

biggest single industry in the country, in terms of both revenues generated and the number of customers/participants.

This presentation examined extant social and economic factors during the 1920's and 1930's, which explain in part the infiltration of illegal gambling into college basketball. Such an analysis revealed that by the mid-1930's, the playing of games in civic arenas, the creation of national tournaments, and the game's popularity were related to the rise of illegal gambling in the sport, which was ignored, not understood, and remained unchecked by college and law enforcement officials until the early 1950's.

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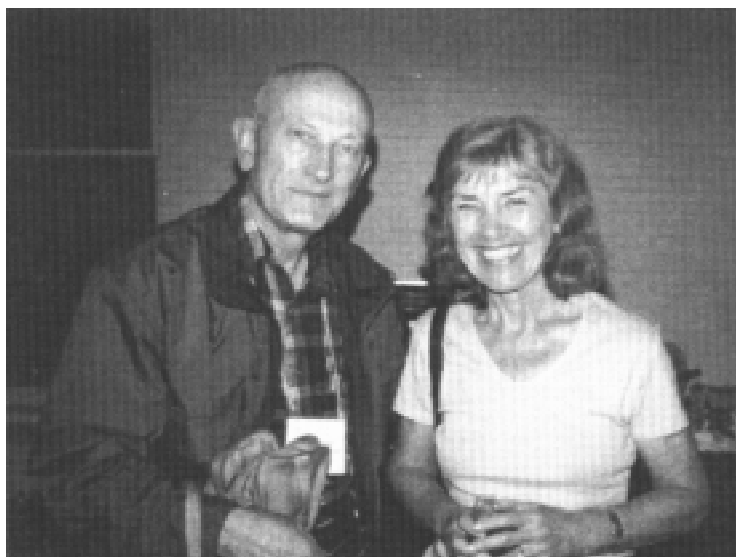
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**The Chicago Bookie Bill of 1935**

This project examines a unique political moment in sport history, when Chicago tried to legalize off-track bookmaking. Chicago was one of the major centers of gambling during the Depression, where it greased the wheels of local politics. There were perhaps 7,500 gambling places in the city. The most popular betting systems were the policy wheel and bookmaking on the races. On May 28, 1935, Mayor Ed Kelly announced that his administration was backing legislation to permit the licensing of handbooks to raise needed revenue and to stop wasting the police's time harassing bookmakers. This had never been attempted in the United States. A bill was introduced in the state House of Representatives to permit handbooks in all cities. Kelly expected it would provide large revenue for the city, "permit efficient control of handbooks, and provide relief for taxpayers." There were reportedly some 1,500 handbooks in Chicago. The first bill sent to the state legislature was badly defeated, but then a revised bill that applied only to Chicago was approved by the state legislature. It was estimated that if the license fee was set at \$2,500 for each book, the city would make from \$3.75 million to \$6.25 million.

Yet, despite the support of the Kelly-Nash Democratic machine, Democratic Governor Henry Homer, a former judge vetoed the bill, even though Attorney General Kerner ruled it might be legal. Homer found the proposal revolutionary and refused to approve it. Kelly retaliated, and decided to drop Homer. Another Democrat was slated for the next election, but Homer won

the party nomination despite the machine's opposition, and went on to be reelected. The paper examines the reasons for the creation of the bill, why it passed, why Homer vetoed the bill, and the machine's response to its defeat. The paper is based on such secondary sources as the biographies of Kelly and Homer, and contemporary newspapers, principally the Chicago Tribune.

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NASSH Photographer Harold Ray and Patricia Vertinsky



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