

A while back I bought my first upright slot machine. It's a Caille PUCK built between 1898 and 1901. I bought the machine from Larry DeBaugh and I believe he bought it at the October 2017 Morphy's auction. Looking at Morphy's past auction catalogs, I found the pictures of my machine they used in their catalog.

The other day, I got Dick Bueschel's 1978 book "AN ILLUSTRATED PRICE GUIDE TO THE 100 MOST COLLECTABLE SLOT MACHINES" out and reread what he had to say about the Caille Puck. I started looking closer at the picture he used and noticed something. It could be a picture of MY Puck! Here's a picture of my Puck, before I restored it, and the picture Dick used in his book.



Here are the things I noticed:

1. The large discoloration in the finish on the bottom panel of the cabinet just above the legs.
2. The small dark spot just above and to the left of the discoloration on the cabinet.
3. The unique wheel. My Puck had what appeared to be a hand painted wheel with the word PUCK instead of the Puck figure on the two light blue positions. On Dick's photo, look just to the right of the 12 o'clock position and also the opposite side of the wheel and you can see the word PUCK instead of the Puck figure.
4. The grain pattern across the top of the cabinet.
5. The coin head paint on the blue "Puck 40" coin slot and also the dark shade of the nickel finish. On my Puck, all of the nickel had been painted gold. In Dick's picture, notice the slight difference between the wheel hub (nickel finish) and the rest of the metal (gold paint).
6. The blemish on the front left leg. (barely visible in Dick's photo at bottom edge.)





I felt this machine had too much “wrong” with it to leave it unrestored. Now, it looks a lot better and more correct to original.

1. Wheel art was hand painted and peeling off.
2. Most of the wood joints in the Cabinet were loose and the cabinet was starting to lean.
3. Most of the nickel plating was gone and had surface rust under gold paint.
4. Black finish on coin head almost gone.

# Caille PUCK Floor Machine

Produced between 1898 and 1901

In the slot machine business it was always impossible to keep a good idea to yourself. It wasn't long after the Mills OWL began to run away with most of the sales in the industry that a company half a mile away began to crank out a similar machine with a 6-way coin head. The first PUCK was made by The Illinois Machine Company at 147 Fifth Avenue, (now it's called Wabash Avenue) in Chicago early in 1898. Adolph Caille and Jacob Schiemer from Saginaw, Mi., already in the store and saloon fixtures business, formed the Caille-Schiemer Company in Detroit to make the machine and take over a big piece of the booming gambling machine business.

Where the OWL had a crank on front, the PUCK had a heavy push-down wooden arm. Instead of a 5-way coin head, with a top payout of a dollar, the PUCK could take up to six coins with double the top payout. The result was instant success, and led to the same form of flattery Mills' experienced; everybody else started making PUCKS.

It was on July 15, 1898 that Caille-Schiemer started using the name PUCK on their machines, even getting a registered trademark for the name and logo style. If you want to frame one on the wall behind your machine look up trademark 32,567 issued on March 7, 1899\_ The machine name was taken from a popular humor magazine called *PUCK WEEKLY* to pick up on an already well-known name, and to suggest that the machine was fun to play.

It's fairly easy to tell the early PUCK machines apart. The Illinois Machine Company model has the lettering "IMCO" on its front casting while the Caille-Schiemer version has "C-S" all-over it, inside and out. There are quite a number of surviving early PUCKS around, with the Caille-Schiemer model outnumbering the Illinois Machine Company version by about four-to-one. They face the same problems the OWLS do; the coin heads are often cracked or missing. If the head is cracked, the problem can be solved, but it takes a careful welding job. Missing heads are a bigger problem as there's not enough to go around. Sometimes a correct head will cost almost half as much as a machine, but if you want a complete machine it's worth the money, otherwise you're stuck with an "Incomplete". Someday, someone will make a good business out of recast and properly machined reproduction coin heads. As of now, it hasn't been done, at least not in volume.

The PUCK is the oldest form of six-slot floor machine made. It was also the first popular floor machine to sport a music box in its PUCK MUSICAL CABINET model of 1899.



## PRICE GUIDE

Condition	Price Range			
Incomplete	\$	2,000	to	\$ 2,500
Rough	\$	2,500	to	\$ 3,500
Fair	\$	3,500	to	\$ 4,500
Good	\$	5,000	to	\$ 6,000
Excellent	\$	6,000	to	\$ 7,000
Restored	\$	7,500	to	\$ 9,000

I'd like to learn more about this machine.

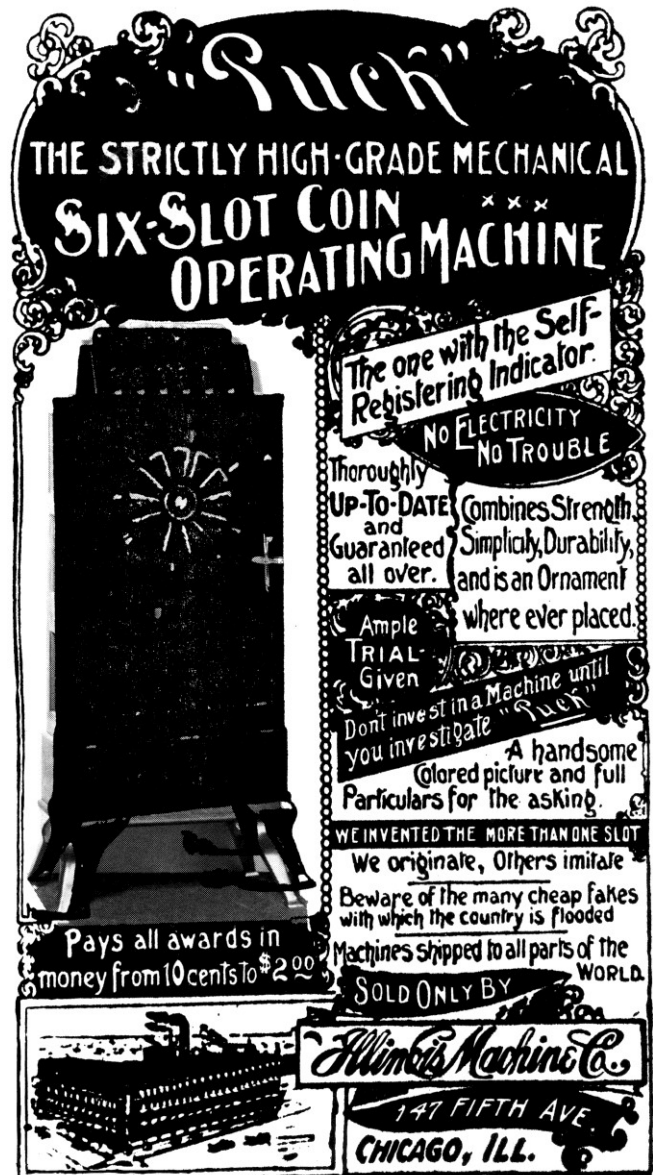
If Dick had this picture of my machine way back in 1978, it's probably safe to say this machine has been in someone's collection since then. Does anyone know who might have had this machine? I asked Morphy's to contact the person that put the machine in the auction and to have them contact me. No one got back with me.

I also want to confirm who actually made this machine. I'm starting to doubt this is a Caille machine. I've had other Caille machines from around the 1930's and one thing you notice is that they were very good at putting their mark just about everywhere inside their machines. The most common mark was CB "Caille Brothers" and on earlier machines it might have been CS "Caille-Schiemer". This machine doesn't have any marks at all. I've had the mech completely apart and didn't see a single mark. I did see a few parts with part numbers stamped in them, but that's it. The only thing, other than the occasional part number, is a serial number 658 painted on the inside of the cabinet.

So now, I'm thinking this may be an even earlier machine, before Caille made them. The first company to make the PUCK was Illinois Machine Company, "IMCO". Could this be an IMCO machine? Again, I have no marks to tell me.

If any of you readers know anything about this machine, would you please contact me?

Rick.Akers1@gmail.com



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