



Collecting Gaming Memorabilia



by Sheldon Smith

Since this is my first article for *The Journal* I thought I'd start out by explaining the lively world of collecting casino memorabilia by explaining just what that is. Gaming Memorabilia range from A to Z, although I am not certain there is an item in every letter of the alphabet, I am certain that if there is an item as it relates to gaming—someone out there is collecting it!

I used to say if it had a casino name on it, we collectors collected it, but then I realized there is a whole range of gaming items that have no casino's names attached to them. There has been gaming pieces or devices known to exist as far back

as dice found 6000 years ago! No casinos back then? Nowadays collectors look for Gaming Memorabilia that go back about 200 years give or take a few decades! There are whole sets of chips made by extremely wealthy early 20th century individuals that played poker with them as they crisscrossed the oceans in their private and very large yachts.

Most importantly we who collect these sort of things do so because they represent a particular kind of history. They represent the chances that we took and still take in our daily lives. Subliminally as we throw the dice, pull the lever on a slot machine, turn the cards over we are imagining ourselves in



Monte Carlo, Monaco as they opened the first casino in 1865 or as a Riverboat Gambler in the 1840s on the Mississippi living off their winnings.

No matter what the gambling vehicle was someone, somewhere was taking a chance and to the collector we take a chance right along with them as we search for the last chip, the last pair of dice or the earliest postcard to add to or complete our collection.

As I continue to write these articles I will dwell on particular kinds of Gaming Memorabilia and provide pictures of some of the best of them. For right now

you just need to understand that it is for many, perhaps not all, the search that drives us to collect!

And, it turns out, that in many cases it's not a bad investment either! Although the economy has softened the collectible market and gaming is no exception, there continues to be a growing body of evidence that collecting Gaming Memorabilia provides a rewarding, frustrating and entertaining experience for those that are willing to pursue it.

There are a number of local clubs that specialize in collecting Gaming Memorabilia, see



if there isn't one near you and of course the national club, The Casino Chip & Gaming Token Collectors Club, Inc.—say that three times fast!, holds a huge collectible show every year in June in Las Vegas! Where else would you hold that kind of show? They have a web site with tons of useful information and membership is indeed always welcome! www.ccgctcc.com.

Watch for my next column, and I will devote itself to the beautiful chips that folks collect, from early, early crest & seal chips to today's latest hot stamp casino chip! Stay tuned!



Sheldon Smith is the Vice-President of the Casino Chip & Gaming Token Collectors Club, Inc. and is the club's Publicity Director. He and his wife Christine specialize in collecting Nevada Casino's \$1 chips. They currently have over 1400 of them!

