

The Caille Silver Cup

By Rick Crandall © 2015

THE COIN-OP GAMBLING-MACHINE INDUSTRY got started by an 1891 Sittman and Pitt invention in Brooklyn, NY which was a gaming machine based on Poker. It contained five drums with 50 cards and it rode the wave of popularity of Poker, especially in New York. It is often described as the precursor to the modern slot machine. However, these machines had no direct-payout mechanism, so establishments would offer a patron a free beer or cigar for a winning hand which would be defined by the proprietor and changed from time-to-time. It was a trade stimulator.

Charles Fey

Then a few years later in 1895, in San Francisco, Charles Fey invented what today we would call the “game changer.” Fey solved the problem of making an automatic pay-out game-of-chance. As the story goes, Fey was watching a Ferris wheel at a carnival and it gave him the idea of making a machine with reels. He found that a mechanism computing payouts based on a Poker hand and five reels would be too complicated. He felt that three reels gave the ideal percentage combination, so the 3-reeler was born.

This was the **Liberty Bell** that is undisputedly the genesis of the massive gaming-machine industry that still sports electronic versions of spinning reels today.

Charles Fey never did believe in patents. His strategy was to be always a jump ahead of the field rather than relying on patent protection. Even if he had patents, California’s anti-gambling laws would have made enforcement a problem. His experience with that arose when a former acquaintance, Gustav Schultze, was awarded a patent in 1893 for his Horseshoe slot machine which he then attempted to use aggressively against others including Fey in an 1897 patent-infringement lawsuit. In the end the court ruled against Schultz by arguing that his patented slot machines had gambling as their purpose which is illegal and thus unworthy of protection!



Gustave Schultze at his storefront featuring his early machines.

Photo courtesy of Roger Kislingbury from his [American Saloons, Pre-Prohibition Photographs](http://historicalsaloophotographs.com/) See: <http://historicalsaloophotographs.com/>

According to Fey's son, Edmund, a San-Francisco saloon was burglarized one night in 1905 and just two items were taken, a bartender's apron and a Liberty Bell. Two years later a copy of the Liberty Bell, including using the name, appeared in Chicago, manufactured and sold by the Mills Novelty Company, and the copying didn't stop with Mills.

Another theory is that it wasn't about a theft, rather that Fey actually went into business with the Mills Novelty Company to achieve a jump on the field using Mills' high-volume assembly-line manufacturing. Whichever is right, copying the Liberty Bell became a clarion call for several manufacturers, and the 3-reel "one arm bandit" quickly became commoditized.

This was occurring in the period 1907 – 1910. One can imagine that once seeing the 3-reel Liberty Bell and follow-on Operator Bell becoming so prevalent, that Charles Fey, "the Edison of slot machines," ⁽¹⁾ would kick into action and create a new design.

Fey Silver Cup

So what did he do? Well, according to Fey himself, *"Take a coin chute for the people to put their money in, and a cash box for the money to go into and put something in-between that will interest the people, and you've invented a new slot machine."*

And that's just what he did – a machine with two dials instead of 3-reels! He made them color wheels spinning in opposite directions to create a sense of anticipation and interest. Furthermore he really mixed it up – he put the five-coin head, only found on big floor-model slot machines, onto a compact table-model machine. The Silver Cup was born.



Fey Silver Cup

Caille Brothers, Co. Follows Fey with its Own Silver Cup

By 1910 or so, the Fey Silver Cup must have caught the attention of the Caille brothers. By 1911 they had developed an attractive and nearly identical-looking version of the Silver Cup with decorative dial graphics and using similar principles of operation. Some current-day collectors think of Caille as a copy-cat manufacturer, albeit with a great sense of engineering quality and esthetic-design attractiveness. Caille had indeed followed Fey not only with the Silver Cup but also earlier with its version of a Liberty Bell 3-reeler, among some others.

However, research into the two brothers and the Caille company paints a different picture – one of innovation, cosmetic-design excellence, mechanical ingenuity and patents. First let's take a look at the Cailles as individuals and then the company they founded and ran to great success.

(1) As proclaimed by his peers at the 1937 convention of the National Association of Coin-Op Machine Mfrs.

The Caille Brothers

Excerpted from: *The Book of Detroiters* Edited by Albert Nelson Marquis 1908

Adolph A. Caille is the elder brother. He was born in Detroit on April 2, 1863. His father, Joseph Caille, was an immigrant from one of the French-speaking cantons of Switzerland. Joseph was a cabinetmaker by trade in Switzerland. He immigrated to the U.S. and settled in Detroit in 1831. There he re-established himself initially as a furniture and cabinet-maker and eventually as a retail furniture-store owner. Adolph was educated to the public-school level in Detroit. As a youth he learned the wood-working trade under the direction of his father and began with making furniture. He became a skilled mechanic and woodworker. His role in Caille Brothers Co. was as vice president, co-owner and general supervisor of the manufacturing department.

Auguste Arthur Caille, was born on April 1, 1867 in Detroit. When A. Arthur was ten, the family moved from Detroit to Saginaw, Michigan. There he completed his education in public school. In 1883, he apprenticed as a woodworker under the tutelage of his father. He too became a skilled and inventive mechanic. His first invention was a cash-carrier system, which he patented, for use in mercantile establishments. His role in Caille Brothers Co. was as President, co-owner and Treasurer.

A third sibling, sister Louise Caille, was married to Robert Yates, an operator of Caille machines.

Caille Brothers Company

Excerpted from *History and Biography, the City of Detroit and Wayne County* by Henry Taylor Co., Chicago, 1909:

The Caille Brothers Company is one of the most notable industrial enterprises of Detroit which has given the city a place among the leading manufacturing centers of the world [remember this is largely before the development of the auto industry]. The Company is one of the largest manufacturers of coin-slot apparatus in the world employing 500 mechanics at its apex.

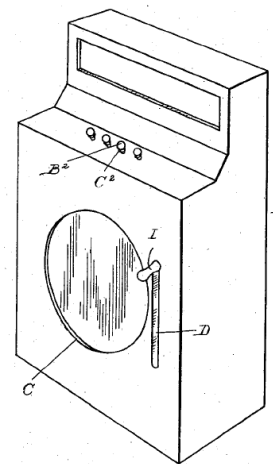
The Caille Brothers Company was incorporated in Michigan in 1901 with a capital stock of \$300,000. Coin-controlling machines of fully 80 different types are manufactured (in 1909). The annual output of the plant has now reached the enormous average of 12,000 machines, all of which are fully protected by patents issued to the Caille brothers. [Well, they did successfully patent some of their devices, but this statement is an exaggeration since many payout games-of-chance were not patentable and some were copied from Fey designs]

Caille Patent for a Game of Chance?

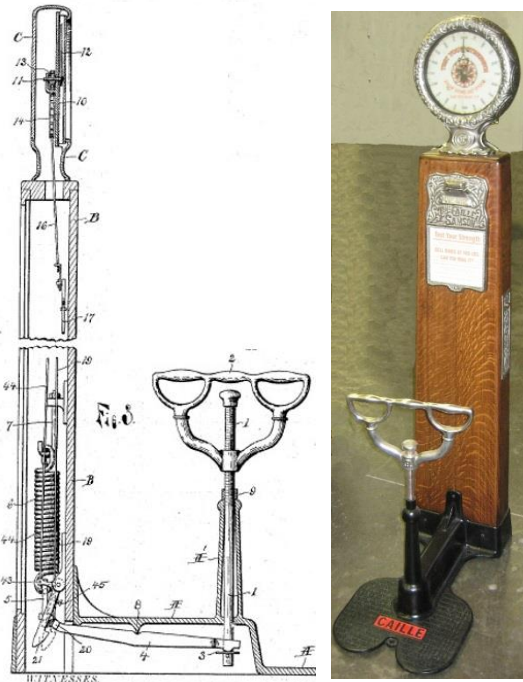
Caille actually had a patent for a game of chance way back in 1901, but with no automatic payout. Apropos of the Silver Cup – it did have a right-side lever and a dial but this device worked differently. Instead of selecting a color by dropping a coin in a coin-head, you pushed on one of the 4 buttons on top – then you pushed down on the lever handle, the dial spun and if it landed on your selection a tab would pop up in the window on top (like a cash register) indicating your winnings. Presumably you would collect whatever you won from the proprietor. No known examples of this device exist to my knowledge.

Game of Chance #741,528: A machine for playing games of chance having a member in the form of a wheel or disk, a plurality of projectable tablets and a series of tablet-selecting devices so that upon the selection of one of the tablets and the rotating of the wheel the selected tablet may or may not be projected according to the position the wheel assumes when brought to rest.

GAME.
APPLICATION FILED JUNE 10, 1902.

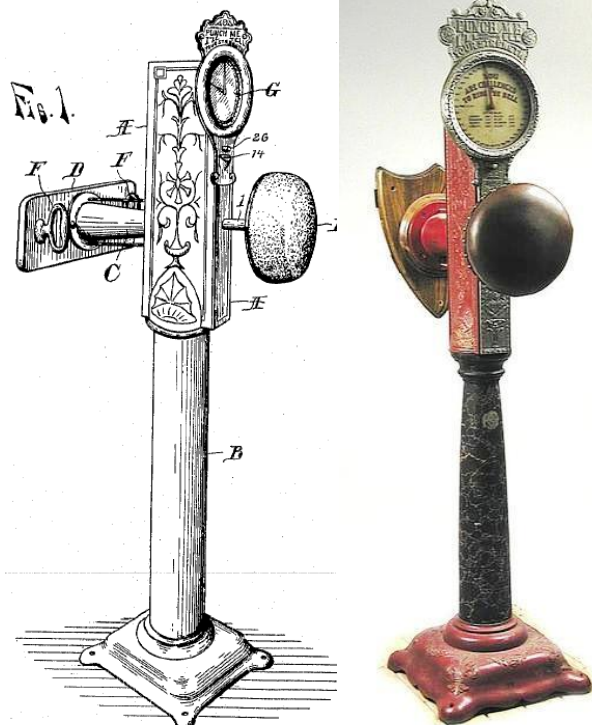


A. A. CAILLE.
COIN CONTROLLED LIFTING MACHINE.
 APPLICATION FILED APR. 4, 1904.



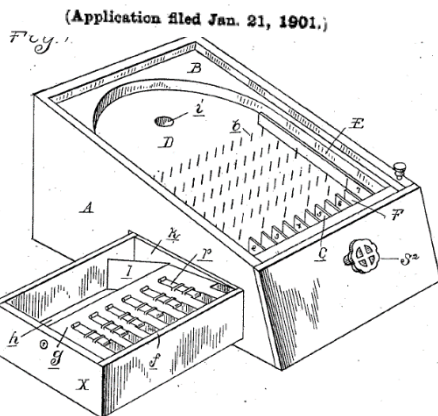
Lifting Mechanism 1903 (Caille Samson)
 Improvements in coin-controlled lifting machines, to provide a simple, cheap and efficient construction which is not liable to get out of order or be broken

A. A. CAILLE.
STRIKING MECHANISM.
 APPLICATION FILED JAN. 30, 1904.



Striking Mechanism 1903
 For testing the strength of a person in delivering a blow with the fist; to provide a strong, simple, cheap and compact device indicating the force of the blow; also that the shock of the blow will not be transmitted to the indicating means ... and to provide means for controlling the operating by a coin.

A. A. CAILLE.
GAME.



Caille Log Cabin – 1901. Game of chance in which marbles or balls are shot upon an inclined board having a series of obstructions thereon and a series of pockets at its lower edge, the object being to lodge said balls in certain of the pockets. Further to provide means for registering the count of the successive plays so that at the end of the game the complete tally thereof is obtained

A.A. Caille Patents:

850,817 Coin Controlled Machine Sept 11, 1905

793,677 Striking Mechanism filed Jan 30, 1904

792,694 Coin-Controlled Weighing Machine Oct 29, 1903

783,678 Coin Controlled Lifting Machine filed Apr 4, 1904

783,993 Weight Verifier May 4, 1903

730,232 Vending Machine Nov. 1, 1902

711,383 Game filed Jan 21, 1901

The Caille Silver Cup

The first version of the Caille Silver Cup was similar-looking to the Fey machine although it had some differences. Cosmetically the dials are much fancier and the feet are a bit simpler – the Fey machine used the claw feet from the Liberty Bell. Functionally there are some differences, Caille designed its own mechanism and a somewhat different coin head, although still supporting playing up to five coins on an arm-pull – either from multiple players or multiple bets from one player. Caille catalog descriptions claim some differentiating features that would strike an attractive note with operators:

1. Checks are slightly larger than a nickel; checks go to cut-out, nickels go to cash box.
2. If a bent coin is forced into the machine, the pay-out is locked and won't accidentally give out rewards
3. Coin-detector window shows last coin played
4. Clock-work governor is used exclusively on the Silver Cup
5. Automatically kicks out pennies from the coin chute and deposits them in a penny compartment.



Fey and Caille Trade tokens. Indeed larger than a nickel



Caille Silver Cup – earliest known model serial # 35 circa 1911-1912. Rick Crandall collection

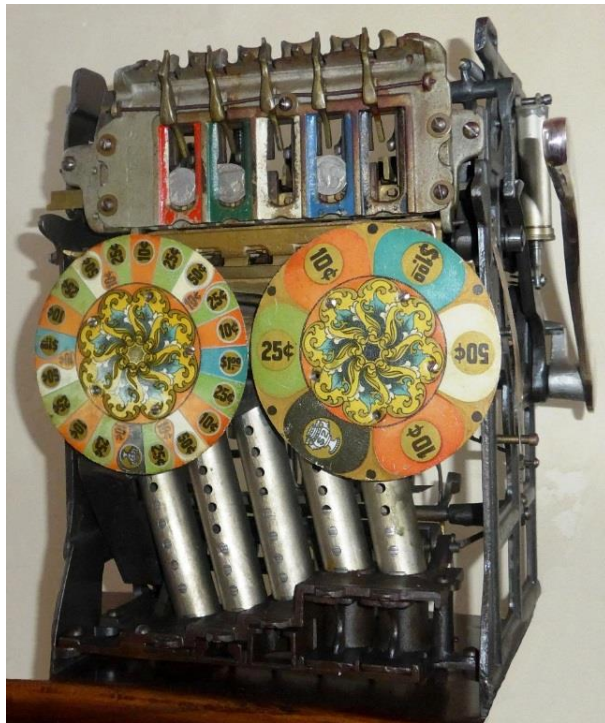
The banner below the “Silver Cup” is pebbled on earlier machines; later machines after 1916 have the words “Caille-Detroit” in the banner.



The action of the machine is interesting – The player selects one or more of any of the five color options of red, green, white, blue or black (with silver cup icon) which pays 10¢, 25¢, 50¢, \$1.00 and \$2.00 respectively. Crank the handle and both wheels spin. The right wheel has 7 stopping positions representing at least one of the five playable options on the left wheel has 20 stopping positions, also representing at least one of the 5 playable options. A winner is paid in checks or nickels if the color of the right wheel matches any of the two colors on the left-hand wheel when they stop if that color had been bet.

From Johnny Duckworth:

"I have observed two different mechanisms Caille produced for the silver cup. The first model had individual slides across the front of the mechanisms, whereas the second model had only one set of slides with two pay tubes to make all the payouts. This payout system also resembles the same one later used on the Caille Aristocrat. Somewhere after serial #340 this machine must have been a little loose on the 25¢ green payout as it was changed to 20¢ where it remained until the end of production. Another interesting change was the pay cup which started out in the center only to be moved to the right side sometime after serial #640 but then to return sometime after #881. This move to the side may have been a bad decision at the factory since the coins had to make a hard right turn out of the pay slides to enter into the pay cup below. I even had one collector who has the version with the pay cup on the right tell me he has had the coins jam up in that area before. They were only produced in a nickel-play version and the machines I have been able to track down bear the serial numbers 35, 129, 340, 523, 593, 614, 639, 640, 642, 690, 712, 746, 752, 880, 881 & 4892. The 4892 is a real number – a mysterious Caille skip in numbering with no clue what it signifies.



Caille Silver Cup #35 earlier mech on left with 5 payout tubes and 25¢ payout on green; later mech (right) pays out all combinations from two tubes with stingier 20¢ payout on green.

THE ORIGINAL FIVE SLOT, DOUBLE DIAL CHECK-PAYING MACHINE



Caille's Silver Cup
Size 19 x 14 x 13 inches. Wt. 72 lbs.
Telegraph Code Word:—Cup
Telegraph Code Word (Side Vender):—Copper

CAILLE'S SILVER CUP

CAILLE'S LATEST SILVER CUP

Many operators prefer this machine on account of it having five coin slots and also because it pays a reward of \$2.00.

The Silver Cup is very popular with the general public because it is a most liberal machine, and is a favorite with the owner or operator because it requires practically no attention.

Every Silver Cup is equipped with the five-way coin top which cannot be beaten. If a bent or mutilated coin is forced into machine the pay-out becomes locked, thus giving out no rewards until bad coin is removed. All coins played show through detector until next operation, thereby allowing no chance for argument.

By means of a clever attachment on the Silver Cup you can make instant change from check payer to money machine. This is done by simply moving a lever and does not require the removal of works from case.

CAILLE'S LATEST CUT-OUT

Shown in the accompanying cut is unquestionably the most accurate of any ever placed on a coin machine and is the result of long experimenting. There are only two tubes holding about nine dollars in nickels beneath which work the pay-out slides. By means of a little "flopper" which is placed at the top of these tubes and which changes its position at every operation of machine, all checks are equally divided, part going to each tube. This system positively prevents the cut-out from becoming empty of checks as sometimes occurs in cut-outs having three or more tubes. A glance at the illustration will convince you how simple this arrangement is and that there is nothing to get out of order. Checks used in the Silver Cup are a trifle larger than a nickel, and when played go direct to the cut-out. All surplus checks are thrown back away from tubes by a little kicker, thus preventing any clogging. All nickels go to money-box.

Money Cup. Placed at right side of front to prevent players manipulating through cut-out slides. A very important feature.

Clock Work Governor is used exclusively on the Silver Cup and is considered the best on the market.

PENNY COMPARTMENT

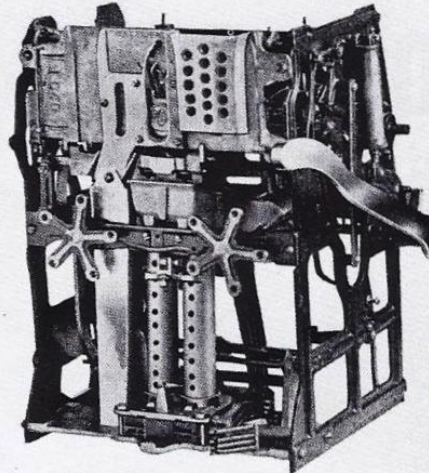
This attachment prevents pennies from dropping through into the machine, and when filled the whole pocket may be removed quickly and emptied. An ingenious device automatically "kicks" out the pennies from the coin chute and deposits them in this pocket, which is shown in cut of mechanism.

CAILLE'S LOVING CUP VENDER

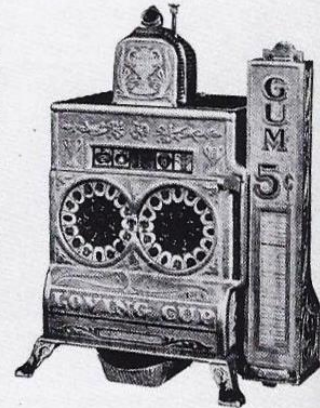
Made similar to the Silver Cup described above with the following exceptions:
Improved separating Coin Top rejects all Bell Checks or washers, returning them to the money cup in front. Also throws out second check or coin, provided two are played.
Rewards range in value from 10 cents to \$1.00.
Each dial divided into sixteen spaces.
Made also without Gum Vender.

WHERE THE MONEY IS SAVED

Every time a Bell check or washer is played into your machine it represents a dead loss to you, not only to the amount of cents for the checks played, but also for the rewards given out, which might be as high as \$1.00. The improved top offsets his loss by rejecting everything but nickels and the checks that rightfully belong to the machine.



Mechanism in Caille's Silver Cup



Caille's Loving Cup Vender
Telegraph Code Word:—Loved
Telegraph Code Word (Side Vender):—Loving

CAILLE'S SILVER CUP.

Combination trade check or money machine. Five may play at one time or one may play all five slots. Has two color dials, which spin in opposite directions. If color played shows on both dials between the arrows, Silver Cup pays out rewards from 10c to \$2.00.

Perfect coin-detector; last coins always in sight.

Separating device separates nickels from checks.

All metal construction; case beautifully nickered; metal dials in handsome colors.

Entirely automatic pay-out device.

Size 19x12x11½ inches. Price \$75. Weight 72 lbs.



Caille's Silver Cup

The Only Real
Double-Dial

Automatic
Machine



This is a combination trade check or money machine that is replacing every other style of coin-operating machine.

As a money machine it will compare with any large floor machine; when arranged to payout checks only is allowed everywhere. Also has a special gum sign if necessity requires it. Five can play at once or one player can play the five slots. Rewards are from ten cents to two dollars.

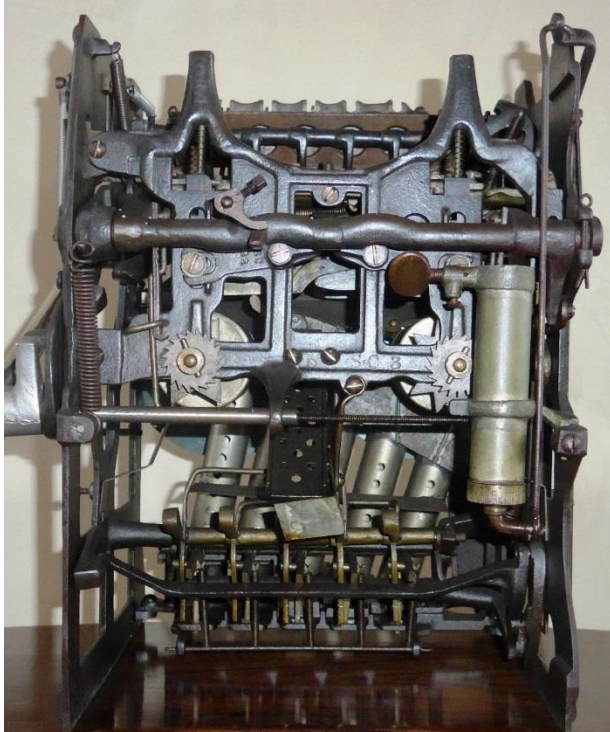
The coin top is perfection itself. Impossible to get a penny through or clog it in any way. The main works are so arranged that it is impossible to empty the payout by manipulation, even though some one should maliciously drop in badly deformed coins that would block it up. This is taken care of by a special locking device that automatically goes on the minute the machine becomes clogged and it remains so locked until the clogging coin is released.

The check separator is new, simple and entirely different from any other. It is absolutely sure. Metal case is handsomely carved and finished in our secret process nickel. This, with the beautiful color dials and reward card, combine to make a most striking and attractive machine to behold. You know what this means as a big play getter.

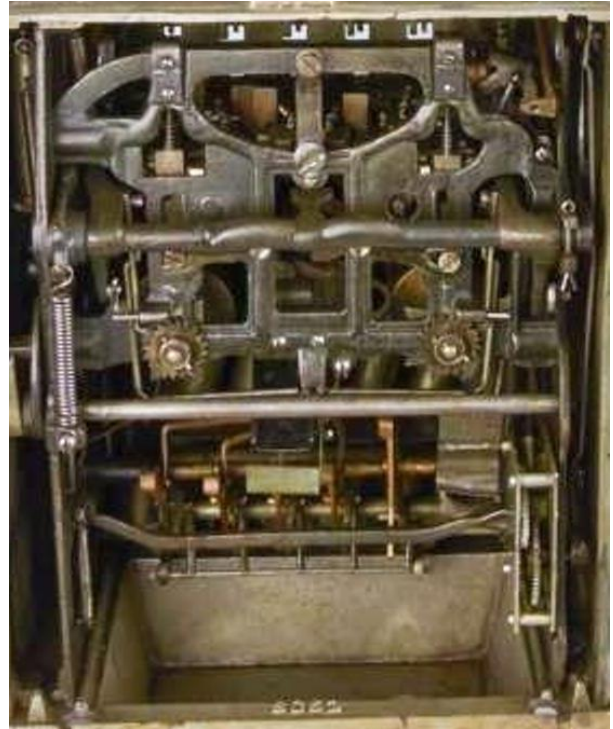
Although the machine has been on the market but a short time, it has proven its place in the field and we have already increased our capacity in that department in order to keep up with orders.

DIMENSIONS: Width 12 in. Depth 11½ in. Height 19 in. Weight 72 lbs.
Telegraph or Cable Code—CUP.

Early and Later Caille Silver Cup Mechanism Pictures



Early style serial #35 rear mechanism (above)



Rear mechanism later style serial #881

Note: above the earlier mechanism has the pump-type governor (vertical cylinder on the right of the mech) and the later mechanism uses the clock-work governor which is specifically mentioned in the catalog page.



Serial #35 Silver Cup mechanism left side view.