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Battle Kid 2

Mountain of Torment

 **Battletoads**

Neo Geo MVS • Dan Burke Interview • Castlevania Burn
Clinic • Wii Collecting • Shining Force Bible • Bucky
O'Hare Collection • Sega Pico • ROM Hacking

NINTENDO AGE E-ZINE

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BATTLE KID 2

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BUCKY O'HARE



BUCKY O'HARE was a 1990 cartoon about the evil Toad Empire trying to conquer the Aniverse. Fortunately, Captain Bucky O'Hare and his crew of the Righteous indignation were committed to stopping them. For me Bucky O'Hare is something more than just an old cartoon I used to enjoy. It's a passion and a link to some of the best times of my life. When I was a kid I would go over to my grandparents' house for the weekend where I would be spoiled rotten. My grandparents local Blockbuster (R.I.P) used to rent kids movies for .49 cents each. My grandma would rent me all six VHS tapes constituting the entire season of the show.

I watched them over and over throughout the many weekends I spent at my grandparents' house. Even when I rented normal movies I would also get a tape or two of Bucky O'Hare to watch as well. I was always super close to my grandma and those memories have happiness intertwined with Bucky O'Hare.

A couple years ago I decided I would start to collect Bucky O'Hare merchandise. My goal is to buy all of the officially retailed items ever made. I am currently close to finishing my goal. I have about 75% of all released merchandise at this point. I bought and recently

re-watched the entire series on DVD. I was afraid I would not enjoy it as an adult. However, I enjoyed it just as much as an adult as I did as a kid. I was surprised to see the themes of commercialization, genocide, government ineptitude/apathy and slavery so prominent in a 1990's kids show.

The reason the show was cancelled was because the factory in China screwed up the action figure case pack out. Instead of putting a higher ratio of the more popular characters like Bucky and Deadeye they reversed the packing plan and put high numbers of less —

popular figures and low numbers of the popular figures. The popular figures sold fast but the unpopular stuff hung around on the shelves. The stores stopped ordering them and were then forced to clearance their remaining stock. With the action figure line a failure there was no reason to keep the show around. They never did make a Jenny figure and sadly I will never complete my crew of the Righteous indignation. When I look at my collection I am reminded of a great time in my life and the wonderful relationship I share with my grandma. — MRFLUTTERPIE

BUCKY O'HARE COLLECTION!



THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE ILLEGAL

Legal Questions in Video Gaming

Credit for this article has to go to member LukeAF24 who, not too long ago, messaged me with an idea for an article for the e-Zine where he answered legal questions that may have crossed the minds of video game enthusiasts. I thought it was a great idea and what resulted was this article of Q&A. Hopefully this might turn into a recurring article, so if this article raises more questions for you please pm me Leatherrebel5150 and I will gather them up for LukeAF24.



DISCLAIMER

The information provided for this Q&A is for informational purposes only and not for the purpose of providing legal advice. Please contact your attorney to obtain advice with respect to any specific issue or problem. Reading of this Q&A does not create an attorney-client relationship between the author and the reader. The opinions expressed through this Q&A are the opinions of the individual author and may not reflect the opinions of NintendoAge or any other authors of this newsletter.

NA So why did you choose attorney as a profession as opposed to doctor or Wal-Mart manager?

LUKEAF24 I went into law because law (and the politics that goes along with it) always fascinated me. I always found it fun to 'debate' the meaning (i.e. interpretation) of the word of law. That and things are ever changing in this field. Law changes daily.

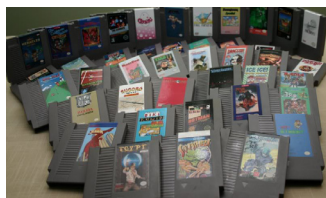
So you are a licensed attorney I presume? In what field does your expertise lie?

I am a licensed attorney, earning my JD in 2006. I practiced patent and copyright law for two years for a private firm. While I have since switched areas of practice, I still try to keep up to date on current laws, pending legislation, court rulings, etc about these. I currently am no longer with the firm where I practiced patent, copyright, trademark, etc law. I did try several cases in those topics. I'm currently corporate counsel for a large insurance company.

Now that we have got to know our expert a little bit let's get to the legal questions.

Let's begin with some questions that may be obvious to the veterans but may not be known to newer members. Are reproductions (specifically, games that were not released in the region the reproduction was made for) legal?

No, selling reproductions in any sense is illegal. People attempt to justify it by claiming it wasn't released here, or that they are protected under FU (Fair-Use). Any way you try and cut it, reproductions are illegal.



Ok, but what about game hacks?

Also illegal. Hacks typically still use the bulk of the original game.

Although you say that hacks are illegal, could they fall under the classification of parody and be legal, just like

Weird AI has done in the music industry?

One could make that argument, but it has only been applied in court towards music. Using the bulk of someone's work, as opposed to select certain beats to a chorus, for example, isn't considered parody, typically. Courts have stated that using the bulk of someone's copyrighted work is not covered under the FUA.



Surely translating a foreign game (fan translation) is ok, right?



Illegal. It would be no different than taking a novel written in German and translating it to English, then selling it without permission from the author, publisher, etc.

Ok, finally homebrew games?

By and large these are perfectly legal. While they wouldn't be licensed by Nintendo and perhaps may borrow elements from various franchises, they are typically written from the ground up by a programmer. It is their intellectual property to do with as they chose.



If all of this is clearly illegal, why are people getting away with it?

Simple answer; Nintendo doesn't care. They no longer make money on this antiquated technology. Sending a C&D (Cease and Desist) to a guy making a pittance off some old NES games from his garage isn't worthwhile to them. It doesn't threaten their bottom line in the slightest.

Moving on from reproductions; we know that patents expire on game consoles after a certain period of time. For

those who do not know what is that time frame?

It is currently 20 years. While I have not seen or researched Nintendo's patents, it may have been that when the NES and SNES patents were filed they were for 17 years.

If Nintendo wanted to retain the patent rights to the NES or SNES consoles is there a way to renew a patent so that the clone consoles could not be produced legally?



Unfortunately, no. Patents cannot be renewed. It takes a congressional vote to renew a patent, and the requirements to even bring it to the floor are very high.



I understand that while the patent on the NES and SNES consoles have expired the security chip that they used in those consoles has not because the programming is not under patent law but under copyright law. When does the time limit on copyrights expire? Can copyrights be renewed?



Correct. Usually software and/or programming would fall under copyright law. The length of a copyright varies wildly based on

countless factors. While I haven't researched how Nintendo filed their copyrights, my best guess would be that the copyright would last 95 years.

No, copyrights cannot be renewed.

So the programming is under copyright law, but what about their mascots/characters such as Mario or Link? Are these under copyright law or are they considered a trademark and what is the difference, legally speaking, between copyright and trademark? Will Nintendo's ownership of these characters expire?



Mascots and characters are certainly copyrighted, but may have also been trademarked at the time (perhaps not, I am unsure as I have not researched if they have or haven't). The difference between copyright and trademark is simple. Copyright protects the actual work of something, artwork, programming code, literary work, etc. Trademark prevents someone else from say, company XYZ using Nintendo's logo on their

products to make the suggestion their XYZ product actually came from Nintendo.

Moving into the video game industry, something that I have always been confused with when talking about the video game industry is the difference between developers, publishers, and owners of the game rights if different from the previous two. Could you explain that to us?

Developers develop the actual game. They write the code, the story, the artwork, etc. Publishers publish the game. They press the 'code' to disc, market and advertise for the game, etc. Contracts between developer and publisher vary wildly, and I can't speak to what is industry standard these days. Ownership rights to the game used to belong to the developer, as they were usually their own — publisher. Ownership rights may be shared now (unsure).

Speaking of developers they often created prototype games and such. Is it legal to sell such things as Not for Resale Carts, Prototypes,



and development equipment? Most of these items were distributed with the expectation that they would be returned to the originating company and not make it into public hands. If a company were to raise a stink could they reclaim these items or prosecute the owners/sellers?

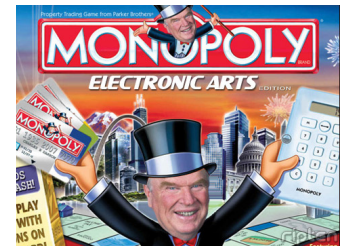
Yes, selling items such as these is legal, as they do not fall under the First-Sale Doctrine.

Could a company bully you (legally) into returning your prototype? Probably, as you don't have the money or time to fight

a large corporation. Would they bother doing that; it's highly unlikely. See my response to "... why are people getting away with it?"

Now let's dive into the state of the industry, so to speak. It can be argued that certain companies have strangleholds on certain sections of the industry, namely EA with their sports titles. If other companies wanted to challenge that could they argue that EA has created a monopoly and have them broken up by the government much like what happened to Bell Atlantic Phone Company in the North-east of the U.S?

They could argue it, but their argument would be poor at best. The NFL (which is its own separate business entity, with its own decision makers, it's important to remember this) agreed to the contract with EA. The other companies would have a strong burden of proof that the two companies were colluding, which isn't the case.



Looking into the past Nintendo used to have a policy which was very constrictive for game developers and restricted them from developing for any other console, is there any chance that could happen again with any given console?

Highly doubtful. They would risk alienating other publishers in the process. Money is to be made on both consoles these days (PS3/360). It's more worthwhile to purchase a developer outright (See MS, Rare).

Looking into the future, there

has been word that some companies may use one time use discs or games locked to a particular console to reduce the number of second hand sales of games. While I'm sure something like this may actually end up in a court, in your opinion is something like this legal for the companies to do to the consumers?

It's legal in my opinion. What most people fail to realize is that when you purchase a new video game, all you are purchasing is a DVD (Blu-Ray, whatever), a plastic case to house said disc, perhaps an instruction manual and the biggest thing a license to play the game. You are not actually buying the game from the company. It is still theirs to do as they wish.

Locking the game to a certain console (or in more likelihood a specific account, XBL, PSN, etc), is only locking an item they (the game company) still owns. You can still go out and sell the DVD, case, instructions to your heart's desire. They are simply making the license to play the game non-transferable.

None of this is to say this won't end up in court in the not so distant future. There are currently cases pending pertaining to the music industry, that could also play a role in how it pertains to the video game industry.

What most people fail to realize is that when you purchase a new video game, all you are purchasing is... a license to play the game.

So if I understand what you are saying when we buy the game we don't legally have control of the program itself. But from what I and others have believed in the past is that yes the companies own the intellectual property of the game and may sell, develop, create sequels etc but the individual disc that we own is ours and we may do as we wish with it. I guess what I'm driving at is, compare it to any other form of media, a book, a cassette tape, etc if I apply the same logic than technically speaking the company or publisher may prevent me from playing my cassette in another car or keep me from letting my friend borrow a book. Do we as consumers and owners of the product not have rights

to do what we wish with said product?

As I stated above, people don't realize what they are buying. They just fork over their money to play Black Ops 2 because well, everyone else is. They are buying a license to play the game. The only thing you actually 'own' is the case, manual (if any) and the 5 cent piece of plastic containing the game code (DVD/Blu Ray). The programming on the disc was never your property. You are 'borrowing' it with the license you purchased.

You are correct; this would be similar to a book being linked to only you, and unable to be lent to a friend. And if you think about it, this is already happening with books (see Amazon Kindle, locked to only your Amazon account).

This recently came to light with Blizzard with the release of Diablo 3, as people were upset with the always on, online DRM. EULA, ToS and what people are actually purchasing came up. People began to realize exactly what they were purchasing.

This discussion also reminds me of the court battle between Nintendo and the Game Genie in which the court found the owner of the game may do as they wish with the game, does that

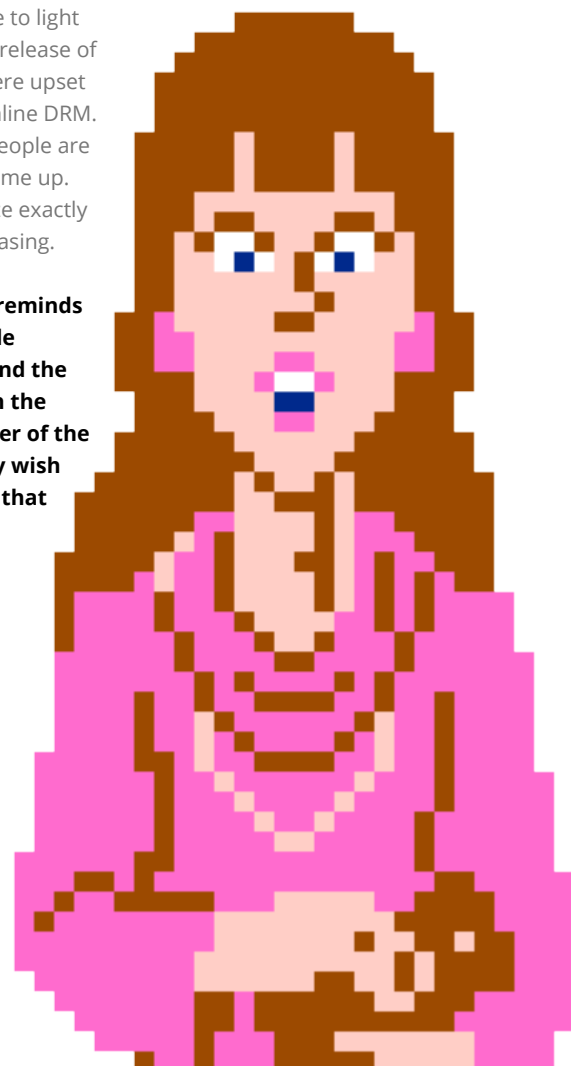
have any bearing on this new situation?

It may. Back then people also purchased the code to the game (I assume, have not researched). Nintendo wasn't selling licenses to play their games back then (assumption again). I would have to read the ruling, but I'm not sure that that specific case law would apply to today's situation.

Well that's all the questions we have for now. Special thanks go to LukeAF24 for taking the time to answer all these questions for us.

— LEATHERREBEL5150

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BATTLETOADS RETROSPECTIVE

THE BEST THING about collecting retro games is finding out all the hidden gems you missed out on the first time around. Growing up we had Super Mario Bros./Duck Hunt of course, Contra, and some others, but looking back it's clear I really missed out on some of the best games the system has to offer. I'm talking about games like Lolo, Kickle Cubicle, Metal Storm and of course, Battletoads. Since I've started collecting again, few games have captivated me as much as Battletoads has. In the past 3 years Battletoads has become not only one of my favorite NES games, but one of my favorite series ever. With that said, I am going to take you through an entire retrospective of all 6 Battletoads games that were released on home consoles, tell you about them and if they're worth playing. So without further delay, I present "The Complete Battletoads Retrospective"...

Nintendo Entertainment System

There are 2 entries in the Battletoads series on the NES. The one and only Battletoads along with the lesser known Battletoads/Double Dragon. Let's start with the roots and cover the one that started it all, Battletoads.



Battletoads (1991)

It's clear from the very beginning that the Battletoads were inspired by the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and rightfully so. The popularity of everybody's favorite Turtles was huge and it only makes sense to try and bank on their popularity. But is Battletoads

just a cheap cash in? Surprisingly, no. Though if you look at the fine details you'll see that this game is developed by RARE, it's easy to see why this game turned out so well.

Playing as either Rash (player 1) or Zitz (player 2), your goal is to rescue Pimple and Queen Angelica from the voluptuous Dark Queen. Appealing names, huh? The names are a perfect inclination to the tongue in cheek humor present in Battletoads. The humor is probably best represented by the toad's trademark attribute, which is the ability to transform their appendages into weapons on the final hit. For exam-

ple; if you're kicking an enemy, on the very last kick before the enemy dies, your foot will turn into a giant boot sending the enemy flying away. One of the more amusing examples is when you hit an enemy while running at them your character will grow ram horns. These fatalities, if you will, give the game a sense of satisfaction that you don't find in other games.

If you couldn't tell already by my description, the game is a beat em' up, sort of. The first level is a pretty simple beat em' up style level with a boss at the end. The next level has you scaling down a massive tunnel on a rope while attacking and avoiding enemies but still retains that beat em' up theme. The infamous level 3, named Wind Tunnel, is where this game separates the men from the boys. The first part of the level is simple enough, but then you come to the speeders. It's simple; all you have to do is avoid the obstacles and reach the end. However after just a few minutes you'll understand why it's one of the most infamously difficult levels of all time. There is no mercy here. You make one simple mistake, this game doesn't care, you're dead and back to the last checkpoint you crossed. It is ruthless, bottom line. This is the kind of level that will take so much practice that you'll want to do a Rocky-esque "Eye of the Tiger" montage at the hours you'll spend on it.

If you somehow manage to join the elite club of people that have beaten the Wind Tunnel, you'll find little forgiveness afterwards. The remainder of the game is near impossible as well. You can be fine one second, dead the next. Like before, it's ruthless. It's a cruel trick really because the first two levels give you a false sense of security and make you think you're playing a good game with a little challenge thrown in. After level two you learn that you were just being fooled. It's still a good game, but that "little challenge" turns into a "monumental challenge". The biggest disappointment I had with the game is that the beat em' up style in the first couple levels is tossed to the side after the Wind Tunnel and it relies more on reflexes and level memorization and that takes a lot of the fun out of it for me.

Some of that fun could however be restored if the 2 player option were any better. Unfortunately they really dropped the ball with this game. The good news is that you do get to play at the same time, unlike Double Dragon for example. The bad news is pretty much everything else. The actual gameplay basically remains unchanged, but there are a couple glaring flaws that prevent the 2 player option from being any better than single player, and in fact I'd go as far as to say it's worse. The first huge flaw is that friendly fire is turned on, meaning you can hit your teammate and cause damage. With all the crazy moves in this game it's

impossible to not hit your teammate at least once or twice per level and sometimes more. The second flaw, which is probably worse than the first, is when one player loses all their lives, its game over for both of you. Usually when one player loses all their lives, the other player gets to continue on until they lose all of theirs, but not in Battletoads. Now the real kicker comes when you "continue". When the game starts back up from your last checkpoint, you'll notice that the player who lost all their lives before, now has the standard 3 lives like you always start out with. However, the player that didn't lose all their lives does not automatically get refilled. Nope, instead they have the exact amount they did when the game over happened. This could be good if they had more than 3 lives, but odds are they didn't so they will be at a huge disadvantage. What makes this so bad is now one player has 3 lives and one player probably has less. So the player with less lives is now much more likely to get a game over than the player with 3 lives which will cause another game over and if

the player with 3 lives lost any during the time the other player lost his remaining lives, he will be at a disadvantage come continue time. It's a vicious circle and is fundamentally flawed. So basically, this game is hard with 1 player but impossible with 2.

This game got pretty high praise at the time, and rightfully so. The graphics are incredible for an NES title and the music has that distinct RARE sound. The gameplay is fun for the first two levels, but infuriating after that. The best recommendation I have for those serious about beating this game is find a copy of Nintendo Power Issue #25. Battletoads is the cover story and on the inside is a complete walkthrough of every level with some nice tips to help you along your challenging journey.

Look, at the end of the day, Battletoads

is one of the hardest games ever. That is one of its most memorable attributes, but also one of its downfalls. It's a really fun game and I most certainly recommend it, but keep in mind that this is the hardcore and not for the faint of heart.



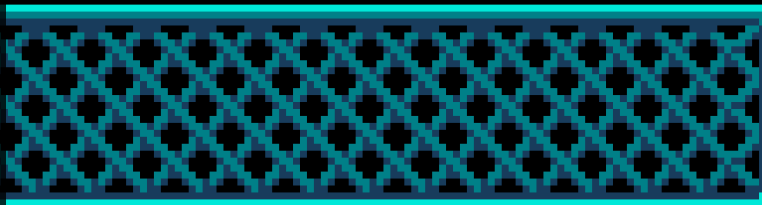
Battletoads/Double Dragon (1993)

At the end of the Battletoads feature in issue #25 of Nintendo Power, it reads "A possible NES sequel, a Super NES game and an arcade game are just a few of the things in the works!" Every single one of those things did in fact happen. First though was the NES sequel that very much slipped under the radar. Coming out two years after the SNES console was released, Battletoads/Double Dragon never saw the love or recognition that is probably deserved. Now the question is, can the sequel be as good as the original? Or perhaps a more frightening question, can the sequel be better than the original classic? Let's find out.

First thing that should be known is that even though this is a crossover game, the Lee Brothers from Double Dragon are very much put on the back burner. This is a Battletoads game first and foremost. In fact it almost seems as if this game was developed as a Battletoads game and then the Lee Brothers were thrown in for better marketing. To refer to Nintendo Power once again, this time issue #49, there is a big Battletoads feature in this magazine. It includes 3 walkthroughs, one for Battletoads in Battlemaniacs (SNES, 1993), Battletoads in Ragnarok's World (Gameboy, 1993) and Battletoads/Double Dragon (NES, 1993). I found it interesting that they chose the NES version of Battletoads/Double Dragon to cover, seeing as it was clearly the least popular version of the game. However, at one point in the coverage of Battletoads/Double Dragon, the magazine says "...a very slight advantage has to go to the 'Toads. Their limbs are a bit longer. Using Jimmy or Billy is a bit more challenging." So it's clear this is much more Battletoads than Double Dragon.

The story of games like this is hardly ever anything important, but after being defeated, the Dark Queen resides to the furthestmost point of the universe to plot her revenge to dominate the galaxy. She collaborates with the Shadow Warriors from the Double Dragon series to team up and take control of the galaxy. After hearing the news, the 'Toads contact Billy (formerly known as Bimmy....) and Jimmy Lee and together they try to take down the enemy threat.

The most important thing is always the gameplay, and for the most part it's relatively unchanged from before. In fact the similarity is sort of striking. The first two levels are for the most part a piece of cake and it isn't until the very end of the second level that the action really heats up. Once again, the difficulty begins with the speeders. Thankfully this time the level is beatable, rather easily at that. It only lasts for a few minutes and as long as you can dodge the obstacles and avoid the enemies chasing you on speeders, you'll be fine. Neither of those things is really hard to do either. The enemies chasing you on speeders can give you some beef though. If they manage to hit you a few times in a row, you'll fall off your bike and lose a life. This level sets the precedent for the rest of the game, and by that I



mean how easy it is to lose a life.

Level 3 resembles level 2 from the original Battletoads. It has you descending a tunnel while having to defeat birds and turrets along the way. The birds are a piece of cake and for the most part the turrets are too, but the turrets are important because they reveal one of the biggest flaws of the game. In most games, when you're hit there are a few seconds afterwards when your characters sprite will flash and you're invincible while this is happening. Think Super Mario Bros. or Mega Man as examples. Well in this game there is no such thing. It adds to the difficulty in a mostly unfair way. Some turrets shoot three bullets at a time. Each bullet takes away two health blocks at a time and you only have six health blocks. So, if you're hit by one bullet, odds are you could be hit by all three which in turn would take away all of your life. Again, it shows you how quickly you can die in this game. The same thing happens when you're fighting two enemies at the same time. One enemy hits you, then the other and they take turns until you die and there is nothing you can do about it.

The remaining levels are tough, but interesting. Level 4 took me by surprise because it's basically a reimagining of the classic Asteroids. It feels a little out place

honestly but it's still a pretty cool addition. The rest of the game is fairly straightforward. Tough but not too tough and probably not on the same level that Battletoads was. At the end of the game you'll fight the Shadow Boss and then finally the Dark Queen and you've won.

So the game is tough by yourself, but is it tougher with a partner? Well thankfully no. RARE must have learned from the terrible 2 player mode of Battletoads because this multiplayer gets it right, with one big exception. First off, there are 2 multiplayer modes to choose from. The first mode, A, is just like Battletoads multiplayer. You can hurt each other and when one player gets a game over, it's a game over for both of you. And yet again the player who did not run out of lives still continues with the same amount he had. So stay away from game A. I was hoping game B would have a better fate, but I was slightly disappointed. Game B fixes the problem of friendly fire. You cannot hurt your partner, thankfully, but guess what? Yes, the game over system is still here. Why? What benefit does this have? None is the answer. Go play Turtles in Time on the SNES for a perfect example of beat em' up multiplayer. However, this is better than Battletoads' multiplayer but still fundamentally flawed.

Remember earlier when I asked "Can the sequel be better than the original classic?" Battletoads/Double Dragon answers with a resounding, kind of. It has better graphics, more appealing gameplay, improved multiplayer and a neat gimmick with the Lee brothers. The music is a little lacking, but in the end, Battletoads/Double Dragon is a great game. Whether this game is better than Battletoads is almost irrelevant though because they're both great games. If you're looking for a very hardcore tough experience, go with Battletoads. If you're looking for a fun cooperative experience, Battletoads/Double Dragon is your game. However both of them are worth your time and the price of admission.



Next Time...

I alluded to it before and purposely didn't elaborate on it much, but Battletoads/Double Dragon was also released on the Super NES and the Genesis. The original Battletoads was also ported to the Sega Genesis. In the next issue of the NintendoAge e-Zine, we'll take a look the two entries on the Sega Genesis.

Can the Genesis entries fair better than the NES entries? I think the answer might just surprise you. Until next time, thanks for reading!

— COBRADVS



SEGA PICO

BY JOHNNY



WHAT'S A PICO?

Oh-Man, You guys remember the Sega Pico right? What a great console, the countless hours spent playing Musical Zoo, Sonic's Gameworld, and... Wait, you have never heard of the Sega Pico? It was only the number one educational Kids Computer created by Sega in 1994. In all seriousness if you have never heard of the Sega Pico AKA the Kids Computer Pico you are not alone, but if you can make it through this article I will tell you all you need to know if you want to collect it.

BASIC PICO FACTS

Sega Pico was released in the US in 1994, and was discontinued in 1998. The system did well in Japan and wasn't discontinued there until 2005. In the US 20 games were released, while Japan had nearly 300. The Pico was branded as a computer and sometimes as a toy. Sega did it's best for it not to be known as a video game console. This approach was taken in an effort avoid negative associations that were attached to video games. The Pico was supposed to be an educational product and the slogan for the console illustrates this mind, "The computer that thinks it's a toy". The system itself is a clamshell design which unfolds to hold the large book shaped carts that the system used and also act as the controller. The controller portion of the console had a very basic touchpad a "Magic Pen" and a large button which you used to play the games. The carts for this system are unlike any other system and were called Storyware. The carts act like books and have pages that open up and allow you to play different parts of the game (look at the pic below for clarification).

WHY YOU SHOULD COLLECT SEGA PICO

It's a console oddity from a major publisher, it was Sega's last cart based system, and nothing else in your library will look like Pico games, they stand out. It's an easy set to complete because there are only 20 games in the US and not many people collect for the system so they are cheap. The system also has 3 major Sega titles in its library and they are all exclusive to the Pico: Sonic the Hedgehog's Gameworld, Tails and the Music Maker, and Ecco Jr. and the Great Ocean Treasure Hunt.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO COLLECT

The console came in a few version one that was just the console and one that was the console and the game Richard Scarry's Huckle and Lowly's Busiest Day Ever. The version with the pack in is the one you will find the most often. Regardless of which version you find the price range is from about \$35 to \$100 depending on condition and completeness. Most consoles are sold with a few games so if you don't have a Pico this will be your best value. If you must buy individual games Amazon and eBay are the place to go. Loose games run from \$8 to \$12 and in box it's about \$10 to \$25. Sonic Gameworld, Musical Zoo, and Tails seem to be the exception to this price range so expect to pay more for those, especially Sonic. Be warned these boxes are large so the shipping runs high.



WHAT'S IN THE BOX

Not much really just a cart, parenting guide (manual) and insert. They all come sealed in a plastic bag if the game is new.

WHAT'S HARD TO FIND

Sonic Gameworld was the last US release and is difficult to find with its box, Richard Scarry's Huckle and Lowly's Busiest Day Ever even though it was a pack-in it did have a boxed version, while the cart by itself is very common the boxed version doesn't show up very often. Storyware Sampler, by far the rarest US title to find, good news is that it wasn't a retail release and isn't needed for the set.

VARIANTS

It wouldn't be Sega without variants; The shells for the games often come in different colors without rhyme or reason. A full list of these does not exist as far as I know.

GAMES

Only 20 games were released in the US.

- A Year at Pooh Corner
- Adventures in Letterland with Jack and Jill
- Crayola: Create a World
- Pocahontas Riverbend Adventure
- Disney's the Lion King: Adventures at Pride Rock
- Ecco Jr. and the Great Ocean Treasure Hunt!
- Magic Crayons
- Math Antics with Disney's 101 Dalmatians
- Mickey's Blast Into the Past
- Muppets on the Go
- Musical Zoo
- Pepe's Puzzles
- Richard Scarry's Huckle and Lowly's Busiest Day Ever
- Scholastic's the Magic School Bus
- Sesame Street Alphabet Avenue
- Smart Alex and Smart Alice: Curious Kids
- Sonic the Hedgehog's Gameworld
- Tails and the Music Maker
- The Berenstain Bears: A School Day
- The Great Counting Caper with the 3 Blind Mice.



Pico was the first Sega console to carry a licensed game made by Nintendo, Pokémon says Hello



BASEBALL RIVALRY

BY THEM MAX VOLTAGE

WHEN I PLAY, I PLAY TO WIN. That could probably be applied to most the activities I partake in, but video games in particular.

Beating a single-player game is satisfying in its own right, but nothing gets the blood going like besting another human being in a friendly computerized spar. However, such an intense competitive drive has its downsides. What follows is the tale of a bitter defeat and resulting vengeance 15 years in the making... The year is 1998. I'm an awkward adolescent already quite versed in the ins and outs of the Nintendo age. The N64 is the current system dejour, though it is still something that is out of reach of my pre-working permit reach. Nevertheless my friends and I are quite content playing our SNES RPGs and occasionally popping Battletoads in the NES for a round of masochism; though a typical weekend consisted of me and my best friend Jerad playing through Final Fantasy 3 for the umpteenth time while talking about Britney Spears or the amount of boobs were counted during the movie Species (we would pause it, there are 32). One winter night, however, was different. Jerad recommended we break out the old NES and play a little game called Baseball. "Baseball?" I asked. "Sure, whatever dude" I interjected before Jerad could even answer. Typically Jerad and I didn't play against each other much, because both of us are fiercely, even violently, competitive. Frankly, I believe we learned at a young age that it was in the best interest of our friendship to simply abstain from competition (long story short, he beat me up during a game of 4-square in the 5th grade; best friends ever since). Nevertheless, what came next was quite possibly the worst video game beat down to have ever occurred in the history of digital entertainment. I got my ass kicked.

I'll spare you the details, but the general idea is that I don't think I ever scored, whilst my arrogant opponent quite possibly could have glitched the game due to an excessive amount of runs. The controller was blamed. The TV was blamed. The freaking chair I was sitting in was blamed. A curse word may have even been uttered. That was the first, and last time, I would ever, ever, EVER play baseball. Fast forward 15 years. Jerad and I are both respectable adults. We both do respectable adult things and live respectable adult lives, though deep down we'll always be gamers. You would think that after 15 years one might forget about a particular face-whomping that transpired a decade and a half prior. You would think, but that's not the case because I'm an incredibly sore loser and incredibly vindictive. So when one weekend Jerad and his wife decided to come and visit me and my wife, I thought I might arrange a friendly rematch of an age old classic. Let set the stage: My game room is also my spare bedroom. When friends from out of town come to visit, they are able to enjoy all my favorite Nintendo memorabilia. But, you see, since Jerad had last come to visit my collection had grown. I had recently acquired an NES-101 and used it to prominently display a very specific NES game in the spare bedroom. "Baseball" That's all that Jerad said, as he turned to me and looked deep into my soul. "Yep" I replied "I thought we could have a little rematch."

Some may think that I had been practicing in anticipation of this even, but that is not the case. Though I had long dreamt of reclaiming the title of baseball champion, I had felt that a pure rematch would be the only way to justify it. Because, you see, as adults our manual dexterity had decreased. No longer were Jerad and I the Wizards we had once been. The rematch that was about to ensue would be one that would be fueled by pure primal prowess and nothing else. We were about to have our final showdown.

The first four or five innings were pathetic. I don't think either of us scored, and I'm pretty sure I still don't even know how exactly the controls work. Has anyone played baseball recently? The game has not aged well, but I digress. It was at about the 6th inning that Jerad remembered that you can steal bases, and so for the next few innings the two of us scored some runs, not by hitting a homerun mind you, but rather by arbitrary mashing of the B-button. However, right around the top of the 9th inning shit got real. The score was 2-2 with 2 outs. Jerad threw the first pitch and a cracked a hit down the 3rd base line... going... going...my heart was racing... the adrenaline began pumping...gone. For the first time in 15 years I was winning at baseball. My next batter popped out to center but I didn't care, I was winning! The premature celebratory dances had already started when Jerad took to bat. What happened next was a blur, but all I know is that I'm staring down Jerad's final batter; somehow I had struck out the previous two batters in my jubilation but the bases were loaded and the count was full. The next 8-bit pitch was going to decide who had bragging rights for the next 20 years. I pitched. He connected and up it goes... in field pop up. My little sprite players ran as fast as their little sprite legs would carry them. Was I even controlling them? Hell I don't know! Just catch the damn ball! And they did. And I won.

MIKE TYSON'S PUNCH-OUT!!



GIVEN THAT THE THEME of my column this time was “challenge and accomplishment” I thought I’d review a game that, for me at least, exemplifies the concepts I wrote about nearly perfectly: Mike Tyson’s Punch Out!! (called MTPO from here on out).

I won’t dwell too much on reviewing the actual game itself as it is a classic NES title and I don’t think I can really say something that hasn’t already been said about the game. It has nearly everything you’d want from a sports game on the NES: the controls are very tight and responsive, the graphics are bright and vibrant, the enemies are all well designed and the music is some of the best on the NES. If you haven’t ever played MTPO (or it’s censored later version called Punch Out!!) you are missing out on one of the best games in the NES library. Do yourself a favour and try to get a copy and enjoy it.

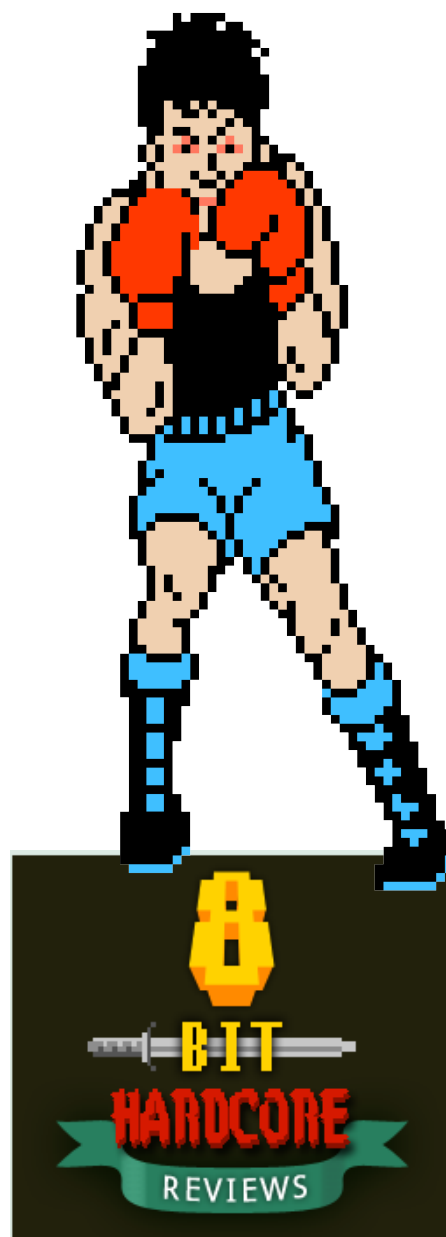
I won’t spend any more time talking about the usual aspects of a game you’d find in a review and I’d like to switch gears and talk about an element of game design that MTPO really did right. In my column I mentioned that without adequate challenge the feeling of accomplishment is lessened. Anybody who played MTPO knows the rush of finally beating an opponent who had been vexing you for hours. MTPO has a difficulty curve that is probably as close to perfect as you will find on the NES. Your first fight is against Glass Joe and is very easy. Anybody who knows the basic controls of the game and has a basic understand-

ing of the mechanics (hearts = punches, uppercuts, etc) will defeat him quite easily thus earning their first win and will advance up the rankings. Glass Joe still teaches the player about how the game will use visual and audio clues about when they will strike and how surprise hits to your opponent will garner you stars to use as powerful uppercuts. A little experimentation with Glass Joe will also teach the player that alternating left and right punches can lead to multiple hit combos that lead to dealing a lot of damage. Even in these early stages the game is offering small challenges for small feelings of accomplishment.

Once Glass Joe is defeated you fight Von Kaiser who is still very easy but is a little tougher than Glass Joe. The third opponent (Honda) will provide even more challenge. The game steadily ramps up the challenge with each success in stages that don’t feel overly daunting. The game is far from a cake walk though (it sure wasn’t for me when I was 8). I’d be willing to bet that King Hippo stopped many gamers in their tracks back in 1987. My best friend and I both owned MTPO and neither of us could figure out how to get past King Hippo. I still remember the afternoon we were playing and we finally figured out his pattern and put him down for the count. This perfectly exemplifies my idea of challenge and accomplishment. The final four opponents in the game will also test the reflexes and abilities of most players (the sound of Soda Popinski laughing at my unconscious Little Mac still haunts my dreams) and the feeling of finally putting Iron Mike Tyson down is something that is impossible to describe. The first time I managed to defeat Mike Tyson it was because I had more than 5000 points and the judges gave me the win by decision (I’d rather have won by knocking him out but I was just happy to have finally beat Tyson after days of trying).

I adore this game for many reasons and one of them was the feeling of success and triumph it allowed me for overcoming the obstacles it put in my path. I recently added MTPO to my steadily growing collection of

NES games and showed my five year old son how to play it the other night. I taught him how to move Little Mac and throw punches. He went down to Glass Joe the first time he played all by himself but managed to drop him on his second attempt. The guttural victory yell and fist pump my son did when Mario counted to ten and announced the KO drove home what a truly timeless classic MTPO truly is. Go play it. — RCBORON



Logo by Scott Hodgins: www.scotthodginscreative.com

You have tapped into the Official Nintendo Universe. This is Captain Nintendo bringing you the hottest tips and latest news from Nintendo Headquarters for the week of May 7th.

While searching for the last castle in Castlevania II Simon's Quest kneel close to rock wall at Deborah Cliff for about five seconds with the Red Crystal and let the whirlwind take you to Bodley Mansion. Move on to the right through a town and over a broken bridge. At the stairway, go down and continue to the right until you reach a wall. If you have the Cross and all five parts of the Count, you'll be able to break the bricks in the wall by using the Nail or the Holy Water. Keep going and you'll be on your way to Castlevania and a final encounter with the Count. Let's check the computer now for new releases.

I am emerald, the omni-intelligence, receiving store check data. Sensors indicate that Predator from Activision and Adventures of Lolo from Hal American are on their way to NES retailers.

Thanks Emerald!

You're quite welcome.

You can find Warp Zones in Super Mario Bros. 2 by sinking into certain jars while in Sub Space. You can warp to World 4-1 by way of the last jar in the outside section of World 1-3. In World 3-1, leap into the second waterfall you come to and keep centered so that you'll land on an island below. Enter the doorway on that island and you'll find a potion under one of the clumps of grass. Drop the Potion, enter Sub-Space and sink into the jar to Warp to World 5-1.

Tune in Next Sunday for an all new Captain Nintendo message featuring Ninja Gaiden. Remember, each call costs a dollar fifty, so be sure to get proper clearance. And don't miss Nintendo Power with over 100 pages of hot tips, high scores, and new reviews of the latest games. Call (800) 422-2602 for subscription information. Until next week, this is Captain Nintendo!

These quick tip articles come from a collection of inner memo packages I received from a former Game Counselor. Enjoy! — ACIDJAGUAR



THE

TM

THE LEGACY OF GREAT INTENTION

BIBLE

BY DRAGON

CHAPTERS 1 & 2



Introduction

The Shining Force series took a giant turn from its predecessor, **Shining in the Darkness**, in Shining Force. With a new battle engine, a more robust party system that allows up to 11 playable characters (12 if you include the required Hero), and more spells, to turn an already enjoyable game to the next level.

The Battle System is based on a chess style platform, where you take turns controlling your characters on the battlefield with the opponent (the opponent being the computer), and at times, this requires some strategic planning to get through some of the more later battles in the game.

Shining Force was one of the most highly sought out games on the Sega Genesis in the early to mid 1990's, especially since there wasn't a whole lot of Role Playing Games available for the Genesis during its life span. The graphics and sound were outstanding, even due to the limitations of the hardware; the controls were set up in such a way that it was nearly impossible to not get use to them, and the storyline was great as well. Character development wasn't the greatest, but that's a minor issue since there are 30 playable characters in the game, it would be difficult to try and incorporate every single character into an already elaborate story. However, the few characters that the game really does focus on develop fairly well,

so there really isn't much to complain about.

The controls in Shining Force are very simple to get use to. The A and C buttons are the accept buttons, and the B button is the decline button. If you want to skim through the battle messages, you can hold down one of the directional pads or hold down one of the buttons.

The graphics in Shining Force were very well for their time, and the music is really pleasing to listen to as well. There's not a whole lot of animation in the battles, but this is the kind of game that doesn't require over the top animations or long drawn out sequences.

CHAPTER 1 Runefaust Invasion

You start off by coming back to consciousness from being knocked out by Lord Varios during your warrior training. Walk up into the building and you'll be met by Lowe. He'll speak to you for a brief moment then you need to talk to Lord Varios again. A guardsmen will come and tell Lord Varios that the king has sent for him. Talk to Lowe again and then you'll be free to explore.

There's not a whole lot to do in this town, especially when you're starting off and have no gold. Go talk to Gort at the pub, and he'll tell you he was once a warrior and would join again if he had the right opportunity come up. After you talk to him, head up into the castle. Talk to the King and listen to what he has to say. After you talk to the King, head to town to gather your troops.

Well that was easy, wasn't it? The troops just came to you - Luke, Hans, Tao, Ken and Lowe. Nova will come out and tell you to go talk to the King and hear his final wishes. Go speak with him and he'll give you 100 coins. Not a whole lot we can do with this at the moment, so just make your way out of the town. You'll be brought over to the Gate of the Ancients by a cart and you'll engage in your first battle.

When you first enter the Gate of the Ancients, you'll see some conversations between the Rune Knight and his forces. An earthquake will also occur, which will block your passage back to Guardiana.

Battle 1 - The Gate of the Ancients

- 1 Rune Knight
- 2 Dark Dwarf
- 5 Goblin

Win Condition - Defeat the Rune Knight

The Rune Knight is the leader of this monster pack, so if you defeat him before the rest of the monsters, the battle will end. Defeat all the monsters except the Rune Knight then have Max cast Egress to escape the battle. Head back towards the Gate of the Ancients, but instead head to the cabin just past it near the water. Talk to Jogurt on the far right, then on the far left of the cabin, talk to Gong and he will join your party.

There's also a friar inside of the cabin who will raise fallen warriors, promote, remove curses and save your progress. Head back into the Gate of the Ancients and fight away.

When you defeat the Rune Knight, he will say that other forces have been moving in on Guardiana and Nova will tell you that you must return. Of course, the earthquake blocked the easy passage back to Guardiana, and the Runefaust Army is waiting outside to try and stop you.

Battle 2 - Guardiana Under Attack

- 6 Goblin
- 3 Dark Dwarf
- 2 Rune Knight

Win Condition - Defeat All Enemies

When the battle starts, one of the Rune Knights will mention Darksol and him being behind the attacks. The Dwarves will say "Death to Guardiana". The start of this battle is a pain because nobody has good move range while on the Mountains, and everyone is clammed into one small section outside of the Gates of the Ancients. If you need to escape from Battle, you can run into the cabin where Gong was, or cast Egress to the cabin.

After the battle, enter Guardiana and the guards at the front gates will tell you that they were almost overrun by the forces of Runefaust. Explore the town a little bit to

see the damage. Go talk to Gort at the pub and he'll join your party now.

The weapon shop owner will now sell you weapons instead of giving you lip about having customers all day. His arsenal is weak, and your characters are already equipped with most of the weapons. The only weapon you will want to buy is a Hand Axe for Luke.

Guardiana Weapon Shop

- 100 G Short Sword
- 150 G Spear
- 200 G Hand Axe
- 80 G Wooden Staff
- 320 G Wooden Arrow

Guardiana Item Shop

- 10 G Medical Herb
- 200 G Healing Seed
- 40 G Angel Wing

After you're done exploring, head up to the castle and you'll be brought to the King. Lord Varios is trying to get Kane out of Guardiana. Kane sleighs Lord Varios with the Sword of Darkness and Mae comes into the throne room crying due to her father's sudden murder. Kane leaves right afterwards. The king tells you about the Gate of the Ancients being the only way into the tower and that you have to find the key before it falls into the hands of evil. The king tells Mae to join the Shining Force and to head to Manarina to find Anri, the King's daughter. The

next place to head is Alterone, but first, go out of the Throne Room and make your way left, then go up into the cave to obtain some treasures. In there, you will find an Antidote, 50 Coins, a Power Potion, a Defense Potion, an Angel Wing, and a Medical Herb.

Save your game and make your way to Alterone.

When you step out of Guardia, you'll have to fight your way through the Rune-faust Army to reach Alterone.

Battle 3 – To Alterone

5 Giant Bat

5 Dark Dwarf

5 Rune Knight

Win Condition – Defeat all enemies

This battle isn't too rough. Remember to Egress if you get into trouble, or use an Angel Wing. The Giant Bat's might give you some trouble, as they put you to sleep when they hit you. So if you're having trouble with them, Egress out and level your party up a little bit until you have no trouble getting through these enemies.

ALTERONE

Treasures to find: Bronze Lance, 70 Coins, 50 Coins, 3x Healing Seed, Power Potion, 2x Medical Herb, 2x Middle Sword, Wooden Arrow, Defense Potion, 100 Coins, Bread of Life, Wooden Staff

Alterone Weapon Shop

100 G Short Sword

150 G Spear

200 G Hand Axe

80 G Wooden Staff

320 G Wooden Arrow

When you enter Alterone, go in the first building you come to and head down into the basement. There will be 4 treasure chests that contain: Bronze Lance (center), Nothing (Bottom right), 70 Coins (left center) and nothing (Left corner).

Before you cross the second bridge, there is a person there that will tell you your future - she tells you death lies to the north and to head back to Guardia. Her name is Mishaela, and she'll be a nuisance throughout the game. Continue north. Don't let her scare you, that big bully.

The weapon shop contains the same weapons as Guardia, though there is a treasure chest that you can open right next to the weapon shop owner that contains 50 coins. There are also 2 more chests at the bottom of the shop. In them contain 50 Coins and a Healing Seed.

In the center of town, you will see a treasure chest on an island. To get the chest, talk to the girl and she'll tell you to watch out because she doesn't want mud all over her new dress. Head to the right and push the cart at her. Talk to her again and she'll toss you in the water and you'll land on the island. In the chest is a Power Potion. Jump back in the water to return to the mainland. Next, make your way to the building on the east side of town where the Friar is. Of course, the Friar isn't there so you can't save your game just yet, but there is a treasure chest. Open it to get a Medical Herb.

Next head to the building in the north-east and head to the basement. You will find 4 more treasure chests. In the chests you will find: a Healing Seed and a Middle Sword, the other 2 chests are empty.

The building in the far Northwest has a chest that contains a Medical Herb.

There's a man in the weapon shop who will ask you if you're Max. Tell him yes and listen to what he has to say and tell him and then say yes again. Now you will be able to enter the Castle.

In the castle you will find a waterfall with a treasure chest past the bridge that contains a Healing Seed. You can also see another chest to the left, go around and open it to get a Wooden Arrow. Now head down from that chest to find another one that contains nothing. To the left of the king's throne room is another room with 4

chests. In those chests are a Defense Potion, a Middle Sword, 100 Coins, and a Bread of Life. That's all you can get at the moment since the rest of the passage ways are blocked off by guards. Talk to the king and he will bring you to his tactician. Head right and go in the door. Before you go down the stairs, grab the treasure chest all the way to the left. Inside the chest is a Wooden Staff. Head down the stairs to the King.

The King is standing next to Kane, and 2 Rune Knights are in the room as well. Talk to Kane and he will throw you in a prison cell. The Friar is also in jail with you. Save your game and search the cell door. Khris will come and let you out. Talk to her again and she will join the Shining Force and will show you a secret escape passage. Head back to HQ and prepare for battle. When you're done in HQ (which there's not a lot you can do in there at the moment aside from talk to Nova since we don't have a lot of people in the Shining Force yet), head out of HQ to Town and you'll enter a battle.

Kane will send his troops to destroy you, but leaves because Darksol commands him to return to Runefaust immediately.

Battle 4 – Save Alterone

4 Giant Bat

4 Dark Dwarf

4 Rune Knight

2 Sniper

1 Dark Mage

Win Condition – Defeat the Dark Mage

After the battle, go back into the castle. Go left of the Throne Room and head down the stairs. You will find 3 treasure chests. One contains 50 coins and the other 2 are empty. Go back up stairs and talk to the King. He will ask for your apology and he'll tell you to search the Dragon's Head for a way to open a secret passage. Pull the chain to reveal a door behind the waterfall. Enter the door and follow the path to reach the end of Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 2 Spirit of the Holy Spring

RINDO

Treasures to find: Speed Ring

Rindo Weapon Shop

250 G Middle Sword

150 G Spear

300 G Bronze Lance

500 G Power Staff

80 G Wooden Staff

320 G Wooden Arrow

Rindo Item Shop

10 G Medical Herb

200 G Healing Seed

20 G Antidote

40 G Angel Wing

You start off in the Town of Rindo. The first thing you should do is talk to the townsfolk to see if they clue you in on where you need to go. The building above Headquarters is a theater. Go in there and watch the show if you want. It's not required, but entertaining. Now head on over to the Mayor's house in the northern part of town. His house is in the center, and once you're there, speak with him. Next, head over to the house near the water and you'll find Guntz, a Steam Knight. Talk to him and the old man, and you'll see that the Steam Suit isn't quite finished. Head the house below and you'll find a treasure chest with a Speed Ring.

Now that you've spoken with everyone, make your way outside of the town to make

your way to Manarina. Of course, what fun would the travel be without getting into a battle? The mages of Manarina sent out the army, due to them not knowing you or your reason for coming.

Battle 5 – A Welcoming from Manarina

4 Giant Bat

3 Dark Dwarf

4 Zombies

2 Sniper

3 Dark Mage

Win Condition – Defeat all enemies

TOWN OF MANARINA

Treasures to find: Domingo Egg

When you enter Manarina, talk to everyone except Anri (she's blocking the door in the first building). Instead, go explore a little bit. Behind the library is a room with a machine that looks like a robotic clown. Search it for the Domingo Egg. There's a room where you can be turned into a chicken. Explore as a chicken, and when you find the chute to go down a floor, keep walking around until you find a guard that lets a chicken through. Go into the back room and talk to the lady there. She will change you back to your normal self. Talk to her if you want and then head back and speak with Anri. On your exploration you should have spoken with Arthur as well, though you don't get him to join the Shining Force just yet.

After you speak with Anri, she'll run off. Go find her and talk to her again (she's on the platform near Arthur), and she will join the Shining Force.

Go into the room that she was blocking and talk to Otrant. She will tell you to

retrieve the orb of light from the Cavern of Darkness. Go through the door and down the stairs.

Battle 6 – The Cavern of Darkness

4 Giant Bat

1 Skeleton

3 Zombies

2 Sniper

4 Dark Mage

Win Condition – Defeat the Skeleton

In the cavern of darkness, there are 5 treasure chests. The top left corner has a power staff. The chest above the bridge contains a Wooden Staff. The chest below the bridge contains a medical herb. The chest at the bottom right corner contains a Power Ring, and the chest behind the skeleton contains the orb of light.

After the battle, go talk to Otrant who will tell you to use the Orb of Light at the pool behind the entrance to the cavern of darkness. Use the orb, and a spirit will appear and talk to you. The Spirit just tells you that Darksol is looking for key to the seal and that you must stop him. Yep, that's right, the Spirit told us what we already knew.

Go back up to Otrant and talk to her again. She'll tell you to cross the Eastern Sea's to stop Kane.

Head back up to where Arthur is and talk to him. He'll now join the Shining Force.

Make your way back to Rindo and go talk to the Mayor. He'll ask you to find his grandson and if you do, his ship is yours. The grandson is in the circus tent, which means, another battle. This is where we'll face the first real boss - Marionette. This battle isn't easy, so be prepared to Egress

out a few times so you can build your characters up.

Battle 7 – The Circus

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1 | Marionette |
| 3 | Giant Bat |
| 2 | Dire Clown |
| 3 | Mannequin |
| 3 | Evil Puppet |

Win Condition – Defeat Marionette

There are 3 chests in the circus tent that has treasures. The chest in the top right corner has a defense potion, the 2 chests next to Marionette has a Steel Arrow (Right) and 50 Coins (Left).

After you defeat the Marionette, go talk to the Mayor and he will give you his ship. Go aboard Mishaela will come and burn it down. Talk to the Mayor again and he'll tell you to go to the North East to Shade Abbey. Head out of town and make your way there.

SHADE ABBEY

When you walk into Shade Abby, you'll notice a birdman standing at the entrance. He will announce himself as Amon, and ask you to help Balbory. You can sense a battle coming as the music in Shade Abby is very glum. Talk to everyone and the back door will be unblocked by the woman standing in it. You'll notice that people are now following you. Walk into the Chapel of Light and you'll get into the next battle. If you talked to the Friar, you'll notice that he ignores you. You'll find out that it's Darksol in disguise and he'll send an army of undead after you.

When the battle starts, Max is standing away from the party. Get him back to the group and take out the monsters.

Battle 8 – The Chapel of Light

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1 | Ghoul |
| 6 | Zombie |
| 3 | Skeleton |

Win Condition – Defeat all enemies

After you defeat all of the undead creatures, Balbory will tell you that he was turned to stone by Darksol when he stole the bodies and will join the Shining Force. Walk towards the entrance and speak to Amon, he too, will join the Shining Force and then take you to Bustoke.





HAVING TROUBLE bringing down the Count's castle? Fear not, for this guide will help you "blaze" a path to glory! Keep in mind this guide is not intended as an in-depth breakdown of every square inch of the game, but rather instead is both a trip down memory lane, and

meant to give you the "cake-walk" treatment you can use in your own adventures into the castle's depths.

My first experience with Castlevania came in the summer of 1988. I was yet unfamiliar with the library of NES games, having just obtained the console for my 14th birthday that April. My father and brother

went out to shop for another NES game for us to play through after having finished Top Gun and Rush 'N Attack. They arrived home with Castlevania, and I knew nothing about it. Skeptical, I nevertheless grabbed the game up and loaded it into the NES to start playing.

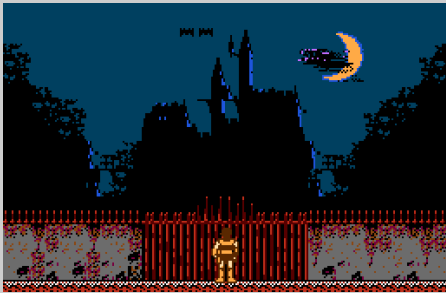
I didn't know what to think of the game even after an hour of playing it. Okay yeah,



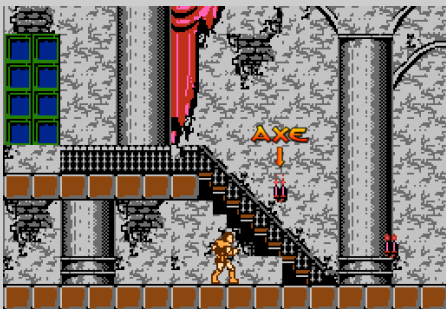
it's an homage to old classic horror movie monsters, but I wasn't sure if I was going to really like it or not. By that night, I was already up to the cavern area after the Mummy Men. That damn cavern became a roadblock as it required significantly more skill than the previous areas to traverse. Over the ensuing next few days, I'd honed my skill and found the triple boomerangs to be my weapons of choice. I would come to use them on every boss for years in my regular playthroughs of the game. Yes, I fell in love with Castlevania. The challenge was hard, but not frustratingly so. That's a very difficult balance to make, and Konami pulled it off perfectly.

Flash forward a decade to 1998. My friends and I are sitting around talking about the good 'ol days of NES gaming when we got on the subject of Castlevania. I'm then informed by one of them about the potency of the "jar" on many of the bosses (the weapon is actually called the "fire bomb"). I was stunned when I loaded up the game to try it myself. Boss after boss would fall without so much as making any movement! I dropped the triple boomerang method like a nasty habit and never looked back since. It's now time to show you what I learned...

Let the burning begin!

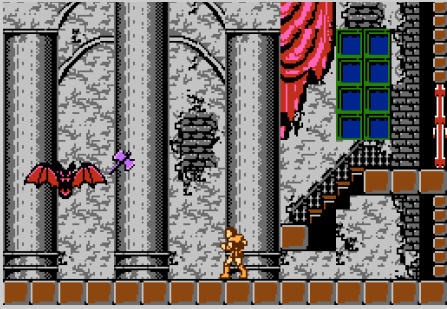


The only thing to worry about in the first area is to grab the axe on the last section:

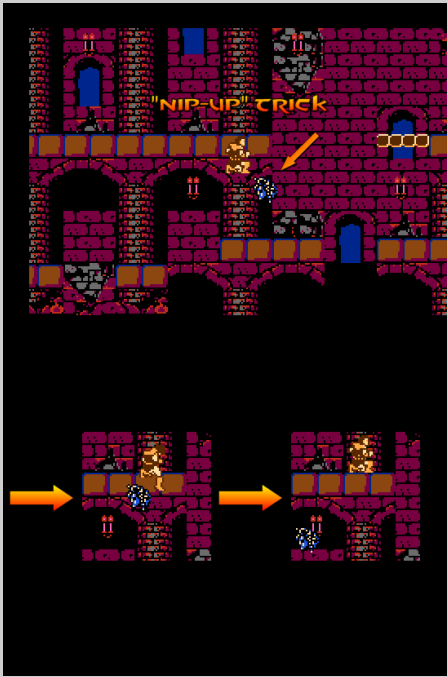


The boss phantom bat at the end is easily dispatched with the axe, and there is a

double-shot token hidden in the bricks on the boss screen to make it even easier. Flick some axes at that hovering bat and win:



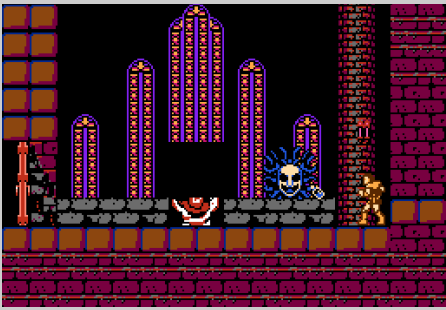
The 2nd area has one of my favorite little tricks to skip a section of one of the stages. I call it the "nip-up" trick. This is where you intentionally take a hit from a Medusa head in order to bounce up to the next floor. The image below demonstrates the positioning for the hit:



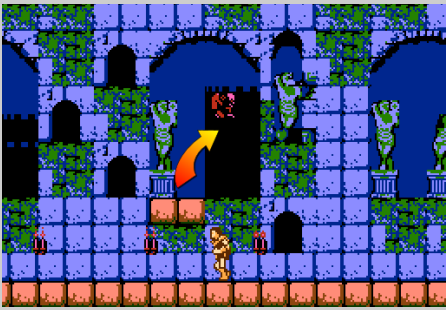
On the 2nd to last segment, it's vitally important to grab the fire bomb weapon here:



We'll be keeping the fire bomb all the way through the game, save for the last stage. Our first taste of its potency will be on the Queen Medusa at the end of this area. When she appears, just toss some fire bombs until she burns away.

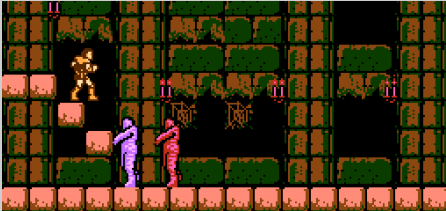


The 3rd area starts to get a little challenging for first-timers. The hunchbacks can be really annoying as they leap towards you and bounce around rather quickly. The trick is to walk right straight at them without stopping until they do a slow high-jump over you. The you just turn and whip them:

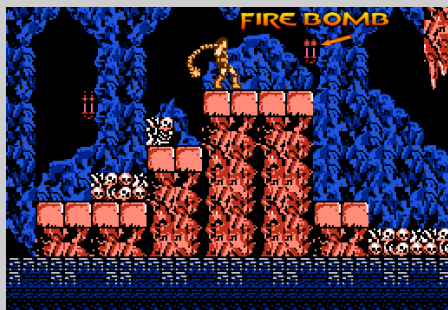


On your way to the mummy men, make sure to carefully avoid accidentally losing your fire bomb weapon. There's a knife in one of the candles right before the boss room, so avoid that as well. If you do end up losing the fire bomb, don't panic. There's another chance to get the fire bomb back in the 4th area.

The mummy men themselves are a joke. Simply toss fire bombs from the top ledge to burn them, or crouch on the lowest ledge and whip the two of them like crazy. If you get low on health, the lowest ledge also can be broken away to reveal a pork chop.

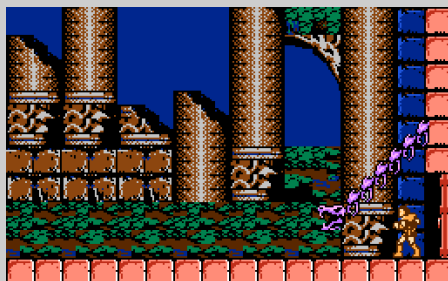


The 4th area requires some practice to master if you're a bit new to the game. Provided below is the location of the fire bomb if you lost it in the previous area:



The main thing to watch out for after making it past the underground swamp is to not accidentally grab a new weapon that might drop from one of the hunchbacks. Once in a great while, they drop an axe or a watch, and you'll be royally screwed on Frankenstein's Monster + Igor if you pick one of those weapons up.

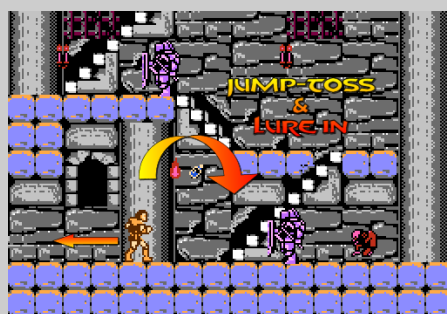
At the end of the outdoor area, just keep running right underneath the skull dragon. You'll pass underneath without getting hit. You can then turn around and whip the dragon or farm it for a double shot if you need:



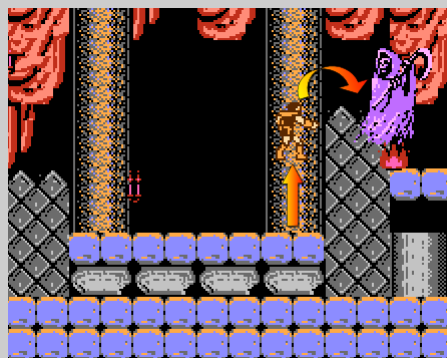
Once you reach the boss screen, immediately start tossing fire bombs at the monster's feet. Both he and Igor will be unable to move! It's just as easy as the Queen Medusa fight, provided of course that you kept the fire bomb to this point.



For the 5th area, we're going to make extensive use of the fire bomb. With practice, the entire area is a snap using the deadly "freezing" ability of the fire bomb on the armored axe men. The technique I use is a jump-toss followed by a lure-in, where I run the opposite direction to get the axe men to walk into the flame on the ground. If timed correctly (and it's pretty easy to do), a single fire bomb will lock an axe man in place until it destroys him. If you only get a partial hit, don't worry, the damage will accumulate with more tosses. Below is a diagram of the jump-toss method, which works superbly even on the final segment of axe men and medusa heads:



When you reach the Grim Reaper boss screen, you're just going to walk left until the screen locks in place. Then you immediately stand on the edge of the lower platform and start jump-tossing fire bombs over and over. Poor Grimmy lands right into the blaze and gets locked in place! What's worse for him is he can't even summon his flying cycles! Just keep jump-tossing fire bombs until his robe goes up in flames:

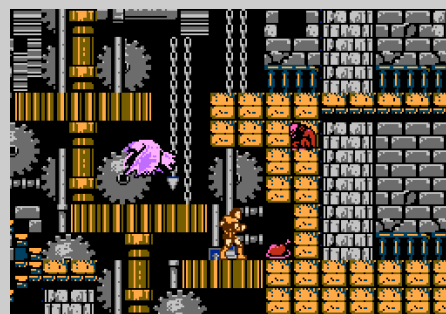


The final area is the real challenge in the game. There's not much for exploits, and you just have to make a run for it. The first segment is a gantlet (yes, that's the correct spelling) of giant phantom bats. Don't try to take them out. All you can do is run and try to dodge them. Along the way is a watch

from one of the candles. Get it, but don't use it. We need all three uses for the next segment.



Once inside the clock tower, you'll need to whip the skeletons and make your way to the top. Once you get to the top, watch out for the dagger and walk to the left until you activate the flying eagles carrying hunchbacks. Drop down below and use the watch. If you need health, there's a pork chop to the right in the wall.



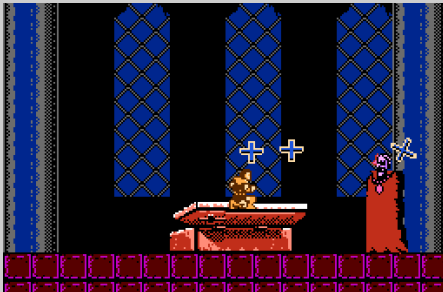
Continue down to the next screen and use the stopwatch again to give you save passage back up the stairs. Once you make it back up to the next screen, you'll be safe. Now you're on the final staircase to Dracula's lair!



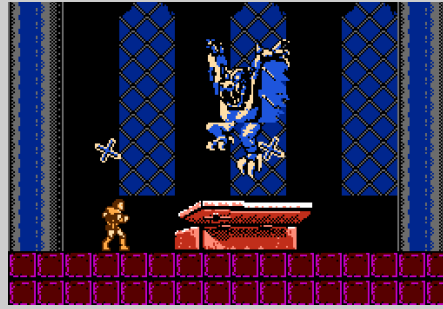
I've heard rumors that the fire bomb works well on Dracula, but I never could work out a strategy with it. The triple boomerang method has always worked plenty fine enough for me anyway. To get triple boomerangs, you need to avoid scrolling completely into

Dracula's room. Instead, grab the boomerang and walk back down the stairs. Then walk back up the stairs to reset the candles. Now hit each candle with a boomerang toss and collect the hearts. Simply rinse and repeat until you collect the triple shot and around 40 hearts or so.

Dracula himself has two forms. First is his human form where he teleports and flings fireballs at you. Only his head can be damaged, so you're going to jump-toss boomerangs at it. Usually you can get multiple



hits on the head in one pass with enough boomerangs already flying through the air. Keep doing this until the head snaps off.



Dracula's second form is a large demon. Once again you'll need to jump-toss boomerangs like crazy, and keep your distance as he jumps around the room. As you get used to the fight, you'll find that your timing of the boomerang jump-toss will destroy his flaming-breath attacks before the fireballs can hit you. The triple boomerangs will

make short work of the demon.



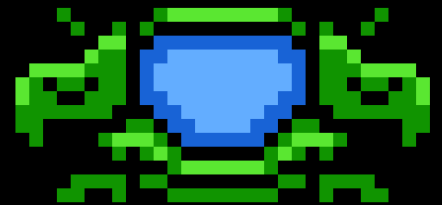
So really only the last stage makes the one-man completion a challenge. Thankfully the rest of the game is short and easy with the fire bomb weapon, and you'll find you can make your way back to Dracula in a mere 20 minutes or less to keep trying. Good luck!

— FIREBRANDX



BATTLE KID 2

Mountain of Torment



I HAD BEEN stalking the RetroZone website earlier this winter. The game I was looking for was taunting me with a label of “temporarily unavailable” every time that I looked. In February, the site estimated that copies would be available in March. In March, it said to wait until April. It took me about 6 weeks, but I was finally able to order my prize: A copy of “Battle Kid 2: Mountain of Torment”.

I’m not surprised that it was so difficult to get a copy of this game. Just this past winter, I had played the first episode, “Battle Kid: Fortress of Peril”, and immediately became a fan. While playing it, I completely forgot that it was a homebrew. The game was so good in all areas that I would rank it right up there with just about anything Nintendo ever released for the NES. “Mountain of Torment” picks up where the first game left off. It offers the same style as the first game, while also making several improvements.



GRAPHICS

It's tough to be a 21st century game on a 20th century system, but Battle Kid 2 pulls it off nicely. The graphics will never make anyone forget that this is an 8-bit game, but compared only to NES games, the visuals are actually quite stellar. The game particularly shines during boss battles. The attention to detail with each of the different enemies is quite impressive. It's also remarkable how this game never suffers from the dreaded NES slowdown effects, despite having a large number of sprites onscreen at times.

SOUND

I really love the soundtrack to this game. I still catch myself humming tunes from my favorite scenes from time to time. It's upbeat, easy to listen to, and never seems to get old. The music has a Mega Man feel to it, which is definitely not a bad thing. The sound effects are just your traditional NES beats and bleeps, but they do the job nicely. There are even a few sounds that I'm sure that I've never heard before in any other game.



STORY

I'll leave the details out to avoid spoilers from the first game, but I will say that I really enjoyed the story. It takes your basic "save the world from the forces of evil" plot and

tells it well. Nothing fancy, but still much improved from the first game. There are a lot more cut scenes this time around. Our hero, Timmy, is now equipped with a comm unit that lets him talk to home base whenever he discovers something. In addition, Timmy ends up talking trash with his enemies on occasion, which really adds some spice to each encounter.



GAMEPLAY

Take the best attributes from Metroid and Mega Man games, throw in some extremely precise controls and an insane (but flexible) difficulty level, and you come up with Battle Kid 2. Much like the first game, you'll spend a lot of time exploring a fortress, most of which cannot be accessed without the many powerups that are scattered about. These items give Timmy new abilities that will not only need to be used, but perfected if he plans to survive.



Timmy continues to sport his blue bomber lookalike best, while also displaying some new moves, such as the ability to climb certain walls and swim quickly through thick sludge. The Feather Fall and Double Jump moves make a return appearance, though the Double Jump can now be later upgraded to a Triple Jump.

New and improved in this episode is a subscreen, which contains several good-



ies, such as a map that shows the entire fortress, along with your current location and a big X to mark your next goal. This screen is also where you can use the comm unit and talk to home base. This is a huge upgrade from the first game, where you could only phone home from a single computer console near the start. You can also use this screen to keep track of your death count. Sivak gave us a 4-digit number for this counter for some reason. Not sure why exactly...

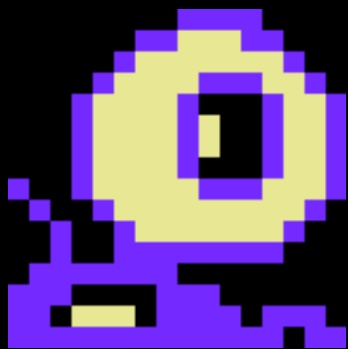


CHALLENGE

Oh right, this game is HARD. Don't expect to beat this game without paying for it with several hundred (or even thousand) lives. Almost every room has a trick to it that will kill you the first few times you try to pass through. You really need to take your time with each room and come up with a plan of attack.

In addition, the boss battles (13 this time!) are all very intense. Each enemy has several attacks that will require careful planning and quick reflexes in order to avoid. The attacks are also random, so forget about getting through by simply memorizing patterns.

Just in case you need more evidence



about this game's extreme difficulty, consider that you are given 65 lives to complete the game with on the "Hard" difficulty setting and 25 lives to beat "Very Hard". Not enough? How about "Unfair", where you cannot die at all? You are only given passwords when you die on the "Easy" and "Normal" modes, so if you want to beat this game on anything higher, you will have to earn it, perhaps more than in any NES game ever made.

Battle Kid 2 is a little bit more forgiving on the easiest difficulty level than its predecessor. Normally one hit is all it takes to kill you, but on "Easy" mode, you can get hit up to three times. As with Battle Kid 1, you also automatically get to use the Damage Amp upgrade (doubles your attack power) when playing on "Easy".

Just to be clear, this is the GOOD kind of challenge. Battle Kid 2 may be one of the toughest games around, but it still fights fairly. This isn't Deadly Towers with all of its glitchy, cheap ways to die. This game has very precise play control and its design is extremely well thought out. When you die, it may piss you off, but you can never say that it happened because the game cheated you.



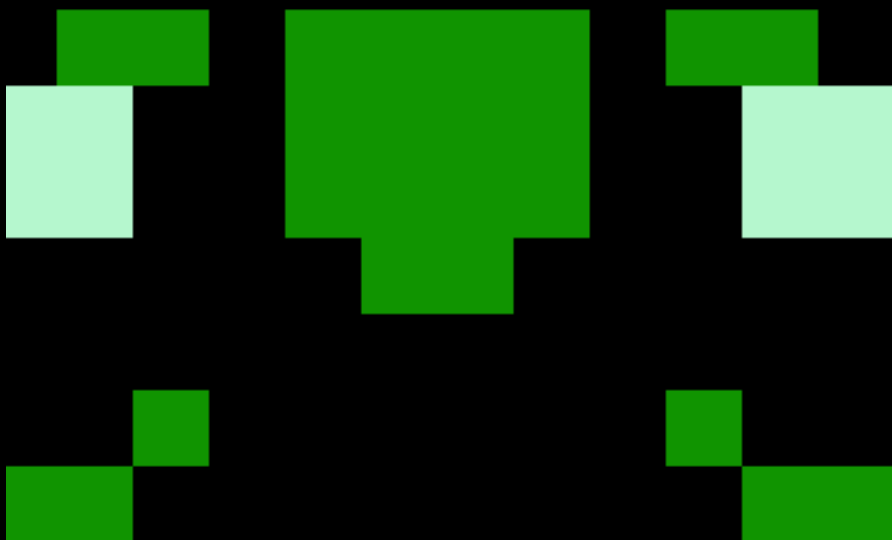
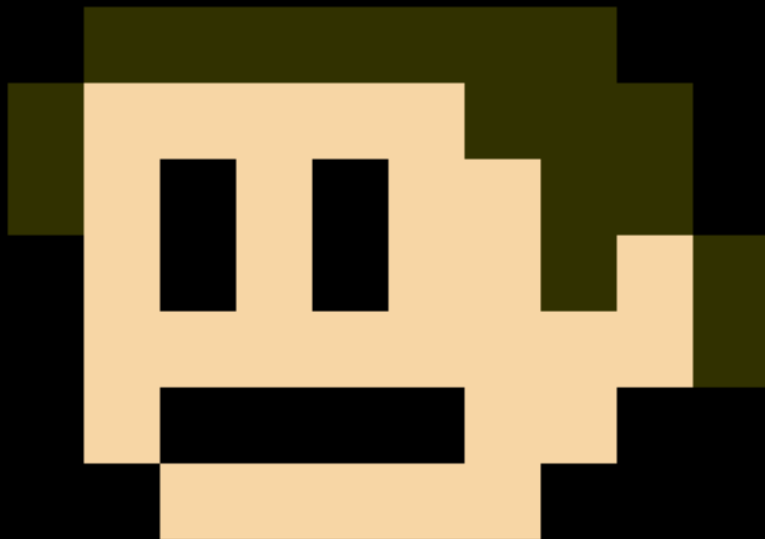
CONCLUSION

Sivak, the developer behind the Battle Kid games, has really outdone himself with Bat-

tle Kid 2. He has taken tried and true game concepts and really made them his own. Quick example: One of the classic moments from the Mega Man series is when he fights against clones of himself. My favorite moment in Battle Kid 2 is a similar boss battle where Timmy encounters a machine that creates what ends up being a whole army of Timmy clones. They start out very easy to kill and gradually pick up additional abilities as the machine tries to figure out a way to beat Timmy. What follows is an extremely tough, but also amusing battle that will be quite satisfying to complete. As if the game wasn't good enough without it, this battle represents the kind of charm that is spread throughout the game.

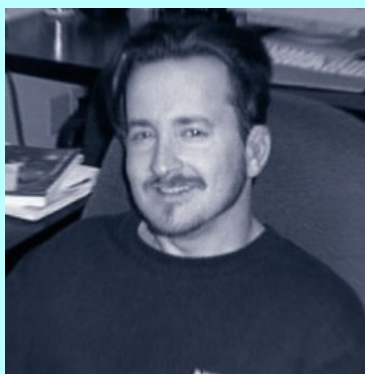
Very few times in my life have I ever finished playing a video game and thought to myself, "now THIS is a game". My experience with Battle Kid 2 was one of those times. It's going to beat you up. It's going to make you swear. It may even give you the urge to break a few things. But it still has a way of keeping you coming back for more. It's easily one of the best video games you can buy. It's absolutely worth all the effort I went through to obtain it. If you're an NES fan and don't already have this game, what are you waiting for? Get it!

—RDRUNNER



DAN BURKE

Interview BY VECTREX280996



NA Hello Dan, As some might already know, you were one of the in house programmers at Color Dreams. Can you first start by telling us a little about yourself?

DAN BURKE Hi Vec, actually I was an artist!

How did you get the job at Color Dreams, and how was the job?

Sure, I was originally going to Saddleback College, working on an AA degree in art with the intent to go into Commercial Art of some kind. I was also working at an Art Store in Irvine called 'Sterline Art'. This was around 1988-89. I was also a cartoonist for the Saddleback College Lariat, and there I met a writer named Leo Gilreath. Leo had met a 'kid' in an arcade named Frank Waung who was making a video game, paid. I was skeptical, but we met-up at Round Table Pizza and hit it off great. Later on, we met with Color Dreams and got contracted to do our first game, Raid 200. The funniest bit is that I had to quit my art job. So, I told my boss about the opportunity and he said, 'If you don't take that job and quit this one, I'm going to fire you!' We laughed. It was a good way to end it. I borrowed a couple hundred bucks from my Dad's wife (and Frank's girlfriend) in order to support myself while we worked for a few months, under-contract but with no pay up-front. When we finished, we each got a check for \$10,000 against royalties, so that was a big deal in 1989. After we finished and shipped Raid 200, Color Dreams asked me to work on more games, under-contract, but this time being paid. We worked on RoboDemons, Challenge of the Dragon, Pestterminator and others. My title then was an artist (and designer) and I worked on some sound too (for Raid 200) before we got dedicated audio people. So that's how I landed my first job in video games. ;)

And that was one heck of a nice job! Was it hard to develop games for the NES, especially with no official developer's kit?

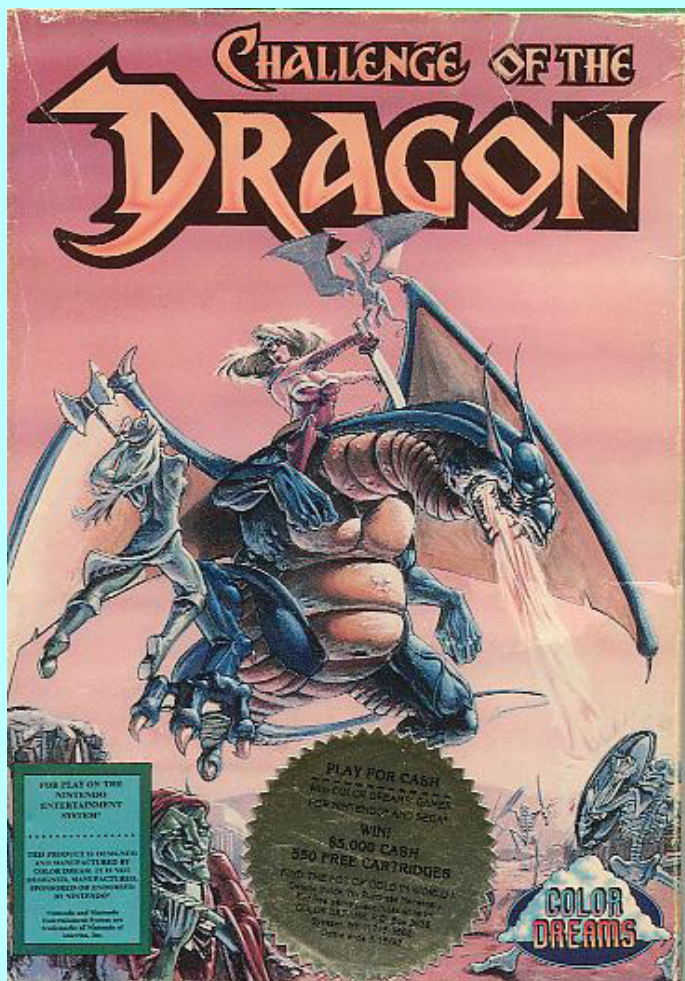
Yeah, kinda. They reverse-engineered the NES as you know, but did it in a way so as not to get sued (like Tengen did). We had a very primitive setup, where I had to use the NES controller to move around on a graph to input pixels, and select my colors using different buttons. I also had to animate like this, frame by frame. It wasn't really animating so much as entering the pixels of each frame. It got to be like a video game unto itself, ripping around on the controller, entering pixel by pixel, line by line! I did the whole Raid 200 game exactly like that! No Wacom, no mouse. Had to walk uphill in the snow to work

and home... Just kidding! The art was easier to do, but I had to do it in a way that was difficult and tricky. ;)

As for the music, I composed all the music for RAID 200. I translated each note to Hex and entered that myself, or Frank Waung would enter it and I'd double-check timing and such. Leo Gilreath (the guy who introduced me to Frank, and whom I worked-with on The Lariat school newspaper) was the official writer.

How many copies did the average Color Dreams sell?

Oh, I have no idea. It was a good amount. They were basically just taking-advantage of an opportunity to sell any games, considering the reverse-engineering and avoiding fees and such from Nintendo. These weren't the best games around, mind, but they were fun little ditties from an indie publisher, without Nintendo's usual vetting process... for better or worse. I don't want to say we were producing



games on par with E.T. for Atari, but we were concerned as much about speed as we were 'quality'. Either way, I did the best with the time and resource I had. Challenge of the Dragon was actually pretty great, I think. I was kinda proud of that one. Robodemons we cranked-out in a month!

Raid 2020 was my very first title-credit, and we put everything we had into making that as good as we could, but needless to say, Color Dreams had some of their own ideas, which changed things at the end, maybe for better but also for worse. ;) I still remember Eddie Lin coming in and saying that we had to make the main hero able to ride on a bee. He received a lot of ridicule for that one (behind closed-doors, of course).

It may have been made in a month, yet I still enjoy it!

Did you play any of the unreleased games (Hellraiser for example)?

Yay! glad to hear that, Vec. No, I remember starting work on Hellraiser... but we never got to finish it. I did play every other game I worked-on. Some of it is the fact that it's got a little place in history. ;)

I remember doing those little illustrations for RoboDemons too. ;) They're on the box My 2D art style was heavily inspired by Denis Loubet, of Ultima fame. I got to meet him later on (at a Max confer-

ence) and we're friends on FB now, so that's kinda cool. Such a small world.

Do you still have any Color Dreams stuff at home?

Yes, I do! I have one of each, I think. Usually we got a few games for posterity. I may have sold a couple on eBay. ;)

Really?! Now my community's gonna hate you for being a reseller (XD) Just kidding! Can you tell us a little bit more about your video game career after Color Dreams?

Well, I've been working since then in video games. I went to work (freelance) for Interplay and have worked for several other companies: Blizzard, NVIDIA, Mindcraft (Magic Candle fame), THQ, Seven Studios, tons of freelance jobs, etc. Around 1993, 3D Art starting becoming something I couldn't ignore.

So I learned to do 3D and it changed my whole job, but I love it! Back when I was first making games... it was all hand-drawn pixel art. My website is at <http://www.nukleon.com>, In case anyone wants to see some of my latest. Warning, there are a lot of orcs. I love orcs.

I remember the first time I got to use a mouse on a Color Dreams game. Ken Beckett developed a tool to let us develop and draw with mice. It was amazing. Ken is the programmer behind



Crystal Mines (Lynx) and others. During this time, the 486 computer was considered 'fast'. Heh.



I know that the definition of "fast" in computing has evolved through the years, too (Have an old C64 with "fast" loading tapes)! You probably know that today, Color Dreams became the camera maker Star Dot Technologies. Did you stay in touch with the company after you left? Or your ex colleagues?

Yes I do know that. I didn't stay in touch with anyone except Roger Somerville, now known as Roger DeForest. Roger is awesome. I actually helped bring him in to the industry, where he stayed for several years. I dated a woman from Color Dreams too (Nina Stanley) and I think she got into teaching later on. We were only together for about a year or so and aren't in contact now. Aside from Roger, I am not in touch with anyone from that time. I'd like to talk to Dan Lawton again sometime though. Maybe I should show up to StarDot one day. ;)

I think they're still in Brea. It'd be fun to see everyone again! The reason I quit Color Dreams is that they basically morphed into Wisdom Tree, making Christian Bible Games. At the time, I was a Christian and I was not keen on the prospect of making Bible Games. Now, as an atheist I am not keen on making Bible Games. I can't win!

I think that they still are. I even saw that they mentioned that they made NES games on their site! Speaking about the games: Even though most people don't like your work at Color Dreams, how do you react when you find out that your Color Dreams games have a cult following?

Some people despise what we did...which they view as flooding the market with crap. They may have a point. For me, it was a trial-by-

fire way to get into the game business quite early and at a young age (20). I love the fact that Color Dreams has a cult following! It's a kick in the pants. It also let me skip college and avoid student loans, so there's that. I thoroughly-enjoyed the time I spent working with everyone at Color Dreams, even with the occasional frustration. It was a hell of a lot of work but we had a lot of fun too.

What a cast of characters, too. Oh wait, I kept in touch with Robert Bonifacio, I can't believe I left that out. Robert was the programmer on King Neptune's Adventure. That's where we met, but I had actually played some of Robert's games on PC before we met (Richard Petty's Talladega, Super Huey, etc.). We ended up becoming good friends and worked at Mindcraft and THQ together. We're still in contact to this day and have developed some iOS games together and may work-together again soon. He's in Hawaii now, where he's a freelance programmer

Except for video games, what are your hobbies?

Oh, hobbies. Well, I'm a skeptic and enjoy debate. I'm a voracious reader (non-fiction). I love motorcycles and moto-vlogging. Check out my channel on YouTube: <http://www.YouTube.com/Spacep0d>. I actually talk about the video game biz sometimes. I also still love to create art and am still composing music too. YouTube and/or motovlogging has become one of my favorite pastimes. Though I rarely have enough time to just 'pass it'. Usually I'm trying to catch up with all my interests. What's funny is that I've met a few other game developers who motovlog, quite by accident.



See? You all should subscribe to Dan! And Now, I would like to thank you for the interview, Sir Burkelot! Any last words before we conclude this?

Thanks for the interview, Vec. Color Dreams was as crazy as it sounds, and we were a little indie developer just struggling to survive like a minnow among sharks. ;) Many of us are still in the biz, years later. ;) Sir Burkelot. OMG haven't heard that in forever. ;) Thanks Vec!

And I shall thank you too, Dan!

NOW PLAYING

TMNT

BY THEWALRUSISAL

This time around in "Now Playing" we'll feature the twin punch of TMNT, the 2007 CG film written and directed by Kevin Munroe and the Game Boy Advance brawler tie-in from publisher Ubisoft.

THE MOVIE

Nothing like striking while the iron's hot, right? Coming only 14 years after the last installment in the Ninja Turtles film franchise, TMNT tells the story of Yaotl, an ancient military general doomed to live forever and repent for the transformation of his comrades into stone statues.

Cut to 3,000 years later and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is... a bit off. Leonardo has been sent to the school of hard knocks in South America, Donatello is an operator for an IT hotline and Michelangelo is a children's party entertainer. Raphael sleeps all day because at night he wanders the streets as the costumed Night-watcher vigilante.

Suffice it to say, the Turtles have a rough reunion upon Leo's return and are thrown into the mix of April O'Neil and Casey Jones' new archaeology business venture, the Foot Clan as hired goons for Yaotl's plan to free himself and his stone brothers and 13 monsters on the loose in NYC.

TMNT is a serviceable entry into the Turtles lexicon; I'd place it even with the 2nd film, but behind the celluloid debut but light years ahead of the abysmal 3rd movie. The computer generated animation is extremely well done - I recommend a Blu-ray viewing to get the most out of the textures and details put into the visuals. Voice acting is also on point, with some big names such as Sir Patrick Stewart and Sarah Michelle Gellar behind the mic.



Where TMNT falls short is in the pacing of the plot, which is ridiculous in a good way that remains true to the comic book and Saturday morning cartoon pedigree of the characters. The first half hour or so is Exposition Theater, the action scenes/fights are over quickly and the climax is, quite frankly, not all that climactic. Those 13 monsters? Taken care of in a 10 second montage. The film is also light on humor with the expected TMNT silliness dialed down in favor of darker plot and infighting between characters. I liked the movie and wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to fans of the franchise, but it definitely could've been better had it been more focused on telling a solid story and just a bit lighter in tone.



THE GAME

Ubisoft released a TMNT game for all major platforms in 2007, but the GBA tie-in is different from its console brethren and a nice little surprise...dare I say a hidden gem? It's a brawler cut from the same cloth as Konami's arcade/NES/SNES classics, but with a dash of

River City Ransom thrown in. In addition to very satisfying controls for your Turtles and the items/weapons at your disposal, you can use coins collected from downed enemies to boost your characters' levels and abilities in a between-level shop. You've also got a selection of mini games to try your hand at that helps round out the title. If you're a fan of TMNT: The Arcade Game, Turtles in Time and/or River City Ransom, you owe it to yourself to track down a cheap copy and pop it into your GBA or Gamecube GBA Player and give it a run. The game IS short and can be beaten in an afternoon, but there is some replay value to go back on harder difficulties, earn trophies and string together longer combos.

PLOT

Overall, the Game Boy Advance TMNT experience is modeled very closely on the film in many respects; more so than most licensed titles I've played through. The game follows the movie's plot, hitting the highlights but told as a flashback by the Turtles to April as she is about to publish a book based on their experiences fighting Yaotl and his forces. In a nice nod to the film, early on you play as Raphael solo, without the help of your brothers. Later stages allow you to cash in a filled up special meter to summon another Turtle to help you with a health power up or as a brief fighting partner. The reconnection of the Turtles as a fearsome fighting team and family was an underlying B-story of the film, so it's neat that it's represented here in the game.

You fight through levels that hark back to the movie - the streets of NYC, a diner, Max Winters/Yaotl's building, the portal - and get to see the story progress with some nicely digitized stills from the movie to illustrate what's going on. Finally, you've got the sewer as a hub

where you can choose to view your trophy room, go above ground to shop or train or talk to Splinter for your next mission.

CHARACTERS

The roster is all there. Aside from the Raph-only stages, you've got your pick of any of the four Turtles with their unique weapons and different levels for strength, defense, speed, etc. Splinter, April and Casey Jones are present in cut scenes but also as training partners for the variety of mini game challenges between levels.

Bad buys take the form of various street thugs and robots that differ in their strength and weaponry. Some drop baseball bats, swords, bombs and dynamite for you to pick up and use right back. The stock enemies are the one liberty taken with the game - after all, you've got to have someone to fight, right?

Bosses are mostly true to the movie - you'll fight a big street punk, Karai (the new leader of the Foot Clan now that Shredder is out of the picture), the small monster Raphael takes on in the diner, Yaotl and his stone brothers. The missing 13th monster appears as a boss - you don't really kill him, you feed him fish. So, there's that. A clever boss battle was to dodge/defeat enemy waves as you try to destroy the capsule that imprisons Leonardo - inspired by a plot point from the film.



MUSIC & SOUND

The film's musical score was nothing too memorable, and neither is the game - but both are serviceable. I'm not sure if the music played during the game is the same as the films as it just sounds like generic background tunes. I did like the music in the sewer hub, as it has a distinct SNES vibe to it. The game doesn't feature much voice acting, but there are some sampled grunts and words here and there that sound close enough to the characters.

RANDOM CLOSING THOUGHT

Another game that shows an influence from this film was TMNT Smash Up, a Smash Bros. clone for Wii/PS2 released in 2009. That game featured a roster of mainly characters from the 2007 movie and some Ubisoft Rabbids. Even though I watched the cartoon series, my main source of Turtle stories came from the Archie 'TMNT Adventures' comics. Characters like Wingnut and Screwloose, Mondo Gecko and Cudley the Cowlick were favorites of mine - too bad they couldn't make the cut for the movie or the fighting game.

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

BY FIKAP

Journey back to a simpler and more relaxing time when playing was our full time job! On weekends our family spends some time perusing yard sales and flea markets in the hope of finding gems from our childhood to collect and / or resell to further our collections. I look forward, to a hopefully continuing column, to sharing some tips and tidbits on collecting retro games and toys and look forward to sharing some rare and otherwise less well known toy and game lines from the late 70's through the early 90's! Let's empty the attic shall we?

GARBAGE PAIL KIDS

The year 1985 ushered in a great new collectable series of trading cards know as Garbage Pail Kids. These cards, a blatant rip-off of the highly successful Cabbage Patch Kids line, featured numerous sticker based cards of kids in disgusting or disfigured situations. The cards quickly became a target of parents who hated them... and of course kids responded by clearing the shelves of the cards as soon as they arrived. For a mere .25 a pack the cards included 5 stickers and a stick of pink gum and were produced by the TOPPS Company which modeled the packs off of their well know baseball card line. With characters such as Scotty Potty, Adam Bomb and Slobby Robbie the stickers were soon plastered all over trapper keepers in school and all of a sudden one dreaded what sticker their name would be drawn as.

The series lasted through fifteen different sets, including an A and B series of the same sticker with different names attached to them. TOPPS also produced 2 giant card sets and a few larger collectable posters. Garbage pail kids have since been re-introduced the first time in 2003 with seven new lines of sticker cards.

DID YOU KNOW?

A not so hit movie called "The Garbage Pail Kids Movie" in 1987 was made which is as bad as it sounds... it currently rates a 2.7 out

of 10 stars on IMDb.

The most popular Garbage Pail Kid was Atom Bomb a child in a blue suit and tie pushing a red trigger causing his head to explode in a mushroom cloud in a Phil Collins Land of Confusion like moment. Adam was the poster child of the collection adorning the cover of TOPPS boxes and packs through the first 5 series. The very last Garbage Pail Kid card produced was also Atom Bomb II but with a different sticker art.

Ronald Reagan, a past president, was characterized as well with a sticker Rappin' Ron.

KEYS TO COLLECTING

As with all card based collectables the key issue in finding good cards is the lack of corner peeling, no bends and or creases in the card itself and of course no writing on the card. Many of these cards have the numbers circled and also show heavy sun fading which also decreases value. The first set (with the A and B series) intact is the most expensive currently and the prices generally decrease from there. These cards were produced internationally as well with the Japanese cards, called Bukimi Kun worth the most. Also keep an eye out for early test sets from Germany / Denmark / Belgium or the Netherlands as well.

CURRENT AVERAGE SOLD VALUE

United States Issued Garbage Pail Kids Sets EBAY Values (As of June 2013)

- **Series 1:** \$300.00 82 of 82 Cards Near Mint 1985
- **Series 2:** \$80.00 84 of 84 Cards Near Mint 1986
- **Series 3:** \$20.00 88 of 88 Cards Near Mint
- **Series 4:** \$15.00 84 of 84 Cards Near Mint





EARLY 80'S HANDHELD MINI ARCADES: DRACULA 1982

I'll let the first paragraph of the manual set the tone for this hidden gem of the early 80's. "You are a treasure hunter seeking the treasure hidden in a coffin in Dracula's castle. But watch out - Dangers lie ahead! You must escape the Wolfman, break down a wall to enter the underground labyrinth and evade a vampire bat as you try to collect diamonds." From there the fun of Dracula begins!

Playing off of the quarter feeding frenzy of the late 70's / early 80's arcade cabinets, a slew of companies began to develop mini handheld arcade cabinets of top arcade hits to play at home. Most of the well-known games including Galaxian, Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man and Frogger got their own mini cabinet versions. A series of companies including the well-known Entex machine entered the market. Published in 1982 by Epoch Dracula came housed in a red case in the United States but was produced in a yellow case under the name Hales in other Countries. In Japan the game was titled Dracula House. Running off of battery power or through a 6V adapter this was a pretty fun game. With a magnifying plastic viewing display that made the graphics seem much bigger than they actually were and the size of this handheld... as a kid you needed both hands to lug it around... it seemed grander than Coleco's more popular mini cabinets.

The game begins on the left side of the screen as you navigate the wolfman's den and attempt to hammer down the loose stone wall to enter the Underground Labyrinth. The directional pad moves the treasure hunter around and the square button operates the hammer. The treasure hunter must hit the wall 8 times to break down the wall... 4 times to demolish the upper portion and another 4 times to destroy the lower section... but beware the wolfman is coming for you! There are three walls total and even though only one wall needs to be collapsed bonus points are given for taking down all three walls. Once entering the Underground Labyrinth the treasure hunter will navigate moving walls and a very mad vampire bat. A series of crosses will protect you from the



bat but beware... they move from time to time. Collect all 16 gems and the doors open to Dracula's castle!

Once in Dracula's castle you are confronted with 4 coffins... in one lies the treasure... find it and you enter Level 2 with faster enemies! But in the other 3 lies Dracula... open the wrong one and you must find a cross and then catch Dracula for a second chance... if not... well you've joined the undead! Though simple sounding its a fairly challenging game and very fun to play.

DID YOU KNOW?

Dracula's initial price tag was a cool \$45.00 and rarely went on sale... consider that steep as a Atari 2600 generally retailed for \$170.00 - \$200.00 and had interchangeable games.

KEYS TO COLLECTING

As with all mini cabinet handhelds don't forget to check the battery compartment... corrosion can ruin those things and many were left in attics with batteries intact for years. Controller smoothness and lack of

scratches on the screen as well as a battery compartment cover are keys for value. The box and manual, in great shape, are rare to find.

CURRENT AVERAGE SOLD VALUE

via Ebay (As of June 2013)

\$35.00 - \$75.00 depending on condition without packaging and manual





NEO·GEO®

MVS®
MULTI VIDEO SYSTEM

CART TUTORIAL

BY GORILLAZERO

PROJECT

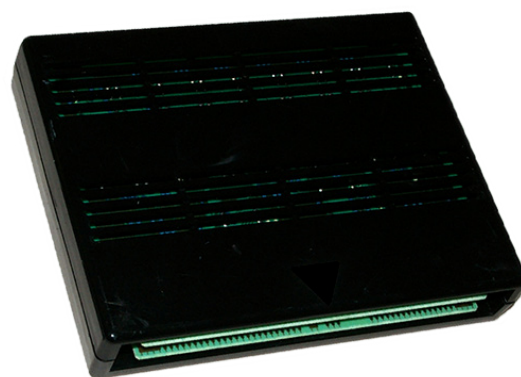
So who's heard of Neo Geo? Whether it was the Neo Geo Pocket or the AES home system, we probably all have. However, most likely you never wanted to pay the price for an AES home system and its even more pricey games. Well lucky for us before creating the AES, SNK was producing MVS motherboards and cartridges for Arcades. I know right, Arcades? What are these? If you don't know what they are, that makes me quite sad, most kids over 25 lived at them while their sisters shopped for jeans. My desire for this article is to identify how easy it is to get your foot in the door with the Neo Geo MVS system and give you a taste of one of the many games that never saw the light of day back in the 90's entitled Ghostlop.

HISTORY

Ghostlop was a title developed by Data East, which was one of the Neo Geo's best developers. Data East developed great games such as Windjammers and Spin Master for their MVS and AES systems. Ghostlop was never released but was shown at various Game Shows in the 90's. The play style is very similar to that of Puzzle Bobble, however the story involves two ghost catchers

named Bruce and McCoy whose goal is to eradicate all of the Great King of Terror's minions and give their beautiful boss something to be happy about.

The object is to not just put three matching bubbles together here, because really there are only two types, orange and blue. Your goal is to watch as the wave of orange and blue ghosts rain down from the top of the screen towards you and shoot the matching color energy ball at them. You are able to change the color of the energy ball on the fly as it bounces across the screen. Your ghost catcher can move left and right, as well as shoot their energy ball at any angle. Now watch out, as the ghost you're actually battling against is doing the exact same thing. The more your opponent or you score, the more the other player receives "stone" ghosts that must be hit multiple times for you to get through them. This is the challenging part, which makes the game a lot of fun. Either using a Unibios or just dip switches you can set the level of difficulty from 1 to 8. Every level has a fun story behind the ghost you're catching and after you finish each level you're able to choose between two levels. This simple idea gives you a different way to pay each time without getting you too tired of the same structured levels.



TUTORIAL

In order to create this game you will need to find the correct donor cart by reviewing Xi Xian's web site (<http://www.jamma-nation-x.com/jammax/mvsboardcodes.html>) or using the GotWalls MVS page (http://mvs.gotwalls.com/index.php/Main_Page). I usually use Xi Xian's page to give me a rough idea of what I need and GotWalls page to give me a greater over-all visual and understanding of the cart that is required. Most games require specific CHR and PRG boards similar to SNES and NES reproductions (See former Nintendoage e-Zine releases), and Ghostlop is no exception. Right now we require a PROGGSC for the PRG board and a CHA256 for the CHR boards. As we view GotWalls page, we identify that our best option is World Heroes Jet 2 (Also Art of Fighting 2, Spin Master and Karnov's Revenge).

Game Name

**PROG
Board**

**CHA
Board**

Ghost Lop

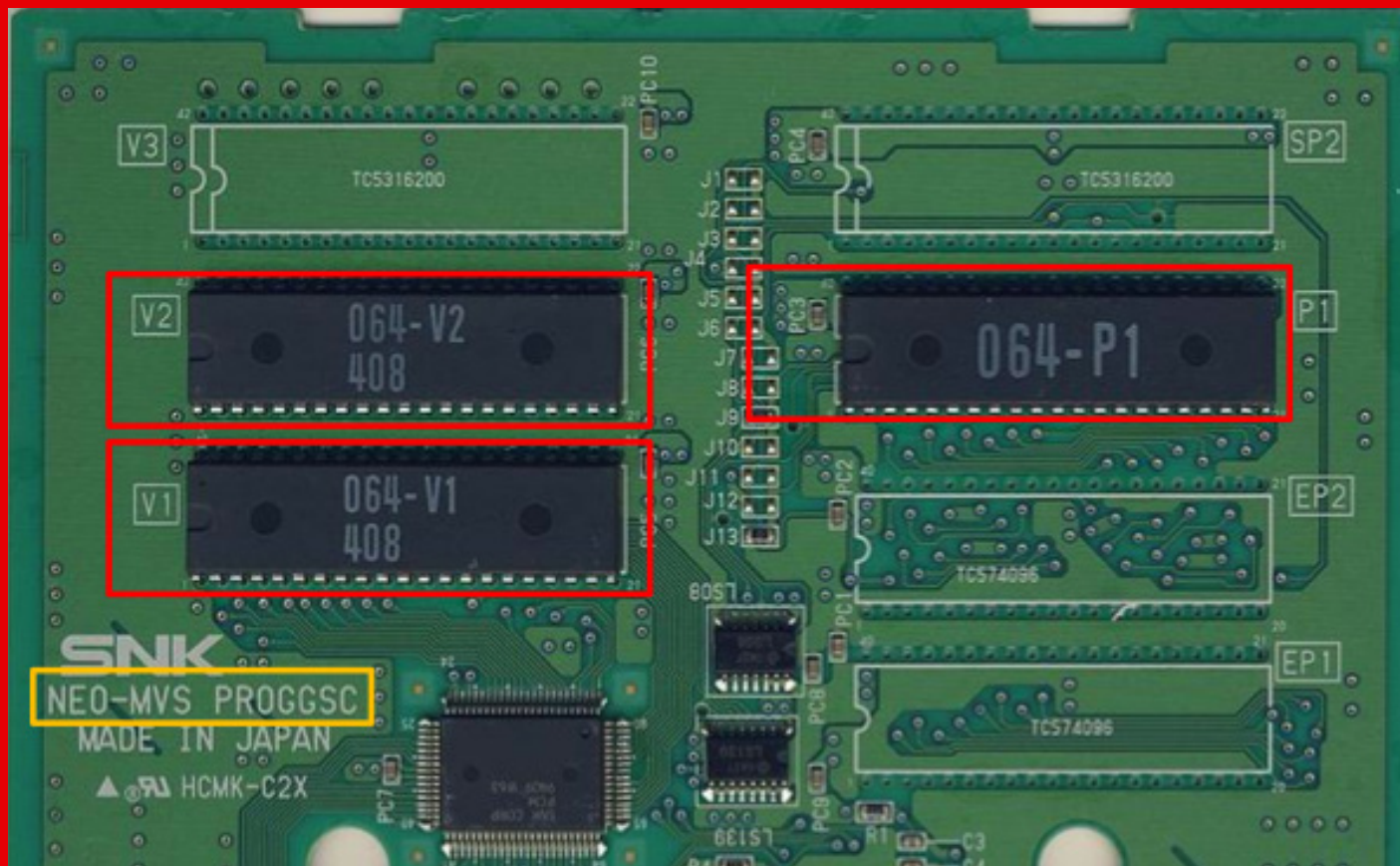
GSC

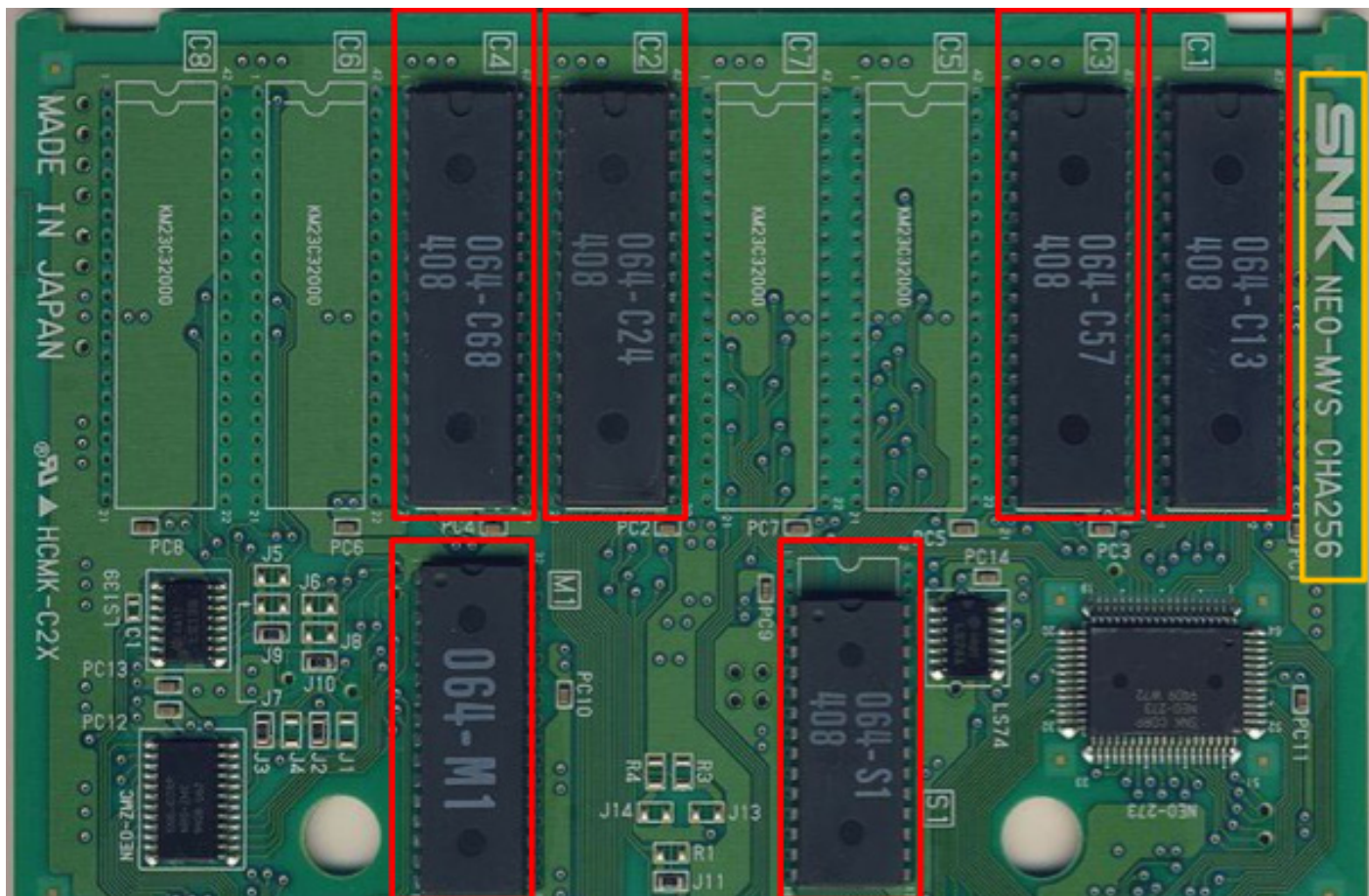
256

World Heroes 2 Jet

GSC

256





When purchasing online, usually try for a cartridge that has a bad label or what not, so you aren't destroying something that could be a collectible item to someone else. For Ghostlop, I chose a World Heroes Jet 2 in a white case. MVS carts came in various colors, such as black, translucent, and white. The white releases were actually sold as rental games suites and have a SNK-G label stamped into the side of the cart case. You can expect to pay between \$15 to \$40 dollars with or without shipping. While the carts look small on your monitor, they are rather large and are quite heavy due to the maskroms in them.

WHAT DO THE CHIPS DO?

P Chips – Contain the actual game code (Think PRG mask roms for NES)

V Chips – Contain the sound samples

C Chips – Contain the graphics and the sprites for the game (Think CHR mask roms for NES)

S Chips – Contain certain details of the game such as health bars, fonts, and others

M Chips – Controls the sound chip

Requirements

- Soldering Iron
- Desoldering Iron
- (2x) M27C160
- (2x) M27C322
- (2x) M27C1001
- 2-4 inches of IDE type wire Donor Cart

****WARNING – Before taking the cart apart, check to make sure the game works.****

The warning is something to live by when dealing with any cartridge based arcade system. The next step is to open up the cart, usually you would want to open them carefully to avoid ripping the label, but we aren't keeping the game, we want a "better" game. If you're interested in the World Heroes series, pick up the collections on PS2 or purchase World Heroes Perfect for MVS, which is a great fighter. The cart opens with four Philip-head screws and unfolds, most likely cracking or breaking the label. The label comes off with hot water or some Goo-be-gone. Next clean the board pins like you would for a NES and SNES games, as they can get pretty dirty whether they were in an arcade or someone's attic. I would clean the entire boards with circuit cleaner (from RadioShack) to avoid any contamination when soldering the chips in the future.

The boards is labeled very clearly for you, which is great, so you'll

be removing every eeprom based chip. There should be 3 on the PROGGSC Board (V2, V1, and P1) and 6 on the CHA256 board (C1-4, S1, M1).

Your best option is to purchase your chips preburnt from buyicnow.com. They provide eproms for a pretty solid price and shipping is great. You can also do premounted Flash chips if you're an SNES reproduction lover who doesn't own their own eeprom burner. Additionally, they will label every rom from you, so you can't mess it up. If you do it this way, the cost is .50 cents per burnt rom, and you must email them your roms. When sending files, I label them to avoid confusion i.e. M27C160 – label as M1. Acquire the MVS Arcade rom like you normally would do, there should be 6 files.

C1 4096kb in size (This will fit on a 27CM322 eeprom)

C2 4096kb in size (This will fit on a 27CM322 eeprom)

P1 1024kb in size (This will fit on a 27CM160 eeprom) you will need to double this file to 2048kb size.

```
Administrator: C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe
Microsoft Windows [Version 6.1.7601]
Copyright (c) 2009 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\ >cd..
C:\Users>cd..
C:\>copy \b 228-P1.ROM + 228-P1.ROM 228-Double-P1.ROM
```

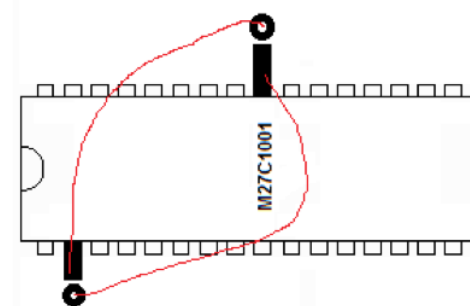
Note: To double a file. Copy the file to your C:\ Drive. Go to MSDOS (go to run and type CMD). Type this in, replace the filename with what your file is called, no spaces allowed. This command is taking the same file and adding it together twice and creating a new file entitled 228-Double-P1.ROM.

V1 2048kb in size (This will fit on a 27CM160 eeprom)

M1 128kb in size (This will fit on a 27CM1001 eeprom)

S1 128kb in size (This will fit on a 27CM1001 eeprom).

Can we say, direct placement? Yes we can. The Neo Geo maskroms are almost direct placements for the eproms you'll be using, with the exception of the S1. After desoldering those 9 chips, you will then solder your previously burnt chips to their corresponding locations, except the S1 eeprom. You will want to raise the legs on the S1 M27C1001 chip, legs 2 and 24 before soldering the other 30 legs on the board. You will then want to solder a wire to each leg (3/4in) and solder them to the different leg, i.e. leg 24 to pin hole 2 and leg 2 to pin hole 24. Up to now everything was pretty straight forward, however I need to teach you something about jumpers.



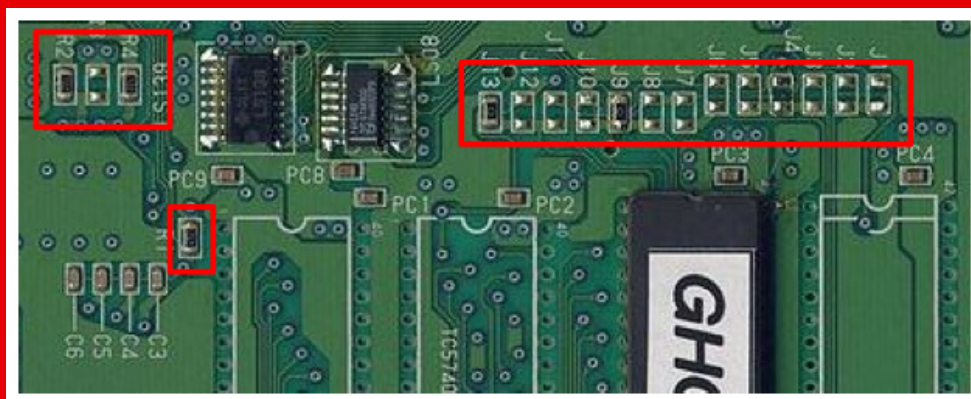
JUMPERS AND CHIP DIAGRAMS AND WHAT THEY ALL MEAN

Jumpers are similar to how you have to set older NES PCB Boards to Vertical or Horizontal Mirroring. The Idea is to allow the board to be used with multiple types of chips, etc. whether it's to increase the size of Character chips or Programming Chips. When you set the jumper, you literally only have to connect the two solder points together to "jump" the connections to the right parts of the chips. If you don't do this correctly, sounds, characters, or sprites will display incorrectly.

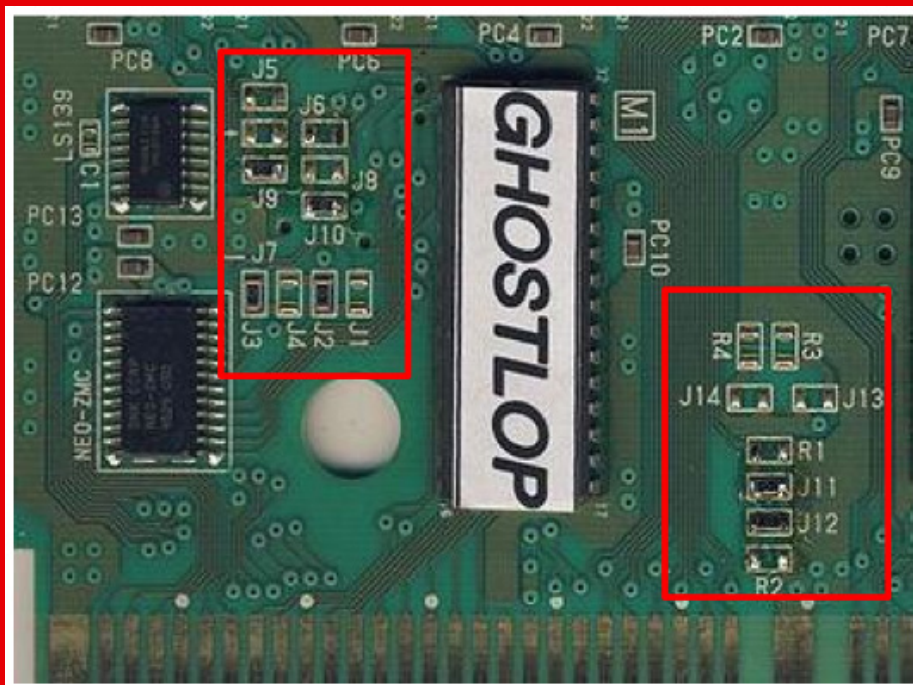
You will review the PCB at the locations depicted for the PRG board and the CHR board. Five things.

- 1 – The jumpers for Ghostlop MUST MATCH the pictures provided.
- 2 – You can leave the ones that already match alone, no need to remove them.
- 3 – Remove any jumpers that do not match.
- 4 – Simply jump the two solder points that are parallel to one another.
- 5 – The jumpers for Ghostlop MUST MATCH the pictures provided

PRG



CHR



LABEL AND INSERT ARTWORK

This is where you can be as creative as you want, or simply download the labels and inserts provided below. Southtown-homebrew will even sell you shockboxes (cases) to hold printed inserts, and print and cut inserts directly for you on quality cardstock.

Game Labels - <http://www.jamma-nation-x.com/jammax/mvslabels.html>

Game Inserts - <http://southtown-homebrew.com/index.php>

MVS Shockboxes - <http://southtown-homebrew.com/index.php>

CONCLUSION

So now we have a complete MVS cart ready to play. Make sure you check your solder points and the wires for the S1 eprom, as we had to cross the 2 and 24 wires if you recall. Now that you have a cart, you will need to start a Consolized MVS (CMVS) project to build yourself your own system. Hopefully NintendoAge's readers will find this interesting and will want a CMVS article as well. Thank you very much for reading. Another great prototype game is Ironclad, see the MVS-WALL site for more information on eprom and board types.

Wii Collect

BY XYZ

WHAT SEEMS like just yesterday, the Wii U was launched in North America, jumpstarting the upcoming 8th generation console wars featuring the PS4 and Xbox One, and ultimately bringing an end to the original Wii's illustrious career as Nintendo's big console, which lasted exactly 6 years. Those 6 years were full of ups and downs amongst gamers around the world – a system plagued by shovelware early on, and a console that hardcore gamers dogged as nothing more than a casual gaming device with lousy graphics compared to those on the PS3 and Xbox 360. But for millions of others who turned a blind eye, many masterpieces of video gaming were to be found on the Wii – games that will be part of video gaming history one day. As a matter of fact, as the Wii entered the final stage in December 2012, Nintendo's official magazine, Nintendo Power came to an end after 25 years. In the final issue of Nintendo Power, the top 285 games of all time were published, and the Wii had 30 different titles make the list that included games from every system Nintendo ever released. If that's not enough to convince one that the Wii was a success, then here's another number: over 100 million Wii's have been sold around the world since 2006 – that's 30 million more units than our beloved NES sold! Well kiddies, the Wii is now a thing of the past (unless you're one of those people who thinks the Wii U is just an add on for the much alive and kicking Wii!)

So let's talk about the Wii's final year on the market – sometimes the most important period from a collector's standpoint. It's a time when sales are poor, new releases are far and few between, and developers have already hitched a ride to the next generation. The Wii is no exception to this philosophy - even before the Wii U launched, few new titles were being released. Mostly absent were sleeper hits and big first party titles, with the exceptions being The Last

Story, released in August 2012, Kirby's Dream Collection released in September 2012, and Disney's Epic Mickey 2 released in November 2012. When this article was originally written, that was how this paragraph ended. But shortly after I made that statement, the people at Xseed (known for the aforementioned Last Story and the to-be-discussed-below Xenoblade Chronicles) announced a localization of Pandora's Tower. After several delays, the game was finally released exclusively for the Wii in April 2013. All signs seem to point to Pandora's Tower being the last great game for the Wii.

If one was to parallel the final months of past consoles to that of the Wii, they appear similar and different in several ways. First, the Wii has fallen prey to few new releases and the system is slowly dying off which is to be expected. If anything, it may be a much slower death since the Wii U is backwards compatible with the Wii and the Wii U still uses the Wiimote for games. Developers may pump attempt to pump a few more titles but ultimately, they all know that the

big sales will be from games stamped in blue with the "Wii U" logo. With poor initial sales on the Wii U, things may change by fall when first party titles begin arriving. Differently, the Wii is not receiving Wii U ports – something that tends to happen when new consoles are released as well as with handhelds. But most of the Wii's final releases have been exclusive to the Wii and that right there is something to make note of. If history is to repeat itself, these exclusives should hold their values over time both due to low production numbers and high demand since all 4 are great games (Last Story, Pandora's Tower, Epic Mickey 2, and Kirby's Dream Collection).

A re-modeled version of the Wii was released in December 2012 exclusively in Canada, known as the Wii Mini. It was immediately compared to the NES Toploader, which was released shortly before the NES' demise – perhaps a last ditch effort that Nintendo makes from time to time to keep the old system alive a little bit longer. The Wii Mini's exclusivity to Canada means that



production numbers aren't going to be very high and the appearance of one in the USA will be extremely uncommon unless it was imported. Historically, rare consoles don't appreciate the same way as their rare video game counterparts do, but that's not to say that the Wii Mini won't be a collectible piece one day. If you do plan to buy a Wii Mini, my best advice to you is to keep it sealed in mint condition and make sure you store it properly for the long haul. At a minimum, you will be able to get your money back and if history repeats itself, it may be worth a bit of money in 10 or 20 years.

So far, I've suggested that the final releases for the Wii, specifically the exclusive titles, and the Wii Mini are some of the items that have potential to be collectible one day. I want to shift the focus of this article to the real core of Wii collecting – the massive game library. There are 3 major deterrents that keep most collectors from wanting to get involved with the Wii. Let us now review those 3 points:

1) "All video games are mass produced today and will never be worth anything."

This statement is half true. Yes, video games today are definitely mass produced. But to state that they will never be worth anything is absolutely not true. It's not false either. Actually, the statement is nothing more than an opinion. There are several games for the Wii that are currently commanding very high amounts of money – were these games mass produced? Based on how hard they are to find, one could assume they were not. If that is the case, then one must assume that there are other uncommon Wii games on the system. It is my belief that in a few years that we will begin to see new titles emerge on the collector's scene – sometimes it's a good game that everyone wants that nobody paid any attention to until later on. Suddenly everyone wants a copy, but there are not enough copies to go around. I also believe there are other games on the system that have low production numbers but nobody realizes it yet because the games are either shovelware or a children's game that very few people would want to play. In the past, children's games are known to get destroyed and hide under the radar for many years. In due time, we shall find out if this will occur on the Wii. Keep in mind, every Nintendo system features mass production – that's what made Nintendo the

king of the video game market – selling millions of consoles, all the way back to the NES and continuing to this day. Mass production is nothing new, remember that!

2) "The Wii is full of shovelware. Nobody wants to collect this crap."

This argument is once again simply untrue. The Wii has over 1000 games and while there are quite a few shovelware titles on the system, there are also 100's of very good games – most of the time whoever is stating that the system has nothing but shovelware most likely never owned a Wii and if they did, they owned a few bad games and automatically assumed every game on the Wii was bad. Also important to point out is that how good or bad a game seems to matter very little. All of the most valuable games in video game history are terrible. From Stadium Events to Cheethahmen II to Fun N Games to Clayfighter's Sculptor's Cut. Try to forget about how bad a game is. What really matters is how rare a game is – people need to be looking to find out which Wii games had the lowest production runs and which were the most exclusive. Several games had variants that were exclusive to specific stores. Historically, that sort of item is almost guaranteed to go up in value over time as more collectors enter the scene and want a piece of the treasure. And in video game collecting, treasure is almost always a crappy game. One last thing to consider on this point is that the PS3 and Xbox had almost an identical lineup of titles, save for several exclusives. But the Wii on the other hand has several hundred exclusives, from masterpieces (Skyward Sword) to hidden gems (Rooms) to downright garbage (Ninjaman Bread).

3) "The Wii is too new of a system. There's no reason to collect games on a new console."

This argument is now flawed because the Wii is no longer a current gen console. The games are cheap to acquire right now – and the opportunity to enter the scene now is better than it will ever be. A chart of the past, present, and predicted future will show the Wii is currently rock bottom with nowhere to go but up.

The Nintendo 64 is now experiencing an influx of collector's and appreciation in value, similar to that of the NES and SNES. Let us all remember, the N64 died just 10 years ago! Furthermore, collectors like my-

self were on the scene by the mid 90's, and people were buying these games to collect them – and here they are worth money today – defeating the theory that the only reason NES games are worth money is because nobody saved the boxes and collected things back then. Of course, getting involved in collecting for the Wii is a risk with your wallet, but if you are going to collect the games because you love the Wii or because you want a massive library of games to play, then you can offset that risk.

I will close this article off with a list of the most well-known rare titles for the Wii along with my predictions for titles that may join the ranks of the aforementioned titles... one day! Use this list liberally as a way to help jumpstart your Wii video game collection. There's nothing wrong with adding a few of the "rarities" now while they're still relatively cheap and available. Have fun with collecting Wii games and make this about the thrill of building a library of titles; make this about the hunt and finding that new game on your list; and then when you finally have that juicy library of Wii games, go play them – have fun finding the good ones and laugh at the bad ones. But please, whatever you do, don't treat this as a way to cash in, because that dream will come crashing down really fast!

The Wii Rarities



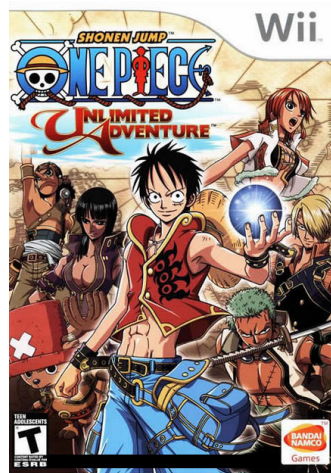
My Horse & Me 2: Riding for Gold

Normally sells for 50-100 dollars on eBay and Amazon, a few copies can be found at any given time, but often they are missing the cover and/or manual. One of about 20 equestrian-based games on the Wii, this being the rarest and the sequel to My Horse & Me from Atari.



Fritz Chess

Somewhat easy to find online, but it still commands a price of 50-75 dollars on a normal day. Sealed copies go for much more. For whatever reason, it never got a widespread release. The DS and PS3 versions are almost as rare too!



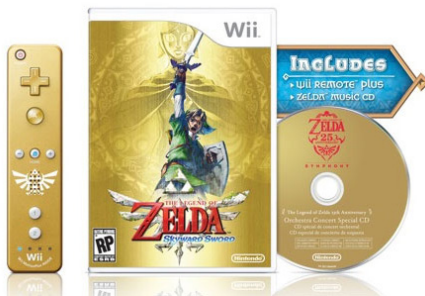
Shonen Jump: One Piece Unlimited Adventure

A series that features games on the GameCube and PS2 as well. Shonen Jump is a popular manga comic series and this is by far the rarest game of them all. It commands a 50-75 dollar price tag.



Beatles Rock Band: Limited Edition Bundle

The biggest bundle on the Wii, featuring the Beatles Rock Band game. This bundle, when complete can sell for anywhere between 200-500 dollars, depending on condition. It's a big one, so S&H can be costly and worse, don't expect to find a mint box. The size of this box makes it prone to bumping and wear. There's a Special Value Edition bundle as well with less pieces, but it's not as valuable... not yet at least!



The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword Gold Wiimote Bundle

This bad boy is going to set you back between 100-150 dollars if you want the gold Wiimote that came in this special bundle. Easily available online but commanding extremely high prices most likely due to the demand of owning such a cool item – the Earthbound of the Wii if you will! Add to this a gold nunchuk from Club Nintendo, and that's another 50-75 dollars and you got yourself a gold combo for just under 200. Oh yes, now that's what I'm talking about!



Punch-Out! Nunchuk Bundle

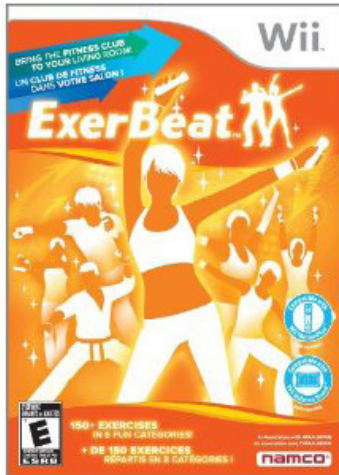
Another bundle that included a free nunchuk inside the box. This was a Target exclusive and has since dried up in availability online. Be prepared to pay big bucks for a mint copy that includes the box with the nunchuk inside. I have not seen one on eBay in months. And this variant is part of a very popular franchise so it has the criteria for future rarity written all over it!



Xenoblade Chronicles

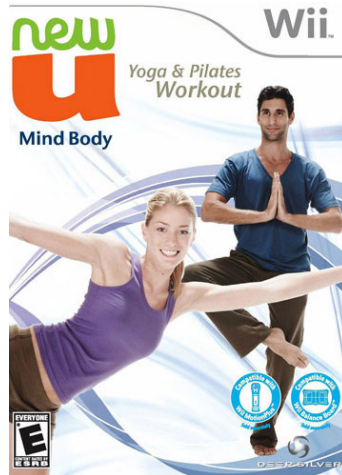
One of the most sought after Wii games, it has taken on a cult following in recent years after a limited release at GameStop. This is the Earthbound of the Wii! This also happens to be one of the best video games in recent memory, so the demand is being met by both collectors and gamers alike. A nice matching artwork book came with pre-orders and fetches an additional \$20-30.

Future Wii Rarities



ExerBeat

A game that uses the Wii Board, this Namco release got very high ratings amongst players. The problem seems to be that the supply ran dry and it's in high demand. There's the possibility it will settle down in price one day, but nothing is set in stone. It's experiencing a very high price similar to Walk It Out, another Wii Board title with good ratings.



New U Fitness First Yoga & Pilates

Deep Silver released this one in small numbers. Be careful when pursuing this title that you don't accidentally pick up Yoga or Daisy Fuentes Pilates – 2 other titles that are not nearly as uncommon.



thinkSMART Games Presents Crazy Machines

Released by Mentor Interactive, this brain puzzle game using physics is quite uncommon. Mentor only released one other game on the Wii, so here we have a company that quickly fell into obscurity since then.



Big Town Shoot Out

The only Wii Ware game ever released with a physical box. The game was included as a free download with the purchase of the Wii Blaster. It appears the single Wii Blaster package was a GameStop exclusive and the double Wii Blaster set was a Toys 'R' Us exclusive. The game itself is featured on the box including the title, description, and screenshots. If there has ever been a recipe for an ultra-rare oddity on the Wii, this is it.

Crushed Dreams

Many have been looking for years for a title called **Sudoku Ball Detective** for the Wii. A rumor got out that it did indeed have a NTSC release and an eBay auction featured the game. Unfortunately, the listing was for a PAL version of the game and was listed incorrectly. The game never got released in North America, with the exception being a Nintendo DS counterpart. So it's time to put some other title on your Wii holy grail wish list!

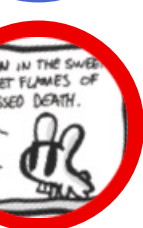
10 Reasons to Write an Article for the NintendoAge e-Zine



1 You get to show off that cool little pencil icon indicating that you give a damn about the forum instead of being one of those all-consuming, ravenous, 'me me' types. (But let's face it; you're the Unicorn of NA users... Look it up!)



2 Other members get to see how brilliant (or staggeringly juvenile) your writing style, spelling and knowledge of all things Nintendo really are. You might hear things like, "Did some divinely inspired demigod just grace us with his or her literary magnum opus?" or (in all likelihood) "How did a gorilla with one of those giant crayons submit an article?"



3 You stave off our blessed e-Zine editors, producers and artists desire to finally end it all for one more month. Here, as an example, is an unauthorized excerpt from Shane7051's private journal...

*"Oh, to accept death's sweet, sweet embrace! To drift off into the soft warm darkness of eternity! Alas! But then who would edit the next NA e-Zine? Who would take the helm and lead this ragtag band of castaways and misfits on to greater and greater glory? Who?!? It falls to me, I'm afraid. I must persist. Oh woe is me! Surely, I doth swoon! *faint*"*
Stirring stuff I tell you!



4 It flexes that creative writing muscle that you haven't used since God knows when. I mean come on! Your 10th grade English teacher is spinning so fast in his or her grave that it sounds like a helicopter is trying to lift off down there!



5 Joel will smile upon thee! (Check out the Joel thread in the "Welcome! Introduce Yourself" section of the forum for more info on the man, the myth, the inhumanly indifferent monster)

6 You might just win a free reproduction cart courtesy of that classy gentleman leatherrebel5150 (offer may have expired)! But you can't win if you don't write anything!

7 Only a steady stream of NA e-Zines can maintain the equilibrium necessary to keep our world from teetering off into fiery chaos. Yes my friends, by simply writing a few paragraphs of vaguely interesting drivel you are helping to keep the last cries of humanity from echoing endlessly through the cold dark reaches of space. Also, zombies don't eat brains of people who write articles for NintendoAge. Enlist Today!

8 You earn the undying adoration and respect of your friends, family and complete strangers once they hear that you've written an article for an online magazine devoted mainly to an obsolete video game console from the late 80s! You savvy motivated professional you!

9 You earn the honor of watching that old Disney movie, "The Black Hole" for 12 straight hours and then writing an exhaustive analysis of the entire film, including interviews with the cast and crew. And seriously, what the hell was up with Maximilian at the end there?

10 If you don't write an article for the next e-Zine I swear to God I will create a comic called "Adventures in 6502: A Bit's Tale". It will portray individual instructions in vivid detail and be so mind-numbingly boring that no one who reads it will ever be able to look at another issue ever again, thus bringing about the catastrophe promised in reason #7. So help me I will! The zombies are waiting...

— M308GUNNER



ROM HACKING FOR DUMMIES

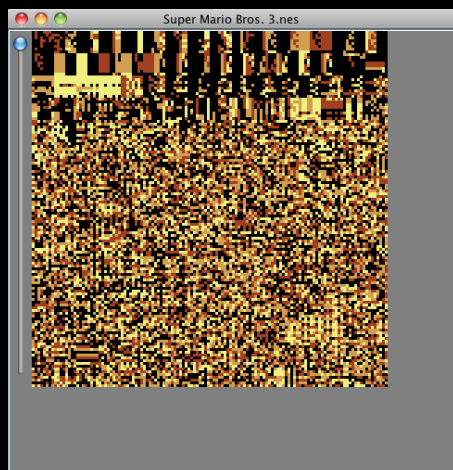
BY VECTREX280996

From translations to level hacks, from naked Mario to new characters implemented into an existing game, the ROM hacking world has a lot to offer. Whether it's a parody or a complete translation of your favorite Japan-only RPG, there always is something for you in the ROM hacking world. But I'm writing this for those who want to be ROM hackers themselves, for those who know they have that ROM-hacking talent inside them. At first, making a ROM hack will seem like a herculean effort, but as you gain experience with it, it gets easier and easier, and you get better and better. In this tutorial, I'll be focusing on the most popular system to hack for, the Nintendo Entertainment System.

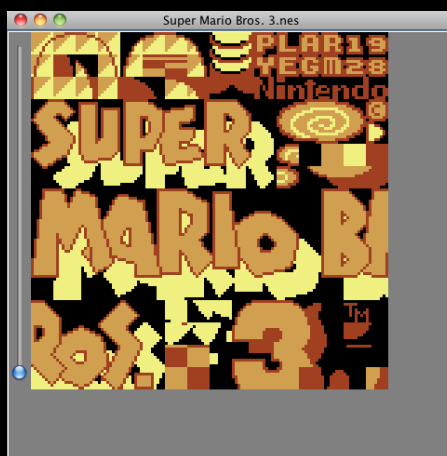
THE BASICS

First, we'll start to hack graphics. This has to be the easiest part about altering a ROM (in most cases), so you shouldn't have any problem doing this!

First download a tile editor (Tile Layer Pro, YYCHR, and TileMolester). For this tutorial, we'll be using the one I always use: TileMolester! The first thing you'll have to do is open up TileMolester. Then go click File>Open. Now choose the ROM you wish to hack, and voilà, you can now express your artistic creativity in your own ROM.



First, you'll probably ask yourself: "What is all this garbage???" The answer is that it's how the tile editor interprets the hexadecimal code inside the ROM just like how it interprets code for the graphics. Simply scroll down as these are not graphics, and you DO NOT want to mess with that!!! Now THIS is more like it!



This game actually has a title screen that's nicely rendered in the program, so it is one of the easiest things to hack! Sometimes your title screen looks messed up, and that's because one 8x8 square, called a tile, is like a puzzle piece, and each 16 x 16 grid con-

sists of 256 tiles, kind of like a 256-piece puzzle, except you can use the pieces multiple times. Now let's go back to graphic hacking itself again, as you will learn all about that in the hexadecimal section!

As you can see, there are 4 colors available on the screen, and those colors are the 4 colors the NES is capable of handling on one tile. You might say that the NES is capable of way more than 4 colors, but again, to mess with the color palettes, you need to know some hex code. Now back to the graphical hacking itself (again). We are going to draw a nice little smiley face where the "o" from Mario is!



Just like that! Now fire up your trusty emulator and admire your first ROM hack: Super Mario Bros. 3 with a Clever NA Loving Smiley Face on the Title Screen (Or SMB3WACNALS-FOTTS for short!)



Now that you made your first graphic hack, it's time to play with the big boys, as the evil Mr. Hexadecimal is lurking and is going to hit you no matter what!

HEXADECIMAL CODE TEXT, TILES AND MORE!

At first, Hexadecimal might seem complicated, but trust me, it isn't. Hexadecimal is a numerical system in base 16, as opposed to ours, which is in base 10. "Why 16?" you might ask? Well, it's because of binary code that makes computers work. Now, we're going to use a nice little emulator called FCEUXD SP, one you call a "Debug emulator". So let's open FCEUXD SP along with Astyanax. Then go to Tools>Hex Editor. Set View to ROM and you should see this.

This is how the NES interprets your game! Each byte (43, A5, 6B) is a piece of binary code compressed into hexadecimal code, with one nibble (4,3, A,5, 6,B) being a number in binary. This may sound complicated, but let's take a look at this mess!

Let's take a look at A5. By now, you should wonder about the letter. That's because the numbers in hexadecimal go up to F, which is 16 (if we count the zero). So logically, the A is going to be 10 in hex (Remember, we count the zero). If you need instructions on how to understand this, check out the enclosed Hex - Binary - Decimal instruction book (Hotel Mario reference intended).

Hexadecimal	Binary	Decimal
0	0000	0
1	0001	1
2	0010	2
3	0011	3
4	0100	4
5	0101	5
6	0110	6
7	0111	7
8	1000	8
9	1001	9
A	1010	10
B	1011	11
C	1100	12
D	1101	13
E	1110	14
F	1111	15

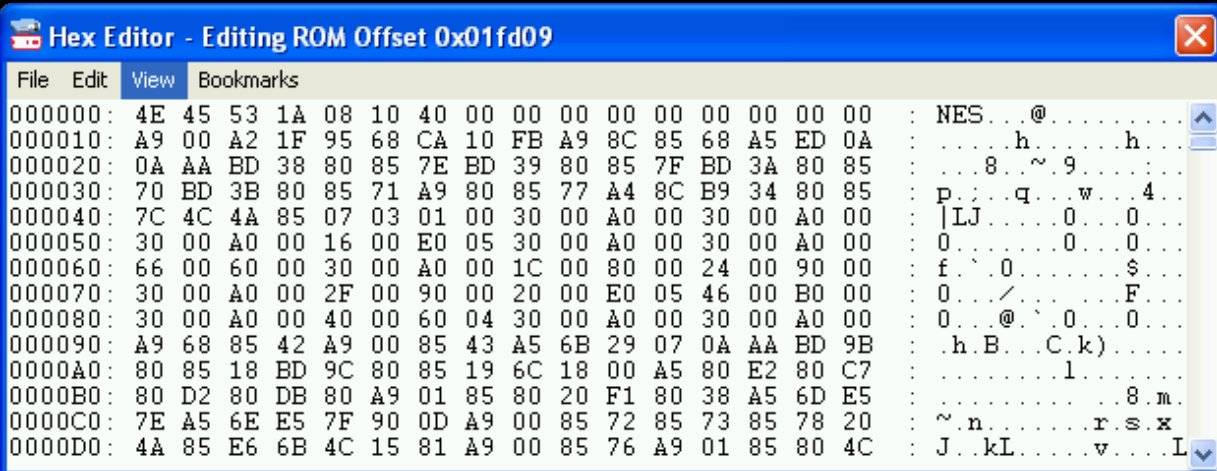
Table design is © Vectrex280996 in 2013

And if you still don't understand, your computer should have a calculator that you can put into scientific mode that lets you convert decimal values into binary or hex. As you might have seen, four binary digits, or bits, also accompany each hexadecimal value. Put two hex values together, and you have 8 bits! That's what the bit wars were all about, folks! It was about some binary numbers!!! What's also interesting is that the maximum

number attainable in one single byte is 255 (256 if you count the zero). It should make your gamer senses awake, as that number was frequently used in games! Pac-Man crashes at level 256, Link cannot carry more than 255 rupees with him, and a whole lot of game start acting weird when one specific value gets to 255: It's because only one byte was assigned to that specific value, like the level number in Pac-Man. All this to show that Hex has a lot to do with how older games work, and text is one of them. Back to Astyanax!

In FCEUXD SP, go to Tools>PPU Viewer, and right click three times on one of the two screens (it changes the palette the screens are viewed with, normally you won't have to use this, but in this game, you have to). If you do this on the right screen, a series of letters and numbers will appear. Mouse over them and if you look at "Tile", which is in the lower left corner, you'll see a hexadecimal number! Now open up Notepad, and write down the values like in this picture, then save them as "Astyanax.tbl". Now open that hex editor in FCEUXD and in the editor, go to File>Load *.TBL File, and search for words like "JALECO" or "ASTYANAX". If nothing comes up, then it means that these aren't the hexadecimal values that the game interprets as text. In most games, a table like this would do the job perfectly, and in some games (mostly the ones with a lot of text such as Nightshade) have the text viewable without any kind of .TBL files. This one uses some dirty little trick to hide the text! Hopefully, it's not compression, because you probably won't be able to text hack a game with compressed text (After all, that's why compression was invented in the first

- 00=
- 80=0
- 81=1
- 82=2
- 83=3
- 84=4
- 85=5
- 86=6
- 87=7
- 88=8
- 89=9
- 8A=A
- 8B=B
- 8C=C
- 8D=D
- 8E=E
- 8F=F
- 90=G
- 91=H
- 92=I
- 93=J
- 94=K
- 95=L
- 96=M
- 97=N
- 98=0
- 99=P
- 9A=Q
- 9B=R
- 9C=S
- 9D=T
- 9E=U
- 9F=V
- A0=W
- A1=X
- A2=Y
- A3=Z
- A4=,
- A5=.
- A6=*
- A7=\$
- A8=(
- A9=)
- AA=!
- AB=?
- AC=%
- AD=-



place!). In order to see if it's that stupid compression, you have to put the game in a more advanced hex editor than the one in FCEUXD Download and open one powerful hex editor such as Transhextion, and load your rom in that edi-

00=0
01=1
02=2
03=3
04=4
05=5
06=6
07=7
08=8
09=9
0A=A
0B=B
0C=C
0D=D
0E=E
0F=F
10=G
11=H
12=I
13=J
14=K
15=L
16=M
17=N
18=O
19=P
1A=Q
1B=R
1C=S
1D=T
1E=U
1F=V
20=W
21=X
22=Y
23=Z
24=,
25=.
26='
27=\$
28=(
29=)
2A=!
2B=?
2C=%
2D=-
2E=/
2F=<
2G=>
2H=&
2I=-

tor! Now go to Search>Search Relative! Type in "JALECO" (Case sensitive). When 13 0A 15 0E 0C 18 comes up, you're sure that it's not compressed, and that the game simply uses other values to store the text. Put those values in your "Astyanax.tbl" file, replacing the older ones, and now load it up in FCEUXD's hex editor. You're now ready to hack the crap out of the text! Just like I did here

```
.Z01TM AND..1990
JALECO LTD.B1LI
CENSED BY01NINTE
NDO OF AMERICA I
NC.....W.....
```

```
.Z01--NINTENDOAG
E RULES!-- B1AN
D K3VBOT 01LOVES
JURASSIC PARK!!
!.....W.....
```

(make sure you hack the text that appears in-game and ONLY the text that does so, unless you want to mess up the text!) Now save it and admire your first text hack!!!



PUSH START BUTTON

```
--NINTENDAGE RULES!--
AND K3VBOT
LOVES JURASSIC PARK!!!
```

COLOR PALETTES

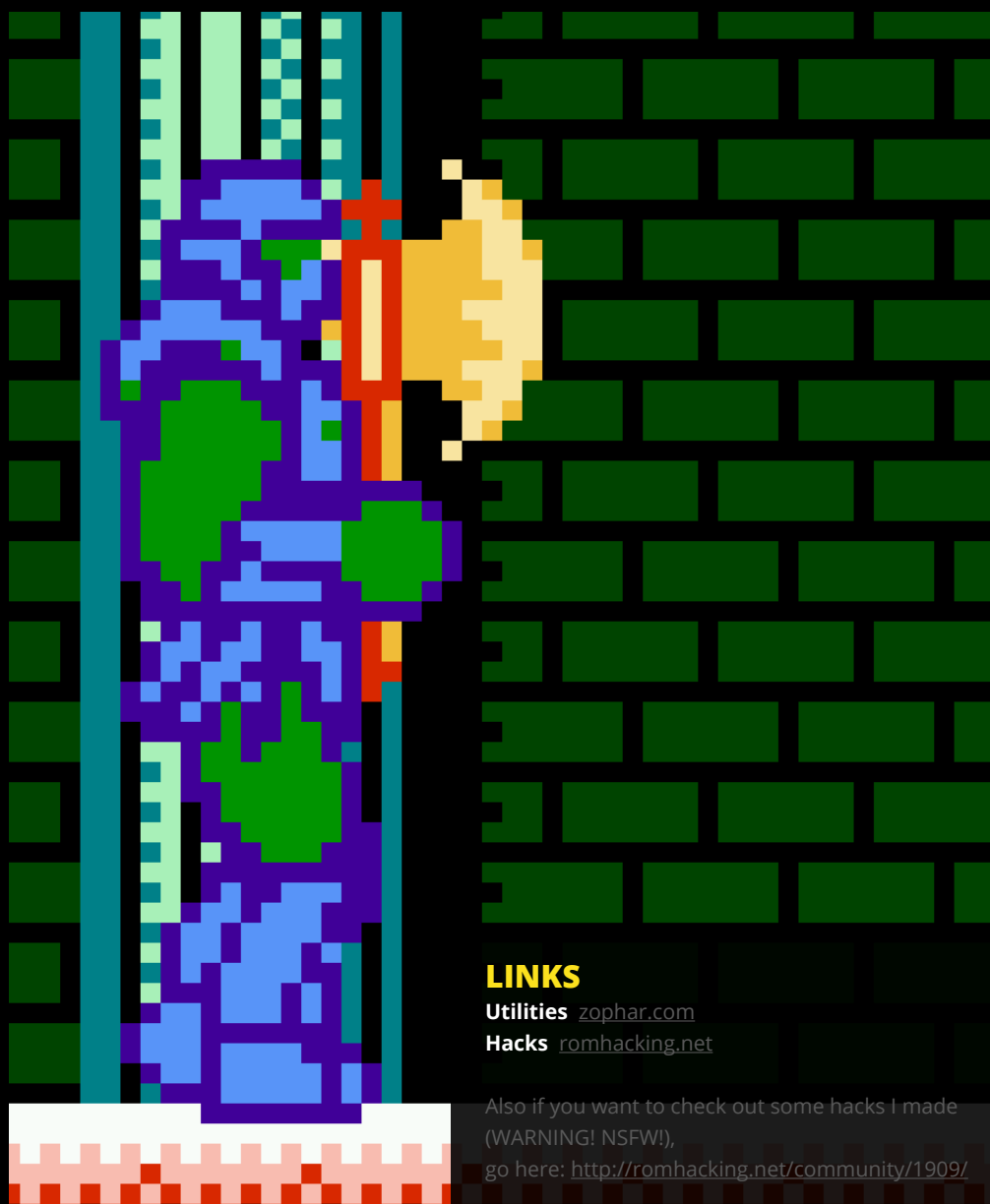
Before I conclude this, I want to show you guys one last thing: Color Palette hacks! Let's stick with Astyanax this time. If you would like to make Astyanax look like a Martian by giving him green skin, it's possible! Start the game and look at the PPU viewer! If you look at Astyanax, you'll see that his corresponding palette is 00 03 22 27! Look it up in

the hex editor, then change 27 into 19 (you can find NES palette values on the internet, I just don't have one that's not copyrighted to someone else).

```
3B 0F 0A 19 3B 0F 07 15 16 0F 11 21 31 0F 03 22
27 0F 38 16 28 0F 01 21 30 0F 3C 16 1A 0F 08 25
```

```
3B 0F 0A 19 3B 0F 07 15 16 0F 11 21 31 0F 03 22
19 0F 38 16 28 0F 01 21 30 0F 3C 16 1A 0F 08 25
```

Reset the game, start it, and there you go, you have a green-skinned Astyanax!!! The only downside to this is that it applies to everything else that shares the same palette, and this can be resolved with some more advanced hacking. But that's another article for another day! Hope you liked it, and that you understood most of my explaining. Happy hacking!



LINKS

Utilities zophar.com
Hacks romhacking.net

Also if you want to check out some hacks I made (WARNING! NSFW!), go here: <http://romhacking.net/community/1909/>

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