Traffic Jam Puzzle

a.k.a. Tit-Bits Teaser No. 4
Patented 1928.
(carboard box and 14 wood pieces, 4 by 4.75 by 1/2 inches; box graphics are the same except that the yellow one says "CAN YOU DRIVE THE CAR HOME?", and the white one has "ORIENTAL ARTS CO." label on the box bottom)

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Directions On the Inside of the Traffic Jam Box Top

The inside of the box lid of the Traffic Jam Puzzle shows 12 starting positions, where the goal is always to get the 2x2 to the lower right corner.

In the 1928 Babcock patent, the figures show problems 3 and 4, Claim 1 addresses puzzles of this type, and Claim 3 specifies this particular piece set. Hordern's book says this puzzle was also patented in the U.K. in 1930 (Tit-Bits Teaser No. 4), and presents solutions for the 12 problems of rectilinear (straight-line) moves:

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<td>80 (94)</td>
<td>128 (150)</td>
<td>132 (147)</td>
<td>223 (257)</td>
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Solution To Traffic Jam Puzzle

MC-d; B-l; D-ul; F-u; MC-r; B-d; D-lld; F-l; N-l; C-l; H-u
O-u; R-r; P-dr; MC-r; N-d; F-rd; C-l; H-l; O-u; P-u;
MC-r; N-ru; B-r; M-u; I-l; S-l; A-l; R-d; P-d; MC-r; B-ru;
S-u; A-l; P-d; MC-d; B-r; N-r; S-u; A-u; P-l; R-l; MC-d

R-r; O-u; B-l; D-l; F-l; R-l; O-u; H-u;
O-r; N-dr; MC-r; B-d; D-lld; F-l; R-l; O-u; H-u; C-u; N-r;
P-dr; MC-r; R-d; P-rd; O-l; H-l; C-u; P-u; MC-r; R-r;
B-r; M-u; I-l; S-l; A-l; N-d; P-d; MC-r; B-ru; S-u; A-l;
P-d; MC-d; B-r; R-s; S-u; A-u; P-l; N-l; MC-d

R-u; P-r; O-r; H-d; C-d; F-l; N-ul; S-l; A-l; R-u; P-ru;
O-r; H-r; C-d; N-dld; S-l; A-l; R-ld; I-d; M-r; B-r; D-r;
MC-r; F-l; N-u; S-l; A-l; D-d; B-d; MC-r; N-ru; S-u; A-l;
B-d; MC-d; N-r; F-r; S-u; A-u; B-l D-l; MC-d; N-dld; M-l;
I-u; R-u; MC-r; N-d; F-d; N-l; I-l; R-u; P-u; MC-r; N-ru;
H-u; O-l; MC-d

P-rd; H-r; C-d; N-l; F-l; H-u; R-ur; C-r; O-r; A-r; S-d;
N-l; F-l; H-l; D-d; B-d; I-r; M-r; MC-r; N-ru; F-l; S-u;
A-l; C-l; O-l; D-d; B-d; I-d; M-r; MC-r; F-r; S-u A-l;
O-l; C-d; H-d; MC-d; F-r; N-r; S-u; A-u; B-l; MC-d; F-d;
M-l; I-u; B-r; MC-r; N-d; M-l; I-l; B-u; R-r; R-u; MC-r;
F-r; C-u; D-l; P-d; MC-d

O-l; H-l; D-c; B-l; N-l; P-d; R-u; F-c; D-c; O-l;
F-l; H-u; C-r; O-r; MC-d; B-l; N-l; P-d; H-u;
O-r; D-dr; MC-r; B-d; N-dld; P-r; R-l; H-l; C-u; O-u; D-r;
P-dr; MC-r; R-d; P-rd; H-l; C-l; O-u; F-r; MC-r; R-r;
B-r; M-u; I-l; S-l; A-l; D-d; F-r; MC-r; R-r; S-u; A-l;
P-d; MC-d; B-r; R-s; S-u; A-u; P-l; D-l; MC-d

R-r; F-r; N-r; P-u; S-l; A-l; R-d; F-rd; N-r; P-r; S-u;
A-l; P-d; N-dld; I-d; M-r; D-r; S-u; A-u; O-r; H-d; C-d;
MC-d; B-l; D-l; S-u; A-u; C-r; MC-d; D-lld; S-l; A-u; C-u;
O-u; H-r; MC-d; D-dr; B-d; S-l; A-l; M-l; I-u; C-r; O-a;
N-l; F-l; P-u; R-u; H-r; N-dr; MC-r; B-d; D-lld; O-I;
P-r; R-u; H-u; N-r; F-dr; MC-r; D-rd; O-c; P-r; R-l;
H-u; F-r; C-r; MC-r; F-rd; R-l; H-l; F-r; N-u; MC-r

R-r; P-r; N-r; M-u; I-u; O-r; H-d; C-d; MC-d; B-l; D-l;
M-l; I-u; C-r; MC-d; D-l; I-l; I-u; C-u; O-u; H-r; MC-d;
D-dr; B-d; M-l; I-l; N-ru; P-l; S-u; A-u; H-r; O-d; C-d;
P-d; N-d; F-rd; R-l; S-u; A-r; C-r; N-dld; F-d; R-d; S-l;
A-u; C-u; H-r; O-r; N-dr; MC-r; B-d; D-lld; P-r; R-l;
H-u; O-u; N-r; F-dr; MC-r; R-rd; P-c; H-l; O-u; F-r;
MC-r; F-rd; D-r; C-r; H-l; O-l; F-ul; N-u; MC-r

R-d; P-d; F-r; I-r; M-d; B-l; D-l; N-ul; F-u; I-r; M-r;
B-d; D-lld; N-l; M-u; I-l; P-r; R-u; A-r; S-r; B-d; D-d;
N-d; M-l; I-u; N-r; C-r; H-u; O-u; B-l; D-dl; S-l; A-l;
R-d; N-dld; C-r; H-r; O-u; D-ul; S-l; A-l; N-dld; C-h;
O-r; D-dr; B-d; M-l; I-l; N-ru; R-l; C-d; F-rd; F-d;
I-r; M-r; MC-r; B-d; D-lld; O-p; I-r; I-r; M-r; MC-r;
D-dr; O-u; P-1; F-l; MC-d; D-r; B-r; O-u; P-u; F-u; S-u;
A-l; N-dld; MC-d; D-lld; M-l; I-l; H-u; C-u; R-r; N-r; MC-a;
H-l; C-u; N-ul; MC-r; S-r; A-d; H-l; C-l; N-ul R-u; MC-r
Traffic Jam Puzzle Solution Sheet, Side 2

The capital letters represent the cars to be moved and the small letters indicate the direction the move is to be made: thus; MC-d, move My Car downward; F-l, move the Ford to the left; R-ru, move the Reno to the right and then upward, etc. Read the columns as paragraphed.

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Tit-Bits Teaser No. 4 Version Of The Traffic Jam Puzzle

Tit-Bits Teaser No. 4, George Newnes Ltd., London, 1931.
(cardboard box and 14 wood pieces, 4 by 4.75 by 1/2 inches;
text at top of box top says "COMPETITION CLOSES FEB. 28th 1931";
text at bottom of box top says "MADE IN U.S. A.")

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Tit-Bits Teaser No. 4 Solution Sheet

Tit-Bits Teaser No. 4 is puzzle number 11 of the Traffic Jam puzzle. *Hordern's book* gives both a 132 move rectilinear move solution and a 147 move straight-line solution. Here is the 132 move solution that came with the puzzle:

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</table>

132 MOVES.

“R” for Right, “L” for Left, “D” for Down, “U” for Up, or a combination of these letters for double moves such as “LD” Left-Down, “UR” Up-Right, etc.


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The Dingbat Puzzle

Hordern's book credits this puzzle as manufactured by Dr Hex Association, USA, 1930s. It uses the same piece set as Traffic Jam (where one of the 2 unit pieces is oriented vertically), also uses a 5 by 6 unit tray, and has the same goal of moving the 2x2 piece to the lower right corner. Here is the starting position; the upper left corner is called "Detroit" and the lower right corner is called "Washington":

Further Reading

Babcock Patent, from: www.uspto.gov - patent no. 1,683,014