



SMARTBOY GAMES

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My first encounter with SmartBoy games came sometime around late 2005 while I was nonchalantly browsing Jason Smith's (NationalGameDepot's) website and happened upon a picture of two bizarre looking NES games. Both games were in rental cases that had 'QuikPlay' game instructions pasted to the front. They looked quite a bit different from a normal licensed release. On the front label of both games, Super Mario Bros 3 and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, 'Smart Boy' was placed prominently in bold font, making the actual title of the game seem unimportant in comparison. What were these games and where did they come from? I had to find out, and here are the results of my research.

These games were manufactured by some random company in South America and distributed by a company named Video Store Services throughout the late 80s and mid 90s. Video Store Services specialized in selling fixtures and other miscellaneous items to both video rental chains and independently owned stores. SmartBoy games were created with the intent of offering stores a cheaper alternative to having the 'popular titles' rather than purchasing their officially licensed counterparts. Independently owned rental stores who decided to purchase the one page QuikPlay instructions were more apt to carry these cartridges than the bigger store chains, which is likely why so few of these have surfaced. From a brief conversation with the original owner of Video Store Services, these cartridges did not sell very well and were eventually dropped from their product catalog. The

SMARTBOY GAMES (at a glance)

Year: late 80s - mid 90s

Manufactured: South American Slaves

Distributed: Video Store Services

Games: Arkanoid (2)
Super Mario Bros. 2 (2)
Super Mario Bros. 3 (2)
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (2)
Tengen Tetris (6)

company has relocated their warehouse several times since then so any possible overstock of these titles were either liquidated or just thrown away. While these are essentially nothing more than another line of pirated games, they do have a traceable history with an actual purpose behind them. This makes them a unique niche for collectors to go after.

To date, five different SmartBoy titles that have surfaced, and the quantities of those in collectors' hands (through my own personal data collecting since I first became aware of them) are listed above.

