

Welcome back Ed Hertel. The old manufactures records were the best boost ever for collectors of illegal chips. Sometimes they leave a lot of questions. Many times I look at them and say "HUH." <g> In the following research Ed takes on one of the "HUH"S in the Taylor records. This is our 1st visit to Mississippi since August 2010.

Illegal of the Day – Mississippi

The availability of the chip records have been a boon to the illegal collector, but not all the records give a straight forward answer. This is the story of one set of chips whose story isn't so easy to unrival, but it does give insight into some of the steps we have to take in finding their true nature.

Today's IOTD looks at the Taylor and Co harp mold "CC" chips from Mississippi:



Crescent1att2



Crescent2att2

I got these chips many years ago and they were said to be from the Crescent Club in Biloxi, Mississippi. Made sense to me. "CC" – Crescent Club, good enough and so it went into the books as such for years. But where did this attribution come from? Years later when the PreservingGamingHistory.com website made the Taylor mold records available, I looked them up and was surprised what I found.

Amount	Color	Initials Both Sides	Style Type	Initials One Side	Other Side	Style Type	Monogram Color	Date Shipped
600	#3 Red	g.c.	Script				Gold	7-30-41
500	R.K. Green	G.C.	"				"	" " "
500	#4 Red	G.C.	"				"	12-30-41
500	#4 Green	G.C.	"				"	" " "
500	DK. BLUE		"	G.C.	\$100		"	" " "
100	YELLOW		"	G.C.	\$500		Silver	" " "
500	#3 Red	G.C.	"				Gold	7-2-42
500	#7 GREEN	"	"				"	7-28-42
10	#5 Red	"	"				"	"

Crescent3att2

Although it had Crescent Club on the card, that name had been crossed out and replaced with "Plaza Club" and the name "Joe Maumus". The Crescent Club name made much more sense, and was cleaner, and we chippers like it when we can decode initials on the chips. This one just didn't work for the Plaza Club.

One thing I had to determine was if the chips had been originally meant for a Crescent Club and for whatever reason, they were not used there and instead picked up for the Plaza Club. After all, there are many examples in the Taylor records of chips being returned and resold to others (likely for a big discount). This was a good possibility, but before I could make that call, I needed to find out more about the Plaza Club and this Joe Maumus.

The Plaza Club was indeed an illegal gambling club in Biloxi and the owner was Joe Maumus. He had to testify and confessed as much in 1944 when he was summoned to court after the club's night watchman was murdered. Whether the Plaza was a real club that offered gambling was not in question.

Could it be that the Plaza Club was originally going to be called the Crescent Club and the name changed after the chips had been ordered? That is an easy answer: No. The Plaza had their own chips. There are two orders in 1940, one in 1941 and one in 1943. The Plaza Club was well established at the time the "CC" chips were ordered in 1941. It was obvious that these chips were never meant for the Plaza.

(As a side note, the chips for the Plaza Club were sent to "Mike Emile" and at some point his name was crossed out on the order card. Emile was indeed an employee at the Plaza and was cited in 1939 and 1941 for allowing gambling. Perhaps he was to leave before the final chip order was delivered?)

So was there a Crescent Club in Biloxi? Well, this wasn't so easy to answer. I asked Tom Henderson, local Mississippi chipper and historian, and he dug through some of his directories. His collection of Biloxi city directories had a hole during the time the chips were ordered, but by 1944 there was a place called the Crescent Bar. Maybe this would lead somewhere and I set out to find what I could about this Crescent Bar, and what I found was very encouraging.

The first chip order was made in July 1941. On 18 October 1941, the following clip was run in Biloxi's Daily Herald:

**OPENING NEW BAR ROOM**  
Curtis Galle and Griffin McEachern are opening the Crescent Bar Room and Cocktail Lounge in the Laughlin building, which is being remodelled. They will occupy the space now taken by Fremin's Barber Shop and that portion of the building behind the shop and the news stand.

lcrescent4att2

So now we know there was something opening with a similar name around the same time the chips were ordered. That's a start, but nowhere could I find mention of this Crescent Bar Room and Cocktail Lounge ever being busted for gambling. So what about the owners, Galle and McEachorn, of the Crescent? Could they be linked to any gambling?

Luckily, information about their exploits goes back years. In August 1940, three clubs were hit by the police, the Buena Vista Deck, Old Union Saloon and the Crescent Billiards Parlor, and a number of employees were arrested. What is very interesting is who posted bonds for the different clubs. From the Daily Herald 15 August 1940:

**A dice game in a room directly over the Old Union Saloon resulted in the arrest of eight individuals, Ace Hudson, Johnny Pretor, Abe Valince, John Brown, Tom Smith, G. Breeze, John Ellis and Clarence Brooks. Bonds for all were jointly signed by Curtis Galle.**

**Arrested at the Crescent Billiard Parlor, were 10 individuals, John Smith, W. B. Smith, C. B. Jones, Earl Brown, J. P. Brown, John Fallo Jr., Shelton Tonchet, Salvadore Taranto, L. B. Perron and George DeMar. Bond for all was jointly signed by W. G. McEachern.**

crescent5att2

Galle would himself be arrested a few days later for gambling charges. It's clear these two were tied into Biloxi's gambling scene.

(It's interesting that McEachorn's club was the Crescent Billiards Parlor. What about that as being the "Crescent Club" for the CC chips? They had gambling, that much has been established. But my problem is why would the chips have been delivered to the Plaza if this Crescent was well established at the time the chips were ordered?)

So the question still remains... if these chips were meant for this Crescent Bar, why were they delivered to the Plaza Club? This isn't as easy to answer, but I have a guess based on my own recent personal experience. I think there is a clue in the grand opening announcement. It says the Crescent Bar is a new place being remodeled from an old barber shop. Anyone who has done a big remodeling job knows that rarely does anything get done on time (or on budget). I think it's entirely possible (but I admit it's a guess) that these guys ordered these chips anticipating them to be delivered to the Crescent Bar, but at

some point had to call Taylor and Company and say, "Ah yea, we're running a little behind. Could you send the chips to our buddy Maumus at the Plaza?"

Is this last part a stretch? Yes, I admit it. I believe Galle, McEachorn and Maumus did know each other. Biloxi isn't a large town and no doubt they socialized in the same circles. Each year they were all included in the amateur golf tournament roster and it's not crazy to believe Maumus would help these guys out in a pinch.

So, here we are full circle. In my mind these chips were probably used at the Crescent Bar Room and Cocktail Lounge (Club). Have I proved it? No, but I think I made a good case for keeping them out of the Plaza.

My note: I have the red CC chip. It came from Allan "Doc" Myers back in 2001. I had it listed same as Ed as The Plaza. I wrote a 3 part article on Biloxi illegals back in 1999. Rip Poulos a long time Biloxi illegal club operator became a friend and furnished a lot of info for them.

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

I wish I had thought to bring up the CC chips with him.