MAY 1982
$2.50

Loose Change™



The Sega Enterprises MINI-SEGA is the culmination of an evolutionary process that started in the late 1930s with the Mills VEST POCKET slot machine.

Since the MINI-SEGA's beginning started long before Sega, some background on the Mills VEST POCKET seems fitting.

Slot machine operators of the 1930s demanded a small, lightweight, reliable and easy-to-hide slot machine which had low cost.

"Put the bell into a package no larger than a countertop napkin holder," said Mills. "Forget all about that knockout appearance we have demanded repeatedly for years on the Silents. Design this baby bell *not to be seen*... what we are talking about is a shoebox of design. Play will come to the machine as the word gets around among players. They'll know it's there soon enough, and no one else will even notice it."

It was a fantastic idea, or course, and one that refuted precepts on which previous bells had carefully relied in their development. The new Mills VEST POCKET was introduced in 1938 and was priced at only $49.50—with a money-back free trial It was eight inches long, seven inches wide, eight inches tall and weighed a mere fifteen pounds. With a cashbox which held $45—according to the advertising—in nickels, it was conceivable that the new little machine could pay for itself in a week or less.

The Mills VEST POCKET had a metal flap which covered the reel window. When it was played, the flap was opened and displayed the award card as well as the three tiny reels. The payouts were standard 3/5/10/14/18-payouts for cherries, oranges, plums and bells; three bars payed 20-coins. No mention of a jackpot is made on the award card of the standard M-420 VEST POCKET.

Twelve separately-designated models were offered by Mills:

Model 420: *5¢ Fruit Reels, Gold and Blue Midget Bell.* This was the basic nickel machine with coin slide action. Payout was 3/5. The machine could be furnished with a locking payout cover on special order.

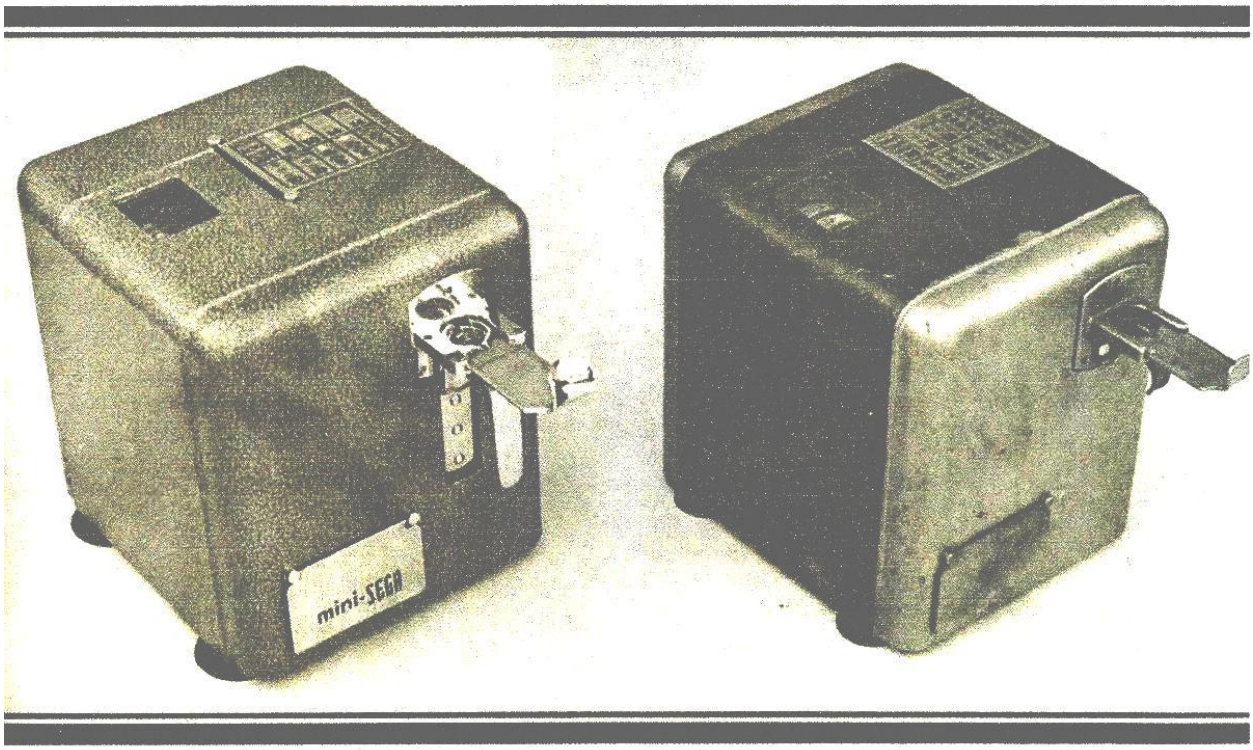
Model 420-C: *5¢ Fruit Reels, Chrome Midget Bell.* This model was the same as the Model 420 except for the chrome-finished case.

Model 421: *5¢ Cigarette Reels, Gold and Blue Midget Bell.* This model was the same as the Model 420 except it was equipped with cigarette reel strips and award plate.

Model 421-C: *5¢ Cigarette Reels, Chrome Midget Bell.* This model was the same as the Model 420 except it was equipped with cigarette reel strips and award plate and chrome-finished case.

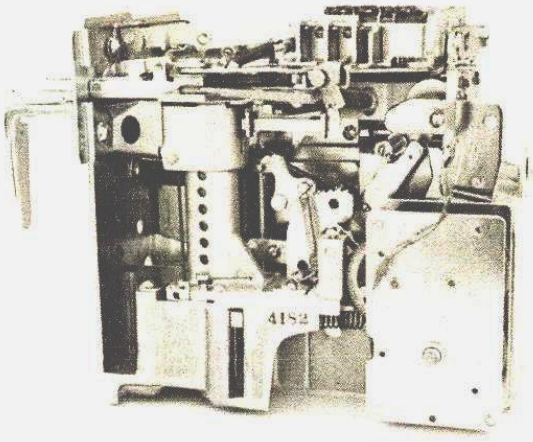
Model 422: *5¢ Fruit Reels, Jackpot, Gold and Blue Midget Bell.* This model was the same as the Model 420 except it was equipped with a 20-Jackpot award plate and jackpot register.

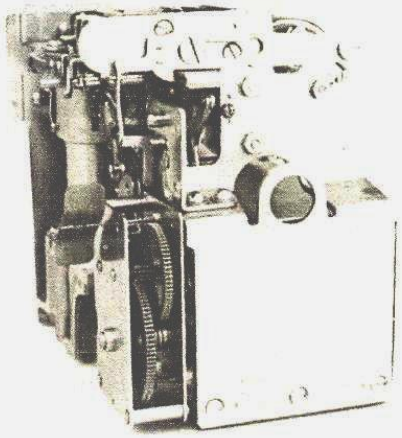
Model 422-C: *5¢ Fruit Reels, Jackpot, Gold and Blue Midget Bell.* This model was the same as the Model 420 except it was equipped with 20-Jackpot award plate, jackpot register and chrome-



Collector's Shoebox

by Joel Gilgoff and Dan Mead





finished case.

Model 423: *1¢ Fruit Reels, Jackpot, Gold and Blue Midget Bell.* This was the basic penny machine with coin slide action, special award plate and jackpot register. Payout was 3-5. The machine could be furnished with a locking payout cover on special order.

Model 423-C: *1¢ Fruit Reels, Jackpot, Chrome Midget Bell.* This model was the same as the Model 423 except for the chrome-finished case.

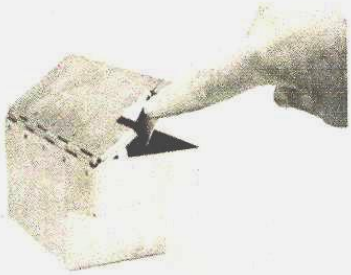
Model 424: *1¢ Cigarette Reels, Jackpot, Gold and Blue Midget Bell.* This model was the same as the Model 423 except it was equipped with cigarette reel strips and award plate.

Model 424-C: *1¢ Cigarette Reels, Jackpot, Chrome Midget Bell.* This model was the same as the Model 423 except it was equipped with cigarette reel strips and chrome-finished case.

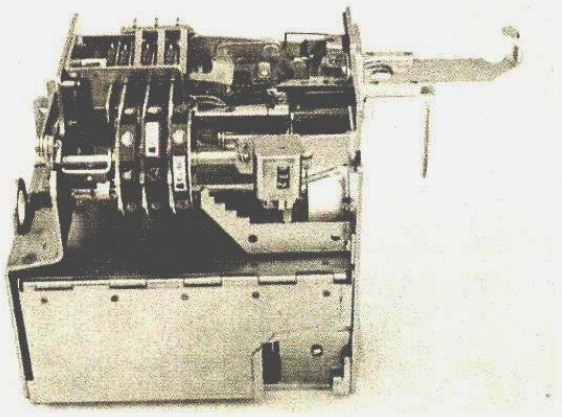
Model 425: *1¢ Cigarette Reels, Jackpot, Gold and Blue Midget Bell.* This model was the same as the Model 420 except it was equipped with cigarette reel strips, 20+Jackpot award plate and jackpot register.

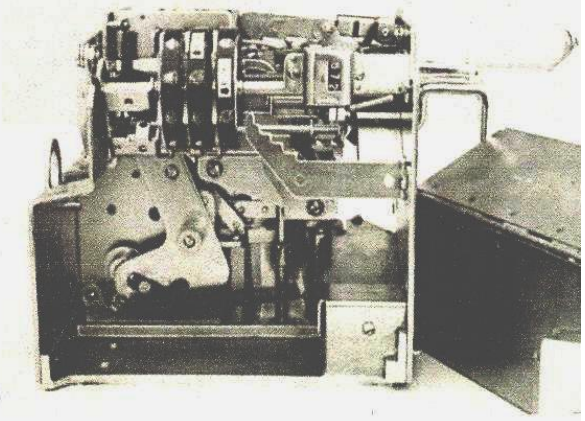
Model 425-C: *1¢ Cigarette Reels, Jackpot, Chrome Midget Bell.* This model was the same as the Model 420 except it was equipped with cigarette reel strips, 20+Jackpot award plate, jackpot register and chrome-finished case.

A number of theories have been advanced concerning Sega's entry into the manufacture of the Mills VEST POCKET under the MINI-SEGA name. John W. Caler, a noted slot machine historian, has put the pieces together as follows: A certain slot machine mechanic, who was so well regarded by the Mills family that he was actually part of the company (his name cannot be revealed), was sent to Japan to help in the manufacture of Mills products for worldwide distribution by Sega, an acronym for Service Equipment Games Associates. Sega, however, wished to begin the manufacture of machines of their own "design." These were the infamous days of the Japanese copycats—after World War II—when they copied everything from everywhere. With the mechanic's help, they remanufactured the Mills VEST POCKET. The MINI-SEGA, its proper



Can you believe this cashbox holds $45 in nickels? It does, but only if they fall in place just right. Otherwise they backup and jam the works.





name, was identical to the VEST POCKET except for the stronger coin-entry handle.

John feels that between 25,000 and 50,000 of the MINI-SEGAS were eventually manufactured from 1959 into the early 1970s. But he feels that few have actually survived. "The first ones were made of extremely inferior materials," John said, "whatever the war-torn country could salvage."

Very few of the MINI-SEGAs are still in existance. "Many were simply thrown on the floor to break open the case," John explained, with a shrug of his shoulders. "It was the easiest way for thieves and vandals to open them up for the money inside."

TABLE I

Computerized Statistical Analysis

MANUFACTURER Mills Novelty Company
MACHINE NAME Vest Pocket Bell M/420
DENOMINATION 5 Cents SERIAL NO. 6
NO. STOPS/REEL 10 NO. REELS 3
TOTAL POSSIBLE COMBINATIONS 1000
SUBMITTED BY Doug Larlson and Loren Conaway

REEL STRIP IDENTIFICATION	REEL-1 CC-459-1-A	REEL-2 CC-459-2-B	REEL-3 CC-459-3	REEL-4
SYMBOL 1	Cherry	Cherry	Plum	
SYMBOL 2	Orange	Lemon	Lemon	
SYMBOL 3	Cherry	Cherry	Orange	
SYMBOL 4	Plum	Lemon	Plum	
SYMBOL 5	Cherry	Plum	Bar	
SYMBOL 6	Bar	Cherry	Lemon	
SYMBOL 7	Orange	Bar	Plum	
SYMBOL 8	Cherry	Orange	Bell	
SYMBOL 9	Plum	Lemon	Lemon	
SYMBOL 10	Bell	Bell	Orange	

********** SYMBOL INVENTORY TABLE **********			
Total Lemons	0	2	3
Total Cherries	4	3	0
Total Oranges	2	1	2
Total Plums	2	1	3
Total Bells	1	1	1
Total Bars	1	1	1
Total Other	0	0	0
GRAND TOTALS	10	10	10

**********PAYOUT COMPUTATION CHART**********

AWARD CARD	PAYOUT	NUMBER OF WAYS	COINS PAID	COINS PAID PER SYMBOL	PERCENT PAY PER SYMBOL
Spec-Spec-Spec	0	0	0	Jackpots	Jackpots
Bar-Bar-Bar	20	1	20	20	2.00
Bell-Bell-Bell	18	1	18	Bells	Bells
Bell-Bell-Bar	18	1	18	36	3.60
Plum-Plum-Plum	14	6	84	Plums	Plums
Plum-Plum-Bar	14	2	28	112	11.20
Oran-Oran-Oran	10	4	40	Oranges	Oranges
Oran-Oran-Bar	10	2	20	60	6.00
Cher-Cher-Cher	0	0	0	Cherries	Cherries
Cher-Cher-Any	3	72	216	456	45.60
Cher-Cher-Lemn	5	36	180		
Cher-Cher-Bell	5	12	60		
Cher-Any-Any	0	168	0		
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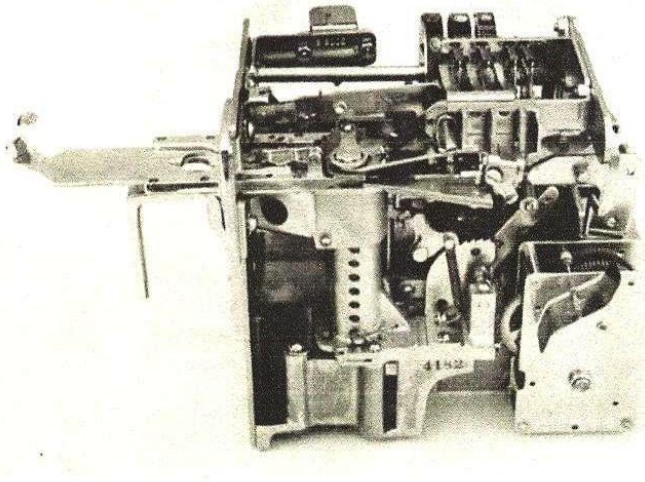
TOTAL COINS PAID			684	684	-------
TOTAL PERCENTAGE PAYOUT			68.40		68.40

Today Sega is owned by Gulf-Western.

The fruit reel strips on the Mills VEST Pocket, labeled CC-459-1-A, CC-459-2-B and CC-459-3 for the first, second and thirds reels respectively, were the same combinations used by Sega on the MINI-SEGA. The complete payout statistics for these strips are shown in Table I, a complete computer analysis of the VEST POCKET—and MINI-SEGA—as submitted recently by two *Loose Change* readers. It is interesting to note that even though three bars (jackpots) pays 20 coins, only 2% of the pays are given to bars, and a whopping 45.60% are from cherries. The total payout to the player is 68.40%. This would, of course, be higher if an operator paid an additional amount for three bars (6⅔% more for a standard $7.50 jackpot on a nickel machine). A simple lemon-modification of the second reel (subject matter for a planned future article) can yield a more-fun-to-play 91.60% payout.



About a year ago, G.A.M.E.S., of Van Nuys, California, advertised MINI-SEGA machines in *Loose Change* magazine at $695.00 each. These were brand new machines on penny play, and were the last of the MINI-SEGAs built by Sega.

The G.A.M.E.S.' MINI-SEGA stash was discovered in a London warehouse where they had been stored for many years. The machines were new in factory sealed cartons, complete with the original locks and keys. G.A.M.E.S. bought the lot—40 machines—and they were shipped to Van Nuys, California where G.A.M.E.S. mechanics adjusted, lubricated and tested each one. Only three remain unsold.

The MINI-SEGA is the smallest, most recent cash-payout gambling device to be manufactured in production quantities. They are, in fact, an extension of the Mills Novelty Company, and they certainly deserve a place in any collection. ■

It is interesting that the articles written by both Dick Bueschel and Joel Gilgorf never mentioned the word “Plus’ in there articles, in fact Joel covered the Mills Vest Pocket in more depth than did Bueschel,

In Joel’s article he mentioned that he bought the last 40 brand new Mini Sega’s from a London Warehouse, he bought those 40 machines from me, I bought them from Marty Bromley along with 60 brand new Sega Mad Money and Bonanza models, they had been stored in a warehouse in Amsterdam, in the Netherlands for more than 20 years, that was in 1981. Joel Gilgorf’s G.A.M.E.S company was my distributor in Los Angeles in those days, I sold the 60 Sega model’s to my ex partner Bob Durose who had a store in San Gabriel at the time.

Enjoy the articles.

Freddy Bailey