dropped by to tell us about the local bar that just got their slot machines and their new slugs. (And I always thought slugs were those little washer-like discs we used to try in gum-ball machines.)

Chips, checks (or is it cheques?), tokens, slugs .... I was thinking to myself, why don't we just call it all "casino coin of the realm"... when up walked Don Sidler with an auction catalog in his hand and asked, "Are you going to bid on this?" I glanced to where he was pointing and saw the word "jeton". Not wishing to display my ignorance, I said, "Gee, I'm not sure".

When I got home, I looked up the word. Sure enough, Webster says jetton is a "counter used... in card playing"; also, "any of various kinds of counters or tokens of metal, ivory, bone, etc."

Then I looked at our copy of "The Collectors Guide to Nevada Casino Promotional Tokens", and sure enough, it showed "tokens" of all shapes and sizes and made of steel, aluminum, brass, bronze, nickel, clay, composition, plastic of all colors, wood, ... and even paper! I wondered, perhaps we should agree and just call all of these doodads simply TOKENS, just as some golf clubs made of metal are called "woods"! Or we could paraphrase our club's President and call them all "manhole covers"... but unfortunately, that would be politically incorrect.