

This will be number 145 in our "Illegal Of The Day" series. It is only the 2nd one from Oklahoma. They have been from 46 states in the US. The most by far, 20, are from Illinois. I am aware of Illegal chips from 3 of the 4 remaining states, I just don't have them. That leaves one state without an illegal chip attribution.

Some of you will recognize the name, Doc Finstuen. He used to be active in illegal chip collecting and research. He is the one that found the Jack Todd (Diamond mold) heirs. He got a lot of good info and pictures from them. The records had already gone to Paulson in Las Vegas. After Doc's story in Gambling Times (both Doc and I wrote columns in every issue of Gambling Times back in the late 1990's) I went to Paulson and actually saw the Jack Todd records. I could not get them at the time. Since then I have tried through GPI several times to get them. GPI cleaned out the warehouse and it appears the records went to the dump.

My main reason for mentioning Doc's name is he had Illegal chips from 49 states. For years he was on a quest to find one from that 50th state. Today there is still not an Illegal ID in TGT from that 50th state. Doc has been inactive in the hobby for a number of years. I miss him. I know he worked for NASA in Texas. Maybe he went to the moon to find an Illegal from there. <g>

Warning Will Robinson:

An Illegal chip from that 50th state has been found and is undergoing research. Coming soon to an "Illegal Of The Day" post.

It will be the 1st entry from that state in the new TGT. If you are an avid Illegal chip collector you will want this one. Who knows how long or even if, it will take to find another one from this state.

Enough Of that:
Oklahoma:

I got 2 colors (chocolate and white) of the CG chip back in 2007. They have a lot of history going back to the Alaska gold rush and from today, a town that is almost a ghost town. Mining both built it and destroyed it.

**FRANK W POTTS (Mr SLAVIN)
PICHER, OK**

**JANUARY 15, 1936
MONO CG OLD STYLE BOTH SIDES IN GOLD**

**300 CHOCOLATE
300 WHITE
300 BLUE
300 LAVENDER
300 LT BLUE
300 LT GREEN
300 RED
200 PINK
100 YELLOW**



CG

Brass Rail Taproom
Pitcher, OK

I am trying to remember how many different Brass Rail's we have documented. Maybe 4?

Frank W. Potts, a native of Missouri, died at Pitcher, OK in 1943 age 73. During the Klondike Gold Rush, Frank left his home in Kansas and went north to Alaska where at least for a while he operated a saloon in Anchorage called the Silver Dollar. By 1905 he had returned to Parsons, Kansas. In the late 1910's a large discovery of lead and zinc in Pitcher, OK turned that place into a boom town and Frank moved a few miles south of Parsons to Pitcher where he was involved in the operation of several enterprises (hotel, hardware store, drug store, bar, athletic association).

Frank became a druggist while in Pitcher and for several years operated a place called Central Drug. I never saw any gambling reported at the place, but Frank had problems with liquor laws there both during and after prohibition. In late 1935, a few months prior to the CG chip order, Frank sold his drug store—but retained ownership of the building. That same year Frank partnered-up with John Rutherford and began operating the Brass Rail Taproom at 214 1/2 E. Second St. (a few doors down from the drug store). Frank and Rutherford were partners in the place until Rutherford's death in Oct. 1942 (Frank died a few months later).

A side note: Frank had a brother Albert who operated a pool hall in nearby Joplin, MO in the 1930's.

Although it changed locations, the Brass Rail remained in business until 2007. The plight of Pitcher is well documented—the mining that created the town ultimately destroyed it. A virtual ghost town today, most people having accepted the Federal Government payoff to leave, the remaining buildings in Pitcher are scheduled for future demolition.

Here's a pic from the 1920's looking down E. Second St. from S. Connell Ave.; Central Drug far left, took-up the corner of E. Second & S. Connell; a few years later the Brass Rail would have been located a couple doors down.



CG-42att1

Current Google street view of above—the building and telephone poles about the only things still there:



CG-43att2

When Alaska became a state in 1959 an Oklahoma newspaper interviewed an old timer in Picher named Bill about his experiences there during the Klondike Gold Rush; the Frank mentioned is Frank Potts:

The work day ended about 3:30 p.m., when dark began to fall. There was nothing to do after supper except go down to the Silver Dollar until bedtime.

The Silver Dollar was run by a man named Frank.

"He wore a big hat, an elegant vest and hand-made boots and was as handsome a big man as I ever looked at," says Bill of Frank

You could buy a variety of entertainment at the Silver Dollar. There were green felt gambling tables, silk-clad hurdy-gurdy girls, and "very short little drinks of whiskey for \$1." Sooner or later there was apt to be a good fight.

Frank had a gold-weighing scale and 10 to 15 people brought in and sold their day's panning of gold every night, then spent most of it in the Silver Dollar.

CG-44att2

COUNTY AUTHORITIES CLOSE PICHER STORE

**Drug Establishment Placed Under
Temporary Injunction Fol-
lowing Raid.**

Picher, Okla., Feb. 7.—The Central drug store, conducted by Frank Potts at 200 South Connell avenue, has been closed by county authorities following the issuing of a temporary injunction by District Judge J. J. Smith of Miami, charging that intoxicating liquor is being unlawfully kept at the establishment. February 25 has been set as the date for the hearing of the case.

The store will be closed until the hearing and cannot then be reopened for business unless the proprietor furnishes a satisfactory bond as an assurance of conducting the business in a lawful manner.

The closing of the drug store is the result of a raid made at the establishment about ten days ago by Sheriff Cal B. Garman and several deputies, at which time three gallons of alcohol is said to have been found in the store.

CG-45att2

PICHER DRUGGIST FACES LIQUOR TAX ACT CHARGE

Picher, Okla., Nov. 17.—Frank W. Potts, proprietor of the Central drug store at Second street and Connell avenue, was to be released today at Vinita on \$3,500 bond pending trial on a federal charge of violating the liquor tax act of 1934. He was arrested Thursday afternoon by John York, deputy United States marshal, who took him to Vinita.

York said Potts was arrested on a capias warrant issued following a grand jury indictment at Tulsa.

CG-46att2

Brass Rail raided when the Mayor of Picher, fed-up by the lack of action by county officials, decides to lead his own gambling raids—3 months later he lost his bid for re-election (3 months after that he died). Joplin Globe—18feb1939:

11 Arrested as Mayor Klinefelter Directs Gambling Raids at Picher

Picher, Okla., Feb. 17.—Mayor J. H. Klinefelter of Picher led a group of six officers in raids on more than six business houses tonight, arrested 11 men and destroyed alleged gambling equipment valued at several hundred dollars.

Slot machines, marble boards and dice tables were chopped to bits with axes in the hands of the raiders in front of the establishments where they were found.

Mayor Klinefelter, 73 years old, presiding in police court after the raids, accepted bonds ranging from \$10 to \$20 from the 11 men arrested, and issued an ultimatum to gamblers to "leave town within 24 hours or face further prosecution."

"Gambling in Picher has been run wide open for some time now," the mayor declared. "I gave county authorities six weeks to make a clean-up. They have not, so we have taken the affair into our own hands."

Mayor Klinefelter called six officers into his offices here at 7:30 o'clock tonight and, after giving instructions, buckled on a pistol and took part in the raiding.

The mayor announced he had been planning such raids several weeks with Police Chief Al Maness. Maness, who is ill at his home, did not accompany the raiding squads.

One local police officer, two specially appointed police, two Picher constables and a merchant policeman formed the squad that conducted raids on six places simultaneously.

At Roy Walker's tap room, the Brass Rail and Roy's cafe on Second street, officers found slot machines, marble machines and dice tables, they said.

The officers found a dice table in Toby Renick's place and marble machines in the Connell hotel on Connell avenue.

Several drug stores also were raided, but officers said they found no trace of any gambling devices.

Mayor Klinefelter announced the city confiscated \$125 they found either on the dice tables or in slot machines and marble boards.

Those who posted bonds of \$20 each on charges of operating gambling houses were booked at police headquarters as John Rutherford, owner of the Brass Rail; "Red"

Rogers, alleged dealer at the Brass Rail; James Stevens, Bebo Sisk and George Adams.

Ten-dollar bonds were posted on charges of gambling by Elmer Reader, Harvey Rayon, Len Patterson, Roy Ballard, H. A. Smith and Farley Murray.

Their cases were called for trial Monday afternoon.

Members of the raiding squad were A. J. Sexton, patrolman; Ward Lee and Virgil Darnell, special officers called in by the mayor; Constables Clarence McClanahan and A. E. Breedlove, and William Richardson, merchant policeman.

Raided right before Christmas.
Joplin Globe—24dec1941

NO CHARGES FILED AFTER RAID AT PICHER

Picher, Okla., Dec. 28. — No charges have been filed in connection with a raid conducted last night at the Brass Rail grill, 214 East Second street. The raid was conducted by Cliff Goldsmith and Jack Walsh, state agents, who entered the establishment about 10 o'clock.

A number of tables, said by officers to be used for gambling, were destroyed and officers said a quantity of liquor was seized.

The agents intimated today that charges would be filed against three persons.

CG-48

Looks like a long series of raids at Frank's places of business. <g>