

Just a little warning. Don't miss the next "Illegal Of The Day" Great story about one little chip that ties to big names including Huey Long in New Orleans Louisiana 1935, Trinidad, Colorado 1939, Las Vegas, New Mexico 1953, and The Palms Casino Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada, present day.

If you do not collect the old illegal chips, you are missing out on the best part of our hobby. History, I love it! <g>

I got the V&K chip in 2001. Recently sent for a little research on it. Another one with very few answers.

Enough of that:

Illinois:

My notes:

Plano had a population of 2,000 in a county with 11,000 people. Sounds like one of those little towns where everyone knew everybody. <g> But, no one knows anything including the Plano library. <g> Or at least they aren't talking. <g>

Van Kirk bought 6,000 chips, way too many for a home game.

Van Kirk was on the Plano Chamber of Commerce and a commander of the Plano American Legion. Just a guess on my part. The American legion post was running some type of games. Maybe legal "Fun Nite" games to raise funds for the post or charities. Maybe poker games? Maybe illegal games?

It looks like we will never know. The library has been very helpful as you can read below. Maybe we will get a third email with more info for a future update.



chip10768att2

Van Kirk, C.W. Chicago Style  
115 Hugh St.,  
Plano, Illinois. Mono-V&K- In Gold-Both Sides  
11/15/37: B-9: 500W-400R-100Bk.  
Chicago. Inv. #9585

Inv. #3946 - 12/18/39: 500 B-9's Rad. .  
Inv. #4173 - 12/26/39: 900 B-9's - 700 Rk 200 B.  
Inv. #4474 - 1/4/39: 1400 B-9's - 1200 Or., 200 L.

#### V&K

Charles Wilber Van Kirk, 1890-1954 was a native of Plano, IL. His father, who died in 1914, ran a pool hall in Plano. Charles, a WWI vet, was the commander of the Plano American Legion in the mid 40's.

Plano was a pretty small town, population less than 2,000 in a county with a population of around 11,000. He must have had something going on there that people would have known about.

I contacted the local library and the librarian said she would see if she could find something and get back to me next week.

Got an email from the Plano, IL library. Said the only thing they found so far was that Charles Van Kirk's father had a confectionary shop in the late 1890's (place sold cigars and tobacco as well). Said they were still looking, so maybe some more info forthcoming.

Van Kirk ordered over 6,000 chips during a two year period; he lived in a town of less than 2,000--surely whatever he was doing had to have been something that would have left a few traces behind.

I got another email from the Plano IL library concerning Van Kirk. They sent me some info but none of it sheds any light on what he was doing with all those chips. Said he was a member of the Plano Chamber of Commerce in 1945. Also sent a copy of his obit:

*Kendall County Record—4march1954*

## CHARLES VAN KIRK

Charles W. VanKirk, of North Hugh street, Plano, died Tuesday night at the Hines Memorial hospital, where he had been taken earlier for special treatment.

Mr. VanKirk was a resident of Plano all his life. The VanKirk family is well known all over this area.

He is survived by his widow, Mary, a sister, Mrs. Irene Manchester, of Aurora, and several cousins, as well as innumerable friends and acquaintances throughout this and surrounding counties.

Funeral services will be held at 2:00 o'clock Friday afternoon at the Plano Baptist church, with the Rev. Dr. R. E. Simms officiating. American Legion services will be held also, and interment will be in Plano cemetery. Friends may call at the Cooper funeral home in Plano, Thursday afternoon.

V&K1att2

New info 4/20/11.

We now have an attribution for the use of the V&K chips.

Above I said:

"I got another email from the Plano II library concerning Van Kirk. They sent me some info but none of it sheds any light on what he was doing with those 6,000 chips. Said he was a member of the Plano Chamber of Commerce in 1945. Also sent a copy of his obit:"

A third update email from the Plano library gives us what we were looking for. It appears that CW Van Kirk used his membership on the Plano Chamber of Commerce for the commerce of gambling. <g> Special thanks to the Library for going above and beyond to help our hobby.

C.W. "Bump" Vankirk

Cooper Furniture Store

115 Hugh Street  
Plano, IL  
Chips delivered in 1937-39

I got a follow-up email from the Plano, IL public library concerning Charles Van Kirk, the guy who ordered the V&K hub chips in 1937/39 that we were unable to find a location for. The librarian was able to give the chips a likely attribution through contact with members of the Cooper family of Plano. The Coopers have operated a furniture store on Main Street since the 1880's.

According to one of the elder Cooper's there was a gambling operation in the basement of their store run by a guy named "Bump" Van Kirk (no dates mentioned). The basement was entered through a door at the rear of the building. Another Cooper family member said there was also a gambling room above a tavern which was located in the same building, although they were not sure if it was operated by Van Kirk.

I went to the Cooper Furniture website and they had some old photos of the store including this one which looks like it may be from the era (tavern probably where there appears to be an old Schlitz Beer sign).

My note: Hopefully we can find the name of the Tavern and we will have another Illinois chip to look for.  
<g>



V&K2att2