In 1970, the newspaper Republican Speech, which included letters with altered words, appeared in Boston. The paper was referred to as the O.K. clippings with altered words, referring to the New York Times of October 1970. The puzzle described a word game involving the alphabet, which was described as a use of letters in a word game, described as a word game with altered letters.

By 1830, two major changes were evident in American puzzledom. First, miscellaneous word puzzles involving deletion and juggling of letters were becoming popular as never before. Many of them were unversed, but others were in poetic form. One puzzle from the Saturday Evening Post of September 22, 1827 is perhaps a good example of this new style:

"My total is a brilliant gem,
I deck the costly diadem;
Erase a letter, and I stand
High honour'd in the royal land;
Cut off the last, my first regain,
A well-known fruit I do explain;
My second, third, and first transpose,
An imitator 'twill disclose;
My second, third, and fourth will name,
A number of the human frame.
Ye riddling one's who e'er you be,
Unfold the seeming mystery."

The answer was "pearl," which changed into new words as explained.

The second change coming over puzzledom of this period was the appearance of more and more charades which told a story or were centered around one subject. In the past, the parts of nearly all charades had been enigmatically described in separate verses or in lines unconnected with one another. Now, some people began to feel that a puzzle should have a point to it besides the puzzle element itself.

Some writers began to weave charades into stories, and later writers would do the same for beheadments, reversals, and other puzzles. Here is a story charade that was printed in the puzzle department of The Casket for December 1829, answered by "nightingale":

"My first was dreary, cold and dark
As I left my second's door.
The sky showed not one diamond spark,
And I heard no sound but the watch-dog's bark
As I wandered the wild heath o'er.

"In a lonely spot I chanced to be
When my third came fiercely on;
He tore my cloak and hat from me,
And drove me under an old dead tree,
And left me there alone.

"Then swiftly the dark clouds passed away,
And the silver moon did fling
On my path once more her gentle ray,
And my whole began from the greenwood spray
Her blithsome caroling."

An excellent charade also based on the word "nightingale" was published in the Philadelphia Courier of July 24, 1841 (and reprinted in the Ardmore Puzzler of May 6, 1899):

"'Twas sunset, and a golden light
Was bathing lake, and hill, and river,
With hues so brilliant and so bright,
That one might wish them there for ever.
When rising from the shaded dell,
With raven robe and vestments flowing,
My FIRST upon the landscape fell,
And quenched the glory round it glowing.

"You'll see my SECOND in the rain,
Its short existence briefly closing,
And twice upon the raging main,
Its form was calmly seen repose.
The Summer breeze it ne'er hath stirred,
Nor dared on Autumn's sky to enter;
But in the Spring its voice is heard,
And 'mid the whistling winds of Winter.

"My THIRD hath bowed the stately tree,
Its giant limbs around it dashing —
Or woke the wild and wrathful sea,
Its mountain waves to madness lashing,
The midnight tempest rocks our dwelling,
Its spirit rides the roaring storm, —
A threatened death to thousands knelling.

"My WHOLE, — nor tinkling harp nor lute
May rival thy sweet warbling measure —
Soft as the breathings of the flute —
And rich and full thy varied treasure.
The lark soars up to drink the light,
Its careless song to earth returning;
But thine are lays that love the night,
Bright as the gems above the burning."

A final example of a story charade is taken from the May 1840 issue of Evergreen, A Monthly Magazine of New and Popular Tales and Poetry. The answer to the charade is "cobweb":

The thirty trends in Am
The widow Jones is fair and fat,
And her gait is seldom hurried—
What has the widow Jones been at,
That, to-day, she looks so flurried?
Sir Hugh had ridden a score of miles,
And well 'my first' has sped him,
To drink in the tones of the widow Jones,
And to ask her if she'll wed him.

"Now simple maidens who nothing know,
Will melt when a lover woos 'em;--
Then how, when her suitors bend so low,
Should a widow's lip refuse 'em?
And many a day, as her neighbors say,
Tho' so grave and good she's reckoned,
To win Sir Hugh, and to keep him true,
Has the widow spun 'my second'!

"And so when, at last, he declared his love,
And described his varied feelings,
And told how he needed some hand to move
'My all!' from his doors and ceilings;
The widow Jones, with a gentle 'yes,,'
Put an end to the old man's sorrow,
And declared that in cupboard, shelf, or press,
Not one should remain to-morrow!

"Now tho' you may wonder the good old knight
So long for a wife should tarry,
And tho' you may fancy the cause was slight
Which induced Sir Hugh to marry;
Yet I think you will see, in the Registry,
Where all weddings are now included,
That nine out of ten, of our married men,
Have wed for the cause Sir Hugh did!"

The thirty years before the Civil War witnessed three divergent trends in American publishing: a steady decline of puzzles in literary magazines, a decline and then a recovery of puzzles in family and general interest magazines, and a substantial growth of puzzles in children's magazines. One can speculate on the reasons for these changes. Editors were placing greater emphasis on poetic style and story continuity, and the short verse puzzles so popular during the early 1800s were no longer acceptable. Most of the best word puzzles printed in the United States during this period were copied from British books and magazines, and with the decline in popularity of puzzles in England, American magazines had less material from which to choose. Although word puzzles had appeared in magazines for youth as early as 1815 (the April 7, 1815 issue of Youth's Cabinet, published in Utica, New York, contained an eighteen-line enigma in the "Original Poetry" section), periodicals for young people did not gain significant circulation until the 1830s. Because children are naturally attracted to puzzles, it would be expected that an upswing in children's literature would
be accompanied by a surge of puzzle interest among young people.

Even though literary puzzling was limited in this period, the pastime did have dedicated followers, particularly women. As evidence of this following, a book of original literary puzzles was published in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1839 -- the first book of original adult literary puzzles to appear in this country. Entitled Original Charades, it was written by fifteen different people, most of whom were Harvard professors and their wives. The 104-page volume contained a lengthy preface by Andrews Norton tracing the history of the charade back to 1777, and then 68 original charades. Some of the puzzles were serious in nature, but most of them were light-hearted. The following serious charade, written by George Ticknor, was answered by "Marygold":

"Before my first, to seek relief,  
The nun devoutly kneels,  
And, in her solitude and grief,  
Her secret heart reveals.  
My second, as their highest good,  
Men of all lands pursue,  
And worship in a sternerr mood,  
But not with love so true.  
The namesake of my first, my whole  
Grows wild in southern meads,  
But here, too nigh the unfriendly pole,  
Aid from my second needs."

The book evidently was popular enough that another volume, Original Charades, Prepared for the Fair in Aid of Bunker Hill Monument, was published in Boston in 1840. (For more details, see John Olin Eidson's article "A Harvard Book of Charades", in the September 1949 issue of The New England Quarterly.)

One of the few literary periodicals to include puzzles was Sartain's Union Magazine of Literature and Art, published monthly in New York from 1847 to 1852. A number of puzzles appeared in the earlier issues; however, beginning with volume 8 (in 1851) the magazine began publishing an original charade every month. The puzzles were lengthy and witty, and almost always told a story. The following charade, answered by the word "snowball", appeared in the December 1851 issue:

"I come, the month of merry times,  
Bringing bright gifts, with Christmas chimes,  
With cheerful songs and jesting rhymes,  
A friend you all remember.  
But would you win my grace and dole,  
My hidden word you must enroll, --  
My first, my second, and my whole,  
All come with gay December."

"My first, it is the garb I wear,  
I bring it forth all pure and fair,  
And lay it gently everywhere,  

The charade was answered by "snowball".

As mentioned in "The Riddler" column in the New York Times during the first few years of the century, there were other interesting puzzles at this time. Many of these were not particularly challenging, or "mediocres", as stated on occasion.
The charades in Sartain's Magazine quickly became a favorite feature with readers, who sent in original charades and answers in verse to the old ones. In April 1852 the editors wrote, "The interest manifested in this feature of the Magazine is exceedingly gratifying to us, as its introduction was a pet fancy of our own, founded on our admiration of Praed's beautiful lyrical charades. A numerous corps of volunteers regularly transmit to us metrical answers."

A number of new American literary magazines, such as The New Yorker, The Expositor, Evergreen and the Cincinnati Mirror, and Ladies' Parterre and Museum, also printed some excellent original charades and enigmas, but even these puzzles were rare. Most of the literary magazines published between 1830 and 1860 printed no puzzles at all.

As mentioned previously, family and general interest magazines suffered a decline and then a resurgence in puzzling. After mid-century puzzle columns appeared in a number of adult magazines. "The Riddler" in The Saturday Evening Post carried some good word puzzles. The Ladies' Companion devoted a column to charades and enigmas during 1850. One important country periodical, Moore's Rural New Yorker, carried a numerical enigma in every issue for a number of years, along with other puzzle types. Dwight's American Magazine and Family Newspaper, published in New York, printed numerous numerical enigmas and other puzzles.

Most of the word puzzles in these general interest magazines were mediocre, although some puzzle verse of considerable merit was printed on occasion. The diversity of the puzzle fare was greater than...
ever before. Charades and enigmas were no longer the staple items of the puzzle departments, but were only two types of puzzles among many. Numerical enigmas, beheadments, curtailments, transpositions, acrostic rebuses and many other puzzles were found often.

Probably the most noteworthy event in American puzzledom during these years was the rapid growth of puzzle departments in juvenile magazines. The Youth's Literary Gazette, published in Philadelphia from 1832 to 1833, was one of the earliest to carry puzzles in most of its issues. Charades, conundrums and enigmas were the most popular. Here is a charade from the October 5, 1833 issue, followed by an enigma from the November 15, 1833 issue:

"See yon poor soldier; he has lost my first,
His dearest friend has fallen in the dust;
He too must meet my second in his race,
Then yield, a victim to death's cold embrace;
My whole is fabulous, and loves the tales
Where fancy in her wildest dress prevails."

"A sailor launch'd a ship of force,
A cargo put therein, of course;
No goods had he, he wish'd to sell;
Each wind did serve his turn as well;
No pirate dreaded: to no harbour bound;
His stronge at wish that he might run aground."

The answer to the first puzzle was "legend" and the answer to the second was "Noah".

Another early magazine for youth was The Southern Rosebud, published in Charleston, South Carolina from 1832 to 1839. Conundrums were the most popular form of puzzle in it, but charades and other types of puzzles appeared frequently. Most of the word puzzles were very juvenile and had little literary merit. The following anagram and charade were published in the September 28, 1833 and the January 25, 1834 issues, respectively:

"Read me forwards, I am the highest point of every thing, read me backwards, scarcely any thing is deeper."

"My first, tho' water, cures no thirst,
My next alone has soul,
And when he lives upon my first,
He then is called my whole."

The answers to these two puzzles were "tip - pit" and "seaman".

Parley's Magazine, published in Boston and New York from 1833 to 1844, was one of the largest-circulating juvenile magazines of the period. Puzzles appeared occasionally in it during the 1830s but frequently during the 1840s. In the prospectus for volume one of Parley's Magazine, the editors set forth their plan for the magazine. Although they did not mention puzzles in which the public and the editors might become interested, the editor did say that they would appear occasionally, and this continued to be the practice. Many young people enjoyed solving the puzzles, and they became more popular as the years went on.
mention puzzles directly, the editors certainly proposed a periodical in which puzzles would be welcomed. Their design was "to offer to the public an entertaining work for children and youth; one that may become with them a favorite; one that will please and instruct them; one that will rouse, not dull the thoughts which they must read for a task, but which they will love to consult as a companion and friend." And everyone knows that word puzzles are both educational and highly entertaining.

Riddles, conundrums, charades and enigmas all proved to be popular in Parley's Magazine. Probably the most popular puzzle in it, however, was a new type that first came into vogue during the 1820s, called the numerical enigma. This involved clues to words which contained letters of a longer name, phrase or saying. One simple numerical enigma in the March 1, 1835 issue of Parley's ran like this:

"My 4th, 6th, 9th, and 8th is used by carpenters. My 7th, 6th, 5th, and 10th are what no civilized nations can exist without. My 10th, 9th, and 8th is a part of a door. My 1st, 2d, and 5th is a quadruped. My 2d, 6th, and 3d is used on the water. My whole is the name of a distinguished Englishman."

The answer was "Cornwallis," from which the appropriate letters spelled "nail," "laws," etc. Numerical enigmas were very popular with young readers because they were easy to make and fun to solve. Many young people sent in their own puzzles along with answers to ones already printed.

Forrester's Boys and Girls Magazine and Fireside Companion, published in Boston from 1848 to 1857, was one of the best children's periodicals of the period. It was edited by a man known as Mark Forrester, who projected a fatherly image to his young readers and wrote a friendly column each month called "Chat with Readers and Correspondents." During the first two years of publication, Forrester's Magazine printed an elementary numerical enigma or scrambled word puzzle in most issues. Responding to "Father Forrester's" invitation to write to him, many young people wrote to say how much they enjoyed the puzzles, or sent in their own puzzles and answers. Perhaps due to this popularity, the puzzle department was gradually enlarged during late 1850 and early 1851, and given a separate heading, "New Puzzles, Enigmas, &c." Charades, beheadments and other verse puzzles became more frequent, and the quality of puzzles rose substantially.

Below is a beheadment, a riddle, and a charade -- three of the best puzzles in the puzzle department of Forrester's Magazine. These appeared in the February 1851, March 1851 and March 1852 issues, respectively:

"Cut off my head, and if you guess, Your angry feelings you'll express; Cut off my tail, and you will see In me a tall and stately tree. My whole complete is what you like
On every cold and wintry night."

"I'm round as a globe, as a feather I'm light;
I shine in the sunbeams resplendent and bright.
I rival the rainbow in richness of hue;
I live but a moment, then vanish from view.
Two of the elements give me an existence;
But to other agents I owe my consistence.
By air I'm produced, and by air I'm destroyed;
Essay you to grasp me? Your hand will be void.
To childhood's glad time my short life is due;
And perhaps I've been sent forth, kind reader, by you."

"The night was dark, fierce howl'd the wind,
As seated near my first,
A mother sat within my next,
And almost feared the worst.
Her sailor-boy was homeward bound,
Might then be near the coast,
But on my whole she placed her trust,
And cried -- he'll not be lost."

The answers to these were "fire," "soap-bubble," and "lighthouse."

A large number of other periodicals for youth printed puzzles. A few of them were The School Mate, The School Fellow, Youth's Cabinet, and Merry's Museum, all published in New York; Forrester's Playmate and Child's Friend, both published in Boston; and Mentor, a Magazine for Youth, published in Philadelphia.

Though many types of puzzles were being printed in the puzzle departments of juvenile magazines during the 1850s, only one new type of puzzle appeared and gained great popularity -- the illustrated rebus. Simple illustrated (picture) rebuses began appearing as early as the late 1840s. They involved pictures and letters which the reader had to combine in order to get a name or a saying. Some later illustrated enigmas, however, were extremely complicated and sometimes took up as much as a full page. They grew to be very popular puzzles and appeared in many books and magazines.

The surge of interest in word puzzling among young people was not limited to magazine readers alone. Quite a few juvenile puzzle books soon were published and achieved good sales. Robert Merry, the editor of Merry's Museum children's magazine mentioned above, edited the book Merry's Book of Puzzles, published in New York in 1857. It contained charades, enigmas, conundrums, trick riddles, numerical enigmas, and a great number of illustrated rebuses. Many of the puzzles were copied from other sources. Most of the material was in the popular vein and was obviously directed toward young readers. Here are two representative puzzles from Merry's book -- the first a juvenile riddle on "a bell," and the second a charade on "candle-stick."
"My tongue is long, my breath is strong,  
And yet I breed no strife;  
My voice you hear both far and near,  
And yet I have no life."

"In every hedge my second is,  
As well as every tree,  
And when poor school-boys act amiss,  
It often is their fee.  
My first likewise is always wicked,  
Yet ne'er committed sin,  
My total for my first is fitted,  
Composed of brass or tin."

In Philadelphia, a series of juvenile books of riddles were published in 1860. Three of the titles were The Illustrated Book of Riddles, My New Book of Riddles, and My New Book of Guess Again. Many of the puzzles were fashioned after the ones in The Puzzling Cap, and all of the books had clever illustrations in color.

The history of American word puzzles from the beginning of American literature to the Civil War is a story of development and diversification of puzzles, reflecting the development and diversification of literature and intellectual thought.

Word puzzling has always been an entertaining pastime among educated Americans. More importantly, though, during each period when new social groups have become educated and have developed literatures of their own, word puzzles have become popular in those groups. Almost from the birth of printing in New England, word puzzles were popular, despite the oppressing social conditions. Puzzles appeared in the earliest magazines and newspapers during the early 1700s. With the great growth of American literature following the Revolutionary War, word puzzles surged in popularity. Puzzles became popular in rural areas just at the time farmers' magazines and almanacs appeared. When periodicals for general interests advanced in circulation during the 1820s, word puzzles appeared in profusion. And with the growth of children's literature between 1830 and 1860, puzzles became one of the most popular amusements of young people.

Not only have word puzzles played a significant role in the development of American literature, but they have also proved themselves to be a significant art form. The best enigmas and charades in the literary magazines matched, in quality, the best of the other poetic material.

Our study today of the early history of American word puzzles is a profitable exercise, for it not only gives us better insights into the reasons behind the popularity of puzzles, but also adds a certain dignity to the pastime, a dignity which word puzzling justly deserves.