

The Platinum Collection

by Howard W. Herz

The Platinum Collection

In several months collectors will have a unique opportunity to bid (or watch others bid) on one of America's greatest gaming collections that combines gaming check rarities and gaming tokens. The Platinum collection has two distinct characteristics that set it apart from other collections. As a collection of gaming tokens, it is the definitive collection that has almost every known specimen issued by Nevada casinos. As a collection of gaming checks, it features some of the great rarities from Reno, Lake Tahoe and Las Vegas. As a combined collection, it has the distinction of being a collection that can not be reproduced and is the single finest collection of Nevada chips and tokens in the world. James Campiglia, a consultant to the collection, has represented many of the collection pieces as being very desirable and extremely rare. Gaming Archaeology's considers the gaming tokens to be abundant in rarities in super condition. The collection is named for the unique platinum dollar gaming token that the Franklin Mint made for William Harrah in 1965 and is considered to be the first Nevada gaming token.

Building the Collection

The Platinum collection has a unique provenance that has given it both depth and quality. Major portions of the collection are the original pieces acquired by Harvey's Resort Hotel starting in 1965. Additional rarities from other great collections as well as single pieces that have surfaced over the last decade have been added to the collection in recent years.



Harvey's original collection contained more than 26,000 gaming checks from around the world and around 3,800 different Nevada gaming tokens. Between 1965, when the collection was started and the early 1990's, when the collection was sold, Harvey's obtained many of the rarest and highest quality gaming checks and tokens that were available when collecting gaming items was in its infancy. In several instances over the years, entire collections were purchased and combined into a master collection of checks and tokens. A number of dealers assisted in the development of the token collection including Elta Gray and Frank Mantell. Checks and tokens were constantly upgraded and duplicates were traded for additional items.

In the early 1990's, Harvey's collection was sold to new owners and the gaming checks were auctioned over a period of 4 years. Several casino check groups in the collection were purchased by a single collector who continued to acquire additional material that specialized on the strip casinos of Las Vegas.

The entire gaming token collection remained intact and the new owner continued to collect as new pieces were issued by the casinos. In every instance, the best condition was

sought. In several instances entire collections were purchased to combine missing pieces with the master collection. These included the superb collection of Dr. Ariagno and the unique dies and samples of the 1965 gaming tokens produced by Osbourne Coinage Co. In the 1990's, the unique Harrah's platinum token was finally added to the token collection making it the most complete in the world.

Today, the collection represents the definitive collection of Nevada gaming tokens and contains numerous patterns, proofs and specimen strikes along with the standard business strikes.

Luck, fate and fortune have all played a hand in the creation of the Platinum collection. Despite being sold a number of times, many of the original checks from Harvey's collection are still in the group. Having been sold to some of America's top collectors of the day such as Gene Grossblatt, Bruce Landau and Jerry Wall, these pieces have once again found their way back into the collection.

Gaming checks and tokens are the tangible artifacts of a casino's existence. With many of the rarest and most historic checks and tokens included, the Platinum collection reflects the development of the Nevada gaming industry from the crowded club rooms of the 1930's to the Mega strip resorts of Las Vegas in the 21st Century.

As gaming checks and tokens continue to gain in popularity with collectors, this pioneering collection

will always be recognized as one of the defining collections of the hobby. With 2,400 plus gaming checks and more than 3,800 gaming tokens, the collection reflects the wide variety of gaming check and token styles that Nevada casinos have used for the past 74 years of legalized gaming. The Platinum collection reflects 40 years of collecting. Collectors and gaming historians can view the collection at www.chipsandtokens.com

A few of the highlights of the collection are illustrated on the following pages.



1965 (O) Diamond Jim's 50¢
One of two known examples of the rare issue struck only as samples in brass.
(Token shown enlarged)



1965 (O) Sonoma Inn
One of two known examples struck in brass. Considered one of the rarest of the 1965 token issues.



Harvey's
1965 - (MTE) Pattern



Crystal Bay Club
1965 - MTE



PLATINUM PROOF
HARRAH'S BUCK SLOT MACHINE TOKEN
PRESENTED BY THE FRANKLIN MINT
TO WILLIAM F. HARRAH





\$100 Aladdin Hotel
Limited Edition



\$100 Excalibur Hotel Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada



\$100 Monte Carlo Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada



\$100 Bally's Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada



\$100 Golden Nugget
Las Vegas, Nevada



\$100 Ramada Express
Laughlin, Nevada



\$25 Buffalo Bills
Jean, Nevada



\$100 Hard Rock Cafe
Las Vegas, Nevada



\$100 Rio Suites Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada



\$100 Caesars Tahoe
State Line Lake Tahoe



\$100 MGM Sands Hotel Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada



\$100 Stardust Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada

Gaming Checks from the Platinum Collection

1
\$5 Harrah's
Reno, Nevada - Circa 1950's

One of Harrah's first inlaid gaming checks. As Harrah's developed from a "tango" or bingo parlor to a full fledged gaming house, they began to expand on Virginia Street. At first they used plain hot stamped checks, but graduated to the more expensive inlaid checks in the early 1950's.

2
\$100 Colony Club
Reno, Nevada (1946-1964)

This small casino was located on the corner of Virginia street and Commercial Row in downtown Reno. The owners would not sell to their neighbor Harolds club but leased the roof to Harolds for a sign. Every month the check for the sign rental came in from Harolds and the rest of the gaming profits were gravy.

3
\$5 The Town House
Reno, Nevada - (Circa 1950's)

Featuring "The Riding Lesson" by Lou Hymer - a local illustrator's famous characterization of the dude ranch cowboy and two divorcees getting a riding lesson in a bar. The small club operated from 1932 to 1955. Its cozy atmosphere was favored by locals.

4
\$100 Bank Club Reno
Reno, Nevada - (Circa 1940's)

Reno's most famous club of the 1930's and 1940's operated by Bill Graham and James McKay. Originally opened in the basement of the building prior to the legalization

of gaming in 1931, the Bank Club moved up to the street level in April of 1931 with a "Grand Opening" that celebrated the legalization of gaming and its acceptance by Reno's citizens.

5
\$5 New China Club
Reno, Nevada - (1952-1971)

One of Reno's clubs that catered to clientele of all races during the days when Nevada gaming was segregated. Bill Fong operated the club and featured keno as well as a full line of table games.

6
50¢ Zimba's
Reno, Nevada (1969-1972)

A small club located in Reno's Commercial Row area. One of the more colorful checks issued in Nevada in a low denomination.

7
\$1000 Harold's Club
Reno, Nevada (1935-1970)

Possibly one of Reno's most world famous casinos. A high denomination check featuring a portrait of its founder Harold Smith in his cowboy hat. The club actively promoted their business around the world with signs that noted the distance to Harolds Club. After years of family ownership, the Smith family sold the casino to Howard Hughes in 1970.

8
\$100 RR (Reno Ramada)
Reno, Nevada (1980-1989)

A small casino operation to the northeast of the downtown center. The casino survived for 9 years but could not compete against the solid downtown clubs. Their brass core checks were an innovation in gaming checks. Dealers favored the weight

but sometimes complained that the edges were too sharp.

9
10¢ Palace Club
Reno, Nevada (1934-1979)

One of Reno's oldest clubs that was operating before the legalization of gaming in 1931. The club was located near the train station and could trace its roots to the days before gaming was prohibited in 1910.

10
\$2.50 Primadonna Club
Reno, Nevada (1955-1974)

Ernie Primm's club featured larger than life dancing girl statues over its entrance on Virginia Street. This style of gaming check features a "pie" color design. Ernie Primm was an experienced gambler from the card rooms of Gardena, California who moved to Nevada.

11
\$5 China Mint
Reno, Nevada (1960-1963)

One of Reno's Asian clubs located on Lake Street between 1960 and 1963. The owners, Frank Chung, Henry Leong, Andrew Young and William Bailly Sr. operated slots and table games. In 1963 they moved their license to the Happy Buddha Club.

12
\$20 United Club Reno
Reno, Nevada (1962-1964)

A small club located in Douglas Alley, an area where Reno's gaming started in the late 1920's. This club was owned by Gene and Tom Wong. They featured slots, 21 and a poker game. The Club closed in October of 1964.



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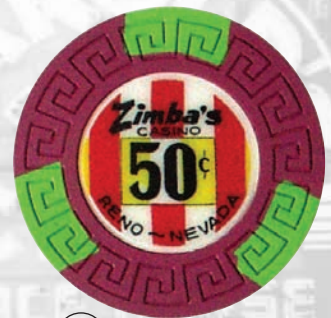
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25¢ Club Cal-Neva
Reno, Nevada (1962-)

Originally located in the heart of Reno on the corner of Center and Second Streets, this club has expanded over the years to include the entire block. Besides featuring table games and slots, the club's owners have licensed sports books in many other casinos in the state.

14

\$500 Circus-Circus
Reno, Nevada (1978-)

After a successful casino venture in Las Vegas, the owners of Circus - Circus bought a department store in Reno and converted it into a casino. Nevada's gaming control board certified that only two examples were not accounted for when they destroyed these high value gaming checks.

15

\$1 Christmas Tree
Mount Rose Highway S. of Reno
(1954-1959)

This small steakhouse featured mahogany broiled steaks and a view over Reno from the side of a mountain. Its "casino" usually had only a couple of table games. During the ownership of the restaurant by Guy and Gloria Michaels, Gloria's exotic lion pets were frequently seen.

16

\$25 Golden Bank
Reno, Nevada (1955-1962)

When the Tomerlin brothers bought the Golden Hotel they had no gaming experience. In 1955 William and James Tomerlin combined the Bank Club and the Golden Hotel casino by cutting a doorway in the wall between the two operation to create the Golden Bank. The casino operated until destroyed by a fire in 1962.

17

\$5 Frontier Reno
Reno, Nevada (1946-1956)

In the heart of downtown Reno, this casino featured the highest keno limit of \$10,000 in 1953. Only when Binion's in Las Vegas went to \$25,000 was the limit outdone. This club was absorbed into Harrah's in 1956.

18

\$100 Holiday Hotel
Reno, Nevada (1956-1962)

Originally opened in 1955 as only a hotel without gambling, the property failed. In 1956, Newt Crumley of Elko, Nevada purchased in interest in the property and put in gaming. The property became successful until the untimely death of Mr. Crumley in an airplane accident in 1962.

19

\$2.50 Horseshoe Club
Reno, Nevada (1956-1977)

This denomination was used to pay blackjack bets. The casino was in the heart of the downtown gaming block on Virginia Street and owned by a group of investors. The horseshoe sign was touted as the biggest horseshoe in the world.

20

100 Mapes Hotel
Reno, Nevada (1947-1982)

Downtown Reno's highrise hotel that featured a casino/dining room on the top floor. For years the Mapes offered Reno's top accommodations. This check features a metal wafer inlay popular in the late 1940's. The casino used two sets of gaming checks, one for the first floor casino and a second set at the Skyroom. This system allowed an accounting of the number of players who visited both casino areas.

21

\$5 Primadonna Club
Reno, Nevada (1955-1974)

The Primadonna girl sits on a slot machine and offers a drink and a keno ticket. One of the downtown core casinos on Virginia Street, this gaming check is one of the older checks from the casino.

22

(no value) Nevada Club
Reno, Nevada (1946-1988)

These chips were made for the exclusive use of Reno millionaire Laverne Redfield by the club owner Lincoln Fitzgerald. Their value could be determined at the time of play. Redfield and Fitzgerald had been friends from the days of the depression in Detroit where both men started their fortunes.

23

\$500 MGM Grand Hotel
Reno, Nevada (1978-1986)

The first destination resort hotel to be built in Reno. The MGM offered guests a complete resort destination facility. The MGM was predicted to be the start of a massive casino expansion in Reno, but over the years, casino growth has declined in Reno.

24

\$100 Riverside Hotel
Reno, Nevada (1954-1959)

The "hot stamp" check was used at one of Reno's oldest hotels. Originally dating from the 1880's, the hotel was rebuilt by George Wingfield in the 1920's with additions in the 1950's. The hotel still stands today and is used as an art complex. In its heyday, the Riverside featured top name entertainment and a full line of table games.



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\$100 Cal-Neva Biltmore
Crystal Bay, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1952-1956)

This hotel catered to players from San Francisco who visited Lake Tahoe's north shore in the summers. Originally operating on a seasonal basis, the Biltmore featured hotel rooms and a separate casino. In 1956 the hotel was purchased by Lincoln Fitzgerald and renamed the Nevada Lodge.

26

\$25 Cal-Neva (Lodge)
Crystal Bay, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1937)

These checks were featured at the famous Lake Tahoe lodge after a disastrous fire in May of 1937 resulted in a rebuilding of the property for an opening on July 4th!! Owners, Graham and McKay, exercised their considerable power in Reno to have the Lodge completed on time. The construction is still considered as some of the most beautiful at the Lake with the California/Nevada state line running through the Indian Room and the swimming pool.

27

\$500 Kings Castle
Incline Village, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1968-1974)

A high value check from this Lake Tahoe casino that ran afoul of gaming regulations and was closed by authorities. Financed by the teamsters Union, the casino operated for several years until authorities questioned their accounting.

28

\$25 Crystal Bay Club
Crystal Bay, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(circa 1950's)

This early check may be the only

surviving example of the denomination. This club featured seasonal gaming in the 1950's and 1960's.

Recently remodeled by new owners, the club now offers year round hospitality. The original casino housed a bowling alley with a spectacular open ceiling that now serves as the restaurant.

29

\$25 New Cal-Vada Lodge
Crystal Bay, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1956-1958)

Operating for a brief time in the 1950's, the casino was purchased by the Nevada Lodge after an arson attempt failed to ignite the building. The closed casino was used for storage until it was sold and remodeled as a brewery.

30

\$1 Cal-Neva Lodge
Crystal Bay, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1955-1958)

One of the various ownerships of the lodge issued this check in the late 1950's. Seasonally operating, the casino was open from Late May through Labor Day.

31

\$5 Joby's Monte Carlo
Crystal Bay, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1955-1956)

Operated by Joby Lewis for two seasons, the casino was bought by the Nevada Lodge and annexed as a bingo room. Mr. Lewis moved to Hawthorne, Nevada and opened a casino also named the Monte Carlo.

32

roulette Cal-Neva (Lodge)
Crystal Bay, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1937)

One of the beautiful pine cone motif roulette chips used on the casinos roulette tables. These chips were

issued following the May 1937 fire that destroyed the original casino.

33

\$5 Sierra Tahoe
Incline Village, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1965-1966)

This operation lasted for a single year on the north shore of Lake Tahoe. Today the building, on the shore of Lake Tahoe, operates as a restaurant only.

34

\$100 CLN (Cal-Neva Lodge)
(1948-1955)

One of the most intriguing lettering styles on a Nevada gaming check. One of the mysteries of this check is why the full name of the casino was not used. It is possible that this high denomination was used for special play or for a special game.

35

\$20 Nevada Club Nevada Lodge
Reno & Crystal Bay Nevada
(1958-1988)

A denomination that was popular in the 1950's that corresponded to U.S. currency values. In the 1960, almost every casino used the \$25 denomination that encouraged gamblers to play an extra \$5. Lincoln Fitzgerald operated both the Nevada Lodge and the Nevada Club in Reno.

36

\$100 Ta-Neva-Ho
Crystal Bay, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1937-1940's)

This small gaming casino eventually developed into the Crystal Bay Club. With seasonal gaming and several changes in ownership over the years the club had erratic operations until Johnny Rayburn took control and developed the property into the Crystal Bay club.



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\$5 Dopey Norman
Stateline, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(circa 1953)

Raymond N Reinberg operated a card game in Vallejo before moving to Lake Tahoe and operating a small club squeezed between the California state line and George Cannon's Gateway Club. Raymond's nickname "Dopey" was given by George Cannon and other friends for his more than frequent drinking.

38

\$5 Barney's Casino
Stateline, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1967-1983)

Started by Barney O'Malia in 1967, this small club had been the Circus Room. When Harrah's expanded Bill's Casino, they purchased Barney's and incorporated it into the expansion. Barney O'Malia's gaming career included gambling in Hawthorne and Fallon, Nevada.

39

\$5 Nugget
Stateline, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1965-1968)

This small casino was owned by a group of partners. Several years after the principal partner, Dick Chartrand, was killed by a car bomb, the casino was sold.

40

\$100 State Line Country Club
Stateline, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1953-1956)

Originally built in 1931, the club had a casino and show room. After a number of ownerships and casino operators, the club was purchased by Bill Harrah and operated for a year as Harrah's Stateline Country Club before it was torn down in 1959 for the building of Harrah's Tahoe.

41

\$5 South Shore Riverboat
Stateline, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1970)

A one season operation casino that lasted for two months in the summer of 1970 The single 21 table and six slot machines filled the club.

42

\$2.50 Harvey's
Stateline, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1963-)

Starting in 1945 as Harvey's Wagon Wheel Saloon & Gambling Hall, Harvey and Llewellyn Gross built a small restaurant into Lake Tahoe's first high rise hotel. By staying open during the hardest winters and working 20 hour shifts, they managed to survive the seasonal tourist fluctuations of the Lake.

43

\$100 John's Tahoe Nugget
Stateline, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1981-1991)

John Fultz purchased the South Tahoe Nugget from the estate of Richard Chartrand and operated the club for 10 years. After ten years of operation the casino was again sold.

44

\$25 Harrah's Club
Reno and Lake Tahoe
(1956)

Bill Harrah purchased George Cannon's Gateway Club on the west side of highway 50 in 1955. At the time Harrah's Club had a logo featuring a sultan with his harem. This logo was a part of Harrah's famous campaign slogan "I hit the jackpot at Harrah's". A local rumor has it that someone once commented that the chip was Bill Harrah and his wives - a quip that resulted in the demise of the logo.

45

\$2.50 Sahara Tahoe
Stateline, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1965-1983)

The Del Webb corporation leased land from Park Cattle Co. and built a hotel casino at Lake Tahoe. Taking the name of their flagship property, the Sahara in Las Vegas, they created the Sahara Tahoe. This \$2.50 blackjack check featured their Lake Tahoe logo.

46

\$20 Sahara Tahoe
Stateline, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1965-1983)

In 1965, the Bud Jones company developed a metal center plastic gaming check. This example from the Sahara Tahoe is one of the earliest checks of this type. The \$20 denomination was frequently used for baccarat tables.

47

Tahoe Village
Stateline, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1949-1951)

This metal wafer roulette chip is one of a series featuring the recreational assets of Lake Tahoe. The Tahoe Village featured a full line of gaming. Located about one mile north of the stateline, the property overlooked a meadow that went down to the lake.

48

\$100 Sky Harbor
Stateline, Lake Tahoe Nevada
(1949-1951)

Located about a mile north of the stateline, Sky Harbour was south Lake Tahoe's only airport. A small casino was located near the highway 50 end of the runway. Operating seasonally, the club featured full gaming and a showroom.



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49
\$100 Golden Nugget
Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada
(1970's)

From the casino that was the focus of downtown Las Vegas for decades. The golden Nugget was first opened in 1946. Its colorful entrance symbolized the bright lights of Glitter Gulch, the tacky name for Fremont St.

50
\$5 Boulder Club
Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada
(1931-1960)

The Boulder Club was considered as a working man's joint. It gaming checks featured the image of Boulder Dam, the club's namesake. The pattern of arrows and dice around the center inlay is the manufacturer's "mold" pattern. This "arrow-die" mold is one of the most popular with collectors and this issue of the "Boulder Club" is one of the top 10 checks from Las Vegas.

51
\$25 El Cortez Hotel
Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada
(1947-1963)

This gaming check is a classic example of the artwork of the 1950's. For years the hotel was operated by Jackie Gaughan, the dean of Las Vegas gamblers. Customers could find Jackie picking up papers from the carpet or just looking around at the action.

52
\$1 Fremont Hotel
Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada
(1956-1985)

This classic "arrow-dice" mold gaming check is one of the more colorful issued by the hotel. Its attractive colors and early issue make it one of the more desirable checks for collectors.

53
\$5 Lucky Casino
Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada
(1963-1967)

At the present time, this is the only known example of this check that is undrilled. It is one of the super checks from downtown Las Vegas. Like other casinos in the area, this operation was bought by the Golden Nugget and its building incorporated into the Nugget block.

54
\$25 Binion's Horseshoe Club
Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada
(1951-1958)

Benny Binion was a true gambler. His Horseshoe Club remained one of the purest gambling houses in Las Vegas. Your first bet was your limit. This club held a number of firsts including a single million dollar roll of the dice on the craps table to the World renowned World Series of Poker. This check is one of 7 in collections.

55
\$5 Cotton Club
Las Vegas, Nevada (Westside)
(1947-1948)

The Cotton Club was located on the West side of Las Vegas. In the segregation days of Las Vegas even the most famous entertainers like Sammy Davis Jr. had to stay in this section of town.

56
\$1 The Mint
Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada
(1957-1966)

This casino was opened by Sam Boyd and a group of investors. The casino was slowly expanded as other adjacent properties became available. In 1966 the Del Webb corporation purchased the property and built a

hotel. The crown mold on this check is from the T.R. King Co. of Los Angeles.

57
\$25 Pioneer Club
Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada
(1948-1956)

The pioneer was located in the heart of Glitter Gulch. It's famous sign featuring the cowboy Vegas Vic dominated Fremont street and for years was the symbol of Las Vegas. The casino is now a gift shop, but Vegas Vic continues to wave.

58
\$25 The Westerner
Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada
(1954-1960)

Located at 22 Fremont street, the Westerner was once operated by Benny Binion when he first arrived on the Las Vegas scene. The casino featured a western atmosphere in the heart of Glitter Gulch.

59
\$5 Las Vegas Club
Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada
(1951-1961)

The famous Las Vegas gaming check featured the one armed bandit slot machines that the Las Vegas club was famous for. These slot machines were housed in hand carved wooden statues of outlaws made by Frank Polk.

60
\$1 Silver Palace
Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada
(1963-1964)

This gaming check features a likeness of the U.S. peace dollar that circulated up to the silver crisis days of 1964 when rising silver prices drove the last of the silver dollars off of the gaming tables of Nevada.



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61
\$100 Dunes Hotel
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1983-1988)

With one of the largest neon signs on the strip, the casino specialized in junket flights from the east coast. With an adjoining golf course, the hotel was a choice property and when Steve Wynn saw the chance, he bought the hotel, imploded it and built the Mirage in its place. This check features the top section of the famous Dunes sign.

62
\$1 Milton Prell's Aladdin
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1966-1968)

Milton Prell's dream to build a resort hotel came true with the Aladdin in 1966. After two years of operations, the hotel fell on hard times and was taken over by the Parvin-Dorman group. This original issue gaming check was used in the card room of the hotel. At the present time, it is one of three known examples.

63
\$500 Milton Prell's Aladdin
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1966-1968)

This high value check is not only colorful but highly collectible because of its "pie" color combinations and its denomination. An original issue of the Aladdin in 1966.

64
\$25 Wilbur Clark's Desert Inn
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1950-1967)

Wilbur Clark's dream hotel was the Desert Inn. Although financial problems required that Clark take on additional financial partners, the Desert Inn was always considered to be the Clark's. Over the years

Wilbur Clark became one of the most outstanding hosts of Las Vegas. His golf Tournament of Champions became famous throughout the country.

65
\$100 Hotel Bonanza
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1967-1973)

The Bonanza was built on the corner of Flamingo and Las Vegas Boulevard when the strip was still developing southward. It operated for a few years until an enterprising man named Kirk Kerkorian purchased the casino and built the MGM Grand on the property. The Bonanza had a western theme but was never a great success.

66
\$1000 Desert Inn
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1988-2003)

After the days of Wilbur Clark, Howard Hughes and others, the DI and its golf course maintained a solid position on the strip. But all good things in Las Vegas have to make way for better things and today the once proud property of the DI houses the newest (for the moment) creation of the city in the form of the Wynn Hotel.

67
\$5 Ceasars Palace
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1966-1969)

The original issue of Caesars Palace featured Caesar on a couch. A modern tribute to the opulence of Rome and the Caesars all on the northwest corner of Flamingo and Las Vegas Boulevard south. Caesars quickly became the home of the high rollers in Las Vegas and still holds its own on the strip where a world of gilded glitz and glitter abound.

68
\$5 Dunes Hotel
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1955-1956)

The original Dunes gaming checks featured a giant Arabian palace guard complete with symitar and turban. As one of the rarest and most sought after gaming checks of the classic period of the mid-1950's, this check is a true treasure.

69
roulette Dunes Hotel
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1955-1956)

The roulette wheels of the Dunes featured their classic Arabian palace guard logo. One of the most popular roulette chip series for collectors, this yellow issue is one of 4 or 5 known to have survived over the years.

70
\$5 Hotel Dunes Card Room
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1970's)

This special use check has a non-negotiable value of \$5 for use in the card room.

71
\$5 Dunes Hotel Country Club
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1956-1980)

This check shows a portrait of the hotel as it appeared in its later years. This extremely hard to find check is popular with collectors.

72
\$25,000 Dunes Baccarat
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1989-1993)

This extremely high value check was strictly for high rollers in the Dunes' baccarat game.



61



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\$25 The Flamingo
Las Vegas strip, Nevada (1946)

Benjamin Siegel ordered these gaming checks from the B.C. Wills Co. of Detroit in late 1946 for his dream casino. A flat check with a metal wafer inlay was used on the craps tables.

74

50¢ Flamingo Capri
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1973-1979)

This small neighbor of the well known Flamingo began as a motel and a coffee shop. The coffee shop became a small casino with slots and then gaming tables.

75

\$25 El Rancho Vegas
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1949-1960)

Most of the old timers in Las Vegas will tell you that Bugsy Siegel did not start the strip - and they will point to the El Rancho Vegas as evidence. Built in 1944, the El Rancho was located on the corner of what is now Sahara and Las Vegas Boulevard. On June 17, 1960 the casino burned in a spectacular fire. The gaming check is one of those recovered from the fire.

76

\$100 The Flamingo
Las Vegas strip, Nevada (1946)

When the Flamingo opened, they used the B.C. Wills "Grecian design" checks on the blackjack tables as opposed to the smooth craps checks. Both issues had the metal wafer inlay. This classic original issue of the Flamingo was one of 19 found in a small hoard in the 1990's. The demand for this check far outstrips the quantity available.

77

25 The Flamingo Hotel
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1947-48)

One of the hardest to find checks of the Flamingo with only 2 known examples as of this date. A beautiful and classic check, this issue appeared after Siegel was gunned down.

78

Flamingo
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(early 1950's)

This smooth "crest & seal" roulette has the Flamingo's famous "bubble tower" that was put up in the early 1950's.

79

\$100 Flamingo
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1971-1990)

This issue of the Flamingo was made after the property was purchased by the Hilton Hotels. The gaming check is an example of a "house" mold. In the 1970's, a number of manufacturers offered customers the advantage of having a house mold rather than the manufacturers mold design. This additional security device is now used by most of the larger casino in the world. This Flamingo issue, although later in the history of the casino still merits considerable attention from collectors.

80

\$25 The Flamingo Hotel
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1967-1973)

This Flamingo issue was made on the "H" mold by the H.C. Edwards company of New York. A very rare and sought after issue by the hotel in the 1970's.

81

5 Hotel Last Frontier
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1942-1951)

A smooth style craps check of the "crest & seal" type made by B.C. Wills for the hotel during the war. The Hotel Last Frontier featured a number of original buildings brought in from ghost towns in Nevada and California.

82

\$25 New Frontier
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1955-1956)

In the 1950's, the Frontier Hotel caught the fever of the modern times and remodeled. After a year and a half of operation the hotel folded - apparently caught between its historically oriented western past and the modern era of formica and modern styling. The property morphed into the Silver Slipper Gambling Hall.

83

\$500 Frontier Hotel
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1967-1988)

Shortly after its opening by a group of investors, Howard Hughes swooped in and purchased the property. Located just a short distance from his recluse quarters at the Desert Inn.

84

\$5 New Frontier
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1955-1956)

One of the very few gaming checks made for a Nevada casino with the "hourglass" mold of Rigdon & Co. This check and an earlier issue on the "rectangle" mold of the Langworthy company apparently were used in the short 18 months of operation of the casino.



73



74



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85

\$25 El Rancho Vegas
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1944-1947)

Wilbur Clark operated the El Rancho Vegas in the mid-1940's. As the first casino/hotel on what was to become the famous strip, the El Rancho became famous as a Las Vegas landmark.

86

\$500 Jockey Club Baccarat
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(Gaming Never Opened-1980's)

Sometimes opening a casino can be a catch-22 situation. Licensing is a major consideration and more than once a group has been denied a license at the last minute. Ordering the gaming checks takes time for production. In the case of the Jockey Club, the checks were ordered, but the license did not come through.

87

\$5 Hacienda
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1956-1972)

From the first ownership of the casino, this check is one of the more popular checks with collectors with possibly only two known examples.

88

\$25 Landmark Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada
(1969-1978)

The Landmark was located near the Las Vegas convention center, rather than on the traditional strip. It was built in 1967, but the original builder/owner went into bankruptcy. Howard Hughes purchased the property in 1969, completed construction and had a grand opening on July 1, 1969. Bob Maheu, who managed the Hughes properties, recalled the opening as "frantic" as the eccentric

Hughes refused to make final arrangements for the opening until the last moment.

89

\$10,000 Little Ceasars
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1970-1994)

Despite its small size, Little Ceasars had one of the largest trades in sports betting in Las Vegas. High value sports bets were encouraged, thus the large denominations, especially for a small casino.

90

\$100 MGM-Sands
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1988-1989)

When Kirk Kerkorian sold his original MGM Grand property he purchased the Sands, Desert Inn, Marina and the Tropicana Country Club to park his money for the building of the new MGM Grand. His brief ownership resulted in an issue of gaming checks for his ownership under the name of the MGM and each of these casinos.

91

\$5 MGM Grand
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1976)

This bicentennial check is one of a dozen or so issued throughout the state. A number of casinos issued checks in 1976 that were termed "patriotic" with red, white and blue colors, but not with any direct statement of 1976 or "Bicentennial".

92

\$1,000 MGM-Desert Inn
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1988-1991)

One of Kirk Kerkorian's purchases following the sale of the original MGM.

93

\$5 Riviera Hotel
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1955)

This is one of the earliest issues of the hotel. The "balloons" or colored circles were used on the stationary for the grand opening press kit. This hotel is one of the last remaining of the group of hotels that were built in the 1950's as the Las Vegas strip expanded to the south.

94

\$25 Royal Nevada Hotel
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1955-1957)

When Sid Wyman and Charles "Kewpie" Rich had built the the Sands into a successful casino, they wanted their own resort hotel. After two years of financial problems with their new venture, they sold to the Stardust. The Royal Nevada Hotel was blended into the Stardust property.

95

\$25 Sahara Hotel
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1952-1961)

The property was built by the Del Webb corporation (who would eventually own the hotel). The second issue of gaming checks featured the hotel portico. This gaming check is presently the only known example of the denomination.

96

\$5 Sahara Hotel
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1952)

The first issue of the Sahara featuring the pyramid and Sphinx logo. This crest & seal is certainly in the top 10 issues of Las Vegas. We believe that the smooth surface check was used on the craps table.



85



86



87



89



88



92



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91



93



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97

\$5 The Sands
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1952-1967)

The Sands hotel second issue gaming check. This example is drilled (cancelled) in two places. Despite the cancellation, it is one of the rarest strip hotel gaming checks. The Sands featured the motto "A place in the sun." This incredibly rare check now has its own place in the sun.

98

\$100 The Sands
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1952-1967)

This is considered to be the 4th gaming check issue of the casino. The large sunburst and the stylized logo make it both a rarity and classic strip check. The Sands made history with entertainers like Frank Sinatra and the "rat pack".

99

\$25 The Sands
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1952-1967)

One of the more colorful issues of the Sands hotel from its early years. "A place in the sun" logo dates the piece to the early 1950's.

100

\$100 Silver Slipper
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1951-1956)

Certainly one of the top 10 best gaming checks from the Las Vegas strip casinos. The early zig-zag mold is combined with a high value to give this check spectacular popularity. Presently unique.

101

\$25 Silver Slipper
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1956-1968)

This classic gaming check has a secret. Hidden in the scroll work below the denomination is the name of one of the owners of the casino - "Shelby Williams". This intricate design work was recently discovered by collectors when the original art work for the check was examined.

102

\$25 Stardust
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1955-1958)

The first issue of the casino in 1955. The logo for the casino bares a striking resemblance to one that was in use in Covington Kentucky in the 1940's by one of the casino's owners - Moe Dalitz. This interesting piece is popular with collectors. The casino is one of the few surviving 1950's strip hotels.

103

\$25 Thunder Bird Hotel
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1949-1964)

Certainly an early issue of this casino as the thunderbird appears on the grand opening key chains. The "arrow-die" mold makes this a very collectible check and its rarity is the reason that it is missing in most collections.

104

\$5 Thunderbird Hotel
(1949-1964)

The colorful thunderbird is taken directly from the large sign that stood at the edge of Las Vegas Blvd. The logo is one of the more colorful in Las Vegas.

105

\$25 Hotel Thunderbird
Las Vegas strip, Nevada
(1949-1964)

Listed as the 6th issue of the hotel, this denomination is very hard to find in any condition. Considered to be in the extremely rare category, this check is missing in almost every collection.

106

50 Cents Tropicana
(1968-1972)

One of the most colorful checks issued in a "pie" configuration of colors. This casino is still the home of one of the longest running floor shows - the Folies Bergere.

107

\$500 The Sands
(1960's)

In an attempt to cater to the customers who preferred the elegance of Monte Carlo, several Las Vegas casinos tried Baccarat in the 1960's. Using French style "plaques", the casinos ran the game in the subdued atmosphere that would be found in French casinos. The games failed to attract sufficient players and the casinos discarded the French style plaques and jetons. This great example from the Sands has two "lunettes" and a serial number.



97



98



99



100



101



102



104



103



105



107



106