

Nothing miiffs me more than to see "all" Chicago illegal chips attributed to Al Capone. Most sellers and traders hint at Big Al when selling/trading for chips and close to all on ebay tout Al's name. Al had his share of illegal gambling in Chicago, but he did not have all of it. <g>

I have never had to research Chicago chips. We have 2 resident Chicago collectors that have a vast data base of info. I email one or both. <g> Info on Johnson and Skidmore below is credited to them.

Enough of that:

The Horseshoe Club was an illegal gambling operation at 4721 Kedzie in Chicago. This club was part of the gambling empire of Johnson and Skidmore, which would grow to include at least 23 different operations. Their flagship operation was the Bon Air Country Club in Wheeling, which was one of the biggest casinos in the nation at the time. The Horseshoe Club was open ca1930s-1940s.

The Horseshoe Club was a big casino style operation run by the William Johnson syndicate. It was at 4721 Kedzie on the north side of Chicago. No connection with Capone or the outfit. He was the biggest independent operator with about 20 casino style operations including the Horseshoe, Senrab, Southland, Bon Aire Country Club...etc....

This one has been on ebay several times. I captured this scan off ebay. Using it as an example of the many sales on ebay with bad info.



Ebay description:

Horseshoe Club

4721 Kedzie Ave., Owner: "AL CAPONE" (can't be Al Capone either way!) Opened 1920 Closed 1930's

My Notes:

Horseshoe mold distributed by TK Specialty Kansas city and later Reno NV.

16 horseshoes, alternately pointing in and out. 1952-early 2000's.

The Chicago Horseshoe was closed in the 1940's. Mold first in 1952. Could the ID be a good one? You make the call? But, IT IS NOT AL CAPONE! <g>

This one is my chip.



17764 im

Same logo TK mold. TK repeated 13 times. 1940's-1970's? T.K. Specialty again.

Could be Chicago Horseshoe as the years are right, but doubtful, IMO. I think it went to the same place as the horseshoe mold with same logo one did after 1952. Just my opinion.

GPI bought out TKS. Records would have fallen into the proverbial black hole with the rest of their buyout companies.

My Chicago friend on the TK mold.

"Not sure the origin of this ID. There are Monarch mold chips with a horseshoe mark that are IDd from the Hunt records, and a cord mold with the "4721" address on it. Maybe the diamond mark chips were found with? Would have been a while back...."

Moral to the story. Ask questions before you buy.

For sure Johnson and Skidmore Chicago illegals.



15361



13637

Hunt & Co record.

SEN RAB 3/1-32
CLUB Barnes
 Kedzie + Lawrence
 2000 - WHITE } stamped in gold
 Cross + Circle
 1000 - CHOC } his checka
 PLAIN MOLD

4745 N Kedzie 1929-36-delivered to a Mr Barnes.

Senrab is Barnes spelled backwards- Senrab later became the Horseshoe




16523IM



17538



17537

 "BALLS" CHECK 10/8/34

RED CREIGHTON
CHICAGO - ILL
- - - -

3000-BLACK } BOTH SIDES FLIKE

CIRCLES

Piece of Shucks
\$3000 per thousand

Chicago Tribune story.

The Club Southland was a big illegal gambling operation run by Andrew J. (Red) Creighton for the Johnson syndicate. It was at 6245 Cottage Grove Ave. in Chicago. The club was still around in the 1940s

- Tiers of craps tables, some roulette wheels, Blackjack, chuck-a-luck, horse betting, "sometimes" slot machines (as many as 40-50), sometimes keno. Entrance was via a marble stairway to the second floor. At the top of the stairs there was a reception room with a desk. A small bell was on the desk. You rang the bell and a steel door would be opened. There was a guard who would then escort you through the steel door into a search room. A ladder in the search room led to a guard room above it. The guards could look at you through slits in the ceiling. The guard would check patrons for guns, etc... The guards above were armed and were ready to "fell" any hold-up men. There was a search room, and guards viewing search room thru slits in ceiling.

Interesting excerpt from a very long Chicago Tribune newspaper story on "Big Bill" Johnson. Harry Truman's name once again pops up in conjunction with the "Era Of The Illegals."

Johnson began life as an express truck driver and later became an expert dice shooter. Ultimately he controlled a string of gambling houses in and around Chicago, some of them, reportedly, in partnership with the late William R. Skidmore, reputed fixer who served as a link between the independent gamblers and the syndicate. Skidmore died in 1944 while serving a prison term for income tax evasion.

Pardoned by Truman

Johnson himself was sentenced to five years in prison in 1940 for evasion of nearly 2 million dollars in income taxes. The case went to the United States Supreme court three time before Johnson began serving his term in March of 1946.

He was released on parole in November of 1948, after serving 32 months of his term, and was granted a complete pardon, restoring his citizenship, by President Truman on Dec. 24, 1952.



13521



13520

William Johnson and Billy Skidmore-Skidmore once was associated with the "Bugs" Moran gang

There are more for another day.

