

Dissected maps of the United States have been popular since the 1800s.

This McLoughlin Bros. 1887 map came in an attractive box with this cover. You may have had a later version of one of these US puzzle maps in grade school to prepare for geography class. The 52 pieces are not interlocking. Though the states and territories were almost completely defined by 1887, note these oddities compared to today's geography:



- Present day Oklahoma was in dispute at that time between the Indians and the “Boomers”. This puzzle presciently depicts the final resolution of 1890 with the eastern areas for Indian Territory and western half for Oklahoma Territory and the “Sooners” of the Land Run of 1889.
- Yellowstone Park in the northwest corner of Wyoming is distinctly marked. Established in 1872 as the world's first national park, the land's exact legal status was still being defined.
- Alaska is shown as a cutout on the lower left but Hawaii is nowhere to be found – not surprisingly as it did not become a US territory until 1898.



McLoughlin Bros. 1887 Dissected US Map

Here's a Japanese puzzle made of erasers after WWII in the late 1940s or 1950s when the country was rebuilding and beginning to produce cheap toys for export. The cartographer did not sign his creation for some reason.



Japanese dissected US map, c 1950

Some dissected maps are trickier than they first appear to be. This French map is made of cubes with each cube face being a section of a different map. This image shows the North America solution, one of 6 possible correct configurations. The set came with a paper “key” to show what each completed map would look like.



French cube puzzle - North American solution