



NintendoAGE e-Zine  
Volume 1  
Issue 1  
September 2007



**This issue:**

**Braveheart's NES Battlefield - p1**  
**Dain's Variation Station - p2**  
**The Wizard's Hidden Treasures Revealed - p3**  
**Dr. Morbis' Reality Bit-for-Bit - p4**  
**BootGod's Tech Corner - p5**  
**NGD's PAL Corner - p7**  
**DreamTR's Diaries of a Diabolical Madman - p9**  
**FEATURE ARTICLE - AI Bailey Interview - p9**  
**Bronty's Babblings - p10**



Braveheart's

## NES BATTLEFIELD

### IN THE BEGINNING:

While it is certainly true that at any given time on eBay there are over 5,000 NES items listed, with new listings starting every minute to replace closing listings, eBay can only take you so far in the world of NES collecting. As many of you know I have been buying and collecting NES on eBay since 1997. But let me indulge a little and go back to how it all started. I first started collecting NES when I was a kid and had to save for what seemed like forever to buy my deluxe set. My first collection grew to approximately 75 games and instruction booklets, but like so many of us I trashed all of the boxes. Back then my dad owned 4 video stores and he convinced me to let him rent out all my games, and for doing so he would let me take home any games I wanted that he bought for the stores. Sounded good to me, but as I got older and became focused on other things, he sold off all rental games - both his and mine. Then when I was in college I was at a friend's house for a party and a lot of people were gathered around a TV playing Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!! This just happened to be one of my favorite games ever for the NES and I went out the next day and bought a NES system and MTPO. (A side note about why I loved this game so much is that my little brother, who always copied me at everything could never figure out how to beat King Hippo -- I would always make him leave the room at that point. It still makes me laugh!)

---

**"Could there really be that many people who collect this stuff or are there just that many people who want to sell it?"**

---

I picked up some other favorites along the way but the collecting bug didn't really bite me until after I joined eBay. My original intention for joining eBay was to buy and sell sports cards and comic book collections, but one day I happened to be bored and I looked up Nintendo. I was absolutely amazed to see all of the auctions going. My first thought was, "Could there really be that many people who collect this stuff or are there just that many people who want to sell it?"

Now I had a new outlet to fuel my NES collecting desires, and a very big outlet at that. My original idea was to buy bulk-lots right from the start. My collection at that point consisted of a basic system, all of my magazines and fun club stuff that I had saved from when I was little, about 20 carts, and 4-5 boxed games that I found at our lake house that had my dad's video store rental stickers all over them. ( It would be funny to know if anyone out there reading this has come across any games with Hopkin's Video City stickers on them.) I still remember the first lot that I bought, because it led me down the path that I'm still on today. This first lot was from a seller in Idaho, and I absolutely could not wait to get it home.

The first lot I bought consisted of a mint compete-in-box Power Set, about 40 games - of which about 10 had boxes, and a few manuals. Total price of that first lot including shipping was about \$40. Showing my ignorance I thought, "For this price I will have the complete collection in no time." At first I just displayed the Power Set and stacked all of the games on the floor, with the boxed ones in a separate pile. I continued to buy more lots to build the base of my collection as fast as I could, and grow it did. However there were always bits and pieces... by that I mean a few boxes and a few books in each lot, so while the majority of my collection was carts I still had a growing number of boxes and books. One day I was counting all of my games and it just dawned on me how much better I liked games in boxes, than the naked carts. From that point on I decided I wanted to collect complete games. My focus then shifted to searching BIN listings with cheapest price first and buying all of the complete games I could find under \$10 or thereabouts. I also shifted from just buying lots to build cart totals, to looking for lots with more boxes and books included.

---

**Setting up sub-goals . . .  
is a great way to keep  
the collecting hobby  
from getting stale.**

---

My first actual NES collecting goal was to mark off as complete-in-box the first 100 NES games list in the NES Player's Guide. I did stray from this goal from time to time when I found good deals or when I just couldn't find anything from that list for awhile. Setting up sub-goals, like Dan (Bronty's) goal of trying to get all the games released in one year, or my original goal of getting all the games on that "first 100" is a great way to keep the collecting hobby from getting stale. It is very easy to burn out when you either set your goal as "I want all NES CIB" right from the start, or when you get further along and can't find anything to add to your collection because your goal is too specific. Completing sub goals is fun and will keep collecting rewarding for years to come. In fact, with my recent purchase of the \$1790 Stadium Events cart, I completed a sub goal to have the entire NTSC cart set. One thing I have learned and would not recommend to anyone starting out is that the "first 100" list is about the hardest sub goal you can possibly have. To this day with over 1,200 different CIB NES games from around the world in my collection, I still have not completed that original goal. Think about the titles on that list: Spoon, Chubby Cherub, Stadium Events, FFF Athletic World, Clu Clu Land, Donkey Kong Jr. Math, to name a few. I guess what I am trying to say is you never know what you are going to find in a given day, but even with as many games as I have in my collection I still haven't completed my original goal of completing that list of the "first 100". This hobby can remain fun and challenging for many many years if you don't get frustrated, don't give up, and do it for the love of collecting and playing the greatest video game system around.

**NEXT ISSUE: eBay Can Only Take You So Far**

**Buy It Now**

# Dain's Variation Station

Let's face facts – variations collectors are the true archaeologists and historians of the NES community, continuously exploring new territory and uncovering new discoveries all the time. Often shunned by their counterparts, these extremists are stereotypically acknowledged as *fanatics* of sorts, scoffed at for owning multiple copies of the same items. The encompassing mood towards variations forms a dichotomy of sorts amongst collectors: they either hunt for variations head-on, gathering each and every item that's different in any respect, accounting for even the slightest minutiae; or, they don't at all, and consider the notion of owning two of the same item as absurd. Chances are, you're neither.

It's in this unaccounted for territory between these polar opposites that most hobbyists reside – they're either indifferent to it all, or simply haven't given it much thought. Without getting over laden with the intricacies of variations collecting (yet), and with a bit of luck, this article will introduce even the newest of collectors to the world of variations and why they *should* matter, at least at some level, to all of us.

In this inaugural article, we'll start with the basics and define what a variation is. In essence, a variation is anything NES-related that has been re-released at some point with at least one change to it, whether it be a game, accessory or other memorabilia. Changes come in many flavors, ranging from the ultra-minute to the incredibly complex – if something changed, it's considered a variation. Collectors typically group these variations into two classifications: major and minor – how deep into variations collecting you go is your choice, but it's good to understand what they mean to collectors both historically and fiscally so that you may at least make educated choices in your collecting endeavors.

Two games that constitute one of the most famous variations are Myriad and Caltron 6-in-1. In case you didn't know, Myriad 6-in-1 is a *variation* of Caltron 6-in-1, consisting of a redesigned box, a stripped down manual and a cart who's only difference is a sticker plastered over the original Caltron label (see Figure 1) – other than these differences, the games are identical. The price tags for Caltron and Myriad, however, are vastly different – the former fetching a few hundred dollars, the latter a few thousand.



3- vs. 5-screw carts

While there are literally thousands of variations to collect, most collectors selectively narrow their collecting scope to the major categories. Some of these categories of variations include:



Cut- vs. Full-corner AVE games



Blue vs. Black Color Dreams, Bunch Games & Wisdom Tree carts



Artwork redesigns



There are many other categories of variations, but for the scope of this article, we'll focus on the more popular ones.

The early releases published by Nintendo were all distributed in distinctive black boxes, coining the term "black box" games. These games are of particular interest to collectors because they provide us with a timeline of release dates, re-released dates, and give us a general feel for how popular a game was at the time – if it was re-released, there must have been enough demand to justify it. There are hundreds, possibly thousands, of variations within the black box games alone, but the most hotly collected of these variations is the 5- vs. 3-screw carts.

**Unlicensed games have had their fair share of variations as well, usually a result of cheaper production costs or faulty game programming.**

Prior to 1988, most games (not just black box games) were released in cases that used 5 screws to hold them together, whereas after 1988, Nintendo switched to using 3-screw casings along with a security bit instead of flat-head screws. Some games were re-released as 3-screw in very small quantities, such as Alpha Mission, Ninja Kid and a few others, and some were never re-released, such as M.U.S.C.L.E., Chubby Cherub and Sqoon. However, none of these variations have become any more valuable than their 3- or 5-screw counterparts. So in this instance, rarity doesn't necessarily reflect value. In a future article, we'll dive head-on into the world of 3- vs. 5-screw collecting, showing which ones are more rare, which ones haven't been verified and which ones likely do not exist and why.

Unlicensed games have had their fair share of variations as well, usually a result of cheaper production costs or faulty game programming. Sometimes, however, the reason isn't so clear, as is the case with the American Video Entertainment (AVE) "cut" corner re-releases – it's still a bit of a mystery. At some point in their productions runs, AVE began releasing their games in a newly-styled case that appeared to be missing its upper left corner, lending it the name "cut corner" (see Figure 3). Later titles by AVE, such as Venice Beach Volleyball, Rad Racket and Wally Bear have yet to surface *without* the cut corner.

---

## Even collectors who maintain they aren't variations collectors usually have a few anyway

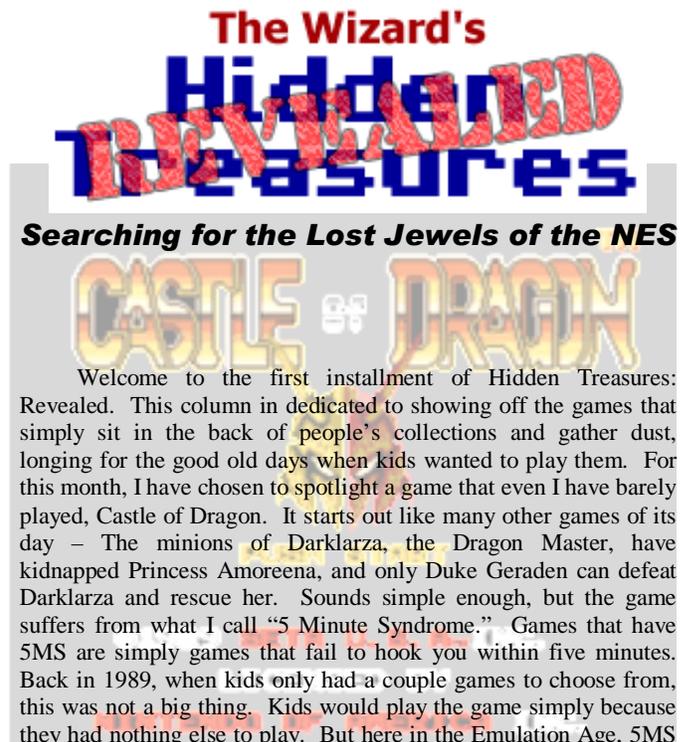
---

In the United States, Color Dreams – which also manufactured under the Bunch Games and Wisdom Tree brands – originally released most of its games in blue cases. In later production runs, and internationally, it released these same games in smaller quantities and in black cases (see Figure 4). It is largely believed that these black cases were released primarily in Canada and parts of Europe (under the Micro Genius name). One thing, however, is certain: with the exception of Secret Scout, the black-cased games are rarer than their blue-cased brethren, and can command significantly higher prices at auction. Notable rarities in this set include Crystal Mines, Raid 2020 and Metal Fighter – there are fewer than 10 of the latter two known to exist!



Even collectors who maintain they aren't variations collectors usually have a few anyway, such as the artwork redesigns of the "Classic Series" games (see Figure 5) or, at a minimum, the "yellow" Metroid. Some of the lesser-known redesigns include the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition Pac-Man, black box Hollywood Squares, Family Fun Fitness Athletic World and white box Flying Dragon (see Figure 6). There are others, but these are some of the more sought-after ones amongst collectors.

Variations collecting can be a lot of fun, and is a way to keep things interesting even after obtaining a "complete" set. How far you take it is up to you, but we'll dive into the hairy details of other variations in future articles so that you may decide what direction you'd like to take your collection next. For now, happy hunting!



Welcome to the first installment of Hidden Treasures: Revealed. This column is dedicated to showing off the games that simply sit in the back of people's collections and gather dust, longing for the good old days when kids wanted to play them. For this month, I have chosen to spotlight a game that even I have barely played, Castle of Dragon. It starts out like many other games of its day – The minions of Darklarza, the Dragon Master, have kidnapped Princess Amoreena, and only Duke Geraden can defeat Darklarza and rescue her. Sounds simple enough, but the game suffers from what I call "5 Minute Syndrome." Games that have 5MS are simply games that fail to hook you within five minutes. Back in 1989, when kids only had a couple games to choose from, this was not a big thing. Kids would play the game simply because they had nothing else to play. But here in the Emulation Age, 5MS can spell death for a game. Why play a game that doesn't hook you when you have thousands of others just a button press away? However, if you make it more than 5 minutes into the game, you will be pleasantly surprised by it. Despite its horrible box art and stereotypical storyline, the game shines.



**GRAPHICS:** Simply put, Castle of Dragon's graphics are AMAZING! Everything about the game screams detail, from the highly detailed backgrounds to the varied sprites. Not to mention the colors! Until I played this game, I didn't know an NES game could look this good without having problems with flickering screens.

**SOUND:** Castle of Dragon sports some decent, albeit forgettable music. Although it sets the mood and suits the game, the songs won't have you humming them at work the next day. Also, despite the lack of sound effects, what little there are pretty sweet. I especially like the "ping" when a sword strikes your shield.

**GAMEPLAY:** Castle of Dragon's gameplay is a bit tough to rate. At first, it seems that the game has lousy hit detection...that is, until you learn how the game works. Every creature requires several sword strikes to kill, and also needs certain tactics to defeat them. For example, when fighting skeletal knights, crouching and swapping sword strikes is all you need. Every strike from the skeleton hits your sword, while yours hit the skeleton. Zombies, however, require hit-and-run tactics: hit once, run to the edge of the screen, jump over, run to the middle of the screen, turn and strike, repeat until its back in its grave. As for the game itself, it's fairly hard – one life and no continues is pretty unforgiving.



**OVERALL:** While Castle of Dragon may not be the greatest game ever, it certainly has its charms. Fun, simple to learn, and at the same time challenging enough to entertain both new and veteran gamers, and being very easy to find for under \$10 CIB, no collection should be without it.

# Dr. Morbis' Reality: bit for bit

Do you remember the scene in the movie “Predator” where Arnold is running around in a skintight pink leotard, punching random soldiers in the face, and balancing on moving rocks that have their own eyes? Me neither, but I’m sure it’s in there somewhere – or at least it ought to be if the NES game is any indication. It’s not, of course, and that’s exactly the point. Realism and eight-bit graphics just aren’t a good match, and so most games, as you know, didn’t bother. So what were we left with, now two decades on, looking back? Games like Predator, that’s what. Here’s a game where you get to be the ultra-buff, ultra-pink(!?) Arnold Schwarzenegger, who, having conveniently traded in his commando boots for a comfy pair of knee-high moccasins, now sets out to wage his unholy war against the unending deluge of menacing scorpions that we all so fondly remember from the movie.

That’s the joy of collecting Nintendo games right there: you never know what kind of whacked out, nonsensical universe you’ll be invited to next. Now, obviously, there’s no set law that says you have to do any playing at all, despite whatever message board grumblings you’ve heard. Speaking of which, that’s the one aspect of our little hobby that I’ve never understood – the idea that you are somehow less “worthy” if you don’t play your games. And so it is with this mantle of shame, then, that so many feel they must post of their dust bunny guilt. “What I don’t play, I must sell,” is their cry, in a nutshell, and it makes about as much real-world sense to me as blasting fireballs from the palms of your hands to kill goombas.

---

## Why would you want to collect videogames if you won’t ever play them?

---

Whoever said that a collection of *anything* has to be used for its primary purpose? Do stamp collectors weep and wail because they can’t lick their stamps and send them out with the mail? Do coin collectors lament the injustice of not being able to spend their best coins? Of course the beauty of collecting video games is that they *can* be used for their primary purpose, and without any real degradation at that, but, to a “collector,” that is entirely irrelevant. To “collect” something is to acquire it for the sake of acquiring it; there is no means to an end – collecting is the end in itself. If having shelves of unplayed games gives you a deep sense of guilt, or of whatever it is that compels people to start those silly topics to begin with, then I dare say you were never really a collector to begin with – just a passionate gamer who let things get out of hand.

One nagging question remains, though, and I hear it a lot: *WHY?* Why would you want to collect videogames if you won’t ever play them? Well the short answer is that *I might*. I can’t speak for anyone else here, but the reason why I, personally, collect for the NES is not so that I can play the whole library per se, but, rather, so that I have the *option* of playing any game at any time that I like. I might not touch a particular title for a week or a month or for even a decade, but it’s nice to know that it’ll be sitting there if one day the mood strikes.

But anyway, coming back to ol’ Predator, I am sure you are aware that the game is a turd. That’s something anyone will tell you and I won’t now deny it, but if you’re a fan of odd NES games, there’s some stuff in this cart that you won’t want to miss. The music, for one, sets the game’s tone superbly, and if you haven’t at least trudged through enough levels to hit the first “Big Mode,” then you’ve already sold yourself short (take a look at the back of the game’s box for a preview). Now I’m not saying that the Big Mode levels save the game from its plight, but it does add some spice to



the mix. At any rate, the game has its haters, and if I had to guess why, I’d say it’s most likely due to the sloppy control. I have trouble, myself, controlling “Slippery Arnold” and his incredible downward inertia, but at the end of the day Predator’s a game that I like. Again, there is the question of why.

And my answer, in short, is because it’s so flagrantly detached from reality – both the reality of the movie and any real-world life.

Ahhh... reality and NES games: a harmonious union forged at the base of Mount Fuji that, having stowed its way to the new world, pulled a generation of children into the bizarre. They say restriction rather than freedom begets creativity’s best, and if that statement rings true, it could not sound much more loudly than here. Attempting to mirror our world on the NES wasn’t easy, so an unending plethora of other-worldly settings were imagined instead. How many NES games do you think have the earth as their setting? How many have a representation of human society at all? Now compare that percent with today’s modern libraries.

So I pose you this question: would you rather joust through the night on an odd flying ostrich or play a game where you have to remember to take your dog for a walk? I don’t know about you, but if I want a taste of reality, I’ll put down my controller and, hey, maybe even walk out my front door. Bubble-blowing dino’s anyone?





I'm going to show you a few different ways you can go about changing a battery in your NES carts. They vary greatly in difficulty, skill, and tools needed. Choose whichever suits you best.

**Some tools & parts you will need:**

- 3.8mm security bit to open the cart
- New CR2032 Lithium battery
- A precision knife for cutting the welds on existing battery
- Soldering equipment & supplies (optional, needed for methods 2 & 3)
- A new battery clip (optional, needed for method

Radio Shack is probably the *worst* place to buy a battery, they highly overcharge for them. If you're only looking to buy 1 or 2, you should be able to find them in places like Wal-Mart for \$2 - \$3. If you're looking to buy a lot of them, get them online from someone like MCM electronics (mcmnine.com) for only \$1 a piece (part #: 291-510). MCM also sells other things you may need like the security bit (part #: 22-1145) and battery clips (part #: 29-1675).

Before I jump right in, here are answers to some questions you may have:

**Q: I can still save my game, how do I know if the battery needs to be replaced?**

**A1: If you have a multi-meter, check the voltage the battery is producing. A new battery will produce about 3.3V, if your meter reports less than 3V, it's time to be replaced.**

**A2: The batteries often have the year and month printed on them. If your battery is original, i.e. dated in late 80's, early 90's, it's likely close to being dead.**

**Q: How can I change the battery without losing my saves?**

**A1: If you're the lucky owner of a CopyNES, this is very easy. You simply download the carts WRAM data before changing the battery, and then re-upload it after your finished.**

**A2: If you have an extra new battery, you can temporarily attach the extra one in parallel with the old one before you begin. This would be easiest if you had a battery holder for the extra battery and then solder some wires between the holder and where the bands come thru on the back of the PCB (assuming your not taking the bands out). It needs to be in parallel with the old battery so you'd connect positive to positive, negative to negative. After you've finished installing a new battery, simple remove the wires. Trying to do this without soldering the wires to the PCB isn't viable, it'd be very likely the wires could detach while you're messing around trying to remove the old battery. Your saves will be lost even if power is removed for even a fraction of a second!**

**Removal of old battery**

Batteries are initially held in place by a couple bands which are spot welded directly to the battery itself. If you're going to be installing a new battery clip, you do not need to bother with cutting these welds, simply de-solder the clip itself. If you're reusing them, read on:



First we'll remove the top band. Take a sharp exact-o knife or equivalent and slide it in between the battery and band. With a combo of sawing and rocking motions, you will eventually break thru the welds. Cut in the opposite direction of the bend in the band. When you break thru the welds, it will probably be somewhat forcefully, so be sure your knife isn't going to hit anything as it exits.

Now do the same thing on the other side of the battery. Again, cut in the opposite direction of the bend.



**Installing new battery**

This is where we split into a few different methods:

**Method 1: Electrical Tape**

Difficulty: **Easy**

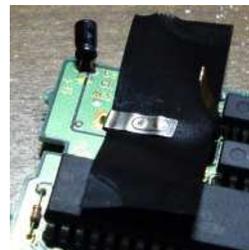
Pros:

- Takes the least amount of time of all methods.
- Doesn't require any soldering tools or skills.
- No modifications to PCB or case needed.

Cons:

- Potentially unreliable if tape becomes loose.

If this is your first time changing a battery, I would recommend this method.



**Step 1:** Cut a piece of electrical tape 1.5 – 2 inches long. With the sticky side up, slide the tape centered underneath the bottom band.



**Step 2:** Insert the new battery in between clips, with the positive (+) side up.



**Step 3:** Wrap each end of the tape up over the top clip, pulling somewhat snugly to ensure a tight connection.

And that's pretty much all there is too it! If you have a multi-meter, now would be a good time to make sure it connecting properly. Check the voltage by probing the 2 points on the back of the PCB, where the bands come thru. If all is well, you should get a reading of ~3.3V.



**Method 2: Installing new clip**

Difficulty: **Moderate**

Pros:

- Future battery replacements will be painless.
- Reliable. Battery won't be able to come loose over time.

Cons:

- May require alterations to PCB and/or case.

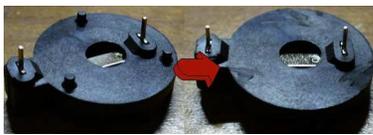
This is the method I personally use, mainly because I feel it to be the most reliable of all methods. Also, there are a couple ways you can go about this as well.



The first way is very similar to what I mentioned before about saving game data. Basically you just attach the clip to the PCB via some 2" - 3" wires. Then when you put the PCB back in the case, just tape the holder to the inside of the cart so it doesn't wobble around. This

is the easiest way to do it as it requires no modifications.

The other way, is to mount it directly to the board. There are many different types of clips you can get. Try to find one with as low a profile (height/thickness) as possible. The steps below are based on the MCM clips mentioned earlier. There may very well be more suitable ones available. A Dremel type rotary tool will come in handy for this.



**Step 1:** On the bottom of these clips are 3 legs that will hold the battery up an extra 1/16 more than it needs to be, grind or cut them off.

**Step 2:** The spacing between pins on the holder is slightly wider than the spacing on the PCB. Using a small drill bit (1/16" or 3/32"), widen the left-side of the left hole as shown.



**Step 3:** Install a battery into the clip and dry fit it into the PCB. Make sure it sits as low to the PCB as possible. Try setting the PCB back into the case and see how it fits. Depending of the PCB / location of the battery, the clip may bump into a standoff inside the case, in



which case, you'll need to remove, or at least partially remove, the standoff in question.

Note: The arm that clamps the battery in on the top will almost certainly hold the PCB up a little from completely setting into the case, but this is fine, the metal arm will flex down once you screw the cart back together.



**Step 4:** Once everything fits OK, go ahead and solder the holder in place. Done!

**Method 3: Reusing existing clip**

Difficulty: **Hard**

Pros:

- Looks closest to original.

Cons:

- Very difficult to get solder to bond to battery.
- Solder may come loose down the road.
- Would need to do everything again for future battery

I'm only going to cover this briefly, as I wouldn't recommend this method. The best advice I can give about getting the solder to bond is to scratch up the surface of the battery where the clips need to attach too. Even doing this, I've had little success in the past. What you need to do is de-solder the clips from the PCB, solder the clips onto the new battery, in the same configuration they were originally, and then solder the whole thing back into the PCB.

**PAL's Corner**



To HES or not to HES?  
By ~NGD



What is H.E.S.? H.E.S. stands for Home Entertainment Suppliers and is an Australian based unlicensed game company. The company was established in 1984 by Sebastian Giompaolo, and is still in the video game industry today manufacturing, marketing,



distributing and selling both hardware and software products for current systems and PCs.

H.E.S. was a pretty big player in the unlicensed game rush. They had relationships and contracts with several of the other unlicensed game companies, including,

Sachen, Color Dreams, Epyx, Tengen, and American Video (AVE). The company released over 25 distinctive NES carts in their infamous clamshell Disney style game cases in the Australian and Southeastern Asian region. All HES games are PAL region A.

Home Entertainment Suppliers did not do any actual game programming or development themselves, they simply bought the rights to other companies' games and released and distributed them throughout Australia. The main reason for the lack of internal development was the sophisticated lockout chip that Nintendo used to combat the unlicensed companies. So HES began to think outside the box and creatively found ways around the lockout device.

They came up with the Dongle and Piggyback carts. The Dongle cart looks similar to a standard cart but has an open pin connector slot on the top left of the cart that is where the dongle itself plugs in. The HES cart is placed inside the NES, with the dongle attached. Then a licensed NES cart is placed on the dongle's pins, thus using the licensed cart to bypass the NES's lockout chip. The Dongles are thought to be the first attempt at the lockout chip solution by the company. Finding any games as the Dongle version is a challenge in today's cutthroat market.



design as well to accommodate the standard carts. As you can easily tell the new HES cardboard cases look strikingly similar to the Tengen boxes that we know and love. The biggest problem with this new style box is they are not remotely as durable as the clamshell ones, and are extremely difficult to find in new or excellent condition.

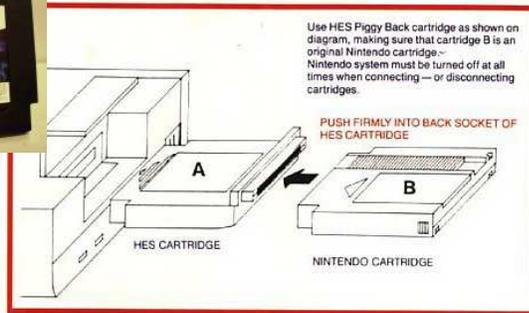
HES was a very intuitive company and tried to reduce costs without sacrificing quality. For instance their manuals were printed on the reverse side of the paper title insert on the cart's case. All you had to do is open up the clamshell and slide out the instructions, very similar to how current DVD case covers are designed. This insightful tactic undoubtedly saved the company large sums of money.

H.E.S. also accomplished something else that was pretty groundbreaking for the time. They found a way to produce single carts with multiple games on them such as the Real Players Pak, the Mindblower Pak, the Funblaster Pak, the Total Funpak and of course Maxi 15; thus allowing the consumers to get more games for their hard earned money.

Maxi 15 is an interesting game with a little history. It was originally produced by AVE and was supposed to be called MaxiVision 30 in 1; they even had commercials with Hulk Hogan starring in them. As AVE and HES began to collaborate on projects HES also purchased the rights to sale a Maxi 15 cart. The first version of the game featured Pyramid and Double Strike, but as with the AVE version of the game, they didn't actually have the rights at the time to use those games. So a game swap was done, Pyramid and Double Strike were replaced by Blackjack and Death Race. The original version of Maxi had a green label on the cart and the newer version has a red label, the original green version is incredibly hard to find as well.



The Piggyback version is a strange looking cart that has an "L" shaped bend at the top. It is very similar to the Dongle in the way it works however.



You simply plug the cart into your NES and place a licensed cart into the top piggyback slot, thus using the licensed game to bypass the lockout chip. The piggyback was the company's second solution to the lockout problem, and is the most prevalent version. The vast majority of HES games that are found on eBay are in the piggyback form.

The last of the 3 HES variants is the standard cart. The standard cart was released late in the NES's lifecycle. By this point the lockout system was pretty well known and several companies knew Nintendo's "lockout secret" so to speak. The lockout chip bypass is built into the PCB's on these versions and a licensed cart isn't needed for play. The standard carts also have a few variants

such as upside down labels, black & white labels, and the white text only labels. This makes the HES subset a nice little challenge for the variant hunters among us. Some of the standard carts came in the clamshell cases similar to the piggyback and dongle versions; however HES also implemented their new cardboard box



In addition to distributing games, they were also into the peripherals market. They sold several types of aftermarket controllers and accessories. Their most famous one however is the HES Unidaptor. This odd looking contraption allows you to play NTSC, PAL B and Famicom games on an Australian PAL A NES console. As with almost all the HES merchandise there is more than one version of this cool piece of hardware



to collect. The one pictured is the equivalent of the Dongle version; there is also one that is an offspring of the piggyback version. The loose ones pop up from time to time on eBay and fetch \$100 plus, but to find a complete in box (CIB) is truly a collecting achievement.

Home Entertainment Suppliers also had several other games planned for future releases including Gauntlet, Menace Beach, Road Runner, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, and a few others. As the end of the NES era approached though, HES placed these titles on hold and began to focus more on their future console plans. The company has been contacted numerous times ([www.hes.net](http://www.hes.net)) by collectors in hope to find some back-stock of the rare titles like Pipemania, Vindicators and International Ultimate League Soccer, to no avail. According to a company spokesman I contacted, they sold their back stock long ago and have no NES items remaining. As the NES community continues to grow, the HES subset of games will steadily gain popularity and rise in price. The only question I have for you is "To HES or not to HES?" ~~~NGD

## DreamTR's *Diaries of a* **DIABOLICAL MADMAN**

I received my first NES when I was 11 years old. It was the Summer before my 7th grade year. I was living in Coral Gables, FL at the time (I moved there from North Las Vegas, NV in 1985) and at the time I was really against console video game systems. (I still am to some degree, but I'll save that for another article) You see, the arcade was where the REAL games were. Stunning HIGH DEFINITION graphics and realistic gameplay could not be duplicated on any console system to date UNTIL Nintendo decided to release home versions that replicated the arcade experience from their Vs. Unisystem games. If it wasn't for those many weekends playing arcade games at Pirates' Family Entertainment Center, I would probably be more of a Sony or Microsoft type of guy. I had been playing Donkey Kong, Donkey Kong Jr., Popeye, Mario Bros., and any of those Vs. games I could find at the arcade when I went. When my friends were gloating about their Atari 2600s, I always laughed and thought, 'how could anyone even think those games were remotely fun?'

It's not like I did not grow up with the Atari 2600 shoved down my throat. I'm from the era when the Atari 2600 ruled the school, but it just didn't do it for me. That hot, blazing day of August 6, 1987 at the Kay-Bee Toy Store in the Miami International Mall turned out to be the start of what would end up being the main thing that my life revolved around. Fast forward 20 years later, and not only has it consumed me, it's brought me to the realization that the greatest video game system ever made, the one that truly revolutionized video games as we see it today will always be looked upon fondly by anyone from Generation X and Y, and future ones for many lifetimes.

---

### **My job choices, my future career path; everything was reverted back to that one fateful day...**

---

I actually was given a choice to turn down the NES and go after 20-30 games and an Atari 2600 with a bunch of blowout titles from Zayre for around the same price I bought the NES and Super Mario Bros. pack-in for. (\$79.99). There was no second guessing this. I wanted that NES. I wanted to experience real arcade quality on my television at home. It's not that I didn't enjoy playing in the arcade all the time, but when you're a little kid, and all you have at home is an Astrocade which mostly requires 2-4 players for most of their games, you end up getting bored pretty damned quick. Little did I know, having something to do for the next couple of weeks before school started was going to change the rest of my life.

My job choices, my future career path; everything was reverted back to that one fateful day where Nintendo ended up being the ONE mainstay over anything else out there. It also allows me to think back upon the countless bizarre situations involving the NES that only a maniacal collector like myself would get involved in. Stay tuned for some diabolical ravings next month...

## Feature Article

### **Al Bailey: Sudoku, Homebrewing and Beyond**

*The editor of the NintendoAGE e-Zine asked Al to come up with a few words describing his thoughts and feelings about the current state of the NES development scene as it stands today, and what plans he has for the coming months.*

"This has been a pretty crazy year for me as a NES collector and homebrewer. I've spent a very large amount of my spare time this year working on Sudoku for NES... either programming it, or attempting to make 100 numbered copies of it. (Well 95 actually, since I lost some of the stickers!)"

"Only 10 carts were purchased at the Toronto show back in April and so I considered the game a failure and the homebrew scene to be dead. At the Midwest gaming classic in May I only sent 15 and they were all purchased which made me wonder if there was some hope that I might be able to sell all my remaining carts after all. At CGE in July, all 28 copies were sold before the doors even opened. This was good news but also bad. I'd wanted the people attending CGE to be able to get one, not just the vendors. In retrospect, some sort of draw would have been better so that everyone would have a chance to buy a cart. Eurocon is in November and they are getting most of the remaining carts. I'll suggest to them that they allow everybody to have a chance at getting one."

"I've also been working with bunnyboy at retroub to get a true unlicensed version of Sudoku made. This required me to make the game work on PAL and NTSC machines, and I also added some other changes such as music, different puzzles, and a better filter for selecting a random game."

"As for what's coming up next... My next game will almost definitely be checkers for the NES. but it's still in its infancy. I would still produce a numbered version of the game, but I'll never go back to using donor carts. That takes way too much time and it feels more like I'm wrecking something than creating something."

"I've also begun designing a fighting game for the NES based on caricatures of my fellow NES collectors. I was hoping to have some of the tools written for this by the end of the year, so that I could use the as part of a contest to win the last remaining Sudoku Gold."

"I've also been improving the NES development tools I've already written so that my future games are easier to develop. I had wanted to create some sort of development studio to allow others to more easily make games, perhaps something similar to Game Maker."

"I have a couple of other projects I've been researching, but I'd prefer to not speak about them until I actually have something accomplished."

*On behalf of NintendoAGE, I'd like to extend my thanks to Al for his time and tantalizing details. We can't wait to see what's next!* **-Dangevin**

# BRONTY'S BABBLINGS

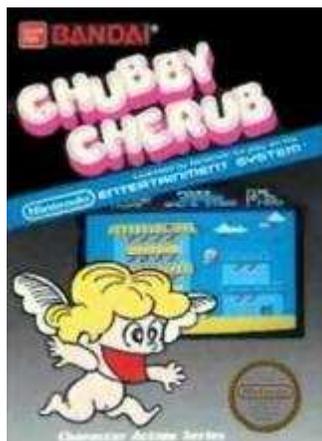
## CIB/sealed rarity - why the discrepancies?

Ever wondered why some games are rarer CIB or sealed than other games with the same loose cart rarity ranking? In other words, why is that loose cart rarity rankings, from places like NintendoAGE and Digital Press, don't always correspond to the titles' rarity complete or sealed?

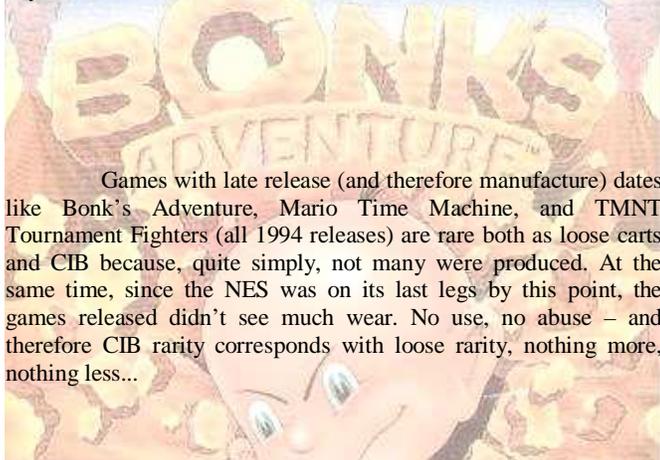
In my opinion, date of manufacture has a lot to do with it. (I'm using that term as opposed to do release date to account for the fact that some early titles were manufactured for years, while others went off the market quickly).

Back in 1985/6/7, video game collecting really wasn't on anyone's radar. The NES was simply a children's toy and there was no reason for the child to really keep anything other than the loose cart. So, the boxes and manuals manufactured in that first part of the NES's life were likely used and abused or flat out thrown away, especially since the early titles would have been the first games these children received and thus have seen especially heavy use.

As a result, those "random" rare CIB games like Chubby Cherub aren't that "random" at all. They are simply early releases that were not reprinted, making the boxes difficult to find. In the case of Chubby Cherub, it was the first third party game released, and it was a relatively poor seller for 1986 if loose cart rarity is any indication (i.e. most 1986 releases have a lower loose cart rarity). As a result, any Chubby Cherub box out there was probably manufactured in 1986 or early 1987, and would have been one of the first games a child had owned. Used, and abused!!



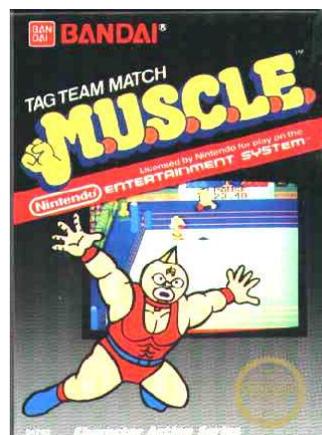
On the other hand, games from a little later on had fewer years of wear to survive. A game received on Christmas 1989 or 1990 didn't have too long to wait until the child switched up to Genesis, Super NES, or just wasn't quite as mesmerized by the NES anymore. Less use, less abuse. Fewer random rares from this era.



Games with late release (and therefore manufacture) dates like Bonk's Adventure, Mario Time Machine, and TMNT Tournament Fighters (all 1994 releases) are rare both as loose carts and CIB because, quite simply, not many were produced. At the same time, since the NES was on its last legs by this point, the games released didn't see much wear. No use, no abuse – and therefore CIB rarity corresponds with loose rarity, nothing more, nothing less...

Here's a short list of licensed CIBs (unlicensed games are really a different animal and I'm not discussing them here) that a lot of people chase after along with their year of release. Note that all of the titles are either from 1987 and earlier, or 1992 and later. Naturally, a few 1988 to 1991 rares exist (poor sellers), but the number of rare titles from this era is small indeed considering that most licensed NES games were released during this period!

**Clu Clu Land (1985)**  
**DK Jr Math (1986)**  
**Chubby Cherub (1986)**  
**Stadium Events (1987)**  
**FFF Athletic World (1987)**  
**Dragon Warrior 4 (1992)**  
**Little Samson (1992)**  
**Bubble Bobble Part 2 (1993)**  
**Flintstones 2 (1993)**  
**Bonk's Adventure (1994)**  
**TMNT Tournament Fighters (1994)**



What can we draw from this?

Well, we can guess at what some of the next "surprise" CIB rares like Chubby Cherub might be (perhaps not to the same extent of course). It seems that M.U.S.C.L.E. is starting to get a little more consideration as a rarer CIB lately. Surprising? Or as expected? To me, its entirely expected. It's a 1986 title for which no oval seal copies exist (to my knowledge), implying a short manufacture period (as oval seals were first used on boxes in March, 1989).

NintendoAGE eZine Volume 1 Issue 1; September 2007  
Copyright 2007 NintendoAGE & Dain Anderson

All rights reserved. No portion of this document may be copied, reproduced, hosted, redistributed or sold, in part or in whole, without express written consent of NintendoAGE.

Staff:

Editor-in-Chief: Dan Langevin (Dangevin)  
Executive Supervisor: Dain Anderson (Dain)  
Staff Writers: Bronty, NationalGameDepot, The\_Wizard\_666,  
Bronty, DreamTR, Dr. Morbis, BootGod, Braveheart

This is, and always will be a free publication available exclusively to the registered members of NintendoAGE.com – if you acquired this document from any other source please notify us at

[webmaster@nintendoage.com](mailto:webmaster@nintendoage.com).

