

Finding Aid to Alexander Smith's Nutting Associates Collection, 1967-1998

Summary Information

Title: Alexander Smith's Nutting Associates collection

Creator: Nutting Associates (primary); Alexander Smith (secondary)

ID: 117.6983

Date: 1967-1998 (inclusive); 1968-1973 (bulk)

Extent: 4.3 linear feet

Language: The materials in this collection are in English.

Abstract: Alexander Smith's Nutting Associates collection is a compilation of materials originally created by Nutting Associates, including photographs, slides, marketing assets, manuals, news clippings, a scrapbook, and other documentation. The bulk of the collection is dated between 1968 and 1973.

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 intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) have not been transferred, The Strong has permission to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

Custodial History: Alexander Smith's Nutting Associates collection was donated to The Strong in August 2017 as a gift from Alexander Smith. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 117.6983 and were received from Smith (a librarian, researcher, and blogger) in one box. Prior to being in Smith's possession, the materials in this collection were owned by Claire Nutting, widow of William Nutting (the founder of Nutting Associates) and were sent to Smith in 2017. (Claire Nutting received the materials from Nancy Watson, a former colleague at Nutting Associates, in 1998.)

Preferred citation for publication: Alexander Smith's Nutting Associates collection, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

Processed by: Julia Novakovic, November 2017

Controlled Access Terms

Personal Names

- Bushnell, Nolan
- Dabney, Ted
- Nutting, Claire
- Nutting, William ("Bill")

Corporate Names

- Nutting Associates

Subjects

- Arcades
- Computer Quiz (Game)
- Computer Space (Game)
- Employee handbooks
- Video arcades
- Video game industry
- Video games--Handbooks, manuals, etc.
- Video games--History

Historical Note

Founded by William ("Bill") Gilbert Nutting in 1966, Nutting Associates formed following the acquisition of patent rights to EDEX Teaching Machines' *Knowledge Computer*, a coin-operated, multiple-choice, question-and-answer machine that used a film projector to display questions. Following a redesign at Nutting Associates, they released the machine as *Computer Quiz* in 1967; the successful game popped up in airports, train stations, bowling alleys, student unions, and other venues where visitors might not have ordinarily expected to see coin-operated games. Nutting Associates produced Nolan Bushnell and Ted Dabney's *Computer Space*, the first commercial arcade video game, in 1971.

Nutting Associates continued manufacturing arcade games up until 1977, when the company was purchased by William "Si" Redd, a slot machine manufacturer. (The final game released by Nutting was *Ricochet* during that same year.) Nutting Associates was absorbed by Redd's new company Sircoma in 1979 and effectively shuttered.

Collection Scope and Content Note

Alexander Smith's Nutting Associates collection is a compilation of materials originally created by Nutting Associates. This collection contains photographs, slides, marketing assets, manuals, news clippings, a scrapbook, and other Nutting Associates documentation. The company maintained the scrapbook housed in Box 2 from late 1967 through 1969, adding clippings from trade journals and internally produced marketing materials. Additional information can be found in the Contents List section of this finding aid.

Alexander Smith's Nutting Associates collection is arranged into four series. The collection is housed in two archival document boxes and one oversized folder.

Related Materials

The International Center for the History of Electronic Games at The Strong preserves examples of the Nutting Associates' *Computer Space* (1971), *Computer Space Ball* (1973), *Table Tennis* (1973), and *Two-Player Computer Space* (1973).

System of Arrangement

- Series I: Nutting Associates company information, 1967-1972
- Series II: *Computer Quiz*, 1968-1972
- Series III: *Computer Space*, 1971-1972
- Series IV: Miscellaneous, 1967-1998

Contents List

Series I: Nutting Associates company information, 1967-1972

Scope and Content Note: This series holds photographs, slides, an employee manual, and a company scrapbook maintained between Fall 1967 and Fall 1969. (The first page of the scrapbook in Box 2 notes, "Being a record of the appearance in print of notables of this company, advertisements of this company and of its competitors, and mention of its friends, enemies, and/or competitors as taken from the magazines and scandal sheets to which we have become privy.")

Box 1

- Folder 1 Nutting Associates Employee Manual, n.d. [c. 1968-1970s]
- Folder 2 Nutting Associates employees and buildings photographs, c. 1968-1972 and n.d.
- Folder 3 Nutting Associates at trade shows and display booths photographs and slides, c. 1969-1972 and n.d.

Box 2

- Object 1 Nutting Associates company scrapbook, 1967-1969

Series II: *Computer Quiz*, 1968-1972

Scope and Content Note: This series houses Nutting Associates-produced materials on *Computer Quiz* (1968), including a maintenance manual, certificate of warranty, postcards, and photographs. (For more information on *Computer Quiz*, see also the Nutting Associates company scrapbook in Box 2.)

Box 1

- Folder 4 "*Computer Quiz* Maintenance Manual," Nutting Associates, n.d. [c. 1968-1970s?] [2 copies]
- Folder 5 *Computer Quiz* Certificate of Warranty, n.d. [c. 1968-1970s?]
- Folder 6 *Computer Quiz* postcards, n.d. [c. 1968-1970s?]
- Folder 7 *Computer Quiz* photographs, c. 1968-1972

Series III: *Computer Space*, 1971-1972

Scope and Content Note: Within this series are fliers, postcards, and oversized wiring diagram diazo prints for the Nutting Associates game *Computer Space* (1971).

Box 1

- Folder 8 *Computer Space* fliers, Nutting Associates, 1971 and n.d. [c. 1972?]
Folder 9 *Computer Space* postcards, Nutting Associates, n.d. [c. 1971-1972?]

Oversized

- Folder 1 *Computer Space* circuit board schematics/wiring diagrams, 1971 [2 copies]

Series IV: Miscellaneous, 1967-1998

Scope and Content Note: This series contains additional materials from Nutting Associates, including photographs and slides of arcades, photographs of a *Computer Space Ball* cabinet, a monitor conversion kit, publicity clippings, and more. Also within this series is a folder containing a card to Bill and Claire Nutting and the return address portion of the box sent to the Nuttings which had previously included the materials in this collection.

Box 1

- Folder 10 Photographs and slides of arcades and game players, c. 1972 and n.d.
Folder 11 *Computer Space Ball* photographs, c. 1972-1973
Folder 12 Miscellaneous photographs and slides, c. 1967-1973 and n.d.
Folder 13 "TV-21 Conversion Kit, Assembly Manual, Wiring Diagram, Revision A," manual and wire samples, n.d. [c. early 1970s?]
Folder 14 Newspapers/magazine articles, 1967-1976 and n.d.
Folder 15 Nancy Watson to Bill and Claire Nutting - provenance information, 1998