

Our "Friend Of The Hobby" gets all the credit for this one. I didn't even have the chip until he sent me one. Die cut USPC chips have never been on my radar unless they had an ID. Most did not until the USPC records became available to us. You can find the USPC records here thanks to a lot of work by several people.

[http://chipguide.themogh.org/cg\\_uspc\\_list.php](http://chipguide.themogh.org/cg_uspc_list.php)

Email from Steve Passalacqua our resident Die Cut expert:

Hi Gene

I've always liked this chip. From my early days of collecting clay and ivory chips I have always been a big fan of what I felt were diecut monograms. I never went after the over-the-counter generic alphabet letters. I always felt that the owners of these custom monogram chips took the extra step to have something special. This reversed diecut CC was not listed in Dale's (Seymour) first book. In Dale's revised edition it was listed as two horseshoes in the poker wheel, faro and inlaid section on page 326. I always felt this chip was CC and not two horseshoes because of my captivation for monogram chips. When Craig's guide of the USPC records was published in 2001 they listed it as the Crocker Club Chicago Illinois 1922. I do have the four colors white, redish, blue and yellow in my collection as singles.

Steve

My Note: This IOTD tells the story of an illegal Chicago operation from 1902 until the mid 1930's. Opened well before what I call the "Era Of The Illegals" 1931-1961. Many clubs/joints had gambling prior to 1931 but their main draw was bootleg booze. \*vbg\*

Take it away "Friend."

Got this chip a few weeks ago on eBay:



Corker1

I've seen the chip for sale on eBay and TheChipBoard over the years but never looked into it.

Started looking into to it and couldn't stop...and so now we have an IOTD \*vbg\*

Do you have the chip?

My note. He is not kidding when he said he couldn't stop. \*vbg\* 24 scans in the history of this chip.

### **Corker Club**

If you lived in Chicago in the early 1920's and needed some playing cards or poker chips and decided to consult the city directory for guidance, among your options would be some well known national chip distributors as well as a local South Side business run by Harry Friend:

**PLAYING CARDS, CHECKS,  
ETC**

Arlene Mfg Co, 6153 Wentworth av  
 Ball A & Bro, 25 N Mkt  
 Chicago Chip Co, 422 S Clark  
**EVANS H C & CO INC, 1528 Adams,**  
 Teis Haymarket 7630-7631  
**Friend Harry,** 5719 S Mich av  
 Hobbs Game & Specialty Co Inc, 1733 N  
 Clark  
 Inter-Ocean Playing Card Co, 1733 Irv  
 Pk bl  
 Midland Playing Card Co, 1733 Irv Pk bl  
 Pittry & August & Son, 218 S Wab av  
**STANDARD PLAYING CARD CO, 345**  
**W Austin av, Tel Main 4270**  
**S Playing Cards Co, 10 S LaS, R410**

corker2

In June 1922 Harry Friend ordered these CC chips from the USPC; according to the ink notation on the card, the chips were for the Corker Club and were reordered Oct. 24th 1927:



Corker3

My note: Look closely under the white chip for USPC note on above record. I have a blue chip on the way. Blue was probably on the empty peg on the right in the scan. That makes 5 colors for sure.



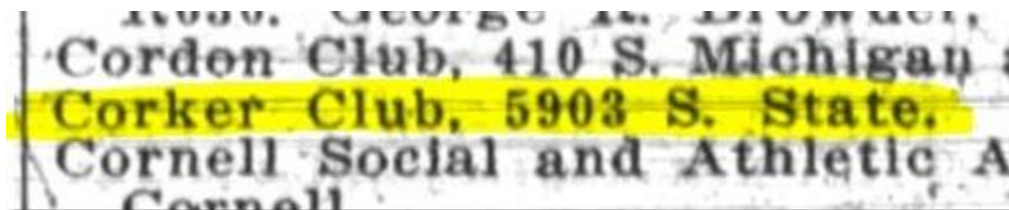
Corker4

Repeat Order 10-24-27  
Corker Club



Corker5

At the time of the 1922 order the Corker Club was located at 5903 South State Street, just a few blocks south of Friend's location.



Corker6

For over a decade prior to the chip order, 5903 and its neighbor 5901 were the homes of various enterprises operated by brothers Walter and George Schneider. 5901 and 5903 were housed in a two story building on the southeast corner of South State and 59th Street. On that corner the Schneider's operated saloons, cigar stores, pool halls and gambling rooms.

George Schneider was an original incorporator of the Corker Club in December 1902:

## NEW INCORPORATIONS.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE AT SPRINGfield yesterday licensed the following corporations:

Woman's General Missionary Society of the Churches of God, Mount Carroll; religious; incorporators, Mary B. Newcomber, Alice S. Giddes, and Myra Paige.

Rescue and Mission Workers union, Chicago; for evangelical work; incorporators, Arthur L. Gettys, Oliver A. Richards, and H. E. Hoag.

International Brotherhood of Steamshovel Dredge Engineers and Cranemen, Chicago; for mutual protection; incorporators, D. C. Butler, R. Watkins, and James Graham.

Corker club, Chicago; social; incorporators, Otto P. Sommers, Fred Lindstrom, and George F. Schneider.

Love Bros., Aurora; capital stock, \$200,000; to conduct a foundry business; incorporators, Joy Love, J. P. Love, and F. W. Von Oven.

Hill-Gaynord Construction company, East St. Louis; capital, \$5,000; to do contracting business; incorporators, W. H. Hill, Peter P. Gaynord, and

Corker7

During a Congressional investigation in 1911 George Schneider was mentioned as one of 14 persons who operated a "gambling headquarters" for Chicago gambling kingpin and race wire pioneer Mont Tennes:

(Schneider's name is misspelled and the address is inaccurate; the Congressman Mann mentioned is the namesake of the Mann Act of 1910):



Harry Brolaski, a former gambler who had turned investigator, submitted to Congressman Mann, who was then chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, a list of fourteen persons said to be associated with Mont Tennes and operating the handbook establishments. Mr. Brolaski's list of persons who operated the Tennes gambling headquarters follows:

Mont Tennes, who controlled the wire service at Chicago for race gambling news;  
Horace Argo, interested with Tennes;  
Tennes and Wagner, pool-room at 260 State Street;  
Tennes and Wagner, pool-room at 170 Madison Street;  
Dave McGowan, pool-room at 464 State Street;  
Clifford's Hotel, handbook, Englewood Avenue and Halsted Street;  
Bud White, pool-room at 116 Monroe Street;  
Swan's Hotel, handbook, Sixty-third and Cottage Grove Avenue;  
Tooney and Singleton, handbook, Twenty-eighth and Wabash Avenue;  
George Snyder, handbook, 5900 State Street;  
Sam Tuckhorn, handbook, 23 Quincy Street;  
Julius Canfield, handbook, Adams Express Building;  
McGinty and O'Brien, handbook, 84 Adams Street;  
Pat O'Malley, handbook, State Street, opposite Masonic Temple.

Corker8

Schneider and his place show-up again on a list produced during a 1916 Federal inquiry of Mont Tennes' gambling syndicate made in US District Court by Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis. Legendary criminal defense lawyer Clarence Darrow represented Tennes during the hearings:

Eleventh Precinct—  
723 E. Thirty-ninth Street, Cigar Store.....Tom Burns  
4020 Cottage Grove Avenue.....Langford  
5903 S. State Street, basement.....Schneider

Corker9

According to a 1915 report made by the Chicago police department there were 1,023 poolrooms in Chicago. Of these, 105 were described as "congregating places of gamblers, thugs, hoodlums and other undesirables." Out of these 105 the police gave 24 the additional distinction of being "shady." Schneider's place made the list of 24 poolrooms reposing in the shadows:

George Schneider, 5903 South State street—Has reputation of being handbook maker. Fined Feb. 25.

Corker10

A few years later the corner where the Schneider's ran their businesses was also described as a "hangout of thieves, politicians, lawyers, judges, policemen and others" as well as being "long known as a gathering place for labor agents and gunmen."

In September 1920 George Schneider was operating a cigar store and gambling room at 5903 and his brother Walter was running a saloon at 5901 when a fire broke out in the building which was said to have been started by a gambler who had been "double crossed." After the fire, Walter moved

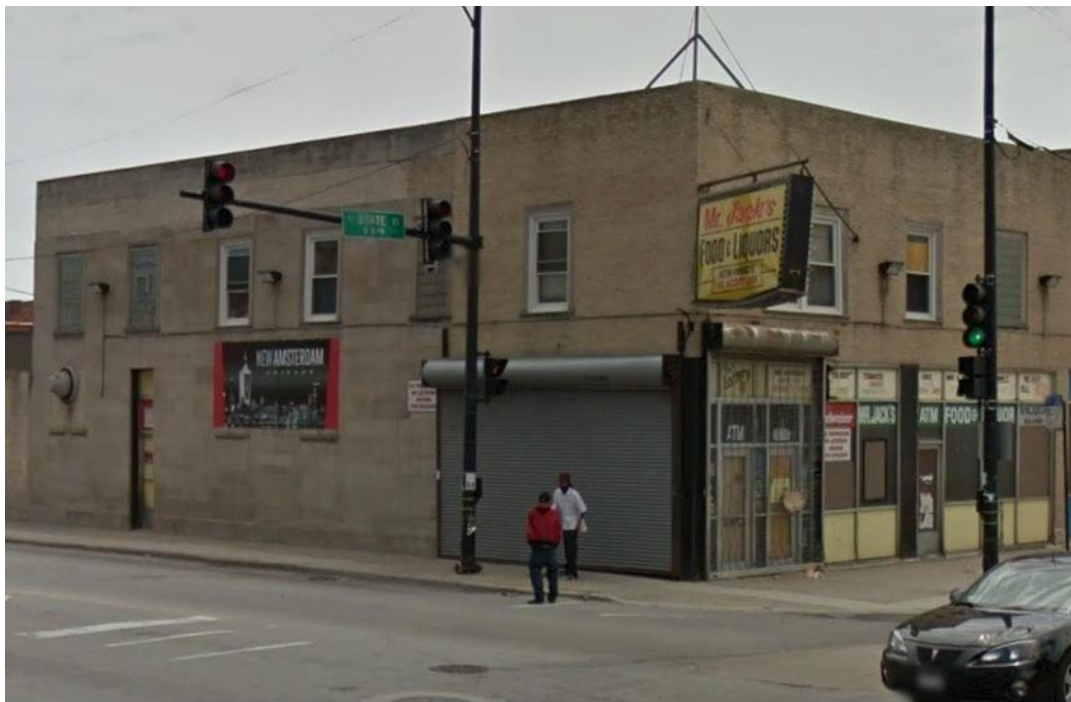
his saloon a few blocks southeast to 6323 South Park—more on this address later. George appears to have maintained a connection to 5903 for a while longer.

Here's a pic of the corner of South State & 59th taken in June 1921, about a year before the CC chip order (South State runs to the right, 59th left). 5901 was on the corner; 5903 is next door on the right, below the United Cigars sign.



Corker11

current view:



Corker12

In the 1921 photo above, a crowd has gathered on the corner because a noted Chicago criminal defense lawyer named William W. O'Brien had just been shot inside the saloon at 5901. O'Brien, often referred to as a "mob lawyer," survived. A few years later O'Brien would be shot again while he was walking down North State Street with Hymie Weiss, a North Side boss and arch nemesis of Al Capone. O'Brien survived again but Weiss wasn't so lucky:



Corker13

The character portrayed by Richard Gere in the 2002 Academy Award winning film "Chicago" is based on O'Brien.

trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6vTRLxU9gk>

pic of O'Brien:

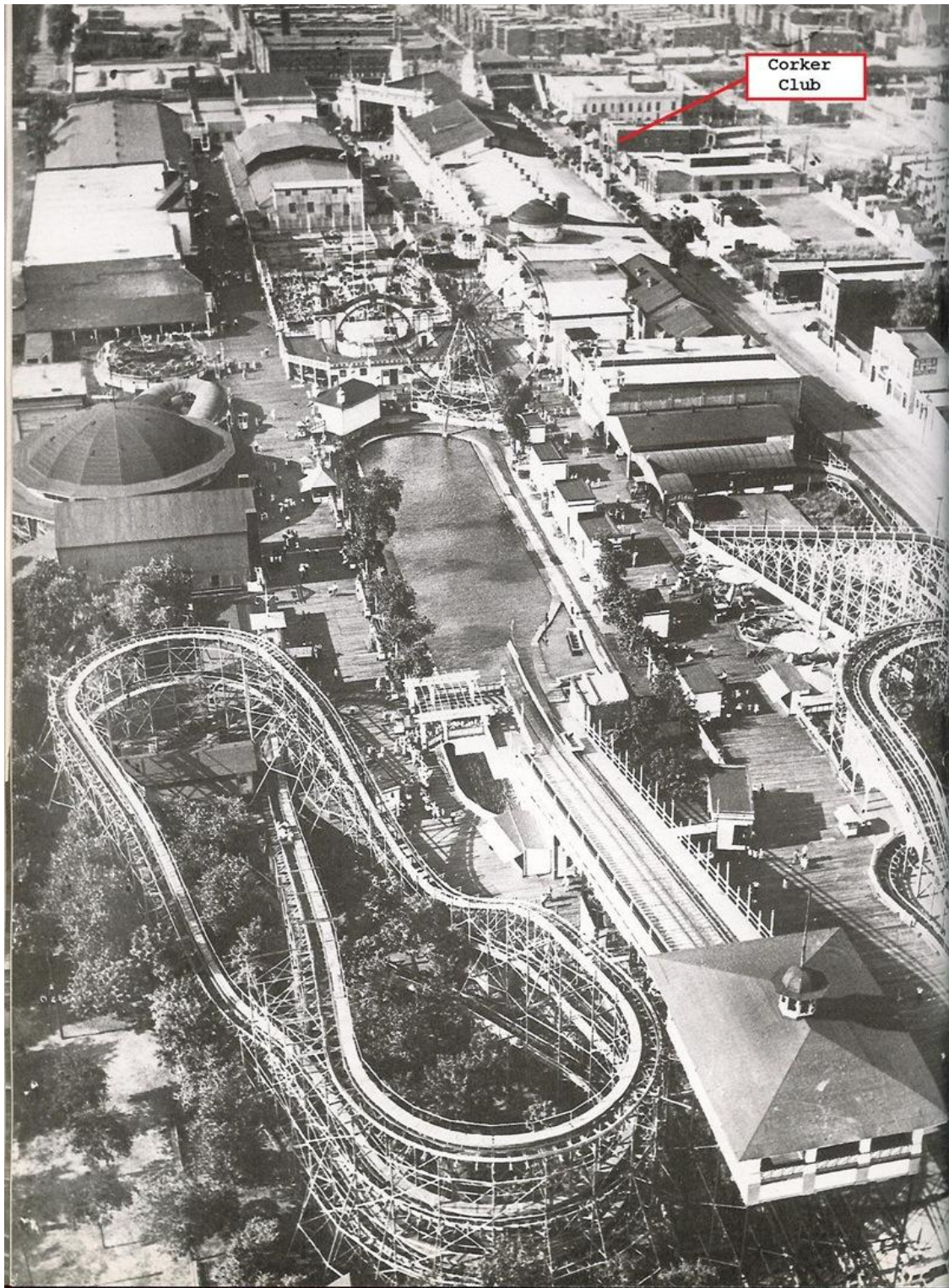


Corker14

As mentioned above, after the fire hit the building housing the Schneider's enterprises Walter moved his saloon to 6323 South Park Avenue (today Martin Luther King Drive). When the CC chips are reordered in 1927 the Corker Club has moved into this address. 6323 South Park Avenue was housed in a 2 story building located directly across the street from the entrance to the White City Amusement Park. Built in 1905 White City had an arena which regularly hosted boxing matches in the 1920's.

aerial from 1924:

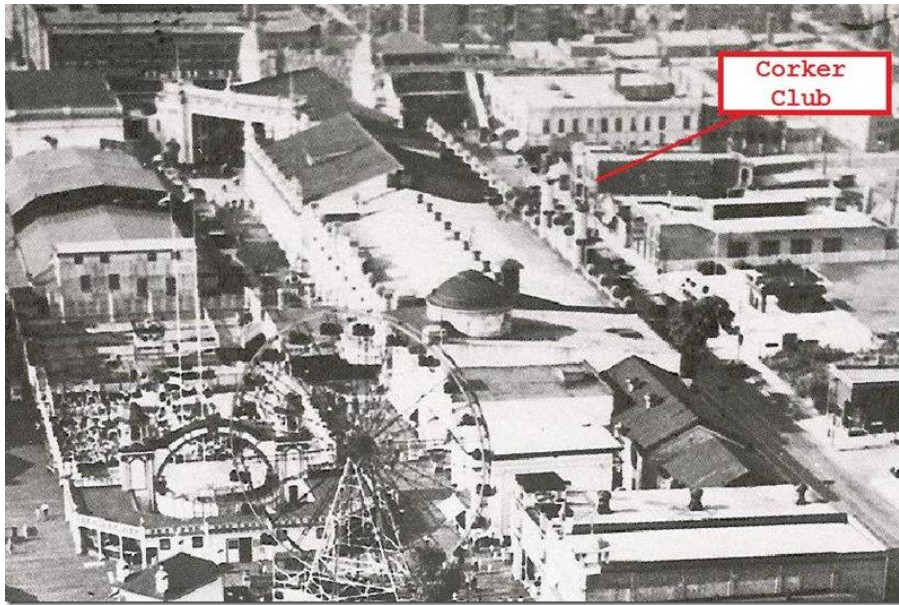




Corker15

a little closer:



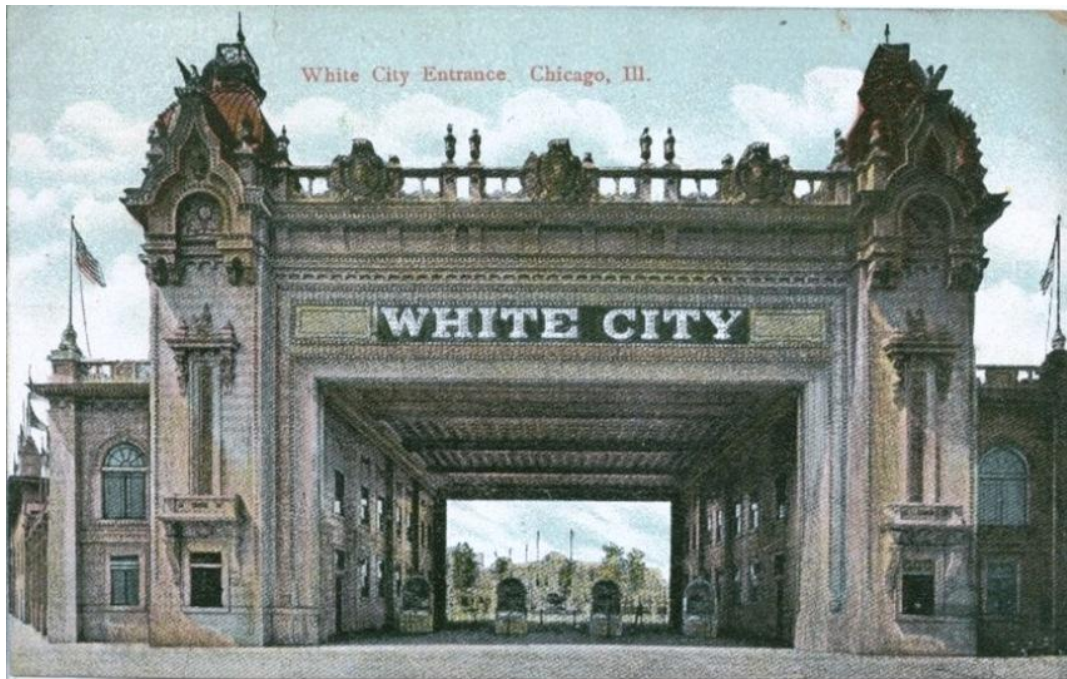


Corker16

view looking opposite direction; entrance gate to the park is visible:



Corker17



Corker18

On September 3rd 1927, about two months before the CC chip reorder, the Corker Club was hijacked. The Corker Club was said to have been running roulette, faro, dice and poker games at the time.

This Chicago Tribune article about the hijacking mistakenly refers to the club as the "Poker" rather than the "Corker." George Schneider mentioned as operator. \$20,000 in 1927 is approximately \$270,000 in 2014:

## **8 BANDITS ROB POKER PLAYERS; LOOT IS \$20,000**

One bandit carrying a small machine gun and seven others armed with shotguns and pistols entered the Poker club in the rear of a cigar store at 6323 South Park avenue last night, compelled 150 patrons to stand in line with hands upraised, and after searching them at their leisure departed with loot estimated at \$20,000.

According to underworld reports, games of roulette, faro, dice, and poker were in full swing when the robbers entered. The man with the machine gun pushed aside the sentinels at the door and compelled them to remain quiet while his companions completed the conquest.

The club is operated by Dick Montgomery and George Schnelder and is reported to have a prominent south side politician as backer. No report of the robbery was made to the police.

Corker19

The AP wire got the name right:



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## **Bandits Raid Poker Club, Get \$10,000**

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Chicago, Sept. 3. (AP)— Seven masked men tonight held up and robbed 150 gamblers at the "Corker Club" and escaped with approximately \$10,000.

Corker20

one more; Schneider mentioned again:

# SHOTGUNS BEAT GAMBLING GAME

## Seven Robbers Get \$20,- 000 at Chicago Resort.

(Chicago Tribune Press Service)

CHICAGO, Sept. 5.—There is one way to beat the gambling syndicate that is taking hundreds of thousands of dollars from gullible Chicagoans every day, and it was learned today that seven men adopted that method Sunday when they invaded the gambling house of George Schneider and relieved him of \$20,000.

Flourishing sawed-off shotguns, the invaders terrified the outer guard of "bouncers." They made no attempt to molest the twoscore of more patrons, but took the bank roll of the house and departed. No report of the holdup was made to the police.

The gambling syndicate, by terms of its "insurance agreement" with the gambling house keepers, is obligated to take charge of the investigation when any house under its protection is robbed.

Corker21

This hijacking by a gang of armed men was one of the first of many which occurred around this time. The gangs were said to have a list of gambling locations "where the play is high and have started to clean-up."

The Corker Club remained at the South Park address for a few more years. 1928-29 Chicago directory:

6309	Lambros & Ruston Corp
6317	Valkan Thos restr
6321	DeKoker Johanna Mrs
	Greene Gilbert
6323	Corker Club
6325	White City Gospel Tabernacle
6335	Roxana Petroleum Corp

Corker22

But by the early 1930's it had moved again.

September 12th 1931:

injunctions by ordinary legal procedure. These injunctions cover the Corker club, 7938 South Halsted street, and the Dorle Social and Athletic club, 3831 Ogden avenue. Gambling flourishes in both places, according to Mr. Weiner.

Corker23

By 1935 the Corker Club is not located at this address and perhaps no longer existed. George Frank Schneider died at Chicago in 1946 at the age of 67.

pic of a 27 year old Schneider from 1905:



Corker24

My notes: Some of the bigger players in this "Illegal Of The Day" post.

**Clarence Seward Darrow** (April 18, 1857 – March 13, 1938) was an American lawyer and leading member of the American Civil Liberties Union, best known for defending teenage thrill killers Leopold and Loeb in their trial for murdering 14-year-old Robert "Bobby" Franks (1924), for defending Ossian Sweet, and defending John T. Scopes in the Scopes "Monkey" Trial (1925), in which he opposed William Jennings Bryan (statesman, noted orator, and three-time presidential candidate). Called a "sophisticated country lawyer",<sup>[2]</sup> he remains notable for his wit, which marked him as one of the most famous American lawyers and civil libertarians.<sup>[3]</sup>

**Kenesaw Mountain Landis** (/ˈkɛnisoʊ ˈmaʊntɪn ˈlændɪs/; November 20, 1866 – November 25, 1944) was an American jurist who served as a federal judge from 1905 to 1922 and as the first Commissioner of Baseball from 1920 until his death. He is remembered for his handling of the Black Sox scandal, in which he expelled eight members of the Chicago White Sox from organized baseball for conspiring to lose the 1919 World Series and repeatedly refused their reinstatement requests. His firm actions and iron rule over baseball in the near quarter-century of his commissionership are generally credited with restoring public confidence in the game.

**Henry Earl J. Wojciechowski**, also known as **Hymie Weiss** (January 25, 1898 – October 11, 1926), was an American mob boss who became a leader of the Prohibition-era North Side Gang and a bitter rival of Al Capone.

The complete life story of one man, were it known in every detail, would disclose practically all there is to know about syndicated gambling as a phase of organized crime in Chicago in the last quarter century.

That man is **Mont Tennes**."

So declared the *Illinois Crime Survey* of 1929. The man who stood at the center of Chicago gambling during the first quarter of the 20th century, and who developed a sporting news service that eventually monopolized horse racing operations throughout North America, lived here, in the mansion at 632 W. Belden Ave. (or before the 1909 street renumbering, 404 Belden) during the height of his power. Story here: <http://chicagocrimescenes.blogspot.com/2009/04/mont-tennes-king-of-gamblers.html>

Only one thing left to say.

Thank you "Friend" for one of the best documented illegal operations we have seen to date.