

I got the SPX chip at the Arizona Charlie's show back in January this year. Somewhere along the line I sent for the ID. It came back to Brockway, CA, 1929. I am always disappointed when an ID comes back as CA. CA has had legal card rooms ever since the gold rush. <g> IMO, It is tough to ferret out illegal from legal. I put it in my program and forgot about it.

Fast forward to the convention 2011. I was offered another SPX chip. My reply: No thanks I got one and CA is not my favorite chips unless I can prove they are illegals. His reply, they are not CA chips they are The Cal Neva Lodge, Tahoe chips. HUH?

Now I am interested! <g>

A little more digging through the Mason records turned out a little more info. But why would Cal Neva chips be hot stamped SPX. <g> Conversations with two of our biggest and most respected NV chip collectors could not turn up an answer to that question.

Some important info did come out of our talks. Cal Neva was licensed for gaming soon after NV legalized gambling in 1931. It would have gotten one of the first gambling licenses. Yes "Virginia" gaming used to have a "B" in it. Wonder what happened to it? <g>

Chips delivered in 1929. No problem, we all know NV clubs had gambling prior to 1931. Brockway, CA was the PO address Tahoe used. Good point! Chips were delivered to George B. Goldie owner of The Cal Neva. GOOOOOOOD point!!!!

After much back and forth it came down to what "SPX" stood for. I said that is what we need to find out. My friend said "that is your job!

I love my job!

The story starts in Brockway, Ca with side trips thru Lake Tahoe, Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, CA, and Reno, NV. It involves cops, raids, Country Clubs, Hollywood big shots, and last but not least Bugsy Siegel.

Enough of that:

California:

And now "The Rest Of The Story."



SPX1att2

SPX. Per Mason Records

Geo B. Goldie

Brockway CA

December 1929

Per Mason records – “No date on card but there is an order letter says 12/29 and delivery G. Goldie/Cal Neva Lodge”

Brockway CA was the mailing address for the Cal Neva at the time. No PO in Tahoe.

Lavender 1

Pink 5

Blue 25

Per our “Friend Of The Hobby:

After looking into the SPX, in my opinion, I think the chip is probably more Cal than Neva. <g>

Geo B. Goldie

The Sphinx’s

8477 Sunset Boulevard

Hollywood, CA

December 1929

I agree with our friend, more Cal. <g>

SPX

George Bernhard Goldenberg AKA Goldie was born at Portland, OR in 1896 to Russian Jewish immigrant parents. When he was a kid the family moved to Los Angeles. George and his older brother Robert (by 2 years) were well known gamblers and night club operators in the LA area during the 1920's to the 40's—many of their places catering to Hollywood's rich and famous (Robert died in 1935).

It's said that Robert got his start in the gambling world when he and his kid brother were newsboys in LA. One day, waiting to buy his daily allotment of papers, Robert got involved in an alley crap game and lost his newspaper buying money. The following day he showed-up at the place with some dice and started his own game. His kid brother followed in his footsteps.

Fast forward to 1929, the year of the SPX order. In February of that year George Goldie becomes part owner of the Vernon Country Club in LA County (he got the place from Baron Long, one of the border barons who owned Agua Caliente). The place gets completely remodeled and about two weeks after its re-opening it burns to the ground.

Note: Geez, another illegal burns to the ground. How many have we read about?

LATimes—19feb1929:

JOYOUS RE-OPENING
OF THE
NEW VERNON
COUNTRY CLUB



Completely Redecorated and Under the Management of
Geo. Goldie and Tommy Jacobs
A Night of Joy and Revelry. Remember the Date.

TOMORROW NITE

Dave Snell's Orchestra—Mel Calish—Geo. Lloyd and
Jane Jones to make whoopee for famous
stars of stage and screen.

For the Premiere Supper, \$3.50, Including Cover.
Phone reservations at once to DEl. 0568 or 9401.

SPX2att2

A month after the fire, March 1929 the 34 year old George Goldie marries a 21 year old actress named Corinne Autra in Reno, NV. Two months after that, in May 1929 Goldie is listed as the owner-manager of the Cal-Neva Lodge when it opened "under new management" for the 1929 season (the entertainment provided by the Vernon Country Club boys from LA):

Note, "The Season" for Tahoe resorts was only 3 months.

Under New Management

Cal-Neva Lodge

Opening Saturday
June 15

At the State Line on Lake Tahoe

Unsurpassable dinner by one of America's most famous chefs will be served from 5:30 o'clock on without cover charge, \$2.50 per plate. Music and entertaining by the well-known Vernon Country Club boys from Los Angeles.

American Plan. Also a la Carte
24 Hours Service

Phone for your Reservation Saturday

Thanking you,

TONY LA RUSSO,
Chef de Cuisine.

GEO. B. GOLDI,
Owner-Manager.

SPX3att2

Cal-Neva Lodge closed the 1929 season on September 14th & 15th (the 3 month season allowed people to reside on the Neva side of the lodge for 90 days—satisfying Nevada's residency requirement for a divorce).

CAL - NEVA LODGE

LAKE TAHOE

cordially invites you to help
celebrate their closing of the
season in a

Gala Holiday

**Saturday and
Sunday**

Call Brockway 35 for
reservations.

SPX4att2

In Dec. 1929 the SPX chips are delivered to Goldie in Brockway. A little over a month later on January 31, 1930, Goldie is arrested during a gambling raid of a place on the Sunset Strip in Hollywood: The Sphinx Club. My guess is that the SPX on the chip is a contraction of Sphinx.

Note: I totally agree with that guess. IMO it is not a guess but spot on. <g>

Note: Time line.

May 1929, Goldie listed as owner/manager Cal Neva.

September 1929, Goldie closes the Cal Neva for the season.

December 1929, Goldie receives the SPX chips at the Can Neva address in Brockway, CA.

January 1930, Goldie (under an alias) is arrested at The Sphinx's club raid on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, CA. All gambling equipment was confiscated. No chips mentioned in article but "gambling equipment used in various card games" should cover the chips. <g>

LATimes—1feb1930:

FIVE ARRESTED IN RAID ON CLUB

*Gaming Paraphernalia Taken
by Fitts's Vice Squad*

*Accused to Face Prosecution
on Gambling Charge*

*Prominent Persons Released
in Hollywood Capture*

Five men were taken in custody yesterday facing prosecution on a charge of illegal possession of gambling equipment as the result of a surprise raid conducted by detectives under Capt. Clyde Plummer, chief of Dist.-Atty. Fitts's vice detail, on the Sphinx Club at 8477 Sunset Boulevard.

The equipment seized consists of a roulette wheel and a large quantity of paraphernalia used in various card games, according to the officers. Numerous prominent residents who were patrons of the place were released by the officers without being questioned.

Those taken into custody gave their names as Joe Davis and Frank Harris, residents of the club, and E. C. Randolph, 1213 North Harvard Boulevard; Frank Johnson, 6819 Franklin avenue, and Tom Cooper, Teris Hotel. The officers assert that Frank Harris is George Goldie, brother of Bob Goldie, well known in Hollywood.

The raid is but one of a series being conducted by the District Attorney against roadhouses and clubs believed to be sponsoring gambling. It was the third time within as many months that the officers had visited the Sunset address. Failing to gain immediate entrance, the detectives were forced to batter down the doors.

All such raids are conducted along strictly legal lines, the officers first being provided with a search warrant, Capt. Plummer stated.

The arrested men were arraigned before Municipal Judge Ambrose and granted a delay until the 5th inst. to enter their plea to the charge of possession of gambling paraphernalia, a misdemeanor. They are at liberty pending trial on \$250 bail each.

The address, 8477 Sunset Boulevard, housed many gambling clubs over the years, most notably the legendary “Clover Club” which operated there off and on in the 30’s and 40’s and catered to Hollywood big shots and movie stars (George and his brother Robert were involved with it—and other places).

Here’s a pic of the place when it was the Clover Club—the sign in the middle, the building to the left. The structure no longer exists, but the building to the right, the Piazza del Sol, does. Bugsy Siegel had an interest in the Clover Club.

(pic taken at intersection of Sunset & La Cienga)



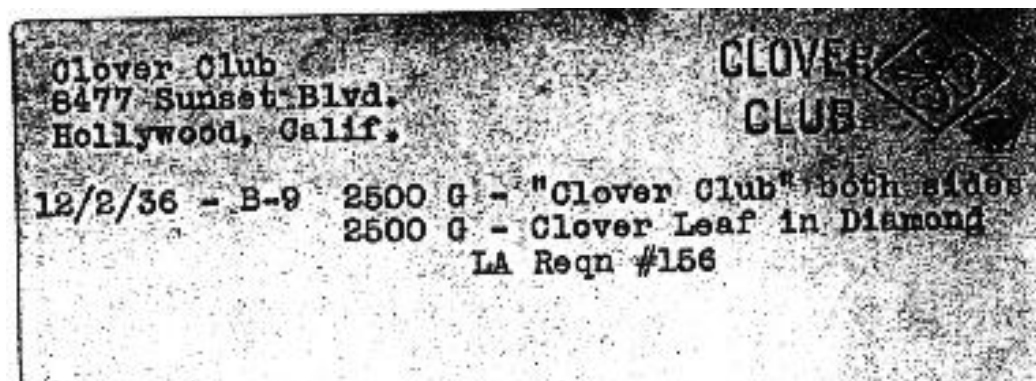
SPX6att2

Pic of the entrance driveway off Sunset:



SPX7att2

Note: Bugsy Siegel and the Clover Club: I have read quite a bit about this Club. I have 2 Skey 3 leaf clover chips attributed to it. The ID is in TGT. I have never researched them and it might be hard to prove they came from there. There is also a hub chip that was sent there. I need it if you have a trader cough it up.



SPX8att2

A decade after the 1930 raid of the Sphinx Club, Goldie opens another Sphinx Club at a different Sunset Strip location:

LATimes—20may1940:

Sphinx Club Raided Again; None of Patrons Molested

In a "repeat" raid at the exclusive Sphinx Club at 9236 Sunset Blvd., Sheriff's vice detail deputies yesterday arrested nine persons and confiscated 15 cases of liquor.

None of the 500 patrons, among them members of Hollywood's cafe and film society, was molested by the officers, led by Capt. George Contreras.

CLUB MANAGER HELD

George Goldenberg, also known as George Goldie, 44, of 1941 Coldwater Canyon Dr., given as the club manager, and Marcel A. Lamaze, 43, of 8437 Sunset Blvd., restaurateur, were among those taken into custody and booked at the County Jail on charges of violating the State Alcoholic Beverages Act by selling liquor after the 2 a.m. closing hour.

Capt. Contreras led another raid on the club last Easter morning,

at which time Goldenberg was arrested on a charge of possession of gambling devices, and poker chips and playing cards were confiscated.

MEET NO RESISTANCE

During the first raid the authorities broke into the club by battering down the doors of the establishment. Yesterday the deputies met with no resistance, walking quietly in the front entrance. Patrons were ordered to leave.

Those arrested, in addition to Goldenberg and Lamaze, were Frank S. Weindl, 44; Hans Laase, 29; Frank Laase, 29; Rudolph Kahr, 43; Harry Allen, 33; Victor Condon, 40, and George H. Newell, 29, all club employees.

They were later released on \$250 bail each and will appear for arraignment at 3 p.m. Wednesday in Beverly Hills Justice Court.

Matchbook:

©R6-6161
RR2-3383

The Sphinx Club



CLOSE COVER BEFORE STRIKING MATCH

©R6-6161
RR2-3383

9236 Sunset Blvd.



Made in U.S.A.
THE DIAMOND MATCH CO. CHICO, CALIF.

George Goldie died at Beverly Hills in 1961, age 64.

BTW--

When I saw the references to the Sphinx Club it reminded that there are some crest & seal chips attributed to a Sphinx Club in Reno. Thinking that maybe Goldie had something to do with that place I looked into it. The only thing I could find was a Sphynx Club—always spelled with a “Y”—which operated in the early 40’s. The Sphinx c&s chips are all spelled with an “I”. Is there evidence of a Sphinx Club in Reno? If not, I wonder if the c&s Sphinx may be from Hollywood?

ad for the Sphynx in Reno from 1942:

DINE	THE SPHYNX CLUB	DANCE
1410 East Fourth Street — Phone 25196		
THE FINEST STEAK DINNER IN TOWN		
Our Steak Dinner		\$1.50
Young Steer Beef Exclusively		
Guaranteed to Be Supreme — Charcoal Broiled		
Step in Any Taxicab in Reno and Come to the Sphynx Club FREE OF CHARGE		FLOOR SHOW THE O'NEILL GIRLS LES POE and His Orchestra Featuring MONTE and His NOVA- CHORD ORGAN
FLOOR SHOW		HAVE FUN

SPX11att2

The Sphinx, Reno per Harvey J. Fuller's "Index Of Nevada Gambling Establishments:

Rest easy my friend and fellow CCGTCC Hall Of Fame member. You will never be forgotten by chip collectors. You gave so much to our hobby and asked for so little. I still have notes you gave me on the backs of Fiesta keno tickets.

The Sphinx-spelled with a "Y"

1410 E. 4th St

Reno, NV

Washoe County

Licensed: 12/10-41 – 1943 – 21, craps, roulette

The Sphinx – spelled with a "I" - C&S chips attributed to Reno The Sphinx – spelled with a "Y."



SPX12att2

I think TCR has a bad "Attributed To" for these chips.

Per our resident authority on C&S chips.

The Sphinx crest & seals appear to be Burt chips which would make them early 1950s. (POSSIBLY late 1940s)

Note: The Burt Co bought out the old molds from USPC in 1947, leaving only two companies in the US producing clay compression molded chips, The Burt Co in Maine and TR King in California. I have seen some comments that USPC produced some C&S after the sell out in 1947. I have seen no proof of that.

The Burt Co may have or may not have made C&S chips prior to the buyout in 1947.

If they did not, it would be impossible for the Sphinx's – spelled with an "I" - to be used in Reno Sphinx – spelled with "Y" - 12/10-41 – 1943. Say that 3 times fast and win a chip. <g>

We know Goldie was arrested a 2nd time in 1940 at The Sphinx in Hollywood. Did the Sphinx operate until the late 40's early 50's? If so that is where the C&S should be attributed. Did Burt make C&S's before 1947? If so that is where the C&S should be attributed.

I am pretty sure this post is not going to be popular with Nevada chip collectors. Sorry gang.

On the other hand Ca illegal chip collectors are going to love me. <g>