Buckley CRISS CROSS Bell Machine

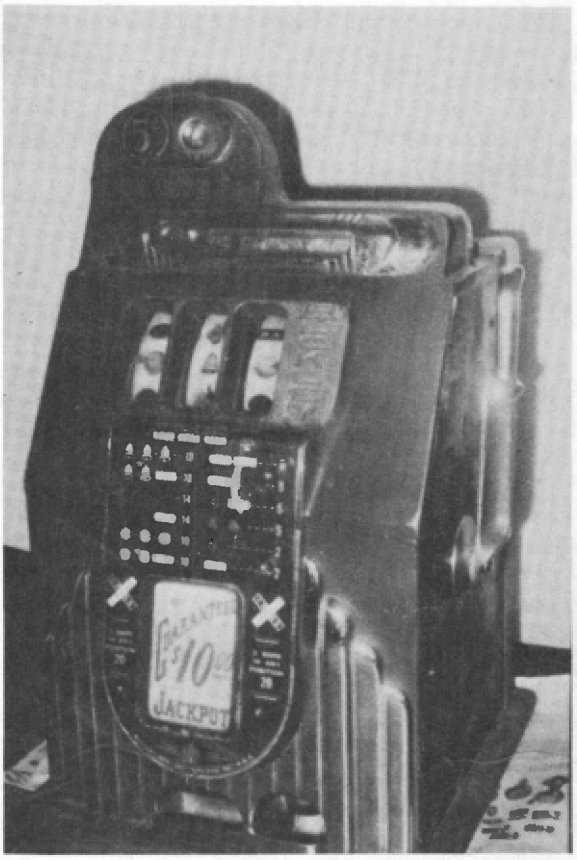
Produced between 1948 and 1955

If the Buckley CRISS CROSS has a major distinction it is that of being the preeminent "junk" machine of the late forties and most of the fifties. That's not a put down. Buckley Bells are the last classic style escalator machines made. They look like Mills pre-war or the initial post-war Escalator Bells, yet they aren't. Well, not completely. Buckley, a pre-war counter game and console producer, got into the big Bell business during the war as a revamper. With the war ending and finally over Buckley bought up all the old Mills Bells they could, cast new fronts and changed the reels. They came back on the market as "Diamond Fronts", "Cherry Fronts" -- a copy of the 1946 Mills BLACK CHERRY -- and pseudo-GOLDEN FALLS machines. Buckley was big for making fronts in cast iron, later aluminum, and most of the revamps around are Buckleys.

One of the first post-war Buckley revamps was called BARS, soon CRISS-CROSS BARS, with a tic-tac-toe payout. It caught on fast, particularly in Nevada and the western states. In a few short years Buckley chewed up all the old Mills pre-war Bells on the open market, and was soon converting post-war machines as Buckley CRISS CROSS BELLE, plain CRISS CROSS and the EXTRA AWARD CRISS CROSS BELLE. By this time Buckley had developed their own unique cabinet design in fact, two or three of them. The actual machine serials were the old Mills numbers, with the CRISS CROSS line working in the 500,000 to 520,000 range.

When even these ran out Buckley had no alternative but to make their CRISS CROSS machines from scratch. So they copied the already adopted Mills Bell mechanism and escalator -- improving it with the use of lighter aircraft type metals -- and put the mechanism into a Mills-type Escalator Bell cabinet that has a large B–U–C–K–L–E–Y name on it. When most manufacturers stopped production with the passage of the Johnson Act in January, 1951, Buckley just kept right on going, selling to a market that they had made virtually their own: Nevada. It's hard to say where the actual made-by-Buckley serials started, but they must have done quite well. A typical Buckley-made CRISS CROSS serial is 89,740.

For pure playing fun it's hard to beat a liberal payout Buckley CRISS CROSS, whether aesthetic collectors call them "junk" or not.



PRICE GUIDE

Condition	Price Range		
Incomplete	$ 300	to	$ 600
Rough	$ 600	to	$ 700
Fair	$ 700	to	$ 850
Good	$ 850	to	$ 1,100
Excellent	$ 1,100	to	$ 1,300
Restored	$ 1,300	to	$ 1,700