

The AD chip was a gift from a regular BB poster. Thank you Sir. He is welcome to post his name if he wants to. I had no clue what it was used for. When the ID came back from the Mason records, I was excited as Texas produces some of the best stories for Illegal chips. They had as many colorful characters as any state in the USA. There are two big names in this one. Three time WSOP champion Johnny Moss and JFK.

It is amazing the amount of history that can be linked to the "Era Of The Illegals."

AD scan had to be lightened so the monogram would show in the scan.

Enough of that:

Texas:

A-D



AD1att2

A -D
Albert A Davis
Metropolitan Hotel
Ft Worth, TX
Various orders 1931-33, 4000+ chips total

Albert Artemus Davis, a native of Tyler, Texas, whose family moved to Ft. Worth when he was a kid. He was a known gambler who operated cafes in downtown Ft. Worth from the 1910's until as late as 1930 (including a place called the Panther Café which was located around the corner from the Metropolitan Hotel). He died at Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1960 aged 76 (buried Ft. Worth).

pics of Davis:



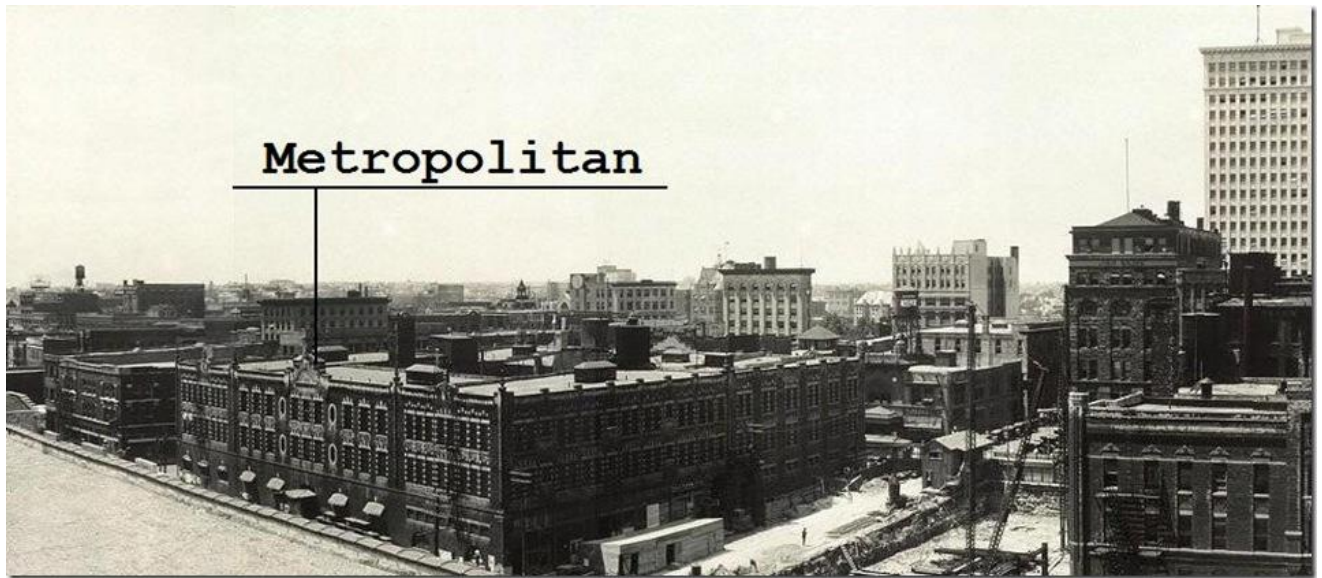
AD2att2



AD3Att2

The chips were delivered to Davis at the Metropolitan Hotel from 1931-1933. I didn't see any evidence that he was operating any cafes during this time and since there is evidence that he was not residing at the Metropolitan when the chips were ordered, the chips were most likely used in a gambling operation at the hotel—for which it had a reputation.

The Metropolitan Hotel opened in 1898 and was built in a part of Ft. Worth which, during its wild west days, was known as "Hell's Half-Acre." During its early life the Metropolitan was considered to be Ft. Worth's best hotel—a title it lost when the Hotel Texas opened across the street in the early 1920's. The 3 story structure took-up a city block with the main entrance located on the 900 block of Main St. Here's a pic from 1920; view shows the Commerce St. side on left and the 8th St. side on the right (the construction of the Hotel Texas visible on 8th St.):



AD4att2

View of dining room:



AD5att2

In the 1920's the Metropolitan made headlines when the police commissioner was accused by the chief of police of protecting the hotel from gambling and liquor raids. The controversy started when the commissioner tried to fire the chief over a raid.

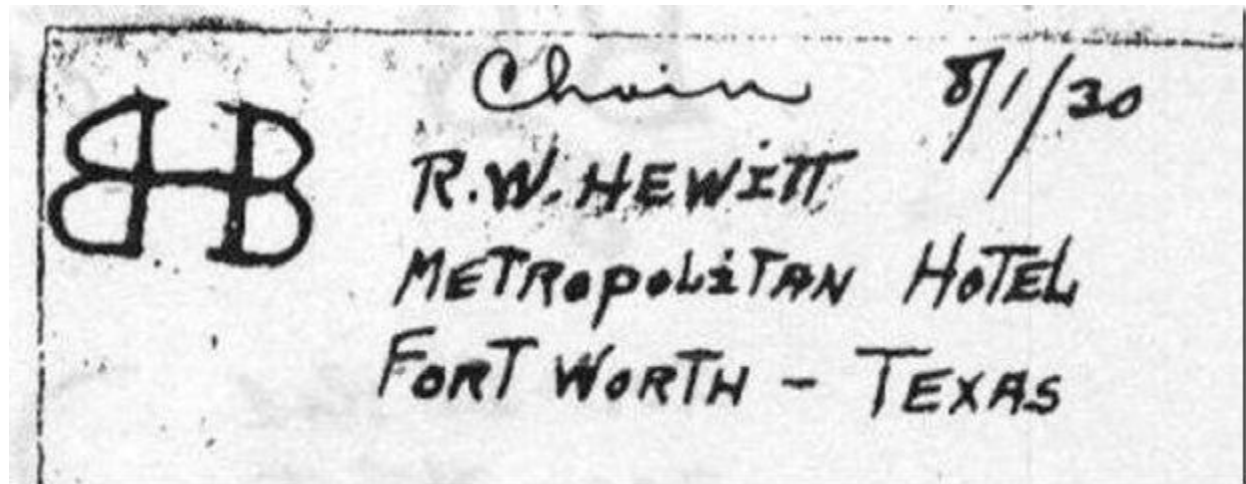
Here's a snip of Chief Hamilton's testimony about Commissioner Alderman:

"Alderman told me before Bill Tolbert, assistant district attorney, that if there was gambling at the Metropolitan Hotel to go and get it. But privately on that same day he instructed me to lay off the hotel. His instructions publicly always were to enforce the law without fear or favor but if any of my men or myself raided the Metropolitan there was the devil to pay," Hamilton testified.

AD6att2

The Hunt records show this chip order from 1930:

BHB



AD7att2

I need this chip. Cough it up if you have a trader.

At the time of this order, Hewitt was under indictment in the state of Oklahoma for the operation of a swank gambling resort outside of Tulsa. His partner in the OK operation, who was also under indictment, was Fred Browning (the logo on the chip looks like a combination of H B). Browning was a major player in Dallas/Ft.Worth gambling circles during the 1930-40's when his legendary Top O'Hill Terrace in Arlington was in operation.

Johnny Moss mentions the Metropolitan in a 1971 *Sports Illustrated* article (Moss grew up in Dallas and lived there during the Metropolitan's heyday):

My note: I never knew Johnny had interviewed for a Sports Illustrated article.

Some of the biggest poker games ever held were in small hotels in Texas during the Depression. Gamblers and street hustlers were going into the oil business, and they were betting leases and rigs as well as cash. "If you played a week you could win a million dollars, win it in a night if it shaped up right," Johnny Moss recalls. "There were games, like at the old Metropolitan Hotel in Fort Worth, that nobody would believe the sums involved if I told you today. You got to be a good gambler, anyhow, to get rich in the oil business. Some of them players came out worth \$40 million, what with poker and dice and oil leases and whatnot. Money didn't mean nothing to them, but gambling did. Some of them big oldtime oilmen still play in big poker games, but only for the pleasure of stepping on a professional gambler if they can. I like to see them come around."

AD8att2

My Note: I listened to a lot of Johnny's stories over the years at the WSOP and Queen's Poker Classic. I don't remember him ever mentioning the Metropolitan Hotel. I wish I had these chips to show him back in those days.

The Metropolitan was sold in 1938, became known as the Milner Hotel and was torn down in 1959. JFK, who was staying at the Hotel Texas in 1963, walked from his hotel across 8th St. to give his last public speech in the parking lot that once housed the Metropolitan (pic below).



AD9att2

My note. JFK between 2 Secret Service agents is my guess. The guy in light suit next to JFK looks like Lyndon Johnson to me. Was LBJ there that day?
No doubt Texas Rangers on the horses.

The era of the illegals had ended and the President gives his last public speech in a parking lot that only 4 years prior held one of the biggest illegals in Texas on it. In my opinion, that is a wry quirk of history.

I know where I was that day. I was in a gas station in La Habra, Ca. Where were you?

A side note—

In the 1920's, when the pulp/noir fiction writer Jim Thompson [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Thompson_\(writer\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Thompson_(writer)) was a teenager he worked as a bellboy at the Hotel Texas procuring booze, drugs and women for patrons as well as steering them into the gambling rooms. His experiences while a bellboy make their way into some of his fiction. In his biography *Savage Art* his sister Maxine recounts an incident involving Thompson and some Ft. Worth gamblers at the Hotel Texas:

gambling parties that blew into Fort Worth for the large stock and rodeo conventions. Twenty-four-hour-a-day dice and card games devoured entire floors, and the staff mingled with the hustlers. Sitting in was discouraged, but the bellhops cut into the haul by "feeding them mooches": bringing fresh blood to the tables. Predictably these gaffs often erupted in violence. On at least one occasion Jimmie paid for his attendance with his safety. Recalled Maxine: "A party of gamblers was upset with Jimmie about something or other, and the situation got out of hand. Two or three of the biggest men picked him up and held him upside down over an elevator shaft. I don't know how he got out of it, but he really was frightened over that for a long time."