

Tom Henderson has contributed to several "Illegal Of The Day" posts. He lives in Mississippi and is an avid collector of illegal chips from there. This is his first attempt at his own IOTD. Welcome Tom. Hopefully many more to come. *vbg* Once you get started it is addicting. *vbg*

Take it away Tom.

IOTD

The Paddock Club, Biloxi, Mississippi

A few weeks ago, Gene posted an inquiry asking for chips ordered for the Paddock Club. In 1950 and 1952 Harry Bennett ordered over 2,800 chips from Taylor . There are at least two other Taylor orders with the same hot stamp, but Bennett's chips are T-mold and in different colors from the other orders. Unfortunately, none of these have turned up yet.

NAME <u>Harry Bennett</u>				SPECIAL MONOGRAM				
Address <u>Box 839</u>				PADDock				
Town <u>Georgetown</u> State <u>Miss</u>				CLUB				
Per <u>T. Bennett</u>								
Amount	Color	Initials Both Sides	Style Type	Initials One Side	Other Side	Style Type	Monogram Color	Date Shipped
707	Red						Gold	2-2-50
707	dk Blue						"	2-2-50
400	dk Green	Paddock Club	Special				"	2-2-50
202	Gray						"	2-2-50
808	dk Blue (Gua)	"	"				"	1-18-52

Paddock1att2

My note: Tom, Ed, and I all need these chips. Cough them up if you have a trader. *vbg*

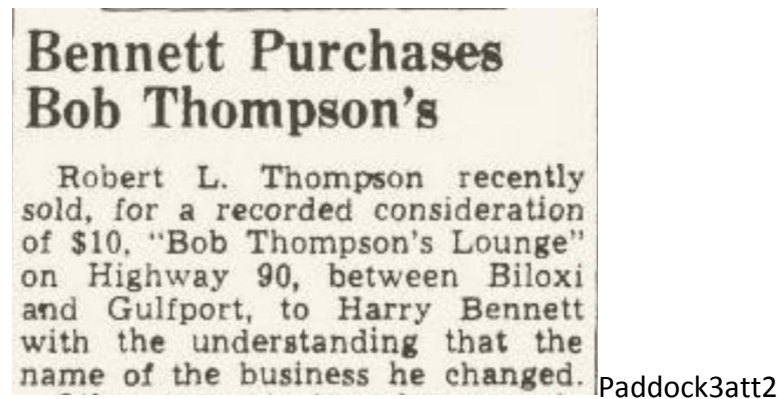


Paddock2att2

Ed Hertel got this smkey chip along with other definite Biloxi chips and has good reason to believe it's from the Paddock club, but there is no order record to confirm it. So we have an order record without a chip, and a chip without an order record. Keep looking for a match.

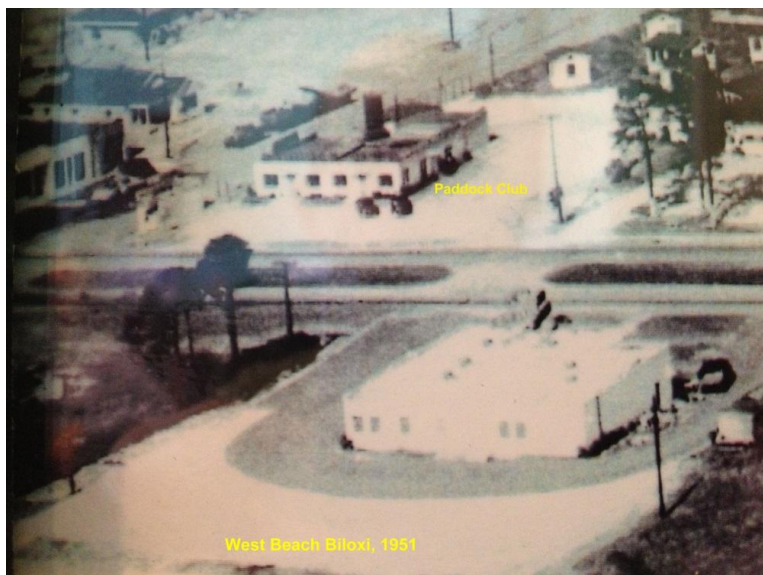
My note: I have a white 50¢ Skey attributed there (different font) I am not showing as I cannot be sure of it. Maybe someday. *vbg*

The Paddock Club and its owner, Harry Bennett, however, are an important part of gambling history on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and were in the center of illegal gaming in Biloxi. In February 1950, Harry Bennett bought "Bob Thompson's Lounge" from Robert L. Thompson with the stipulation that the name be changed. No problem because Bennett had already ordered chips for the new Paddock Club located on the northeast corner of West Beach Boulevard (U. S. 90) and Camellia Street just outside the city limits of Biloxi, Mississippi.



Daily Herald, Biloxi, February 11, 1950

At that time, both gambling and liquor were illegal in Mississippi but in the West Beach area, like many other places in the state, clubs operated openly. The Paddock Club was near the Plaza Club, the Stable, the Fiesta, Gus Stevens', and the Broadwater Beach Hotel.



Paddock4att2

ns	Pete's Lounge—	Δ9064
ss	Under constn	
ns	U-All-Dr In	
ns	Malt Shop—	Δ7831
ns	Vacant	
ss	Stable The—	Δ9424
ns	Paddock Club—	Δ5701 -
		Δ6583
ns(r)	Bennett Harry ®—	
		Δ5416
	Camelia	
ss	El Rancho Cafeteria—	
		Δ9679
ss	El Rancho Motel	
ss	Thomas Cities Serv—	Δ9028
ns	Sun-N-Sand Hotel Ct—	

Paddock5att2

1952 Biloxi City Directory, West Beach Boulevard



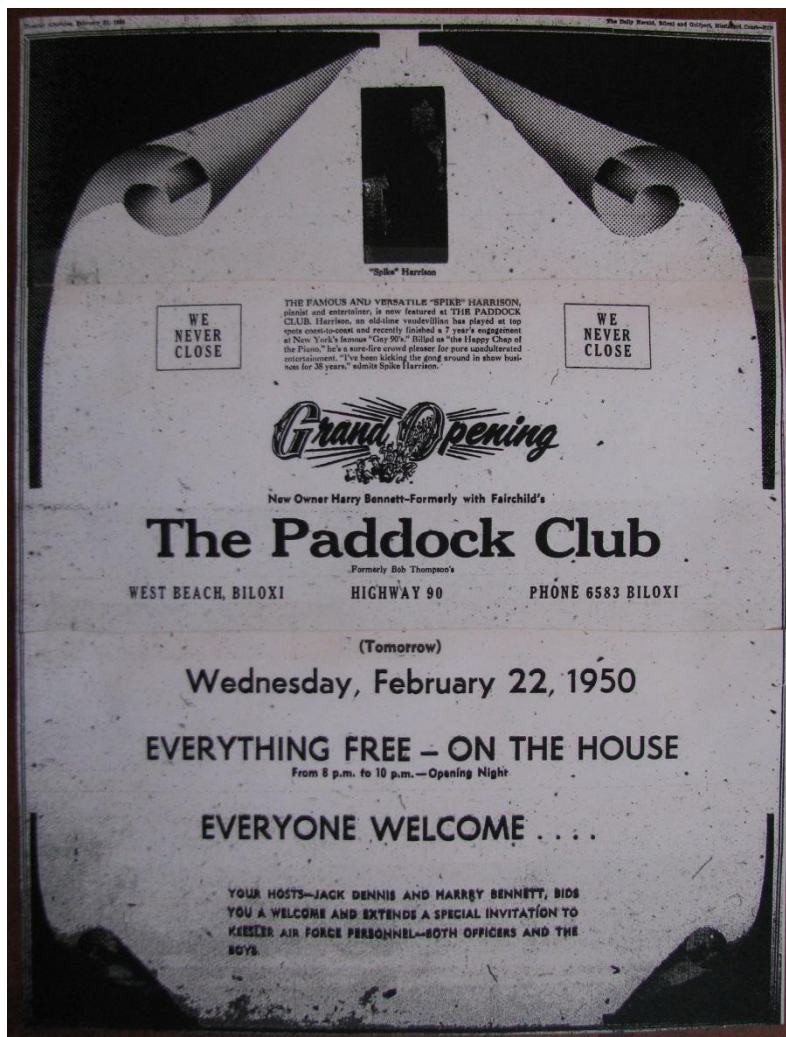
Paddock6att2

Present site is a Waffle House, east of Treasure Bay Casino

Harry Bennett (1902-1967), a professional gambler, was born in Louisiana, the son of a successful New Orleans merchant. Not much is known about his early years except that he worked in California, Missouri, and Illinois before returning to Louisiana in the 1940s where he reportedly worked at the Beverly Club in New Orleans. About 1943 Bennett moved to the Mississippi Gulf Coast where he tended bar and ran gaming at the Beachcomber on Henderson Point and at Fairchild's on the beach between Gulfport and Biloxi.

Jack Dennis, Bennett's partner, had come to the Gulf Coast from Alabama in the late 1940s, worked with Bennett at the Paddock Club, and in the 1950s and 1960s was involved in gaming at the Friendship House and the Raven Club. Federal investigations of Dennis resulted in a 1971 conviction on interstate gaming charges.

On February 22, 1950, the Paddock Club announced its grand opening in a full-page ad in the *Biloxi Daily-Herald*. Featuring "the famous and versatile 'Spike' Harrison," the club offered free drinks and a special invitation to Keesler Air Base personnel, an offer that got Bennett in trouble two years later.



Paddock7att2

Postcards printed for the club include this one which may have been for the grand opening. Harry Bennett is seated front and center with the lady in blue.



Paddock8att2

The Kefauver Committee hearings brought attention to crime all over the country in 1951. Evidence presented in the New Orleans hearing showed that Bennett leased a racing news wire service at Bob Thompson's old address on West Beach, Biloxi, and had purchased gambling equipment from E. M. O'Neil Company of Las Vegas; and we know he ordered chips for the club.


In October 1951, the U. S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, Sub-Committee on Preparedness, came to town to investigate gambling activities near Keesler Air Base. It seems many young airmen were losing money in the clubs and complaining to their parents back home. In an effort to clean up Biloxi before the hearing many clubs were temporarily shut down including the Paddock. In his testimony, Bennett said the club had about 10 employees, a bar, entertainment, and craps, roulette, dice tables, and slot machines. He also admitted paying \$108 each week for a racing wire service from the Daily Sports News in New Orleans and took bets from all over the country on all sports. The bar and entertainment were in the front of the club; the games were in a back room.

My note: The Military played a big role in closing illegal operations in several states including Phenix City, Alabama. If the Military put your joint "off Limits," in a Military town you were in trouble business wise.

<http://www.marlowcasinochips.com/links/genetrimble/illegaloftheday/BamaAL.pdf>

Business was good for the Paddock Club, and Bennett advertised regularly with large ads like this one featuring night club entertainers.

NOW PLAYING . . .
At The Paddock Club



**WONDERFUL, EXCITING, TERRIFIC
AND DIFFERENT!**

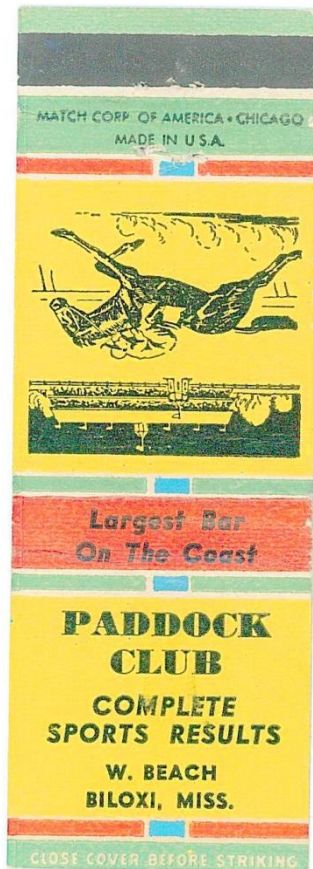
A Show You'll Long Remember!
First Show 8:00 p.m.—'Til 2:00 a.m.
POPULAR PRICES — NO COVER CHARGE

THE **PADDOCK CLUB**

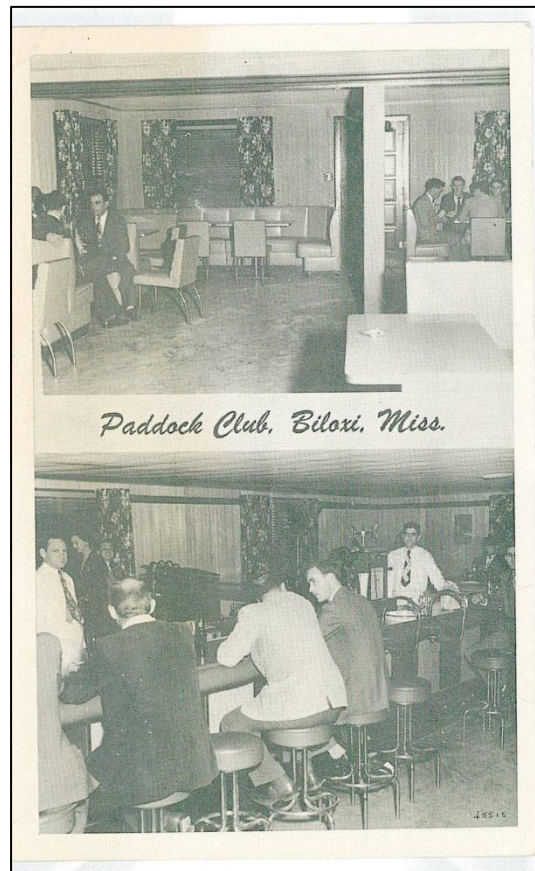
Highway 90 — West Beach, Biloxi

Daily Herald (Biloxi), 8 August 1952, p. 11

Paddock9att2



Paddock10&11att2



Illegal gaming clubs like the Paddock were frequently under pressure from the state although local Harrison County law enforcement officers were sufficiently paid off to leave the clubs alone. The Paddock Club was put off limits for Keesler Air Base personnel by Air Force officials in August 1952 and was padlocked the next month, along with other clubs, under orders of State Attorney General J. P. Coleman. Coleman had made a personal raid on the Sage Patch Club (on the state line between Mississippi and Alabama) and threatened a "continuous effort statewide to end professional crime". Bennett petitioned to have the injunction lifted and went so far as to lease the club to someone else. He even claimed the gaming equipment and liquor on site were not intended for customers.

Eight Clubs Put Off Limits For Allowing Gambling

Eight Gulf Coast establishments are now off limits to all military personnel for permitting commercialized gambling on their premises.

The latest ruling was announced Tuesday by the Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board after a meeting at Keesler Air Force Base.

The eight places are the Paddock Club, the Stable, Broadwater Beach Hotel, the Beach Club, the Grove Club, Paradise Point, Fairchild's, and Benny French's. With the exception of Benny French's, which is at Henderson Point, all the clubs are on the Coast between Biloxi and Gulfport.

Paddock12att2

Daily Herald, Biloxi, August 6, 1952

Bennett, ignoring the Keesler ban and the injunction, advertised the club was back "on limits" for Keesler airmen on February 22, 1953, but quickly came under pressure from the Governor again.

In April 1953 Governor Hugh White threatened to "break up everything in sight" if the Harrison County sheriff allowed any more "rotten gambling." The Paddock Club was specifically targeted because of a complaint from a Colorado man who claimed to have been cheated out of \$5,500 at the Club which, the Governor noted, had been ordered closed down eight months before. Coleman threatened contempt if Bennett continued to violate the terms of the padlock injunction.

As for the Paddock Club, the governor said, "It had no business being open at all.

"That place was under an injunction from the state supreme court to close down and stay closed. There is danger of somebody going to jail for violating the order."

Paddock13att2

Times-Picayune, April 25, 1953

Bennett did close the Paddock Club in July 1953 but reopened it as the 5 O'Clock Club in an attempt to skirt the Paddock Club's injunction. In August 1955, the 5 O'Clock Club itself was declared off-limits to Keesler airmen and the next month Governor White ordered all Harrison County gambling closed down and threatened to send the National Guard unless the sheriff acted. Apparently the sheriff did not act because the Governor sent the Guard on the night of September 7 to raid seven clubs and hotels including the Five O'Clock Club.

It is unclear how long Bennett himself operated the 5 O'Clock Club but in 1957 he moved to New Orleans to set up a sports booking operation while maintaining his Biloxi booking. In November 1964 Bennett was back in Biloxi where he and Dewey D'Angelo opened the Red Carpet Club.

For the rest of Harry Bennett's story see Gene's [IOTD of August 3, 2010](#), about the Red Carpet Club, the "juice joint" case, and Bennett's murder.

Tom Henderson
R-8545

My note: Harry Bennett, Dewey D'Angelo, and Jimmy James (the Juice man) all met bloody deaths at the hands of the Dixie Mafia. Dewey actually had his ear cut off and stuffed in his mouth. Link. <http://www.marlowcasinochips.com/links/genetrimble/illegaloftheday/BiloxiMS.pdf>
My 3 part article on Biloxi illegals is posted here.
<http://www.marlowcasinochips.com/links/genetrimble/genetrimble.htm>

Many of the Biloxi illegal joints are well documented in the articles and in "Illegal Of the Day" posts. Biloxi may be one of the most documented areas in IOTD's. We can now thank Tom for adding one more Biloxi joint to that list. Great job, Tom.

How about some of the OH, KY, IL, IN, CA boys taking a shot at an IOTD? The more the merrier. *vbg*