

A friend sent me a link to an ebay auction. All I could see was a couple 100 plastic and paper chips in a chip caddy. In a back slot of the caddy there was a yellow chip on top but could not tell the initials or mold. My friend did magic on it and sent me this scan.

Per him: The initials were TJ.

Per Me: Not TJ. <g>

They are TI.



TI1att2

I sent the auction to David Spragg as I don't do ebay. I sent for the Mason record. Research came back with another great story on Northern Illinois illegal gambling. The usual suspects like Al Capone but this one threw in Jimmy Hoffa as a little bonus.

Spragg will be coming along with some for sale. Only 17 TI's in that caddy slot.

Enough of that:

Illinois.



TI2att2

TI

E J Henry

Tumble Inn

Box #214

Mendota IL

5/5/38 – 920 orange, 80 lavender.

**TI**

The Tumble Inn was located a half mile north of Mendota, just outside the city limits, on what was then called Route 51 but today is IL State Route 251 or US Federal Route 52. I wasn't able to pinpoint the location exactly but I think it was on the east side of the road, opposite Lake Mendota. Mendota is a town in the far northwestern corner of La Salle County. La Salle County was well known for years as a wide open county with plenty of spots for entertainment and gambling.

William Vogelsang moved to Mendota in 1935 and became the proprietor of the Tumble Inn (not exactly sure when). In 1941 Mendota's mayor went on a crusade against slot machines in his town. Here's a snip from the Chicago Tribune which mentions a tavern north of Mendota which I think is referring to the Tumble Inn; also, a pic of the Mayor which I think was taken inside the Tumble Inn.

# MENDOTA MAYOR WARS ALONE ON SLOT MACHINES

Receives No Help from  
Other Officials.

## Appear in Roadhouses.

After the mayor banned the machines in Mendota, they appeared at once in roadhouses surrounding the town. One tavern, half a mile north on route 51, had four, catering to either the nickel, dime, or quarter players.

A tour thru the county revealed the mayor had not exaggerated. The visitor stumbled over the tempting machines in almost every tavern, candy store, and pool room.

Gambling was wide open in La Salle's two night clubs. And outside of Ottawa, as a natural concomitant to loose money and easy spending, was a large and popular brothel, described proudly by local denizens as "one of the largest and the finest in the entire country."

In all, outside of the larger towns, there were 12 busy roadhouses, complete with orchestras and dancing, each catering to gambling with dice, roulette, and slot machines.

"It looks," said Mayor Oester sadly, "as if the one-arm bandits will continue indefinitely unless the state officials act."



[TRIBUNE Photo.]

Mayor Leslie J. Oester of Mendota points to slot machines in a tavern outside his jurisdiction.

T13att2

My note: Are we sure he is pointing to the slot machine? Spragg thinks it looks like he got caught playing it! <g>

In January 1948 the Tumble Inn gets a new proprietor:

## NOTICE

**Effective January 2, 1948, the Tumble Inn, located on Route 51 at Mendota, Ill., will be under the management and ownership of Kohry, who formerly operated Kohry's Kor-ner in Oglesby, Illinois, and was connected with Tinney's Silver Congo at LaSalle, and will be known as Kohry's Tumble Inn.**

**Your Patronage Will Be Appreciated**

**Come in and let's get acquainted. Watch your local newspaper for further announcement as to when we will open our kitchen to serve you the finest food.**

**KOHRY'S TUMBLE INN**

**Kohry**

TI4att2

A side note:

Tinney's Silver Congo mentioned above was run by Tinney Cosgrove. Cosgrove operated many places over the years in La Salle County. In addition to the Silver Congo he operated a place called "South Bluff" in Peru.

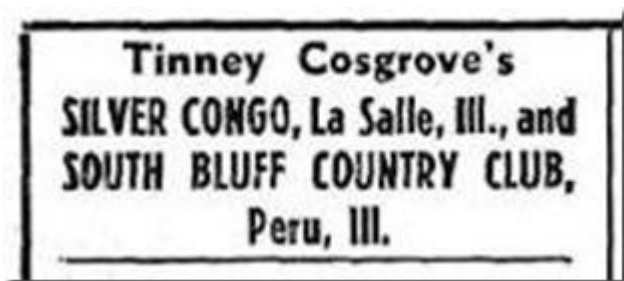
Last week these chips were sold on eBay by a seller from Peru, IL (not ID'ed in TGT or Hertel):

[http://www.ebay.com/itm/South-Bluff-illinois-poker-chips-/290624674858?pt=LH\\_DefaultDomain\\_0&hash=item43aa949c2a](http://www.ebay.com/itm/South-Bluff-illinois-poker-chips-/290624674858?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item43aa949c2a)

My note: This should make Dave Hepburn happy as he won that auction and asked for an ID on the BB. I want these chips if and when more turn up.



TI5att2



TI6att2

---

A year and a half after Kohry took over the Tumble Inn, Vogelsang puts the place up for sale:

**FOR SALE**  
**NIGHT CLUB -- RESTAURANT**

**AIR CONDITIONED**

**TUMBLE INN --- Mendota, Ill.**

**Now Advertised as KOHRY'S TUMBLE INN**

**TOURIST CABINS — TRAILER CAMP**

**About 4 Acres**

**Fully Equipped With Living Quarters**

**IS, AND HAS BEEN, ONE OF THE BEST MONEY MAKING  
SPOTS IN LASALLE COUNTY**

**For More Details, Call 193 or 267Y, Mendota for Appointment  
WM. VOGELSANG**

TI7att2

For some reason Kohry's lease was not renewed by Vogelsang:

**KOHRY**

takes this occasion to express the season's best to all his loyal friends and to express his appreciation to them for past patronage these many years

**KOHRY**

regrets that he will not be able to serve you in his present location, north of Mendota on Route No. 51, after the 1st of January, because his lease is not being renewed. But will soon announce the opening of a new and larger Supper Club at 1 1/2 blocks west of Peru on Route 6, early in 1950.

*Until Then*

**KOHRY**

**SAYS MERRY CHRISTMAS AND  
A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

*Kohry's Tumble Inn*

**RT. 51 — MENDOTA, ILL.**

TI8att2

This chip order was probably for Kohry's new place:

Amount	Color	Initials Both Sides	Style Type	Initials One Side	Other Side	Style Type	Monogram Color	Date Shipped
1009	Yellow			CK	75¢	Block	Blue	10.29.51
261	Red			CK	5.00	"	Gold	10.29.51
161	Black			CK	75.00	"	Gold	10.29.51
525	Yellow			CK	75¢	"	Blue	12.8.52
71	Black			CK	25.00	"	Gold	12.8.52
20	Red			CK	5.00	"	"	12.8.52

TI9att2

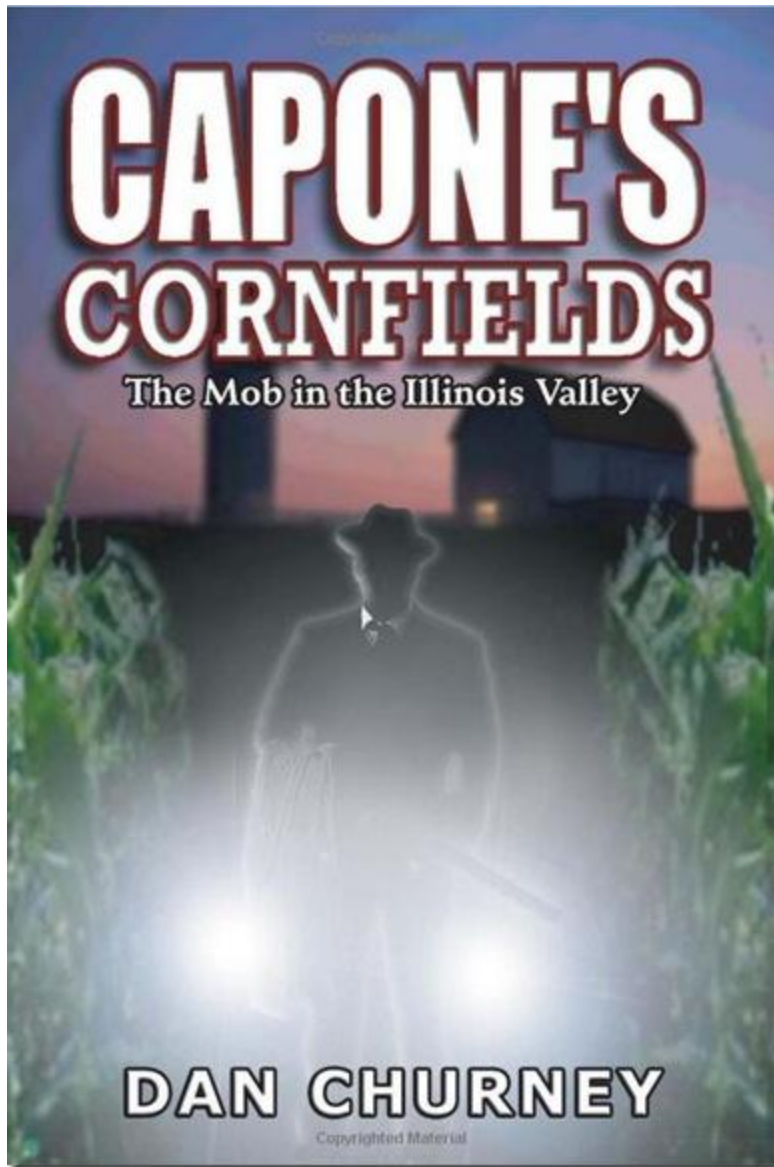
I need this chip. Cough it up if you have a trader.

A couple of books have been published featuring info about La Salle County's gambling past:

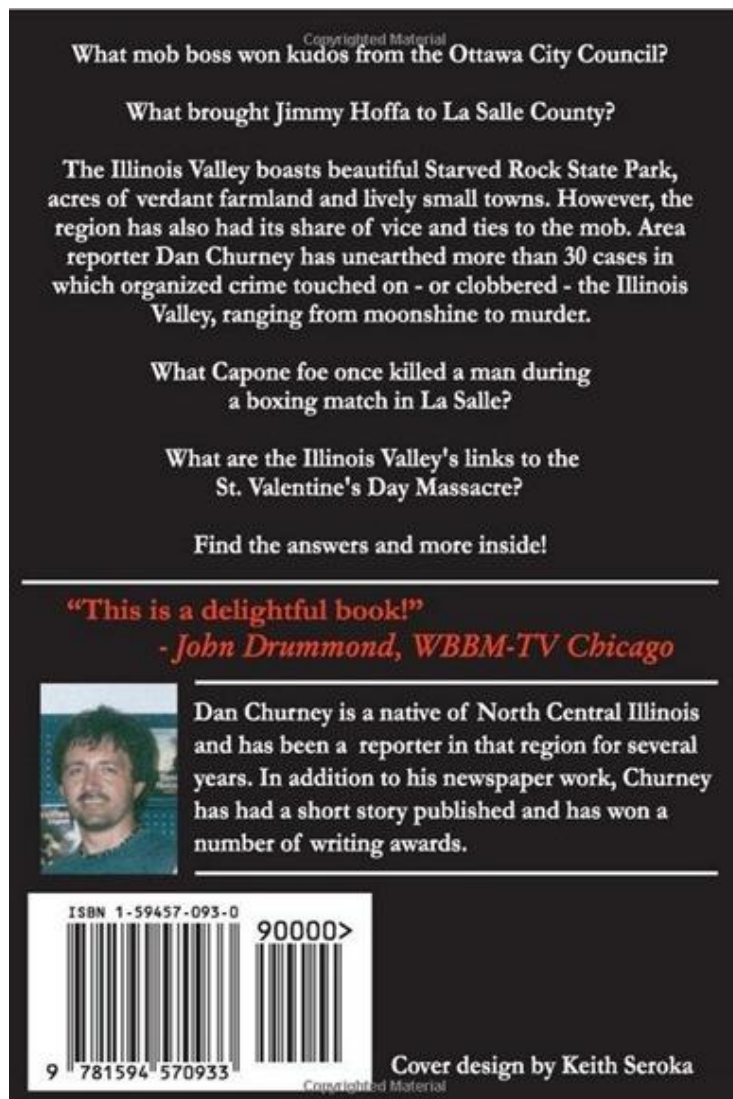
This one from 2003 (<http://www.amazon.com/Capones-Cornfields-Mob-Illinois-Valley/dp/1594570930>)

TI10att2





T110att2

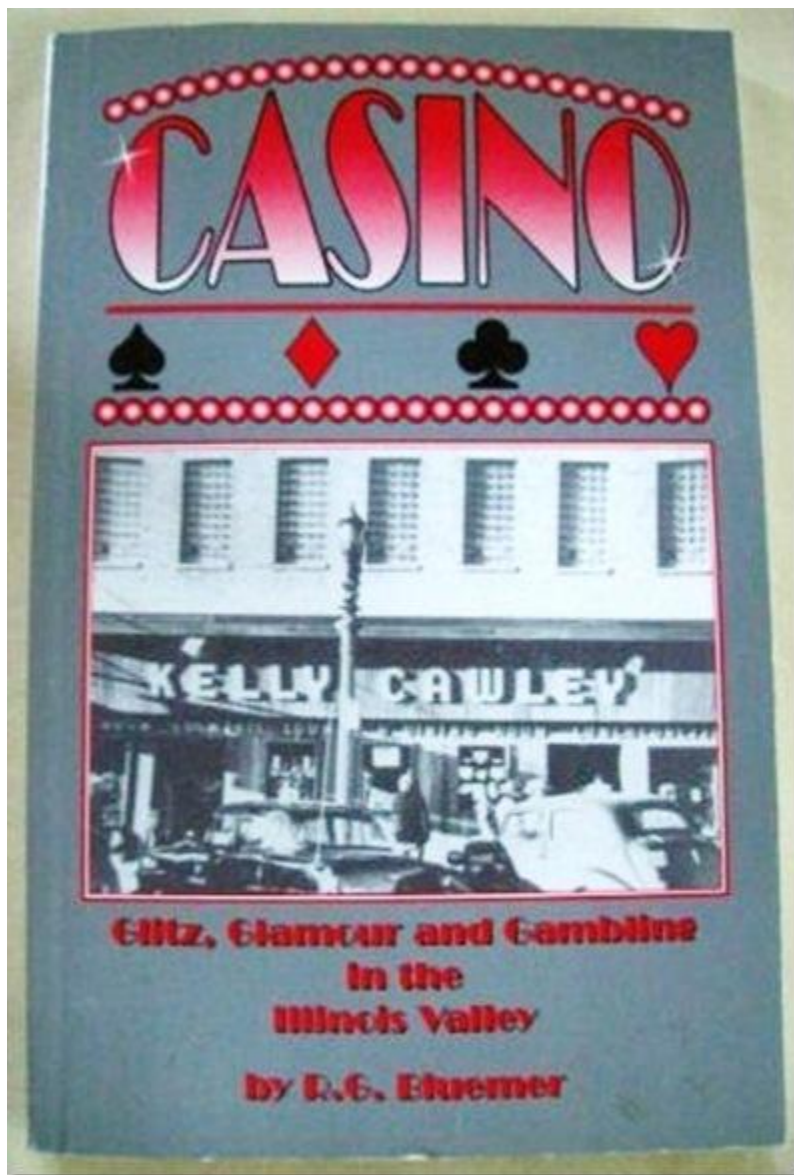


TI11att2

My note: Author asks "What brought Jimmy Hoffa to La Salle County." My answer: " To be buried in that cornfield on the front cover." <g>

This one from 2004 by Ronald Bluemer (the pic on the cover of Kelly & Cawley's which was in downtown La Salle; Tom Cawley was a major figure in La Salle County gambling; testified before Kefauver):

My note: I have a lot of research on LaSalle and Tom Cawley done by a fellow club member a number of years ago. Will post it someday I also have chips from there.



T112att2

Bloomer's contact info:

## Ronald Bluemer

Mailing Address:  
134 Cleveland  
Granville, IL 61326

County: Cook

Phone: 815-339-6947

e-mail: [rbluemer@hotmail.com](mailto:rbluemer@hotmail.com)

T113att2



Bluemer's book discussed in a 2004 article from the La Salle News Tribune:

## Self-publisher writes book on area gambling

NewsTribune (La Salle, IL) - Saturday, June 26, 2004

*Author: Shannon Crawley-Serpette*

---

Self-publisher writes book on area gambling

By Shannon Crawley-Serpette

Putnam-Marshall Bureau Chief

GRANVILLE -- In the late 1940s and 1950s, the Illinois Valley was a mecca for gamblers until the power of the press brought it to a crashing halt. But before the plug was pulled, the activity was so well-known in this area that La Salle was known as "Little Reno" and Spring Valley had the nickname of "Little Las Vegas."

Ron Bluemer of Granville explores this subculture in "Casino: Glitz, Glamour, and Gambling in the Illinois Valley," his latest book on the history of the Illinois Valley.

"People have asked me to write this story for a long time," Bluemer said. "The main focus of the book revolves around the gambling action at La Salle's First Street casinos and Illinois Valley night clubs and lounges in the late 1940s and 1950s with their illegal slot machines, roulette and poker games and bookie operations."

In this 224-page book, Bluemer writes that residents from other area towns, like Peoria and Chicago, came to places such as Kelly and Cawley's, the **Silver Congo**, Club South Bluff, El Mirador, the Rose Bowl and the Diamond Horseshoe for the gambling and entertainment.

"Casino also describes the great entertainers brought to the Illinois Valley by Buzz Verucchi and 'Tinney' Cosgrove. During the big band era of the late 1940s, entertainers such as Duke Ellington, Tommy Dorsey and Louis Armstrong were only a few of the headliners that played at the Les-Buzz ballroom in Spring Valley," Bluemer said. "When popular music switched to 'rock and roll,' Buzz Verucchi brought in some of the best groups and singers in the entire country, including Bill Halley and the Comets and Frankie Avalon."

The book also chronicles the 1950s crusade by the NewsTribune to eliminate gambling from the area.

"The owners of the clubs, especially Tom Cawley, faced not only the wrath of the newspaper but also the national investigation into illegal gambling and connections with organized crime by the Kefauver Crime Commission," Bluemer said. "LaSalle was singled out and thrust into the national spotlight during national television broadcasts.

When the federal investigations failed to halt the illegal activities in La Salle, numerous exposes of illegal gambling by undercover reporters for the NewsTribune focused attention on the lack of law enforcement. Finally, the La Salle state's attorney took action in 1953 to close the casinos and night clubs."

Casino is now available at many Illinois Valley bookstores and other distributors. The book also may be ordered directly from the publisher for \$22.50, which includes shipping and sales tax, by contacting Grand Village Press, 134 Cleveland Circle, Granville IL 61326.

Chip from the Rose Bowl mentioned above:

STAMP MC

SPECIAL MONOGRAM

Name *Frank Newman*

Address *4. The Rose Bowl*

Town *La Grange* State *Ill*

Per *T. Jarecki*

RB

Amount	Color	Initials Both Sides	Style Type	Initials One Side	Other Side	Style Type	Monogram Color	Date Shipped
1000	Green		Script	RB	256	Script	Yellow	2-22-47
303	Red		"	"	"	"	"	6-8-49
THE ROSE BOWL								

T115att2

I need this chip. Cough it up if you have a trader.

La Salle County purchasing disproportionate number of gambling stamps in December 1951:

## LIST 234 MORE PURCHASERS OF GAMING STAMPS

John T. Jarecki, collector of internal revenue, released the names yesterday of 234 additional persons to whom he had issued federal gambling tax stamps. Eighteen other stamps had been mailed but the names of these purchasers will not be available until Monday.

The new sales bring to 427 the total number of stamps issued in the 26 counties of northern Illinois over which Jarecki has jurisdiction. A total of 668 applications were received.

The list released yesterday showed 193 stamps sold in La Salle county, bringing its total to 284, highest in the 26 counties. Cook county added six, bringing its total to 52, and Lake county individuals acquired 23, making the total there 28.

T116att2

My note: 234 Federal gambling tax stamps in 1951. Geeezzzz. I though Newport had a lot of gambling. They could not hold a candle to La Salle County. I wonder how many still existed after the Estes Kefauver Commission got done with La Salle in 1952. Newport's 151 illegals survived Kefauver except for The Lookout House thanks to the deal Moe Dalitz made with them. Newport lived on for another 10 years. Their end came in late 1961 thanks to a Cleveland Brown retired quarterback George Ratterman, an illegal operator named Tito Carinski, and a stripper named April Flowers.

It took a US Senate investigation to bring down Northern Illinois illegal gambling.

But:

Only one very pretty lady brought down The Cleveland Syndicate's 30 year gambling enterprise in Northern Kentucky's "Sin City." <g>



TI17att2