

Gilbert Erector Set Guidebook

1913-1988

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my dear wife Tracy whose tolerance of my Erector “madness” has been exemplary! Also, thanks to my children Jennifer and Steven who’ve humored their dad on many occasions with a “that looks cool” or “can we build one of those in Cub Scouts?”

I’d also be remiss to not thank a long list of “Erector Buddies” who share this affliction and have helped with this work. They have been more than helpful with information and photos of sets included throughout this book. They include (apologies to any omissions, I’m better at organizing sets than remembering names): Dave Ware, Ray Rosebush, Dave Blood, Bob McKee, Frank Sargent, Larry Worley, Tom Lindsey, Ron Ford, John Cook, Klon Smith, Mitch Brown, Mike VanValkenburg, Mike DiVita, Joe Long, Michael Wagner, Avery Root, and Al Sternagle.

I got interested again in Erector when my son turned four in 2000. He got Lego’s for his birthday; finally, a toy that dad doesn’t mind playing with too! While shopping for a building base for his new toy, I happened upon the “wall of Lego”. Boy, had things changed since my youth! Sets had motors, people, special bricks, etc. I remembered fondly my first Erector set, a #8104 Senior Engineer type III set given to me by my parents for Christmas in 1968 or 1969. . . . Rats!! No Erector sets at the local toy store. My office mate suggested I hit eBay. Well, over a hundred sets later ranging from 1913 to 1988, the rest is history!

I was born in September, 1959 and have been a Project Engineer at General Motors since 1982. But when it comes to Erector, I’m a youngster. Over 95% of the Erector collecting community is older than me. My concern is that the next generation will miss out on A. C. Gilbert’s wonderful creation if the information accumulated by the current collecting community is not passed on. There are other references out there, but some of their prices have escalated to a point where a twenty-something potential collector might be hesitant to take the jump. That twenty-something is the future of keeping Erector alive and well! If we want A. C. Gilbert’s legacy to continue, new blood must be introduced to his wonderful toy!

My intent is to present an overview of Erector from 1913 to 1988; essentially a “poor man’s guide” to Erector sets. All questions won’t be answered here, but many will. There are no copyrights implied either. Please feel free to copy and distribute any and all parts of this book. The more copies, the better! However, the copies may not be sold for a profit. Try to favor the twenty-something’s!

A. C. GILBERT ERECTOR SETS – BRIEF INTRODUCTION

A. C. Gilbert was born February 15, 1884 and died January 18, 1961. He managed to pack many achievements in those 76 years! After winning a gold medal in pole vaulting at the 1908 Olympics, he earned his degree in medicine at Yale in New Haven, Connecticut. Instead of practicing medicine or becoming a college athletic director, he started the Mysto Manufacturing Company in 1909. He introduced the Erector set in 1913. Lore has it that Gilbert saw electrification towers being erected and was fascinated by the continual building as he rode the train to New York. Wouldn't boys be interested in building things like those towers?

He bought out his partners in late 1913 and renamed the business The A. C. Gilbert Company in 1916. The early sets are called "Type I" and are easily identified by their 1 1/8" wide girders. These sets were produced from 1913-1923.

In 1924, the New Erector was introduced. This era, which ran from 1924-62, contained what are called "Type II" parts. The girders were 5/8" in width and continued the same "trussed" look of the type I parts. The type II era can be broken up into sub-eras: The Classic Period ('24-'32), Transition ('33-'37), Return to Prominence ('38-'45), Material Substitutions ('46-'52), Business is Boomin' ('53-'59) and Decline ('60-'62).

When Gilbert died, the company was bought by the Wrather Corporation. The system was redesigned to be more Meccano type. Girders were strips with evenly spaced holes on 1/2" centers. The edges had a flange folded over reminiscent of the 1913 type I girders. This new design is called "Type III". Gone was the trussed girder look of type II Erector. The Wrather/Gilbert Company went out of business in late 1966. But parts from the original New Haven plant lived on in various sets until 1988. Gilbert noted in his 1954 biography that over 30 million sets had been sold. That's an average of over 700,000 sets per year (naturally some years were better than others). If you extrapolate those numbers out over the 34 years after his biography was published, over 50 million of the sets were sold between 1913 – 1988!

There is one thing to remember before we go year by year through Erector sets. They were a kid's toy! The A. C. Gilbert Company did not produce the sets with the idea of conserving a piece of history. Their motive was to educate kids with a construction toy and make a buck! Gilbert had a well deserved reputation of not throwing anything away. If an idea was developed that would save a buck or two, it was introduced as soon as possible. That makes it somewhat difficult for the modern collector to know exactly what was in each set and how they were arranged. A particular set could have had many variations in the same year. If a batch of old parts was found with a different finish than was used in a particular set, they were used anyhow. A 7-14 year old wouldn't notice or care! The information presented should be used as a guideline, more than the definitive rule. Gilbert changed the contents of sets from year to year. In the year by year summary I do not go into that detail. There are other resources and books out there (namely a How to Date 'em Parts Guide by Klon Smith) that answer those questions.

TYPE I ERECTOR – 1913 to 1923

This is where it all began. The toy was a hit during the 1913 Christmas season and Gilbert was on track to becoming the largest toy manufacturer in the country. There were a number of construction toys on the market at the time. But Gilbert uniquely included a motor in his larger sets to add “action”. The girders from this period were available in three different lengths (3”, 6” and 12” or 11” depending on the year) and were about 1 1/8” wide. Small sets were packed in cardboard boxes with three different covers used throughout the years. The larger sets were packed in brown stained wooden boxes usually adorned with a decal.

1913: Parts were unique to that year. The girders were shaped with a single 45 deg. bend on the edge to form a flange to aid in building the square girder. Pulleys had to be assembled from plates and hubs. The cardboard boxed sets had a fireplace scene with a family watching boys build a crane. The motor resembled a science project as it was left to the owner to build. Larger sets were in wooden boxes. A. C. Gilbert developed all the models himself. The manual was printed photographs of A. C.’s efforts (101 models pictured). The parts were pinned to the sets with T-clips onto black cardboard. Sets offered were numbered #0 - #8.



1913 #1 set. Box top on the left, insides in the middle and the manual cover to the right. The same manual was used for sets #1 - #8.

Also offered were accessory sets numbered #1A - #7A. When a particular accessory set was combined with a set of the same number, the combination matched the inventory of the next larger set. For example, combining a #5 set and a #5A accessory set resulted in a #6 set. The accessory sets came in a box to house the new upgraded set in that set's size (for example, #5A came in a #6 sized box). Also included was another manual for the new set. This practice continued until 1919 when the accessory sets were dropped.

Parts were T-clipped to cardboard inserts. Two styles of T-clips show up on sets from 1913 – 1919. One style is 1/2” across the top, is flat and resembles a “T”. The other style is rounded on top – something like a mushroom cap.

1914: Girders had a different shape on the edges. The section looked like the sides and top of an isosceles trapezoid. This made the square girder more rigid. The pulleys, gears and wheels came with hubs already attached. The motor (P51) came in sets #4 and larger and was already assembled. The wooden boxed sets did not have any label on the outside.

The cardboard boxes had a new litho; two boys building a train trestle with a mustached dad watching the scene. The artwork was a drawing as apposed to a photograph. The same scene appeared on the manual covers.

Early manuals pictured models built from sets #1 - #8. Later manuals were split into two parts. Part 1 had models for sets #1 - #6, Part 2 had models for sets #7 and #8. The manuals were large; about 8 x 12 inches and printed in brown ink. The manual showed over twice as many models this year. Gilbert ran a contest with prizes for the best models submitted by new Erector engineers. The manuals had pictures of the boys with their models. What boy wouldn't want to get his picture and model printed in the manual!



1914 #6 set. Inside top layer and manual on the left, bottom layer in the middle. Note the large propeller blades. This was the only year the P51 motor was available (two pictures on the right). Note the single “foot” or flange across the bottom of the base and the brass strip brushes.

Two different styles of P7 pulleys were used until at least 1920. One version had two pulley halves held together with a solid hub that was peened on the back side to hold the assembly together. The other style had a stamped hub with a rounded end and three tangs that passed through slots in the pulley halves. The tangs were bent over to hold the pulley assembly together.

1915: Sets had a few modifications. The wooden boxes had a decal on the outside with a hand holding a square girder. Early sets had a silver background “Mysto Manufacturing” banner, late 1915 sets eliminated the silver background. The P51 motor was dropped in favor of the P58 (which would continue for over 30 years). The P58 motor resembles the P51, but is easily identifiable by the brushes. The P51 used brass strips, the P58 used carbon cylinders. Also the bases were different. The bottom edge of the P51 motor halves were bent to provide a flat base for screwing the motor to a board. The P58 has four “feet” in the corners for mounting. Also, the P59 reversing base plate was introduced. This accessory allowed the P58 motor to be turned on/off and control the motor's rotation direction. The propeller changed from single, large blades to a double blade with a hub. The manual continued with the same cover artwork, but was printed with black ink instead of brown.



1915 #1 set. The same box lithograph was used from 1914 through 1919. The "Mysto Manufacturing Company" designation was changed to the "A. C. Gilbert Company" in 1916. The parts boxes were unique to each set with the set number and number of models built being highlighted. The same manual cover illustration was used from 1914 - 1919 also with variations in the color and manufacturing company depending on the year.

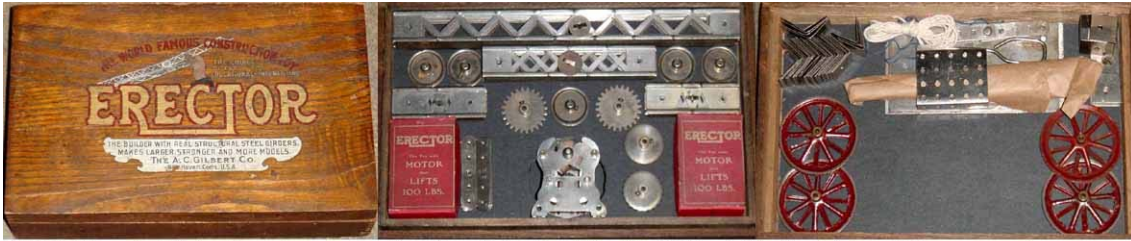
Gilbert included the P58 motor in sets #4 and larger. However, this year he offered three "M" sets - #1M, #2M and #3M. These sets came in a deeper box and were the numbered set with a P58 motor added to the set. For example, a #2M was a #2 set with a P58 added.

The accessory sets again were offered this year. As in the past, the combination of the accessory set and regular set resulted in the inventory of the next larger set.

1916-1919: Sets were basically the same from year to year during this period. The outside wooden box label still had the hand holding the square girder, but the company name was changed to "A. C. Gilbert Company". There was a second box label used on some sets which bore a smaller "ERECTOR" with the company name below. Cardboard boxed sets had the same scene on the cover (boys building the train trestle), except the company name was changed from Mysto to A. C. Gilbert. Gilbert decided to reduce the inventory of all sets by roughly 20%.



1916-19 #6 set with the P58 motor, spoked wheels, propellers. There were variations of the outside label with differences being in the company (Mysto or Gilbert) and a silver backed banner or plain (plain Mysto version shown here).



1917 #4 set. Note the change in the decal to the "A. C. Gilbert Co.". This mid-range set was a big seller as it was the smallest set to include the P58 motor.

The "M" sets were offered in 1916 but were dropped in 1917. The accessory sets continued until 1919.



1919 Toy Builder set. Also called a #000 sized set in the 1919 Gilbert catalog. The set built 100 small models and used P29 washers as wheels.



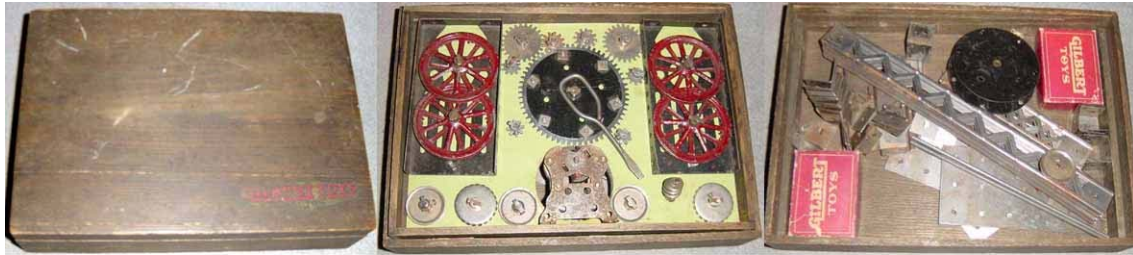
1917 #2 set. A new box top label with the A. C. Gilbert Company shown as the manufacturer was used from 1916 - 1919.

1920: The cardboard box litho was the same basic scene, except the clothing was updated and the scene was a photograph of actual people instead of a drawing. This litho continued on boxes until 1929 (a new scene was introduced in 1928 on one set). The wooden boxes had a new adornment also. A decal with "Gilbert Toys – Erector" appeared in the lower right hand corner. New parts included the ladder chain, gear box side plates and mitre gears.



The P58 AC/DC motor on the far left and the P56G 110V motor on the near left were staples for powering models for years. The P58 was introduced in 1915, the P56G in 1923. Both continued to be used in sets into the early 1940's.

The display inserts were changed from black cardboard to green. The set contents were again greatly reduced. The manual now pictured three boys building a large bridge on the cover.



1920 #6 set. Box top, top layer and bottom layer going from left to right. Note how empty the box looks compared to the 1914 #6 set. The number of 12" girders was reduced from 68 to 10! Yet Gilbert continued to show some #6 models in 1920 that couldn't be built with the reduced number of parts.

1921: Sets were downgraded from their 1920 counterparts. For the larger sets, they were basically the previous year's next size smaller set and were upgraded in number only. For example, the 1920 #4 became the 1921 #6. The part numbers were changed from a "P" designator to an "E" designator in 1921 only. Curiously, the 12" girders were reduced in length to 11" sometime in 1921.

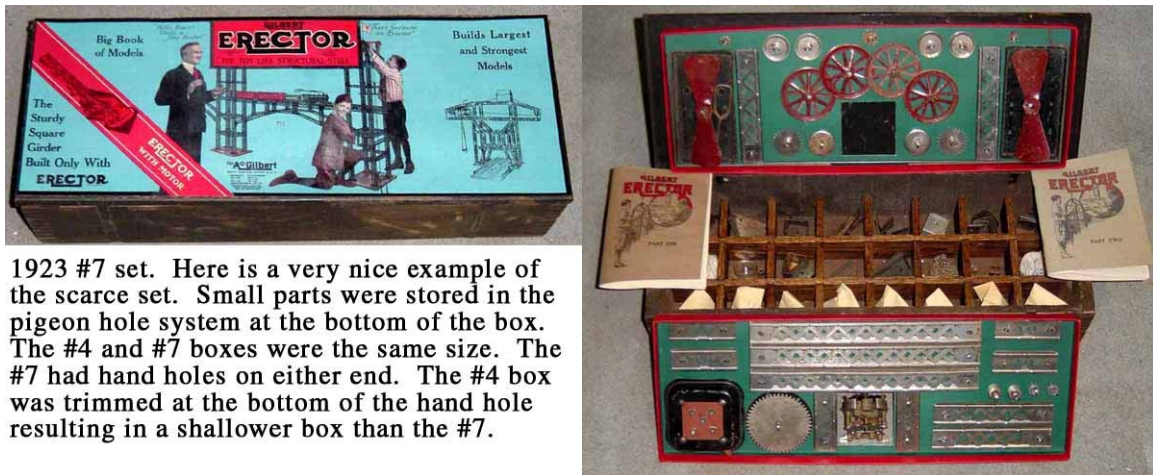
1922: The P56G 110 volt motor made its debut in set #10. The motor was versatile. Gilbert used it in fans and other appliances. Curiously, the manuals were not updated showing the P56G motor – the P58 was still shown in all of the illustrations. The content of the other sets seems to be the same as 1921 except the parts were again designated with "P" numbers. The manual was changed to a "Reader's Digest" style picturing a standing boy building a tower. The large gear became a single stamped part with a hub instead of the old arrangement of three gear segments screwed to a round plate to form a gear. Also, the #4 set came with a wooden box bottom and a cardboard box top.



1923 #4 set. Only set to have a cardboard lid and wood bottom. It was a two-layer set with a cardboard top tray. Both the 11" and 12" girders show up in sets, but never mixed in the same set.

1923: Sets contained one of the few parts to make it through to the end of Erector - the P79 car truck. The sets continued more or less unchanged from 1922 except for the

addition of the P79 car truck. Gilbert did some experimentation in the packaging of one set. The #7 set came in a wooden box with pigeon holes in the bottom for parts storage. The box lid was sheet metal with the same paper label used for the #4 set.



1923 #7 set. Here is a very nice example of the scarce set. Small parts were stored in the pigeon hole system at the bottom of the box. The #4 and #7 boxes were the same size. The #7 had hand holes on either end. The #4 box was trimmed at the bottom of the hand hole resulting in a shallower box than the #7.

TYPE II ERECTOR (1924 – 1962)

CLASSIC PERIOD (1924-1932)

In 1924, the A. C. Gilbert Company introduced a totally new Erector system. The old type I parts built large models. But the parts were somewhat limited in what they could build. The New Erector contained curved girders, boilers, protractors, electrical lights, steam shovel buckets, clamshell buckets, wheel segments, etc. The new models looked more realistic instead of “skeletons”. Think of the difference between Tinker Toys and die cast models. The earliest period of these sets has been termed the “Classic Period” and it ran from 1924 to 1932. It was the most exciting period of Erector regarding parts proliferation, models built and size of sets.

Probably the most noteworthy characteristic of the period was the use of specific parts to build a specific model. For example, the X digger scoop introduced in 1924 was used for making the Steam Shovel model. Its application in other models was very limited.

Wooden boxes were still used for the larger sets. The boxes were stained brown and varnished in 1924-27. In 1928, the boxes were “freshened up” with red paint. An exception is the 1928 #10 set which was housed in a 9 drawer box.

Those are some of the Classic Period highlights, now let's look at them from year to year.

1924/25: Cardboard boxed sets continued with the same basic scene on the box. The wooden boxed sets were stained brown. Only the #10 set contained type I and type II parts; Gilbert's way of using up old inventory. Manuals continued with the picture of three boys building the large type I part bridge. Gilbert saved printing costs from this point forward by producing manuals specific to the sets. In the past, the Part I manual included models from set #1 - #6 and was included in all of those sets. Models were pictured for larger sets that couldn't be built by the smaller one. By going to specific manuals, only the pages of models for that particular set were included.



1925 #1 set. The manual featured dozens of models. It pictured 3 boys building a bridge from type I girders which were dropped in 1924. The contents lists were loose packed on a small sheet instead of gluing them to the inside of the box top.

One change in 1925 sets from 1924 was the manual. 1925 manuals were printed on cream colored paper (greenish in 1924) and the copyright date was 1925. Also, the CA signal arms were paper in 1924 and steel in 1925. Other than that, the sets were the same for the two years. Manuals started using the “Coal Loader” model on the cover. This model, built only by the #10 set, was used on the manual cover until 1948.



1925 #7 Steam Shovel set. Unchanged from its introduction in 1924, the set contained the new type II girders that were 5/8" wide. Also included were the new boiler parts, scoop, base plates and over 30 other new parts. Wooden boxed sets were stained brown and varnished. The 1924 and 1925 sets came with a three piece constructed lid. In 1926 and 1927 the lids were a single piece of plywood.



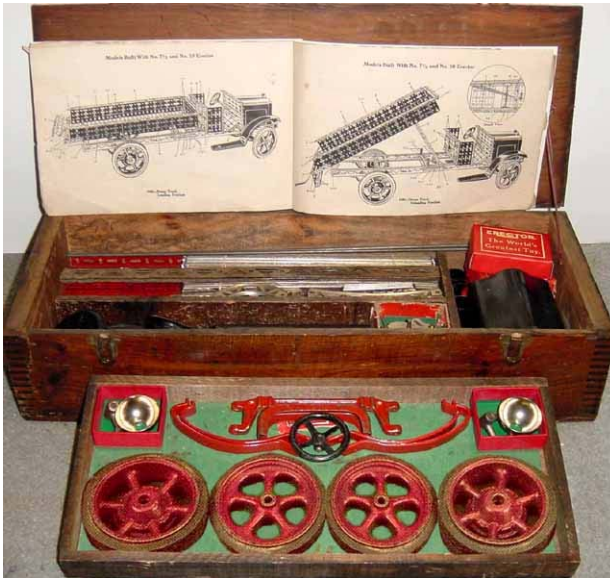
1924/25 #10 set. The set was housed in a large oak box with removeable oak trays. The packing technique of using base plates as display trays started with this set (and continued for 35 years). The inventory included many scarce parts including the pile driver weight, dial plates and the 'Y' clamshell bucket. Another unique feature of the set was the inclusion of both type I and type II parts. The set included a large number of girders: 100 each of the type I 6" and 11"/12" girders, 200 of the 'B' 5 inch and 150 of the 'C' 10 inch girders.

A lot of confusion and question revolves around the parts numbering system. Yes, it was a system and not just randomly assigned letters/numbers.

When type I parts were introduced, the numbering system (except for 1921) was a "P" for "Part" suffix followed by a number. When type II Erector was introduced, parts that carried over from the type I era continued with this numbering system. However, with the 75+ parts being introduced in 1924 alone, the decision was made to come up with a new numbering system. Parts were identified by a letter: A for the 2 1/2" girder, B for the 5" girder, and so forth. After the letter Z, part numbers went back to AA, followed by AB, etc. After AZ, the next part was BA and so forth. My theory is that skips in the numbering system were a result of a planned part not being ready for production. It was simply left out of the system until it was ready or was completely dropped.

An example is the BC/BD White Truck fenders. Part numbering in 1924 jumps from the AX 19 ¾" axle rod to the BK wing nut. Perhaps the fenders were tooled in 1924, but the model didn't look right with the P17 spoked wheels available in 1924. Instead of including them in 1924/25 sets, Gilbert waited until 1926 when the other Truck parts were tooled. It's understandable that the part numbering was so disjointed in 1924/25. With the complete overhaul of the system, Gilbert simply packed sets and developed models with the parts that were ready. Naturally, the parts that couldn't be produced weren't included in the sets/models.

1926: The highlights of this year have to be the introduction of the White Truck model and the start of the 9 drawer #10 sets. The White Truck parts were included in sets #7 ½ and #10. Gilbert changed the truck parts drastically during the year. Early wheels/tires were cast as opposed to the later stamped version; definitely a cost cutting measure done mid-year. The leaf springs were also modified. The DP angle girder made its debut as a 15" long trussed girder. Sometime during the year it was shortened to 12 ¾".



1926 #7 1/2 set. This is an early 1926 example with the spoked cast iron wheels, curved DK springs and the 15" DP angle girders. The set was offered with these very rare parts for just a short time.

Over thirty new parts were developed (or previously developed parts were finally included) for 1926. Gilbert started to brighten up the system by changing the paint color on the small base plates (P & Q) from black to red.



1926 #7 1/2 set. This is a later version of the White Truck set. Note the change to the stamped wheels, 12" DP angle girder and new styled DK truck springs.



1927: This year is highlighted by the introduction of another classic period model, the Stiff Legged Derrick. The ED triple drum hoist was the major component of this model and was available only this year. Another 30+ parts were introduced and/or modified this year. Notably, the gear pitch was changed from a diametral pitch of 16 to 24. For example, the CJ gear changed from 24 teeth to 36 teeth. The links per foot of the P52 ladder chain changed also, from 65 links per foot to 46 links per foot. Interestingly, the chain got "coarser" as the gears got "finer". The new gears/chain linked to every other tooth with the new system.



1927 #10 set in the 9 drawer oak cabinet. Gilbert packed the #10's in this style box from 1926 - 28. The sets weighed over 60 lbs. and contained thousands of parts. The manual alone was over 1/2" thick. The 1927 set is the most desirable of the three 9 drawer sets as it contained some "one year only" parts.



1927 #1 set. The gear teeth got finer this year. For example, the CJ 24 tooth gear became a 36 tooth gear. The other gears and P52 ladder chain had similar changes.

Other major part additions included the bull wheel system (AY, AZ, BA), clamshell scoop (BM), tip bucket (BP) and the truck body (BG). Previously, the Dump Truck model had a dump box built from P and Q base plates. The BG improved the look of the model.



1927 #8 Trumodel set. Included the ED three drum hoist and the BP tip bucket. This was the last year sets came with wooden parts display trays. One of the featured models was a Stiff Legged Derrick using the ED to work the crane. The part is rare because it was offered in two sets and only in 1927.



1927 #7 1/2 White Truck set. The BG Truck body was added this year. The top display tray was made of wood.



Gilbert also introduced accessory sets this year. These sets focused on a series of “theme” models. The only offering in 1927 was the #A Big Girder set which built over 40 models; primarily bridges.

1928: This year is highlighted by the “brightening up” of the wooden boxes, one cardboard box and the introduction of more accessory sets. Up until now, the wooden boxed sets were stained brown. Starting this year, they were painted red with black corners. A large “ERECTOR” decal was on the box top. The #7 and #10 sets were the exceptions. The #7 set was really just a leftover from 1927. The #10 continued in the oak 9-drawer boxes. A new “oddball” wooden boxed set entered the lineup this year. It was curiously called #77. I have a theory on the reason for this number. I believe the #77 set was originally to be the #7 set for 1928. The box for the 1927 #7 1/2 set was used for the #77 set so they were already available. Gilbert had produced the sets and numbered them with a #7. However, after Christmas of 1927, he found there were a lot of 1927 #7 sets left over. Instead of pulling the parts out of the 1927 #7 sets, he simply printed a couple of extra manual pages for a #77 set. The red boxed #7’s had another 7 added to become #77. Of course, it’s my theory with no facts to support it.



1928 #7 1/2 White Truck set. One of the most popular sets at the time. The lead models were a series of different Trucks about two feet in length. The box had brass corner plates, brass latches and brass handles on the sides.

A new lithograph adorned only the #1 set this year. It was a colorful label picturing a Coal Conveyor and White Truck model. Perhaps Gilbert decided to refresh the boxes with bright reds and yellows for visual appeal instead of acknowledging the fact that the old box label pictured a model that couldn't be built since 1924. Regardless, it was one of the most appealing lithographs to ever appear.



1929 #4 set. Box top on the left, first layer in the middle and the bottom layer to the right. Smallest set to included the P58 motor. The box label was introduced in 1928 on just the #1 set. It was used on all of the cardboard boxed sets from 1929 through 1932.

This year was also marked by another 30+ new or modified parts. Notable new ones included the EX/EY/EZ big channel girder series, the EK/EL drums, FC/FK machine frames, cams and step pulleys. The P56G 110 volt motor reappeared in the largest sets (examples with P58 motors in the #8 and #10 do exist). Also, the top wooden parts trays were replaced by sheet metal ones that covered the entire box.



1928 #8 Trumodel set in a larger red box than the 1927 model. The ED three drum hoist was eliminated, but the machine frames were added. Featured models were Derricks and Machine Shop tool models.

The #A big girder accessory set was offered unchanged from 1927. The #B Ferris Wheel set was added to the lineup. This set built over 50 models and featured a 3 foot diameter Ferris Wheel. The #C Air-Plane set was also added. It built 19 different Air-Plane models and included a P56G motor.



1928 #C accessory set. The set was introduced this year and was packed in a wooden box. The set built a number of air plane models. The propeller was powered by a P56G motor. The set also included a swivel assembly which was nailed to the ceiling and the plane hung by the motor wires for "flying". The air plane parts were never included in a numbered Erector set (not in a #10 for example) making them somewhat scarce.

1929: The highlight this year was the introduction of the #8 Zeppelin set. The set built a 5 foot Zeppelin; a steel frame with a cloth bag for the skin. It is a highly prized set even today. Content-wise, the set was essentially a White Truck #7 ½ set with the addition of the Zeppelin parts. It also introduced the practice of gluing a lithographed label to the inside of the set box. This practice continued (with some exceptions) until 1960.



1929 #8 Zeppelin set. Inside label, top layer and bottom layer from left to right. The set built the Steam Shovel, White Truck and a five foot long Zeppelin model. One of the most desirable sets from the Classic era.

The cardboard sets all came with the colorful Coal Conveyor/White Truck lithograph. There were some changes from the previous year's inventory; primarily with the wheels that were included.

The #7 Steam Shovel set was changed to the red painted wooden box scheme. The inventory was revised from the previous year to reflect a redesigned (and simplified) Steam Shovel model.

The chassis parts for the White Truck model were also changed/cheapened. Instead of metal castings, stampings were used to form the DK truck springs, and front axle assembly. The inside of the box got an "ERECTOR" decal to match the one on the top.

The #9 Mechanical Wonders set was new this year. It was basically a 1928 #8 set enlarged with more mechanical parts (gears, eccentrics) for more models and included the Zeppelin parts. Interestingly, it did not have a lithograph on the inside of the box. The inside was adorned with an “ERECTOR” decal.

The 1929 #10 got the wooden box lineup back on the same page. The 9 drawer oak box was dropped in favor of a large red painted one. The set contained all of the #9 Mechanical Wonders parts plus the CS wheel segments, BM clamshell bucket and all the #B Ferris Wheel parts (and more of the standard parts).

The accessory lineup of #A-#C continued with the difference being #C was now sold in a cardboard box. Gilbert also sold an assembled Air-Plane as accessory #D and an assembled Zeppelin as accessory #F.

1930: Sets from this year were basically the same as last year. Contents of the #1 set differed and the accessory sets #A, #C, #D and #F were dropped. Actually, the #C Air-Plane set was repackaged as No. 45. It came in a cardboard box and was the same basic accessory set except the P56G motor was omitted. No. 75 was a new accessory kit that combined the Air-Plane and Zeppelin parts in one large (and valuable) cardboard box.



1929/30 #9 Mechanical Wonders set. Included all of the parts to make the Zeppelin, White Truck and mechanical parts. Those included the machine frames, helical gears, cams, eccentrics, bull wheels, etc.

1931: The highlight of this year was the creation of the last Classic period feature model - the Hudson Locomotive and Tender. The introduction of this model also prompted Gilbert to sell the grand-daddy of all Erector sets, the 150 lb. #10 Climax of Erector Glory set.



1931/32 #10 Climax of Erector Glory set. This was the grand-daddy of them all weighing in at nearly 150 lbs. It included all of the parts from the #9 Mechanical Wonders set, the #B Giant Ferris Wheel set and the #8 1/2 Hudson Locomotive and Tender set (plus many other unique to this set parts). Fewer than 10 of these sets are known to exist making it the most valuable set to date.

The Hudson sets had to be a major business risk for Gilbert. The United States was in a full blown depression and the money spent to tool the 75+ Hudson parts had to be questioned. Regardless, the over 4 foot model was the epitome of Erector models. The Locomotive was included in four sets; the Tender in two sets (plus as an accessory).



1931 #7 1/2 White Truck set. The lid was recessed and included a nice label really dressing up the set. The parts were arranged differently from the previous year even though the inventory was the same.



The cardboard sets in 1931 were the same as 1930. Some time this year the wooden box lids had a lip added to them. The metal display trays got shallower at the same time. This helped the inside lithographs from being torn by the parts on the display tray. Only the #6 regular set and #B accessory set came without an inside lithograph. #7 had a picture of boys with the Steam Shovel model, #7 1/2 pictured boys with the White Truck. #8 and #A accessory set pictured the Hudson Locomotive. The #8 1/2 pictured the Hudson Locomotive and Tender. The #9 Mechanical Wonders set finally got an inside label - it used the Zeppelin label with a #9 identifying the set. The #10 Climax of Erector Glory set had a label showing two boys playing with the Hudson Locomotive and Tender going over a bridge.



1932 No. 8 1/2 Hudson Locomotive and Tender set. This set is one of the most sought after by collectors. It built a train model (pictured on the box inside lid) over 4 feet long. It included all the parts from the #7 Steam Shovel set also. However, it did not include the #7 1/2 White Truck parts thus breaking one of “Gilbert’s rules” that progressively larger sets build all the models of the smaller sets. Regardless, the spectacular Hudson models more than made up for the missing truck parts. The Locomotive parts ran basically unchanged during their 1931 - 1937 run. Decals on the Locomotive and Tender were removed by 1937. Also, the set came packed in a metal box starting in 1934 requiring the track sections to come as separate pieces instead of a welded assembly.

The accessory sets this year included the #A Locomotive set, #B Ferris Wheel set, #D pre-assembled air-plane, #L pre-assembled Locomotive and Tender, #T Hudson Tender set, No. 45 Air-Plane set and the No. 75 Air-Plane/Zeppelin set.

1932: The sets for this year were close to last year’s except the P56G motor was substituted for the P58 in all motorized sets except #4 and #6. The inside box lithographs of #7 and #7 1/2 had modifications also. The #7 set had at least two labels this year. One was a carry over 1931 label with “and over 375 other models” added under the “Builds the Steam Shovel” text. The other #7 label showed a new Elevator model in addition to the Steam Shovel. The #7 1/2 label had the “Set that Builds the Chassis” annotated with “and over 400 other models”.



1932 #7 Steam Shovel set. The 110V P56G motor was substituted for the P58 motor this year in sets #7 and larger. Gilbert had added inside labels in most of the wooden boxed sets by this time.

WHOLESALE SETS

Gilbert offered sets for sale through the major wholesale retail stores from 1929 - 32. The sets included girders with different hole patterns than the regular line. Instead of the "truss" look, they had a duplex hole pattern with alternating $5/32$ " and $5/16$ " holes. The sets sold through J. C. Penney were called Little Jim, sets for Sears were called Trumodel and sets for Montgomery Ward were called Steel-Tech.



1928/30 #1 Steel-Tech set. Note the duplex hole girders and flat base plates included in the Wholesaler sets.



1929 #77 TruModel set. The Wholesaler sets were similar to the Gilbert line, but contained some unique parts. The girders had just holes in them instead of a truss pattern. Most of the same models were pictured in the manuals but the drawings were updated to show the different parts.

TRANSITION PERIOD (1933-1937)

The great depression put a damper on the expansion of the Erector system. One can only ponder the excesses that might have been had the economy not fallen so drastically. Could the Hudson Locomotive model have been topped? The conversion from wooden boxes to steel ones started in 1933. Sets from this era are characterized by the cardboard display inserts on the inside of the box lid. The Hudson was the only Classic period model to survive the depression. The impact of the country's economic decline can be seen by the sheer number of parts eliminated in 1933 alone - over 100!

1933: This year was marked by the downsizing of nearly every set. The very popular White Truck model continued, but on a reduced scale. The hood and radiator were retooled as smaller, separate parts. The large rubber tires of 1932 were replaced with 3" nickel plated ones (MH). On the plus side, the axle assembly became just that. The separate parts from 1932 were assembled into one unit. Another positive this year was the introduction of the MJ electromagnet. This first offering was a 2 3/4" diameter red painted design. Metal parts cans about 2" in diameter were used in the larger sets instead of cardboard parts boxes as in the past. Other parts introduced this year were those numbered LP – ML. These include the parts mentioned above, plus base plates, flat plates, red wheels and railroad rail parts. The familiar MC and MD base plates were introduced as red painted parts.



1933 #7 set included the new parts to build truck models, cranes and engines. The MJ Electromagnet made its debut in 1933. The small parts were stored in metal parts cans which were positioned in the box with a wooden block. A second wooden block was used to support one end of the P56G motor. The boiler was painted black with a gold "ERECTOR" decal.

The lithograph on the cardboard sets changed this year. Pictured was a dad watching a boy build a bridge with an actual bridge in the background. This label continued on sets until 1958.



The new box lithograph starting in 1933. The design was on all cardboard sets until 1958. Note that the “kneeling boy” label was a portion of this scene. The apron of the box identified the set number.

Metal boxes made their debut this year in sets #6 and #7. The #6 was painted green and had a display insert affixed to the inside lid with metal tabs or channels. The outside label started out as a leftover “ERECTOR” decal but was changed to the familiar “Kneeling Boy Label”. That label was actually a part of the scene from the cardboard box lithograph also introduced this year. Initially, the background of the label was black (changed to yellow in 1934).



1933 #6 set came in a green box with a display insert on the inside lid. The set came with a 110V P56G motor. Many variations of this set exist with changes to the lid graphic, display insert attaching method and box depth.

The #7 set was in a red painted metal box and was adorned with the same scene as the cardboard boxes. Later in the year, the black background kneeling boy label was used. The #7 set included a cardboard display insert mounted to the inside lid and included the new MJ magnet and the new truck parts. Most of the models introduced with this set continued until the end of type II Erector in 1962.



The black background “kneeling boy label” was introduced in 1933. The yellow background version replaced the black background version some time in 1934. The yellow background label had two variations and adorned metal box sets until 1959. Sets with the scarce black label bring a premium price.

The Erector Hudson and Tender sets #8, #8 ½ and #A continued in 1933. The content changed with the redesign of the truck parts and other downsizing. On the plus side, the

truck parts were now included in the sets. In 1931-32, the White Truck parts were not in the Hudson sets as there was no room in the box. Metal parts cans were used to house all of the small components.

1934: The Erector “make over” continued this year. Hudson’s were still offered, but now they were housed in a metal box. A familiar new part was added this year, the MM wrench/ screwdriver. Gilbert tried to liven up the truck models with a rubber tire (LW) that went over the red LV (painted MH) wheel. History has not been kind to the LW as the rubber compound used has not stood up with time.



1934 #7 1/2 set. Unique set in a powder blue box. The set built a number of Crane and Automotive models. The base for the P56G motor had to be removed for the motor to fit in the box. The set also included the now scarce LW rubber tires. If the parts are removed from the display inserts and placed in the box, the box looks quite sparse. This same box size was used the following year to house a similar set that added the CS wheel segments and the EX-EZ wide channel girders.

The cardboard sets continued with minor revisions in inventories this year. Set #4 was upgraded to a metal box. The set continued the new practice of mounting parts to an inside lid cardboard display insert.



1934 #4 set. Quaint little set with the AC/DC P58 motor. Another nice example of the parts display insert mounted on the box inside lid.

A new set was added this year, the #7 1/2 Automotive set. It was the same set as the 1933 #7 (with the addition of the MM wrench and LW tires), but was packed in a larger powder blue metal box. It used the same inside display insert as the #7. The 1934 #7 set was in the same sized red box as last year, but the contents were reduced. No truck parts were included with this set. The #8 Hudson came in only a Locomotive and Tender set this year (no Locomotive only) and the powder blue metal box had a large inside box lid cardboard display insert.



1934 #7 set with the P56G motor and large red MJ electro-magnet. The metal parts cans were blue with nickel lids and the boiler was black with a gold decal.

1935: Gilbert was on the rebound this year with many new parts being introduced to the system. Additions included two new motors with associated hardware and parts MN – NG (minus MW – MZ). Specifically, the parts were the cardboard building panels with snap rivets to mount them to strips and angle girders. Also included were the MO 3” angle girder, MV flat car truck and the MN 12” base plate. This is also the year that introduced the odd practice of using a “1/2” after every set number. The reason for this numbering system has not been determined but Gilbert must have had a good reason because the practice continued until 1957. This is a confusing year as the numbering of some same-named sets (though not really the same set) changed from 1934. In 1934, the #7 1/2 was called the Automotive Set. In 1935, it was the #8 1/2. In 1934 the #8 was called the World's Champion (Hudson Locomotive and Tender). In 1935, the set was the #9 1/2.



The P51 Electric Engine on the far left and A52 induction motor on the near left powered the models in 1935 - 1937. The P51 showed up in Sears sets from 1938 - 42 also. The open armature of the P51 makes it a favorite of collectors.

Cardboard boxed sets continued pretty much unchanged except for the addition of an “S” Skyscraper set. This set included 64 of the building panels (and associated hardware), angle girders, strips, screws and nuts.



1935 #6 1/2 set, contained the boiler parts, P51 motor, metal parts can and the skyscraper parts. The set built a number of Engines and truck models.

The metal boxed sets had a new look this year. With the addition of the MN base plate, display inserts were removed from the inside lid except for the Hudson #9 1/2 set. All

others used the MN's as trays to display the parts. T-clips were used to hold the trays and parts together. The boxes had ledges welded in them to support the parts trays. Cardboard inserts were used under the MN trays to display most of the remaining parts. All left over parts were typically wrapped in brown paper and placed in a boiler (if present) or under the bottom insert.



1935 #9 1/2 Hudson Locomotive and Tender set. The wooden boxes were dropped this year in favor of a 24" x 14" x 4" steel box. The set included the new truck parts and MJ electro-magnet. Also included were the parts to build the skyscraper models.

The inside lid display inserts were gone, but Gilbert didn't forget about the inside of the box lids. New labels adorned the inside showing off the feature models of the respective sets. The #4 1/2 and #6 1/2 shared a label showing a Delivery Truck, Ship Crane and Oscillating Engine. The #7 1/2 and #8 1/2 had the first version of the Ferris Wheel/Refrigeration Plant (later called the Giant Power Plant) label. The metal boxed sets (and one of the cardboard sets) included a small set of skyscraper panels and snap rivets for building architectural models.



1935 #8 1/2 set with the truck parts and electromagnet. The 1935 sets also came with the cardboard skyscraper parts pictured to the right.

The new A52 induction motor was included only in set #4 1/2. It looked so close to the P58 motor it replaced that Gilbert didn't bother redrawing the motor in the model instructions. The other new motor was a P51 Erector Electric Engine. No explanation is known for the number designation as Gilbert produced a very different looking P51 motor in 1914. This new P51 motor included a base with axle holes for building up a gear box. The #6 1/2 set had a P51 which did not reverse. That feature was saved for the larger #7 1/2 - #9 1/2 sets.

Significant models from this year include the classic Ferris Wheel (#7 1/2 set), Walking Beam Engine (#6 1/2 set) and the Refrigeration Plant (#8 1/2 set).

There were some finish changes on old parts and a number of reintroduced parts this year. The P79 car truck and U boiler top were painted red. A number of other parts were changed to blue including the MD, ME and MF base plates. Nickel plating was used on the T boiler, MJ electromagnet and the EX/EY/EZ big channel girders. The MC was changed to yellow paint. Gilbert was “dressing” up Erector with new colors.

1936: This year saw the introduction of the MW nut holder; an essential tool aiding in attaching BN turret plates to the T boiler. The Skyscraper parts were eliminated from the sets. Oddly, all of the sets numbered #4 ½ - #9 ½ had their set numbers increased by one as compensation for the omission of the skyscraper parts (#4 ½ became #5 ½ and so forth).



1936/7 #5 1/2 set. Came with the A52 induction motor. The set was the same as the 1935 #4 1/2 set without the skyscraper parts.

A familiar cardboard boxed set returned to the lineup this year - #4 ½. The set included the P58 motor and came with a hinged lid. The inside had the same label as the #8 ½ and #9 ½ sets. The contents of the metal boxed sets continued essentially unchanged from 1935 (exceptions were the skyscraper parts and set numbers).

1937: A curious change to the 1 1/8” P7 pulley occurred this year. A new, smaller 7/8” pulley was introduced and became the P7. The larger version continued as a P7A.

The P51 motor had used a separate worm gear with hub (MQ) that engaged the motor armature’s worm. In 1937, this gear became integral with an axle.

SEARS Sets

As an aside, Gilbert also offered sets for sale through the major retailer Sears. The sets were offered from 1929 – 32, 1935 – 42, 1946 - 47 and 1960 – 62. The 1935 – 42 era is briefly covered here. These Sears sets in general matched the inventories of Gilbert’s regular line sets from 1934.

The P51 Electric Engine and A52 induction motor were introduced in 1935. However, the Sears sets initially had the P56G motor or the P58 motor in the case of the #4 set. The P51 wasn’t included in a Sears set until Gilbert had introduced a new motor for the

regular line in 1938. Likewise, the MN base plate was added in 1935. But the Sears sets continued with the discontinued S base plate.

The Sears sets had interesting variations in parts appearance from the regular Gilbert line. The MC, MD, ME and MF base plates were painted red instead of yellow (MC) and blue (MD, ME, MF) like the regular line. The MH wheels were painted solid red. The P79 car trucks were nickel plated instead of red like the Gilbert line. Also, the T boiler was painted black with a silver label.

The line included cardboard boxed sets numbered #1, #3 and #4. The sets matched the regular lineup from 1934.

Gilbert had inside lid display inserts on the regular line #4 - #8 sets in 1934. However, the practice ended in 1935 with the advent of the MN base plate on all but one set (#9 ½ Hudson). One of the appealing features of Sears sets is that the inside lid parts display inserts continued on sets #6, #7 and #8.

The #6 set from 1936 – 42 had the same inventory as Gilbert's #6 from 1933 and 1934. The major difference was the parts layout, which was slightly different on the bottom insert.



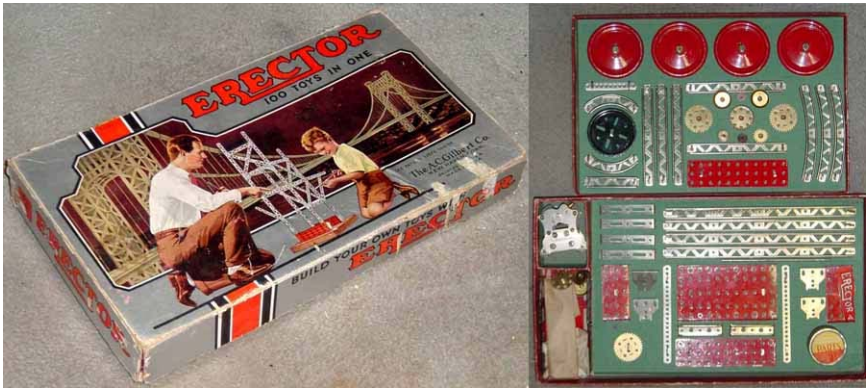
1938 #6 Sears set. The inside lid display was the same one used in the 1934 #6 Gilbert set, but there were differences. The bottom layout was different. The boiler had a silver label instead of a gold decal. The MC and MD base plates were thinner gauge steel. Also, the inside lid had (4) tabs for securing the cardboard display insert instead of (6) like the Gilbert version. The Sears sets had a conventional egg shaped motor or a more cylindrical motor.

The #7 Sears set had the same content as the 1934 #7 Gilbert set. However, instead of coming in a red box 22" x 13", the Sears #7 was packed in a blue box measuring 18" x 10". Actually, the Sears #7 was packed in the same box as the regular line #7 ½.

The #8 Sears set matched the contents of the 1933 #7 Gilbert set. Or, it more closely matched the contents of the 1934 #7 ½ Automotive set except the LW tires were omitted. The #8 contained the automotive parts and electromagnet. The large MJ electromagnet was included from 1935 – 1939. The change to a smaller (1 3/8" diameter) MJ in 1940 was in the Sears sets also.



1940 #7 Sears set. The contents were the same as the 1934 #7 Gilbert set. The layout for the inside cardboard insert was the same. However, the set was packed in a smaller box so the bottom insert had a new layout. The set build a number of Engine, small Truck and Crane models. The set included the MJ electromagnet.



1942 #4 Sears set. Note the box top aprons that go to the bottom of the box. This was unique to the Sears cardboard box tops.

In 1939, Sears added a #9 set to the line. The set didn't really fit with the other sets, as it did not come with a P56G motor like the #6 - #8 sets. Instead, it came with an A49 motor and an inventory that matched the Gilbert #9 ½ Automotive set. However, when Gilbert added the Parachute Jump parts in 1940 (discussed later in this text), the Sears #9 set continued unchanged. The Sears and Gilbert #9 and #9 ½ sets are most easily distinguished by looking at the inside lid. The Sears set had a second "kneeling boy" label while the Gilbert set had a Giant Power Plant/ Ferris Wheel label.

RETURN TO PROMINENCE (1938 – 1945)

This period is marked by the introduction of many parts that would continue through the end of type II Erector in 1962. The economy was turning around and Gilbert had to be itching to return to the extravagant days of the Classic Period.

1938: Development of parts hit a high note this year with the introduction of many new ones. These included two motors and parts MX – NR (plus P13B 12 tooth gear, 7/32" face). The motors were the A49 electric engine and the A48 mechanical motor. The other parts included the MX house (with cut out windows and 2 3/4" roof), MY base plate, MZ bearing block, NH/NI/NJ lighting system, NK ratchet and the NL-NR Electric Locomotive model parts. The metal parts cans were dropped in favor of cardboard cans with nickel plated tops. A "PARTS" label was pasted to the lid.



The A49 motor on the far left was included in sets #6 1/2 and larger from 1938 - 1964. The exception was when the A47 shown on the near left was substituted from 1950 - 1953. Both motors went through changes during their runs in case color, gear box side plate color and gear box design.

The A49 motor had a pre-assembled gearbox but no guard over the worm gears. It had a gear shift lever to control neutral, forward and reverse. The #6 1/2 set included an A49 without the gear shift lever; it being available as an accessory. The A48 mechanical motor was wound with a K48 key.

The cardboard sets #1 1/2- 3# 1/2 were unchanged from 1937. Set #4 1/2 included the new A48 motor and came with a new colorful label on the inside. A boy working on a Delivery Truck and a Windmill was pictured.



1938 #4 1/2 set. Came with a new A48 mechanical windup motor and a nice inside label. The set also came with the new MX house. The P58 motor was still available in the Sears line of sets. The featured models were an Airplane Ride, Delivery Truck and a Windmill.

The metal boxed sets included a new staple for the lineup - the #6 1/2 Electric Engine set. It was packed in the same sized box as last year's #5 1/2 (leftover #5 1/2's were sold this year also) and had no ledges to make an MN base plate display. Instead, six boxes and inserts held the parts. The inside label was the #5 1/2 label from last year except a poorly executed patch job was done to identify it as the #6 1/2 Electric Engine set. The label showed models built with discontinued motors but continued on the #6 1/2 set until 1949.

Set #7 ½ built many of the same models as last year's set but came with the A49 motor, MX house and the electrical parts. The box did get a new label showing the Airplane Ride and Walking Beam Engine. Curiously, this label incorrectly called the Airplane Ride a Merry-Go-Round. Gilbert was not a stickler for details as this error continued until 1957 when the label was dropped.

Set #8 ½ had the A49 motor and electrical parts and built the same models as last year. The inside label was revised to picture the new A49 and MX house on the Ferris Wheel model. The Giant Power Plant model showed snap rivets (dropped this year) holding EX girders to the MN base plates. Like the error in the #7 ½ label, the Giant Power Plant picture with snap rivets continued until 1957.

Set #9 ½ also included the new motor and electrical parts and continued in a blue box. The set used the same inside label as the #8 ½, but sometime during the year the text was revised from "The Great New Erector" to the "8 ½ All Electric". A "9 ½" was pasted over the #8 ½ to keep the labels common.

The Hudson set was dropped this year so a new set filled the top spot; the #10 ½ Electric Train set. It continued the practice of displaying parts on the inside lid of the box and came with a train, but no transformer. Extra parts were included to build a variety of train cars.

1939: After all the introductions in 1938, it's not surprising that this year did not have a lot of changes. The A49 motor had a thin strip of steel added across the top of the gearbox as a guard. The MN base plate went from duplex holes (5/16" and 5/32" holes) to only 5/32" holes. The #10 ½ Electric Train set had a few changes to some of its unique parts, but the big news was a transformer for running the Locomotive was included with the set.



1940 #10 1/2 Electric Train set. Included all the parts to build the Parachute Jump and Giant Power Plant (#9 1/2 set parts), an American Flyer Locomotive, transformer and parts to build a number of different train cars.

1940: New parts and a significant model were added to the system this year. Parts NS – NV were added. Specifically, the NS 41 hole strip - formed, NT cone, NU parachute and the NV whistle. The first three parts were used in the construction of the new model - the Parachute Jump. It was modeled after a display at the 1939 World's Fair in New

York City and stood 5 feet tall. The parts were included in only the #9 ½ and #10 ½ sets. The MJ electromagnet was changed this year also. Previously, it was a “can” about 2 ¾” in diameter. Now the part was about 1 3/8” in diameter and painted red. The NV whistle attached to the back of the A49 motor. A P13 pinion gear was attached to the high speed shaft and engaging the whistle’s lever caused a brass strip to contact the gear. The resulting sound was more of a high pitch squeal than a whistle. A locomotive with different trim was included in the #10 ½ set.



1940 #8 1/2 Ferris Wheel set. The motor came with the whistle and the set included the new, smaller MJ electro-magnet. Built the lead model, Cranes, Bridges and Towers. One of the best selling sets for Gilbert.

1941: This was another quiet year in New Haven. There were finish changes to the T boiler and MH wheels. Another locomotive was substituted in the #10 ½ Electric Train set.



1941 #6 1/2 Electric Engine set. Came with the A49 motor (without the gear shift), black MH wheels, and the MX house (with cutout windows in the door). The set had a complex layout with many cardboard boxes and display trays. The set built the Air-plane Ride, small Cranes, Lift Bridge, Delivery Truck and many other models.



1941 #10 1/2 Electric Train set. Gilbert substituted a #556 Royal Blue locomotive in the set this year and next. The rest of the inventory remained the same as the previous year.



1942: Gilbert did a lot of changes in the part finishes this year. The P13/P13B pinion gears were made of powdered metal instead of brass. The nickel plated parts (girders, strips, truck parts) were zinc plated in some sets. Some of the paint colors were changed also. There was no rhyme or reason to what was included in a set, but mixed finishes of a single part were not included in a set. Examples of yellow painted A-E girders, red BN turret plates, blue CS wheel segments, blue or yellow DP 12" angle girders, blue MB 18 1/2" girders and red MC/ME/MF base plates indicate the volatility of the year. The AM special pulley was dropped this year and was replaced by a brass AQ sheave pulley.



1941 #7 1/2 set. Came with the boiler parts. The set was packed in a blue box from 1936 until 1947. The models included many Engines and powered Machine Tools.

1943-1945: The onset of World War II made steel a rationed resource. Steel Erector sets stopped production. However, wood was one resource available. Gilbert produced three different sized sets made of this renewable resource and called them "Erector Junior". The girders were similar to tongue depressors with holes. Wooden pins fastened parts together instead of screws and nuts. Pulleys and angle girders (or columns) were made of wood also. No motors were included with the sets and frankly building with them was a real challenge. The girders would split, the axles didn't fit through the girder holes and the pins didn't hold parts together very well. I'm sure a lot of frustrated kids ended up using their Erector Junior for kindling. The sets were produced from 1943 – 1947.



1945 #5 Erector Junior set. All the pieces were made of wood. Pins were used to hold girders together instead of nuts and screws.

MATERIAL SUBSTITUTIONS (1946-1952)

The war was over and steel was no longer rationed. But it was still hard to come by so sets had many aluminum parts. Aluminum was a poor substitute for steel and quality suffered early in this period. However, by 1950 steel started reappearing in the base plates. This is a period when Erector sales skyrocketed.

1946: After supporting the war effort, the A. C. Gilbert Company rolled back into the toy business. Most of the sets continued unchanged from before the war. The exceptions were the #4 ½, which was repackaged with a lift off lid thus eliminating the colorful inside label. Also, the #7 ½ set came in a thin blue cardboard box. The #10 ½ Electric Train set was dropped. No new parts were added this year and most of them went back to their pre-1942 finishes. The exception is the CS wheel segments that appear to have been blue (instead of red) the entire year. This was the year that the parts cans changed from a nickel plated lid to a white lid. The “PARTS” label was still pasted on.



1946 #9 1/2 set. Came packed in a blue box and built the Giant Power Plant and Parachute Jump. The set was essentially unchanged from 1940 to 1947 except the CS wheel segments were painted blue in 1946 (and a pulley change). The parachutes were carried to the top of a tower via the NT cone. The set also built the Horizontal Engine, Walking Beam Engine, Hammerhead Crane, Trucks, Bridges and many more models.

1947: This was the year of the aluminum Erector set. Almost every part showed up at some time this year made from this soft metal including the nuts and screws. Also, the #7 ½ and #9 ½ sets, which had been housed in blue boxes, were painted red. No new parts were introduced this year, and the NV whistle was dropped.

Part changes were numerous. The MX house no longer had four windows cut out of the doors. The CJ 36 tooth gear went from 4 holes and 4 slots (introduced in 1935) to just four holes. The PARTS text on the parts cans was lithographed directly on the lid eliminating the pasted on label.

The label for the #8 ½ and #9 ½ sets was revised also. Presumably to save printing costs, Gilbert dropped the blue and green ink used on the 1946 label to produce a black, red and yellow label. The top inside banner label had read “FIRST SET WITH THE WHISTLE” in 1940. Now the banner read “BUILDS GIANT FERRIS WHEEL”. The #9 ½ set continued with a small paste over label on the “8 ½ All Electric Set”.

1948: An exciting new set was added to the line this year - the #12 ½ Remote Control Set. The set came in the same large steel box as the Hudson sets of the mid '30's and Electric Train sets of 1938-42. A lid label proclaiming "The Mysterious Walking Giant" was created for this set. A 24" x 14" display tray covered the entire inside of the box. The set was "remote controlled" with the new P55 motor. The "guts" of the P55 were taken from the American Flyer train line and was powered by a transformer. A control box with two momentary switches for forward or reverse brought the motor to life.



The P55 motor was available from 1948 - 1950. It was included only in the #12 1/2 set making it somewhat scarce. It was an AC motor powered by a train transformer. A control box with momentary switches controlled the motor's direction.

The parts added to the system this year were primarily for the #12 ½ set. Parts included the No. 2B transformer, OD control box, OA wiring, P55 motor, NX tread pulleys, OA 18V bulb, NZ wooden handled screwdriver, NY 3 1/8" axle and the NW/OB treads/pins.

Sometime in the year the "Coal Loader" picture on the manual covers was dropped. The new cover was printed in midnight blue and pictured the Giant Power Plant model with a "smiling face" boy. The label for the #7 ½ set was changed also. Gilbert started phasing out blue painted base plates this year so the inside box label was updated. The Airplane Ride and Walking Beam Engine previously shown on the #7 ½ label with blue base plates were now printed gray. Gilbert continued his tradition of not being a stickler for accurate details as the revised label still incorrectly called the Airplane Ride a Merry-Go-Round.

1949: The big news for 1949 was the introduction of probably the best blend of parts and models - the #10 ½ Amusement Park set. The "new" classic model was the Carousel. Six horses were included; four of them moved up/down as the model rotated. The Parachute Jump was also redesigned using gears to power the parachutes instead of steel cones that relied on friction to carry the parachutes to the top of the model. The action was more reliable and the model grew from 5 ft. to 6 ft. tall. The #12 ½ set was modified to include the new Carousel and Parachute Jump parts. The display tray was cut to about half the size as the 1948 version. There are examples of an early 1949 #12 ½ set that had the half sized tray but no Carousel parts.

The #6 ½ set got an inside label again. It showed the flexible coupling and Airplane Ride models. The #8 ½ set got a refresh on the label also. The picture of A. C. Gilbert was updated and the Giant Power Plant was shown being built by the #10 ½ set.



1950 #10 1/2 Amusement Park set. Arguably the best proportioned, most visually appealing Erector set of all time. Included the truck parts and built the Parachute Jump, Carousel and Giant Engines. It is a favorite of collectors.

The new parts this year were the OE flexible coupling, OF carousel horses, OG 21 hole strip formed, and the OH/OI large gears to drive the Parachute Jump (P50 gear now called the OH). The coupling is actually a 6" length of automotive speedometer cable. No new models were developed using the flex coupling. The OF horses were printed on thin plastic.



1949/50 #1 1/2 set. The set made it's return to the lineup after being dropped after World War II.

1950: Steel started to resurface on a number of the base plates this year. Also introduced was the A47 motor (replacing the A49). The motor was housed in a stamped case instead of a die casting. The gear box had an improved "guard" over the gears. The gear positions were still held in place by a small metal "finger" which fell into depressions on the shift lever. Also, the NZ screwdriver changed from a wooden handle to a short red plastic one late in the year.



1950 #12 1/2 Remote Control set. Built all of the models from the #10 1/2 Amusement Park set plus a dozen other large models. The featured one was the Mysterious Walking Giant. The set came with caterpillar treads, a P55 remote control motor and transformer to power the P55. The control box switched the motor between forward and reverse. The set was packed in a red box 24" x 14" x 4" and weighed close to 40 lbs.

1951: Very few aluminum parts showed up in base plates this year. The OH horse was changed from plastic to paper. The "kneeling boy" label moved from the left side of the box to the right side. The #12 1/2 set was dropped from the lineup this year. Also, Gilbert

started to change from nickel plating on girders and strips to cadmium. The cardboard boxed lineup expanded this year as the #7 ½ and #8 ½ were again packed in cardboard. The cardboard was heavy, about 3/8” thick.



1951/52 #8 1/2 set. Came in a heavy cardboard box. Due to a lack of steel, the #7 1/2 set came in a cardboard box also. Most of these sets are found with split sides and faded color on the box. The “kneeling boy” label was moved from the left side to the right side of the boxes this year.

1952: The A47 motor gearbox was modified this year. Instead of a “finger” to hold gear positions, the shift lever engaged notches cut into the guard. Sets #7 ½ and #8 ½ returned to steel boxes this year.



1951 #6 1/2 set. This version of the popular #6 1/2 included the A47 electric engine and built a number of Crane and Bridge models. The featured model was an Airplane Ride. The box cover had the familiar scene with the man and boy building a bridge.

BUSINESS IS BOOMIN' (1953 – 1959)

The Korean War had ended and steel was available in quantities again. Baby Boomers were keeping the factory in New Haven busy! The sets from this era were great sellers and the quality was top notched.

1953: Gears and pulleys had been made with brass hubs attached to steel plates washed in brass. Sintered metal became the process of choice this year. However, the hubs were too small and the set screws easily stripped out. Parts using the sintered metal process were the P7, P7A, Z, BT and CJ. The U boiler top was changed from steel to plastic. The NU parachute struts changed from wood to plastic.



Gilbert offered accessory kits between 1949 - 53. These included the #5 ('49-'52) Illumination kit, #6 ('50-'51) Whistle kit, #7 ('50-'53) Smoke and Choo-Choo kit and the #1E Square Girder kit.

The “smiling face” boy manual covers were changed from midnight blue to a lighter blue.

1954: The A49 motor returned after a 4 year absence. The gear box was the same style as the A47 motor. The easiest way to identify pre-1950 A49 motors from post-1954 motors is to look at the gear box side plates. The post-1954 side plates had flanges at the bottom which provided addition holes for mounting the motor to the model. The pre-1950 motors only had mounting holes on the “feet” of the motor casting.



1949-55 Junior Erector #2 and #10 sets (a #4 set was offered also). These sets replaced the wooden Erector Junior sets and were made for the “small fry”. They were similar to TinkerToys except the “rods” were hollow plastic tubes and the hubs had pins on the periphery for attaching the tubes.



1954/55 #2 1/2 set. The set included a pop up display card that tucked into the back of the box. Sets with this display card are hard to find. Another frequent casualty of Christmas day "mayhem".

1955: A new metal box was used to house the #4 1/2 set this year. The 16" x 8" x 3" box previously used to house the #6 1/2 was now used for this quaint little set. The sintered metal hubs were increased in diameter in response to the stripping problem of the small hubs. A red bulb was added to the electrical parts in sets #7 1/2 - #10 1/2.



1955/56 #3 1/2 set. The "Junior Engineer's set" returned to the line up in 1955 after being dropped in 1943. The pop up display touted the set's steel base plates and girders. It was a two layer set.



1955 #4 1/2 set. Came packed again in a metal box. Included the A48 mechanical motor. Built a number of small motorized models. The box was 16" x 8" x 3".

1956: The #6 1/2 set returned to a metal box this year. The box was 16" x 10" x 3". The #12 1/2 set returned this year. It was quite different from the 1948-50 version. The P55 motor was not included with the new set. However, a new part - the clamshell bucket was added. The inside label was changed from the "Walking Giant" to "Walking Robot". The box partitions were different also. The new set did not use an MN base plate constructed tray to display parts. Instead, there was an extra row of compartments for

storing parts. The AJ paper flag had previously been precut and stapled for mounting on an axle. Now it was up to the Erector engineer to trim and paste or staple the flag together. The NZ screwdriver was changed from a short red handle to a long yellow handle.



1956 #12 1/2 set. Note the absence of the MN display tray and bottom insert used in the 1948-50 version. The clamshell bucket was a nice addition. The 1957 version substituted a 3 volt DC3 motor for the A48 mechanical motor.



1956 #6 1/2 set. The #6 1/2 returned to a metal box this year. The contents were reduced in 1951 (C girders went from 14 to 8). Yet the Unloading Crane was still shown as a featured model in the back of the manual.

1957: This marks the decline of Erector sets in many collectors' minds. But the date of the decline is up for debate. One reason for 1957 being the year is the end of the trademark red metal boxes with the "kneeling boy" label on mid-range sets. However, the change to lithographed boxes with models displayed on the lids may be considered an enhancement depending on your perspective. Regardless, 1957 mid-range sets started out with the typical set number printed on the lid with a featured model of the set. The sets involved were the #5 1/2, #6 1/2, #7 1/2 and #8 1/2. The #5 1/2 was a new number for this year but was actually last year's #4 1/2 with a 3V DC3 motor substituted for the A48 mechanical motor. The #12 1/2 set had the same motor refresh. The featured model on the #5 1/2 was the Airplane Ride. The #6 1/2 set also featured a different Airplane Ride so to avoid confusion; Gilbert used a Crane model instead. The #7 1/2 pictured a Walking Beam Engine and the #8 1/2 used the Ferris Wheel.

The following table is a summary of the year, set# (5-digit), set# (old designation) and name of the sets. As mentioned before, both the new and old style numbering system shows up on 1957 sets. After mid-1957, all sets used the 5-digit new numbering system.

| | 1957 | 1958 | 1959 | 1960/61 | 1962 |
|-------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| #1 ½ | #10010 | #10011 | #10011 | 10011 | 10016 |
| | Builder's | Beginner's | Beginner's | Beginner's | Beginner's |
| #2 ½ | 10020 | 10021 | 10021 | 10021 | 10161 |
| | Apprentice | Young Builder's | Young Builder's | Young Builder's | Model Makers |
| #3 ½ | 10030 | 10031 | 10032 | 10032 | 10171 |
| | Professional | Engineer's | Engineer's | Engineer's | Engineer's |
| #5 ½ | 10041 | 10041 | 10042 | 10042 | 10181 |
| | Motorized | Power Model | Automatic Radar Scope | Automatic Radar Scanner | Action Helicopter |
| #6 ½ | 10051 | 10052 | 10053 | 10053 | 10201 |
| | Electric Engine | Rocket Launcher | Rocket Launcher | Rocket Launcher | Rocket Launcher |
| #7 ½ | 10061 | 10062 | 10063 | 10063 | 10211 |
| | Engineer's | Steam Engine | Action Conveyor | Automatic Conveyor | Cape Canaveral |
| #8 ½ | 10071 | 10072 | 10073 | 10074 | 10221 |
| | All-Electric | Musical Ferris Wheel | Musical Ferris Wheel | Ferris Wheel | Lunar Drilling Rig |
| #10 ½ | 10081 | 10082 | 10083 | 10084 | 10231 |
| | Amusement Park | Amusement Park | Amusement Park | Amusement Park | Astronaut |
| #12 ½ | 10091 | 10092 | 10093 | 10094 | 10094 |
| | Master Builder | Master Builder | Master Builder | Master Builder | Master Builder |

There was a #10046 set offered in 1957 which was a #6 ½ set in a cardboard box. It had the same content as the #10051 except for the packaging difference. There were a pair of “in between” sets offered in 1958 and 1960 that are not listed in the table above. Instead, the #10026 (1958) and #10037 (1960) are discussed in the appropriate year section.



The A48 mechanical motor shown on the far left had a 1938 introduction in set #4 1/2. It was available until 1957 when the 3 volt DC3 motor was introduced. The #4 1/2 set became the #5 1/2 set with the advent of the DC3. Both motors were also included in the #12 1/2 sets.

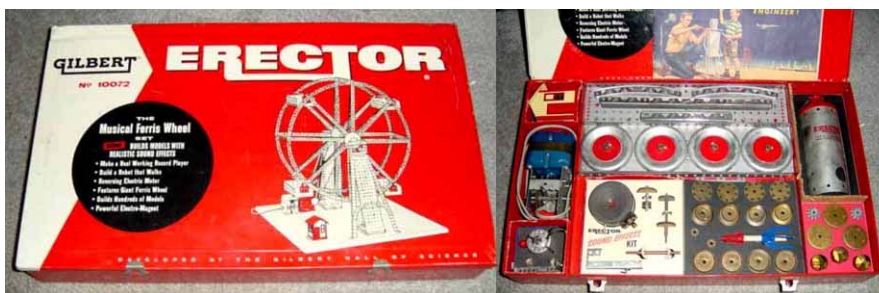


In 1957, the mid-sized metal boxes all got new lithographs on the inside and outside. The sets started out the year with the typical #5 1/2, #6 1/2, #7 1/2 and #8 1/2 designations. But in mid-1957 they changed to the 5-digit #10041, #10051, #10061 and #10071.

1958: This year introduced one of the cleverest mechanisms Erector had developed to date. The parts made up a working record player and were called the Sound Effects kit. The parts were included in the #8 1/2, #10 1/2 and #12 1/2 sets. A small record was included with amusement park sounds on one side and steam engine sounds on the other. The mechanism works fairly well in my experience, but I'm sure a number of Erector engineers tired of hearing the same 25 second sound byte over and over and permanently disassembled the parts! The rocket was also introduced this year. The first variation was a red, white and blue assembly and was taken from the American Flyer train line. Three separate pieces were glued together to form the rocket. Later in the year, new molds were used and the rocket was cast in one piece. The color was yellow with a red painted nose cone.



Sound effect parts included in sets #8 1/2 - #12 1/2 from 1958 to 1959. The record had amusement park music or a carnival barker voice on one side, boiler sounds on the other.



1958 #10072 Musical Ferris Wheel set. Contained the sound effects kit to build a working record player.

Cardboard tubes made their debut this year in the two smallest sets. The lithograph on the tubes was a scene of two boys playing with a Robot. The same scene was used on the manual cover with “Be an Erector Engineer” printed on the upper left. “ERECTOR” was printed in red and the set name and number were printed on a red banner.

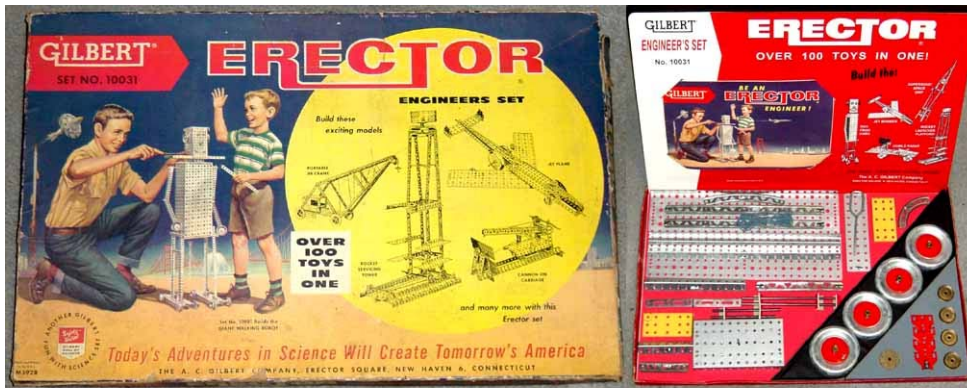


Part number P14A686 rockets available from 1958 - 1962. The first version was three pieces and is shown to the far left. In the middle of 1958, it was changed to a one piece yellow and red painted version. In 1959, the same mold was used but in white and red. Lastly, in 1962 a ring was added above the fins.

The cardboard boxed sets had elaborate packing and make for excellent displays. The #10026 Junior Engineer and #10031 Engineer's set are favorites of collectors today. However, the labor involved to organize a \$5 and \$8 set had to be a questionable business decision. Especially when little “Johnny” threw the packing away on Christmas morning! The #10026 set varied in content from the #10021 Young Builder's set only in packaging (box vs. tube) and the wheels included. However, the #10026 set cost \$5 vs. \$3 for the equivalent tube set. Tube packaging was definitely the wave of the cost cutting future.



1958 #10026 Junior Engineer's Set. This set (along with the #10031) were the last metal Erector sets to be packed in a cardboard box ending a 45 year tradition. The attractive display arrangement makes this set and the #10031 favorites of collectors.



1958 #10031 set. Note the new box top lithograph and complex parts arrangement for a \$7.98 #3 1/2 sized set.

The mid-range metal boxed sets continued with lithographs of the lead models on the lid, both inside and out. The set numbers were “bumped up” one to reflect the new rocket and sound system parts. The #10 1/2 set (now #10082) and #12 1/2 set (now #10092) inside labels were revised to show the new set numbers.



1958 #10052 Rocket Launcher set. It was a #6 1/2 set set with the rocket added. The rocket propellant was a rubber band. The rocket's fins were easily broken making intact ones a rare find.

1959: More new parts were added this year - the TA conveyor belt and the TB/TC ball bearing system. The TA was added to the #7 1/2 and larger sets. The TB/TC were added just to the #10083 and #10093. The conveyor belt was a strip of fabric that wrapped around drums made from Z flanged pulleys and W stacks. The ball bearing system fit between two BN turret plates and helped large models with rotating assemblies move much easier.



1959 saw the introduction of a new type of set - the Space Age Erector set. Only the #18000 was available the first year. The set built models of missiles, rockets and satellites. All of the parts were plastic.



1959 #10053 Rocket Launcher set. The box top showed a boy playing with the Rocket Launcher model and also included a 50th anniversary sticker. The set's inventory was the same as the 1958 set but the Rocket Launcher model design was modified. Early 1959 sets (like this one) had the instruction manual secured by tucking the corners into slots cut into a cardboard insert. Later sets used T-clips to hold the manual to the box top.

There were three cardboard tube sets this year. All three used the same scene - two boys playing with the Robot. The cost saving realized from "dump in" packing in 1958 was expanded this year. In fact, cardboard box sets, which had been a "tradition" since 1913, were dropped altogether. The 1959 tubes had a different printing scheme from 1958. "ERECTOR" was now printed white (red in 1958) and the set name and number were printed white in a red circle (red banner in 1958).

The same trend was used on the mid-range metal boxed sets. Display trays were used on the top layer, but the bottom layer was not organized. Parts were placed in plastic bags and laid on top of a lift out insert. Though this method of packing was not as visually appealing, it's important to put things in perspective to understand the reason for the change. The Gilbert Company was in business to make money, bottom line. Erector sets were marketed primarily to young boys. The labor savings from not organizing the bottom layers on the high volume sets had to be significant.

Gilbert did find the money to print up 50th anniversary labels that were placed on the #10053 Rocket Launcher set. Actually, it was the 46th anniversary of Erector but the 50th anniversary of the original Mysto Manufacturing Company started by A. C. in 1909.



1959 #10083 Musical Amusement Park set. Note the new outside label used this year only on the #10083 and #10093 sets. This is the most desirable #10 1/2 set to own. It contained the sound effects kit, the ball bearing system and the conveyor belt. It had the biggest inventory of the Amusement Park sets.

The two largest sets (#10083 and #10093) continued in large red metal boxes. The inside labels were revised to show the new set numbers. However, the "kneeling boy" label used since 1933 was dropped in favor of a new label that resembled the tube set lithograph. It was a sad day for collectors when the kneeling boy label disappeared.

However, the Gilbert Company was fighting for its financial life. The space race was on with the Russians. The three “R’s” were now Rockets, Robots, and Radar. A refresh of the models and appearance of the sets was long overdue. Would a boy rather build a Walking Robot or a stationary Bridge?



1959 #10093 Musical Master Builder set. Contained parts to build a working record player, rocket, clamshell bucket, treads, ball bearing system and conveyor belt. The largest set produced during the post Classic period era. The set weighed 40 lbs. and was housed in a box 24" x 14" x 4". Probably the most desirable set in the 1951 - 1962 time frame.

A pair of new manual covers appeared this year. Actually one was the same scene as last year's but the text was changed to "Erector Instructions". The other manual pictured two boys playing with the Rocket Launcher model. The mid-range metal boxed sets started out the year with a cardboard insert fitted to the inside of the lid. There were slots cut into the corners where the manual was tucked in place. Later in the year, the cardboard insert was dropped and the advertising text was printed directly on the inside lid. The manual had two holes punched at the top and was secured to the lid with T-clips.

DECLINE (1960-1962)

1960: Sadly, the large red boxes used for the #10 ½ (#10083) and #12 ½ (#10093) were dropped. In another cost cutting move, two smaller boxes were fastened together to form a large box. In the case of the #10 ½ (now the #10084), two Rocket Launcher set boxes were used. Two Action Conveyor (#7 ½) set boxes were used for the #12 ½ (#10094). The lids were lithographed with two boys playing with the Parachute Jump (#10084) and a boy playing with the Walking Robot (#10094).



1960 was the end of an era - red metal boxes were dropped in favor the double lid boxes. Shown here from left to right are: 1960/61 #10084 Amusement Park Set, 1962 #10231 Astronaut Set and the 1960/62 #10094 Master Builder's Set.

Styrofoam packing made its debut in the Rocket Launcher (#10053), Amusement Park (#10084) and Master Builder (#10094) sets. The move was done as a cost cutting measure to quicken the packing time of the sets. Parts were dropped into the appropriate “pocket” for display. It was a good compromise: the visual appeal of the organized parts was maintained while the time required to organize them was reduced.



1960/61 #10053 Rocket Launcher set. Note the change in packaging to styrofoam inserts. Curiously, only the #10053, #10084 (#10 1/2 set) and the #10094 (#12 1/2 set) got the foam inserts.

One note on the #10053 set. If you are shopping for one of these sets note that the set number did not change from 1959 through 1961. However, the 1959 set differs from the latter sets. There are a couple of ways to identify the vintage of the set. One is to look for the anniversary label (only on 1959 sets). Another is to look at the inside of the box. If there is a metal strap and ledge to support an MN base plate display tray, it is a 1959 set. If the inside of the box is totally open, it is a 1960 (red painted inside bottom) or 1961 (no paint on the inside bottom) set. That is an important point as the boxes for these sets are not interchangeable.

Another cost savings move was the elimination of the Sound System parts. The parts assembled into a clever mechanism, but the parts were “fluff” and didn’t impact the building of models. Another cost cutting move involved the parts cans. The lithographed “PARTS” lid was changed to an embossed “ERECTOR PARTS” lid thus eliminating one manufacturing process. The NZ screwdriver was revised to a short yellow handle this year.

The last new part was developed this year. It was a remote control battery case with two momentary switches to run the DC3 motor. Curiously, it was included in only one set, the newly introduced #10037 Remote Control tube set, which was only offered this year.



1960 #10037 Remote Control Set. Oddly, the set was offered for only one year. It included the part# P15B528 remote control which housed 2 batteries and was wired to the DC3 motor. Models were illustrated on a nearly 2 ft. by 2 ft. instruction sheet.

Gilbert started selling special sets through Sears and Montgomery Ward. They were the mid-sized sets from the regular Erector line. The Sears sets were packaged in blue and orange lithographed boxes and were called the “Science – Career Series”. The Wards sets were packed in boxes lithographed to look like an American Flag with the designation “American Science Series”. Even though type II Erector production stopped after 1962, there apparently were enough leftover parts and demand for the sets to be sold through 1964.



1960/64 Sears Science Career mid-sized sets were lithographed in blue and orange with a silhouette of the lead model on the cover. The #5 1/2, #6 1/2 and #7 1/2 sized sets were offered.



1960-62 American Science Series sets all came with the same “flag” pattern on the box. The #5 1/2, #6 1/2, and #7 1/2 sized sets were offered. The American Science Series was sold through Wards. It differed from the regular line by including the manual loose in the box instead of T-clipping it to the box lid.

1961: The end was near for the Gilbert Company. A. C. Gilbert died on January 18, 1961. The company was run by his son, A. C. Jr., but the business was taken over by the Jack Wrather Company. The Wrather company was producing “Lassie” and the “Lone Ranger” TV shows at the time. Only a few parts changes were done this year. The boiler was adorned with a painted “ERECTOR” instead of a label. The inside of the Styrofoam insert boxes were oxidized to a goldish tone instead of being painted red.



1960 - 62 #10094 (#12 1/2 sized) Master Builder set. The box was made from two #7 1/2 sized boxes attached front to front. A styrofoam insert held many parts on the left side with cardboard boxes below. The balance of the parts were packed loosely on the right side in boxes wherever they would fit. The box top lithograph was a boy playing with a Walking Robot model. Oddly, the robot pictured is the one built with the #10084 (#10231 in 1962) #10 1/2 sized set and not the one built with the #10094 set.

1962: This was the last year of type II Erector even though some “leftovers” were sold for another two years. No new parts were added, but after using up existing stock, the P79 car trucks and MV flat car trucks changed from red to yellow paint. The ME/MF flat plates changed from gray paint to a galvanized look. The set contents did not change, but the packaging did on every set.

The cardboard tubes were dropped in favor of milk cartons. The contents did not change and the packaging was cheaper. The sets were available through 1964.



The phasing out of cardboard boxed sets started in 1958 with the addition of the #10011 and #10021 tube sets. No T-clips were required - packing the sets was a matter of dumping the parts in the tube. In 1962, the tubes were dropped in favor of even less expensive packaging. The parts were placed in thin cardboard boxes that resembled milk cartons. The sets shown here from left to right are: 1959 #10011, 1958 #10021, 1959 #10021, 1959 #10032, 1960/61 #10021, 1960/61 #10032, 1962/64 #10171, 1962/64 #10161.

The metal boxed sets got new “Space Age” names (except for the #10094 Master Builder set which was the same as the 1960/61 version). The sets featured a new model (redesigned Rocket Launcher in the case of that set) and pictured the new model(s) on the lid. The set numbers were changed also. The models included the “Action Helicopter”, “Rocket Gantry”, “Cherry Picker”, “Lunar Drilling Rig”, “70 Ton Crane”, “Astronaut Trainer”, and “Space Needle”.



1962 #10211 Cape Canaveral Set. A #7 1/2 set with the rocket and conveyor belt added. New “Space Age” lithograph on the lid for this year only.

TYPE III ERECTOR (1963 – 88)

When A. C. Gilbert died January 18, 1961 the family was required to sell stock at low prices to pay inheritance taxes. This left the company vulnerable for a take over. The Jack Wrather Corporation did just that in 1961.

The Wrather Corp. hired the firm “Product Design and Development Corp.” to totally revamp the Erector system. In 1963, the new system was unveiled and “type III” Erector was born. Type III offered some improvements on the older systems. For example, the steel used for base plates was electromagnetic prepainted and stamped. Gone were the runs typical of Gilbert’s process of painting parts by dipping. Axles had a flat on them for a much better grip with pulley and gear set screws. Ladder chain reappeared after a nearly 40 year absence. Chain was much more effective in transferring power than string.

On the negative side, the 3.0 – 4.8 volt Powermatic motor was a weak replacement for the A49 motor. The plastic wheels didn’t stay on the axles like the old MH wheels with a set screw. The square girder patented by Gilbert and prominently featured in advertising for decades was no longer featured. In fact, only two models use a type III square girder - a Trip Hammer recycled from the #4 ½ set circa 1938 and a Crane model.

Much type II stock was apparently left over when type III was introduced. A number of “transition” sets were available from Sears, Montgomery Wards and Penney’s. The sets were the milk carton #10161 and #10171 sets and the #10181 Action Helicopter. Also produced were #6 ½ sets. The transition sets were sold in 1963 and 1964.

1963: Type III debuted with 4 different sets: #10129 Master Power Set, #10128 Planetary Probe Set, #10127 Lunar Vehicles Set and the uncatalogued #10120 Lunar Crane Set (a Lunar Vehicle set including the hoist and a few extra girders to build the lead model). The instructions were on loose pieces of paper. Space Vehicles and Cranes were the featured models. A few type II carryover designs continued; the Hammerhead Crane, Floating Crane, Bulldozer, Truck, Lift Bridge, etc. Gone were the boiler and Carousel parts and with them the famous Giant Power Plant, Walking Beam Engines, Ferris Wheel, Carousel and Parachute Jump.



1963/64 #10127 Lunar Vehicles set including both sides of the cardboard shipping sleeve. The model instructions (like all 1963 sets) came on loose pages. The small parts were held in clear plastic tubes.

The three steel-boxed sets had a lid of clear plastic that slid in place. The sets make for a nice display when standing up vertically. However, once the parts were removed from the display cardboard the box would not longer hold the parts! To make matters worse, the two largest sets were two boxes hinged together, but the hinge was attached on the wrong side of the boxes. The intent was to fold the box open to display all of the parts, but when closed the open sides were to the outside and the parts fell out.



Very few type II parts carried over into the new sets. Parts F-I strips, CH angles, P7 pulleys and BT pierced discs were the exceptions. The #10129 Master Power set included many unique parts including a transformer, flood light and programmer. The set also included a few type II parts including the P13B, P48, CJ gears and the MJ electromagnet.

The #95 hoist and #903 programmer were a pair of parts that deserve more discussion. The #95 two drum hoist was a close approximation of the type II engine setup #10. That setup used a pair of P13B gears and the NK ratchets to give the A49 motor two driven axles with "brakes" applied when power wasn't applied to the axle. The #95 hoist accomplished the same thing in a 3" x 3" package. It was included in sets #10120, #10128 and #10129. The hoist was connected to the #69 powermatic motor with an 878 coupling. A shift lever on the hoist transferred power between the two drums. Drum 'B' also had a power take off shaft outside of the hoist that was used to drive models.

The #903 programmer was included only in the #10129 set. It was connected to the #95 hoist with a linkage and was also driven by the #69 powermatic motor. The programmer had a cam that moved a lever connected to the hoist's shift lever. This made for some interesting action as the hoist was automatically shifted as the motor ran.

The sets were sold by Sears, Wards and Penney's in 1963, but sales were so bad and returns so great that all three retailers dropped them in 1964. Gilbert's marketing

mistakenly only introduced the new system in large sets; equivalent #7 ½ - #12 ½ sized sets. Perhaps parents were a little hesitant to pay premium dollars for an elaborate set that might not get played with.



1963/64 #10128 Planetary Probe set. The two box set was hinged in the middle and folded so all the parts were still displayed. This rendered the box useless as it wouldn't hold the parts after they were removed from the display inserts. Contained some scarce parts including the treads/pulleys, 10 1/2" girders and the clear domes. Contents were somewhere between a #8 1/2 and #10 1/2.

1964: The marketing blunder of 1963 was corrected in 1964 when smaller sized sets were produced, essentially #2 ½ - #6 ½ sets sold at a reasonable price. The manuals had a picture of the Lunar Vehicle on the cover. Also introduced was the exclusive to Sears 5 in 1 Constructor sets. There were three sets that produced small models in three themes: Military, Road Construction and Cars/Trucks. Oddly, the sets used base plates with hole spacing of 5/8" between holes instead of the typical ½" spacing. A. C. Gilbert, Jr. had been kept on as the company's chairman when the Wrather Corp. took over in 1962. However, the Gilbert family tie to the Erector business unfortunately ended in June 1964 when A. C. Jr. died at 45 of a brain tumor.



1964 #10253 and #10260 sets. They contained the DC3 and #69 Powermatic motors respectively. These were new sets in 1964 and reintroduced smaller motorized (non-motor sets available too) into the lineup.

The year 1964 was not a banner one for sales either. The large steel boxed #10127 - #10129 sets were dropped at the end of the year. Gone with those sets were some unique parts like the programmer, ball hook and the tapered girders.

1965: The four cardboard sets from 1964 changed to sets "#1 - #4" in 1965. The top set included the hoist, battery case and Powermatic motor. The manuals were printed in red and black on the covers (Lunar Surface probe was pictured) and contained many models that would stay with the system for the next fifteen years. The Constructor sets carried over and a new Powermatic powered Road Building set was added (other three sets continued to make "push" models).



1965/66 #10354 Set #4. This was the only set to include the part# 95 two drum hoist. A lucite box held the small parts. The display box was intended to be discarded and the parts stored in the middle box with the parts identification on the lid. This was the first year that all sets were in cardboard boxes.

1966: Sales were still not up to a level to keep the company solvent. In 1966, unpaid bills to suppliers lead to massive substitutions of materials to produce parts. Yellow plastic used to mold NZ screwdrivers ran out so the blue plastic used to mold Powermatic motor cases was substituted. When blue plastic ran out, silver plastic from the Constructor sets was used. ME plates and #30/#31 boiler/cone parts were not the typical blue/yellow. Instead, aluminum blue/red and tan prepainted steel were used. Lastly, square stock for N21 nuts ran out so hex stock was used.

1967: The Gilbert Company went out of business in 1966/67. Gabriel Industries bought the assets in 1967. Actually, the price was a steal, \$0.00! Payment was a promised royalty based on future sales. The Gilbert Company became the Gilbert Division of Gabriel Industries. Operations were moved to Gabriel headquarters in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Sets in 1967 were leftovers from the Erector Square production in Connecticut; parts to fill inventories were probably produced in Lancaster. The box covers were changed to the new company name and set numbers changed from “1 – 4” to “10 – 40”. The new management dropped the Constructor 5 in 1 sets.



1967 Set 30; a repacked 1965/66 #10353 Set #3. This set is an equivalent #6 1/2 set from the type II era. One nice feature of this vintage of type III sets is that the models pictured in the manual were all photographed and pictured on the box top also.

1968: In 1968, Gabriel produced the same sets but packaged them in new display cartons. The Gilbert Division was still mentioned in the manuals continuing the link to the original company. The numbers changed to #8101 - #8104. The sets ranged from size #2 1/2 - #7 1/2. The new packaging didn't bring any new models however. The manual cover was changed to blue and black ink and a helicopter was pictured.



1968 - 70 Senior Engineer #8104 set. Trivial fact: this is the author's set from Christmas either 1968 or 1969. The set continued to build all of the models introduced by the Gilbert company in Set #4 in 1965.

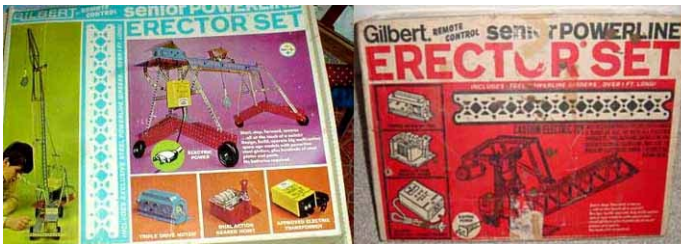
1969-1970: By 1969, sales and profits were on the rebound and a new large set was introduced - the #8105 Master Engineer set. This set was beefed up with common parts. This was a different practice from what was typical in the type II sets. In the type II era, the large sets had parts unique to them. Large models were reintroduced in this two motor set: Lunar Explorer Module, Hammerhead Crane, Texas Tower, etc. The set also came with a pair of P48 mitre gears and a SPDT switch for transferring power between two motors.



1969/70 Master Engineer #8105 set. Difficult to find in good condition as the parts were shrink wrapped to a piece of cardboard. The printed box was meant to be thrown away after peeling the parts from the display cardboard. A separate box was included for storing the parts. This set came with two #69 powermatic motors and a SPDT switch to send power to either motor.

The year 1969 also introduced a proliferation of sets. Gilbert had historically sold “cut rate” sets through the major retailers. The Sears sets of the 1940’s were smaller sets with old parts from the standard Gilbert line. Gabriel Industries had a different approach and knew that marketing and distribution were everything. Gabriel catered to Sears by producing exclusive sets for just that retailer.

Sears sets from 1969-1974 were marketed under the “Powerline” name and contained an old part, the EX 12” wide channel girder. The sets are called “49’ers” because they were all catalogued as #49-xxxxx.



1969/70 and 1974 Senior Powerline boxes. These sets built all of the retail line models plus a number of models featuring the EX 12” big channel girder. The powermatic motor was powered by a 4.8V transformer to handle larger models.

The Sears sets did not have “Sears” on the boxes. They came in large white cardboard boxes with a lithographed photo of a boy playing with a feature model in the 1969-1971 versions (Powerline and Senior Powerline). The regular Powerline set did not contain the boiler, cone or boiler cap parts but built a number of nice models. The Cherry Picker (first built by the 1962 #10211 Cape Canaveral type II set) was redesigned with type III parts as a featured model. The Senior Powerline was upgraded with a transformer and included all of the regular line parts including the blue/black Helicopter manual. In addition, a manual showing models built with the wide channel girders was included.

1971-1975: One of the biggest improvements in 1971 was the change from fragile cardboard boxes to blow molded red storage boxes for the mid-ranged sets (Sears sets were still in cardboard). The sets were renamed Mark 10 – Mark 60 (equivalent sizes #2 ½ - #8 ½). The Mark 60 was packaged in a blue steel toolbox. Someone else made the toolbox (storage tray for sockets was still in the top tray) and incidentally it was the last set sold in a standard steel box (accessory steel boxes were sold by Sears in the late 70's). All of the instructions carried over and no new models were developed. The Mark 60 set had the same inventory as the Sears Senior Powerline set.



1971/75 Mark 50 set. Gabriel/Gilbert dropped the cardboard boxes (except for the Sears sets) and went to blow molded red boxes on the mid-line sets. The contents of this set are essentially the same as the 1965 #4 set. No new models were developed for the regular line sets for over ten years.

In 1972-74, the Sears Powerline sets were packed in smaller boxes printed in red/black. The smaller boxes were probably used to reduce shipping and printing costs as the typical set weight dropped by 30%. In 1972 – 74, the lineup included the Powerline, Senior Powerline and the two motored Master Powerline sets. Sets produced were of the #7 ½ - #10 ½ sizes. New models were developed for the Master Powerline sets including the Large T-crane, Texas Tower (redesigned 1969/70 #8105 Master Engineer model) and Bascule Bridge. The 1972 Master set included two #69 Powermatic motors. In 1973, a DC3 was substituted for one of the #69's. In 1974, the Master set was upgraded with about 10% more parts and built a new model, the 8 Wheel Outrigger Derrick.



1971/75 Mark 60 set is the last set offered standard in a steel box. The contents were the same as the Sears Senior Powerline. Penney's also offered a set in the same box which had the same inventory as the Master Powerline set.

The Gilbert Division became Gilbert Industries of Gabriel Industries in 1971. Presumably the change was made so both companies could use the same "GI" logo. Operations had outgrown the Lancaster facility so offices and production were moved to Hagerstown, Maryland.



1974 and 1975/76 Sears steel accessory boxes ('74 on the left, '75/76 on the right). The boxes came with cardboard dividers for organizing parts. Since they were sold as accessories, it's difficult to determine what set is there. The best bet is examining the manual. These accessory boxes are the last steel boxes used for storing sets.

1976-1980: Gabriel Industries started eliminating the Gilbert Industries name from sets in 1975 and by 1976 the name "Gilbert" was Erector history. The Mark sets of 1971 – 1975 were gone along with the familiar red storage box. Sets were packed in stylish blow molded cases embossed with "Gabriel Erector" in blue, yellow and red. The set sizes were old sized #2 ½ - #8 ½. The ladder chain and sprockets, an excellent method of transferring power, were dropped. Presumably the chain length was too difficult for young children to adjust. Also, 1976 marked the return of a 110V motor in the Erector system. The blue plastic motor had an on/off switch either on the cord or on the motor case depending on the vintage. The motor had one output shaft and was clumsily reversed by stalling the motor.



Gabriel produced sets in blow molded blue, red and yellow boxes from 1976 - 1980. To confuse matters, Sears started selling the red box as an accessory in 1977 making it difficult to identify sets.

Gabriel sales must have started tailing off as the company was taken over by Columbia Broadcasting Corporation in 1978. Sets in 1979 were sold as "Gabriel CBS Toys". It is believed that the sets were losing popularity as some of the key components were dropped (hoist, battery case, sprockets) and no new models were introduced. The familiar steel blue/yellow plates were replaced with cheaper blue plastic. Also, the familiar 2 ½" black wheels were replaced by yellow hubs with black removable tires (recycled 1964 5 in 1 Constructor parts).



Here are a couple examples of 1976- 1981 Gabriel sets sold by Sears and other outlets. The cherry picker model on the left was redesigned as the part# 95 hoist was dropped. The #14/15/30/31 plates were changed from steel to plastic.

Prices started escalating even as the parts quality dropped. In 1979, a Sears #8 ½ sized set sold for \$54.99. All Sears sets came in cardboard boxes and had blue/red printing. They were labeled “Gabriel Motorized Erector”. Sets for Wards and Penney’s still came in the blue, red and yellow plastic boxes.

1981-1986: In 1981, Sears dropped cardboard sets in favor of plastic boxes. The sets were sized from #5 ½ - #8 ½ and contained the EX 12” wide channel girder, the last year of its production. In fact, type III Erector essentially ceased production this year. The DC3 motor (introduced in 1957) and the #69 Powermatic motor (introduced in 1963) were dropped. Gone also were the #95 hoist, transformer, #125 battery case and the fine array of mid-sized models built with the system.

Type III War Toys (termed by the author) were introduced in 1981. These were sets #200, #375, #500 and #725. Also produced were specialized sets - Maxx Steele Robot, Pod Foot Lunar Lander, etc. These sets included some of the familiar girders of the past. Base plates and car trucks came in flat black. A number of plastic parts were introduced and futuristic Space models were the typical building project.



1981 - 86 Gabriel/View-Master Ideal sets (two shown) took a clue from Gilbert type I sets regarding the manuals. All sets (#200, #375, #500 and #725) came with the same manual.

By 1982 the Gabriel Division name disappeared and the name on the boxes was CBS Toys with the Ideal logo. In 1984, CBS sold the Ideal Company and Erector to GAF View-Master. Copyrights were held under the name “Ideal Inc., Portland, OR, a subsidiary of View-Master Ideal Group Inc.”

1987-1988: In 1987, View-Master Ideal Toys updated the #200, #375, #500 and #725 sets by changing the set names and added purple and yellow rockets. The largest set (#725) was changed into a war game featuring an electronic battle between a tank and a missile launcher.

“Type III War Toys” Erector died out in 1988 actually on a high note. The four motor Laser-Plex Combat Station was a large set. The electronically equipped turrets featured flashing LED’s, explosions and cannon fire. The EY 6” wide channel girder made its final appearance in this set after being introduced 60 years before in 1928.



1987/88 Laserplex Combat Station. The last offering to include any parts originally produced by the Gilbert company. This set built a two player “shoot ‘em up” game.

GILBERT ERECTOR SETS YEAR TO YEAR

1913

- No. 0 – Cardboard box 11" x 7" x ¾", built 13 models
- No. 1 – Cardboard box 13" x 9" x 1", built 27 models
- No. 2 – Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 1", built 39 models
- No. 3 – Cardboard box 19" x 11" x 1", built 55 models
- No. 4 – Cardboard box 20" x 12" x 1", built 65 models
- No. 5 – Cardboard box 20" x 12" x 1", built 76 models
- No. 6 – Cardboard box 20" x 12" x 2", built 88 models
- No. 7 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 4", built 92 models
- No. 8 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 5 ½", built 101 models

1914

- No. 0 – Cardboard box 11" x 7" x ¾", built 69 models/98 parts
- No. 1 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 88 models/140 parts
- No. 2 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 120 models/205 parts
- No. 3 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 2", built 176 models/345 parts
- No. 4 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 2 1/2", built 207 models/571 parts
- No. 5 – Cardboard box 14" x 9" x 2 1/2", built 229 models/679 parts
- No. 6 – Wooden box 15" x 10" x 3", built 264 models/1000 parts
- No. 7 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 3 1/2", built 278 models/1291 parts
- No. 8 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 5", built 304 models/1800 parts

1915

- No. 1 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 88 models/140 parts
- No. 1M – Cardboard box – same as No. 1 but included a motor, 2 ½" deep box.
- No. 2 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 120 models/205 parts
- No. 2M – Cardboard box – same as No. 2 but included a motor, 2 ½" deep box.
- No. 3 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 2", built 176 models/345 parts
- No. 3M – Cardboard box – same as No. 3 but included a motor, 2 ½" deep box.
- No. 4 – Wooden box 13" x 8" x 3", built 207 models/571 parts
- No. 5 – Wooden box 13" x 9" x 3", built 229 models/679 parts
- No. 6 – Wooden box 15" x 10" x 3", built 264 models/1000 parts
- No. 7 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 3 1/2", built 278 models/1291 parts
- No. 8 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 5", built 304 models/1800 parts

1916-19

- No. 1 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 111 models
- No. 1M – Cardboard box – same as No. 1 but included a motor, 2 ½" deep box.
- No. 2 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 152 models
- No. 2M – Cardboard box – same as No. 2 but included a motor, 2 ½" deep box.
- No. 3 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 2", built 197 models
- No. 3M – Cardboard box – same as No. 3 but included a motor, 2 ½" deep box.
- No. 4 – Cardboard box 13" x 8" x 3", built 278 models

- No. 4 – Wooden box 13" x 8" x 3", built 278 models
- No. 5 – Wooden box 13" x 9" x 3", built 317 models
- No. 6 – Wooden box 15" x 10" x 3", built 382 models
- No. 7 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 3 1/2", built 410 models
- No. 8 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 5", built 454 models

1920

- No. 1 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 111 models
- No. 2 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 152 models
- No. 3 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 2", built 197 models
- No. 4 – Wooden box 13" x 9" x 3", built 278 models
- No. 6 – Wooden box 13" x 9" x 3", built 278 models
- No. 7 – Wooden box 19" x 11" x 3 1/2", built 317 models
- No. 8 – Wooden box 19" x 11" x 3 1/2", built 382 models
- No. 10 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 3 1/2", built 410 models

1921

- No. 1 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 111 models
- No. 2 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 152 models
- No. 3 – Cardboard box 19" x 10" x 1", built 197 models
- No. 4 – Wooden box 19" x 10" x 1", built 278 models
- No. 6 – Wooden box 22" x 8 1/2" x 3", built 317 models
- No. 7 – Wooden box 17" x 10" x 3", built 382 models
- No. 8 – Wooden box 19" x 11" x 3 1/2", built 410 models
- No. 10 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 3 1/2", built 454 models

1922

- No. 1 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 111 models
- No. 3 – Cardboard box 19" x 10" x 1", built 197 models
- No. 4 – Wooden box/cardboard lid 22" x 8 1/2" x 2 1/2", built 278 models
- No. 7 – Wooden box 17" x 10" x 3", built 382 models
- No. 8 – Wooden box 19" x 11" x 3 1/2", built 410 models
- No. 10 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 3 1/2", built 454 models

1922

- No. 1 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 111 models
- No. 3 – Cardboard box 19" x 10" x 1", built 197 models
- No. 4 – Wooden box/cardboard lid 22" x 8 1/2" x 2 1/2", built 278 models
- No. 7 – Wooden box 17" x 10" x 3", built 382 models
- No. 8 – Wooden box 19" x 11" x 3 1/2", built 410 models
- No. 10 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 3 1/2", built 454 models

1923

- No. 1 – Cardboard box 12" x 9" x 1", built 111 models

- No. 3 – Cardboard box 19" x 10" x 1", built 197 models
- No. 4 – Wooden box/cardboard lid 22" x 8 1/2" x 2 1/2", built 278 models
- No. 7 – Wooden box/steel lid 22" x 8 1/2" x 5", built 382 models
- No. 8 – Wooden box 19" x 11" x 3 1/2", built 410 models
- No. 10 – Wooden box 20" x 12" x 3 1/2", built 454 models

1924/25

- No. 1 – Cardboard box 12 1/2" x 8 3/4" x 1", built 278 models/104 parts
- No. 3 – Cardboard box 18 1/4" x 10" x 1 1/4", built 381 models/169 parts
- No. 4 – Cardboard box 18 1/4" x 10" x 2 1/2", built 500 models/235 parts
- No. 7 – Wooden box 21 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 3 1/4", built 533 models/473 parts
- No. 8 – Wooden box 23" x 11" x 5 1/2", built 559 models/1226 parts
- No. 10 – Wooden box 22 1/4" x 12" x 7", built 677 models/2469 parts

1926

- No. 1 – Dandy Beginner's Set
Cardboard box 12 1/2" x 8 3/4" x 1", built 278 models/104 parts
- No. 3 – The Set With the Big Red Wheels
Cardboard box 18 1/4" x 10" x 1 1/4", built 381 models/169 parts
- No. 4 – The Famous No. 4 Erector with the Powerful Electric Motor
Cardboard box 18 1/4" x 10" x 2 1/2", built 500 models/235 parts
- No. 7 – The Super No. 7 Erector. The Set that Builds the Steam Shovel
Wooden box 21 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 3 1/4", built 533 models/473 parts
- No. 7 1/2 – Motorized Erector
Wooden box 21 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 4 3/4", built 543 models/870 parts
- No. 8 – The Set with Dredge and Electric Motor
Wooden box 22" x 11" x 5 1/2", built 570 models/1226 parts
- No. 10 – The Set with the Giant Fly Wheel and Giant Girders
Wooden box 20 1/4" x 15 1/2" x 10 3/4", built 700 models/>2500 parts

1927

- No. 1 – Dandy Beginner's Set
Cardboard box 12 1/2" x 8 3/4" x 1", built 278 models/104 parts
- No. 3 – The Set with the Gears and the Big Red Wheels
Cardboard box 18 1/4" x 10" x 1 1/4", built 381 models/169 parts
- No. 4 – The Set with the Powerful Electric Motor
Cardboard box 18 1/4" x 10" x 2 1/2", built 500 models/235 parts
- No. 7 – The Super No. 7 Erector. The Set that Builds the Steam Shovel
Wooden box 21 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 3 1/4", built 533 models/473 parts
- No. 7 1/2 – The Wonderful New 7 1/2
Wooden box 21 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 4 3/4", built 543 models/870 parts
- No. 8 – The Trumodel Set
Wooden box 25 1/2" x 11" x 5", built 650 models/922 parts
- No. 10 – Erector Deluxe In All Its Glory
Wooden box 20 3/4" x 16 1/2" x 11", built 714 models/>2000 parts
- No. A – Big Girder Set. The Set with the Giant Girders

Cardboard box 18 1/4" x 10" x 2 1/2", built 42 models/442 parts

1928

No. 1 – Beginner's Set

Cardboard box 13 1/2" x 9 1/2" x 1", built 460 models

No. 3 – With Gears and Red Wheels

Cardboard box 18 1/4" x 10" x 1 1/4", built 562 models

No. 4 – With Powerful Electric Motor

Cardboard box 18 1/4" x 10" x 2 1/2", built 680 models

No. 7 – Builds the Steam Shovel

Wooden box 21 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 3 1/4", built 719 models

No. 77 – Builds the Steam Shovel

Wooden box 22 1/2" x 8 1/4" x 5", built 727 models

No. 7 1/2 – Builds the Chassis

Wooden box 22 3/4" x 10 3/4" x 5 3/4", built 749 models

No. 8 – The Trumodel Set With 110-Volt Motor

Wooden box 26" x 10 3/4" x 5 3/4", built 827 models

No. 10 – The Complete Deluxe Set

Wooden box 20 3/4" x 16 1/2" x 11", built 1000 models

No. A – With the Giant Girders

Cardboard box 18 1/4" x 10" x 2 1/2", built 42 models/442 parts

No. B – Builds the Ferris Wheel

Wooden box 21 1/4" x 8 1/2" x 3 1/4", built 54 models

No. C – The Air-Plane Set

Wooden box 22 1/2" x 8 1/4" x 5", built 19 models

1929

No. 1 – Dandy Beginner's Set

Cardboard box 13 1/2" x 9 1/2" x 1", built 492 models

No. 3 – The Set with the Long Girders

Cardboard box 18 1/4" x 10" x 1 1/4", built 611 models

No. 4 – With Powerful Electric Motor and Gear Box

Cardboard box 18 1/4" x 10" x 2 1/2", built 733 models

No. 6 – In the Big Red Chest with the Steam Boiler

Wooden box 21 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 3", built 765 models

No. 7 – The Set that builds the Steam Shovel

Wooden box 21 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 5", built 777 models

No. 7 1/2 – The Set that builds the Chassis

Wooden box 22 3/4" x 10 3/4" x 5 3/4", built 809 models

No. 8 – Trail Blazing Set that Builds the Zeppelin

Wooden box 26" x 10 3/4" x 5 3/4"

No. 9 – Mechanical Wonders Set with 110-Volt Motor

Wooden box 29" x 10 3/4" x 5 3/4"

No. 10 – Complete, Unsurpassable Erector In All Its Glory

Wooden box 25 1/2" x 19 1/4" x 6"

No. A – With Giant Girders

- Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10" x 2 ½", built 42 models/442 parts
- No. B – Builds the Giant Ferris Wheel
 - Wooden box 21 ¼" x 8 ½" x 3 ¼", built 54 models
- No. C – Complete Airplane Construction Set
 - Cardboard box 20 ½" x 13 ¼" x 3", built 19 models
- No. D – Completely Assembled All Metal Airplane
 - Cardboard box 23" x 22" x 8 ¾"
- No. F – Completely Assembled Zeppelin
 - Wooden box 55" x 14" x 10"

1930

- No. 1 – Dandy Beginner's Set
 - Cardboard box 13 ½" x 9 ½" x 1", built 492 models
- No. 3 – The Set with the Long Girders
 - Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10" x 1 ¼", built 611 models
- No. 4 – With Powerful Electric Motor and Gear Box
 - Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10" x 2 ½", built 733 models
- No. 6 – In the Big Red Chest with the Steam Boiler
 - Wooden box 21 ½" x 8 ½" x 3", built 765 models
- No. 7 – The Set that builds the Steam Shovel
 - Wooden box 21 ½" x 8 ½" x 5", built 777 models
- No. 7 ½ – The Set that builds the Chassis
 - Wooden box 22 ¾" x 10 ¾" x 5 ¾", built 809 models
- No. 8 – Trail Blazing Set that Builds the Zeppelin
 - Wooden box 26" x 10 ¾" x 5 ¾"
- No. 9 – Mechanical Wonders Set with 110-Volt Motor
 - Wooden box 29" x 10 ¾" x 5 ¾"
- No. 10 – Complete, Unsurpassable Erector In All Its Glory
 - Wooden box 25 ½" x 19 ¼" x 6"
- No. B – Builds the Giant Ferris Wheel
 - Wooden box 21 ¼" x 8 ½" x 3 ¼", built 54 models
- No. 45 – A Complete Airplane Construction Set
 - Cardboard box 20 ½" x 13 ¼" x 3", built 19 models
- No. 75 – Erector Combination Aircraft and Zeppelin Set
 - Cardboard box 20 ½" x 26 ¾" x 3", built 22 models

1931/32

- No. 1 – Dandy Beginner's Set
 - Cardboard box 12 ½" x 8 ¾" x ¾", built >100 models
- No. 3 – The Set with the Long Girders
 - Cardboard box 18" x 10" x ¾", built >200 models
- No. 4 – Famous No. 4 Erector with Powerful Electric Motor and Gear Box
 - Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 2 ½", built >300 models
- No. 6 – The Wonderful No. 6 Erector
 - Wooden box 21 ½" x 8 ½" x 3", built >325 models

- No. 7 – The New Big No. 7 Erector
Wooden box 21 ½" x 8 ½" x 4 ½", built >350 models
- No. 7 ½ – The Sensational No. 7 ½ Erector
Wooden box 22 ¾" x 10 ¾" x 5 ¾", built >400 models
- No. 8 – The Twentieth Century No. 8
Wooden box 26" x 10 ¾" x 5 ¾", built 399 models
- No. 8 ½ - The World's Champion No. 8 ½
Wooden box 29 ¼" x 10 ¾" x 5 ½", built 405 models
- No. 9 – Mechanical Wonders Set with 110-Volt Motor
Wooden box 29" x 10 ¾" x 5 ¾", built 451 models
- No. 10 – Deluxe Set – The Climax of Erector Glory
Wooden box 31" x 27 ¼" x 7 ½", built >500 models
- No. A – The Mile-A-Minute No. A
Wooden box 22 ¾" x 10 ¾" x 5 ¾"
- No. B – The Big Girder Set
Wooden box 21 ¼" x 8 ½" x 3 ¼", built 58 models
- No. D – Completely Assembled All Metal Airplane
Cardboard box 23" x 22" x 8 ¾"
- No. L – Locomotive and Tender Model
Cardboard box 50 ½" x 10 ½" x 8"
- No. T – Erector Tender Accessory Set
Cardboard box 20 ½" x 13 ¼" x 3"
- No. 45 – A Complete Airplane Construction Set
Cardboard box 20 ½" x 13 ¼" x 3", built 19 models
- No. 75 – Erector Combination Aircraft and Zeppelin Set
Cardboard box 20 ½" x 26 ¾" x 3", built 22 models

1933

- No. 1 – The Dandy Beginner's Set
Cardboard box 13 ½" x 9 ½" x 1", built 50 models
- No. 3 – The Set with the Long Girders
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 1", built 75 models
- No. 4 – The Famous No. 4
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 2 ½", built >100 models
- No. 6 – The Super 6
Green metal box 18" x 10" x 3", built >125 models
- No. 7 – The Sensational No. 7
Red metal box 20" x 12" x 3", built >160 models
- No. 8 – The 20th Century No. 8 Erector
Red wood box 25 ½" x 10 ¾" x 5 ½", built 199 models
- No. 8 ½ - The World's Champion No. 8 ½ Erector
Red wood box 29 ¼" x 10 ¾" x 5 ½", built 207 models
- No. A – The Mile-A-Minute No. A Erector
Red wood box 22 ¾" x 10 ¾" x 5 ½", built 14 models

1934

- No. 1 – The Dandy Beginner's Set
Cardboard box 13 ½" x 9 ½" x 1", built 50 models
- No. 3 – The Set with the Long Girders
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 1", built 75 models
- No. 4 – The Famous No. 4
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 2 ½", built >100 models
- No. 6 – The Super 6
Green metal box 18" x 10" x 3", built >125 models
- No. 7 – The Sensational No. 7
Red metal box 20" x 12" x 3", built >150 models
- No. 7 ½ - The Automotive Set
Powder blue metal box 22" x 13" x 3", built >180 models
- No. 8 – The World's Champion No. 8 Erector
Powder blue crackle finish metal box 24" x 14" x 4", built 210 models

1935

- No. 1 ½ – The Dandy Beginner's Set
Cardboard box 13 ½" x 9 ½" x 1"
- No. 3 ½ - The Set with the Big Red Wheels
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 1 ¼"
- No. 4 ½ – The Famous No. 4 ½
Red metal box 16" x 8" x 3"
- No. 6 ½ – The Super 6 ½
Green metal box 18" x 10" x 3"
- No. 7 ½ – The Engineer's Set
Red metal box 20" x 12" x 3"
- No. 8 ½ - The Automotive Set
Royal blue metal box 22" x 13" x 3"
- No. 9 ½ – The World's Champion No. 9 ½
Powder blue crackle finish metal box 24" x 14" x 4"
- No. S – The Erector Skyscraper Set
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 1 ¼"

1936/7

- No. 1 ½ – The Dandy Beginner's Set
Cardboard box 13 ½" x 10 ¼" x ¾"
- No. 2 ½ - The Apprentice Set
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x ¾"
- No. 3 ½ - The Intermediate Set
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 1 ¼"
- No. 4 ½ – The Famous No. 4 ½
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 2 ½"
- No. 5 ½ - The Super No. 5 ½
Red metal box 16" x 8" x 3"
- No. 7 ½ – The Electric Engine Set
Early 1936 - Green metal box 18" x 10" x 3"

Late 1936/37 – Royal blue metal box 18" x 10" x 3"
No. 8 ½ – The Engineer's Set
Red metal box 20" x 12" x 3"
No. 9 ½ - The Automotive Set
Royal blue metal box 22" x 13" x 3"
No. 10 ½ – The World's Champion No. 10 ½
Powder blue crackle finish metal box 24" x 14" x 4"
No. S – The Erector Skyscraper Set
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 1 ¼"
No. SA – The Skyscraper Accessory Set
Cardboard box

1938/39

No. 1 ½ – The Dandy Beginner's Set
Cardboard box 13 ½" x 10 ¼" x ¾"
No. 2 ½ - The Apprentice Set
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x ¾"
No. 3 ½ - The Intermediate Set
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 1 ¼"
No. 4 ½ – The Famous No. 4 ½
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 2 ½"
No. 5 ½ - The Super No. 5 ½
Red metal box 16" x 8" x 3"
No. 6 ½ - The Sensational No. 6 ½
Red metal box 16" x 8" x 3"
No. 7 ½ – The Electric Engine Set
Royal blue metal box 18" x 10" x 3"
No. 8 ½ – The Engineer's Set
Red metal box 20" x 12" x 3"
No. 9 ½ - The Automotive Set
Royal blue metal box 22" x 13" x 3"
No. 10 ½ – The Electric Train Set
Royal blue metal box 24" x 14" x 4"

1940/42

No. 1 ½ – The Dandy Beginner's Set
Cardboard box 13 ½" x 10 ¼" x ¾"
No. 2 ½ - The Apprentice Set
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x ¾"
No. 3 ½ - The Intermediate Set
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 1 ¼"
No. 4 ½ – The Famous No. 4 ½
Cardboard box 18 ¼" x 10 ¼" x 2 ½"
No. 6 ½ - The Sensational No. 6 ½
Red metal box 16" x 8" x 3"
No. 7 ½ – The Electric Engine Set

Royal blue metal box 18" x 10" x 3"
No. 8 ½ – The Engineer's Set

Red metal box 20" x 12" x 3"
No. 9 ½ - The Automotive Set

Royal blue metal box 22" x 13" x 3"
No. 10 ½ – The Electric Train Set

Royal blue metal box 24" x 14" x 4"

1943-47 Erector Junior Sets

No. 1 – Cardboard box 12 ¼" x 8 ¾" x 1 ½"

No. 3 – Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 1 ½"

No. 5 – Cardboard box 20 ½" x 13 ½" x 1 ½"

1946/7

No. 2 ½ - The Apprentice Set
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x ¾"

No. 4 ½ – The Famous No. 4 ½
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 2 ½"

No. 6 ½ - The Sensational No. 6 ½
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 3"

No. 7 ½ – The Engineer's Set
1946 - Royal blue cardboard box 20 ¾" x 13 ¾" x 3 ½"
1947 - Red cardboard box 20 ¾" x 13 ¾" x 3 ½"

No. 8 ½ – The All-Electric Set
Red metal box 20" x 12" x 3"

No. 9 ½ - The Automotive Set
1946 - Royal blue metal box 22" x 13" x 3"
1947 - Red metal box 22" x 13" x 3"

1948

No. 2 ½ - The Apprentice Set
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x ¾"

No. 4 ½ – The Famous No. 4 ½
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 2 ½"

No. 6 ½ - The Sensational No. 6 ½
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 3"

No. 7 ½ – The Engineer's Set
Red metal box 18" x 10" x 3"

No. 8 ½ – The All-Electric Set
Red metal box 20" x 12" x 3"

No. 9 ½ - The Automotive Set
Red metal box 22" x 13" x 3"

No. 12 ½ - The Remote Control Set
Red metal box 24" x 14" x 4"

1949/55 Junior Erector Set

- No. 2 – Cardboard box 13 ½” x 9 ½” x 1 ¼”
No. 4 – Cardboard box 20 ½” x 13 ½” x 1 ¼”
No. 10 – Cardboard box 20 ½” x 13 ½” x 2 ½”

1949/50

- No. 1 ½ - The Builder's Set
Cardboard box 13 ½” x 9 ¾” x ¾”
No. 2 ½ - The Apprentice Set
Cardboard box 18” x 10” x 1 ¼”
No. 4 ½ – The Famous No. 4 ½
Cardboard box 18” x 10” x 2 ½”
No. 6 ½ - The Sensational No. 6 ½
Cardboard box 18” x 10” x 3”
No. 6 ½ - The Electric Engine Set
Red metal box 16” x 8” x 3”
No. 7 ½ – The Engineer's Set
Red metal box 18” x 10” x 3”
No. 8 ½ – The All-Electric Set
Red metal box 20” x 12” x 3”
No. 9 ½ (1949 only) - The Automotive Set
Red metal box 22” x 13” x 3”
No. 10 ½ - The Amusement Park Set
Red metal box 22” x 13” x 3”
No. 12 ½ - The Remote Control Set
Red metal box 24” x 14” x 4”
No. 1E (1949-50) – The Square Girder Kit
Cardboard tube 10 ¾” long x 1 ¾” diameter
No. 5 (1949-52) – The Erector Illumination Kit
Red cardboard box 8 ¾” x 6 ¼” x 1 ½”
No. 6 (1950-51) – The Erector Whistle Kit
Red cardboard box 8 ¾” x 6 ¼” x 1 ½”
No. 7 (1950-53) – The Erector Smoke and Choo-Choo Kit
Red cardboard box 8 ¾” x 6 ¼” x 1 ½”
No. 12 ½ A (1949) – The Merry-Go-Round Kit
Plain brown cardboard box 11 ½” x 4 ½” x 1 ¼”

1951/52

- No. 1 ½ - The Builder's Set
Cardboard box 13 ½” x 9 ¾” x ¾”
No. 2 ½ - The Apprentice Set
Cardboard box 18” x 10” x 1 ¼”
No. 4 ½ – The Motorized Set
Cardboard box 18” x 10” x 2 ½”
No. 6 ½ - The Electric Engine Set
Cardboard box 18” x 10” x 3”
No. 7 ½ – The Engineer's Set

Red cardboard box 19 ½" x 11" x 3"
No. 8 ½ – The All-Electric Set
Red cardboard box 29" x 12" x 4"
No. 10 ½ - The Amusement Park Set
Red metal box 22" x 13" x 3"

1953/54

No. 1 ½ - The Builder's Set
Cardboard box 13 ½" x 9 ¾" x ¾"
No. 2 ½ - The Apprentice Set
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 1 ¼"
No. 4 ½ – The Motorized Set
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 2 ½"
No. 6 ½ - The Electric Engine Set
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 3"
No. 7 ½ – The Engineer's Set
Red metal box 18" x 10" x 3"
No. 8 ½ – The All-Electric Set
Red metal box 20" x 12" x 3"
No. 10 ½ - The Amusement Park Set
Red metal box 22" x 13" x 3"

1955/56

No. 1 ½ - The Builder's Set
Cardboard box 13 ½" x 9 ¾" x ¾"
No. 2 ½ - The Apprentice Set
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 1 ¼"
No. 3 ½ - The Professional Set
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 2"
No. 4 ½ – The Motorized Set
Red metal box 16" x 8" x 3"
No. 6 ½ - The Electric Engine Set
1955 - Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 3"
1956 – Red metal box 16" x 10" x 3"
No. 7 ½ – The Engineer's Set
Red metal box 18" x 10" x 3"
No. 8 ½ – The All-Electric Set
Red metal box 20" x 12" x 3"
No. 10 ½ - The Amusement Park Set
Red metal box 22" x 13" x 3"
No. 12 ½ - The Master Builder Set
1956 - Red metal box 24" x 14" x 4"

1957

No. 16010 – The Young Builder's Set
Cardboard box 10 ½" x 9" x ¾"

- No. 1 ½ (#10010) - The Builder's Set
Cardboard box 13 ½" x 9 ¾" x ¾"
- No. 2 ½ (#10020) - The Apprentice Set
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 1 ¼"
- No. 3 ½ (#10030) - The Professional Set
Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 2"
- No. 5 ½ (#10041) – The Motorized Set
Lithographed metal box 16" x 8" x 3"
- No. 6 ½ - The Electric Engine Set
#10046 - Cardboard box 18" x 10" x 3"
#10051 – Lithographed metal box 16" x 10" x 3"
- No. 7 ½ (#10061) – The Engineer's Set
Lithographed metal box 18" x 10" x 3"
- No. 8 ½ (#10071) – The All-Electric Set
Lithographed metal box 20" x 12" x 3"
- No. 10 ½ (#10081) - The Amusement Park Set
Red metal box 22" x 13" x 3"
- No. 12 ½ (#10091) - The Master Builder Set
Red metal box 24" x 14" x 4"

1958

- No. 10011 - The Builder's Set
Cardboard tube 11" high x 3 ½" diameter
- No. 10021 - The Young Builder's Set
Cardboard tube 12" high x 4 ½" diameter
- No. 10026 – The Junior's Engineer's Set
Cardboard box 18" x 10 ¼" x 1 ½"
- No. 10031 - The Engineer's Set
Cardboard box 20 ¼" x 13 ¼" x 1 ½"
- No. 10041 – The Power Model Set
Lithographed metal box 16" x 8" x 3"
- No. 10052 – The Rocket Launcher Set
Lithographed metal box 16" x 10" x 3"
- No. 10062 – The Steam Engine Set
Lithographed metal box 18" x 10" x 3"
- No. 10072 – The Musical Ferris Wheel Set
Lithographed metal box 20" x 12" x 3"
- No. 10082 - The Amusement Park Set
Red metal box 22" x 13" x 3"
- No. 10092 - The Master Builder Set
Red metal box 24" x 14" x 4"

1959

- No. 10011 - The Builder's Set
Cardboard tube 11" high x 3 ½" diameter
- No. 10021 - The Young Builder's Set

Cardboard tube 12" high x 4 ½" diameter
No. 10032 - The Engineer's Set
Cardboard tube 14" high x 5" diameter
No. 10042 – The Automatic Radar Scope Set
Lithographed metal box 16" x 8" x 3"
No. 10053 – The Rocket Launcher Set
Lithographed metal box 16" x 10" x 3"
No. 10063 – The Action Conveyor Set
Lithographed metal box 18" x 10" x 3"
No. 10073 – The Musical Ferris Wheel Set
Lithographed metal box 20" x 12" x 3"
No. 10083 - The Amusement Park Set
Red metal box 22" x 13" x 3"
No. 10093 - The Master Builder Set
Red metal box 24" x 14" x 4"

1960/61

No. 10011 - The Builder's Set
Cardboard tube 11" high x 3 ½" diameter
No. 10021 - The Young Builder's Set
Cardboard tube 12" high x 4 ½" diameter
No. 10032 - The Engineer's Set
Cardboard tube 14" high x 5" diameter
No. 10037 (1960) – The Motorized Remote Control Set
Cardboard tube 15 ¾" high x 5" diameter
No. 10042 – The Automatic Radar Scanner Set
Lithographed metal box 16" x 8" x 3"
No. 10053 – The Rocket Launcher Set
Lithographed metal box 16" x 10" x 3"
No. 10063 – The Automatic Conveyor Set
Lithographed metal box 18" x 10" x 3"
No. 10074 – The Ferris Wheel Set
Lithographed metal box 20" x 12" x 3"
No. 10084 - The Amusement Park Set
Lithographed double metal box 20" x 16" x 3"
No. 10094 - The Master Builder Set
Lithographed double metal box 20" x 18" x 3"

1962

No. 10161 – The Model Maker's Set
Milk Carton 13 ½" tall x 4" square
No. 10171 – The Engineer's Set
Milk Carton 16 ½" tall x 5" square
No. 10181 – The Action Helicopter Set
Lithographed metal box 16" x 8" x 3"
No. 10201 – The Rocket Launcher Set

Lithographed metal box 16" x 10" x 3"
No. 10211 – The Cape Canaveral Set
Lithographed metal box 18" x 10" x 3"
No. 10221 – The Lunar Drilling Rig Set
Lithographed metal box 20" x 12" x 3"
No. 10084 - The Astronaut Set
Lithographed double metal box 20" x 16" x 3"
No. 10094 - The Master Builder Set
Lithographed double metal box 20" x 18" x 3"