The terrible Nintendo controller that helped make VR happen

The Nintendo Power Glove was not good. It's important that you know that. The Power Glove was ambitious, impressive, even important — one of the very first mainstream devices that let you control a game using your body instead of just your thumbs — but it was not good. In some ways, its not-good-ness is a key part of the story.

The Power Glove showed up in the late 1980s, at a complicated time for the gaming industry, when Nintendo was a hugely powerful force for the future of fun. But the Power Glove wasn't really even a Nintendo product. It started as a research lark, became a toy, and only wound up with Nintendo's name on it after a particularly fateful pitch meeting. Thanks to a remarkable marketing campaign, and the feeling that VR often gives of simply being *the future*, the Power Glove wound up a reasonable (if brief) business success. And you can draw a line from the Glove to some other hugely successful Nintendo products — and maybe even to the whole VR industry as we know it.

On this episode of *Version History*, our chat show about old technology, we dig into the story of the Power Glove. It is, somehow, both very brief and very long. David Pierce, *Fandom*'s Chris Grant, and *Game File*'s Stephen Totilo explore the projects that led to the Power Glove, the many (*many)* reasons it wasn't a very good product, and the ways in which it changed the future anyway. They also attempt to set up a decades-old Glove and play games with it, which goes… poorly.

If you want to subscribe to *Version History,* there are two ways to get every episode as soon as it drops:

And if you want to know more about the Power Glove, whether you got to try it or not, here are some links to get you started:

https://www.theverge.com/podcast/850556/nintendo-power-glove-version-history