

This is more of a fact sheet I put together for myself rather than an "Illegal Of The Day." When I see chips either bought by or used by the same guy I try to note it. The 1st chip I got attributed to Tom Moore was the Horseshoe mold M in a circle. I got it many years ago. I traded for a 2nd one last year by accident. <g>

Used at Circle M Ranch and Tom Moore's Castle Hills Club, San Antonio, TX, 1950's.



Tom Moore1att2

I was still at the Four Queens and very much involved with the WSOP when I got it. My 1st stop was to talk to Amarillo Slim Preston. He was always good for stories about Texas chips. You kinda had to cut through the BS but still great stories. <g> He told me about some big poker games at Tom Moore's places. All the usual suspects played there. Benny Binion, Johnny Moss, Sailor Roberts, Puggy Pearson, OK Johnny, Jack "Treetop" Strauss to name a few. The blinds were determined by how big the "fish" of the week was. <g>

The ID on these chips were never in doubt but when the Taylor records came along, they proved the ID on the chip as T's molds were made with the same logo.

Amount	Color	Initials Both Sides	Style Type	Initials One Side	Other Side	Style Type	Monogram Color	Date Shipped
505	Black	M Lm circle 2 Sides	H Pink	inward edges				11-8-56
606	Yellow	"	4 green	"	"			"
1010	Red	"	4 White	"	"			"

Tom Moore2att2



Tom Moore3att2

I got the \$5 in Horseshoe chip last year advertised as The Navy Club in San Antonio, TX. It was originally used at the Stephen F Austin Hotel, in Austin by Tom Moore. He later took over the Commanders Club in San Antonio and changed the name to the Navy Club.



Tom Moore4att2

I have 2 of these for trade.

Michael Knapp used to have a column in our Club magazine where members sent in UFC's and other members would send in replies for the next issue. A friend reminded me this chip had been in the column. Below is the reply by Doc Finstuen. Doc was a friend and did a lot of research on illegals, Both him and I wrote columns for every issue of Bill Aikemens, now gone, magazine, Gambling Times. It was fun times for illegal chip collectors. Doc dropped out of the hobby and the fun. He used to work for NASA and I use to kid him about finding illegal chips on the moon. I miss Doc.

UFC 1208 (11/4) Doc Finstuen recognized this **inverted horseshoe** and has taken time to send us a very complete story about the chip and its owner. The chip was made for Tom Connelly Moore, who used them in high stakes poker games at the Stephen F. Austin Hotel in Austin, TX in the 1930's. In 1949, Moore moved to San Antonio and opened the Navy Club on Broadway. The chips may well have been used there as well. In the early 1960's, Moore sold the Navy Club property and built the Circle M Ranch on Kings Trail (Hwy. 35N) in San Antonio on the way to Austin.

The Circle M burned down, and Moore moved his "private club" to his large residence at 6701 West Avenue in Castle Hills, a San Antonio suburb. Whether these chips were still in use at that time is unknown. In 1968, Moore moved to Reno, where he bought the Holiday Hotel from Newt Crumley.

All that history from what appears to be a "generic" poker chip! Just proves once again: assume nothing!



Tom Moore5att2



Tom Moore6att2



Tom Moore7att2

I need the Navy Club chips. Cough them up if you have a trader.

Some of you might remember when the CCGTCC had chapters. I belonged to several chapters. One chapter was the Lone Star chapter.

Here is Texas chip collector newsletter from July/August 1999. It has a 3 page article written by Doc Finstuen about Tom Moore from Ed Hertel's website. I did not ask Ed, I hope it was ok to download. <g>



Volume 2 Issue 4 Jul / Aug 1999

TOM C. MOORE

Entrepreneur and High Stakes Player

by: Doc Finstuen

Tom Connally Moore was originally from Eddy, Texas, near Waco. He came from a prestigious Baptist Texas family. He was named after his uncle, Tom Connally, a prominent politician from Texas. Tom Connally served two terms in the Texas House of Representatives (1901 to 1904), and was elected as the Texas Representative to the U.S. Congress serving from 1917 to 1929. In 1929, he became the United States Senator from Texas, and served six more terms in the congress, retired in 1953, after a political career spanning over 40 years of service to the Lone Star state.

Tom Moore's mother Bertha Moore, Tom Connally's sister, was active in the women's Democratic party in Eddy and was one of the first to introduce Lyndon Baines Johnson on the radio during LBJ's early political years. John Connally, the governor of Texas who was shot and wounded while riding in the car when John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, was Tom Moore's first cousin. Many of Tom's brothers

and cousins were professional people, doctors, lawyers and businessmen. Tom C. Moore was a professional gambler, and according to one account, probably the best poker player in the country.

Tom had studied at Baylor University in Waco but his academic career ended abruptly when he was caught gambling, an activity that was frowned upon by the staunchly Baptist school.

Moore made his way to Austin, Texas, where he tried his hand

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at several business ventures, running a restaurant, a bowling alley, and always playing cards. Soon he was running poker games out of the penthouse of the Stephen F. Austin Hotel, and in nearby Luling and Lockhart. Many of his card playing acquaintances were Texas oil and stockmen from around the state. In 1949 Tom moved his operation down the old King's Trail from Austin to San Antonio.

About this time, Moore bought the Commander's Club on Pecan and Main Streets from the Safair brothers and changed the name to the Navy Club. The place was chartered as a private club, supposedly for Naval officers, and served mixed drinks. On the door was a brass plate that read "Navy Club, Private, Members Only."

Tom ran the club from 1949 to the early 1960's when he sold the property to the National Bank of Commerce for their new bank building. The smaller gambling "joints" in the town had slot machines, marble "one ball" payouts and punch board action, but by comparison, the Navy Club was a first class operation. It boasted a private gaming area where the high rollers from San Antonio, Austin and Houston could take their pleasure at the polished mahogany craps, blackjack and poker tables, or bet at the roulette wheel. The second



Chip from the Navy Club. Known denominations include \$1, \$5 and \$25.

floor apartments across the street from the Navy Club were used for his sports and horse race bookmaking operation.

Tom Moore was a gentleman gambler with more than 500 tailor made suits in his closet. He was always known to run an honest game. There was a sign on the wall in the casino area that read something to the effect "We run a straight game here. If a customer wants to take a set of dice or a deck of cards off the table, put them in your pocket and take them home and check to see if they are right." The same slogan appeared on the inside of the matchbook from the Navy Club's exclusive cocktail lounge.

After the Navy Club closed its doors to make way for higher finance at the National Bank of Commerce, Tom built a new gaming house out on old Highway 81, north of San Antonio past Selma, across the present IH 35 freeway from

Garden Ridge (old "Carter's Corner" gas station and store) called the "Circle M Ranch." The ranch opened in 1954 and closed five years later. The fancy new operation drew clients from both Austin and San Antonio. Many weekends when the San Antonio Country Club on New Braunfels Avenue closed for the night at 2:00 a caravan of Buicks and Caddies headed north of the city out "to the ranch" for some late hours entertainment. The Circle M sported four large 10 by 14 foot murals in the main gaming hall commissioned by Tom's wife LaFayne from well known artist Hunter Warren. Each mural depicted a Mississippi gambling river boat. The faces of the people playing at the tables inside the paddle wheel boats could be seen. These were no ordinary people's faces. LaFayne had the artist paint "mini-portraits" of the faces of regular high rollers playing their favorite game. So if Senator "X" from Austin was a dice player, he was shown making passes at the craps table. Likewise if the wife of county judge "Y" liked roulette, there she was stacking chips on the payout.

Next issue: The story concludes with the destruction of the Circle M Ranch, Moore's move to Nevada, and a 20 foot polar bear named White King.

Tom Connally **Part 2**

by Doc Finstuen

In the last issue of the Newsletter, Doc Finstuen told the story of the Texas gambler Tom Connally. He told of Tom's gambling days after opening up the Navy Club in San Antonio and then with a few gamblers opened the Circle M Ranch outside the city limits. When this club burned to the ground, he eventually moved West.

In 1968, Moore moved to Reno and bought the Holiday Hotel from Newt Crumley. This was considered unusual since Moore was technically an "outsider," but he was respected nationally for his poker games and so was granted a Nevada gaming license.

While Newt Crumley was still in charge, he had bought a large 20 foot white polar bear, White King, from a trapper in Alaska and installed it in the lobby of the hotel. After Moore bought the Holiday, one of the first things he did when he walked in the lobby was say, "Get rid of that bear. I want to run a class joint here, not a circus." They took the bear to the basement. Many of the locals inquired about the bear; many of them used to tap on the plexiglass case for good luck; but Moore didn't really want locals in his place, he wanted high stakes poker players and tourists with big bank rolls. The bear stayed in the basement for a couple of years.

One day Newt Crumley asked

what happened to White King. Moore said, "If you want the bear you can have it." Under cover of darkness, they loaded the bear into a van and moved it to the Commercial Casino in Elko where it still stands today.



Later, Tom Moore suffered health problems, the air in Reno was too cold for his heart condition - he walked about 4 miles a day for exercise, so he decided to move back to San Antonio.

He sold the "World Series of Poker" to his buddy and fellow Texan Benny Binion at the Horseshoe in Las Vegas. When he got back to San Antonio, at the age of 70, he started up his poker game and bookie operation. At the age of 74, he was investigated by the FBI for tax evasion and gambling, and spent several months in court. He died shortly thereafter, and is buried in a cemetery about 1-1/2 miles from my house in a place called Sunset Park on the Austin Highway. And now, as Paul Harvey says, you know "the rest of the story."

Tom Moore had a long career in illegal gambling and finished off owning a casino in Reno, NV and he got rid of the large white bear. <g>