The "Joints of Jeffersonville"

The Indiana Club Part

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with layout and art by Kevin Norris

t has been said that everything gathers dust and everything has a history. The gambling chips pictured in this manuscript are no exception. Each has a story to tell. The worn nicked edges and cigarette burns attest to the hours of play in the smoke filled "Joints of Jeffersonville."

The Primary Question

Why are all of the "Indiana Club" chips in pristine condition? All other known chips from the Jeffersonville area exhibit extreme wear. This dichotomy was one of the first issues to spark my interest into searching for the story behind

the Indiana Club.



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The Indiana Club was

reportedly located at 5th Street and Missouri Avenue in Jeffersonville, Indiana. This is the story not only, of how the location was confirmed, but also about the people, events, and chips involved with the Indiana Club.

The deed books of this small river town in Clark County, Indiana, begin with the original land grant of 1783. The Commonwealth of Virginia granted 150,000 acres known as the Illinois Grant, to George Rogers Clark, his brother William Clark, and the other members of the Virginia Regiment. The records revealed that the northwest and southwest corners of 5th and Missouri Avenue were owned by The American Car Foundry. As the search continued, it was found that the northeast corner was a residence belonging to Clara Duitz. Having found no gambling establishment listed on any of the four corners and feeling that every option had been exhausted, the decision was made to forget about ever finding out who owned the elusive Indiana Club. However, the following events stuck in the back of my mind. On September 1, 1928, one Albert A. Duitz sold lot 8 of block 48, the southeast corner, to attorney James W. Sweeny, Esq. On September 4, 1928 (three days later), Mr. Sweeny sold lots 7 and 8 of block 48 back to Albert Duitz and his wife Clara. I'm not skilled in title searching, so I called in an expert. He confirmed that these two lots, did indeed, change hands twice in three days. There were absolutely no records of said property after that date. It appeared that block 48 had vanished.

Finally, after many years and many interviews, I met the 85 year old son of Maurice Wesley McBride, the owner of the Indiana Club. When asked why the chips were in such good shape, he just laughed and said "Well, I got out of the service in 1946 and was a box-man at the craps table for Dad at the Indiana Club. I went to Chicago to pick up dice and chips in 1947 and they closed us down in 1948."

Taylor Company records confirm the 1947 purchase date and the newspapers reported the details of the raids ordered by Jeffersonville Judge James L. Bottorff and carried out by Col. Robert Rossow and the Indiana State Police on the second day of January 1948. I now knew why all those chips were in such pristine condition. I will now tell you the rest of the story about the history of the Indiana Club.

Until recently it was difficult to trace the origin of chips in illegal clubs because they were often purchased and used under a veil of secrecy. Fortunately, Howard Herz of Gaming Archaeology, purchased the Taylor Company order records in 2001 and graciously made them available to collectors. Hopefully, these and other records will put a stop to the practice of falsely fabricating a name to go with a chip monogrammed with initials.

The Taylor Company records confirm that four colors of the Indiana Club "T" mold chips were ordered: red with yellow

hot stamp, black with yellow hot stamp, yellow with blue hot stamp and gray with blue hot stamp. Just as important, they also provided the address from which the chips were ordered.

During my second interview with the son, I asked about the ownership of the property where the Indiana Club was located. He replied that his Dad had owned the property from 1928 until 1950. At that time, the property was

condemned for the right-of-way for the Clark Memorial Bridge. When shown my drawing of the intersection at 5th and Missouri and the previously typed notes, he simply laughed and stated, "Sure, Dad owned it, but you wouldn't expect him to have a piece of property with an illegal gambling house in his own name, would you?" He just winked and told me to forget trying to find the records on that piece of property.

The reason the property could not be found in the original search is that the property had been condemned by the State of Indiana for the aforementioned ease-

Town Je	432 Miss ffersonvi lor "T" c	lle Sta		Indiana Club
Amount	Color	Style	monogram	Date Shipped
5,000	scarlet	spec	Yellow	4-5-47
3,000	Black	spec	Yellow	4-5- 47
500	Yellow	spec	Blue	4-5-47
500	Grey	spec	Blue	4-5-47
		\$25 Other side		

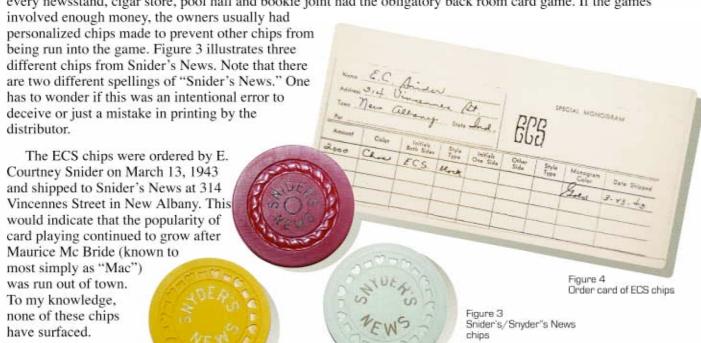
Figure 2 - Order card for the Indiana Club chips

ment and the State doesn't pay taxes to Indiana counties. However, the records at the Clark County Recorder Office reflected that Mary Duitz sold lots 7 and 8 of block 48 to the State of Indiana for easement on December 30, 1950. The search had been for documents that recorded ownership and were used for assessing taxes; therefore since no taxes were owed or paid, those records had been removed from the files.

Territorial Wars

The idea for the Indiana Club was conceived, out of necessity, in Snider's News in the early 1940s. Snider's News, located on the east side of Vincennes Street just north of Market Street in New Albany, Indiana, was owned jointly by E. Courtney Snider of Floyd County and Maurice Wesley McBride of Clark County. Floyd and Clark County have been bitter rivals over the years and the power brokers in control of the political machine in Floyd County forced Maurice McBride to give up his interest in Snider's News.

Like most newsstands and cigar stores of the period, the real money at Snider's News was not made by selling newspapers or cigars but, rather, by selling the daily racing form and by making book on horse races. Of course, every newsstand, cigar store, pool hall and bookie joint had the obligatory back room card game. If the games

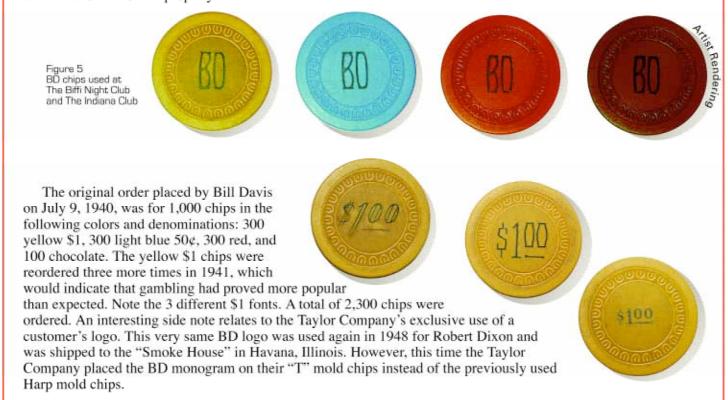


"Mac" had given up his job as a railroad detective and was looking for a partner to open an operation on his own turf in Clark County. His dream was to not only open just another bookie joint, but to open a full fledged casino with all the games of chance. He wanted poker, black jack, roulette, bird cage, craps and most of all a wire service to post the current results of horse racing from across the country.

Bill Davis and The Biffi Night-Club

Enter one Bill Davis into the story. He was a big fellow with a bank roll to match his stature. In 1942, Davis was having problems with the local authorities across the Ohio River in Louisville, Kentucky. He was running the Biffi Night-Club along with several other bookie joints, but the frequent raids and constant harassment was causing him to look for another location where the police were willing to "look the other way."

The Biffe Cafe opened in 1937 and became the Biffi Night-Club in 1938. It was located at 1423 Poplar Level Road in Louisville and closed it's doors in 1943. John A. Longo was listed as proprietor in the Caron's City Directory. However, in what seemed to be the accepted practice of the day, the deed book listed his wife Emerga Longo as the real owner of the property.



The harassment at Davis' Biffi Night-Club continued to increase and finally Bill Davis picked up his chips and moved across the river to Indiana. Thus, a verifiable link was found between these BD Taylor Harp mold chips being used at the Biffi Night-Club in Louisville, Kentucky, and at the Indiana Club in Jeffersonville, Indiana.

Location

As best it can be documented, the physical plant of the Indiana Club was taking shape in the early part of 1942. Bill Davis ordered 6,000 of the Harp mold B over D chips during the first three months of 1943 and had them shipped to 432 Missouri Avenue, Jeffersonville, Indiana. (see addendum 1 on back page) This chip order brings to light the interesting question. Why didn't they have these chips hot stamped with the Indiana Club logo? One answer may have been the uncertainty of their long term success. The actual name "Indiana Club" does not appear in the Caron's City Directory until 1947. However, one must note that due to the war, there was no Caron's City Directory published in 1945 or 1946. Being unable to procure phone books for those two years, made it difficult to determine what name was listed for the property. Further evidence of their dilemma is the fact that the property during this timeframe but may have been showing restraint in advertising it as a gambling parlor.

Realtors are fond of saying that there are only three things to consider when purchasing property. Location, location, location. "Mac" had found a perfect location on Missouri Avenue. Missouri









Figure 6 - B over D chips ordered by Bill Davis for The Indiana Club

Avenue and Court Avenue were the only approach roads to the newly constructed Municipal Bridge. This meant that anyone traveling across the bridge, whether going to or from Louisville, had to pass by the Indiana Club or the other gambling joints on Court Avenue. As a further bonus, the Jeffersonville Coach Line passed by every fifteen minutes. As a courtesy, a dish of bus tokens was located near the front door for the patron's convenience.



Timing is everything and in this case, Maurice McBride hit the home run. The Municipal Bar, owned by Jimmy James, had had the very best location. It was located right at the entrance to the bridge. However the Municipal Bar had been shut down in 1937, following a machine gun shooting at Walter's Place on U.S. Highway 31-E and Applegate Lane in Clark County. Shortly after, Judge James L. Bottorff was elected as circuit court judge on a promise to clean up gambling in his district. He had succeeded in shutting down the Greyhound Club and others operating out in the county in 1939. However, he refused to get involved with the clubs within the city proper. The illegal clubs along West Court Avenue and the Indiana Club on Missouri Avenue were flourishing during the 1940's because the locations were perfect, the timing was right, and even more importantly, the city fathers were willing to turn a deaf ear and look the other way. Of course, they also extended their hands with their palms up.

President Herbert Hoover arrived in Louisville for the dedication of the Municipal Bridge on October 31, 1931. It was the first span to carry only highway traffic between Southern Indiana and kentucky. U.S. Highway 31 became the main north/south artery for the Midwest. The Municipal Bridge, built for \$1.2 million, operated on a toll basis until 1946. Three things are credited with the early pay down of the bridge debt. First, was the heavy wartime traffic to and from the Indiana Ammunition Plant in Charlestown, Indiana. Second, was the heavier than expected ebb and flow of gamblers from Louisville, and finally, was the daily commute by the people who worked in Louisville and lived in Southern Indiana.

"Mac" also purchased the adjacent property to the south, at 430 Missouri Avenue, so as to insulate the Indiana Club from the neighbors and the neighbors from the casino. "Mac" owned the property, but the actual name on the deed from 1941-1944 was T.R. Donahue. The house that he purchased at 432 Missouri Avenue was a two story white frame house with a large back yard. The back yard was an important consideration, as that is where they made the large concrete block addition which became the gambling arena.

To gain entrance to the Indiana Club, one had to pass by the doorman standing in the portico. Once past this point, your choice was to either go up the stairs to the restaurant or down the hallway, past the cage and office, into the large remodeled open grand salon. They converted the upstairs to a full service restaurant called The Indiana Café. Comfort was king and the owners certainly didn't want their patrons leaving the property to go somewhere else to eat dinner. The Café served everything from sandwiches to the finest steaks and chops. Although they did not hold a liquor license, one was able to order the libation of choice from any of the many attractive waitresses that continually circulated around the floor. The grand salon contained a plethora of games of chance. There was chuck-a-luck, bird cage, big wheel, several craps tables, blackjack, poker and a large sports book with chalk boards proclaiming all the horse racing information that the Western Union Wire Service provided. Since there were no telephones allowed at the actual horse tracks, bets could be laid right up to post time. The race results came in over the "Wire" and the race was "called" by the club announcer. The payout limit for a \$2 bet on any race was: Win \$20, Place \$8 and Show \$4. For an additional fee known as "the vigorish", one would be paid "actual track odds."

Following the raid of 1948, the house at 432 Missouri became a dusty white elephant and sat idle for two years. No one wanted the two story building with the huge back room. But as another example of how a good location paid off, the State of Indiana confiscated the property in 1950 by The Right of Eminent Domain for the right-of-way to the newly renamed George Rogers Clark Memorial Bridge. "Mac" went into retirement following the raid in 1948 and passed away a year later while walking home from his favorite fishing hole.

Colley Sheppard

Colley Sheppard was a craps dealer at the Indiana Club from the time they opened until they were shut down in 1948. He had run floating craps games in several locations including the Shady Terrace Trailer Park located at the east end of Eastern Boulevard in Clarksville, Indiana. He owned enough chips to handle most games. Initially, his chips were used along with those belonging to Bill Davis at the Indiana Club. Unfortunately, the order cards for his chips are unavailable but it is known that there were the following colors: green, orange, violet and black. Very few of the violet chips are in the hands of collectors since these chips are currently being used in a private game.





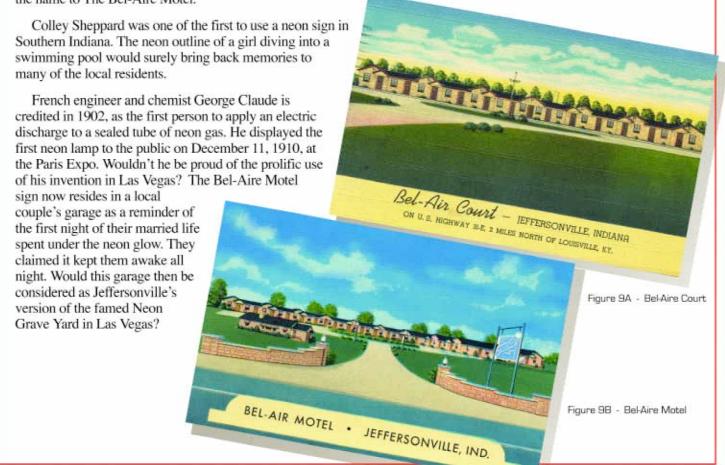




Cole C. Shepard a/k/a Colie Shepard a/k/a Coleman Shepard a/k/a Colley Sheppard

Figure 8 Colley Shepard's chips

The Caron's Directory revealed that Cole C. Shepard quit school in 1920 but he continued to live with his mother until 1930. During that time, he worked his way up from an apprentice to a helper at the American Car and Freight Company. In 1930, he worked as a roadhouse employee which may have proved to be the training ground for his future endeavors. Over the years, he changed his name several times. Starting in 1915, he was known as Cole C. Shepard. In 1921 he became Colie Shepard, in 1927, he became Coleman Shepard and in 1930 he was listed as Colley Sheppard. In 1937 and 1938, he was back to being called Coleman Shepard. In 1938, he resided on the west side of Homestead Avenue in Clarksville, Indiana. Colley, as he shall be referred to, was a very frugal person and saved most of his money. In 1940, he and his wife, Myrtel, purchased property at 600 E. U.S. 31 in Clark County about two miles north of Louisville, Kentucky. He built the Bel-Aire Court on this site in 1948. A search of the records proved difficult because of the many aliases on the deed books but all evidence would lead us to believe that he built the Bel-Aire Court with cash money as there were no recorded liens or mortgages on the property. This fact would further substantiate his frugal nature. Sometime prior to 1959, he changed the name to The Bel-Aire Motel.



The Club with many Aliases

Although the property at 432 Missouri Avenue belonged to Maurice McBride, it was listed in the deed book as belonging to Mary Duitz from 1929 through 1950. In 1937, it was listed as The Coy Restaurant, however, the ashtrays and dice were inscribed with The Indiana Café name. The chips which were ordered in 1947, carry the Indiana Club name. It is speculated that, in the early years, the owners were not convinced that they were going to be allowed to operate in the open and were not comfortable advertising. As the years passed, they became more secure and openly advertised the Indiana Club as a place to get "Sports Results." In fact, they advertised the Indiana Café as "The Finest in the Middle West."

This insecurity is consistent with the advice that "Mac" gave his son when he arrived home from the war. He

said, "Just remember that this is a business and right now times are good. Save your money because the good times may not last."



Figure 10

Dynamite box full of chips

In the early 1900's, Sunday afternoon was considered family time in Southern Indiana. The adults played cards and the younger set played board games. As a result, a deck of cards and a pair of dice were often in the pockets of the boys when they shipped out to war. The countless hours spent in fox holes and onboard troop transport ships were spent playing cards and rattling the bones. Dice were extremely popular because their size made them the ideal portable game. The board games of their youth were replaced by the tightly tucked blankets on their bunks. Stories abound about how many paychecks changed hands by the roll of the dice on a blanket. The War changed them all. They left as boys and came home as men. Some even

came home as cigarette smoking, whiskey drinking, craps

shooting men!



Figure 12 Loaded Dice

Dice

To understand why the owners of the Indiana Club went to the added expense of having their name hot stamped on their dice, the term "Bust Out Joint" must be defined. The term, "Bust Out Joint" came from the fact that they would "Bust" your bank roll before you were "Out"

the door. It was common practice in "Bust Out Joints", to have miss-spotted or miss-shaped dice run in and out of games, thereby making it impossible for the customer to win.

Figure 13 Holdout Dice

At the Indiana Club, the patrons were treated to fair games. For, after all, the odds were always in favor of the house. By having their name on the dice, it was believed that the patrons would view the game as being legitimate.

However, in all games during this period, the house as well as the patrons needed to be aware of outside influences. The "Dice Mechanics" as they were called often operated out of the trunk of a car. They carried a full line of straight dice of all sizes and colors, as well as the corresponding gaffed dice. They could match the dice in any game and they even had a hot stamp machine hooked to the car battery so they could stamp the correct dice with the desired logo. A team of Dice Mechanics operated undetected in the Jeffersonville area for some time before the police finally arrested them, ironically, in an illegal casino.

Dice of the era came packaged in sets of two as opposed to currently used sticks of six. "Gaffed" or cheating dice, as they were called, came in many forms and could be readily purchased from The Hunt & Company, The K.C. Card



Figure 14 - Miss-spotted Dice

Company or any number of other supply houses. Their catalogs listed page after page of different straight dice as well as the matching gaffed dice. The catalogs should have been required reading for any gambler of the period. Some of the gaffed dice available were: loaded dice, tapers, shapes, miss-outs, and passers, as well as Tops and Bottoms. Two of the easiest to identify, pictured above, are the loaded dice and the Tops and Bottoms. The loaded dice had extra weight added under the spots so as to influence the natural probability of a number being rolled.



Figure 15 Gaffed dice in a plane wrapper

The Tops and Bottoms were constructed on the principle that the player could only see three sides of a die at one time. Consequently, the die could be miss-spotted, so as to have only three different numbers, each number being repeated on the opposite side. A rule of thumb would be, "If you don't know what number is on the bottom of the dice, you had better retrieve what was left of your bank roll and exit quietly." Obviously the manufacturer didn't want the company name on the wrapper of gaffed dice; so, they were wrapped in a plain silver wrapper. Can you spot the gaffed dice in Figure 15.

Gambling during the War and the Post War Era

Although World War II took many men from the area, it also brought full employment to Jeffersonville, Louisville, and the surrounding areas. The Indiana Army Ammunition Plant in Charlestown was working around the clock. The Quarter Master Depot became the world's largest military belt and shirt factory and M. Fine and Sons were manufacturing "Olive Drab" trousers. The Colgate Palmolive Company and the American Car Works were also working at full capacity. The U.S. Navy took over the Howard Steamboat yards to build LST boats for the war.

Housing was tight and there are reports of people living in chicken coops just to be near work. Living conditions were cramped, but everyone was drawing overtime pay. The people were working long, hard hours and at the end of the day, they wanted

to relax and gamble. The man-in-the-street saw the chance of a big win as his only real chance of escaping the monotony of the work-a-day life. Money flowed like water from a broken fire hydrant. This surplus of disposable income, coupled with Jeffersonville's "look the other way" attitude toward gambling, contributed to the success of the

"Joints of Jeffersonville". It seemed that everyone wanted to

gamble and there was always someone

willing to accommodate.

Raids

Occasionally, the local police would conduct a raid, but these raids usually turned out to be a photo opportunity for the local newspapers. The gamblers were usually tipped off in advance so they could move out most of their equipment. The police would then make a big production by burning the remaining tip sheets and other non-essentials. Ironically, they always let the gamblers purchase back whatever had been confiscated.

Events Leading Up To The Final Raid

By the late 1940's, attitudes were beginning to change. People were outraged when Police Officer Emerson "Buck" Payne and Officer Paul Coleman were shot while waiting for a bank night deposit. In 1945, a man and a woman were murdered and their bodies buried in a wheat field near

Figure 16 - Smashing-absolutely smashing Courtesy of James N. Keen Collection, Special Collections, University of Louisville

the small river town of Rockport, Indiana. That same year a bomb was thrown onto the side walk in front of Antz's Café injuring several plant workers. Weary of the violence, the people began to demand reform.

It has been said that the straw that broke the camel's back was the open construction of a mega casino called Casino X located at Court Avenue and Mulberry Street in Jeffersonville. It is reported that Judge Bottorff was not consulted or asked for his blessing. This breach of decorum angered him to the point of calling in the Indiana State Police. The use of the city police was out of the question because they were on the "take" and wouldn't conduct a raid without first contacting the "Joints of Jeffersonville." The local police had more leaks than a proverbial sieve.

The Final Raid

The Jeffersonville newspaper, The Evening News of January 3, 1948, reported the following account of the final raid. "In several hours of swift, methodical work, the Troopers arrested 63 persons identi-

fied as operators and housemen, took the names of 368 patrons, confiscated more than \$8,000 and enough equipment to fill five big trucks. State Police identified the places raided as the 125 Club, the 322 Club, The Indiana Club, the 119 Club and the Club X. The raiders, directed by Capt. John J. Barton and Capt. Kermit E. Lewis, struck simultaneously from a number of meeting points. State Police said they confiscated equipment including setups for horse bookies, dice, roulette, chuck-a-luck and poker. Col. Robert Rossow, State Police Superintendent, who ordered the raids, said they were made in accordance the policy of the State Police Board."

The aforementioned 322 Club was actually Kenneth Horn's pool hall located at 322 Spring Street. There were 3 pool tables in front and a card room in the back. Upstairs, behind a steel reinforced panel door, was the horse book.

Figure 17 - Roulette Wheel with the date 1/2/48 and the initials JTP carved into the rim by one of the policemen

"JTP" carved into the rim by one of the policemen

It is interesting to read the article of June 10, 1948, in the Jeffersonville Evening News which documented that not only did the gamblers sue to regain their equipment and the cash, but they actually won the case.

"Western Union, not to be outdone, filed a suit to get back five tickers that had been confiscated in the raids. During the hearing held May 27, 1948 in Clark County, District Manager E. A. Schaeffer admitted that Western Union installed, serviced and maintained the tickers. One service man testified on the witness stand that he had worked on the tickers in each

of the gambling houses at least once a week but that he did not know gambling was

going on. Western Union got the tickers back."

After the raid to end all raids, one would assume that all the gambling in the City of Jeffersonville and Clark County would have ceased to exist. Well, that was not quite the case. Just as a leopard finds it hard to change its spots, Jeffersonians and the good people from Louisville and the surrounding area still wanted a little "Action". Gambling just moved from the public eye once again into the back rooms of bars, pool halls, liquor stores and the basements of private homes. Although the plush carpeted casinos and the sawdust floor joints were gone, gambling continued.

On October 28, 1972, James Bolus reported in The Courier-Journal: "Betting parlors are thriving in New Albany." He is further quoted as saying "A recent investigation into illegal bookmaking activities of walk-in establishments, which are said to be nonexistent in Louisville and Jefferson County, are flourishing in at

least three locations right across the Ohio River in New Albany." He continues to name names and locations in which he was able to place bets.

In 1980, the headlines of The Courier-Journal attest to the state of gambling. They read, "As Clark County has earned the reputation as a gambling haven, even for a stranger, placing a bet in Jeffersonville is easy."

During a well publicized trial in Federal Court in Indianapolis (118 miles north of Jeffersonville), the defense attorney put the question very simply to the FBI agent on the stand: "Wasn't it true, the attorney asked, that gambling-wagering on horse races, basketball games and the like, was well tolerated in Jeffersonville and Clark County? Isn't gambling a way of life down there, more so than in other areas?" The FBI agent answered in the affirmative.

Figure 18

Idiana Café

The Arrival of Legalized Gambling

Evansville became the first city in southern Indiana to have legal riverboat gambling when the Casino Aztar Riverboat had its inaugural sailing in 1995. Ironically, the boat was constructed at the Jeffersonville Boat Yard in Jeffersonville, Indiana. The Argosy followed in 1996. It was reported that over 6.7 million people had been on board an Indiana gambling boat during the year of 1996. Interestingly, that is more than the total population of the State.

Although Clark County [Jeffersonville] successfully defeated the referendum to legalizing Riverboat gambling in 1993, Harrison County gladly passed it in 1996, and in two short years, Caesar's Glory of Rome river boat weighed anchor. What was then billed as the largest river boat in the world, set sail for it's new home just 11 miles down stream from where "The Joints of Jeffersonville" once stood. Proving once again: "What goes around-comes around."

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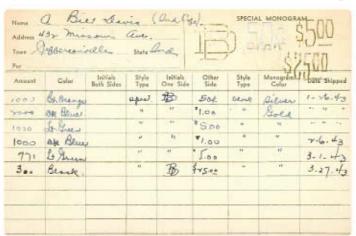


Finally, I would like to thank my wife for reading, correcting and rereading this manuscript, and for allowing me to have it cluttering our dinning room table for several months.

Disclaimer

This manuscript has been in the "works" for nine years. During that time, I have suffered two computer crashes. Many of my original notes were lost. If I have quoted, misquoted or failed to give proper credit, then I hereby beg forgiveness. I readily acknowledge that there will be inaccuracies of omission as well as commission.

If you have information or corrections to add to this manuscript, I welcome your comments.



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Figure 20 - Addendum

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