

BILL DEEZY MCS has an ad for this early American system. Structures are made from steel Rods, cut to length, which push into 4-way steel Connectors, with any of their unused sockets trimmed off. A few small Pulleys & possibly a Spoked Wheel are the system's other other main parts. These notes are based on one set, most likely the largest, & a smaller one seen on Ebay. Both incomplete and neither had a manual with them.

A patent covering BILL DEEZY was applied for in August 1913 and sets probably appeared at the end of that year. Ads are known from Jan. to Nov. 1914 but nothing thereafter.

In a magazine write-up BILL DEEZY was said to be made by the Bill Deezy Company of 141 Milk Street, Boston. Other Boston addresses in Bill Deezy ads are 145 Milk Street, 6 Oliver Street, & 1119 Oliver Bldg. An ad from E.I. Horsman Co., 365-367 Broadway, New York in January 1914 said that it was the 'Sole Selling Agents for BILL DEEZY'.

The PATENT, No.1092217 was granted to Alfred Hopkins of Boston in April 1914. It was to construct articles 'for practical, amusement, or instructive purposes' 'without nails, glue, of any tools whatever'. Fig.2 shows the figures in the patent with two other frameworks omitted, a cube & a triangular prism.

Connectors ('A' in Fig.2) were to be metal with sockets able to be bent through any angle up to 90° by putting Rods into suitable sockets and using them as levers (Fig.15 is from an ad). Unwanted sockets were to be cut or broken off. Some or all the sockets could be indented either before or after a Rod had been inserted, as at a4 in 'B' of Fig.2. Rods could be of any length, or were to be capable of being easily cut or broken into shorter lengths. They were not necessarily of circular section and Connector 'C' has a socket shaped to receive a flat Rod. D & E are Connectors suitably configured for use in the Tower F. G shows 2 Connectors used to house the spokes of a wheel but nothing is said of a suitable rim.

The PARTS Below a short length of Rod, 2 Connectors & one disc from a Loose Pulley (the only remaining circular part in the large set). Rods are mild steel, 20" long, .096" Ø, & have traces of their original copper coating (3/32" welding rod?). The ads say they 'are light and easily handled. You can bend them and cut them any length.' Connectors are steel, now somewhat rusty, about .02" thick, with a .098 centre hole. Ads speak of 'flexible joints' which connect the rods at any angle. The Pulley disc is 3/4" Ø with a similar centre hole.

Fig.4 shows parts from the small set. The Pulley on the right is probably the one above, the one on the left is similar in size but with a tapped boss. The poked Spoked Wheel scales at 1.7" Ø but in the Ebay photos looks slightly too large to lay flat in the box. If genuine it might be suitable for the



Fig.3

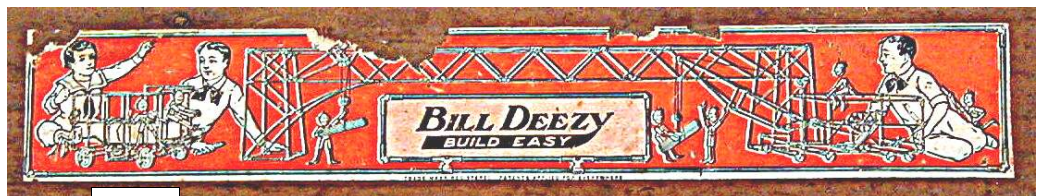


Fig.1

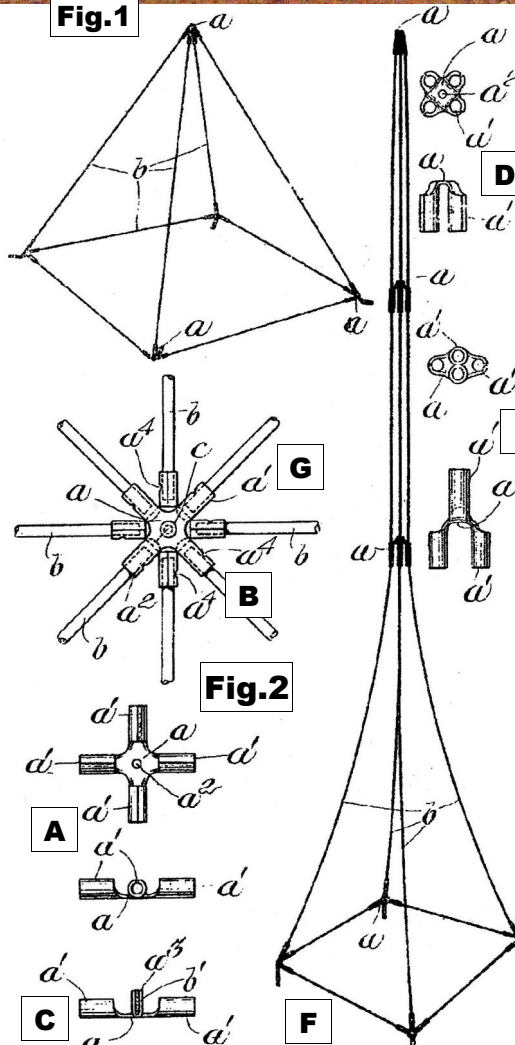
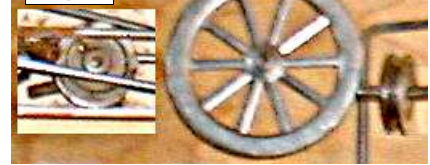


Fig.2

Fig.4



Car in Fig.7 but the Wheel in the Cart in Fig.6 is much larger (and in any case looks to be built up from BILL DEEZY parts).

The Crane (Fig.11) in one of the ads has 2 other parts, the Pulleys on the undercarriage and in the 'cab', which look larger than those mentioned above, and the Hook.

A write-up in Toys and Novelties of Aug. 1914 includes 'In addition to the rods and joints, the outfit includes a plier which will cut the rods accurately, cleanly and easily. The plier is equipped with a device for clamping the joints to the rods wherever stability is required. Bracing wire, pulley and cart wheels, cable and rubber tires are also supplied for mechanical working models.' It goes on to list the 4 outfits, as below.

The SETS There were 4 sets priced at 50c, \$1, \$2, & \$5. Auxilliary sets from 25c to \$2 were also advertised, and 14c in stamps would bring a a sample set. The 3 larger sets were said to contain 2 1/2, 6, & 18 times the quantity of parts in the 50c outfit.

The large set below is in a nicely



Fig.5

made wooden box, 20 3/4 * 6 1/2 * 2 1/4", with a hinged lid. There were no signs of any partitioning. It had labels on its sides, lid, & inside lid, but apart from scraps only the latter, shown larger in Fig.1, remains. 2 scraps are shown below in Figs.6 & 7.

As found the set contained 246 Connectors, plus 58 with 1 or more sockets removed, and 132x 20" Rods plus shorter lengths



Fig.6

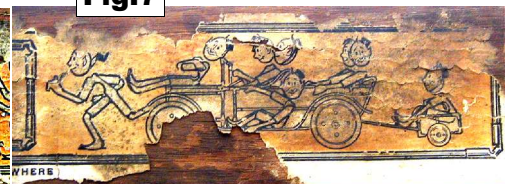


Fig.7



The lid **Fig.8** of the small set is shown above and is about 12" long. The parts in it, apart from those in Fig.4, are 2 Rods 12" long, a few bent ones, and a number of Connectors, few of which still have all their sockets.

If the large set was the \$5 one, the small one might at a guess be the 50c outfit (with the Spoked Wheel from another set, BILL DEEZY or otherwise).

The MODELS All that are known from the boxes, and in the ads, are shown here, plus a Bridge in Fig.13 made from the large set. Fig.10 was called a Wireless Tower.

USING the PARTS The absence of Wheels in the large set ruled out many 'interesting' models and the 20" long Bridge in Fig.13 was made to gain experience in using the parts before considering whether to attempt a more ambitious model.

The Plier tool mentioned in the ad would no doubt have been a great help in making the model: without it the Rods were hacksawed to length and

seemingly unused, could not be pushed onto the Rods and so had to be opened out before use. In the Bridge's side frames (and most likely in any non-rectangular structure) a fair degree of opening out was needed to give enough play to assembly the Rods into their sockets. A gently tapering drift was used for this but appreciable force was needed. Apart from this the sockets were easy to bend and no cracking occurred after several bends.

Two other difficulties warrant mention. One was the force needed to bend the Rods. A sharp 90° bend needed a vice & a hammer, or similar, and the 180° curves at the back of the Soap Dish in Fig.14 would be very hard to make with fingers alone. The second was that in assembling structures some planning was needed to avoid having to make joints which could only be achieved with unacceptable distortion of the surrounding structure. Also it could be tricky if, as in joining the sides of the Bridge, a number of joints had to be made at more or less the same time.

I'm sure a more ambitious model would have been possible but after building the Bridge I didn't take up to the challenge.

Partly because of the amount of rather dull work involved and partly because I felt that, unlike the appearance of the models in the ads, the actual models had a 'spidery' look to them. But I take my hat off

to whoever built the large models featured in the ads.

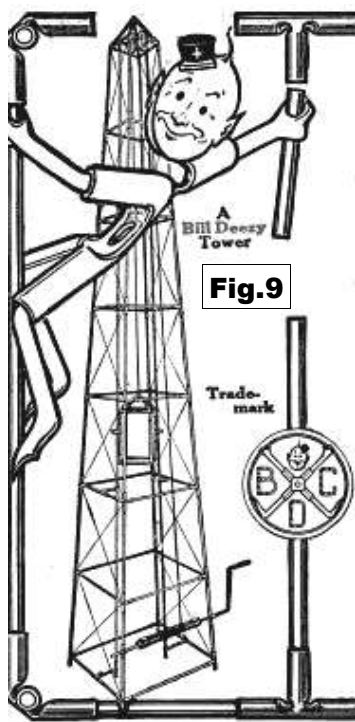


Fig.9

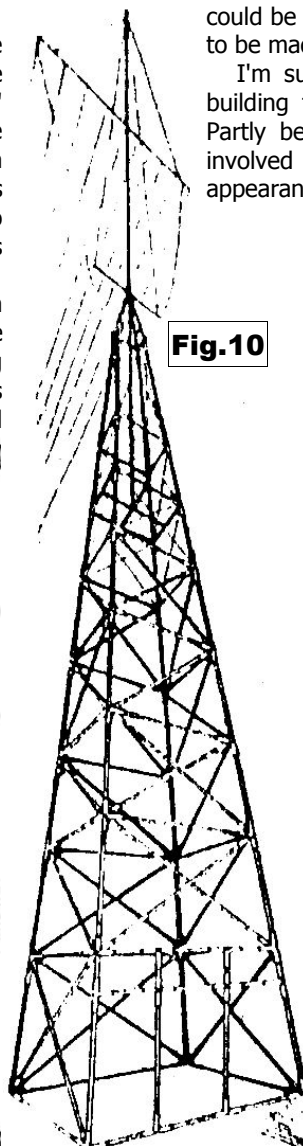


Fig.10

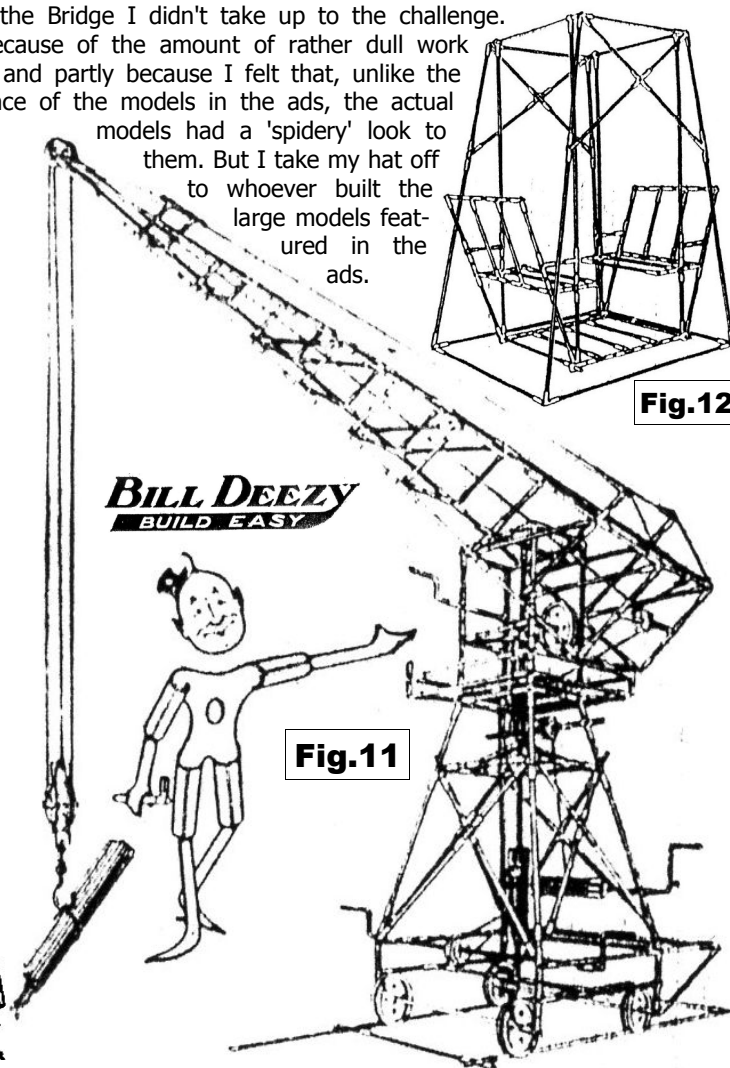


Fig.11

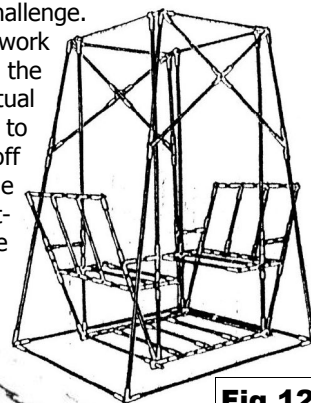


Fig.12

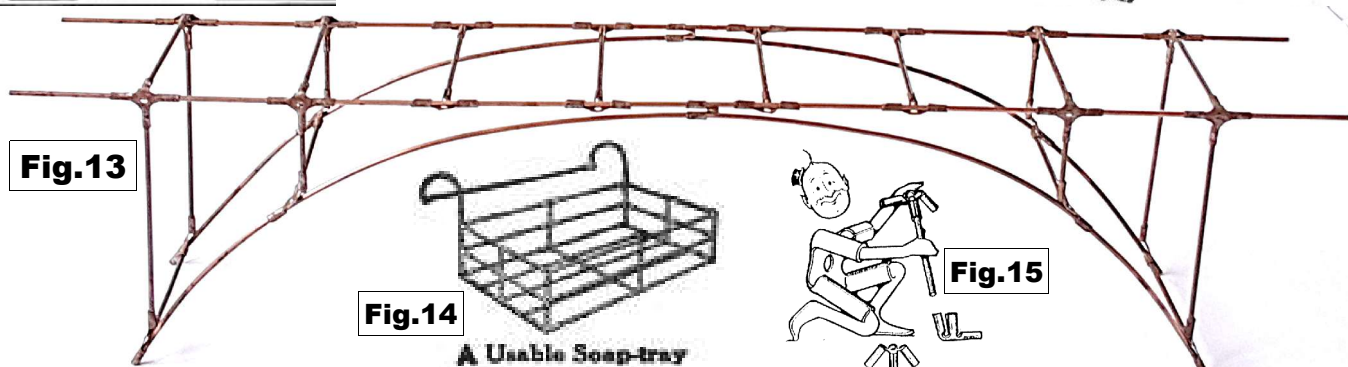


Fig.13

Fig.14

A Usable Soap-tray

Fig.15

Another BILL DEEZY Set It was the same size as the one in 52/1587 but more complete, at least with regard to the Wheels, and it showed some manual pages. Said pages are unfortunately of poor quality and in what follows items in red were very blurry and the most likely to be incorrect.

The 'New' Set is shown right.

The little that remains of the labels on the box are similar to those on the OSN 52 set. The bulk of the Rods lie in the bottom of the box with most of the Joints on top at the lefthand end, but some are in the small cardboard boxes. The latter may of course not be original and among the parts are a few pieces of ERECTOR, the 3" Girder beside the larger box for instance. What is original is the board at the right end which carries the Wheel parts and has notches in its end pieces to carry 7 of the Rods.

Fig.2 is an enlarged view of 2 of the Wheel Parts with a $\frac{3}{4}$ " Loose Pulley with 2 face holes, as in OSN 52, on top, and what looks like a $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Pulley with 4 face holes underneath. They can also be seen in Fig.3, a view of the Board with it turned up and leaning on the front of the box. The parts under the Pulleys are discussed in the Parts paragraph below.

The Set Contents One of the Ebay photos showed the contents of the 4 sets produced (Nos.50, 100, 200, 500) as follows. • Flexible Joints: 30/75/180/540. • Coppered Steel Construction Rods: 12" 15/0/0/0; 20" 0/25/60/180. • Bracing Wire: 25/60/150/400ft. • Cable: 10/15/60, 180ft. • Pulley Wheels: 4/4/8/8. • Cart Wheels: 0/2/4/16. • Rubber Tires: 0/2/4/0. • Wheel Rims: 0/0/0/16. • Wheel Bands: 0/0/0/16. • Pair K?? Deezy Pliers: 1/1/1/1. • Catalog: 1/1/1/1.

It is clear from the above that the present & large OSN 52 sets are No.500's and the small OSN 52 sets a No.50.

Also listed on the page are 15 Auxilliary Packages: A,B,C,D Flexible Joints; AA,BB,CC,DD, each with Rods & Bracing Wire; X, 12 Pulley Wheels; X1, Bracing Wire; X2, Pair of Pliers; X3, 6 Cart Wheels; X4, 3 each Wheel Rims & Bands; S, 3 Rubber Tires for Wheel Rims; T, 4 Rubber Tires for Cart Wheels.

The Parts It's hard to reconcile the Wheel parts in the Contents above with those in the sets. All one can say is that those on the pegs in the present set are a $\frac{3}{4}$ " Pulley with what looks like a $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Pulley underneath it, and that the parts underneath them at the bottom of the pegs in Fig.3 might be a Wheel Band on the left peg (a Road Wheel? or part of one?) and a Wheel Rim on the righthand one. Also that the $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Pulley looks like the Wheels on one of the models on the lid, as

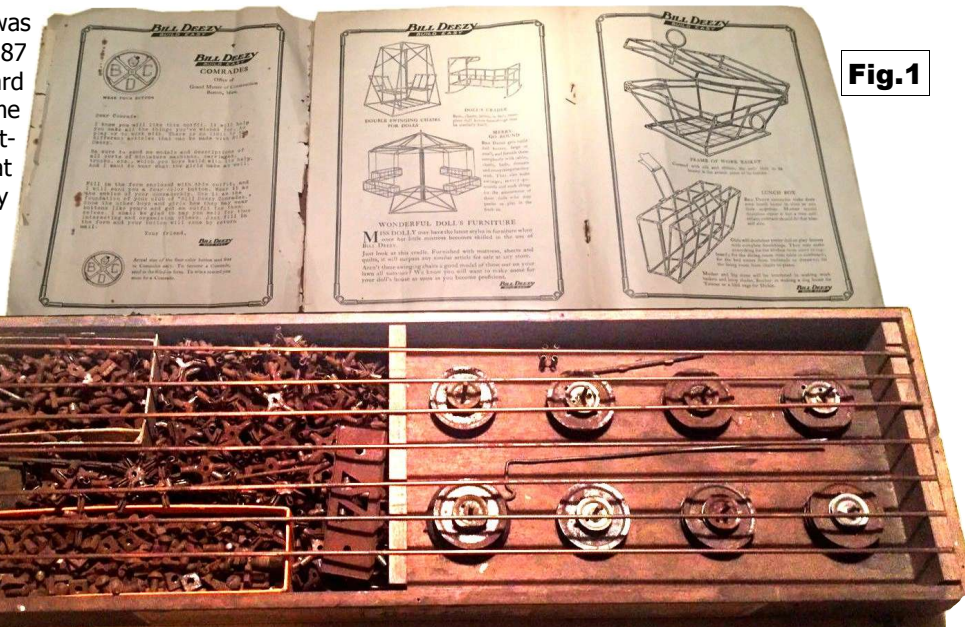


Fig.1



Fig.2

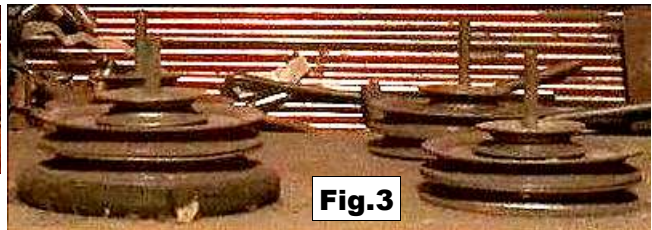


Fig.3

shown in Fig.7 model in OSN 52.

Several of the other parts haven't been seen in any of the known sets: the Pliers; the Bracing Wire (which would presumably be used for cross-bracing but was it thin piano type wire or flexible?); and the Cable (the name might indicate a flexible metal wire but it might I suppose be simply cord).

The Manual is Copyright 1914 and the models that can be seen are the Crane in OSN 52, the Ferris Wheel in Fig.4, and the models in Fig.1: Double Swinging Chairs for Dolls (Fig.12 in OSN 52), Doll's Cradle, Merry Go Round, Frame of Work Basket, & Lunch Box.

The lefthand page in Fig.1 is a letter to 'Dear Comrade' from the 'Office of the Grand Master of Constructions, Bill Deezy Comrades', and signed 'Your Friend, Bill Deezy'. It asks for details of models, and offers a free brochure.

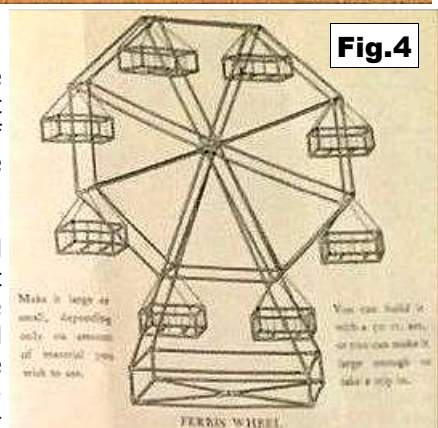


Fig.4

OSN 54/1647

BILL DEEZY: S3

Snippet. METALCRAFT Right a better picture of the label in 35/1047. The latter was on a box larger than on other known sets, but this box is the normal, smaller size. And instead of a green backing card, the present one is yellow, the usual colour in other sets (and also in VOGUE & PIONIER outfits). This set's small parts box is missing.

The parts are entirely 'standard' with no additional holes in any of them.

The manual is as before with the same industrial scene on its cover, and no models at all, quite unlike the label.



OSN 54/1647

METALCRAFT [2]: S4