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Guide to the Scoop Shoppe Family Fun Center Records, 1981-1983 123.3041

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

The Strong

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URL: <https://www.museumofplay.org/collections/brian-sutton-smith-library-archives-of-play/>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Administrative History	3
Collection Scope and Content Note	4
System of Arrangement	5
Administrative Information	5
Controlled Access Headings	6
Collection Inventory	6

Summary Information

Repository:	Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong
Creator:	Scoop Shoppe Family Fun Center (Silver Spring, Md.)
Source:	Brewer's Arcade, Inc. (Mt. Rainier, Md)
Title:	Scoop Shoppe Family Fun Center records
ID:	123.3041
Date [inclusive]:	1981-1983
Physical Description:	1.0 Linear Feet (1 document box, 1 oversized flat box)
Language of the Material:	English
Mixed Materials [box]:	1
Mixed Materials [box]:	2
Abstract:	This collection consists of the records of the Scoop Shoppe Family Fun Center, a video game arcade and ice cream shop in 1980s, Silver Spring, Maryland. The materials are dated from 1981 to 1983. The records are comprised of handwritten notes, photographs, financial documents, correspondence, promotional materials, fliers, game operation manuals, and administrative documents.

Preferred citation for publication

Scoop Shoppe Family Fun Center records, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative History

The Scoop Shoppe Family Fun Center was incorporated as FFC Inc. on April 8, 1982, by Robert "Bob" Benson, Rudolfo Bristo, and Dung Nguyen. The Scoop Shoppe was an arcade and ice cream shop located in Cloverly Plaza, Silver Spring, Maryland during the height of the arcade craze in the 1980s.

Benson conducted intensive research about starting the business and used resources available to him such as the Small Business Association, newspaper articles, and arcade industry experts. Once the Scoop Shoppe was up and running, daily operations were overseen by Bristo and Nguyen with Benson managing promotions and marketing.

Ultimately, the Scoop Shoppe struggled to stay in business due to a poor reputation, public image problems, and market oversaturation and closed for business around the mid-to-late 1980s.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Scoop Shoppe Family Fun Center records document the establishment of, and the day-to-day activities of, the arcade and ice cream shop during the 1980s. Coin-operated video games such as *Space Invaders* (1978), *Asteroids* (1979), *Pac-Man* (1980), and *Donkey Kong* (1981) fueled the explosive growth of video game arcades in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Scoop Shoppe was one of more than 20,000 arcades in business by 1982.

The "Operating Methods and Philosophy policy," cash reserve agreement, purchase agreement addendums, owners meeting notes, and other administrative records provide insight into operating an arcade. Financial documents consist of handwritten inventories but also include cost analyses, game collection reports, correspondence regarding the business loan, and an amortization table for 1982.

The many handwritten notes by Robert Benson throughout the papers document his daily to-do lists, thoughts and ideas on potential promotions, financial issues, and conversations he had. They also include questions for attorneys, financial professionals, business associations, and industry experts, sometimes recording the answers he received.

Because Benson's main responsibility once the arcade was operational was promotions and marketing, the records are also comprised of hand drawn coupons, notices to customers about special events, promotions, and rule changes, proofs of marketing materials, and notes about marketing ideas such as "Free Plays" and "Two for One" games. Reference materials used by Benson include newspaper articles about licensing fees and the general arcade business, a copy of Dick McNicholas' pamphlet "Amusement Machine: Your Route to Success," 1981, and pamphlets from the Small Business Association, Management Aids series.

The records also contain many interesting visuals such as photographs of inside and outside the arcade, complete parts and operating manuals for *Centipede*, *Ms. Pac-Man*, and *QIX*, and fliers for *Ponpoko*, *Sky Bumper*, *Xargon*, *MOGUchan*, *Sky Lancer*, *Super Rider*, and *Star Trek*.

Market saturation and a lack of innovation in the mid-1980s sent profits tumbling and led many arcades to close their doors. The records document the difficulties the Scoop Shoppe experienced with coin-op vendors, security, crime, poor reputation, and lack of experience and can be seen in the handwritten notes, correspondence, and internal memorandums.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

System of Arrangement

This collection consists of two boxes. The folders are arranged alphabetically, by title.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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Publication Statement

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Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and users of its library and archives.

Conditions Governing Use

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Custodial History

The Scoop Shoppe Family Fun Center records were donated to The Strong in August 2022 as a gift from Joseph, Stephanie, Samuel, Lucas, and Nate Brewer, owners of Brewer's Arcade Inc. in Mount Rainier, Maryland, accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 123.3041. The papers were received from Joe and Lucas Brewer in one box, approximately 1.0 linear foot. Joe Brewer acquired the materials from the estate of Scoop Shoppe co-owner, Robert Benson.

Processing Information

The original folder titles were retained when available. Loose materials were integrated in the appropriate existing folders. New folders were created to accomodate larger portions of loose materials. Folder titles in quotations marks are original to the creator. All other titles were derived by the archivist. The folders have been arranged alphabetically by title for ease of research.

Processed by

Stephanie Ball, February 2024

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Video arcades
- Arcades -- Equipment and supplies
- Arcades
- Centipede (Game)
- Ms. Pac-Man (Game)
- QIX (Video game)
- Brewer's Arcade, Inc. (Mt. Rainier, Md)

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
"A/C" - notes and serial numbers, c. 1982	box 1	folder 1
Administrative documents, notes, and reference, 1982	box 1	folder 2
Business research, 1981-1983	box 1	folder 3
Centipede operation, maintenance, and service manuals, 1981	box 1	folder 4
"Collection records" - clippings, notes, and machine readings, 1983	box 1	folder 5
Counter Top Amusements - notes and brochures, 1981-1982	box 1	folder 6
Daily operations - notes, c. 1982	box 1	folder 7
"FCC action" - notes, reference, correspondence, and financials, c. 1982	box 1	folder 8
Financials - notes, inventory, and reports, c. 1982	box 1	folder 9

"Good Grades" reward program, c. 1981	box 1	folder 10
"Leonard Rosenthal - CPA" - notes, c. 1981	box 1	folder 11
Maryland Retail Sales Tax application [blank], 1982	box 1	folder 12
"Meeting notes", 1982	box 1	folder 13
Ms. Pac-Man parts and operating manual, 1982 January	box 1	folder 14
Photographs, 1982	box 1	folder 15
Promotional materials, notes, and lists, 1981-1982	box 1	folder 16
QIX manual and readings, 1981-1982	box 1	folder 17
RePlay correspondence, 1982	box 1	folder 18
Small Business Association management aid brochures, 1981-1982	box 1	folder 19
"Small Business Association" - notes, correspondence, and machine readings, 1982	box 1	folder 20
"SS" - notes, promotional materials, and reference, 1982	box 1	folder 21
"SS plans", c. 1980-1982	box 1	folder 22
Venture Line Inc. conversion kit fliers, 1983, undated	box 1	folder 23
"Wood and Christie" - notes, 1982	box 1	folder 24
Tri-County Free Press, 1981 December 10	box 2	item 1
Tri-County Free Press, 1982 February 01	box 2	item 2
Tri-County Free Press, 1982 March 01	box 2	item 3
Tri-County Free Press, 1982 April 01	box 2	item 4