Squish 'em Analysis

Squish 'em is an arcade action game released to commodore in the year 1983. Its a 2D vertical scroller where climbing is the main aspect of the game. The players controls a character named Sam, who is a builder, is trying to reach the top of a building to grab a suitcase full of money. Sam has to avoid monsters on the way to the top and the player has to keep in mind the way Sam moves towards top is via climbing. But worry not Sam has a parachute so if the player manages to get the suitcase Sam will happily and safely jump down.
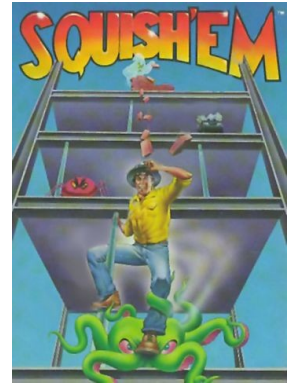
Gameplay and Mechanics:

the gameplay loop is very simple as the player is tasked to reach the top of the building to get the suitcase. This is done via climbing structural pillars which appear as some sort of a metal.
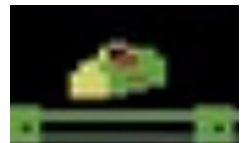

Figure 1: Suitcase

Climbing: The player can go upward via vertical pillars and can go side to side using the horizontal supports. During the climb the player has to avoid monsters where if the player touches a monster they will lose one man and start from the beginning of the level.

Squishing the Enemies: The player is able to squish monsters which when this ability is activated Sam will tuck his legs up and push after 1 second will push down. This action will squish monsters allowing the player to pass them for a limited time. After some time the monsters will raise back up. This action will also play a sound which is reminiscent of charging up.

Falling Objects: Other than monsters the game offers another major challenge which is falling objects that Sam has to avoid or then player will lose 1 health / man. The objects start at the very top and at a certain speed fall down. They are not too fast or too slow they leave a very enough time to avoid them but one must avoid them quickly or they might catch them unexpectedly. One can note even tough they behave the same falling objects can vary in looks. There are hammers TV's bricks, etc.
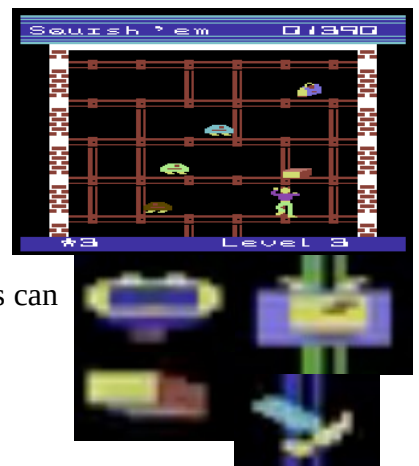
Passing Levels: When a level is passed a tune plays and the colour of the supports or pillars turn another colour, each colour will be assigned random yet it it won't be the colour the players previous level was. As of talking about the colours the bricks of the building will also change colour. Each level start will be used as a checkpoint.

Monsters: Monsters are not so different though there is a lot of types of them. There are differing behaviours to them; some will go slow, some fast, some will scroll from wall to wall and some will move towards opposite direction randomly. Movement differs but also their appearance but the most important aspect of the monsters mechanic is that **there will always only be 1 monster per level.**

Gaining Points: The game has multiple ways of gaining points but one can understand that its very utilitarian when it comes to giving them. Basically every floor passed grants 10 points while every monster squished gives 100 and each suitcase taken grants 1000.
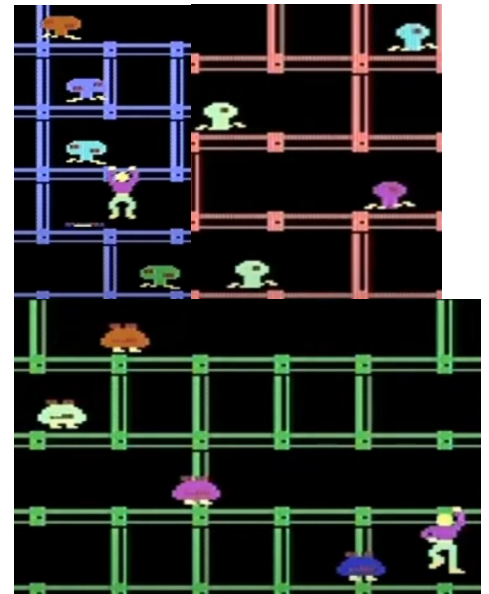
Music:

Music is very basic which is very rhythmic but unlike other games of the era the music is not fairly special but gives that game feel. The music does not match up with Sam's movement patters or monsters' movement patterns.

Game Screen and UI:

Another place of simplicity the UI is extremely basic. The name of the game is displayed on the top left. The Score on the top right and The amount of tries which are shown by a man figure next to a digit on the bottom left and finally the level number which is accompanied by a "Level" text. One thing to note about the games choice of font is 'Magnetic Ink Character Recognition Code' or MICR.