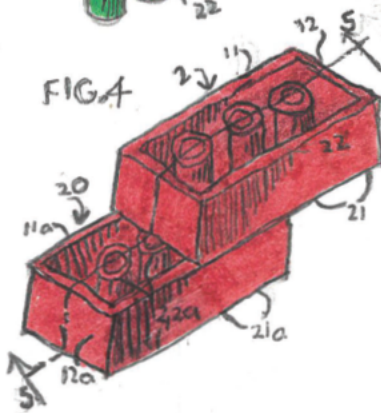
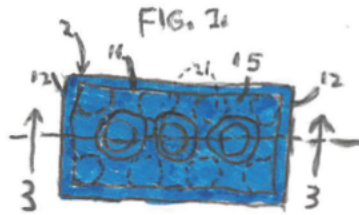
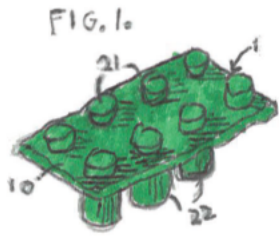


Once Upon a Brick:
The History of Lego
by: Jackson

Childhood

Ole Kirk Kristiansen was born on April 17, 1891 about 12 miles outside of Billund, Denmark. He lived on a farm and loved to whittle in his free time. Eventually, his older brother, Kristian, taught him how to be a professional carpenter. In 1916, when Ole was 25 years old, he bought a carpenter's shop in Billund.

Early Adulthood

The same year he bought the shop, Ole married Kirstine Sorensen. Soon, they had children. One day, two of the three children were playing and accidentally set Ole's workshop on fire! The fire spread all the way to Ole's house. Everything was burned down to the ground.

Troubling Times

Ole rebuilt his house and workshop even bigger than the first. Then in 1929, the Great Depression happened. Millions of people lost their jobs and could not afford the houses Ole and his employees built. Ole decided to make smaller items such as ironing boards and stepladders. However, people could not afford these either. Ole had to fire many of his employees. In 1932, Ole's wife died.

The Start of Toymaking

Everyone else in the family gave up on the business but Ole had another idea about making...toys! Soon, he was making brightly colored wooden animals. One of the most popular wooden toys was a duck that quacked when you pulled it.

The Yo-yo Craze

He also began making lots of yo-yos. This time was known as the yo-yo craze! Ole kept on making more and more yo-yos! But then the yo-yo craze was over and Ole still had lots of yo-yos that did not sell. Ole had an idea to cut the yo-yos in half and use them as wheels on toy trucks! These toy trucks were a hit!

A New Company

Ole began wondering what to call his company. He used the two words “leg” and “godt” which mean “play” and “well”. He put them together to make the word “Lego”. One day, a salesman came to Ole’s house and asked him if he would like to buy a plastic molding machine. Ole said that he would like to buy three but his family said that they were expensive and they should only buy one. Lego became one of the first ever companies in Denmark to make plastic toys!

It Gets Brickier

One of the first plastic toys they made was a baby rattle shaped like a fish. Then one day, Ole created a plastic brick that had studs on the top of it so that two bricks could click together. When Ole sold these they were a big hit! Soon after, people who bought Lego bricks said that the bricks were breaking and falling apart. Ole found a better way to make them by putting tubes in the bottom of the bricks. These worked by using tubes on the bottom and studs on the top so friction let them stick together.

The New System

Godtfred, Ole's son, was going on a ferry boat one day to get to a toy fair in Britain. When he was on the boat, he talked to a man about the Lego bricks they were making. The man said that he should make it a system where you can take Lego sets and connect them to other Lego sets.

Future Generations

Ole and Godtfred did make it a system and their company thrived! Lego has grown to be the world's largest toy producer by sales. Today, there are seven Legoland theme parks around the world. More than two million people visit these parks every year. Fans can also enjoy Lego movies, video games, television shows, and books. Lego's legacy is pretty brick-tastic!

Bonus Lego Facts:

In 2012, Lego factories made 45.7 billion bricks. That many bricks would go around the Earth 18 times if you laid them end to end!

Lego bricks have not changed much in design over the years, so if you found your parents' Lego, they would click together just the same with Lego from today.

There are more minifigures than people on Earth!

In the second Lego fire, everything burned down except for the front room. Every new employee gets a tour of this front room when they begin work at the Billund building.

The Ole Kirk Fund is a charity that supports children in need.

List of Sources:

The Inventors of Lego

By: Erin Hagar

Illustrated By: Paige Garrison

From an Idea to Lego

By: Lowey Bundy Sichol

Illustrated By: C.S. Jennings

What is Lego?

By: Jim O'Connor