

Once again the Mason record card does not give us a Club name but enough info to ferret it out. <g>

From the info I received I am very comfortable using the Club name in the info. If for no other reason than, what else could THT stand for in a city with a population today of only 32,467? Wonder what the population was in 1941?

One little bonus, as with many Northern Illinois illegals, this one comes back to Al Capone in the prohibition era. You got to love the history! <g> Guess what? I finally got the info on the Miami, FL, LJC hub I showed on the board a few days ago. It also comes back to Al Capone. Al and his boys were all over the place in that era. <g>

I am going with "Top Hat Tavern" on this one. Read on!

Enough of that:

Illinois:



THT1att2

Thomas Perona

Top Hat Tavern

105 Pine St

Danville, IL

100 blue, 200 white

4/21/41

Thomas Perona emigrated from Italy in the 1890's and went to work in the coal mines. In the early 1900's he was injured in a mining accident which left him permanently disabled. After the accident and for most of the rest of his life Perona was involved in the tavern and liquor business. The chip delivery address 105 Pine, was Perona's residential address. He was 63 years old when the chips were ordered in 1941.

According to an account written in 2011 by the wife of Perona's grandson, during prohibition Perona's activities with illegal liquor at both Danville and nearby Westville got him in trouble with the law. She also relates a story in which Perona's illegal liquor activity got him into more serious trouble:

All relatively harmless until an ambitious and relatively unknown New York native, Al Capone, decided to expand his Chicago business and felt that Thomas's Danville/Westville operation might be too nearby for his liking. Capone sent a couple of representatives to offer to buy out Perona. Perona declined, feeling that he had a good thing going with his local business, and he promised he had no intention of competing in Chicago. The response from Capone's men came a few days later: they kidnapped Thomas's 16 year old son James Perona, and held him (along with a vastly reduced monetary sum) in exchange for all Perona's stills in the area, and a pledge not to open any new ones. Perona had to make his decision in 3 days. While Thomas agonized about what to do and whether they'd return James in any case, James was being held in a hay barn not too far away. His minders got hopelessly drunk, and young James made his escape, walked miles through corn fields over the next night and day, and made his way to his father's house right after Thomas had sent his acceptance of the buyout offer with more Capone "representatives". At first, Thomas wished James could have made it home a little sooner, but the continuing months and years of ruthless cruelty that Capone and his men unleashed on Chicago and beyond were enough to make them glad that they had their business dealings with Capone overwith (and they made a little money out of the deal).

THT2att2

As with most Al Capone stories, without corroborating evidence to support the story it probably needs to be taken with a grain of salt. Perona's "16 year old son James" would have turned 16 in Sept. 1933 (prohibition repealed Dec. 1933). In addition to the Capone story, she says that during a poker game Thomas Perona won a house in Danville from the Vermilion County sheriff. Perona died at Westville in 1970 age 90.

There was a tavern south of Danville in the 40's and 50's called the "Top Hat Tavern" which might account for the THT on the chip. The place had gambling but I don't know if Perona had anything to do with it.

pic of Perona:



THT3att2

Thomas Perona's grandson Michael Perona lives in Minnesota. His wife Juleigh is the one who wrote the account of Perona's activities. Here's their FB profiles in case someone wants to contact them for further info:

I had Juleigh messaged through her face book page but no reply to date.

<http://www.facebook.com/people/Michael-Perona/1813275165>

<http://www.facebook.com/people/Juleigh-Perona/1567030343>