

It has been 20 months since the last Arizona "Illegal Of The Day" post and 21 months since the first "Illegal Of The Day" post. Time flies when you are having fun. <g> The history of our chips is a never ending story.

David Spragg found these. Very few green 25 were found. It is interesting that the 25 is designated as 25¢ on the Mason chip record but not on the chip.

Enough of that:

Arizona:



CDK1att2

CDK

C D Keller

c/o Hub Buffett

Central & Jefferson Streets

Phoenix, AZ

White 10¢-Green 25¢- Pink 50c-Orange-\$1- Black \$5

10/30/36

## CDK

Collis Devine "CD" Keller, was born in 1894 and grew up in Phoenix (he would turn 18 the year Arizona became the 48th state). Keller was an electrician by trade and a member of several organizations in Phoenix including the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the BPOE and the Arizona Game Protective Association (known today as Arizona Wildlife Federation).

Keller died at Phoenix in 1968, age 74.

The CDK chips were delivered to Keller at the Hub Buffet. The Hub was a bar located in the basement of a 2 story building on the northwest corner West Jefferson & South Central (address sometimes listed as 46 1/2, sometimes 48 South Central). The building was in the heart of downtown Phoenix, sharing an intersection with the Luhrs Building, the Jefferson Hotel and the Luhrs Hotel.

The building no longer exists, the block upon which it once stood became Patriots Square Park in 1976.

The red arrow in the image below points to the building; the view is looking north down Central.



CDK23att2

The Hub Buffet opened around September 1935 and was owned and operated by John Levandoski and Jack Hightower. According to the CDK order card, Mason & Co. in Chicago shipped the CDK chips to Keller on October 24th 1936. That also happens to be the last day that the Hub was open for business. On that day Phoenix police served notice on the Hub that it had violated the new city liquor ordinance and suspended its liquor license. After the police left, the guys at the Hub ignored the suspension and continued serving booze to its customers. Later in the day when the police returned and saw what was going on they took all the guys to jail:

# Quintet Is Arrested As City Closes Bars

COMING as the first move in the announced intention of city authorities of cleaning up the liquor situation here, police last night arrested the proprietor and four employes of a downtown saloon after they had ignored a notice served earlier that the establishment's license had been suspended for violation of the new municipal liquor ordinance.

Suspension notices were served on this and one other liquor establishment yesterday on the instructions of Dave W. Fountain, newly-appointed city temperance officer, as he swung into action on the cleanup drive. The second establishment, however, obeyed the notice and closed soon after it was served.

The men taken into custody were Jack M. Hightower, 31 years old, proprietor of the Hub buffet, located in basement quarters at 48 South Central avenue; and Charles W. Hiatt, 25; Fern J. Bay, 32; Truman F. Stanley, age not given, and Bob Amos, 23, all employes of the establishment.

They were arrested by Jack Curlee and Earl O'Clair, detectives, on complaints charging failure to observe the suspension order and were jailed for 25 minutes before being released under bond of \$100 in the case of Hightower and \$50 each in the cases of the other men.

The arrests were ordered by Fountain and L. A. Jennings, city attorney.

CDK3att2

Although evidence of gambling was grounds for suspending a liquor license under the new ordinance, that was not the source of the Hub's violation. The Hub had violated Section 20:

**"No license shall be issued for alcoholic beverages for any premises operated as a dance hall, nor shall dancing be permitted upon the premises of any licensee except upon premises having a restaurant license and where the principal business of such licensee is the restaurant business, and the music provided and the dancing indulged in by the patrons of said restaurant is incidental to the regular business of said restaurants."**

CDK4att2

My note: Booze ok but NO dancing! <g>

Apparently the Hub, which was not a licensed restaurant, had allowed patrons to dance. If violations of the ordinance were confirmed after a hearing, then there was a mandatory revocation of an establishment's liquor license. The Hub's license was permanently revoked on October 28th 1936. So, when Keller's hubs arrived there was no more Hub.

Hightower and Levadonski held the lease on the basement until March 1st 1937, but I don't know if they operated any kind of business there after they lost their liquor license. Whether Keller was operating at the Hub prior to the chip order or whether he was planning to operate there after he got the chips I don't know.

My note: The chips would have arrived to Keller at the Hub a few days after the dancing was stopped upstairs. Hightower and Levadonski held their basement lease at the Hub for 5 more months. As a professional poker player 1961-80 I played poker and also ran poker games in the basements and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors of many closed businesses. A closed business does not mean the poker stopped. Poker players will find a game. <g>

IMO the chips were first used at the Hub Buffet by Keller, Hightower, and Levadonski, Oct 1936 thru March 1937. I see no record of a poker raid at the Hub. Our 3 poker players moved on in March 1937. There is every chance the chips moved on with them but I cannot say that for sure as you will read.

In early 1937, Hightower and Levandoski moved to a new location on South Central. At the old Hub location a place called the El Rey Club operated very briefly in 1937. I wasn't able to determine if Keller had anything to do with either of these places—or any other place after the chip order.

My note: There is every chance the chips moved to the EL Ray, but who really knows. If my partners in the 1960's Brownie and Howard moved to the EL Ray, I would have been right there with them.

However, based on Keller's activities at the time I think it's safe to say he was probably operating a poker game somewhere in downtown Phoenix.

My note: That proves my point. A poker operator is going to operate! <g> Read on.

In the year and a half prior to the CDK order Keller had been arrested twice for operating poker games. On April 20th 1935 the Maricopa County Sheriff raided four known poker games operating in Phoenix:

## Gamblers Pay \$400 In Fines

PHOENIX gamblers stepped up and laid their money "on the line" in court yesterday without a whimper.

Four of them, C. D. Keller, M. H. Brahmer, F. A. Gillhouse and Pete Martin, pleaded guilty to gaming charges in justice courts and paid fines of \$100 apiece.

But the revenue didn't go to the city.

The four arrests were made Friday night when Sheriff J. R. McFadden and his deputies raided and closed four known gambling houses, arresting the operators.

So the \$400 in revenue went into Maricopa county coffers.

The sheriff's raids were directed at gambling in poker games in the city.

CDK5att2

A little over a year later on June 14th 1936 Keller was charged with "conducting, opening and carrying on" a poker game at 32 North First Avenue. This address was around the corner and down a block from the Hub's location. On the same day another poker game was raided at 28 South Central. This address was the location of the Avalon Café and was only a few doors down from the Hub. The case against Keller was dropped on Sept. 10th 1936. CDK chips ordered about a month later.

## Two Gambling Cases Dropped

Charges of "conducting, opening and carrying on a poker game," filed against two men in Maricopa County Superior Court almost three months ago, were dismissed yesterday by Judge M. T. Phelps, on motion of Earl Anderson, deputy county attorney, because of insufficient evidence to prosecute.

Defendants were Collis Keller, charged with having committed the offense June 14 at 32 North First avenue, and Hallie Saliba, charged with the same offense, allegedly committed the same day at 28 South Central avenue. At the time the direct informations were filed by Anderson in Judge Phelps' court, the defendants were arrested on warrants served by deputies of Sheriff J. R. McFadden.

CDK6att2

When the CDK chips were offered on eBay this was the sellers' description:

THESE CHIPS CAME FROM AN ILLEGAL CASINO IN ARIZONA AND VERY "RARE"  
IT WAS IN THE EASTERN PART UP AROUND GLOBE, MIAMI AREA AND WAS CALLED  
"THE TOP OF THE WORLD BROTHEL AND CASINO"

CDK7att2

My note: No proof whatever that Keller had anything to do with the Top Of The World. The rest of this post is being included as it documents a new Arizona illegal for us. Somewhere along the line we could find chips used there or even confirm that Keller operated there.

About 75 miles east of Phoenix and 9 miles west of Miami on Highway 60 is a very small “town” named Top of the World. From the 1920’s to the 1950’s the place was the location of a well known night club called “Top of the World.”

Here’s an ad from 1940 (the “Grand Opening” refers to the 1940 season).



CDK8att2

In the 1950’s the place was referred to as a “vice resort” and “plush prostitution operation” operated by Howard W. Johnson of Phoenix who the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Department described as a “well known professional gambler.” The place was closed in 1957 by a Federal court injunction. Never could find any info linking Keller to the place but I guess it’s possible that the CDK chips could have gotten there at some point.

My note: Yes I can spell but the word with the \$ in it is too bad a word for you guys and gals to read. <g>

In 2007 a couple who had been married for 60 years and had grown up in the Globe-Miami area gave an oral history interview. In the interview they mention the Top of the World club. In the 1950’s the couple was living and working on a ranch owned by the Webb family near the club.

Apparently it was not an uncommon occurrence for people who were looking for the club to drive up to their ranch by mistake. They pronounce Miami “miAHmuh.” I’ve attached part of the interview in an audio WMA file.

No new info in the audio file. If you want to listen, email me and I will send it to you.