# Hirsch Index – History for Betsy & Chuck

Updated January 17, 2018

We have faithfully logged on Board Game Geek every game we have played since January 1, 2012. And we wish we'd taken the suggestion of our gaming buddy, Ben Rhoads, 6 or 8 years earlier when he encouraged us to begin keeping track of what we played ... darn! But thank you, Ben, for at least getting us started six years ago!

Anyway, we recently decided to estimate how many times we played each game earlier in life, before 2012. Part of the reason for this is a curiosity to know the progression of our H-Index. For example, H=5 would mean we had played at least 5 games 5 times, but would need a 6<sup>th</sup> play of an additional game, and perhaps another play of some of the first 5 games, to increase H to 6. As H becomes large, each additional step is difficult.

By the end of 2017, we estimate that we have played at least 45 different games at least 45 times each. Here are the results through the end of each listed year:

Н	Year	Period (Chuck; both from 1971)

5	1956	Denver
14	1960	Idaho Falls
22	1966	High School
25	1971	College
26	1977	Hartford
27	1989	Square Dancing
27	1993	Japan
28	2000	Stamp Business
29	2003	Origins
37	2011	UUFCC
38	2012	BGG
40	2013	BGG
41	2014	BGG
42	2015	BGG
44	2016	BGG
45	2017	BGG

Here are some H-Index summary numbers:

- 24 **2011** Based only on games logged in BGG to 2011
- 2018 Only real-time BGG logs in 2012 to 2017 34
- 38 2018 All BGG-logged games \*

\* Note that the relationship between H-I's is not obvious. For example, 24 (to 2011) + 34 (after 2011) = 58, but the combined H-Index is only 38.

Adding estimated games not individually logged into BGG increased H=38 to H=45, an increase of 7. This represents 17 additions minus 9 that got squeezed out. (Observe that 38 + 17 - 9 = 46 rather than 45. The difference of 1 is due to a tie at H=38.)

#### 17 Additions (Supporting H=45 because of estimated plays not in BGG):

Acquire Anagrams Bridge Canasta Can't Stop Chess **Chinese Checkers** Clue Hearts **Gin Rummy** Oh, Hell! Old Maid Rail Baron Risk Scrabble Skunk Spit! ("Blitz")

Several of these we'll seldom or never play again, thus some will disappear from the list in the future ... like *Old Maid*, for cryin' out loud!

**9** Squeezed Out (38 or more plays logged in BGG, but the total including non-logged estimates is less than 45):

Bora Bora Carcassonne Kingdomino Lost Cities (for 2) Nations Robo Rally Roll for the Galazy San Juan Travel Blog

These *Real Games* that got squeezed out by the estimates will likely return to support our H-Index as we play them more in future years ... that'll be nice!

### Methodology

**Sources.** During the second half of 2017 we dug up a large amount of information from various places, including:

Logs of individual games like Agricola & Le Havre

BGG logs of Ben Rhoads (who encouraged us to begin logging several years earlier)

Records from 14 Game Marathons we hosted at our house and at our "church"

Photos (especially the self-dating variety, and those carefully documented in albums) taken at Family Reunions, game parties, and game-heavy holidays

Specific memories (such as B&C who met playing Risk on New Year's Eve 1967)

Family and Friends also provided several specifics

Notes on monthly calendars we saved (unfortunately, only since 2000)

A computer spreadsheet we maintained for many years documenting when we crossed each national, state, prefectural, or other border, recorded to the nearest 3 minutes, tell where we were going and why

Letters, e-mail notes, and Betsy's Diary

An estimate made in February 2003 of most-played games the past ten years and the lifetime total

Dates we bought many of our games, dredged up from electronic and paper receipts

Reasonable guesses that we played games most frequently soon after we bought them

**Recording.** Chuck entered pre-2012 games with specific dates into BGG. There are 106 different games with a total of 2,184 plays.

In addition, Betsy & Chuck estimate they played *at least* 2,784 additional games for which we don't have enough details to enter in BGG.

Our total plays through 12/31/2017 are thus:

- 3,887 Actual 2012 to 2017 games logged on BGG as played
- 2,184 Additional pre-2012 games later added to BGG
- 2,784 Conservatively-estimated pre-2012 games in an Excel spreadsheet

#### 8,855 Total Plays

We've played a total of at least **645 different games**, not counting Solitaire, War, Twenty Questions and similar games. And perhaps we forgot to list even a few "real games."

With that many plays of just the right games we could have had an **H-Index of 94**, more than twice our actual H=45. However, we played too many games of Pandemic Legacy, Agricola, Race for the Galaxy and several others, and way too many different games just a few times each. Oh, well ... it's been fun!

## **Notes by Period**

I won't complete these now, but will make some sketchy notes; perhaps nobody will ever read this anyway. But at some point it might be fun to record more of the associated memories.

H = 5 by 12/31/1956. Betsy, with two younger siblings and busy parents, played few if any games by age 5, so this period is for Chuck only. He played a lot of games with his

parents, especially his mother, while living in Denver until he and his mother moved to Idaho after second grade. He is sure he played the following games at least 5 times each (and some of them many more than 5 times):

Canasta Chinese Checkers Chutes and Ladders Parchisi Skunk

H = 14 by 12/31/1960. Chuck and his mom lived in Idaho Falls, Idaho, these four years and he played a lot of games with his cousins and other friends. Betsy also started playing more then, some of the same games and some different:

Bridge Canasta Candyland Chinese Checkers Chutes and Ladders Clue El Dorado: World's Hidden Treasures Go Fish Mancala Monopoly Old Maid Parchisi Scrabble Skunk

H = 22 by 12/31/1966. Chuck was in high school and played a lot of Bridge. The question arises as to what constitutes "one game" of bridge; a duplicate tournament, a complete rubber of party bridge, a few hands at lunch? Anyway, by any measure, Chuck played well over 100 "games" in this period.

Betsy (including during 1967 until she met Chuck) played a lot of Canasta, Chess, and Clue. Of course, many childhood games still rank highly in this list, but some will drop out in future periods. Here are B&C's combined most-played games, at least 22 times for each:

Bridge Canasta Candyland Chess Chinese Checkers Clue Crazy 8s Dominoes Gin Rummy Go Go Fish Hearts Mancala Monopoly Oh, Hell! Old Maid Parchisi Poker (all types) Risk Scrabble Skunk Yahtzee

H = 25 by 12/31/1971. In college, rather than bridge or backgammon or whatever other college students used to play a lot, Chuck spent many hours playing Spit! (that's the BGG name, but he learned it from his cousin Deidra as "Blitz"), especially with his friend Jeff Hillman. A very worthwhile investment of time! But except for that, our H-I didn't make a lot progress.

H = 28 by 12/31/2000. This includes several periods when we were busy with other activities (including work, living in Japan for four years, and starting our stamp business) and we mostly played old games a few more times, so our HI increased by only 3 during these 29 years. Modern games were beginning to make the scene (like Catan in 1995), but the only one we found out about was Robo Rally, which we learned from our stamp customer, Vincent Coppla ... *thank you, Vincent*!

H = 29 by 12/31/2003. Vincent also told us about the Origins Game Fair in Columbus and encouraged Chuck (and Ben) to go in 2001, 2002, and 2003. Those three years increased our HI by only 1, but represented the Gateway to Good Times!

H = 37 by 12/31/2011. We went to our first Game Night at the local UU Fellowship in State College, PA, in November of 2003 and met lots of gamers and started playing many more games. Our H-I increase by 8 during these 8 years, which at this level is actually a fairly rapid pace, especially while learning and playing sooooo many different new games.

H = 45 by 12/31/2017. Increasing our HI by 8 in 6 years wes fast, even though we played a lot of games during this period, and we likely won't continue at that speed, especially if we don't make a focused effort to increase our H-I. We'll see.

**Future.** One item on Chuck's "Bucket List" is to end his life with H-I = at least 68 (twice his Lucky Number). Is that feasible? At this point, it would require 807 plays of just-the-right games. Of course, it would be easier if we went back to playing Candyland and Clue and Crazy 8's, but . . .

## Was This Project Worth Doing?

So . . . if there is anything sillier than playing games, it's got to be trying to recall and record all the games we ever played in the past, true? But then we wonder: is this any sillier than collecting postage stamps, something else we've spent a *lot* of our lives doing. At least tabulating games isn't as expensive, we didn't spend any gas going to stamp

shows, and the electronic records of our analysis don't take up as much space as our stamps.

What about learning to square dance, or studying a foreign language we'll probably never actually use, or practicing a single game (Bridge) in depth and trying to earn Master Points? Are any of these goals inherently more worthwhile than recording the games we have played? It is not clear (to us, anyway) that they are.

Betsy's sister Cindy suggested that making the world a better place and bringing happiness to other people might be more worthwhile. *Touché, Cindy!* 

Chuck (a self-declared Game Evangelist) will argue that the games he has introduced people to (family, friends, and even strangers in several countries) have indeed created some new friendships, given people new possible interests and goals they'll find fulfilling, and likely made the world a little smaller and happier. Playing such games may have done more than simply passing time agreeably, and might continue to spread positive ripples into the future.

And though it may seem like grasping at straws, we suggest that even this game history reconstruction project had benefits. For example:

- We who spent time talking and wracking our brains while trying to come up with specific games and dates enjoyed the process and the excuse to reminisce.
- We examined some old photos with interest and appreciation; absent this project, they might never have been looked at all, or worse, been forced upon unwilling audiences. It was fun to give the photos some value when we used them for this purpose.
- Trying to figure out how to do several data manipulations mechanically increased Chuck's spreadsheet skills, and thinking through how H-Indices interact may have sharpened his logical abilities; these may have a future payoffs.
- Perhaps someone learning about our project (*thank you if you've read this far!*) will enjoy doing something similar, and will enjoy it.

Though not as glamorous or important as Cindy's visions, these examples seem like Good Things to have done. And in the overall scheme of things, they didn't take a huge amount of time.

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