User Manual
English Version
Atari VCS 2600 & 7800
PAL - SECAM - NTSC

World Wide Release
World of Atari Show
August 21 - 23, 1998

Concept, Programming and Documentation :

Eric Bacher

Graphics and Packaging :

Igor Barzilai

English Translation :

Bertrand Mouchmino

Jeff Rothkopf

Unconditional Support :

Patrice Robert

Pierre-André Berthault-Meca

Alfred Challenge
The Quest for Recognition

Chapter 1 - Thoughts...

Alfred had been sitting on the crag for three long hours. He could look down upon the entire village from this place.

" Why did I go up Mount Zepithar? ", he asked himself. Probably to be alone and have a more precise view after the recent events in his life. Even more, it would help him feel reassured and bring him faith before the ultimate challenge. A year of training had made him a strong man with a winning soul, but uncertainty started to appear a few hours before the trial. Alfred knew the challenge would completely change his life, whether he succeeded or failed.

His master, old Takida, would keep on telling him: " You are the best! You can make it! You have to succeed! ". Was the master simply saying words of encouragement, or did he really mean it? Probably both. Yet the words that kept going through Alfred's mind were not optimistic: " Your fear is your only enemy ". Never had Alfred been confronted with such a dangerous event. How could he be sure that he would overcome the challenge?

It was late and time to go down.

Chapter 2 - The Village Gathering...

Night was about to fall. In anticipation of the long evening ahead, all the villagers had torches in their hands. Everyone was gathered in the village center. Alfred was standing next to Valdeyros, the village chief. The hum of conversations was interrupted by Valdeyros' clapping:

- " My friends, the great phenomenon we have been waiting for is imminent. In half an hour, the Passage will open and one of us will rush inside for the great challenge. The pretender to the title of village chief this year is Alfred. I know he has trained hard for the challenge and I wish him good luck. "

After hearing these words, the crowd started to applaud.

- " I would like us to offer our respects with a minute of silence in the name of Miredan, who did not make it out of the Passage eleven years ago. "

After this minute of meditation, Valdeyros proceeded more jovially:

- " My friends, I suggest we head for the Passage right away. "

It was dark already. The great torch procession walked away and left the village.

Chapter 3 - Wise Advice...

Alfred walked silently with Takida by his side. Suddenly, the old master started speaking:
- " Are you afraid? "
- " I am. "
- " What are you afraid of? "
- " The unknown. I don't know what I'll encounter. Talk to me about the Passage again, Master. "
Takida started a long explanation.
- " Electing a village chief this way is a severe trial, but you will be a greater leader if you succeed and nobody will dispute your legitimacy. This tradition is centuries old. "
Takida stopped talking. He had told this to Alfred dozens of times, but couldn't refuse pronouncing these words again if it comforted his apprentice.
- " Nobody can explain why a passage appears at the base of the mountain every eleventh year and nobody knows where it leads. To another place, another era? When you pass inside, you are caught in a universe of strange and hostile creatures from another world. The most dangerous of them all is the Bukoi; a one-eyed monster has green, slimy skin. Fortunately, he does not move very fast. You will also have to beware of the Tazniaks; they are recognizable from their two eyes mounted upon their tentacles. Some also claim to have seen giant spiders with a deadly bite. "

Chapter 4 - The Passage

The entire village was now gathered at the foot of Mount Zepithar. There was no sign to indicate that a supernatural phenomenon would take place in a few minutes. Valdeyros solemnly spoke to Alfred:
- " Alfred, if you come out of the Passage alive, I hereby swear to give you the necklace of Dratus. You will be the new chief for the eleven years to come. Good luck ".
Alfred thanked Valdeyros. He then waved to the villagers and headed for the mountain. Takida walked out and joined Alfred to give him a last word of advice:
- " The great moment has arrived. Be confident! You won't be alone. My spirit will follow you. After entering the Passage, remember this: let your instinct lead you. The quickest and most obvious paths are not always the best. "
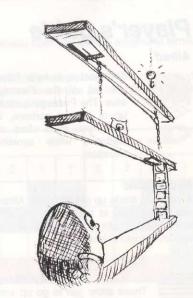Takida was interrupted by a muffled sound. A thick mist took form a few feet away from Alfred. Suddenly, a streak of light came out of the haze: the entrance of the Passage.
Alfred slowly stepped in. The villagers saw his silhouette go through the pencil of rays and disappear.
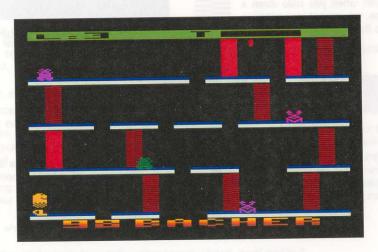
Chapter 5 - The Challenge

For a few seconds, Alfred was blinded, for he needed some time to become accustomed to darkness. He progressively found a metal structure alongside the rock. He felt as though he was trapped inside a well. On the walls, Alfred could see ladders, ropes and platforms. The problem was simple: in order to get out, he would just have to climb to the top of what he could describe as some sort of tunnel.

Alfred was heading for the first ladder when a grating cry chilled his blood. The cry came from a hideous monster on a platform just above him. At this moment, Alfred realized the game would be no cakewalk...

Player's guide

Alfred

The goal is to help Alfred get out of the Passage alive. The Passage is made up of several screens, in which you must climb on platforms while avoiding monsters.

Background

A screen is made up of four floors. Alfred will always start at the bottom left and exit at the top right. In order to do so, he will have to use the following:

Ladders

These allow you to go up and down to different floors.

Ropes

These can only be used to go down; when you slide down a rope, you cannot stop between two floors.

Doors

They hinder your way when locked but can be opened with keys.

Keys

represented as flashing dots; touching one opens one of the doors.

Monsters

The Passage is inhabited by monsters that travel on each floor. Their touch is lethal. There are two different types of monsters:

Bukois

Greenish, one-eyed monsters. They crawl like slugs and leave a slimy trail behind. Their glaucous appearance is repulsive. Sometimes, they will cry stridently and frighten their enemies to death.

Tazniaks

Small but fast and very aggressive animals. Their two eyes are mounted upon jointed limbs and they can spit out a lethal venom.

Time

Alfred has a strict time limit to complete each screen. This time limit varies according to level difficulty.

Screens

There are three different main screens in the game. However, there is also a fourth hidden screen. Try to find it!

After Alfred completes the three screens, they start over at higher speed (see following section).

Difficulty

The following diagram shows how the game progresses from one level to another in terms of speed, time limit and difficulty :

On the three screens of level one, Alfred and the monsters move slowly. Then, on the next three screens of level two, Alfred and the monsters move twice as fast. On the three screens of level three, the monsters are twice as fast as Alfred.

Level	1				2				3			
Screen	1	2	3	?	1	2	3	?	1	2	3	?
Short time			green	?			green	?			green	?
Hard jumps		blue	blue	?		blue	blue	?		blue	blue	?
Slow Alfred	yellow	yellow	yellow	?				?	yellow	yellow	yellow	?
Fast Monsters				?	red	red	red	?	red	red	red	?

Options

Before starting the game (when the background colors change), you can choose to begin on level 2 by pressing GAME SELECT.
Press GAME RESET to start playing.

NTSC/PAL/SECAM settings

The left and right difficulty switches are used to adapt the cartridge to your game system standard.

The left switch modifies the color palette. In position A (expert), you have the NTSC palette. In position B (novice), you have the PAL/SECAM palette.

The right switch adjusts the number of scanlines. In position A (expert), you have the NTSC scanline standard. In position B (novice), you have the PAL/SECAM scanline standard.

Switching has no effect once a game has begun. Adjustments must be set before you first press GAME RESET.

Try out what suits your configuration best.

Good luck in helping Alfred become chief, and enjoy!