During the first third of the nineteenth century in the United States, the overall popularity of word puzzles began to stabilize and then drop somewhat. As enthusiasm for all forms of literature dropped during this period, it was natural that interest in word puzzles should decline also. Nevertheless, word puzzles began to pick up new recruits among classes of people which, generally, had been uneducated before the turn of the century. In particular, puzzles enjoyed considerable popularity among farmers and others living in rural areas.

One evidence of this growth, and a significant reason for its development as well, was the creation of a section of word puzzles in the widely-circulated Farmer's Almanack in 1802. In that year, the Farmer's Almanack, which was published in Boston, inserted an old enigma in the section devoted to poetry and amusements. The puzzle must have been well received because it was followed by another a year later. In fact, in each Farmer's Almanack after 1802, well into the twentieth century, there was a section devoted to new puzzles along with answers to the ones printed in the previous year's almanac. Enigmas were the only puzzles printed at first, but a charade appeared in 1811 and other types appeared later.

One reason why puzzles were so popular in the Farmer's Almanac and in other rural books and magazines published in following years was that the educational level in rural areas was rising, and people were naturally becoming attracted to intellectual amusements. Farm life was well suited for the study of puzzles, because farm families were forced to stay inside a great deal of the time during the long winter months, and recreations of all types were warmly welcomed.

The types of publications in which puzzles appeared during the early nineteenth century give some indication as to the types of people who solved puzzles. Literary magazines such as The Eye (Philadelphia), The Emerald (Boston), the Literary Cabinet (New Haven) and the Rhode Island Literary Repository (Providence), printed occasional word puzzles, some of which were of very high literary quality. By the 1820s, however, few literary magazines printed any puzzles at all, and those that did, printed puzzles only on rare occasions. Ladies' magazines such as the Lady's Monitor (New York), the Lady's Weekly Miscellany (New York), and the Ladies' Literary Museum (Philadelphia) were very fond of puzzles. General interest and family magazines such as the Baltimore Weekly Magazine and the Philadelphia Repository and Weekly Register also frequently included puzzles among their contents.

Although apparently replete with writings of a respectable sort, they were not.

No doubt the puzzles had this flavor:

Enigmas and paradoxes, and such puzzles as the following:

However, some showed no skill:

Many puzzles were so vague as to be correct. The subject, almost any subject, almost any:

The most lacked style.
Although farmers enjoyed puzzles, the intellectuals of this period apparently looked upon them with some disdain. This is illustrated by a note a reader sent to the Ladies' Literary Cabinet of July 8, 1820. He submitted an enigma attributed to Lord Byron for publication, and said, "I think it superior to any thing I have seen of the kind; for it is replete with wit and poetical beauty which is very seldom the case of writings of this kind." In other words, some puzzles were worthy enough to interest those persons with high literary tastes, but most were not.

No doubt he had a point. The literary quality of the verse puzzles ranged from very good to very poor, largely depending on where the puzzles appeared. Literary magazines printed puzzles of excellent quality, while some of the magazines appealing to the more common people were less concerned with the poetry of the verses as with the puzzle element itself. Examples of both types are given below.

Enigmas frequently fell into a dull, singsong pattern of superficial paradoxes. One enigma on "water" in the 1817 Farmer's Almanack had this flaw. In certain parts, the puzzle did have some clever lines, such as these:

"So lax my joints have always been,  
I cannot ev'n support a pin;  
Yet never fail, of strength so rare,  
That none can heavier burdens bear."  

"Of powers sublime, extensive, deep!  
I oft reflect while others sleep;  
Many a fair one grants me this  
Indulgence, free her lips to kiss;"

However, some of the lines were only superficially enigmatic, and showed no sign of wit or cleverness at all:

"Am hard and soft, am short and long,  
Smooth and uneven, weak and strong.  
Both straight & crooked, square & round, ...  
Subservient, overbearing, proud;  
Gentle, impetuous, tranquil, loud ..."

Many puzzles like this one were indeed monotonous. Other puzzles were so vague that any one of a number of answers might be considered correct. This criticism was especially true of enigmas on abstract subjects, although it was true of some enigmas on material subjects, too.

The most important criticism of many word puzzles was that they lacked style and cleverness. Charades and various letter-changing, let-

zles among their offerings. Puzzles were printed in both urban and rural publications, and magazines and newspapers published in both the East and the West (the present-day Midwest).
ter-dropping or letter-juggling word puzzles were especially guilty of this fault. Frequently word puzzles consisted only of straight clues in verse, and contained little or no real poetic content. A charade by "Emma" appearing in the May 10, 1817 issue of The Parterre, a Philadelphia magazine, ran like this:

"My first is an impediment,
My next an exclamation;
My third for many a meal is sent,
My whole a man of station."

The answer was "baronet". The puzzle might have been satisfactory for a children’s magazine, but did seem somewhat out of place in an adult periodical. It is no wonder that many people looked upon puzzles as juvenile amusements.

On the other hand, some word puzzles had considerable literary merit. The best, as usual, appeared in the literary magazines, where puzzles were still considered a form of art. The following logogriph was printed in The Bower of Taste, a Boston magazine, on February 9, 1828:

"1. A fairy form, a footstep light,
A dimpled cheek, an eye so bright,
Teeth of pearl and raven hair
And swan-like neck, so stately fair;
---
All, all of these will tell you who
Comes hither now to puzzle you;
And why not -- when, as poets sing
I'm nothing but a puzzling thing?
But it, at such a bird's eye glance,
To find me out is hard, perchance,
My various parts be pleased to scan,
And then proclaim me -- if you can!

"2. Within my whole you'll surely see
A partner formed to comfort me,
But one alas! who oft has shown
A strange desire to be alone.
To pass this life from troubles free,
Unfettered by a thing like me.
But pass we on and leave the fool
The comfort of his selfish rule.

"3. From me the word you may discover
That damps the joy of yonder lover;
A word though short, which often proves
A tough one to the man that loves.

"4. And next from me you may derive
A word which marks each hour we live.
When all is hushed, and stillly night
Is sleeping 'neath the stars so bright,
And yonder maiden gently waking,
In a logograph, clues were given for a keyword, from which various letters were selected to make new, shorter words that answered other clues. The answer to this puzzle was "woman," from which the words "man," "no," "now," and "won" were found.

Another excellent example of refreshing puzzle verse appeared in the May 30, 1807 issue of a Boston magazine with the lengthy name The Emerald, or, Miscellany of Literature, Containing Sketches of the Manners, Principles, and Amusements of the Age. The puzzle was a charade on the word "timepiece". Notice how the author enigmatically describes the first half of his keyword:

"Fleeting movement; tardy measure; How uncertain is thy pace, Flying in the hours of Pleasure, Bounded by no earthly space!"

"Dragging on, with leaden motion, When with Sorrow’s weight oppress, Or when sailing o’er the Ocean, Calms annoy each anxious breast."

The author of the charade went on to give clues for the second half of the word and the whole. His first two verses are particularly good, however, because they cleverly point out one of the paradoxes of time -- how it seems to fly at times and creep at other times.

The following charade was published in the January 10, 1807 issue of the Literary Cabinet, a magazine issued by the members of the senior class of Yale during 1806 and 1807. It was one of a number of very good puzzles which appeared in the poetry section. The answer to this charade was "firelock".

"My first to certain bounds confin’d,
Most useful is to all that move;"
But when let loose, all plagues combin'd,
A greater curse would hardly prove.

"To deck a beauty, or to guard
The Miser’s god, my second deigns.
My whole, when war’s shrill trump is heard,
With slaughtered armies spreads the plains."

Although the early nineteenth century was a sluggish period in word puzzle history, two significant advances did occur: the appearance in magazines of columns solely devoted to word puzzles, and the publication of word puzzle books for adults.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, most word puzzles appeared in the poetry sections of magazines. Puzzles were, in fact, thought of as one of many types of poetry. However, the new types of people with whom puzzles were becoming popular were far less concerned with style than the intellectuals had been. The newly-educated class of people, the common people, were the ones who made and worked the charades and riddles of the early nineteenth century. Puzzles to them were an amusement, not a form of art, and this change of outlook was reflected in the manner in which they were presented in magazines.

From October to December of 1801, a New York weekly magazine known as The Lady’s Monitor printed a column of word puzzles in nearly every issue. Charades and enigmas appeared the most often, although a good beheadment was printed in one issue. Most or all of the puzzles appear to have been original. The column was dropped entirely, however, after only two and a half months of publication, so we can only assume that reader response to the puzzles was not overwhelming.

A second puzzle column, called "The Enigmatist," ran for six consecutive issues of The Philadelphia Repository beginning on June 26, 1802. The puzzles in the department were either riddles, conundrums, rebuses, or miscellaneous word games. Most were of poor quality, and all were copied from other sources.

From February 8, 1817 to April 26, 1817, the New-York Weekly Museum carried a section of charades in every weekly issue. Many of the original charades were clever, although they were very simply written. The answer to the following charade was "sonnet".

"My first is what the married wish,
And happiness imparts to Lords;
My next takes captive many a fish,
My whole amusement oft affords."

The column was evidently a popular one, because quite a few readers sent in their own puzzles along with answers to the charades that had been printed before. Although none of these three puzzle columns lasted for an appreciable length of time, they are significant for what they represent: early attempts by editors and readers alike to make word puzzles regular fare in their magazines.
The first puzzle column to run for more than a few months in an American periodical was probably the "Enigmas" department which appeared weekly in The Minerva magazine (published in New York) from April 1822 to September 1823, when the magazine ceased publication.

The "Enigmas" column was an interesting one because it went through a number of phases. When it first started, it was filled mainly with riddles and juvenile arithmetical teasers. Puzzles of quality did appear occasionally, but probably all of them were taken from other sources. The author's name never appeared next to a puzzle.

The following two puzzles appeared in The Minerva on May 4, 1822 and December 14, 1822:

"In gloomy convent, or in dreary cell,
Where pious monks and holy hermits dwell,
I'm never seen; but search the world around,
In social circles I am daily found;
I rich and poor, peasant and prince befriend,
Alike to each my soothing aid I lend,
I often leave the token of disgrace;
Yet, strange to tell, I may in strictest sense,
Be deemed the seat of perfect innocence.
Tho' happy they, the happiest of their kind
Whom Love unites and Hymen's fetters bind,
Imperfect is their bliss till me they need:
When I appear, then are they bless'd indeed;
0'er me they anxious bend, in me behold
Treasures more valued than the miser's gold."

"Where'er my first appears dread horror reigns,
Sad desolation marks its wild career:
Mild Peace affrighted flies to happier plains,
And ro seate Hope is chased by pallid Fear.
Led by false zeal, the preacher oft mistakes
My empty next for energy divine;
The simple majesty of truth forsakes,
And fills with pompous sound each feeble line.
My whole, dread mandate of offended power,
The trembling culprit views with wild dismay;
Too late he deprecates the fatal hour
That led him from fair Virtue's peaceful way."

The first puzzle, an enigma, was answered by "a cradle," and the answer to the second puzzle, a charade, was "warrant."

By the end of 1822, the riddles and juvenile word games were found less frequently in the department, and had been replaced by charades, enigmas, and other puzzles. Generally, these puzzles were written in a simple style, but sometimes contained humor and good enigmatic qualities. The following two charades were written in a style common
to many puzzles in The Minerva and other magazines. The first, appearing September 7, 1822, is answered by "housewife," and the second, appearing January 25, 1823, is answered by "justice."

"Dear is my first, when shadowy night is near;  
But 'tis my second makes my first so dear;  
My whole with decent care my first preserves,  
And thus to be my second well deserves."

"My first you will be,  
If you're good and upright;  
My second you'll see  
In a sharp frosty night.  
Together combined,  
I'm a virtue that's great,  
That should govern each mind,  
And preside in each state."

In April 1824 a new series of The Minerva was begun. Although the magazine had a somewhat different appearance and format, the puzzle column continued. In this new series, some new types of puzzles were printed -- an excellent beheadment appeared, along with some clever poetic riddles. Most interesting, however, was the series of anagrams which were printed beginning in October 1824. In an anagram, the letters of a word or name are unscrambled to form another word, name or phrase; ideally, this second combination of letters should describe or be relevant to the initial word or name.

Anagrams appeared in the October 23, 1824 issue and numerous issues afterwards. Some of the excellent examples were:

- Best in prayer: Presbyterian
- There we Sat: Sweetheart
- A Just Master: James Stuart

All of the good ones, however, were taken from other sources, mainly British books and magazines. But along with the good anagrams were quite a few that were not relevant at all to the word or name which answered them:

- Nice Ham: Machine
- See a Pug Dog: Pedagogues
- On Real Catgut: Congratulate
- Made in Pint Pots: Disappointment

Although anagramming had been practiced in the United States as early as the seventeenth century, these examples were perhaps the earliest ones in America intended to be solved by readers. Despite the popularity of the anagrams in The Minerva, they did not gain national popularity until thirty years later.

The Rural Depository, Devoted to Polite Literature, published in Hudson, New York, was the second important American magazine to have a longer puzzle column, but it was filled up to thirty puzzles a week. The record was the series of charades, which appeared in the December 1829 issue of the Rural Depository.

A third puzzle magazine, the American Repository, published in New York City, began publication in 1830. The American Repository was a weekly, and its puzzle column was filled up to thirty puzzles a week, as well. The first puzzle column was filled with anagrams, charades, and riddles, among other things. From time to time, the puzzle column would feature a "curtailment" of the puzzle, which was then followed by the answer on the next page.

A fourth puzzle magazine, the Philadelphia Repository, published in Philadelphia, also featured an anagram column. The first issue of the Philadelphia Repository, published in 1821, included an anagram column filled with puzzles. By late 1822, the anagram column had been discontinued, and the puzzle column had been filled with a variety of other types of puzzles, including charades, riddles, and word games. The anagram column was revived in 1824, but it was not as popular as the puzzle column in the Philadelphia Repository.
have a long-running puzzle department. As in The Minerva, none of the puzzles appears to be original for the column. The department was filled mainly with conundrums and word teasers, along with quality puzzles from both famous British writers and others not so well known. However, no sources were given for any of the puzzles.

There are two reasons why the puzzle department in The Rural Depository is important. First, it was the longest-running department up to that date, appearing from June 12, 1824 to June 22, 1833. That record of over nine years would stand until much later in the nineteenth century. Second, The Rural Depository was the first major rural magazine to print a significant number of word puzzles. Judging from the popularity of the puzzles in the magazine, we can safely say that word puzzling was an important amusement in farming areas.

A third important puzzle department of this era was "The Puzzler," which appeared in The Casket, or, Flowers of Literature, Wit & Sentiment, published in Philadelphia, from January 1826 to the middle of 1830. The column was an extensive one, sometimes filling as many as two full pages. Most of the puzzles in The Casket were riddles, conundrums, and simply-written enigmas and charades, but beheadments, curtailments, logogriphs and other puzzles sometimes added diversity. From time to time, puzzles of real literary merit were published, but most of these were copied from other magazines and books, usually without credit.

A fourth magazine which carried a regular puzzle column was The Philadelphia Album, and Ladies' Weekly Gazette, which printed a section called "Enigmas &c" from July 26, 1826 to September 13, 1826. The department had a diverse selection of puzzles, including reversals, beheadments, curtailments, and other types; however, all of the puzzles of excellent quality seem to have come from other places. Below is one beheadment and curtailment puzzle that appeared in The Philadelphia Album for November 1, 1826:

"Curtail me thrice, I am a youth;  
Behead me once a snake;  
Complete, I'm often us'd, in truth  
When certain steps you'd take."

The answer to the puzzle was "ladder."

The Saturday Evening Post, which began publication in Philadelphia in 1821, also printed a significant number of word puzzles. By 1822, charades, enigmas, acrostic rebuses and conundrums were being published on occasion, some of which were new and some of which were old. By late 1823 and 1824, puzzles were much more frequent, appearing nearly every week in "The Olio" section, where they continued to hold their popularity throughout the decade. Although a majority of the Saturday Evening Post puzzles were poorly written, they were, unlike the puzzles in most other magazines, more often original than copied.
As mentioned previously, a second significant advance in early nineteenth century word puzzling was the publication of two books of word puzzles for adults. The first one, appearing in 1806 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, was entitled The New American Oracle; or, Ladies' Companion and was edited by Samuel Tizzard. Half of the book was composed of enigmas, rebuses, and charades, all "Designed for the Improvement of the Fair-Sex," and "Collected from the Most Eminent and Approved Writers." The purpose of the book, as set forth in its preface, was to provide women with a set of literary word puzzles divested of the "indecencies" common in the puzzles of so many other publications. Many of the puzzles were indeed excellent, as the following beheadment of "grape" demonstrates:

"In many countries I'm produc'ed,
And am to man a blessing:
But blessings, when they are abus'ed,
A curse prove in possessing.
There liv'd a race of men on earth
With nature not contented,
From them did art derive her birth,
In varous shapes invented;
'Mong those, the art to drain my blood,
Was held in veneration,
And deem'd to be extremely good,
In almost ev'ry nation.
The bucks and rakes, and such like breed,
And each audacious varlet,
When they can get it, they'll exceed
The Babylonish harlot;
Then, ladies, would you know the crime
They're capable of doing,
One letter taken from my name,
Will shew it to your viewing;
But justice soon pursues the rake,
'Fore whom they stand and tremble,
Then from my name two letters take,
'You'll see what they resemble."

Most puzzles, however, appear to have been taken from British books and magazines, since they were generally written in a style that was more common with English poets, and since the answers to puzzles were often British people and places.

A second book of adult puzzles, published in Philadelphia in 1811, was entitled The Whim-Wham: or, Evening Amusement, for All Ages and Sizes. Being an Entire New Set of Riddles, Charades, Questions, and Transpositions. This was a shorter book than the earlier one, and the puzzles in it were written in a simpler style and were easier to solve. Most or all of the puzzles appear to have been original. Many of the riddles and charades in The Whim-Wham were presented in prose, a style that would become more popular in the United States throughout the nineteenth century. A riddle and a charade in prose are given below:
I am taken from the mine; confin'd in a wooden case; and am used by many people.

My first is one of the elements; without my second we should be very helpless; and my whole should never be put in the hands of a madman.

The answers to these two puzzles were "a pencil" and "firearms". A majority of the puzzles still were in verse, but the book was certainly less literary than The New American Oracle, and directed more to the average person.

As can be seen from the foregoing examples, the types of puzzles popular during the early nineteenth century were approximately the same types that were popular at the end of the eighteenth century. Little new material was invented or developed; in fact, a number of the new puzzles which appeared during the 1780s and 1790s soon all but disappeared. Charades and enigmas comprised the bulk of the puzzle fare; rebuses, acrostic rebuses and transpositions appeared on occasion.

Nevertheless, one change should be noted -- the appearance of more and more enigmas on abstract subjects, which had occurred in England somewhat earlier. There seems to be a stage in the development of all literatures when writers begin to focus more of their attention on abstract subjects. Here is an example from The New American Oracle, answered by the word "hope":

I'm not confin'd to pomp or state;
Men of all ranks my favours share;
I'm born to shorten sorrow's date
And ease the tortured brow of care.
Oft to assist the youth in flight,
I smiling with him take the field;
But if by fear I'm put to flight,
The most courageous heart will yield.
When, rack'd with doubt, the virgin fair
Sits doating on her fickle love,
At intervals suspend despair,
And say he's faithful as the dove.
But I'm a flatterer found at best,
And often when sad woes are near,
Like a false friend I fly the test;
But pleasure give to some elsewhere.
Yet never rank me as a foe,
Tho' I perhaps may you betray;
And fool'd the witty long ago, --
Enough. 'Tis needless more to say.