

These are my first ivory chips. Just having them was not enough. <g> If there was a story, I wanted it. The box they came in was made prior to 1876. In my opinion that makes the chips date prior to 1876. If I am wrong I feel certain one of our ivory chip collectors will post into this thread.

To be fair, there was some info in our Club magazine back in 2003 about the G Ivory chip find. I was told the info in the story came 2nd hand from the original chip seller. Good story but, very little of it could be verified except for the name the G stands for, city, and time line.

Enough of that:

St Louis, Missouri:

Email from an old friend not heard from in several years:

GENE, I get so much enjoyment reading your FANTASTIC articles on illegals that you post on the bulletin board..... It's high time that I say T H A N K Y O U!

My scan (20 chips) shows you some UFC chips that I have come to have since I sent you a chip care package several years ago. I don't do much buying anymore like I used to.... It would be my pleasure to send these chips to you if you don't mind receiving them. Please send me your mailing address and I will get them off to you.

One of the IVORY CHIPS has YOUR NUMBER on it.

I want you to have it since you are the number 1 illegal chip historian of all time.....

You know, ALL the ivory chips were ILLEGALS !!!! Carry it in your pocket and rub it for luck. <g>

My note: Well, that carry it for luck stuff did not work the 1st time I carried it. A poker machine beat my brains out! <g>

My note: Actually ivory chips were illegals, privately owned sets or quasi-legal. A good percentage of the 1880s-1900s moguls owned ivory sets. These were not illegals. Rich people had ivory sets made for their private use. In my opinion the G ivory chips are a rich guys home game set. The only thing illegal about them is, it is illegal to sell them on EBAY. <g>



GivoryBB1att2

Per the original seller the G ivory belonged to Heinrich Gerhardt, Gearhart, Gearhardt from St Louis, MO? Don't know how his name is spelled ... I didn't write it down.. Have to write everything down that I want to remember.... but then I won't remember where I put the paper I wrote on.

My Note: Me too! <g>

"G" chips were bought back in 2003. You got my only dupe... I just bought it back in Dec 2011 from a guy I had sold it to in 2004.....

Here are scans of the box they came in.



G IvoryBB2att2

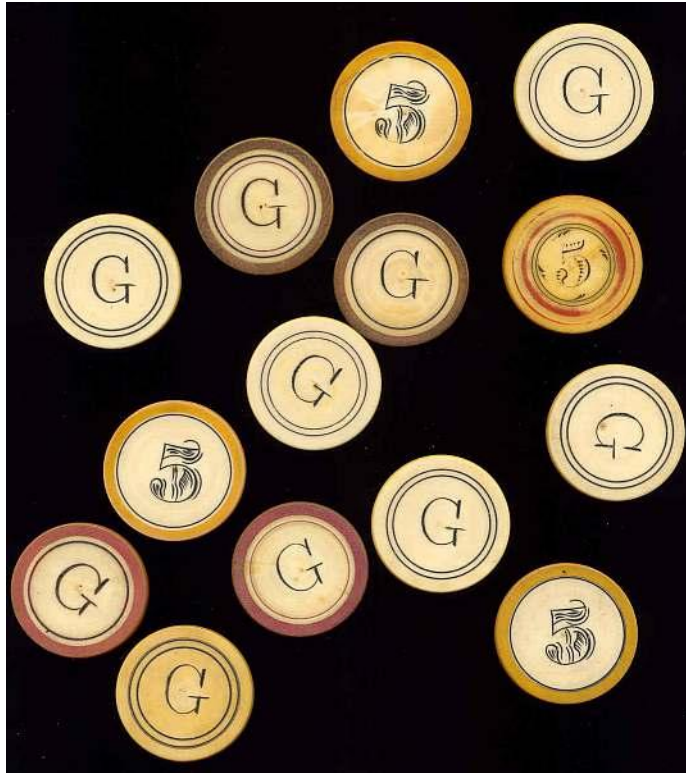


G IvoryBB3att2



G Ivory BB4,1att2

One of each chip in the 2003 find. All are Ivory chips.



G Ivory BB4.2

Enter our “Friend Of The Hobby.”

There was a very wealthy, prominent and influential St. Louis family in the latter half of the 19th century named Gerhart which might be where the chips came from—more on them below.


The guy who made the box, George W. Williams (1810-1887), was in business at 98 Elm St, New York City from 1849 until 1876.

My Note: The G chip made earlier than 1876 is by far the oldest chip in my collection. <g>

Here's some ads:

1859--

GEORGE W. WILLIAMS,
BOX MAKER,
 98 ELM STREET, CORNER OF WALKER,
 NEW YORK.

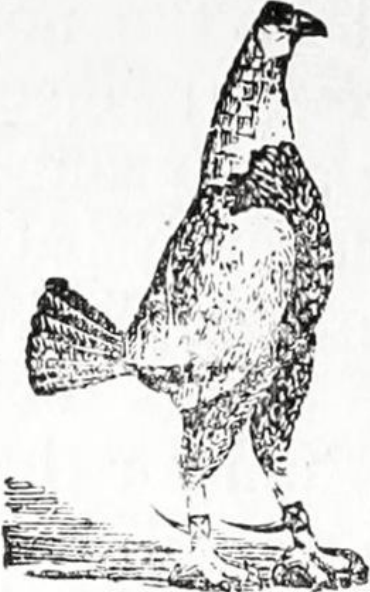


Cue Keepers, Card and Back Gammon Boxes; Roulettes made and repaired; all kinds of Faro Tables made and sent to any part; Painted Layout Cloths on hand; Card Scissors, Cribbage Boards, and Check Holders.

G IvoryBB5att2

1872--

GEORGE W. WILLIAMS,
 Dealer in all kinds of
**Gaming
 Implements**
 98 ELM STREET.




Roulette Wheels of all Sizes, Faro and Poker Tables, Dealing and Quo Boxes, Faro Layouts, &c., &c.

G IvoryBB6att2

1874--

GAMING IMPLEMENTS.

GEORGE W. WILLIAMS,
98 Elm, cor. Walker, St. N. Y.,
GAMING IMPLEMENTS,
ROULETTES, FARO TABLES, POKER TABLES, PAINTED
LAY-OUT CLOTHS ON HAND; CARD SCISSORS, AND
DEALING BOXES, CRIBBAGE BOARDS, CHECK
HOLDERS, CUE KEEPERS, CARD AND BACK-
GAMMON BOXES, CUE PAPERS, &c.
ALL KINDS OF FARO TABLES MADE AND SENT TO ANY PART.



G IvoryBB7att2

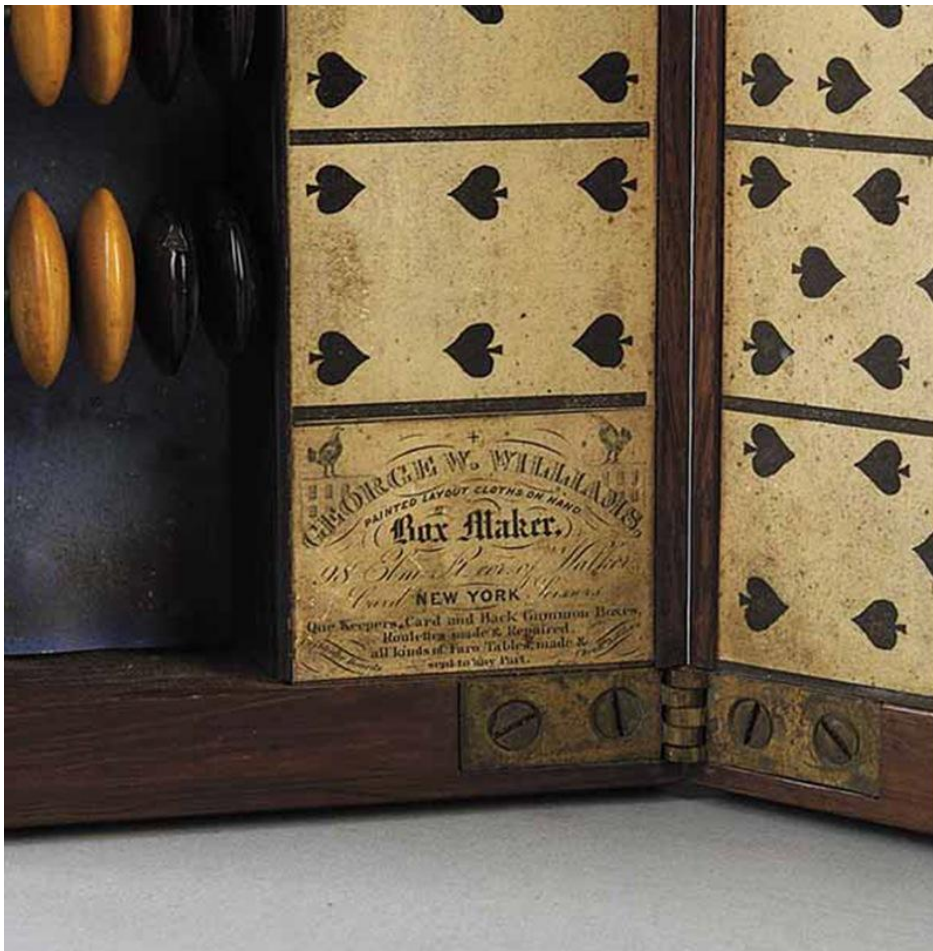
A few more boxes and other things made by Williams:



G Ivory BB8tt2



G IvoryBB9tt2



G IvoryBB10att2

card cutters (top & bottom):



G IvoryBB11attlvo



G IvoryBB12att2

roulette wheel:



G IvoryBB13att2

At the time Williams was making his “gaming implements” in New York there was a wealthy and influential Gerhart family in St. Louis who may have been the source of the chips. I’m including this info because It may have something to do with the Heinrich Gerhardt reference made by your friend—who knows??

It's the closest thing I could find.

The patriarch of this family was Peter G. Gerhart (1830-1904). In the early 1860's he became involved in the liquor trade in St. Louis and presumably would have been intimately acquainted with the saloon culture of the city and perhaps with gambling. Gerhart worked in the liquor business until the early 1880's when his real estate investments were making him so much money he could retire from booze. Here's an ad from 1865:

P. G. GERHART & CO.,
DEALERS IN
Wines & Liquors

ALWAYS ON HAND,
Pure Old Bourbon and Rye Whiskies.
Also, Manufacturers of
**Domestic Liquors and Double Rectified
Whiskies.**

NO. 15 N. SECOND STREET,
Between Market and Chesnut, ST. LOUIS, MO.

G IvoryBB14att2

Gerhart's fathers' name was Heinrich and he had a son Heinrich. His father died in the late 1870's in St Louis and his son, an MD, died in 1902, age 30.

In his later years Gerhart spent his winters in San Diego, CA where he died in 1904:

LAST MEMBER OF ORIGINAL PARK BOARD DIED IN CALIFORNIA,

**Peter G. Gerhart, a Resident of
St. Louis for Sixty-Five Years,
Was Prominent Real
Estate Man.**

News of the death of Peter G. Gerhart, a pioneer resident of St. Louis, was received from San Diego, Cal., by his relatives yesterday. Mr. Gerhart died at 11:45 o'clock yesterday morning.

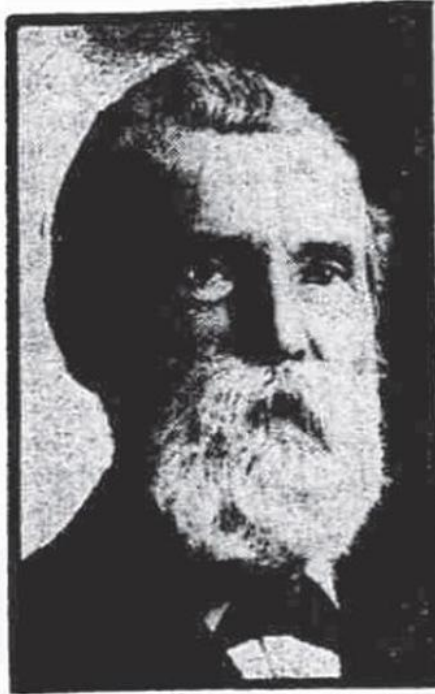
Frank H. Gerhart, one of the sons, started for San Diego soon after the message was received, to accompany the body to St. Louis. The funeral will take place from the family residence at No. 3641 Washington boulevard.

Mr. Gerhart was 75 years old and had lived in St. Louis for more than 65 years. He was born in Alsace-Lorraine, and came to America with his parents when he was nine years old, residing first in Baltimore.

He came to St. Louis in the early fifties and engaged in the wholesale distilling business. On July 5, 1855, he married Octavia A. Flandrin, a daughter of Francis Flandrin, whose father, Antoine Flandrin, a native of Bordeaux, France, fought in the Revolutionary War, under General Lafayette.

In 1880 Mr. Gerhart established the real estate firm of P. G. Gerhart & Co., three of his sons being associated with him. He was one of the original directors of the Board of Park Commissioners that built the chain of parks, including Forest, O'Fallon and Carondelet parks, and he was the last surviving director of that board.

As a member of the City Council has was active in building the Mill Creek sewer



PETER G. GERHART.
Pioneer citizen of St. Louis, who died at
San Diego, Cal., yesterday.

system and other large public enterprises.

Since the death of his wife, on February 15, 1901, Mr. Gerhart had lived in San Diego, having retired from active business in 1890. Five sons survive—Frank H. Gerhart, president, and Charles B. Gerhart, vice president of the Gerhart Real Estate Company; Thomas S., H. Van and George J. Gerhart.

G IvoryBB15att2

Here's a much longer and detailed bio from 1921:

PETER G. GERHART.

The success which Peter G. Gerhart attained would alone entitle him to mention as one of the eminent men of St. Louis, but in citizenship as well he did that which causes his name to be honored, for his labors were a factor in promoting municipal progress in many ways. The real upbuilders of a city are not those who handle the reins of government, but who give their influence to continuous municipal progress, and who found, promote and control extensive business interests. Laudable ambition, ready adaptability and a capacity for hard work are essential elements of success, and in none of these elements was Peter G. Gerhart ever found lacking. It is not a matter of marvel, therefore, that he occupied a pre-eminent position among the builders of St. Louis and the promoters of progress and development in various sections of the country. The eminence to which he attained was also due to the fact that he had the ability to recognize the opportune moment and to appraise correctly the value of a situation and determine its possible outcome. In the earlier years of his manhood he was identified with mercantile and manufacturing interests, but later became known as one of the most extensive real estate operators of St. Louis.

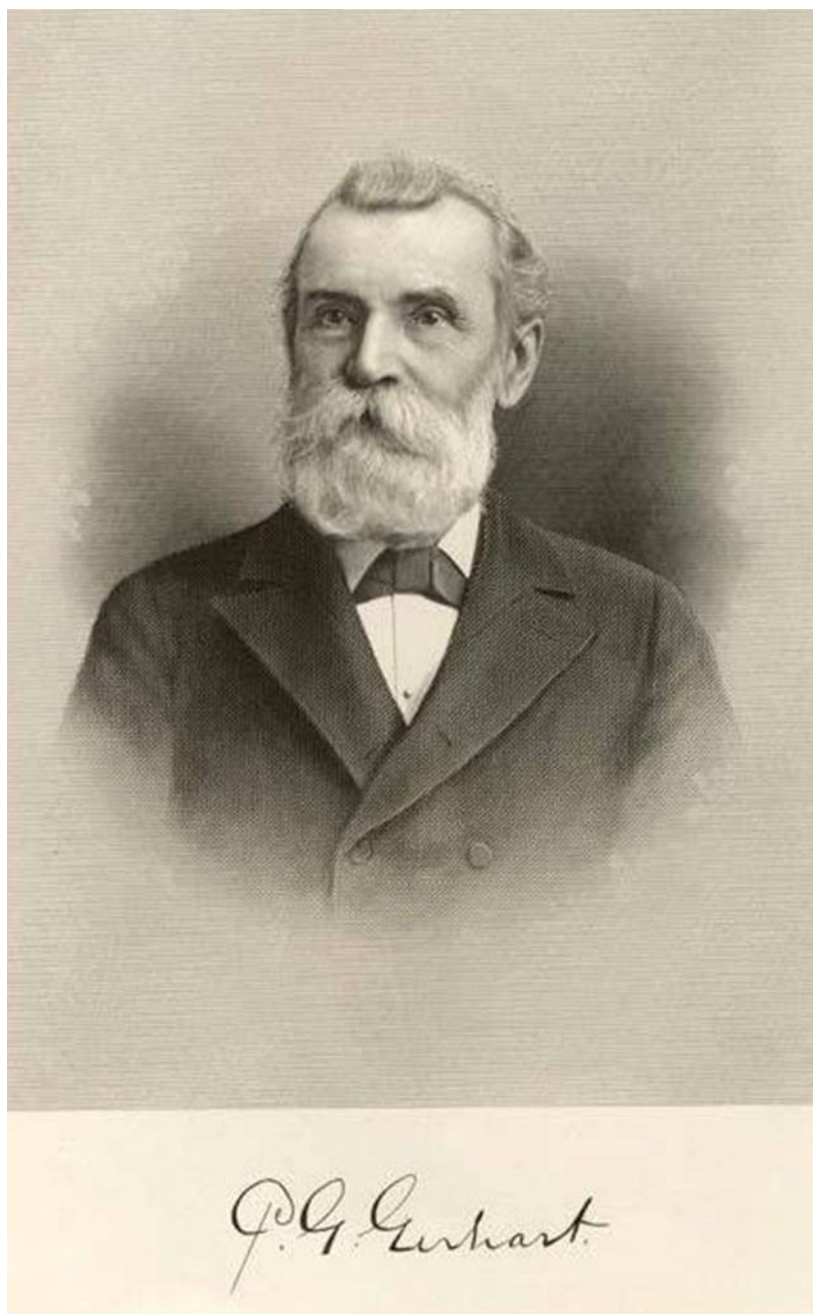
Peter G. Gerhart came to this city when ten years of age from Baltimore, Maryland, in company with his parents, Henry J. and Catharine (Hoebe) Gerhart, who were natives of Strassburg, France. His paternal grandfather, also a native of that country, served as a soldier under the great Napoleon. The year 1830 witnessed the arrival of Henry J. Gerhart in the new world. He landed at Baltimore where he resided for ten years, and in 1840 came to St. Louis. He had received a military education in his native country and was also a graduate of medicine, but never practiced that profession for he found commercial and manufacturing pursuits more congenial. For a time he resided at Belleville, Illinois, and it was there that Peter G. Gerhart acquired a good English education and also thorough business training under the direction of his father. His growing ambition and enterprise, however, felt hampered by the limited business interests of Belleville and he came to St. Louis. A few years later he went to Glasgow, Missouri, where he conducted a stove and hardware business, the success of the enterprise being indicated by the fact that he also established a branch house at Huntsville, Missouri. Several years later he sold out at a good profit and again took up his abode in St. Louis, purchasing an interest in the steam cooperage establishment of Connor & Company, afterward merged into what is now the Brown Cooperage Company. His sound judgment and business ability proved elements in the success of his undertaking and Mr. Gerhart aided in establishing it upon a substantial basis ere he withdrew to take charge of his father's tin and copper roofing business. Noting the growth of the city, he made investments in real estate as opportunity offered, and his success proved that was a sagacious operator in this field of enterprise.

Not long after the outbreak of the Civil war Peter G. Gerhart formed a partnership with John Finn for the conduct of a wholesale liquor business and the rectifying of spirits. When he sold out to his partner five or six years later he purchased a property at No. 213-217 Locust street, where he engaged in rectifying spirits in partnership with Henry W. Dionisius, who was afterward succeeded by Captain M. C. Esby, who was associated with Mr. Gerhart for three or four years. The latter then became sole proprietor of the business through the purchase of his partner's interest and continued alone in the trade until 1881, when the growth of his real estate interests led him to retire from the manufacturing field that he might give his undivided attention to the control of his property and to further investment. He admitted his sons Frank H. and Charles B. to a partnership. Eminently successful as a real estate operator, he and the younger members of the firm, who inherited a large share of his energy and business ability, inaugurated many enterprises of importance and took a prominent place among those most largely interested in St. Louis realty. The name of Gerhart became a synonym for extensive operations in city property and when the firm was well established in a foremost place in the ranks of the real estate men of St. Louis the father, Peter G. Gerhart, retired, spending his remaining days largely in the enjoyment of well earned rest, finding genuine delight in the pleasures which his wealth allowed him. He maintained a summer home in St. Louis and a winter residence in southern California, where he was enabled to surround himself and family with the various luxuries that a competence could secure and good taste sanction.

The efforts of Mr. Gerhart were not only the source of individual prosperity, but constituted a most helpful element in the city's growth and advancement. He did much to make St. Louis attractive through the assistance which he gave to many movements for making the city a great center of trade and commerce. From 1866 until 1888 he was a member of the city council of St. Louis, and exerted his official prerogatives in support of many plans and measures which have been extremely beneficial to the city at large. He endorsed the plan for the construction of a city sewer system, beginning with the Mill creek, Rocky branch and Carondelet sewers. In the early '80s he was again elected to the city council, where he championed the plan of paving the city streets with vitrified brick, since demonstrated to be the most excellent paving material. He was a member of the school board, and the cause of education found in him a stalwart champion whose labors were at once practical and progressive. Perhaps no single feature of his public work will remain as a lasting monument to his memory more than his labors for the establishment of Forest Park. In connection with Messrs. Leffingwell and McKinley he originated this enterprise and assisted in securing the passage of the bill through the legislature which made provision for the establishment and improvement of what is today one of the finest parks in all America. He also acted for some time as a member of the park board. His early political allegiance was given to the whig party and on its dissolution he joined the ranks of the democracy, remaining an untiring worker in supporting its principles and policies. His religious faith was that of the Catholic church and he was a member of the Masonic and Odd Fellows lodges and the Order of Druids.

In 1855 occurred the marriage of Peter G. Gerhart and Miss Octavia A. Flandrin, of St. Louis, a daughter of Francis Flandrin, whose wife was a Miss Chartrand, a member of one of the old French families of the Mississippi valley. Mr. Flandrin was born in St. Louis in 1796, a son of Antoine Flandrin, a native of Bordeaux, France, who came to America with General Lafayette at the time of the Revolutionary war and fought through the war of the Revolution. Soon after America's independence was achieved he settled at St. Louis and married a Miss Barada, a sister of the centenarian, Madame Ortes. Seven children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Gerhart, of whom four are living, Frank H., Charles B., Thomas Slovin and George J., all prominent representatives of the real estate business of St. Louis. Henry V., who was a practicing physician, died in December, 1904, aged thirty-two years.

Such in brief is the life history of Peter G. Gerhart, who departed this life February 22, 1904. While America is the home of the self-made man, it is not so usual for an individual to advance from an humble position to one of marked prominence that the frequent occurrence renders it a commonplace; on the contrary, such a course always awakens admiration and interest. Such was the life record of Mr. Gerhart and there was not a single esoteric phase in his career, his life ever being an open book. Diligent in business, he was also loyal in citizenship and faithful in friendship, while in his home he was a devoted husband and father.



G IvoryBB17att2

Special thanks to my friend. Mainly for being a friend and secondly for my 1st Ivory chips.

I will try that "carry it for luck," one more time. <g>

The friends we make in our "Club" are what it is all about. To my many other friends, thank you for reading.

I asked Rich Hanover one of our best known ivory chip collectors this question.

Do we know who carved the ivory chips? His reply below.

Nobody knows who carved any ivory chips (except Joe Bob Winstead in Georgia who has cranked out many chips over the last 4 or 5 years!!!!).

I believe Dale Seymour may have pointed out some addresses in downtown NYC --- sort of an ivory row of shops. I don't believe there was a particular "artist". The "artist" was the guy that drew the design on paper. I assume the design was then "painted" onto an ivory blank (like Michaelangelo did with the Sistine Chapel). The "painted" blanks were then given to 3 or 4 guys sitting at their stool and lathe to carve the design into the blank. That is why, in my opinion, in one rack of chips there may be 3 or 4 different codes. In reality it was one order with 3 or 4 people each carving a portion of the order. Each carver may have had his own style of carving. Dale would assign 3 or 4 different codes when, in reality, it was all the same order only carved by different people.