

Captain Brantley and his raiders unlike other local law men and politicians did not play favorites with the Illinois illegal club operators. They took all of them down. *vbg* The Thunderbird in East Cape Girardeau was no exception. Both Ed Hertel and Our "Friend Of The Hobby" contributed to this series of posts.

Enough of that:

This is the fourth in a series of mid and southern Illinois "Illegal Of The Day" posts. I am calling this series of posts "Raiders Of the Lost Illegal's" in honor of Captain Elza Brantley and the troopers that served with him.

"Raiders Of the Lost Illegal's" Part 4

The grandson of Captain Elza Brantley sent me 150 scans of raid pictures, notes on the raids, newspaper articles, official documents, and confiscated chips from 500 (300 in one month) raids on Illinois illegal's, conducted by his grandfather. Some of the chips we have never seen. Also raids on clubs we have never heard of.

Elza Brantley 1913-1999

Graduated from the first class at the Illinois State Police Academy.

1955-1960 Captain in Command Battery #6 Illinois State Police-District #13 East Saint Louis- 27 counties - 105 Troopers.

This "Illegal Of The Day" will take us through a mostly pectoral trip of the Thunderbird raids. Jerry Birl wrote a very good article on the East Cape Girardeau illegals after a visit a few years ago. If I remember right it was in the Club magazine. I highly recommend it.

Here's a pic of the Thunderbird:



TBird1

ad from 1954:



The Thunderbird

Hiway 146

East Cape, Ill.

Southern Illinois' Newest Night Club

featuring

EVE THOMAS

Glamorous Piano and Organ Stylist

Come Over and Enjoy Delicious

- Steaks
- Seafood
- Chicken

TBird2

Roadhouse Hit By State Police In Gambling Raid

By Associated Press

McCLURE, Ill.—State police raided The Thunderbird, an Alexander County roadhouse late Wednesday and confiscated two roulette wheels and other gambling equipment.

Lt. Elza Brantley who led the raid said the equipment was found in an upstairs room of the Thunderbird and was not in use when seized.

The Thunderbird is on State Route 146 about two miles east of the Mississippi River bridge at Cape Girardeau, Mo.


Brantley was accompanied by a sergeant and eight patrolmen, all of district 13 at Du Quoin. The lieutenant said he would file charges today against John Wilson, the roadhouse licensee.

Alexander is one of eight counties where state police chief Phil M. Brown last week promised continued gambling crack-downs without advance notice to local authorities.

TBird3

Taylor chip orders:

Actual chip taken in a Thunderbird raid.


NAME		Address		Town		State		Per		SPECIAL MONOGRAM				
														
Amount	Color	Initials Both Sides	Style Type	Initials One Side	Other Side	Style Type	Monogram Color	Date Shipped						
1818	Yellow	Spec.		(Burt)				10/14/53						
1010	Chocolate	Spec.		(US)				10/14/53						
606	Yellow	Spec.		(Burt)			Blue	11/10/53						
404	Chocolate	Spec.		(UW)			Gold	11/10/53						
50	Purple with three red inlays	Thunderbird both sides							12/23/53					



TBird4


Will buy or trade for the chocolate or purple chip.

Actual chip taken in a Thunderbird raid.

NAME WILSON, John		Address Villa Hotel		Town McClure State Ill.		 SPECIAL MONOGRAM			
Per									
Amount	Color	Initials Both Sides	Style Type	Initials One Side	Other Side	Style Type	Monogram Color	Date Shipped	
1800	Yellow	THUNDERBIRD	T	DESIGN			Blue	3/8/55	

TBird5

Chip is from Ed Hertel's collection. Captain Brantley must have missed this one, *vbg*

NAME JOHN WILSON		Address Villa Hotel		Town McClure State Illinois		 SPECIAL MONOGRAM			
Per	SENT TO MILLS HILL								
Amount	Color	Initials Both Sides	Style Type	Initials One Side	Other Side	Style Type	Monogram Color	Date Shipped	
707	Choc.	WH	BEV					7/21	
303	Purple	WH	BEV					7/21	
500	PURPLE	WH	MT					10-24-55	
1000	CHOCOLATE	WH	"					10-24-55	
101	PURPLE	WH	"		WITH 8 RED INKYS			10-21-55	
802	PURPLE	WH	3rd Class				Gold	11-22-55	
2019	CHOCOLATE	WH	3rd Class				Gold	11-22-55	
300	Purple	WH	3rd Class				Gold	11-22-55	
1010	Purple	WH	3rd Class				Gold	11-22-55	

TBird6

I need this chip, any color. Cough it up if you have a trader. *vbg*

Miles Hill was a longtime gambling partner of Wilson (W=wilson H=hill); Wilson owned the Thunderbird and Hill was the manager. They also operated a place in 1955 across the Mississippi in Jefferson County, MO called the Hollywood Beach Club. They both operated the Colony Club after Joe Dodd sold it in 1958 (Dodd operated the Purple Crackle from 1962 until his death in 1975).

The Colony Club was featured in Illegal Of The Day Illinois 40.

<http://www.thechipboard.com/index.cgi/page/1/md/read/id/1303397/sbj/illegal-of-the-day-illinois-40/>

Gaming tables taken in raid at the Thunderbird from Captain Brantley's files.



TBird7



TBird8



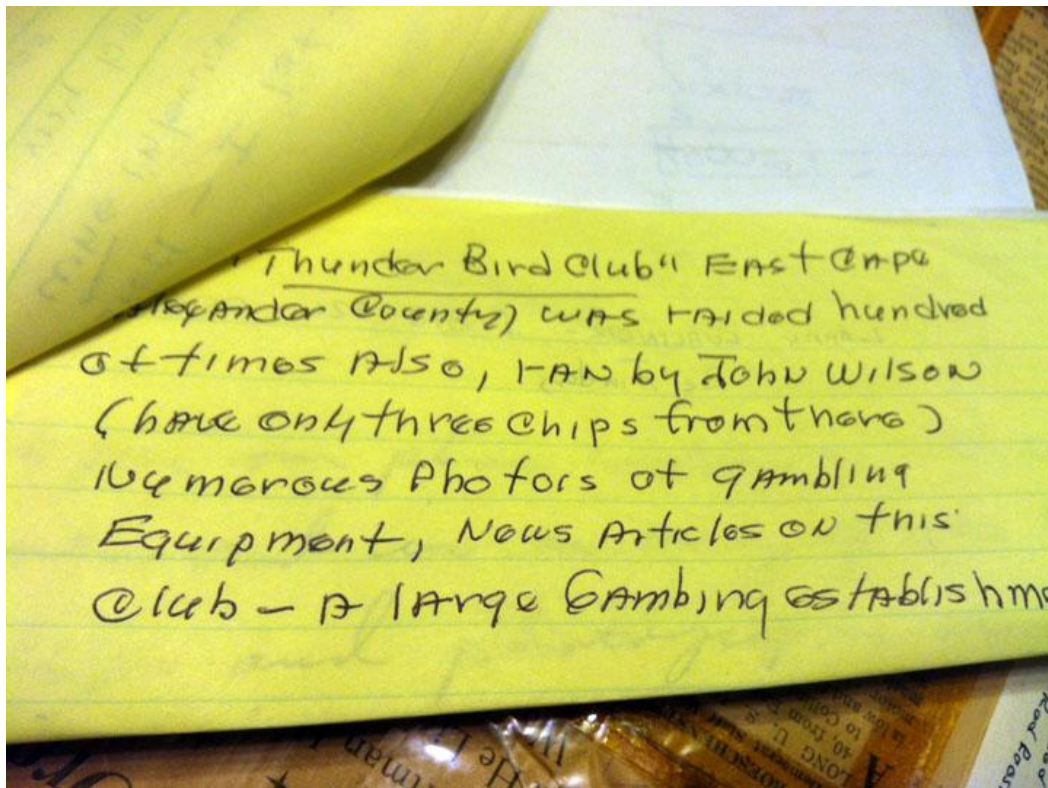
TBird9

The roulette wheel meets a destructive end. *vbg* Big pile of chips, also. "The Horror" *vbg* I bet Jerry Birl will go bananas over roulette chips burning! *vbg*



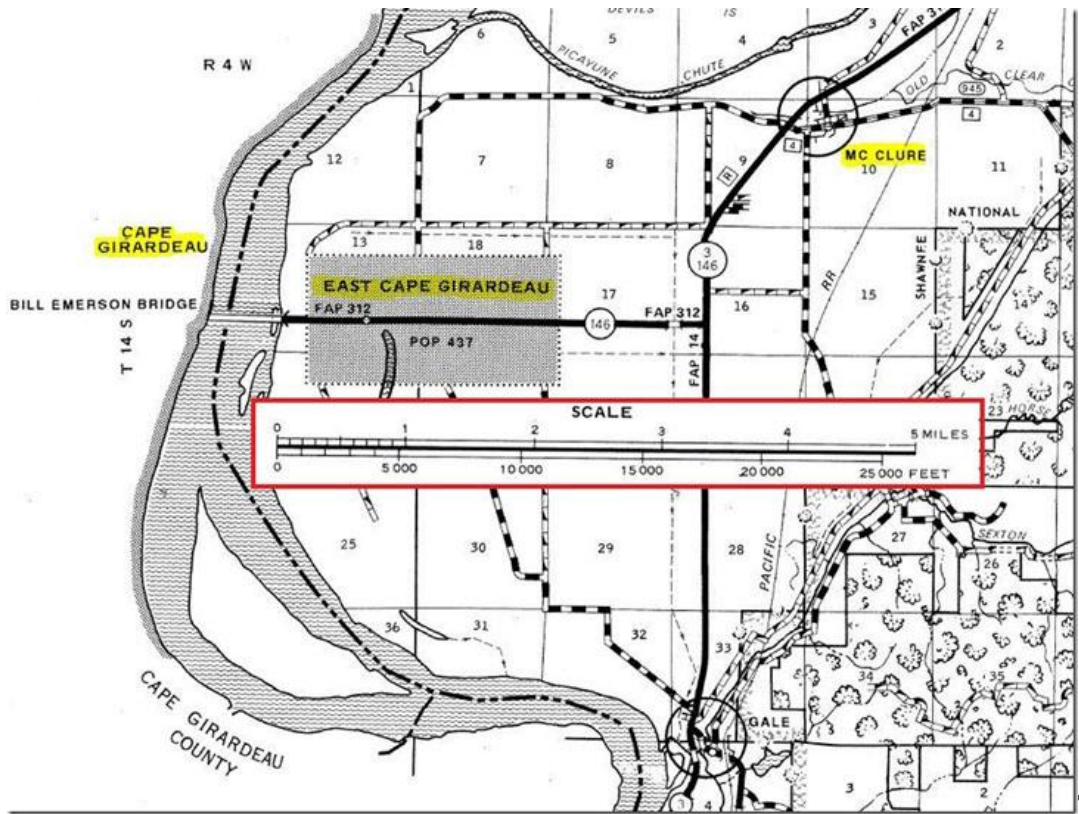
TBird10

From Captain Brantley's notes. Thunderbird "raided hundred of times."



TBird11

Thunderbird mentioned about half way down.



TBird14

Coming soon to "Raiders Of The Lost Illegals."
 Crap table with batteries. It is called a "crap joint."



TBird15

And you thought all you had to do was beat the "odds." *vbg*
 You can read about a crap joint that caused 3 murders in Biloxi Mississippi - Part III posted here.
<http://www.marlowcasinochips.com/links/genetrimble/genetrimble.htm>

Cheating devises and Blackjack mechanics were used in many illegal joints across the country. The Arrowhead Inn in Branch Hill, OH had a rigged roulette wheel and used rigged dice on the crap table. Those stories posted at the above link, also.

The "ODDS" on any gambling game guarantee's the house cannot be beat over the long run. It was not enough for many of the illegal operators. Funny dice and cheating devises were sold in catalogues by most of the old distributors. TR King stopped selling in Nevada in 1974 to avoid a NV Gaming investigation into them selling funny dice. They sold them to anyone that paid including the NV casinos.

You can read about one of the most famous TR King funny dice scams here.

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

it was exposed in a five page article in the Saturday Evening Post. It reached from Chicago and California, across two oceans to Japan and Monte Carlo.