

SUPERWEIGHTS WITH X-RAY VISION

Dr. Allan L. Myers

My phone rang. The voice on the other end was not Candice Bergen, the dime lady. It was Doug Saito, the dime man--the guy responsible for increasing the price of low-value chips over 8000 per-cent by writing an unfinished series of articles in this publication. Doug was excited--he had broken a Christy & Jones hat & cane chip and discovered a metal center hidden under the paper inlay. It was a small lead disc used to add weight.

I then remembered that I had a \$25 Sierra Tahoe chip of the same mold design, that was drilled as a cancellation. It also had an inlay missing on one side that revealed just what Doug was referring to.



Sierra Tahoe drilled



Reverse, inlay missing



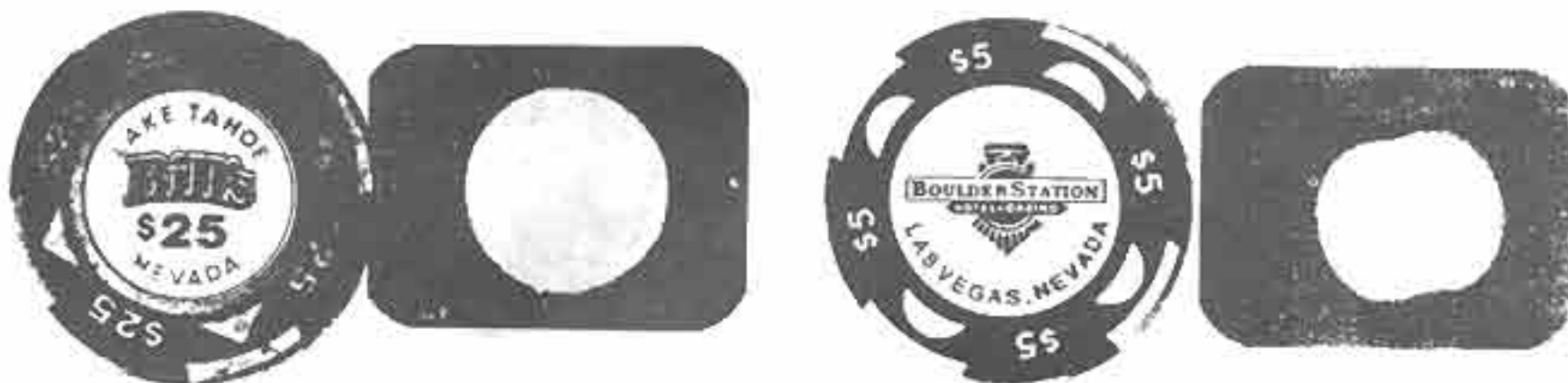
X-ray

My inquiring mind began to wonder whether other chips were weighted. I knew about the obvious ones, the Reliable brass core chips (the real heavyweights), the die-cut metal wafer inlays and the Paul-Son metal inlays of the 1970's. I said to myself, "Self, why don't you x-ray a batch of chips of assorted mold designs and see what develops?"

I proceeded to x-ray over 100 chips of 32 different mold designs. In radiology, materials that have a high molecular weight such as metals, will block the x-rays and appear to be white (radiopaque) on the film. If the rays can easily penetrate the material, it shows up black (radiolucent). Objects in between will be shades of gray.

Most of the chips that I x-rayed were ones with paper or linen inlays which would cover the weight if it were present. The only hot-stamped chips that I x-rayed were a Christy & Jones, Castaways, S1 Free-play, half pink and half cream with a dovetail and two large-key chips with copper specks mixed into the clay. The x-rays of these three chips would not photocopy well enough for me to illustrate. There was not enough differentiation among the gray shades of the dovetail or of the copper specks of the large-key chips.

The only chips that I found with metal weights, besides the aforementioned brass cores, die-cuts and Paul-Son metal inlays, were Christy & Jones chips with paper inlays, Langworthy Horse-head Left, Bud Jones plastic injection molds and one H.C. Edwards ("H" mold). The other Bud Jones molds such as Dice & Cards and Nevada, both incused, and Paul-Son Hat & Cane, did not appear to be weighted.



Bud Jones injection mold chips with x-rays to show metal weights



More Bud Jones injection mold chips with x-rays

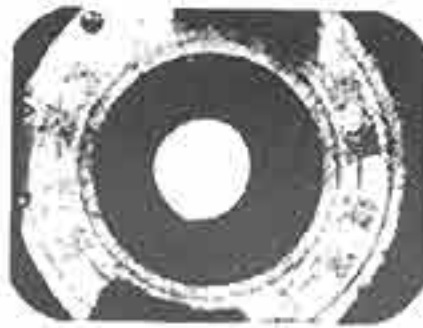


Langworthy Horsehead Left mold chip with x-ray to show metal weight

The following series of photos show a chip, courtesy of Archie Black, which reveals all of the individual parts of the chip, the paper inlay and the lead weight.



The Mint, C&J mold



X-ray of same



Inlay removed to show weight



Inlay



Same chip with weight removed



Lead weight

Paul-Son hat & cane chips do not appear to have lead weights and all Christy & Jones hat & cane chips with paper inlays do appear to have weights.



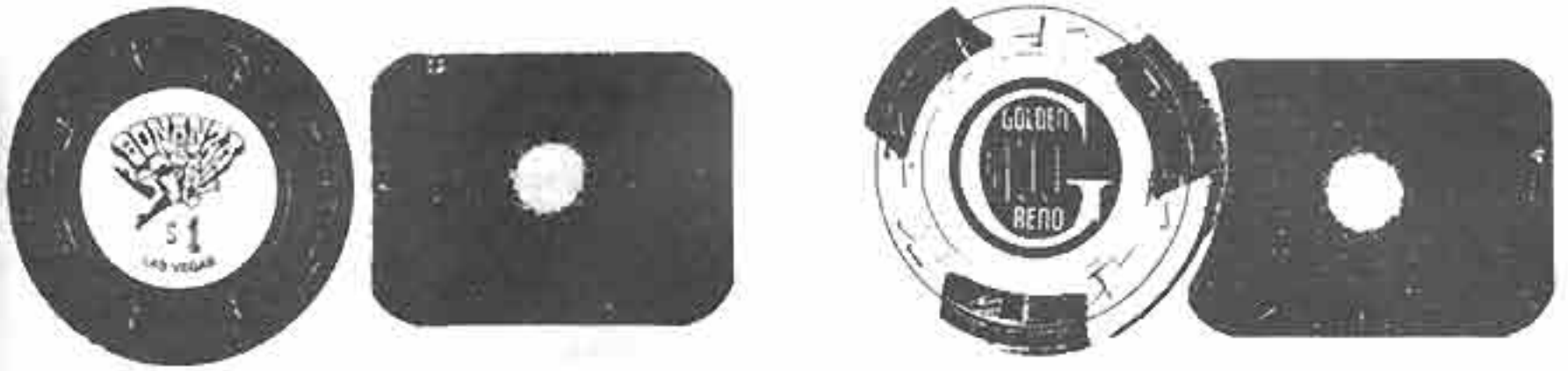
Paul-Son Auto Truck Plaza chip and x-ray



Paul-Son Arizona Charlie's and x-ray

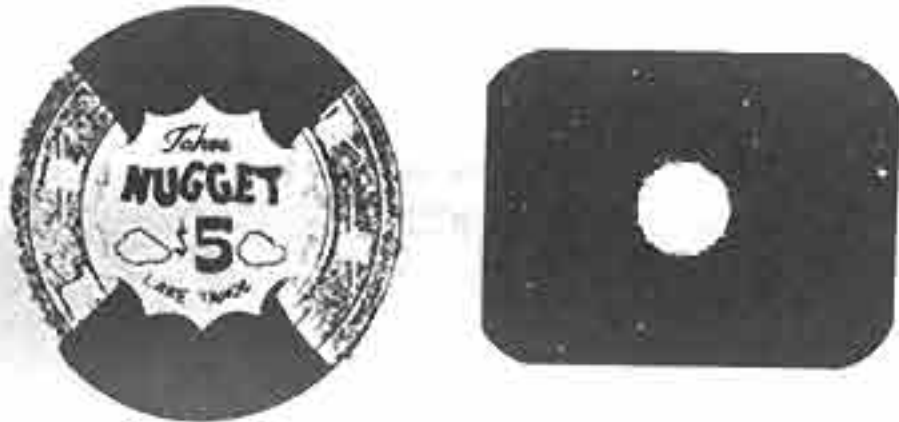
No lead weights are seen on these photos.

Christy & Jones chips showing lead weights:



Christy & Jones Bonanza chip and x-ray

Christy & Jones Golden chip and x-ray



Christy & Jones Tahoe Nugget chip and x-ray

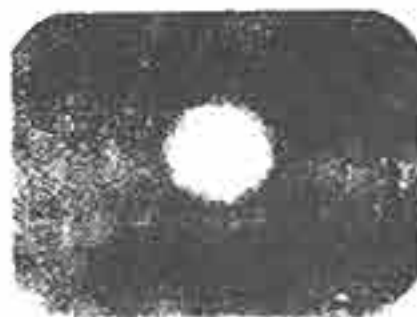
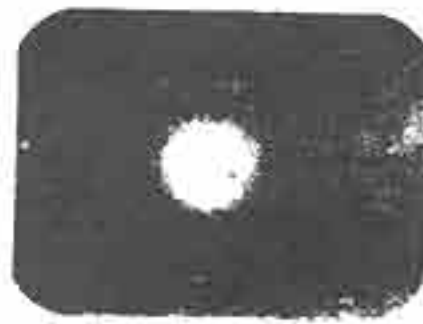
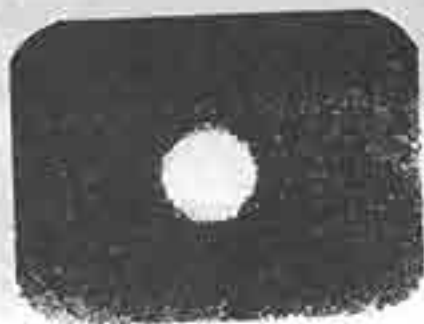
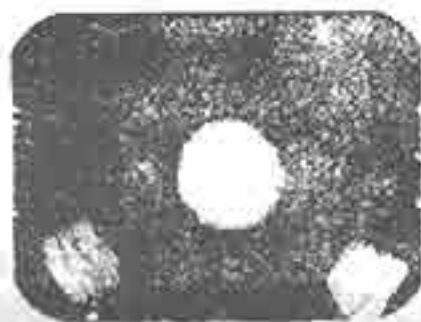
Silver Palace chips, Las Vegas
\$1 Dark green w/ 3-cream
\$5 Blue-gray w/ 3-yellow
\$5 Navy w/ 3-yellow
\$25 Red w/ 3-green
\$100 Cream w/ 3-black



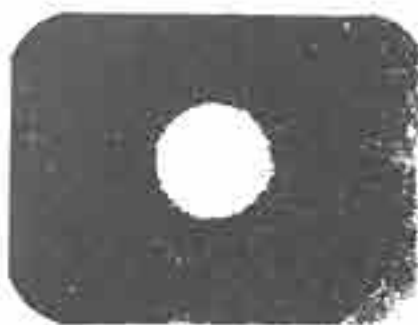
I was confused when I x-rayed the five chips of the Silver Palace, on the previous page. I have prided myself on thinking that I knew the difference between Christy & Jones and Paul-Son hat and cane mold designs. C & J molds have shiny, smooth hats and Paul-Son molds have dull, bumpy hats. Sure, the C & J molds appeared to be deeper and the canes thinner, but so what? If the hats have shiny, smooth surfaces--they are Christy & Jones. But, hey, "weight" a minute! Only the SI Silver Palace, the one with the scalloped inlay and "Myron Lewis" written on the palace wall, has shiny, smooth hats! How come all five chips have lead weights as shown on the x-rays?

There are several possible explanations. The Silver Palace opened in 1956 and closed in 1964 and Myron Lewis's ownership was 1961-1964. Christy & Jones started their business about 1955 and lasted until about 1964 or 1965 when they split into The Bud Jones Co. and Paul-Son Co. Were some of the lead weights inserted into Paul-Son chips? Were some of the same chips shared by both companies during the early days? Some shiny, smooth hats were used into the 1970's. Did Paul-Son keep using Christy & Jones chips that were made by the Burt Co. until the supply was exhausted and Paul-Son started making their own chips? Or maybe, per chance, there never was a cut and dried method of recognizing the difference between the hat & cane molds. Maybe all of the Christy & Jones hats were not shiny & smooth!!!

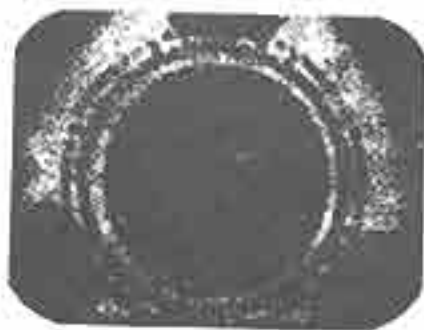
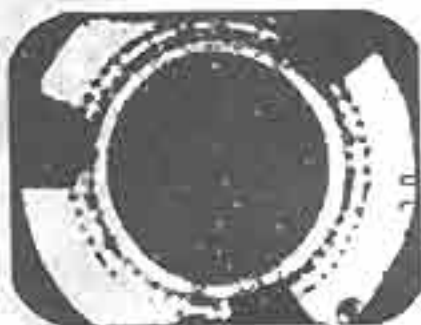
X-rays of the five chips,
Silver Palace, Las Vegas
showing lead weights



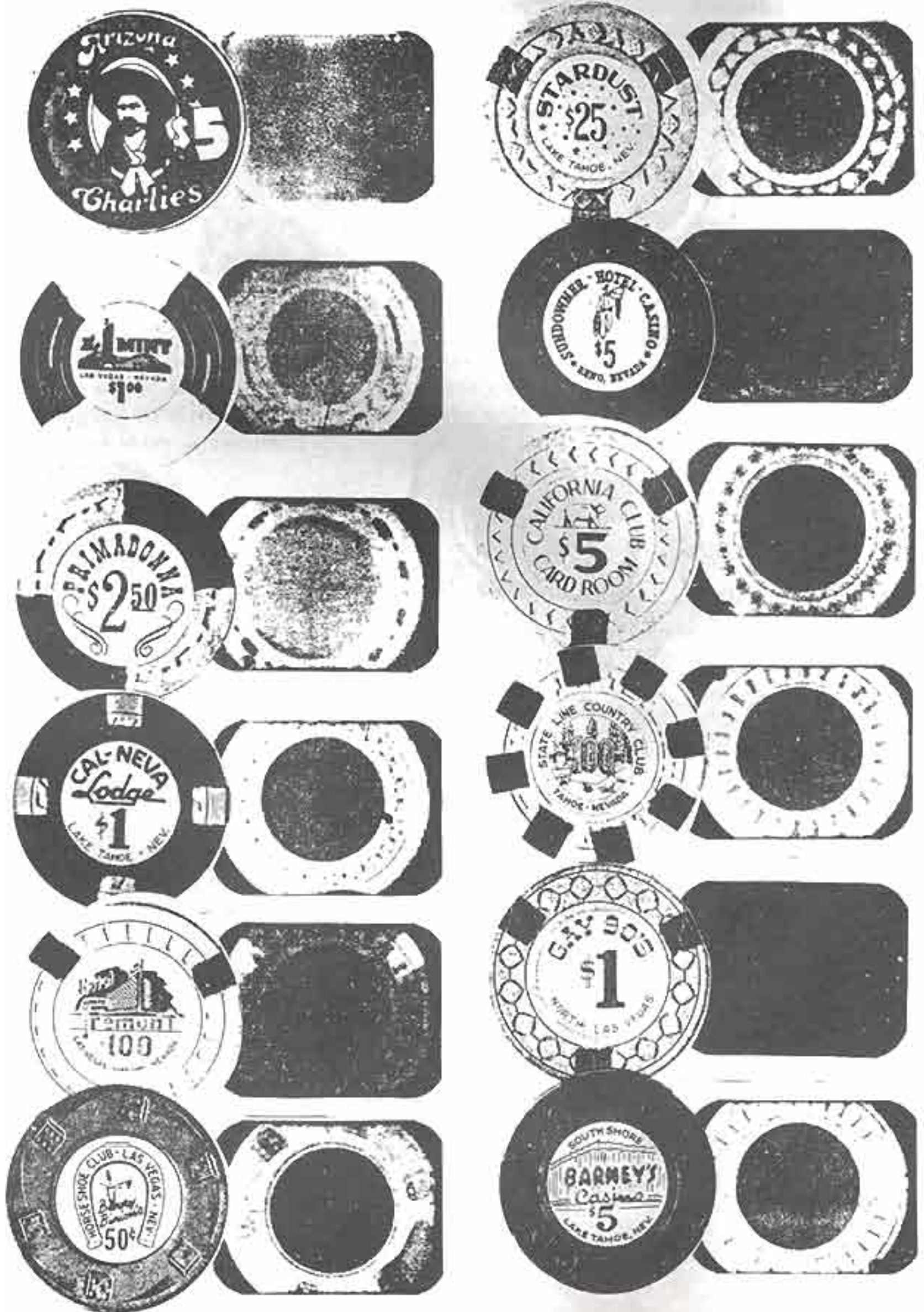
For some unknown reason, this Caesars Palace fifty center is the only H. C. Evans mold chip of the ten that I zapped, that has a lead weight. The chip and x-ray are shown below.



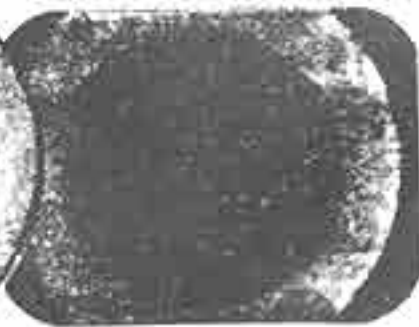
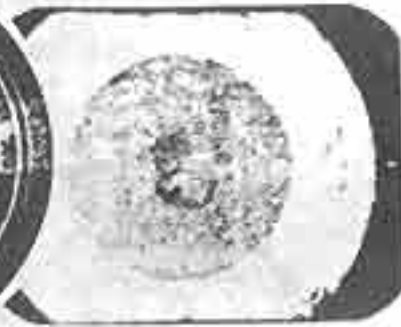
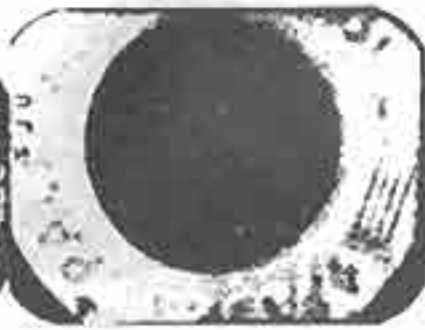
Other examples of H. C. Evans chips and x-rays without lead weights



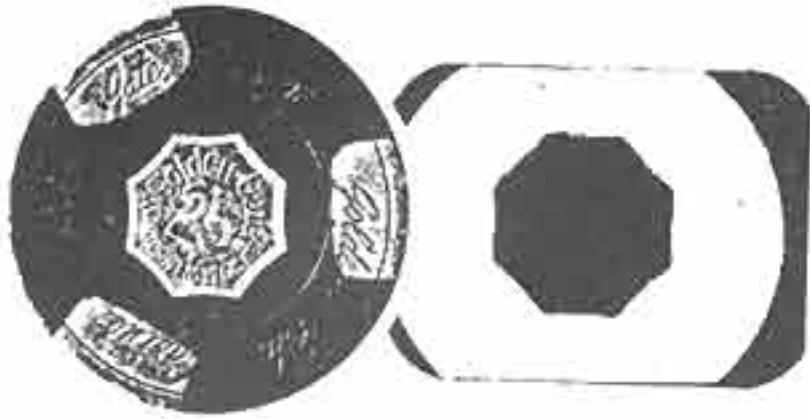
Various other mold designs and their x-rays that show no metal weights



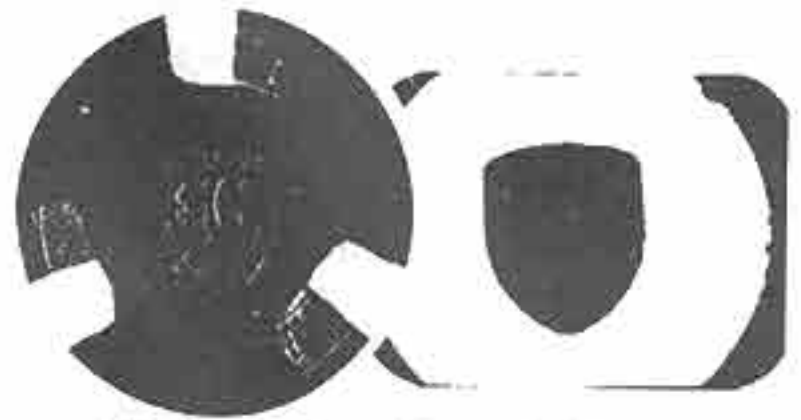
You want to see more? O.K., here's more!



When I x-rayed two Paul-Son, Hat & Cane, metal inlay chips, the results were amazing!

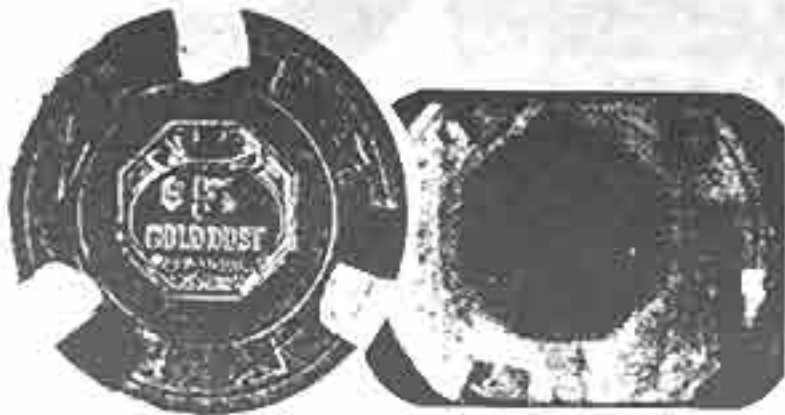


Golden Gate, Las Vegas S25 & X-ray

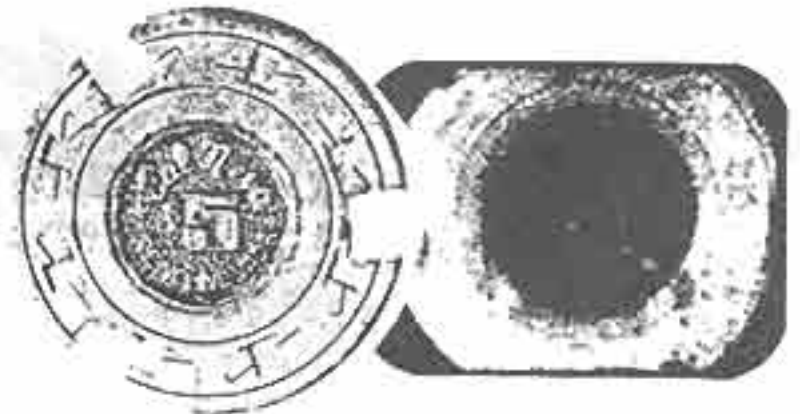


Hacienda, Las Vegas S100 & X-ray

Imagine my surprise when the inlay area on the chip showed up as black. Now, "weight" a minute, again!—metal should be white, not black, right? Hmmm, I said to myself, "The Paul-Son metal inlays are plastic!" I x-rayed more of my Paul-Son metal-plastic inlay chips and they all revealed the same—a black area for the inlay.



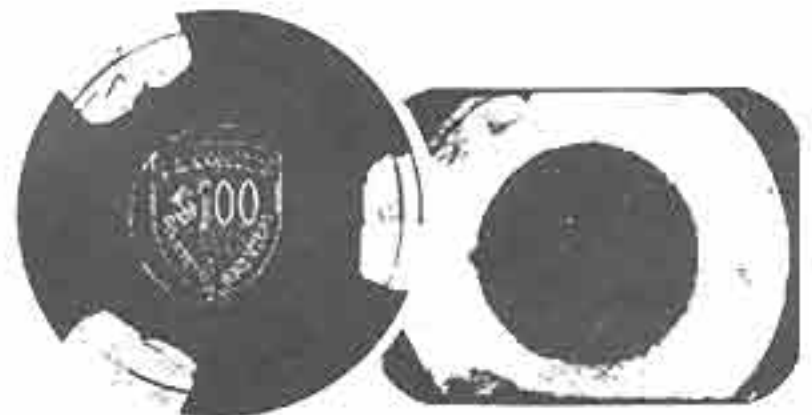
Gold Dust, Reno S5



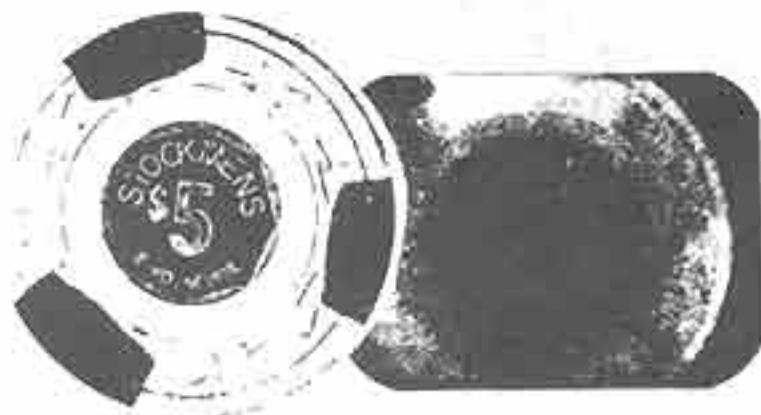
Cal-Neva, Reno S5



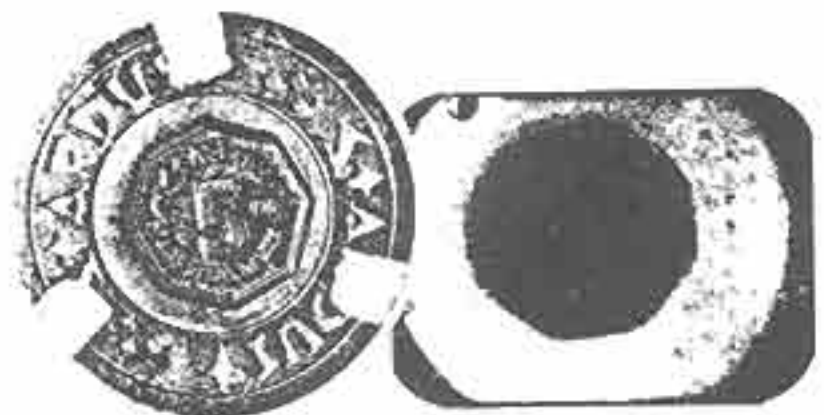
El Cortez, Las Vegas S1



El Cortez, Las Vegas S100



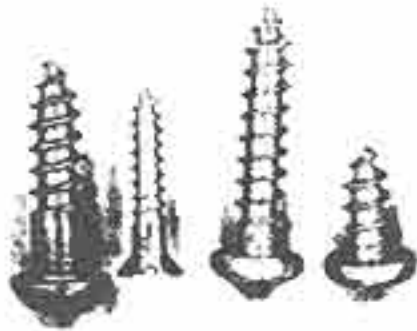
Stockmen's, Elko S5



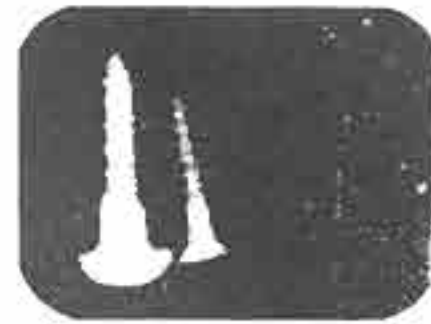
Stardust, Las Vegas S5

I then proceeded to spread this revelation throughout the chip collecting community, feeling proud that I had made a remarkable discovery. One of our collectors, not me, was intelligent enough to call The Paul-Son Co. and inquire of the composition of their inlays of the 1970's. The inlays are cast anodized aluminum, which certainly is a metal, but of a low molecular weight which would allow x-rays to pass through.

With my head now hanging between my legs, I went to a hardware store and purchased two steel and two anodized aluminum wood screws. The resulting x-ray showed the steel screws very plainly on the left half of the film. On the right half where I had carefully placed the aluminum screws, there was nothing--zilch--nada!



2 Steel & 2 Aluminum Screws



X-ray of the Same 4 Screws

I asked several of my dental friends if they were aware that aluminum appears radiolucent (black) on an x-ray film? The only one who knew was Dr. Ken Craig, a fellow chip collector. His son had swallowed a tab from an aluminum soda can several years ago. They x-rayed his lungs to see if it was there and they never found it. It did not show on the x-ray. Recent technology, such as MRI, does reveal aluminum and other materials not shown by x-rays alone.

So, after many hours of sorting through chips and shooting and developing over a hundred x-rays, we can conclude that: like Almond Joy and Mounds, some chips have weights, some don't! Doug--the next time you drop a chip, please call someone else.