

The main purpose of this article is to pass along a technique I use in making realistic canvas covered wagons and equipment.

Here is a list of suggested material needed:

- Plastic trash bag lightweight, tan in color
- 3x5 file card stock
- Adhesive glue such as Walthers GOO
- Tan thread
- Acrylic paint - cream for the sides, tan for the top
- Decals or dry transfer lettering
- Solvaset for decals
- Testors Dullcote spray

The wagon chosen to be built is a Ringling type covered cage from the early 40's.

The basic wagon body is built and completed in a manner that only exposed areas to be seen in open parts of the canvas be finished and painted. In this case we talk about windows, ladders, foot-boards and finally the underside.

Making Canvas Covered Wagons

DATE: None

SCALE: HO

SCANNED & REVISED:
07/05/02

Pg 1 of 7

Circus Model Builders

Drawn By
Joe Kasper, CMB 1940

DRAWING NUMBER

#0248

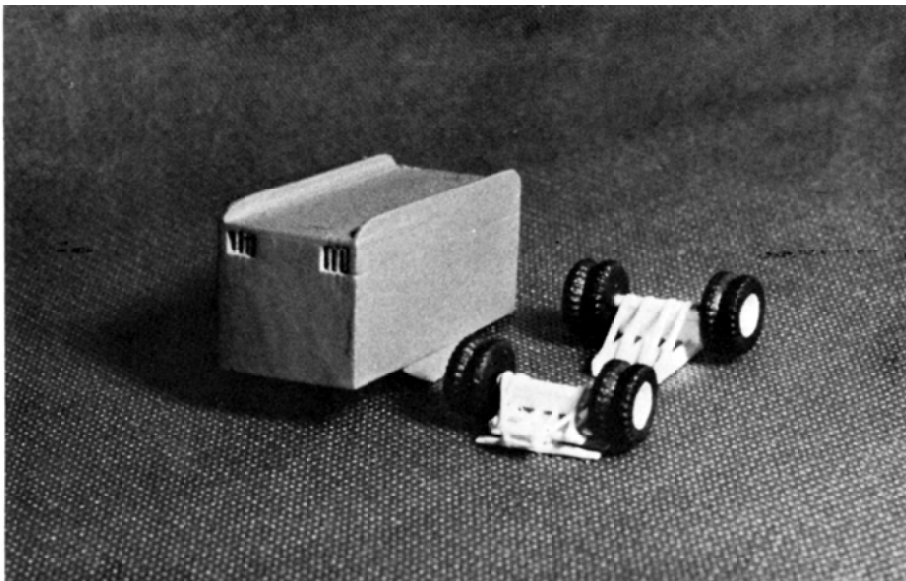


Photo 1

This wagon, as well as any wagon I build, never has undercarriage attached until completed. This is for several reasons. One is that I spray paint and the body is usually a different color than the undercarriage. Second, at some point in life, you may wish to change the undercarriage and keep the wagon body alone. This will happen as more experience and skill is developed in this area of construction.

Using 3x5 type card stock, a pattern of the wagon body is cut that will represent the canvas covering. Out of the pattern cut all areas that should expose parts of the wagon body. Keep in mind that a canvas top will cover the upper part of this wagon so a little cheating can be done in this area, especially around the windows as can be seen in photo #2.

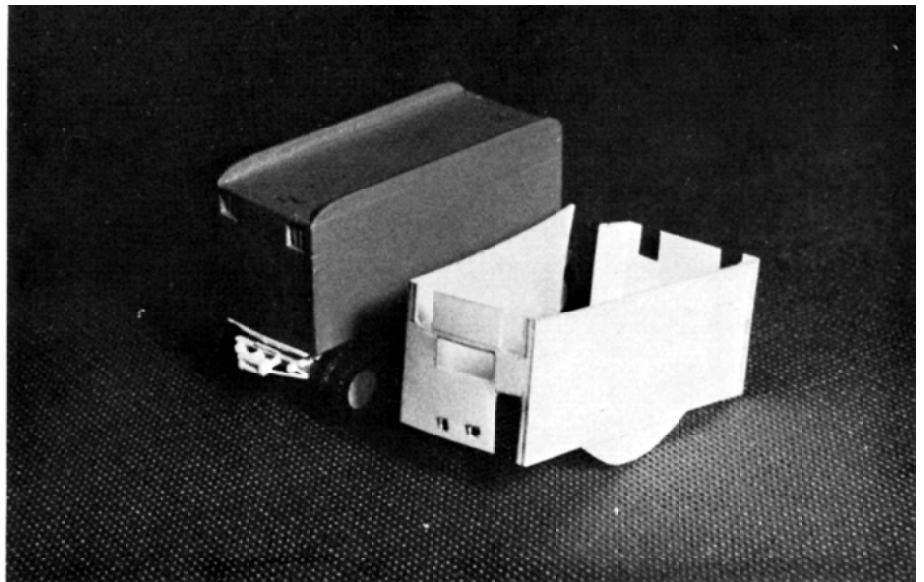


Photo 2



Photo 3

Using the pattern as a guide, cut a strip of plastic covering from the trash bag you've chosen.

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Photo 4

Take the strip of plastic covering and roll it up into a little ball between your fingers. This will give the covering a wrinkled texture. Straighten out the strip and check it. There should be no large creases. If not satisfied, do it again.

After cutting the strip in half, place a little GOO along the one end and fold over to make a seam. This fold gets glued against the seam of the other half of the strip already on the pattern as can be seen in photo 5. When attaching the strip to the pattern, leave more overhang at the bottom than at the top.



Photo 5

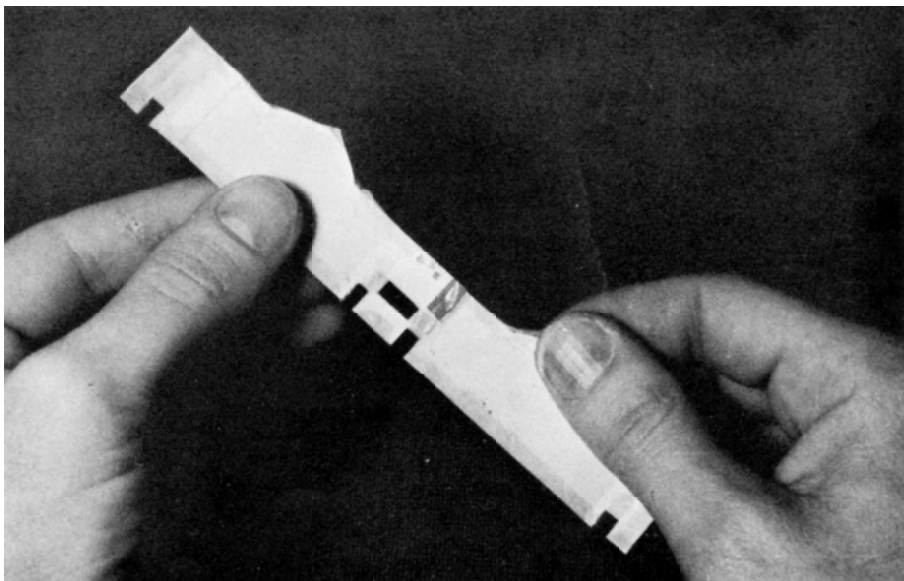
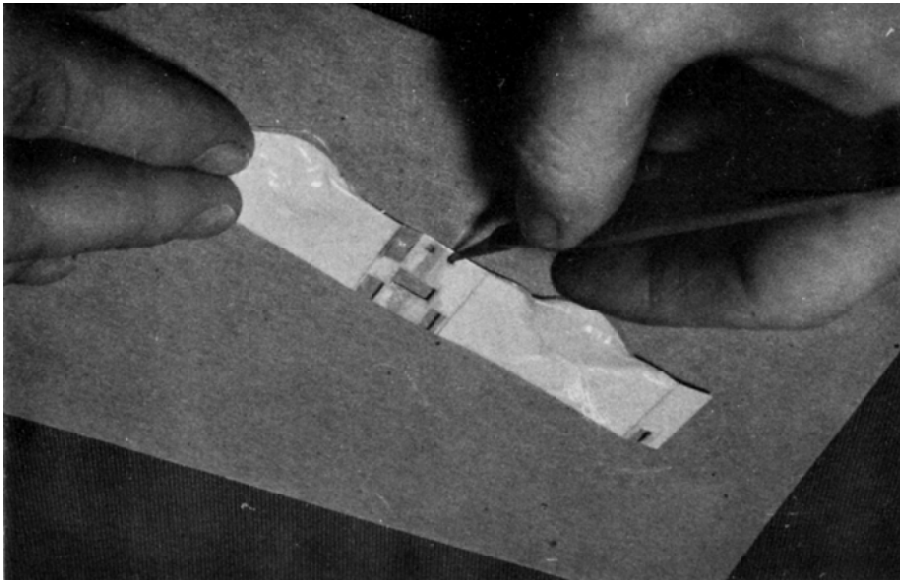


Photo 6

Photo #6 shows that the ends, top, and bottom have been folded over the pattern and glued to the back. The only place not turned over and glued is the center bottom. Leave approximately 1/4" extra here. This will be turned under the wagon when attached. The windows and footboard openings have the plastic strip cut on two sides and folded over to the rear and glued. This holds the plastic strip against the pattern at these open areas. The opening for the ladder is cut on both sides. A little glue on the pattern where open cuts are made will help keep the plastic against the pattern at these places.

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Small detail areas such as chain opening can be cut out from the front side using a sharp blade.

Photo 7

The paint used to simulate canvas should be able to adhere to plastic, has a dull finish, and be able to take decal solvaset. I have found through trial and error that acrylic type paints work very good for this application. Art and craft stores usually carry this type paint. I would suggest testing the paint you choose on a scrap piece of plastic first and seeing how it works out

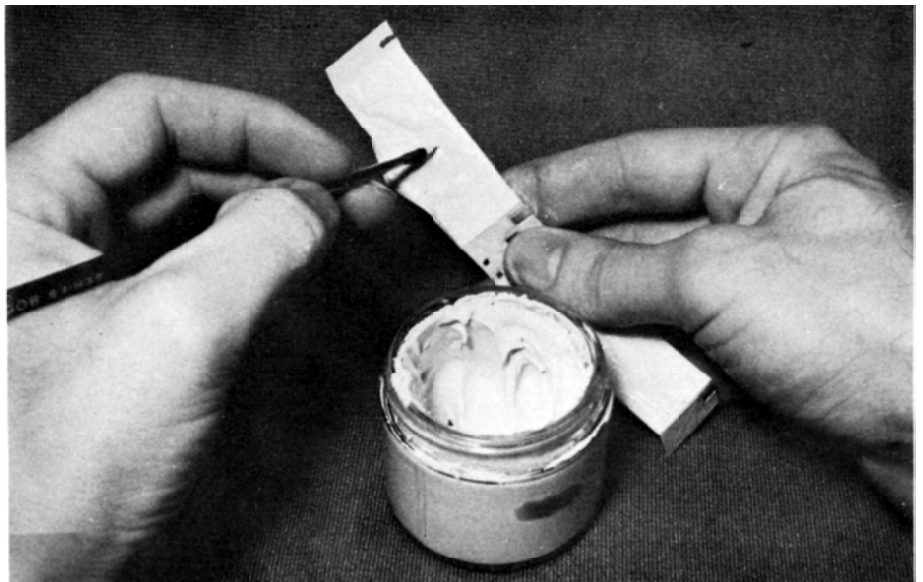


Photo 8

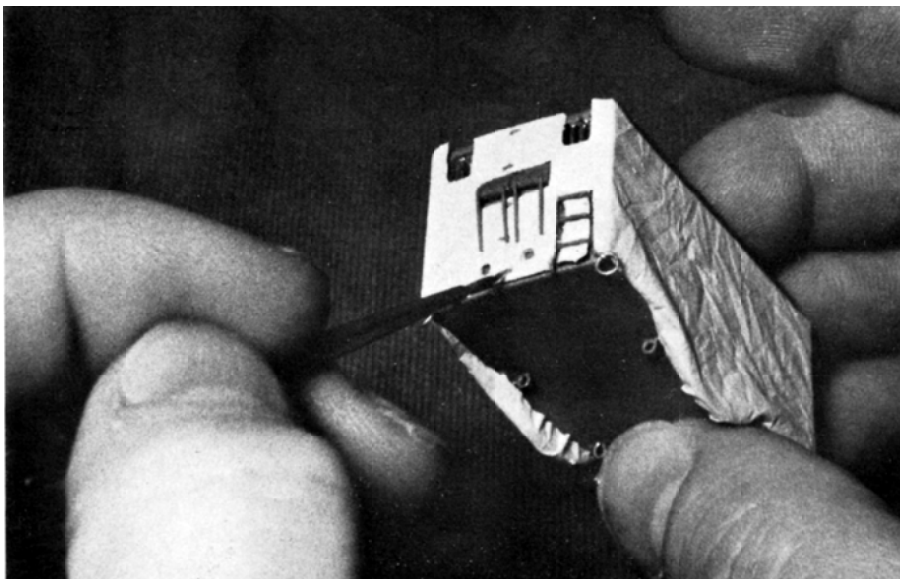
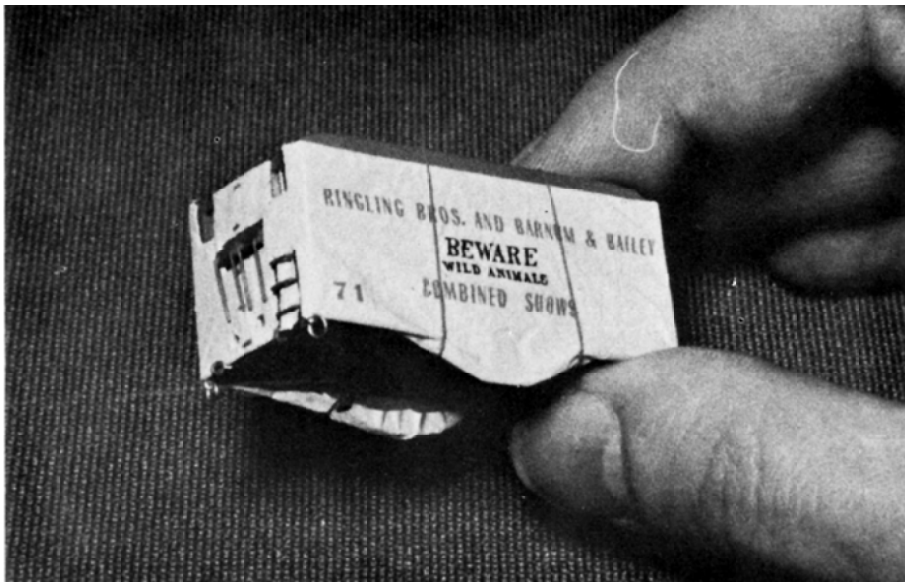


Photo 9

Once painted, the canvas is secured to the wagon body. Photo #9 shows the bottom of the canvas now glued to the underside of the wagon, and final details attached.

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Decals are applied in the normal manner. Once positioned, use Solvaset to dissolve the decal film making it take the shape of the surface applied to. After fully dried, give a light coat of Testors Dullcote to erase any decal shine that might be present. Photo #10 also shows the canvas top tie ropes already attached around the sides.

Photo 10

The canvas top is made of the same material cut to a size that will overhang the wagon by 1/4". Wrinkle the plastic in the same manner as explained earlier. Run a knotted thread thru the four corners and with a drop of glue on each knot, squeeze the tips of each corner together. When attaching the top, put a drop of glue on the side tie ropes that will be covered. Once the top is in place, press the canvas against the ropes. This will simulate the canvas being held down by the ropes.

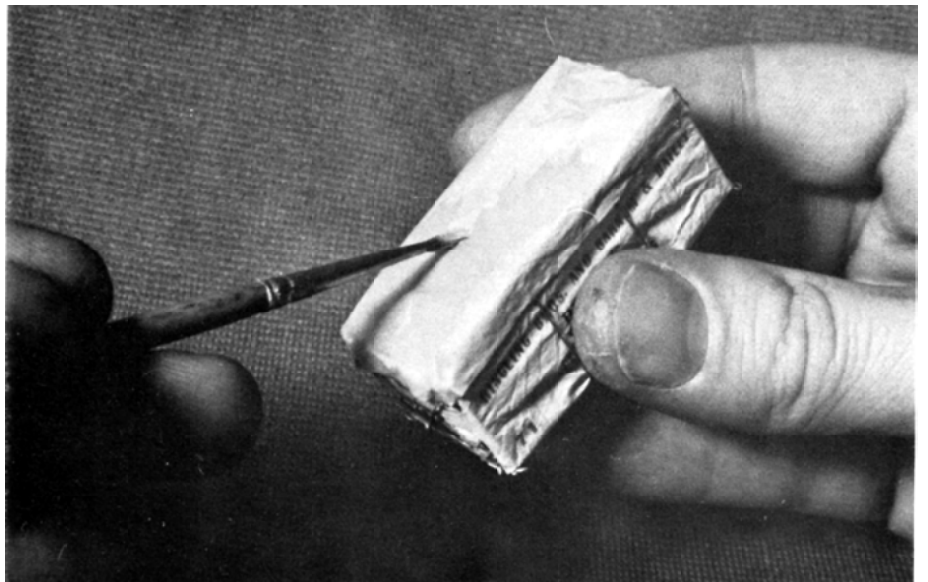


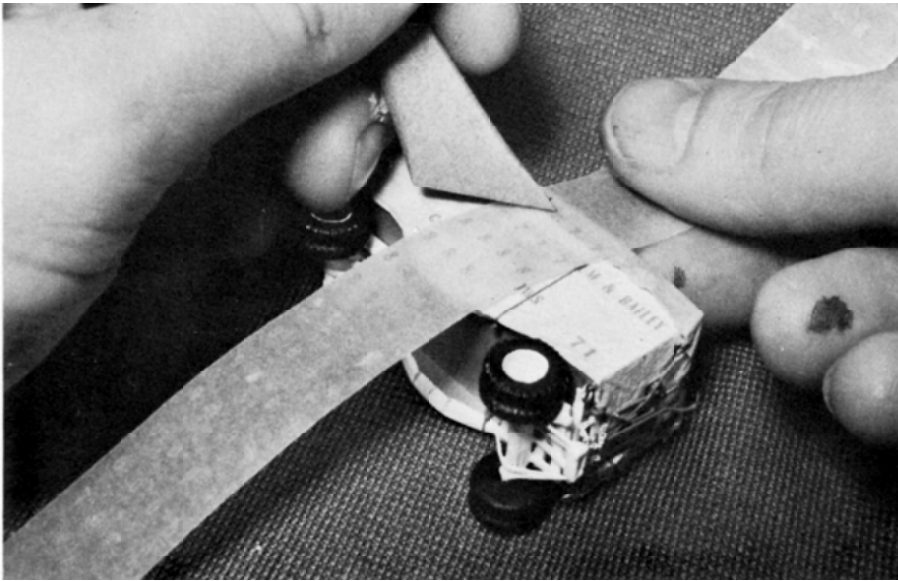
Photo 11



Photo 12

The Top is painted using again your own choice. I used a tan acrylic paint with a matt finish. This type would not take decal Solvaset.

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When decals cannot be used, dry transfer lettering can be substituted. In photo #13, the number of the wagon is being applied to the top canvas cover.

Photo 13

Our wagon takes the spotlight waiting for final shipment to the runs.



Photo 14

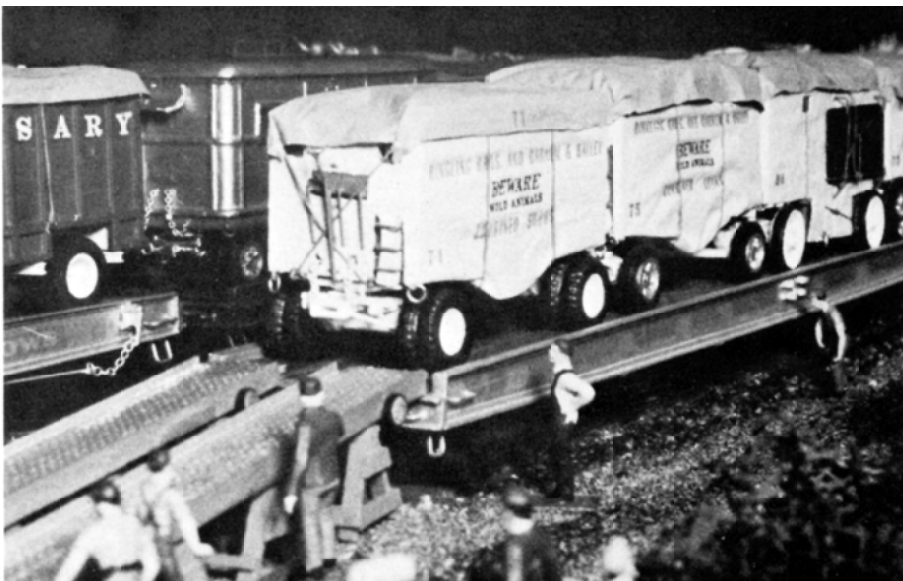


Photo 15

Different wagons present different problems, but after a little practice and the right materials, the final results will be very rewarding. The big difference is usually in the painting. There are many types of paints on the market today and only you can determine what is best for you.

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Photo 16

I have found plastic food wrap excellent for this purpose. This was used on wagon #126 carrying props for the spec and,

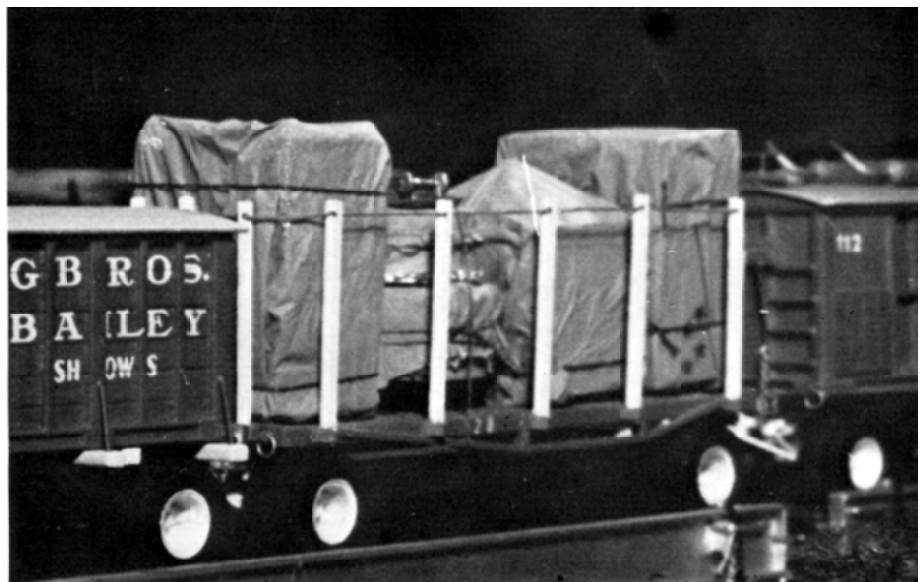


Photo 17

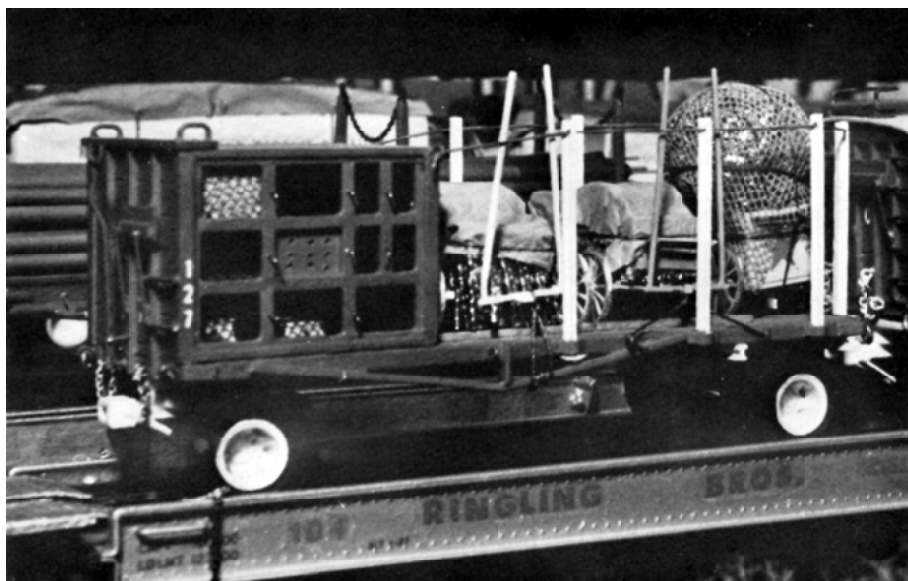


Photo 18

In conclusion, I would like to point out that the plastic material used from the trash bags work well for large subjects like this stake driver being pulled behind the cookhouse canvas wagon. However, on smaller objects,

some Pony wagons carried on the rear of the dog wagon.

Have fun, and I hope all this can be of some help to you all.

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