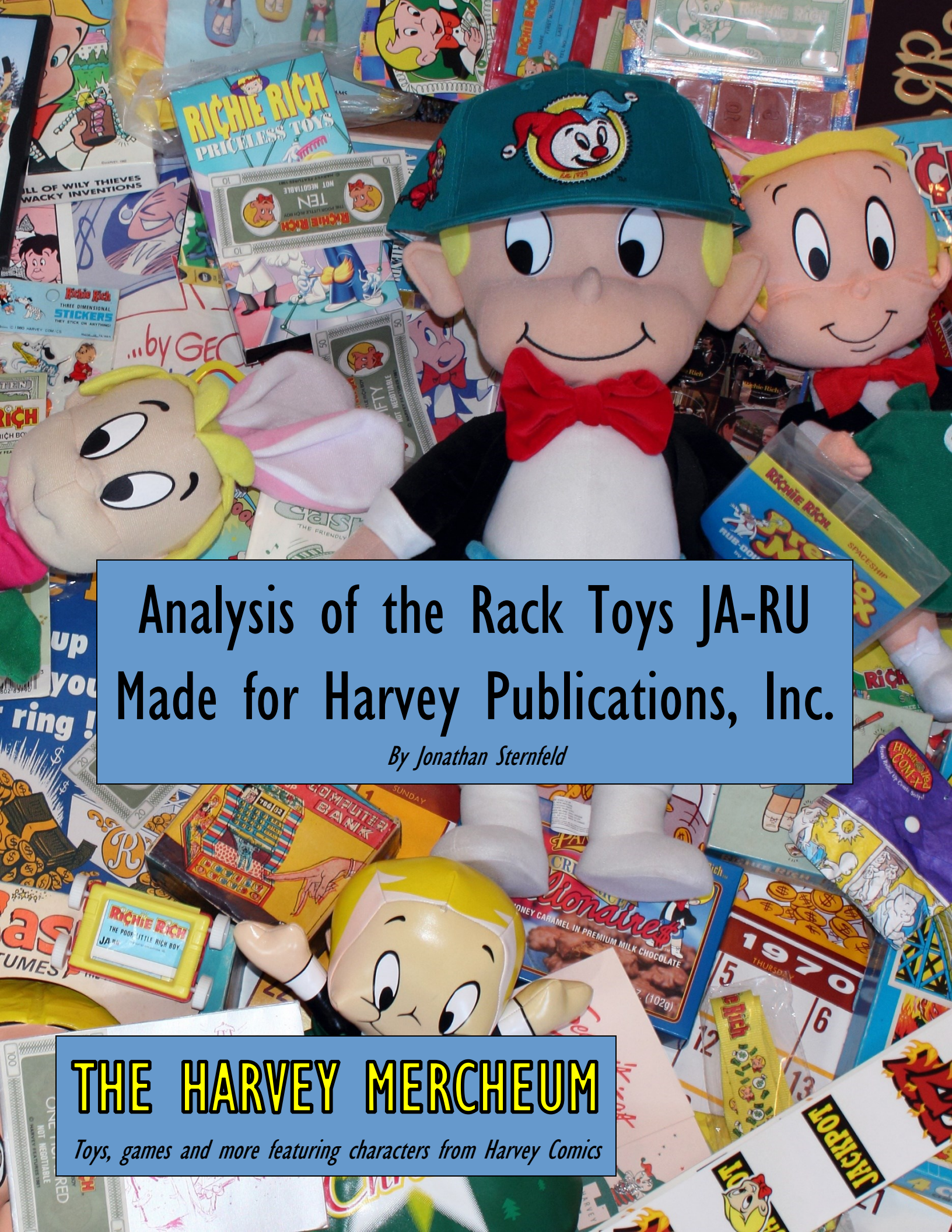




Analysis of the Rack Toys JA-RU Made for Harvey Publications, Inc.

By Jonathan Sternfeld

THE HARVEY MERCHEUM

Toys, games and more featuring characters from Harvey Comics

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Introduction



JA-RU Inc. (<https://www.jaru.com/>) has been making toys since 1961. In 1988, they produced a number of rack toys under license from Harvey Publications, Inc. As of the time of writing this revision, the Harvey Mercheum (<https://www.harveymercheum.com/>) has sixteen of these toys in its permanent collection. While the items are interesting on their own, certain patterns became apparent while looking at the collection as a whole, and these patterns raised questions. This white paper shares the collection data and the questions raised in the hopes that a reader can provide answers.



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Product Numbers

JA-RU had a sensible product numbering system (“No.” on the backing card). The only fault with it is that the “Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles” are all numbered 2930, there is no way to identify the variants from the product numbers. Here is the collection data, sorted by the “Product #” column:

Product Name	Size	COO	Product #	UPC	UPC Should Be
Richie Rich Money Maker	6×9	China	2705	075656500006	075656027053
Richie Rich Video Set	6×9	China	2706	075656500006	075656027060
Richie Rich Money Stamper	6×10	Hong Kong	2710	075656500006	075656027107
Richie Rich Rich Kid Set	6×10	China	2711	075656500006	075656027114
Richie Rich Million Dollars	6×10	China	2712	075656500006	075656027121
Richie Rich Big Spender	6×12	Hong Kong	2716	075656700000	075656027169
Richie Rich Doctor Set	6×12	Hong Kong	2717	075656700000	075656027176
Richie Rich Travel Set	6×12	China	2718	075656500006	075656027183
Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles, Ghostly Trio variant	6×9	Hong Kong	2930	075656400009	075656029309
Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles, Nightmare variant	6×9	Hong Kong	2930	075656400009	075656029309
Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles, Spooky in chair variant	6×9	Hong Kong	2930	075656400009	075656029309
Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles, Spooky boat variant	6×9	China	2930	075656091405	075656029309
Casper Saucer Shooter	6×10	China	2934	075656029347	075656029347
Casper Stamp Set	6×10	China	2936	075656400009	075656029361
Casper Dart Game	6×12	Hong Kong	2940	075656500006	075656029408
Casper Pin Ball Game	6×12	China	2941	075656500006	075656029415

Looking at the data sorted this way, we notice a couple of things. First is that the Richie Rich toys have 27xx numbers, and Casper toys have 29xx numbers. Once we accept that, then the gaps in the series become interesting. For example, we see 2705 and 2706 but then 2710. What were 2707, 2708 and 2709? More



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Richie Rich rack toys? Same for 2713, 2714 and 2715. And were there any below 2705, or above 2718? The size seems to increase as the product number increases, so it is unlikely that 2707 is 6x12, or that 2715 is 6x9.

Universal Product Codes

The other data we can analyze is the Universal Product Codes. Here is the collection data, sorted by the “UPC” column:

Product Name	Size	COO	Product #	UPC	UPC Should Be
Casper Saucer Shooter	6x10	China	2934	075656029347	075656029347
Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles, Spooky boat variant	6x9	China	2930	075656091405	075656029309
Casper Stamp Set	6x10	China	2936	075656400009	075656029361
Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles, Ghostly Trio variant	6x9	Hong Kong	2930	075656400009	075656029309
Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles, Nightmare variant	6x9	Hong Kong	2930	075656400009	075656029309
Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles, Spooky in chair variant	6x9	Hong Kong	2930	075656400009	075656029309
Richie Rich Video Set	6x9	China	2706	075656500006	075656027060
Richie Rich Rich Kid Set	6x10	China	2711	075656500006	075656027114
Richie Rich Money Stamper	6x10	Hong Kong	2710	075656500006	075656027107
Richie Rich Travel Set	6x12	China	2718	075656500006	075656027183
Casper Pin Ball Game	6x12	China	2941	075656500006	075656029415
Casper Dart Game	6x12	Hong Kong	2940	075656500006	075656029408
Richie Rich Million Dollars	6x10	China	2712	075656500006	075656027121
Richie Rich Money Maker	6x9	China	2705	075656500006	075656027053
Richie Rich Big Spender	6x12	Hong Kong	2716	075656700000	075656027169
Richie Rich Doctor Set	6x12	Hong Kong	2717	075656700000	075656027176

We can see that JA-RU’s company prefix is 075656. The next five digits are for the product number, then the last digit is a calculated check digit. Most of the product numbers fit a “ten thousands” pattern, but the



THE HARVEY MERCHEUM

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Casper Saucer Shooter and Spooky with boat variant of the “Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles” do not fit that pattern. The UPC on those particular toys is on a label, so it is possible it was not assigned by JA-RU, but by the retailer or an intermediary such as a distributor.

Once we exclude those two items, we have the numbers “40000” and “50000” repeated for several items each, and two “70000”s. Does this number have a meaning? Unlike the product number column, it does not correspond to the character depicted. All the toys were from 1988, so there was no progression there.

Looking at what other exhibit data was available to me, I next added a column to the table for Country of Origin (“COO”). The number does not correspond to that either. My last attempt was to go back to the items and pull their rack slot sizes (“Size”). JA-RU used a pegboard display divided into spots for toys of a particular size. Unfortunately, gathering this data did not help. Another mystery!

Regardless of the meaning of the ten thousand numbers, the final question is why they were used in the first place. The toys had product numbers, those numbers should have been used to create the UPCs. The final column I added to the table is what I feel the UPCs should be, with the last number being a check digit calculated using the GSI Check digit calculator (<https://www.gsi.org/services/check-digit-calculator>). The label applied to the Casper Saucer Shooter has the correct UPC.

Exhibits

If you would like to see photographs of these rack toys or learn more about them, links to the exhibit pages are provided below. On each exhibit page, underneath the table of interpretive information about the exhibit is a link to the Merchium Blog post about the exhibit. These posts contain additional information and commentary about the exhibits.

Richie Rich Video Set, Exhibit I4.7

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/richie-rich-video-set/>

Richie Rich Rich Kid Set, Exhibit I4.23

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/richie-rich-rich-kid-set/>

Richie Rich Money Stamper, Exhibit I4.24

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/richie-rich-money-stamper/>



THE HARVEY MERCHEUM

Toys, games and more featuring characters from Harvey Comics

Analysis of the Rack Toys JA-RU Made for Harvey Publications, Inc. by Jonathan Sternfeld

Richie Rich Big Spender, Exhibit 14.25

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/richie-rich-big-spender/>

Richie Rich Travel Set, Exhibit 15.9

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/richie-rich-travel-set/>

Casper Pin Ball Game, Exhibit 16.20

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/casper-pin-ball-game/>

Casper Dart Game, Exhibit 16.22

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/casper-dart-game/>

Casper Stamp Set, Exhibit 16.23

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/casper-stamp-set/>

Richie Rich Million Dollars, Exhibit 17.17

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/richie-rich-million-dollars/>

Richie Rich Money Maker, Exhibit 17.18

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/richie-rich-money-maker/>

Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles, Ghostly Trio variant, Exhibit 17.19

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/casper-4-jigsaw-puzzles-ghostly-trio-variant/>

Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles, Nightmare variant, Exhibit 17.20

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/casper-4-jigsaw-puzzles-nightmare-variant/>

Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles, Spooky in chair variant, Exhibit 17.22

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/casper-4-jigsaw-puzzles-spooky-chair-variant/>

Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles, Spooky with boat variant, Exhibit 17.24

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/casper-4-jigsaw-puzzles-spooky-boat-variant/>



THE HARVEY MERCHEUM

Toys, games and more featuring characters from Harvey Comics

Analysis of the Rack Toys JA-RU Made for Harvey Publications, Inc. by Jonathan Sternfeld

Richie Rich Doctor Set, Exhibit 21.11

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/richie-rich-doctor-set/>

Casper Saucer Shooter, Exhibit 24.18

<https://www.harveymercheum.com/exhibits/casper-saucer-shooter/>



THE HARVEY MERCHEUM

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Conclusion

Thank you for reading! I have seen two more variants of the “Casper 4 Jigsaw Puzzles”, one with the Casper logo, the other with a different picture of Nightmare. If you, or anyone you know, has any JA-RU rack toys featuring characters from Harvey Comics that are not featured in this white paper, please email curator@harveymercheum.org and describe what you have! I have also written an article for the Toy Tales toy nostalgia blog about JA-RU's reuse of molds, you can read it here: [Use and Reuse: JA-RU Rack Toys for Harvey Comics](#)

About the Harvey Mercheum

While there are many websites devoted to Harvey comics, and many devoted to toys, the Harvey Mercheum is the only website devoted to Harvey toys. Founded in 2014, the mission of the Harvey Mercheum is to catalog and document as many unique examples of Harvey comics merchandise (Harveyana) as possible, and to make this information accessible to collectors present and future. The Harvey Mercheum is a community effort, and guest submissions are actively encouraged.

About the Author



Jonathan Sternfeld is a lifelong collector, hobbyist and polymath. He funds his various follies by working as an applications developer in New York's Capital Region, where he lives with his long-suffering wife.

