

This one is all ED! *vbg*

He bought them on ebay. He sent them out to the "Illegal Of The Day" team and other Ohio illegal chip collectors. And to top it off, he did the research. What more can we ask? I'm betting there were other colors. Please get on that Ed. *vbg*

Take it away Ed Hertel.

We have a saying around the IOTD headquarters – “They can’t all be epic.” We also have another one, which I like even less – “They can’t all be locks.” This is one of those cases where both sayings apply and which we will never say we are 100% sure, but we can get close.

Fifteen years ago a Springfield, Ohio, local went to an auction (a physical auction, remember those before eBay?) and picked up a partial box of chips. They were all marked “Red Brick” and although he thought they were interesting, he had little desire to do any research.



Red Brick1att2

A month ago he decided to resell these mystery chips and I snapped them up thinking there was a good chance I could find the club behind them. The name on the chips was encouraging as it sounded unique – “Red Brick”. There couldn’t be many of those, right? (What do you think?)

Researching the area, a “Red Brick Tavern” in nearly London/Lafayette (22 miles east of Springfield) immediately popped up. It had a long 150 year history and was a state’s registered historical landmark.



Red Brick2att2

This would be perfect if it wasn't for a few red flags. First off, it seemed like everything about this place was well documented. Researchers have combed the books of this place and nowhere in its long history was there mention of gambling. But the name... it's unique, right?

Possible location #2 popped up quickly. This one belonged to a nightclub in Piqua, Ohio, about forty miles northwest of Springfield. Research into the "Red Brick Nightclub" brought up some very tantalizing results. For starters, it fit the profile of the kind of a club that might have gambling. They had entertainment and a reputation for not always following the rules.



Red Brick3att2

In the early 1940s, the owner of the club was arrested and put on trial for serving liquor to minors. He was found guilty and as usual, the penalty was a fine and it was back to business. This place surely is the "Red Brick" from the chips, right? Not so fast.

I dug deep looking for a gambling connection but could not find anything. Now I know what you're saying, "Ed, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." I know I can't prove a negative and not finding gambling does not mean they didn't have it, but it didn't feel right not having it mentioned somewhere.

I dug deeper and to my amazement, a third "Red Brick" from the area popped up (what is it with these Ohioans and their lack of originality?). This one not only had known gambling, but also ties back to a previous IOTD. Now we are getting somewhere.

In January 1946, a former Clark County, Ohio, sheriff named Niles E. Young was on trial for accepting bribes in exchange for gambling protection from the owners of the Red Brick gambling place. Its location from the article puts it "six miles southwest of Springfield".

CONVICTION IN BRIBERY CASE

EX-SHERIFF IS CONVICTED BY
SPRINGFIELD JURY OF "PRO-
TECTING" GAMBLING ES-
TABLISHMENT

SPRINGFIELD, O., Jan. 17.—Former Clark County Sheriff Niles E. Young faced a possible one to ten years sentence today following his conviction of bribery by a jury of nine men and three women.

The case was given to the jury at 4:50 P. M. yesterday and the unanimous decision reached after two hours of deliberation.

The 49-year-old former sheriff was charged with accepting bribes for "protection" of the Red Brick gambling place six miles southwest of Springfield.

Young denied bribery charges, but Leonard F. Donahue, part owner of the gambling house, testified that he and his partner, Pete Marshall, paid from \$125 to \$200 a month for "protection." He said payments were made to William E. DeWitt, one-time campaign manager for Young.

Red Brick4att2

The crackdown on the sheriff was not the only instance of Springfield going after gamblers and the city officials helping them. As I mentioned, a previous IOTD on the Silver Dollar Club (<http://www.thechipboard.com/archives/archives.pl/bid/399/md/read/id/1257177/sbj/illegal-of-the-day-ohio-8/>) told the story of that club and the trial of the city prosecutor who was paid off.

My note: IMO, "Illegal Of The Day" Ohio 8 is one of the better stories we posted and well worth a re-read.

To unwrap the story of this Red Brick, we pulled in all the IOTD staff to try to figure out a decent timeline. Thanks to new research and some left over from our Friend of the Hobby, we think we know what happened.

It started in the summer of 1940 when the Red Brick's owners Leonard F. Donahue and Pete Marshall met with the sheriff candidate Niles Young to discuss a contribution to his campaign fund. An amount was agreed on in exchange for the right to continue gambling without interference.

Everything must have looked rosy in early 1941 when the votes were counted and Young was elected the new sheriff. What they thought meant easy sailing turned into anything but. It seems the reputation of the Red Brick was enough that allowing it to continue unabated might make it look like Young was soft on gambling. It was time to renegotiate.

Leonard Donahue knew that if he wanted to continue gambling he would need to do it on the sheriff's terms. It was decided to close the well-known Red Brick and move to somewhere out of the spotlight. Donahue and Marshall moved their operation from the suburbs of Springfield into downtown and opened a billiards hall, called simply "Donahue & Marshall" at 143 W. Main in 1942.

I can only guess that the same Red Brick chips were used at the new location, but if they were, they certainly weren't used much. It seems despite the new central location, business on Main Street was anything but robust. Whether it was the lack of country ambiance or the increase in competition, business was just not the same as it was at the Red Brick. After a couple of years of disappointing profits, Donahue and Marshall decided it was time to return to what worked and reopen the Red Brick in southern Springfield.

Despite Sheriff Young's request to wait, the partners proceeded with the move and the Red Brick is back in action. It was now a war between previous allies. The sheriff shot first and sent in his deputies who raided the club and confiscated the gambling equipment, eventually destroying it. This however was not the end. Donahue had a trump card and it was time to play it.

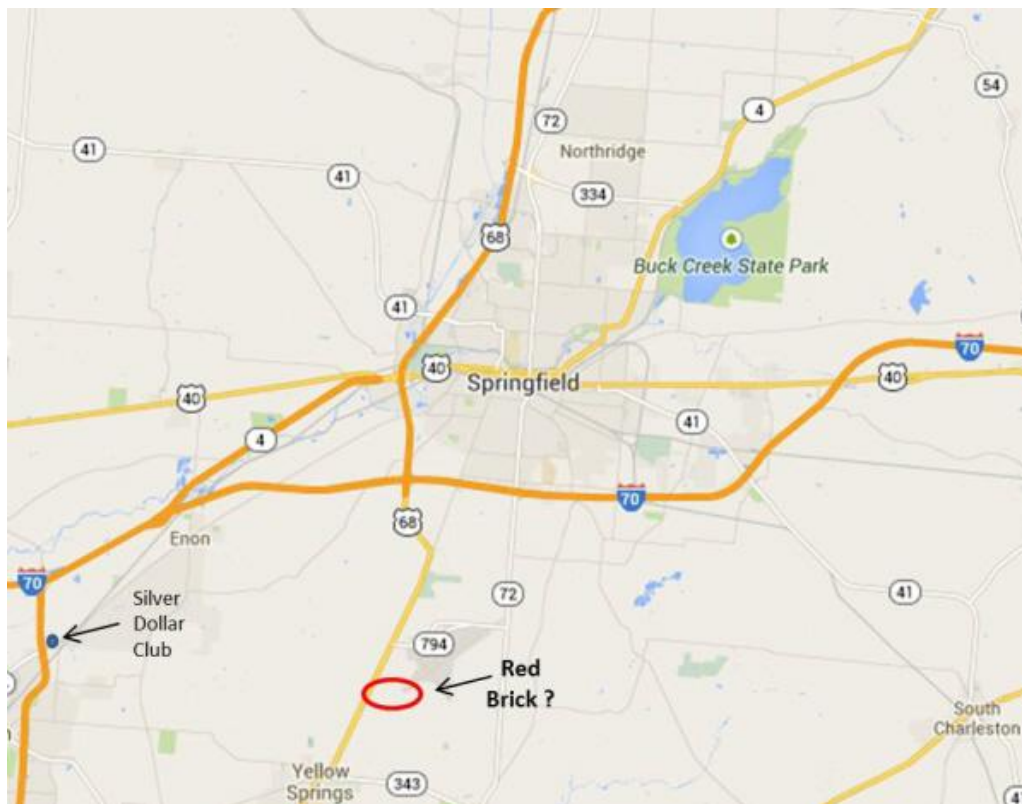
The heat was on gambling in Springfield and the officials were not only looking for club owners, but city employees who were helping. Leonard Donahue dropped a dime to the city and said he had plenty of witnesses who would testify that Sheriff Young was on the take. For the gamblers, a small fine was all they would expect for their crimes, but for those who pledged to uphold the law, it penalties were much harsher. Leonard Donahue was a corrupt sheriff's worst nightmare – an angry man with a mountain of evidence and nothing to lose.

In January 1946, the case against Sheriff Niles Young went to trial. The prosecution brought in a parade of witnesses who spelled out the entire process. William Dewitt, Young's former campaign manager,

was in the center of it all as the go-between. He stood firm on not answering questions and ended up in jail for contempt. His silence might have earned him a some respect, but in the end did little to help his former boss. With all the evidence against him, Niles Young tried his best to fight back. He admitted to receiving money from Leonard Donahue, but claimed it was nothing more than a campaign contribution from “a friend”.

The jury wasn't buying it, and after a two hour deliberation, they delivered a guilty verdict. The judge handed him a one-to-ten year sentence and he was ushered off to Clark County jail to serve it out. The owners of the Red Brick had gotten their revenge.

Nothing else is mentioned of the Red Brick or Leonard Donahue after that. I would guess that with the publicity received from the trial they might keep it quiet and on the down-low. I have also been unsuccessful in finding the exact building that was the Red Brick. There are some tantalizing clues as to where it might have been. In 1936, a couple of years before the Red Brick incident, someone named Leonard F. Donahue was selling some farm equipment in south Springfield. In the ad for the auction, there was no address given, but there were driving directions: “six miles south of Springfield, 3-4 miles west of Route 72 on Jackson road...” which would put it around the area circled below (close to Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport):



Red Brick5att2

There have been some questions from the IOTD team as to whether or not this is the same Donahue as the one from the Red Brick. I find it unlikely (although not impossible) that there could be two Leonard

F. Donahue's on the same street doing business at the same time. The location from the bribery article of "six miles southwest" matches this area exactly. In my mind, Donahue was clearing out the farming equipment and animals to open a gambling club, but I admit that is a guess.

Whatever the case, I am pinning these chips to the Red Brick from southwest Springfield. It's not a lock, I know that, but until someone can give me some information that another "Red Brick" in the area had gambling, it's my guess.

My note: This one was a little unusual as everyone on the "Team" was asked for their opinions and input. IMO, Ed nailed the location. At least 99%. *vbg*