

Finding Aid to the Anne D. Williams Collection of Jigsaw Puzzle Videos, 1983-2011

Summary Information

Title: Anne D. Williams collection of jigsaw puzzle videos

Creator: Anne D. Williams (primary)

ID: 2015.williams

Date: 1983-2011

Extent: 1.5 linear feet

Language: The materials in this collection are in English.

Abstract: The Anne D. Williams collection of jigsaw puzzle videos contains recordings on the topic of jigsaw puzzles, various puzzle-makers, and puzzle collectors. These moving image recordings (VHS cassettes and DVDs) are dated between 1983 and 2011.

Repository:

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

One Manhattan Square

Rochester, New York 14607

585.263.2700

library@museumofplay.org

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Use: This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, she has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

Custodial History: The Anne D. Williams collection of jigsaw puzzle videos was donated to The Strong in November 2014 as a gift from Anne D. Williams. These materials were accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 114.7060 (relating to the *Puzzle Trio* documentary) and Object ID 114.7611 (other puzzle-related video recordings).

Preferred citation for publication: Anne D. Williams collection of jigsaw puzzle videos, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

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Controlled Access Terms

Personal Names

- Cole, Robert
- Muir, Bryce
- Richardson, Steve
- Slocum, Jerry
- Trutter, L. Philip
- Williams, Anne D.

Corporate Names

- ELMS Puzzles
- Hallmark Cards, Inc.
- Lauri Puzzles
- Parker Brothers, Inc.
- Springbok Puzzles
- Stave Puzzles, Inc.
- TUCO Puzzles

Subjects

- Collectors and collecting
- Jigsaw puzzles
- Pastime Puzzles
- Picture puzzles
- Puzzle makers
- Puzzle Parley
- Puzzles
- Video recordings

Historical Note

English cartographer John Spilsbury created the first known jigsaw puzzle in the 1760s when he pasted a map to a wooden board and cut around the countries' borders. Jigsaw puzzles soon became a popular European method to teach geography and history to children of wealthy families. The first American jigsaw puzzles made their appearance during the 1850s, and following the Civil War, people utilized these "dissected pictures" as a source of education and entertainment. American jigsaw puzzles in the 19th century often depicted maps, children's stories, and scenes of industrialization in the United States. Publishing companies such as Milton Bradley and McLoughlin Brothers soon joined in the production of children's games and puzzles. Some puzzle-makers cut costs on their puzzles by using color lithography rather than hand-colored prints, or adhering the pictures to cardboard instead of wood; these measures, along with increased transportation networks, helped to spread the jigsaw puzzle across America.

By 1908, wooden puzzles for adults had caught on. The Pastime Puzzles line at Parker Brothers in Salem, Massachusetts, featured "figure pieces," or puzzle segments deliberately cut to appear as animals, geometric forms, or household objects. (Pastime Puzzles had such a high demand that Parker Brothers halted game production and devoted its entire factory to puzzle manufacturing in 1909.) Around this time, companies began to produce puzzles with interlocking pieces. For the next two decades, jigsaw puzzles remained a well-liked hobby, but their status surged once again during the Great Depression as home amusements replaced more costly forms of entertainment. (Some smaller-scale puzzle-makers even rented out puzzles to families by the week, and communities established lending libraries of puzzles.) Yet another boost in puzzle popularity occurred during World War II, when toy-making materials were diverted to the war effort, while cardboard for puzzles remained in abundant supply.

Anne D. Williams, Professor Emerita of Economics at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, is a preeminent jigsaw puzzle historian and collector. Williams has conducted decades of research and written numerous articles on jigsaw puzzle history; she has also appeared on many national television programs and in local news features on puzzles. Williams joined the Association of Game and Puzzle Collectors (AGPC) as a Charter Member, and she received the 2007 AGPC Spilsbury Award as an acknowledgment of her contributions to the AGPC and for being the “world’s foremost expert on jigsaw puzzles.” Williams’ books include *Jigsaw Puzzles: An Illustrated History and Price Guide* (1990) and *The Jigsaw Puzzle: Piecing Together a History* (2004).

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Anne D. Williams collection of jigsaw puzzle videos contains 40 VHS cassettes and 4 DVDs of jigsaw-puzzle related television features and documentary footage. Topics of these moving images include the history of jigsaw puzzles, specialty puzzle-makers (such as Stave Puzzles and ELMS Puzzles), and puzzle collectors. These recordings are dated between 1983 and 2011. Additional scope and content information can be found in the “Contents List” section of this finding aid.

The Anne D. Williams collection of jigsaw puzzle videos is arranged into two series. The materials are housed in one records carton and one archival document box.

Related Materials

In 2014, The Strong acquired more than 7,000 jigsaw puzzles from Anne D. Williams, including examples from nearly all American and European puzzle-makers from the 18th century to the present.

The Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play houses hundreds of jigsaw puzzle company trade catalogs and flyers within its library stacks, the majority of which were donated to the research library by Anne D. Williams in 2011 and 2013.

System of Arrangement

Series I: Various puzzle-related television features and event recordings, 1983-2011

Series II: *A Puzzle Trio* documentary footage, 1993-1996

Contents List

Series I: Various puzzle-related television features and event recordings, 1983-2011

Scope and Content Note: This series holds 28 VHS cassettes and 4 DVD recordings by or featuring Anne Williams, on the topic of jigsaw puzzle history, various puzzle-makers, and puzzle collectors.

All objects within this series are VHS cassettes, unless otherwise noted.

Descriptions of video segments are indicated in brackets following the label and date of each tape.

Box 1

- Object 1 “Hallmark Cards, Inc., On Puzzles, 8/83,” August 1983 [on how Hallmark makes cardboard die-cut jigsaw puzzles]
- Object 2 “Puzzles - misc. / Bates exhibit (6/1/88); CNN on Stave (Spring 1990); GMA on Stave and Bates (10/7/1988),” 1988, 1990 [various features on puzzle exhibit at Bates College, Stave Puzzles]
- Object 3 *The Marvelous Toys of Dr. Athelstan Spilhaus*, © 1989 [on Spilhaus collection of mechanical toys and puzzles]
- Object 4 “Puzzle Talk - Oxford Hills Jr. High 4/28/89,” April 1989 [Anne Williams talk at school in South Paris, Maine, about jigsaw puzzle history and collecting]
- Object 5 “Bob Davis demonstrating puzzle cutting and saw, 1989,” 1989 [local television program feature on Bob Davis, jigsaw puzzle-maker]
- Object 6 “Channel 13 News - Puzzles, 3/91,” March 1991 [Portland, Maine news program feature on Anne Williams’ puzzle collection]
- Object 7 “WAND TV Phil Trutter Jigsaw, 6/91,” June 1991 [Decatur, Illinois news program feature on Phil Trutter, jigsaw puzzle-maker]
- Object 8 “Pieces of Time - Fresno Metropolitan Museum, 1992,” 1992 [recording of Fresno, California museum exhibition of Chuck Small’s puzzles]
- Object 9 *Classic TV Toys Commercials of the ‘50s and ‘60s*, © 1993 [compiled recordings of television commercials of collectible toys]
- Object 10 “Queen Elizabeth; Elms Puzzles, 3/93,” March 1993 [assorted television features on Queen Elizabeth doing puzzles, ELMS Puzzles]
- Object 11 “Oct. 9, 1993 - Made in Maine on Bryce Muir, Toymaker,” October 1993 [Maine television program feature on Bryce Muir]
- Object 12 “Lauri Puzzles, 1994,” 1994 [promotional “video catalog” for Lauri Puzzles]
- Object 13 “Peter Mehegan’s *Chronicle*, Jan. 20, 1994, Channel 5, Needham, Mass.,” January 1994 [television feature on Anne Williams’ puzzles]
- Object 14 “Puzzle Parley, Sept. 10, 1994,” September 1994 [recording of Puzzle Parley I, Concord, Massachusetts]
- Object 15 “Nov. 28 1994, Jerry Slocum on KABC-TV Los Angeles,” November 1994 [news program feature on Jerry Slocum’s mechanical puzzles]
- Object 16 “6-22-95 CNN on Stave Party,” June 1995 [CNN feature on Stave Puzzles anniversary party]
- Object 17 “Personal FX 8/17/95,” August 1995 [television program feature on Anne Williams’ puzzles]

- Object 18 “MONH exhibit, 4-27-96, 15 min,” April 1996 [recording of “Cutting a Fine Figure: The Art of the Jigsaw Puzzle” exhibition at Museum of Our National Heritage, Lexington, Massachusetts]
- Object 19 “Puzzle Parley II, Lexington Mass., April 27, 1996,” April 1996 [recording of Puzzle Parley II, Lexington, Massachusetts]
- Object 20 “ELMS Puzzles - Made in Maine, 8 May 1997,” May 1997 [Maine television program feature on ELMS Puzzles]
- Object 21 “Chronicle 4/13/00 Pagey Elliot and Jim Ayer, WCVB Boston,” April 2000 [television program feature on puzzles by Pagey Elliott and Jim Ayer]
- Object 22 “Learning Channel 2001 ‘Enigma’ on World’s Weirdest Performers,” 2001 [TLC program recording on “The Enigma” (a.k.a. Paul Lawrence), with a full-body jigsaw puzzle tattoo]
- Object 23 “May 2001 Puzzle Exhibit (Bekkering) A World of Pieces,” May 2001 [recording of puzzle exhibition in Hengelo, Netherlands, mounted by Geert Bekkering]
- Object 24 “Bill Green’s Maine, 6/9/01, Feature on ELMS Puzzles,” June 2001 [Maine television program feature on ELMS Puzzles]
- Object 25 “1 April 2002, Jerry Slocum on Martha Stewart,” April 2002 [television program feature on Jerry Slocum’s mechanical puzzles]
- Object 26 “TUCO Puzzles, NCHS Historically Speaking, April 5, 2002,” April 2002 [television program feature on Bill Abel, collector, on TUCO Puzzles history]
- Object 27 “4-16-04 AGPC Spilsbury Award Dinner, Philadelphia, PA,” April 2004 [presentation of Spilsbury Award to Katie and Bob Lewin, founders of Springbok Editions]
- Object 28 “Stave Puzzles, Appearance on The Genuine Article, Aug. 2004,” August 2004 [television program feature on Stave Puzzles]
- Envelope 1 DVD of segments on *Martha Stewart Living* (10/14/2002) and on *History Detectives* (7/16/2003), 2002-2003 [television program appearances by Anne Williams]
- Envelope 1 DVD of recording from *CBS Sunday Morning* (4/1/2007), April 2007 [on Stave Puzzles]
- Envelope 1 DVD of puzzle episode from *Martha Stewart Show* (2/22/2011), February 2011 [features Will Shortz and crosswords; mechanical puzzle collector; ELMS Puzzles]

Series II: A Puzzle Trio documentary footage, 1993-1996

Scope and Content Note: This series contains twelve 120-minute VHS cassettes of raw footage for Anne Williams' and Bob Cole's jigsaw puzzle documentary called *A Puzzle Trio* (1996). Accompanying this footage are release forms for the interviews. Folder 1 contains a DVD copy of the final documentary, which was shown at the "Cutting a Fine Figure: The Art of the Jigsaw Puzzle" exhibition at Museum of Our National Heritage, Lexington, Massachusetts. Segments in the final documentary include "Puzzle-Making at Parker Brothers," "Jig-Saw Craze Sweeps Country," and "How Puzzles are Made."

All objects within this series are VHS cassettes.

Box 1

- Object 29 "Puzzle Protection Master of Tapes 1-4, part of 5; 9/11-12/93, Salem, MA," September 1993
- Object 30 "Puzzle Protection Master of Tapes 5 (partial), 6-9, 9/12/93, Salem, MA & vicinity," September 1993
- Object 31 "Puzzle Protection Master, of Tapes 10-12, 9/13/93," September 1993
- Object 32 "Puzzle Dubs 211-214, May 13-14, 1994," May 1994
- Object 33 "Puzzle Dubs 215-217, 219, May 14, 15, 1994," May 1994
- Object 34 "PZL DUB, C.R. 220, John McGee, Rabbit Hill Inn, Protection Master, May 15, 1994," May 1994

Box 2

- Object 1 "(1) - Cole - June 1996 - MONH Tour," June 1996
- Object 2 "(2) - Cole - June 1996 - Jim Ayer, Part I," June 1996
- Object 3 "(3) - Cole - June 1996 - Jim Ayer, Part II," June 1996
- Object 4 "(4) - Cole - June 1996 - Helen Finnegan - Part I," June 1996
- Object 5 "(5) - Cole - June 1996 - Helen Finnegan - Part II; Topsfield Show - Part I," June 1996
- Object 6 "(6) - Cole - June 1996 - Topsfield Show - Part II," June 1996
- Folder 1 *A Puzzle Trio*, Anne D. Williams and Robert Cole, © 1996 (DVD, 9 min.)
- Folder 2 *A Puzzle Trio* documentary signed model release forms, 1993