

The Nite Owl's Social Club and Fort Pitt Social Club came from ebay sales. David Spragg has spares of the Nite Owl's.

I have 7 different Nite Owls and 2 different Fort Pitt chips. Jim Linduff did the 1st research on them and came up with a possible connection to the Fort Pitt Hotel. There was a big numbers and bookmaking raid there in 1948. The interesting part was Art Rooney ran the Pittsburgh Steelers' from his office in the Fort Pitt Hotel at the time. Art was a legendary gambler. Art's brother Jim was called to testify about this raid. I have newspaper articles about the raid. After more research David, Jim, and I discounted this info as to the chips.

I received 2 emails that helped change our minds. One from our "Friend Of The Hobby" saying he did not think the chips were used at the Fort Pitt Hotel. The 2nd one was from a new contributor to the "Illegal Of The Day" posts, Craig Romanovich. He sent me links to 2, 1938 newspaper articles about a much earlier raid on a Nite Owl's Club in a different location.

Links to articles

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=bXEbAAAAIABJ&sjid=NEwEAAAAIABJ&pg=3064,680113&dq=ft+pitt+social+club&hl=en>

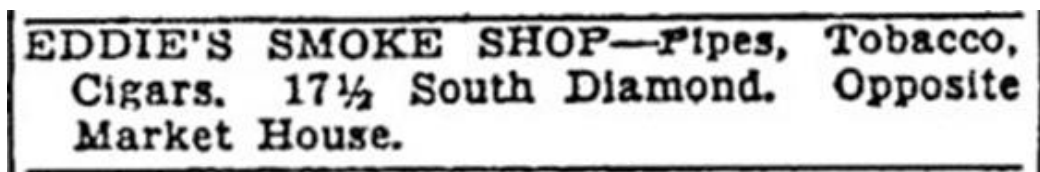
<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=oZBRAAAAIAAJ&sjid=eGkDAAAAIAAJ&pg=1875,204068&dq=ft+pitt+social+club&hl=en>

And now "The Rest Of The Story."

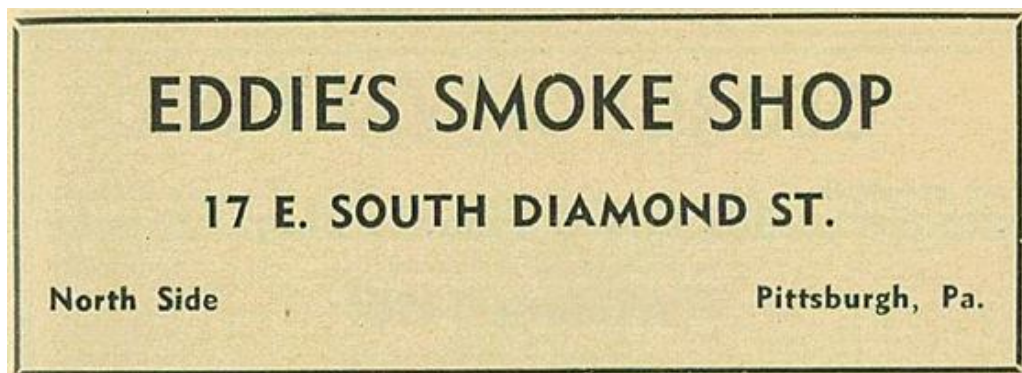
Pennsylvania:

Nite Owl & Fort Pitt Social Clubs

Around 1938 a guy named Edward W. "Eddie" Schindler opened a place called Eddie's Smoke Shop in a 2 story building located at 17 South Diamond Street East in Pittsburgh (address sometimes listed as 17 1/2).



Nite Owl1attt



Nite Owl2att2

Schindler, a Pittsburgh native, was a well known gambling operator in the area of Pittsburgh known as the "North Side" during the 1930's, 40's & 50's (the North Side is an area north of downtown on the other side of the Allegheny River). Around the time Schindler opens his cigar store he starts operating a gambling

room above his store on the 2nd floor called the "Nite Owls Club." Here's a snip from the 1939 Pittsburgh city directory:



Nite Owl3att2

The place is raided in April 1940; a dice table and several card tables confiscated:

Park Promises To Arrest Officers Of Bookie 'Club'

NITE

OWLS

CLUB

This is what officers first saw when they raided the Nite Owls' Club, North Side gambling house, late yesterday. It is the steel door on which they beat for more than 30 minutes before gaining entrance to the second floor horse room. Note the double duty of the "O"—It also is the peep-hole.



Members of the house committee of the Nite Owls' Club likely were surprised and chagrined today to find out that the stern rule against gambling in the club was not obeyed by the members. Here is the sign on the horse room wall forbidding gambling.

County Detectives Beat on Door 30 Minutes in North Side Raid

Arrest of the officers of the Nite Owl's Club, North Side horse book room, was promised by District Attorney Andrew T. Park today following a raid on the club late yesterday.

"I'll make an information against each of the officers—four or five of them—late today," Mr. Park said, adding:

"I want to find out where they got their race information."

Mr. Park's detectives had a hard time getting into the club, which is on the second floor, 17 S. Diamond St., and battered at one of three steel doors with sledges and crow-bars for more than a half hour before they finally were admitted.

Find Elaborate Layout

Inside they found an elaborate gambling layout and about 100 men, two of whom were seized for questioning.

The others, described as horse players, were released, but the establishment virtually was dismantled.

The men held on district attorney's detainers were listed as Frank Kropf Jr., 35, of 414 E. Ohio St., a musician, and Sylvester Deglmann, 29, of 415 Stanton Ave., a janitor.

Mr. Park didn't say whether he planned to file any charges against the men who were held in jail overnight and still were in custody today.

Names in Records

He also declined to make public the names of officers of the club until he is ready to file information against them. He learned the identity of the club officials from records seized in the raid, the prosecutor said.

The raiding detectives said they found the following two signs posted on the wall of the big gaming room:

"Positively No Gambling Allowed in Club Rooms."

"Incorporated for promotion and engagement in social functions and enjoyment, a place for people to meet, read, dine and discuss business and political topics."

Electric Board Found

In the room they found more than 40 modernistic betting tables, an elaborate electric board which flashed the winners in races at five tracks, along with the betting odds.

At one end of the room the raiders also reported finding a dice table and several card tables, all of which they confiscated.

Apparently those inside had plenty of time to prepare for the raiders, held back by the first of the three steel doors.

Officers found no racing sheets but a fire was burning briskly in a stove on an afternoon when heat wasn't needed.

Officers said they heard several telephones ring, but they could find only the boxes containing the bells. The phone sets had been removed and were not in sight.

Raided Last Year

On March 17 of last year county detectives raided the same place, but when they battered their way inside they found about 30 men in a smoke-filled room either reading newspapers or playing ping pong on a dice table. No arrests were made.

My note: Cops beat on steel doors for 30 minutes, which gave the operators plenty of time to get rid of the telephones, burn the race tickets, and dismantle all but a crap table and several card tables. There was a series of 3 steel doors. I think this is the 1st time we've seen this.

Schindler, later described by the DA as the proprietor, was fined \$1000. After this raid I didn't see any more references to a place called the Nite Owls Club.

The 1940 city directory shows that at some point after the Nite Owls Club closed, it was replaced by the Fort Pitt Social Club:



Nite Owl5att2

I'm guessing that the Fort Pitt Club chips were used at this place. The Nite Owls and Fort Pitt chips are very similar in design and were found together at the same Pittsburgh estate sale:



Nite Owl6att2

I'm not sure how long the Fort Pitt Social Club was located at 17 S. Diamond--only Eddie's Smoke Shop is listed there in 1941. The Fort Pitt Social Club seems to have moved around quite a bit, operating at several different locations on the North Side. In the late 1930's it was located at 703 East Ohio and was raided in early 1939:



Nite Owl7att2

In late 1939, early 1940 the FPSC was located at 205 East Ohio, which was just around the corner from Eddie's. In 1945 it was located on North Diamond St.

Schindler operated gambling rooms at various locations throughout the North Side while maintaining his cigar shop on South Diamond. He operated a gambling room called the "Greater Pittsburgh Club" at various addresses in the 1930's and 1940's. During this time he seems also to have continued operating a gambling room above Eddie's, but no name seems to have been associated with the place other than when the Nite Owl's and Fort Pitt were there.

Also, in the early 1940's Schindler started a business called the "Fort Pitt Music Co." in the same

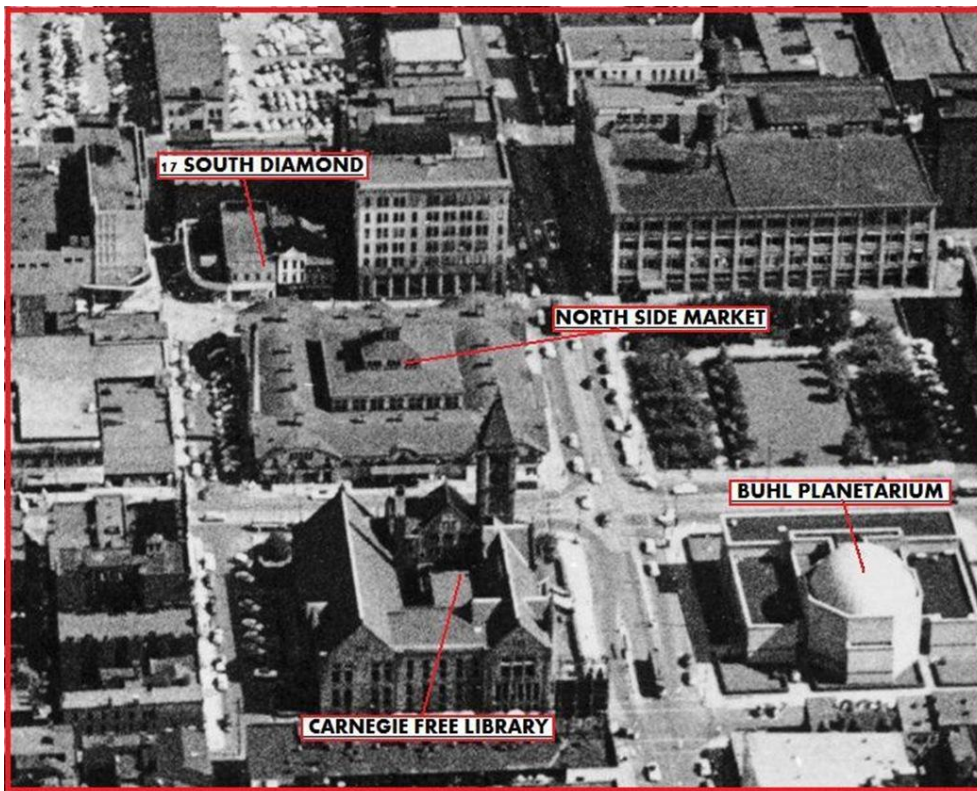


Nite Owl19att2

Here's an aerial view of Pittsburgh from the early 1950's; 17 South Diamond St. was located in the area outlined in red which is shown in detail in the next photo:



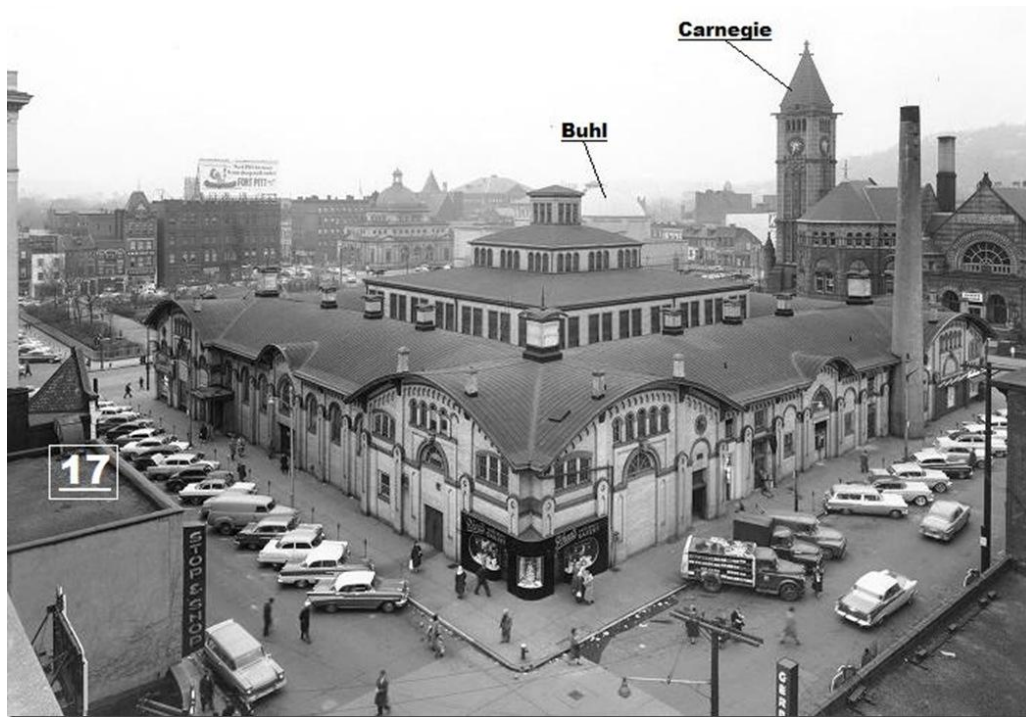
Nite Owl110att2



Nite Owl111att2

Photo from the 1950's showing the North Side Market building at the intersection of South Diamond and East Diamond--17 South Diamond on the lower left (Stop & Shop sign on building);

Although from in the 1950's, the view would have been pretty much the same in the 1930-40's.



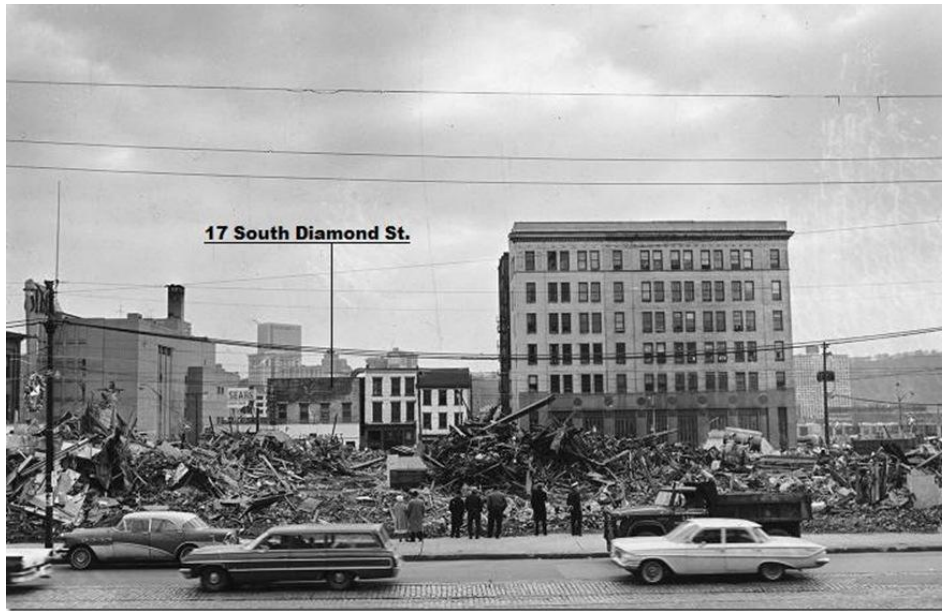
Nite Owl12att2

pic of store front in 1949 when Stop & Shop opened:



Nite Owl113att2

pic from 1965 after the North Side Market building was torn down; buildings on South Diamond St. would soon follow (Carnegie and Buhl still stand):



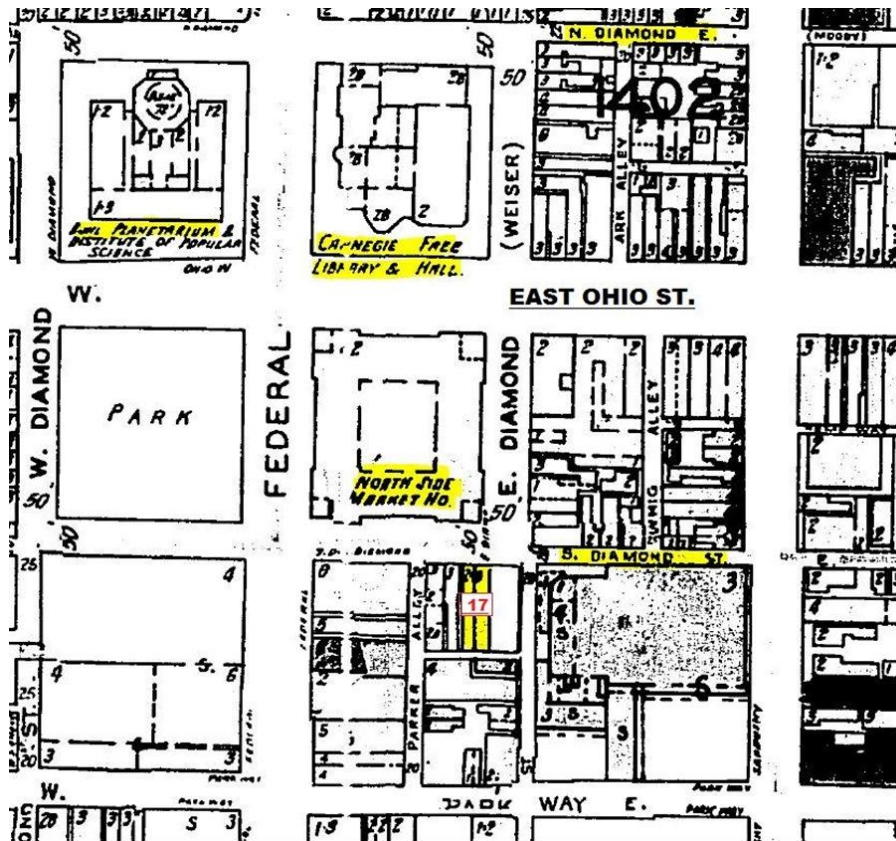
Nite Owl14att2

detail



Nite Owl15att2

map from the time period:



Nite Owl16att2

Pittsburgh was the 10th largest city in the US in 1940:

Rank	City	State	Population
1	New York	New York	7,457,995
2	Chicago	Illinois	3,396,808
3	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	1,931,334
4	Detroit	Michigan	1,623,452
5	Los Angeles	California	1,504,277
6	Cleveland	Ohio	878,336
7	Baltimore	Maryland	859,100
8	St. Louis	Missouri	816,048
9	Boston	Massachusetts	770,816
10	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	671,659

Nite Owl17att2

This 1938 article was found by David Spragg.

Raid on Club Nets \$1,550

Ninth Defendant Is Fined \$50 After Plea

The county's profit from a county detective raid on a notorious North-side bookmaking joint rose to \$1,550 yesterday as the last of nine defendants was fined \$50 in criminal court by Judge Thomas M. Marshall.

Martin Newell, 35, the ninth defendant, pleaded guilty to an assortment of gambling charges. Detectives described him as merely an employe in the lavishly-equipped bookmaking room which was raided last May*20.

Known as the "Nite Owl" Club, the establishment was on the second floor of a building in East Diamond street.

The others arrested after the raid were indicted on a series of gambling charges also. All pleaded guilty previously. Edward Schindler, alleged proprietor, was fined \$1,000. Daniel Kelleher, nominal president; John Naughton, treasurer, and Joseph Weber, secretary, were fined \$100 each. The remaining four, also employes, were fined \$50 each.

Nite Owl18att2

Jim Linduff is continuing his research on Pittsburg clubs. In the following email he has two more Pittsburg club names listed for research. OK, where are the chips? <g>

Gene

Over the weekend I spoke with the guy who wrote one of the Rooney bios who teaches at Pitt and who I've known for years. After some looking at his backup, he agreed that while both the Rooney brothers Art and Jim were "around " the rackets all their life, no evidence they were involved in either the Fort Pitt Social Club or the Nite Owl Club directly.

In the course of my research, I now know about several other social clubs in Pittsburgh that must have used chips and am continuing to use my Pittsburgh guys as sources. Joints like The Bachelor Club and the Progressive Club were carpet joints and must have used chips to run their dice, card and board games. There are others.

Stay tuned.

Jim

There is a least 1 chip, a black \$10, not in this scan.

