

I have 15 Mason records for BC on hub molds. Different fonts some with circles, ovals, etc. IMO they are the most popular initials on hubs. I wonder how many BC ID's I don't have. *vbg*

Allan Myers one of the original TCR/TGT guys sent me this ID over 10 years ago back when we were paying \$5 each for hub ID's and sharing them. I did not get the chip until 2012 when David Spragg found some. No "Club" name. I filed it under "Home Game" and forgot about it.

"Along comes Ed" and like several other recent "Illegal Of The Day" research articles, he moves it into my "Illegal" club file.

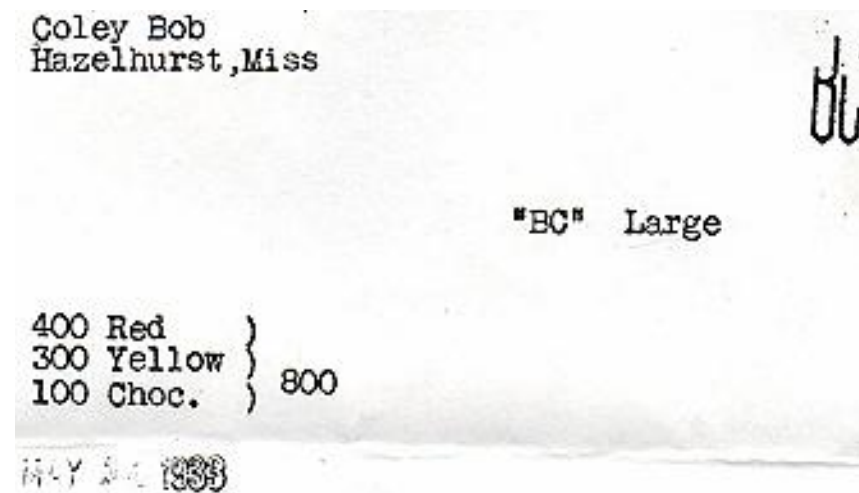
Enter: Ed Hertel

I have in my collection around 100 Mason chips which I have never had the records pulled. I consider these chips to be my rainy day fund which as time permits gives me new material to research. Last week I pulled the below chip out of obscurity and ran a check.



Coley1

Gene had gotten the Mason card years before and shared:

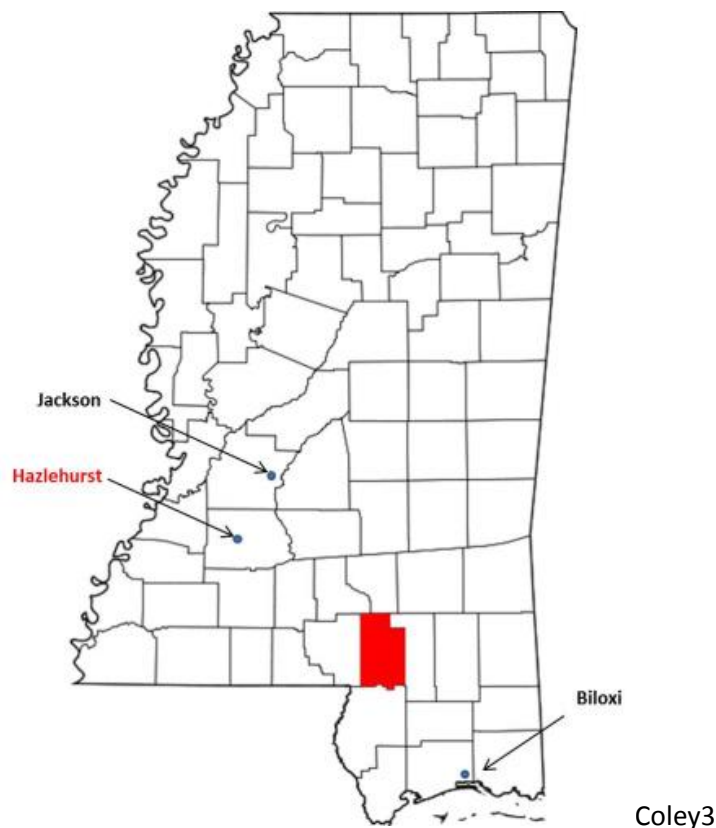


Coley2

It didn't look too promising, but I went into it with the hope that sometimes the most innocuous starts lead to something pretty good.

Mississippi is the state that just keeps on giving, and again it is from an area I knew nothing about. When I think of illegal gambling in Mississippi I think mostly of the coastal cities of Biloxi and Gulfport. I showed in a previous IOTD that Rankin County's Gold Coast was a hot bed of gambling, as well as the northern county of Desoto. Today, we're going to yet another county infamous, at least locally, for their nefarious history.

Let's start out with a little geography...



Although the chips were sent to Hazlehurst (misspelled Hazelhurst in the Mason records), I don't believe they were used there. To find their true home, we have to travel southeast to Lamar County (in red above). It is here along the border of Lamar and Forrest (bordering Lamar on the east) Counties where gambling and illegal whiskey ran wild and Sam Coley ran his business.

Our first look into Coley's illegal gambling activity comes five months after the "BC" chips were ordered. The September 24, 1938 edition of the Hattiesburg American ran the following article:

LAMAR COUNTY PADLOCK RAID REPORTED

District Attorney Sebe Dale, of Columbia, said today that a Lamar county establishment, which he designated as "West End," was closed under a temporary padlock injunction issued by Chancellor Ben Stevens. Mr. Dale said that he requested the injunction order from the chancellor.

District Attorney Dale said that four persons were arrested and held on charges of possession of liquor and having gambling devices. They were listed by Mr. Dale as: Bob Coley, Tom Cannon, Delfoe Cannon and Manson Cannon.

Officers of three counties made the raid, Mr. Dale said. They were listed as: M. N. Holcomb, deputy sheriff of Lamar county; O. W. Saucier, W. L. Howell, and L. P. Smith, Lamar county citizens, who were deputized by Officer Holcomb. Sebe Dale, who was also deputized; Deputy Sheriffs, Barney Brannon and J. R. Cubley, and Constables, French and Cargill, all of Forrest county.

Articles taken in the raid were brought to the office of Sheriff George W. Boone here. They were brought here because the Lamar county courthouse is being remodeled, it was stated.

Coley4

There are a couple important things to take away from this article. First, the name of the club is always referred to as "West End" – always in quotation marks. It's not just here, but for the next year every time it's in the paper (and there will be plenty of times it is) it is always "West End". This designation usually means the club is "referred to" this name. I doubt whether there was ever a sign or a phone book listing for the "West End" but we can be assured most people in the area knew the name.

The second takeaway above is something that is only relevant using hindsight - the name "O. W. Saucier". In the article it says Saucier was one of three citizens who were deputized and took part in the raid. This action, as well as his later testimony in court, would be the catalyst for the West End's ultimate undoing.

Fast forward six months to the early morning hours of March 15, 1939. O.W. Saucier and his wife were startled out of their bed by the sounds of a commotion outside. In an interview that same day, Saucier describes what happened:

"I was awakened about 3:30 o'clock this morning by loud talking and pistol shooting in front of my property. I went to the front porch and called to the people, asking them to move on. They replied they were not on my property and threatened me.

"The voices came from a car parked about 400 feet northeast of my house. They said if I came out and started anything they would take care of me. I told them to wait a minute and I would be there.

"Just as I stepped from the porch after going in to put on my shoes, I turned my flashlight on a car which had started up and was passing my house. About that time I heard two shots from another car which I did not know was there. At the second shot I heard my wife scream and I ran back to her."

Coley5

What O.W. Saucier found was his wife bleeding profusely from a gunshot wound to her hip. He scooped her up and rushed her to the hospital where she was deemed to be in "serious" condition.

Although O.W. Saucier couldn't (or maybe wouldn't) say for sure who was in the car, the police had their suspicions. As a key witness to last year's padlocking of the "West End", the police knew the club owners had a grudge with the Sauciers and suspected that their threats just got out of hand. Officers busted into the small club and rounded up the five people inside, including Bob Coley and Tom Cannon from last year's raid. Found inside were six slot machines, which they confiscated, and 25 cases of illegal whiskey, which police proceeded to smash in the driveway.

With much suspicion, but no evidence, the five club occupants were arrested and charged with assault and battery with the intent to kill. While everyone monitored Mrs. Saucier's condition, the investigation continued with searches of the suspects homes. Although no matching guns were found, another slot machine was discovered in Sam Coley's house with what the newspapers called a "fake jackpot". Apparently the jackpot window showed a nice pile of coins, but closer inspection found that it was filled with slugs with some nickels of top.

When newspapers started hitting the doorsteps that day the honest citizens were not happy with the publicity. The two room structure (one being a bedroom) hidden behind the tall fence was now a local disgrace.

It didn't take long, one day in fact, until someone had had enough. Fire trucks were called to the "West End" roadhouse at 9:30 that night, but by that time the blaze was beyond control. How the fire started would remain a mystery, but it's a pretty good bet that someone wanted to get rid of the blemish while the owners sat helplessly in jail.

It had been a crazy few days in Lamar County. Mrs Saucier had undergone surgery to fix the damage done to her hip and was recovering nicely. The police had continued their investigation, but had not been able to find the gun used in the shooting. Each of the five club operators was eventually released on bond and left to start their own gambling ventures. The once popular "West End" roadhouse, now destroyed, faded into obscurity.

Sam Coley kept a low profile, but never left the area. Fifteen years later, in 1954 his name turned up again when sheriff's deputies led raids on 19 establishments in Forrest County. In the list was Sam Coley who violated the whiskey and gambling laws at a place called the C.Q. Ranch House on Highway 49 South.

My note: This shooting goes against everything the illegal club operators across the country believed. They did not go after cops, sheriff deputies, etc with intent to harm, especially their families. It was too easy to pay them off. Saucier brought heat on the West End before he was deputized but he was still a deputy. Saucier the cops or both more than likely organized the burning of the West End. Everyone that lived close would have been upset about the shooting his wife.

For those interested, here is the article (Hattiesburg American, August 4, 1954) which names some new places from the Lamar/Forrest county area. Where are these chips?

19 Injunction Actions Filed

Sheriff's deputies today began serving papers on 19 Forrest County establishments charged with violating liquor and gambling laws.

Attorney General J. P. Coleman and County Attorney Overton Currie Tuesday filed proceedings for injunctions and contempt of court against persons named as owners and operators.

The petitions for injunctions were filed here in Chancery Court after Coleman and Currie had conferred for several hours.

Next Monday at 9 a. m. is the time set by Chancellor Luther A. Smith for the hearings.

Following is a list of establishments and persons named in the proceedings. For purposes of condensation the word "contempt" will be used to designate those charged with having violated earlier injunctions, or with having conspired with others earlier enjoined. The word "gambling" will be used to designate those charged with operating gambling devices. The word "whiskey" will mark those charged with illegal sale of alcohol.

Clinton Wholesale, Palmer's Crossing; Dewey Clinton, F. E. Clinton, Calvin Sanford, J. E. Boleware, Robert Whelan, Charles A. Sumrall, whiskey.

C. Q. Ranch House, Highway 49 South: J. L. (Red) McCaffrey Sr., Roberta Raymond, J. W. Hodges, George Raymond, Fern Credeur, Slicker Lee, Bob Coley, Kelly Sellers, a female employe named Murphy, a male employe named Tremblay, whiskey and gambling.

Mack's Drive-In, Highway 11 North: F. L. Blackledge, whiskey.

Highway 24 Truck Stop, Highway 24: Grover Prichard, Christine Prichard and Charlie May, whiskey.

Jerry's Drive-In, Highway 11 North: Fern Credeur and H. J. Credeur, whiskey.

Pleasure Inn, Highway 11 South: Clyde Lewis, whiskey.

Toot'n Tell It, Highway 49 South: Russell P. Watkins, whiskey.

Bertaut's Drive-In, Highway 11 South: Mrs. Innocent Bertaut, J. W. Bertaut, John Allen Bertaut, Roy Keller, whiskey.

Duggin's Place, Highway 49 South: H. C. Duggan, Joseph Flynn, whiskey.

Billy's Truck Spot, sometimes known as Hickory Drive, behind the Spot on Highway 11 North: Theron Yawn and Billy Lee, contempt; Grover Prichard, whiskey.

Ballerina Club, Pistol Ridge: A. J. Lee, Ben Lee, Harold Sanford, and a male employe named Johnny, whiskey, gambling and contempt charges against each.

Hill Top Service Station, Highway 49 North: Leonard H. Holifield and Mrs. Leonard H. Holifield, whiskey and contempt charges against each.

P. D. Freeman and Mrs. P. D. Freeman, Highway 49 South: whiskey and contempt.

Red's Grocery, or the Block House, Highway 11 South: Burrie Vance and Grover C. Balloch, contempt; W. A. (Bill) Benton, whiskey.

Five Point, Highway 49 South: John Edwards, James A. Edwards and Mrs. Earline Boykin Edwards, contempt.

White House Grill, Highway 49 North: W. E. Jordan, W. W. Jordan, Walter W. Simms, contempt and gambling; Lawrence B. Turner, whiskey and contempt.

Pines Night Club, Highway 49 North: Charles A. Sumrall, whiskey, contempt and gambling; Walter W.

Simms, Faye Massengale, Pat Massengale and Lucille McKay, contempt and gambling.

El Patio, Highway 49 South: Walter W. Simms and W. W. Jordan, contempt, gambling and whiskey.

Grand View Drive-In, Highway 49 South: Jerry Kendrick, whiskey; Irvin H. Adams and Velma Kendrick, whiskey and contempt.

coley6

My note: I hope TGT guys are reading this. Looks like a lot of new joints for our next edition. *vbg*