

Many of you will not recognize the name Kenny Craig. I met Kenny at my first CCGTCC convention in 1996. He is a big C&S, ivory, and illegal chip collector. He is one of what I call our "inner circle" that just sends out chips to each other as we find them. He has been the source of several chips that has been in past "Illegal Of The Day" posts. He sent me the Cowboy Bar chips last year.

Kenny found the Cowboy Bar chips a few years ago in a coin shop in Arizona. They were not in TGT and were UFC's. While searching ebay a few months ago he found the matchbook.



Cowboy Bar1&2att2



Cowboy Bar3att2

Why was the brands from the Sublette County cattle ranches on the matchbook?

The cattle brands were interesting and Kenny's google search turned up the answer. I am providing two links that are a must read.

In past "Illegal Of The Day" posts we have read about some real "characters" that migrated into the "Era Of The Illegals. Two come to mind. A professional baseball player and a participant in the "Great Brinks Armored Car Robbery" called "The Crime Of The Century" at that time. Never in my wildest dreams did I think we would top the Brinks job.

Considered it topped. <g>

Credit to:

<http://www.pinedaleonline.com/news/2011/07/EarlyHistoryoftheCow.htm>

### **Walt Puntaney**

The Cowboy Bar was built in 1931 by Walt Puntaney in the later years of his life. He was born in 1870 in Kansas, moved to Pinedale in 1926, and passed away in 1950. In between was an adventurous life. His obituary states that at age 18 he came to Thermopolis, Wyoming and quickly became known throughout the state for his ability to break horses. He worked on, and operated, several ranches around the state. By 1893, he was appearing as a top rider and roper in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

My note: Ok, rode in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show is a good one but does not top the Brinks robbery.

Get ready for it!

### **Butch Cassidy, The Sundance Kid, Kid Curry, the Hole In the Wall, The Wild Bunch.**

Walt rode with Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch. He was arrested for participating in the Butte County bank robbery in Belle Fourche, South Dakota in 1897. The true story is sketchy, with historians writing several different accounts. What is known is that six men robbed the bank on June 28th. Tom O'Day was captured in town when his horse ran away. In September, Walt Puntaney and two other men were captured in Montana and taken to Belle Fourche to be put on trial for the robbery. A bank teller identified the men as taking part in the robbery. The identity of the two men with Puntaney is unknown, but it is suspected they were Harry Longabaugh (Sundance Kid) and Harvey Logan (Kid Curry). All four men escaped in October, but O'Day and Puntaney were soon recaptured and put on trial. With the help of prominent legal counsel, the charges against Puntaney were dropped and O'Day was acquitted. Speculation is that Butch Cassidy paid for the high-priced lawyers. There is no evidence Walt participated in any other Wild Bunch robberies, but he did live in the "Hole-In-The-Wall" area for many years.

My note: What do you think? Did we run into a club operator with a better history than the Brinks job? When I think of Butch and Sundance, I always think of Newman and Redford running out that door with guns blazing taking on an entire South American army unit.

What about those cattle brands on the matches?

Credit to:

### **Uncovering history**

#### **Old brands found on exterior walls of the Cowboy Bar in Pinedale**

by Dawn Ballou, Pinedale Online!

*June 15, 2011.*

You need to read this.

<http://www.pinedaleonline.com/news/2011/06/Uncoveringhistory.htm#CowboyBarinPinedale>

The brands were put on the outer walls of the Cowboy Bar in the 1940's-50's.

Many of the brands are still held by local families today. It is uncertain who many of the brands belonged to, or when the siding was originally put up and ultimately covered over.

My note: The brands were covered up by siding and restored 59 years later.

1 side before:



Cowboy Bar4att2

During reconstruction:



Cowboy

Bar5att2

After:  
Front door:





Cowboy Bar6att2

The brands were on all outer walls of a 2 story building. Many more pictures if you click the link.

Close up of a brand:  
Julie Bagner, Green River Wyoming



**Walter Puntney grave**



Cowboy Bar7att2

A little history.

The Puntenev Building was built on the corner of Maybell and Pine in Pinedale in April and May of 1931. By June 1931, the Rendezvous Pool Hall and Rendezvous Restaurant were open for business.

My note: As you see it was not called The Cowboy Bar when Walt owned it.

Prohibition was finally repealed in December of 1933. State and Town enabling laws were passed by March 1935 and Pinedale was allowed to issue two retail liquor licenses which they gave to Walt Puntenev and J.F. McCormick on a secret ballot out of five applicants. McCormick operated what is now the Corral Bar. In 1937, the Town was issued another license that was given to Charles Wood who operated what is now Stockman's Bar.

Walt Puntenev operated his bar until 1944 under several different names including Rendezvous Pool Hall and Bar-B-Q, Rendezvous Liquor, and Rendezvous Bar.

### **Casey's Cowboy Bar and the Brands**

In 1944, Walt leased and later sold the bar to a newcomer, Casey Hensley, who renamed it the Cowboy and Stockman's Bar. It appears the Stockman's part was dropped fairly quickly and the bar was known as Casey's Cowboy Bar. Casey was 44-years old, a WWI vet, originally from Kansas, but most recently from Thermopolis where many of his family lived, as did Walt's brother.

My note: Did Walt have gambling prior to selling out in 1944? My bet is "YES." Sooner or later the chips will turn up and will generate another "Illegal Of The Day" post.

Casey Hensley was shot and killed in 1946.

Jack Mudd took over from 1946-51.

Colorful local legend says Henry Hittle won the Cowboy Bar in a card game in 1951.

Henry is the one that remolded it and covered the brands starting in 1952.

The Cowboy Bar is still open and owned by Marie Golden. She took over from her father CW Davis who owned it for 40 years,

My note: Not sure which one but either Casey, Jack, or Henry could have ordered the Cowboy Bar chips. There are very few records for the H mold chips made by the HC Edwards Company 1940's-68. Mark Lighterman and I found 7 years of the HCE records but none for the 1940's. The 7 years are posted here. They are later dated chips into the 1980's after HCE was broke into 2 companies after 1968.

<http://www.preservinggaminghistory.com/>

The black \$25 zig zag mold came from Noll and Co., Pasadena, CA. 1944-53. No records known on it.

History marches on. Thanks to Dawn Ballou and Pinedale Online the history of the Cowboy Bar will live on forever on the internet. Without her we could have still matched the chips to the matches. With her hard work and research we have a story that will be hard to top in the "Illegal Of The Day" posts. Have I made that statement before? <g>