Sequential Movement - Fifteen Puzzle

Designer: Unknown
Category: Sequential Movement
Material: Plastic
Pieces: 15, plus tray

The first known Fifteen puzzle was made by the Embossing Company of New York in 1865. About eight years later, Sam Loyd reintroduced it and it became the Rubik's Cube of the 1800’s. Everyone was playing it. Variations of this puzzle, most with nothing more than other artwork replacing the numbers, continue to this day with everything from Escher drawings to three-dimensional fish making up the fifteen pieces. It’s actually not so easy to find one with just the numbers.

Below is another of Karl Hörnell’s beautifully designed Java applets. Follow the link through the sources page to his web site for some excellent technical details concerning the implementation of this applet, including his strategy for solving the Fifteen Puzzle. The applet does not simply unscramble the puzzle. You can slide the pieces just like the real thing or press the "Toggle Control" button if you prefer to simply click on the piece to move.