

THE INFORMATION BOOTH

Michael Knapp

Welcome to another installment of "The Information Booth." For those of you who are reading the column for the first time, it is here that I try to provide some information about unidentified flying chips (UFC's) submitted by members for identification, and to answer questions about casino history, chip history, or related subjects.

As I always do, I'll begin with some answers to previous UFC questions. Also, I repeat my request for participation by club members. This column is only of value if you take time to write to me with identifications of chips you recognize here in the column, and if you send *legible* photocopies (full size is a must; black and white is preferred, and please *do not send enlarged copies or color copies*) or samples of chips you'd like identified. Please don't assume that if you recognize a chip, someone else will. Don't assume that "everyone knows what that chip is." If you have information which may be of help to other members, please share it through this column.

There are always far more unidentified chips than there are members who write to me with answers. The purpose of this column is to try to identify chips that our members ask about. If you'd like this column to continue, it's important to share your knowledge of chips that your fellow members may not know about. Come on, collectors: help!

You will notice that very few of the chips which appear in the column are simply photocopied. That's because many older chips do not have enough contrast to photocopy well, and if they will not photocopy once, they certainly will not photocopy a second time when the magazine is published. As a result, I hand-illustrate most of the chips pictured here. It's a painstaking process, because I make every effort to make sure that each chip illustration is as close as possible to its original version. That way, recognition and identification may be possible. Believe it or not, it's actually more difficult to work with color photocopies than with black and white, even though

they look prettier when you copy them!

Please realize that if you cannot read what is printed on a chip clearly after you photocopy it for the column, neither can I, and illustrating it will be impossible. In such a case, you may send the chip to me, *with return postage* if you would like the chip sent back to you.

Also, please realize that if you recognize a chip published here as a UFC, you have information that your fellow collectors do not have. Please share. That's the whole point of this column. What is common knowledge in one area of collecting is completely unknown in others. For those of you with answers or questions, please share your information by writing to me at P. O. Box 340345, Columbus, Ohio 43234.

As usual, we'll begin with some identifications of previously-published UFC's. The volume and issue number of the magazine where the chip first appeared is shown in parentheses so you can see the illustration if you wish.

UFC 112 (3/3): This chip was originally misidentified as a personal/illegal club chip belonging to "H. O. 'Red' Berry," of San Antonio, TX. That identification was partially correct, but incorrect enough to send Doc Finstuen to the library! Doc's done some fantastic digging, and we're glad to be able to pass on the true story behind these chips.

Berry's real name was Virgil E. Berry. Among other things, he ran some illegal clubs (including the Southern Club and the Turf Club) in San Antonio. He was also a Texas State Senator. The story Doc found about the initials on the chips is this: San Antonio has an annual fiesta in April. An event as large and significant to San Antonio as Mardi Gras is to New Orleans.

Private parties at which the attendees are costumed in elaborate and expensive clothes take place at various local homes, which for Fiesta adopt names such as

“House of Brook Hollow” or “House of Westminster.” Virgil Berry called his home “House of Berry,” appropriately enough. Hence the initials on his chips: **HOB**.

Many thanks to Doc Finstuen for his tenacious research and the copies of newspaper articles he sent to confirm the work he did.

UFC 868 (9/1): This is now a Paul-Son fantasy chip. Paul-Son employees could not remember why it was first produced, but the **NOP** chip picturing a crown is now one of the series of casino-quality chips mass-produced by Paul-Son for home use.

UFC 870 (9/2): Member Mike Provenzano wrote to say that the identification of this chip, published in Vol. 9, No. 4, was incorrect. The **BMCC** chip was *not* used in Reseda, CA. For one thing, the name of the country club there is Braemar, not Bryn Mawr. For another, the club opened in 1957, many years after the crest and seal chip was produced. Finally, several members of Mike’s family have been members of the Braemar Country Club in Reseda for many years, and can attest that there has never been gaming of any type at the club. **BMCC** is once again a **UFC!**

UFC 872 (9/2): Glenn D’Agostino confirms what we believed about the **Atlantic City** chip published here. The chip is seen frequently in Atlantic City souvenir shops, attached to refrigerator magnets and other doodads, but has never been used in a casino.

UFC 933 (9/3): We have another speculation that this chip, which shows only an address: **24845 Gratiot Ave.**, came from an illegal club in Detroit. Seems to me we have several members from the Detroit area. Can’t someone confirm what is located at this address, and spend a bit of time at the Detroit library checking past city directories and the like to find out what was at the address through the years?

UFC 975 (9/4): This **JFP** chip remains unidentified, although there is perhaps a lead from Jim Myers, who purchased the chip in Taos, NM. He tells us that the dealer had several of the chips, and recalled that he originally obtained them in CO. Of course, that doesn’t mean that the chip was used in CO, but at least it’s a starting place!

UFC 1069 (10/3): The **Diamond Wheel**, according to Gary Acquistapace, is from the Diamond Wheel Card Room in San Jose, CA.

UFC 1081 (10/4): Well, it seems you can’t even trust *LIFE* magazine! Doc Finstuen originally sent us a copy of this 1950 issue of *LIFE*, picturing the **JPC** chip, and the caption indicated that it was used in an illegal craps game in the Chicago area. Not so! In fact, the expert in chips of the Pacific Northwest, Steve Goodrich, has positively identified the origin of the chip as Jay’s Playmor Club, Cheyenne, WY, used in the 1940’s.

UFC 1085 (10/4): The **P.C.** on this chip stands for Playland Club, at the Playland Bar, Ridgecrest, CA.

UFC 1098 and 1099 (10/4): I got the name wrong! Both of these chips, **KD** and **hOd**, were shipped to Harry Duckham (not Keith Duckworth, which must have been a figment of my imagination!) at the Glenn Hotel in Newport, KY. Where, precisely, they were used, we don’t know at this point.

UFC 1100 (10/4): It’s believed that this **GOJ Club** chip was used in Washington State, but we still don’t know where.

UFC 1104 (10/4): **Vogels** was a card room in Sacramento, CA.

UFC 1109 (10/4): Another CA chip: the **526 Club** was located in Salinas, CA.

UFC 1110 (10/4): This chip was shipped to John A. Beecroft in Trenton, NJ in 1948, although his name certainly doesn’t match the initials **CAC**.

UFC 1111 (10/4): The **CW** card room was located in San Diego, CA.

UFC 1113 (10/4): Truckee, CA is near Lake Tahoe. The **Five Circles** card room was located there.

Our thanks to those members who took time to share what they know with the rest of us. The contributors not mentioned above are acknowledged at the end of this article. Now for some new submissions!



UFC 1114: Here's an example of how even apparently flawless identifications can be—well, wrong. "This is a copy of a chip that was sent to me by someone my mother met on a cruise recently after finding out about my hobby. He claims it comes from a short-lived casino that was opened in Jamaica several years ago. Apparently it was only opened for a few days before Jamaica banned all gambling on the island."

Member Richard Gold thought the story sounded "a little shaky," and sent us a copy of the chip for identification. He was right! The Jamaica story sounds romantic, but just isn't so. The **Arawak Hotel** was located in Gosier, on the island of Guadeloupe. It's a Caribbean island in the chain from Cuba to Venezuela, south and east of St. Maarten. Sometimes it pays to question what you're told!

UFC 1115: Here's one of three CC chips you'll see in this issue. This one was found in an antique shop in Pioche, NV, and the clerk said that the chip had been used long ago at the Alamo Club there. Ted Brown, who purchased the chip, asks whether perhaps it was used instead at the Caliente Club. Can someone answer Ted's question authoritatively?



UFC 1116: The initials **E.D.R.** on this chip stand for Embajador Dominican Republic. The Ambassador Hotel was located in Santo Domingo on this Caribbean island.

UFC 1117: **Pigg's Peak** is a casino in Swaziland, South Africa.



UFC 1118: This chip appears to be a roulette chip, used at Table One at **PJ's**. But I'm afraid I can't say where **PJ's** was! Does anyone know?

UFC 1119: **Ciro Casino**, according to *The Gaming Table*, was located in London, England.



UFC 1120: This chip surfaced recently, and as always, early speculation centered around Las Vegas. Seems every newfound chip is touted by some as being a great undiscovered Las Vegas find! Ted Brown sends us the proof, however, that the **B and B Club** was actually located in the back of the B and B Bar on Malvern Highway in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Although Hot Springs was a well-known and active illegal gambling center, Ted notes that this is one of the first identified "arodie" mold chips outside Nevada or California.



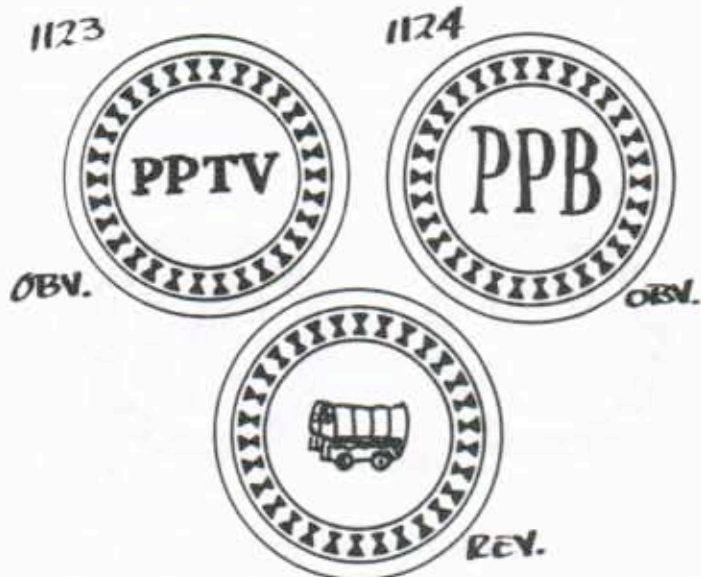
UFC 1121: Jim Myers tells us that this **LC** chip is from the Lima Club in Lima, OH. For those of you who don't live in the Buckeye State, I should point out that this illegal club was located in a city whose name is pronounced like the bean, not the city in Peru! (It's true! Would I lie to you?!)

UFC 1122: This chip may have come from Tipton County, TN. Does anyone recognize **Club Lake**?



UFC 1123 and 1124: Despite the different initials on the obverse, both of these chips, which were found together, have a common reverse. I have no further

information about their possible origin, however.



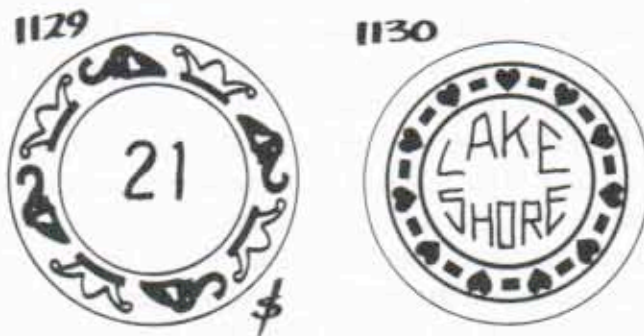
The next chips were sent to us by Bobby Stoops, who says that they are all reputedly from the Chicago area: the 1125 (WHC) from the White House Club in Lincolnshire; the 1126 (Bon Air) from Wheeling; 1127 was supposedly used at Highwood Recreation in Highwood; and the Dells Club (1128) may also have been in Highwood. It also seems possible that the Dells Club originated in Wisconsin, at the Dells resort area, not far from Chicago. Does anyone have further information on any of these chips?



UFC 1129: While not used in Nevada to my

knowledge, and scarce elsewhere in the U.S., the elephant/crown mold ("elfcrown") has been used in the Caribbean. I believe this chip, hotstamped 21 on one side, with a denomination on the reverse, was made as a sample or a home-use chip. Can anyone identify it?

UFC 1130: John Zoesch asks if this chip might be from Hot Springs, AK. Although I've done quite a bit of research on the Hot Springs area, I have yet to find reference to a Lake Shore club there. Until the recent find of the B and B Club chips, though, I'd never heard of such a club in Hot Springs either!



UFC 1131: This chip, Steve Goodrich tells us, was found in Carson City, NV. The initials CC seem to match the location, at least. Does anyone know where it might have been used?

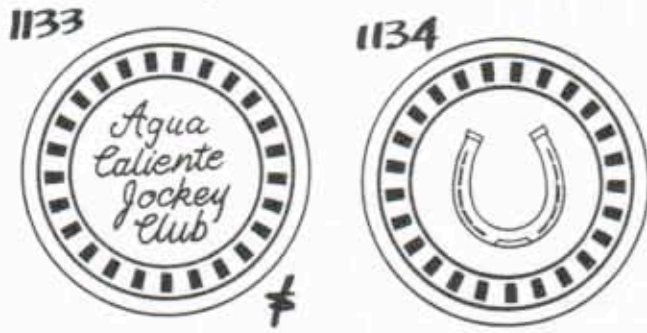
UFC 1132: This chip is believed to be from the "original" Silver Slipper—the one in Newport, KY!



UFC 1133: The Agua Caliente Jockey Club was part of the famous Agua Caliente resort and casino in Tijuana, Mexico. According to *The Gaming Table*, it was open from 1928-1935. Agua Caliente was a playground for Southern California's rich and famous, especially the motion picture industry, during the period, until the Mexican government outlawed all forms of gaming in 1935.

UFC 1134: This is one of many "generic" horseshoe chips. This one has a printed center inlay, rather than

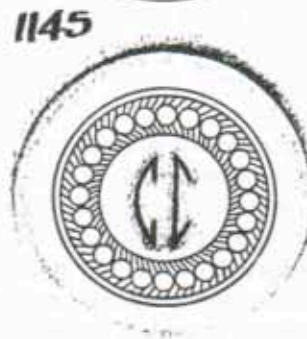
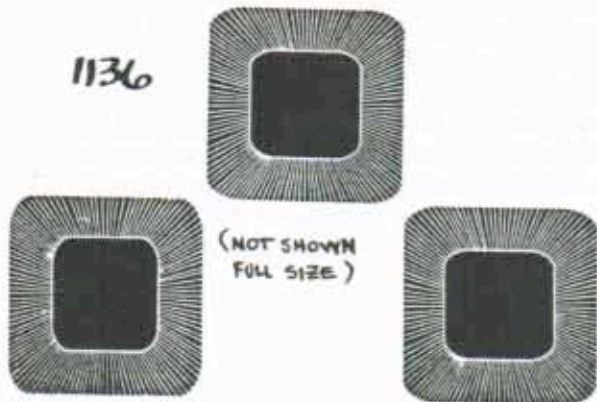
being hotstamped, but it is unlikely that it can ever be attributed to a specific casino.



UFC 1135: One of the advantages of a book like *The Gaming Table* is that it helps to identify the origin of chips such as this one. **Casino de Dieppe** is in Dieppe, France.

UFC 1136: This next chip was sent to us by Doc Finstuen with the note "an idea whose time has not yet arrived." Frankly, we doubt that it ever will! Although we don't, unfortunately, have a date, we do know that the chip, a lightweight plastic chip, was called the "No Roll Poker Chip," and was made by Square Chip Inc. of Dallas, TX. It was simply too good not to share with everyone, although we doubt that you'll be finding too many of these in dealer displays!

The remaining chips illustrated are unidentified. If you recognize a chip, please share your knowledge with the collecting community by writing to me at the address at the beginning of this column. As always, my thanks to those who contributed to The Information Booth for this issue.



Thanks to those contributors mentioned above as well as: John Benedict, Jim Emery, Don Lueders, Allan Myers, Top Newby, Barney Rieffen and Ernie Wheelden.