

This year same as past years, I attended Jim Munding's Super Bowl chip show at Arizona Charlie's in Las Vegas. Always a good show. While talking to Butch Reynolds he showed me a set of the RJE hubs he had for trade. Said he got them from a CA source who claimed they were CA chips. I made a deal for a couple sets of the chips. What you are about to read is the process we went through to get the story on them. It shows the IOTD team in "full" research mode. \*vbg\*

That said: Be sure to read the last part of this post as mistakes were made. The Texas research is good. Take it away Ed Hertel.

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Today's IOTD is an unusual one, and it's an experiment that I doubt I will repeat. What I wanted to do was let you peek behind the curtain and show an actual back-and-forth between Gene and myself on the evolution of a typical IOTD. Most of the off-the-cuff research done for these IOTD starts with a simple "See if this has legs" and hopefully morphs into something interesting. Below is what I would consider a typical result. Nothing mind-blowing, but definitely interesting.

**It started as it usually does, with chips and an ID.**

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From: Gene Trimble  
To: Ed Hertel  
Subject: RJE chips  
Date: Tue, 11 Feb 2014

I have a set of the RJE San Antonio chips on the way to me for you.

Take a quick look when you get time. Maybe you can get a Club name.

Attached picture:



R.J. Elliott  
111 Alamo Plaza  
San Antonio, TX  
500 chips – 10/30/39

RJE1att2

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As far as information, this is a lot to start with and I dove first with an opening shot. Using one of the few pay newspaper search sites I subscribe to, I found a quick hit for “Elliott” / “gambling” / “111 Alamo Plaza”. Usually hits like this don’t happen but when they do I am a happy guy!

In the article it says a “R. W. Elliott” (middle initial wrong) was fined for gambling after a 1937 raid at 111 Alamo Plaza. Unfortunately, no name for the club was mentioned (article attached below).

I next focused my search not on Elliott, but the address to see if I could find a name of the club. I looked for the address at the time of the chip order in 1939 and kept coming up with a toy store named Dibble’s. I was confused. So I turned back the clock to see if anything could be found before the chips were ordered.

Two articles jumped out showing gambling charges at this address – one in 1934 when slot machines were seized, and another in 1938 (attached below). In both, Scholz Garden was given as the name of the establishment. However, in neither of these raids was R. J. Elliott mentioned. This, along with the timing of the chips, made me a little nervous. I forwarded my findings to Gene.

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From: Ed Hertel  
To: Gene Trimble  
Subject: Re: RJE chips  
Date: Tue, 11 Feb 2014

Needs more work, but see attached.

1934 - Slot machines seized at Scholz Palm Garden, 111 Alamo Plaza. (Elliott not listed.)  
 1937 - R.W. Elliott (newspaper mistype of middle initial) was busted for gambling at 1100 Alamo Plaza (club name not listed)  
 1938 - The Scholz Garden, 111 Alamo Plaza raided and men plead guilty to gambling charges (Elliott not listed as one of them)

I'd love to find them all together in 1939 but didn't see it on my first look. The Scholz Garden (nite club) had been around since the turn of the century.

Articles attached:

1937: Elliott Fined

**SIX MEN PAY FINES  
 AFTER GAMING RAIDS**

Six men nabbed in gambling raids here by State Rangers and State patrolmen last week and early this week, were fined a total of \$126 Wednesday after all had pleaded guilty before Justice of the Peace Bat Corrigan to participation in dice games.

Arrested Saturday in a bar at 107 Broadway, C. M. Browne was fined \$25 and costs or \$38.50, while Jimmie Conners was fined \$1 and costs or \$17.50. Complaints against them were filed by R. E. Rohatsch, state patrolman.

Four others, all arrested Tuesday, were each fined \$1 and costs or \$17.50. They included William Giles and Art Saucer, arrested at 503 East Houston Street; and R. W. Elliott and James L. Palmer, arrested at 111 Alamo Plaza. Charges against them were filed by Capt. B. M. Gault, state ranger.

Deputy constables Oscar Warnke and John Sanchez co-operated in the raids.

1938: Scholtz Garden

**GUILTY PLEAS  
 IN GAMBLING**

Fines had been assessed Tuesday against 11 men after they pleaded guilty to charges of gaming before Justice of the Peace Bat Corrigan.

The men were fined Monday afternoon after Texas Ranger Zeno Smith arrested the defendants at Babe's bar, 230 Broadway, and at the Scholz garden, 111 Alamo plaza, Saturday night.

The men who were fined and the addresses given are Babe Shafer, 230 1-2 Broadway; Bob Roberts, no address given, and C. L. Long, 512 Erie avenue, \$35 and costs; Joe Johnson, 318 Avenue B; Fred McGrady, 917 North Alamo street; E. G. Hopkins, 2822 Perez; John Brown, 902 West Russell place; J. L. Price, 343 Oriental avenue; N. V. Brigman, 615 Augusta street; James Garner, 621 Avenue B; C. Herbert, 427 Soledad street, \$1 and costs.

RJE2att2

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From: Gene Trimble  
 To: Ed Hertel

Subject: Re: RJE chips  
Date: Tue, 11 Feb 2014

I think you got a hit!

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With this info in hand, Gene sent it to our "friend of the hobby" who did a little digging of his own and confirmed one of my original concerns.

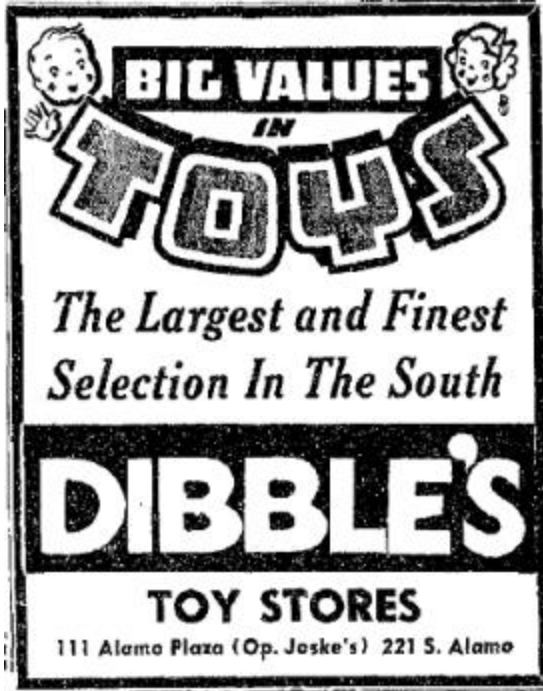
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From: Gene Trimble  
To: Ed Hertel  
Subject: Re: RJE chips  
Date: Wed, 12 Feb 2014

Ed, take a look at our "friend's" comments. What do you think?

From "Friend":

When you sent the ID on the RJE I did a little looking and at the time of the chip delivery date there appears to be a toy store named Dibble's at 111 Alamo Plaza. Dibble's had a store a few blocks away at 221 S. Alamo for several years. The 111 Alamo Plaza location seems to have been a temporary branch store opened only for the 1939 Christmas season. Not sure what this means relative to the chip order....like Ed says, it needs more work <g>



RJE3att2

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Yep, I knew that was coming...

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From: Ed Hertel  
To: Gene Trimble  
Subject: Re: RJE chips  
Date: Wed, 12 Feb 2014

I definitely saw that Dibble's but couldn't find any connection to it or Elliott. Chips delivered to a known gambling place and the guy's initials on them, just so good.

I was a little concerned that the bar and chips seem to almost miss each other. I guess my first question would be "Are we sure that the date of 1939 is right?" Sure would be helpful if it was a misread and actually 1937-8.

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Sometimes the passion can make you overlook something which is glaring. Gene put in a second request to double check the original card and I was pleased to hear the results...

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From: Gene Trimble  
To: Ed Hertel

Subject: Re: RJE chips  
Date: Wed, 12 Feb 2014

Looks like he has grown "FAT FINGERS" <g>

"It is 38 not 39"

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And so with that we were all back comfortable with the Scholz Garden identification.

RJE: R. J. Elliott  
Scholz Garden  
111 Alamo Plaza  
San Antonio, TX  
Chips ordered 10/30/1938 (not 1939 as previously thought)

As a followup, I mentioned above that the club had been around since the turn of the century. This was partially true. It was originally opened, and very popular, in the 1870s but burned down in 1903. This new location was reopened in 1933 and quickly gained a reputation for gambling. It looks like soon after the chips were ordered the Scholz Garden was closed and replaced by a temporary toy store. Did Elliott take his chips and move to another club or were they seized in one of the final raids. It's impossible to say.

I hope you liked this different kind of IOTD. Research is much easier and you get a better product when you work with a team. Sometimes while buried in a story it is hard to see the forest for the trees. Bouncing results and asking questions is the best way to get a complete story.

Ed's Postscript...

Since that time there has been a few developments in the RJE chips. A second identification card has been found with the identical hot stamp. They were shipped in 1959 to a New Jersey address and as Gene explains below, there are compelling reasons to believe we were looking in the wrong place all along. Regardless of the conclusions from here on out, the research into the Scholz Garden is good, and there definitely are chips from there, just maybe not these particular chips. Maybe someone out there has some.

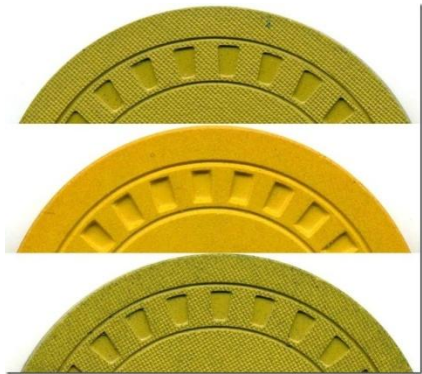
And with that, I'll sign out and let Gene turn this boat around...

My note: During this research our "Friend Of The Hobby" sent out these scans asking when the different molds were made. Knowing that would help in research.

"I was looking at the RJE hubs you sent. The Mason card says they were made in 1938, but they look like they were made on the hub mold that Mason started using sometime in the 1950's. I'd like to get your opinion on this. Here's a row of hubs, the GC from 1960, WHF from 1938."



GC top, WHF middle, RJE bottom—the RJE appears to have the newer mold with the tapered rectangles and the slightly larger inner circle (1 inch compared to .9).



This question spawned a lot of research using the Mason records and the Burt Company records. It will make a good IOTD one of these days. The main points: We just do not know. There are no entries in the Burt records about worn out molds being returned. There is evidence of the cannibalizing of molds, cups, and hobs from all 3 molds. Some orders could have 2 or even all 3 molds front and back. These old molds cost in the neighborhood of \$40,000 to make in those days. Some molds were paid for by the distributor and some paid for by Burt and charged rent for each chip on top of actual cost. Usually .04¢ per chip.

Yesterday while finishing this post it just did not set right with me. What if all 4 of us involved just wanted so badly for the RJE chips to be Texas that 3 of us were overlooking the obvious. A very long phone call pointed out several mistakes that were made going back to the original ID.

1. There was no red on the 1938 Texas order, blue, yellow, and white only. That was missed 1st time around.
2. Red was on the NJ order along with blue, yellow, and white. Only 44 red made.
3. We have never seen the hub mold with tapered rectangles on an order prior to 1940's.

I should have noticed the mold right off.

In our opinions the RJE chips in the scan are:

Russell J. Evans

1085-5 Woodland Trailer Pk

RFD #1

Browns Mills, NJ

1959

Blue, Yellow, White, Red

Only 150 chips. Only 44 red, less of other 3 colors.

Hub mold with tapered rectangles.

All of the Texas research is good. The RJE hot stamp is the same but on the completely rectangular hub mold with a .9 inner circle. OK, who has them? Four researcher's with egg on their face want them!

\*vbg\*

Maybe posting our mistakes will make all of us a little more alert. \*vbg\* Thanks to our "Friend" for starting the mold debate. Since nothing else was ready, I did not want to miss a Friday with no "Illegal Of The Day." \*vbg\*