

Finally!!!! An ID on chips I got 14 years ago. *vbg* Bud Meyer sent me a blue and yellow Colonial chip back in 2000. The Taylor record card was confusing to say the least. I emailed Chris Hendrix one of our resident experts on Hot Springs. He did find what he thought was a relative to B Murphy that was married to Bill Clinton's mother. *vbg* Big story but not enough to prove it. After a lot of research he basically found zip! No Colonial with gambling in Hot Springs.

I began to think the Park Cedar Courtel was a mail drop for the chips and they were then taken elsewhere for use. I forgot about them. Until now! *vbg*

14 years later Ed Hertel moved the research 15 miles across the county line and hit pay dirt. *vbg*

Tell us about it, Ed:

A few months back I received three colors of the Taylor & Co chip with the hotstamp "COLONIAL". My excitement quickly turned to disappointment when I pulled up the order card.



		SPECIAL MONOGRAM						
Name		Park Cedar Courtel						
Address		40 B Murphy						
Town		Hot Springs State Ark.						
Per		T-Design						
Amount	Color	Initials Both Sides	Style Type	Initials One Side	Other Side	Style Type	Monogram Color	Date Shipped
2300	Red Colonial	"	"				Yellow	1-9-48
200	Yellow	"	"				Blue	1-9-48
760	dk Blue	"	"				Yellow	"
280	Gray	"	"				Blue	"
200	Black	"	"				Yellow	"
Returned by above on 8/25/48 the following chips:								
2320	Red							
203	Yellow							
766	dk Blue							
784	Gray							

Colonial1Att2

It seems that the Colonial chips had been sent and then returned. Unfortunately, this usually means the club was a nonstarter, or that the chips were inadequate to the buyer. For some of these, collectors or home players bought the chips later for non-illegal gambling use.

This however had some intriguing details which made it stand out. First off, the chips were shipped in January 1948 and not returned until seven months later. What were they doing in the meantime? It's

been my experience that these chips weren't normally purchased a long time before they were to be used. Unlike the mega-casino of today, illegal gambling owners didn't plan years in advance. Usually, the chips were ordered and put into immediate use.

And a second flag, what happened to the 200 black chips that were shipped but not returned?

I decided to look a little deeper to see what I could turn up.

Quickly I hit a block as the leads of the name "B. Murphy" and the "Park Cedar Courtel" were both turning up blanks. Like many gamblers in the day, Murphy was living in a temporary motel called the Park Cedar where the chips were delivered. I could find no evidence of gambling happening at the Park Cedar and the name "Colonial" meant very little in Hot Springs, Arkansas (a town famous for gambling).

Although Hot Springs was coming up with a bust, moving outside the city I started hearing about a short lived club called the Colonial Club. And by short lived, I mean really short lived. It opened and closed on the same night!

My note: I think we have a new record for the shortest operating time for good size illegal operation. Less than 24 hours. The chips would have been used only for a few hours on 1 night. *vbg* Will be tough to beat that one.

Located about 15 miles northeast of Hot Springs on the Hot Springs Highway (today's Hwy 5), the Colonial Club was said to be just a few yards over the Saline County line. Obviously this was no mere coincidence as the law on the Garland County side was in the midst of the clean-up. However, if the owners of the Colonial Club thought the grass was greener on the other side of the county line, they were mistaken.

The night of January 17, 1948 (eight days after the chips were shipped) would be the opening for the dinner club and it proved to be a big one. The place was busy and everyone enjoying the music, dancing and gambling until the sheriff arrived with a court order from Saline County Judge Thomas Toler to close the place down. What started with a bang ended with a thud as everyone was ordered out and a padlock was fastened to the front door.

From this first night, the legal wrangling would go on for almost two years. A hearing was given and the owners of the club were ordered to come forward and answer the charges. Unfortunately for the courts, the only man they could find was Garrett H. Britt, a local of Hot Springs who in no way seemed like the club owner type. It was obvious Britt was the local frontman to other, more seasoned, gamblers (typical scenario for illegal clubs).

Judge Toler didn't mix words when he handed down his ruling. Calling the club a "hell hole" and saying gambling was "one of the worst evils of our day", he ordered the Colonial Club to be permanently closed and the building and all within to be the property of the state. His final words were to the owners (most

unknown) that if they “had come to me in the first place I could have saved them several thousand dollars by telling them I would not let them run it.”

The next day the sheriff showed up at the now vacant club to take inventory of the state’s furnishings. What he found was a building completely looted of all contents. Someone had come in the night before and completely cleaned the place out.

Of course Judge Toler was furious and ordered a special grand jury to investigate both the gambling and the “robbery”.

Grand Jurors Report On Gambling in Club

BENTON, Ark., Mar. 26. (UP)—The Saline County Grand Jury has reported evidence that gambling went on at the new Colonial Club on the night of Jan. 17, but found it was unable to pin the responsibility on anyone.

In a three-page report summarizing their three-day investigation, the jurors told Circuit Judge Thomas E. Toler of Malvern that they could not determine who owned the club or who prompted the games.

The night club is located just across the line from Garland County and has been padlocked since Jan. 18.

Colonial2

Evidence was hard to come by initially, but finally names started to come out as being associated with the Colonial Club. It took eight months, but by January 1949, Saline County was ready to indict the five people they suspected were involved in the club – G.H. Britt, Frankie Regan, Ben Gravine, Jimmy Roe and B. Murphy (the name on the chip order).

However getting names was one thing, finding the men was quite another. All but Britt’s subpoena went unserved and the courts had no choice but to proceed without them. In November 1949, a pre-trial was set for Garrett Britt who would answer the charges. After seven witnesses had given testimony, it was clear that there would not be enough evidence for a conviction and all charges were dropped. Enough time and expense had been paid to this case and the point had been clearly made. It was time to move on.

And move on we shall too. Now that there is no doubt these chips were intended to be used at the Colonial Club outside of Hot Springs, what can we say about them? The chips were shipped from Taylor on January 8, 1948, and although I don’t know what the postal service was like back then, I’d like to believe they would have been delivered for the opening nine days later.

But what about the return? After seven months of the club being shut down, and really no hope of it reopening, I see the owners saying the chips were as good as new and just wanting to cash out all they could (maybe also selling that furniture that went "missing" as well?) As I said in the beginning, it is kind of weird that the black chips were not returned. Maybe these were confiscated in the raid? Who knows?

And with that, we end the short life of the Colonial Club.

My Note: And now "The Rest Of The Story." The Colonial Chips could be the most traveled and richest in history that we have seen in the "Illegal Of The Day" series. Gamblers pushed the Colonial chips across the tables in at least 6 (that we know of) different joints after that 1 night in Arkansas.

BONUS: The second life of the "Colonial" chips

It seems that the operators of the Colonial Club were not the only ones to try to save a few bucks on the chips. The Taylor Company almost immediately put the chips (sans the black ones) back up for sale (for what I assume to be a heavily discounted price).

On the back of the card are six names of people who took the Colonial chips.

Name _____ Address _____ Town _____ State _____				SPECIAL MONOGRAM				
Amount	Color	Initials Both Sides	Style Type	Initials One Side	Other Side	Style Type	Monogram Color	Date Shipped
500	Red	Colonial	-	St. Mary's Academy Birmingham, La.		1/4/50		
100	Gray	Colonial	apex	Norton, Forest Park, Ga.				
100	dk Blue	"	die	ret. chess from Park Cedar				10-28-48
1000	Red	"	"	sold to John Merritt				
400	dk Blue	"	"	obtained				11-6-48
203	Yellow	"	"					
200	Red	"	"	sold to Jerome				3-12-49
200	Red	"	"					
200	dk Blue	"	"	sold to Francis Khawry				
100	Gray	"	"	40 Park Bar Sulphur, La.				11-19-49

Colonial3

Since this IOTD is threatening to get too long, I will only touch on these. There are definitely a few that could use their own in-depth treatment, but for now we will just paint them with a broad stroke.

October 25, 1948
Norton, Forest Park, Ill
Gray (100) and Blue (100) chips

Not much information on this one. Forest Park is a suburb of Chicago on the west side and was known for its gambling. The amount of chips, 100 each of two colors, isn't much and might have been for a home game. I couldn't find "Norton" anywhere else in the Taylor records.

November 6, 1948
John Merritt, Ottawa, IL
Red (1000), Blue (400) and Yellow (203)

John Merritt was the manager of the Tropic Lounge in Ottawa, about 80 miles southwest of Chicago. A precursory look didn't show any gambling raids, but there might be more story here. I'll have to double back and take a closer look sometime later.

As a side note, I believe my chips probably came from this place as they were all found together and this was the only order that bought the same color combination of the chips I have.


March 12, 1949
"sold to Queenie"
Red (200)

I have no idea where these went, or if I'm even reading the card correctly. I cross-referenced the Taylor records and could not come up with anything close to "Queenie". (It doesn't sound like the kind of place I would personally frequent.)

April 19, 1949
Francis Khoury, c/o Bert's Bar, Sulphur, La
Gray (100), Blue (200) and Red (200)

Sulphur, Louisiana, is right over the border from Texas close to the Gulf coast. During the hey-day of illegal gambling this area was rich with clubs along Interstate 10 which included the towns of Orange, Vidor, Vinton and Lake Charles.

Francis Khoury also bought 100 chips with an "FK" hot stamp on the same day (I've never seen these chips).

Name		Address		Town		State		Per		SPECIAL MONOGRAM	
Francis Khoury		40 Bert's Bar		Sulphur		La		T. Design			
Amount	Color	Initials Both Sides	Style Type	Initials One Side	Other Side	Style Type	Monogram Color	Date Shipped			
101	White	FK	Monogram				Gold	2-19-49			

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A quick look didn't turn up anything gambling related for Francis or the Bert's Bar. The name "Khoury" is tantalizing because it is shared with the owner of the Club Savoy and El Rancho, both of the Las Vegas fame. Maybe they were family?

February 5, 1952
 A. Rand, 4706 S. Sacramento, Chicago, IL
 Blue (25)

I could find nothing more than this guy did exist and lived at the address on the order. With only 25 chips it's doubtful they were used for much.

December 5, 1950
 J.V. McCaleb, Bunkie, LA
 Red (522)

This is one which will certainly have a follow-up someday. Bunkie is a small town right in middle of the state, halfway between Lafayette and Alexandria. The Colonial chips weren't McCaleb's only order. He also ordered from Taylor "PALACE" chips (same date as Colonial, 1950) and "JV" chips (1954) from Jones Brothers (although name was misspelled).


NAME J. V. McCaleb SPECIAL MONOGRAM

Address _____

Town Bunkie State La **PALACE**

Per T. Chivers

Amount	Color	Initials Both Sides	Style Type	Initials One Side	Other Side	Style Type	Monogram Color	Date Shipped
101	Yellow (8)	PALACE	Apical				Blue	12-5-50
302	dk Blue	"	"				Gold	12-5-50
101	Choc. (4)	"	"				Gold	12-5-50



INV.#	DATE	TOTAL QTY.	TYPE	NO. EA. COLOR	COLOR	STAMP or MONOGRAM
7294	5-17-54	600	S.S. (o)	300 Lt. Blue	Monogram	
				200 Maroon	"J.V."	
				100 Orange.	both side	in gold.

McCaleb J.V. 114 c/o O. Tavern 1954

Colonial5

The Jones record says they are going to a place called the "O. Tavern", but more alluring is in the Taylor customer list provided to the Kefauver committee. In it, J.V. McCaleb has an address going to the "Club Playtime" in Bunkie, Louisiana. For what small amount of time I looked into the Playtime, it was obvious this was no small operation. The night club was famous for its jazz music and notorious for its gambling.

This would make a nice IOTD no day, but unfortunately it will take some time and help from local sources since Bunkie wasn't exactly making national news.

And that wraps it up for the life of the "Colonial" chips. For something I assumed would be a bust, it sure turned out to be a lot of fun.

My note:

What about the Gray chips? They were made, returned, and resold to 2 different buyers in IL and LA. Anyone out there ever seen one?

If you do not have Wayne Threadgill's great book on Hot Springs, "Gambling In The Spa," I highly recommend it. It has some great history in it. Wayne Threadgill (WAYNE540300@aol.com) The Colonial chips are technically not Hot Springs chips as they are across the county line

Bonus:

Little known secret about Ed, I thought I would share. *vbg*

He is in Scotland. I received this email 2 days ago.

"My second love is scotch whisky (I have a nice collection of it) and my focus is the scotch from the island of Islay. I'm staying there for a few days. I rented out something called the "Ardbeg Seaview Cottage" which was supposed to be close to the distillery. I had no idea how close. I'm in serious trouble!!!"



Good luck with that, Ed. Bring home a bunch of traders. *vbg*

One more note:

262 past "Illegal Of The Day" posts are now uploaded to this site.

<http://www.marlowcasinochips.com/links/genetrimble/genetrimble.htm>

Thank you David Spragg.