

Rajah Quilt Revisited



Designed by Lessa Siegele
Made by Anita Fraser-Day
and quilted by Connie Potter
Quilt size: 66" x 66"

The Quilt Show.com



The Rajah Quilt, made by British convicts aboard the ship Rajah, 128" x 128", 1841. Collection of the National Gallery of Australia.



The Rajah Quilt Revisited, reproduction fabric version, made by Lessa Siegele, 66" x 66"

Rajah Quilt Revisited Month 1

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Lessa Siegele has a passion for historic Australian quilts. One of her favorites is the Rajah Quilt, in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. It's a huge quilt, approximately 128 x 128 inches square. Made in 1841, it was sewn by women convicts on board the ship Rajah, which left England in April 1841 and arrived at the penal colony of Van Diemen's Land—now known as Tasmania—that July. The original quilt bears the following inscription:

To the ladies of the convict ship committee

This quilt worked by the Convicts of the ship Rajah during their voyage to Van Diemen's Land is presented as a testimony of the gratitude with which they remember their exertions for their welfare while in England and during their passage and also as proof that they have not neglected the Ladies kind admonition of being industrious. June 1841.

Lessa recreated the Rajah Quilt in quarter scale with fabrics from her stash. She used many different scraps, imagining that's what might have happened when the original quilt was being made. She followed the colors of the original quilt loosely, and tea dyed fabrics that didn't look old enough. You can obtain the same look with reproduction fabrics, or make a more contemporary-looking version like the one created for TQS.

Rajah is a medallion-style quilt with 12 pieced or appliqued borders around a central appliqued panel. To ensure you will have a finished quilt that lies flat at the end of your 12-month journey, accurate piecing is essential! Wherever possible, we'll do foundation piecing, or piece blocks oversize and trim them to the

exact size needed. We'll also have patterns for English paper piecing for those of you who prefer to make your quilt the way the women aboard the Rajah might have. Fabric kits for the TQS version, with fabrics from Cotton + Steel, are available through the TQS Shoppe.



***The Rajah Quilt Revisited, 66" x 66". Designed by Lessa Siegele.
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Supplies for the quilt top

- liquid starch or spray starch
- sewing machine with a 1/4" foot for patchwork; appropriate foot for optional machine applique
- matching thread for applique patches
- neutral thread for patchwork
- light box or other light source
- small, sharp scissors

For hand applique and embroidery

- basting glue or pins
- green embroidery thread or perle cotton
- embroidery hoop

For raw-edge fused applique by machine

- 3 yds. paper-backed fusible web (yardage estimate is based on 20"-wide Quilters Select Appli-Web. Adjust this amount as needed for your preferred product).
- non-woven stabilizer such as Ricky Tims Stable Stuff

For foundation piecing

- Foundation material: paper or other product, such as Alex's favorite, Quilters Select Print & Piece

For English paper piecing

- card stock

Tips, techniques, and general instructions

Fabric preparation

To avoid unpleasant surprises, presoak your fabrics in hot water to release any excess dye. For paper foundation piecing and machine piecing, starch your fabrics firmly for accuracy. For best results they should feel quite stiff, almost like paper.

Applique two ways

There are many ways to applique. You may already have your own tried-and-true method—if so, by all means use it! For quilters who are new to applique or those who'd like to try something new, here's a brief tutorial for two different methods.

1. Baste from the back for needle turn by hand

Also needed: a pencil, basting thread in a color that contrasts with the applique fabric, and a round wooden toothpick.

Place the pattern right side down on the light box. Center the applique background fabric right side down over the pattern.

With a pencil, trace the applique pattern onto the back side of the background fabric (Fig. 1).

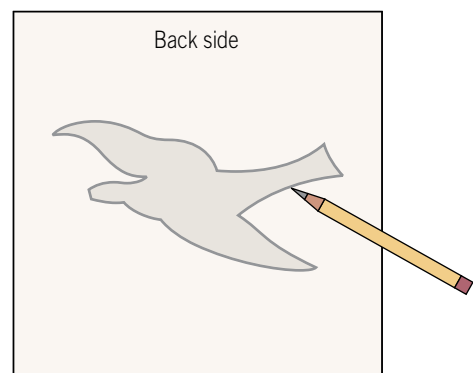


Fig. 1

Place the applique background fabric right side up on the light box. Rough cut a piece of fabric for the first patch and position it on the background. Pin it in place, or hold it in place with a small drop of glue in the center of the motif.

Thread a needle with basting thread. Working from the back of the fabric, neatly baste along the outline of the patch (Fig. 2)

From the front, trim the turn-under allowance to $\frac{3}{16}$ " , measuring by eye. Carefully clip the allowance at $\frac{1}{8}$ " intervals on concave curves and at inside points (Fig. 3).

Snip the basting thread and remove a few stitches. With thread matching the applique patch, begin to stitch the patch in place, turning under the allowance with the point of the needle or the wooden toothpick a little at a time. You will find the allowance turns under easily where the basting stitches were removed. Stitch around the entire patch, removing basting stitches as you go.

2. Raw-edge fused applique by machine

Also needed: paper-backed fusible web, an iron, non-woven stabilizer of your choice, and either invisible thread or thread to match the applique patches.

Place the pattern right side down on the light box. Place a sheet of fusible web on top of the pattern, paper side up. Trace each applique motif on the fusible web, leaving space between the motifs (Fig. 4). Cut the web out roughly with about $\frac{1}{4}$ " extra all around. Fuse each web shape to the back of the correct applique fabric, following the manufacturer's instructions for the fusible web (Fig. 5).

Cut the patches out on the marked lines. Place the pattern right side up on the light box. Center the background fabric right side up over the pattern. Remove the paper backing from the prepared patches. Using the pattern as a guide, position the prepared patches right side up on the background. Carefully transfer the fabric to the pressing surface. Following the manufacturer's instructions for the fusible web, fuse the patches in place (Fig. 6).

With the stabilizer of your choice placed underneath the fabric, stitch by machine around the edges of the fused patches. For a look that mimics hand applique, use invisible thread and a tiny zigzag stitch or a blind hemstitch. As an alternative, use cotton thread which matches the applique patch and a small zigzag or blanket stitch.

Following the manufacturer's instructions, remove excess stabilizer.

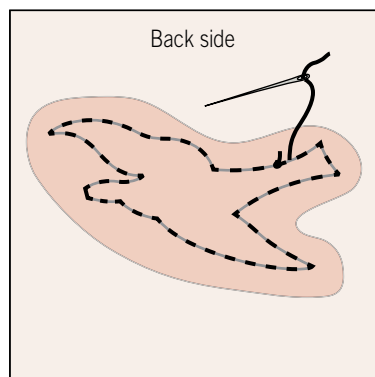


Fig. 2

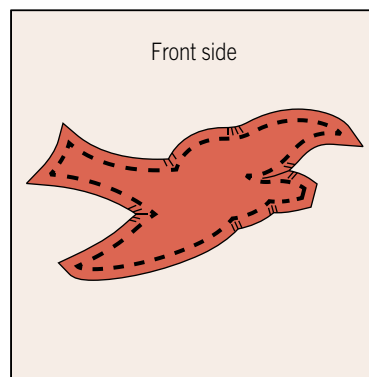


Fig. 3

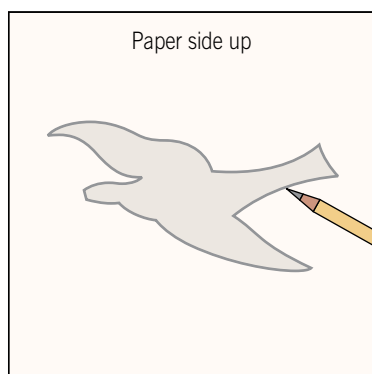


Fig. 4

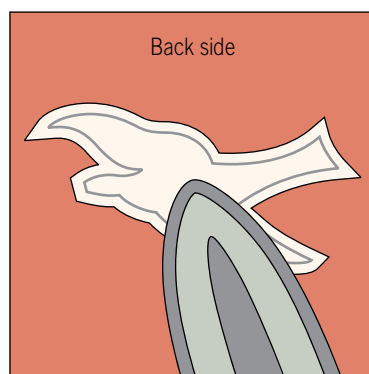


Fig. 5

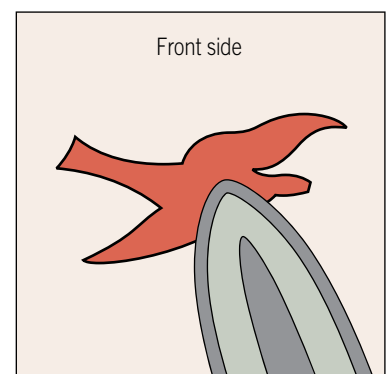


Fig. 6

Piecing two ways

We've included some basic, brief instructions for two popular techniques.

1. English paper piecing

Print the paper templates needed on card stock and cut them out. The template is the exact size of your finished patch. Trace around the template on the wrong side of your chosen fabric and cut out the patch, adding a $\frac{3}{16}$ " turn under allowance by eye. Fold the allowance over the paper and baste in place (Fig. 7). Continue around the patch to complete (Fig. 8). Knot to secure the stitches and snip the thread. Repeat to prepare all patches needed.

To join the patches, hold 2 prepared patches right sides together. By hand, neatly whipstitch the folded edges together (Fig. 9).

Leave the paper templates in place until you're instructed to remove them.

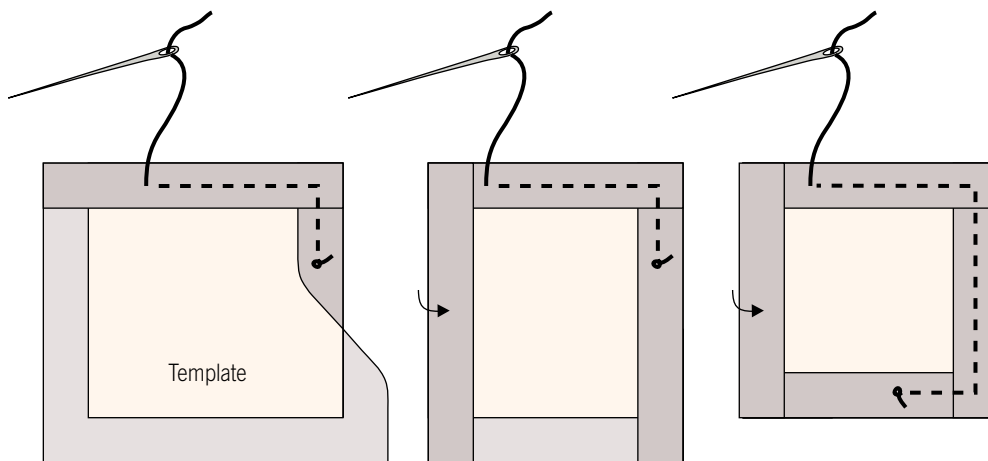


Fig. 7

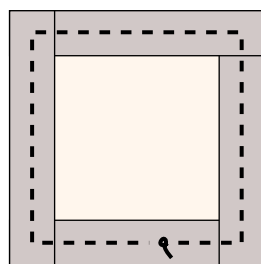


Fig. 8

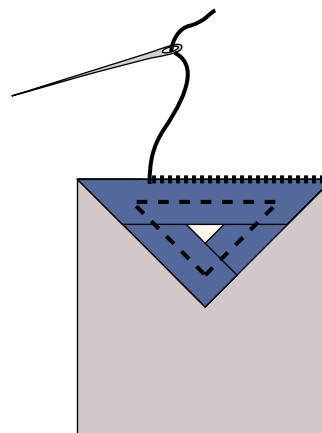


Fig. 9

2. Foundation piecing

Fabric requirements are estimated generously for foundation piecing. Wait to cut the patches as you need them. Rough cut individual patches, estimating at least $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance all around.

Print the foundations as directed. Working on the back (unprinted) side of the foundation, pin patch 1, wrong side toward the foundation in position 1 (Fig. 10). Place patch 2 right sides together with patch 1 (Fig. 11). Pin. Turn the foundation over. Using a short stitch, sew on the printed line between positions 1 and 2 (Fig. 12). Turn the foundation to the unprinted side (Fig. 13). Finger press

patch 2 open (Fig. 14). Refer to Fig. 15 and add patch number 3, the same way you added patch 2. Continue to add patches in numerical order. Press the completed block and trim away the excess fabric, being sure to leave $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance (Fig. 16).

If you are using paper for your foundations, leave it in place until you're instructed to remove it.

Tip: Set your stitch length to 1.0 for easier paper removal.

Coming January 1: Center Panel—Month 1

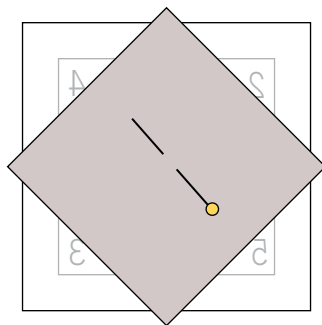


Fig. 10

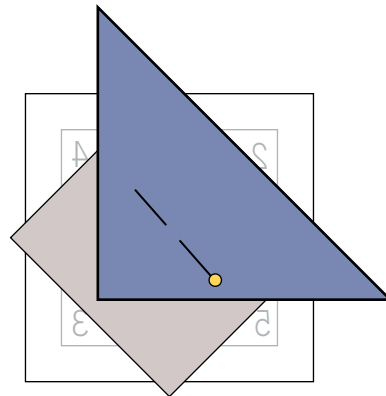


Fig. 11

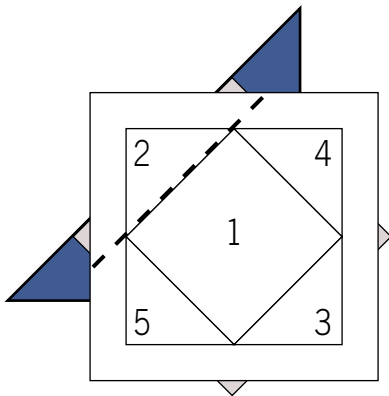


Fig. 12

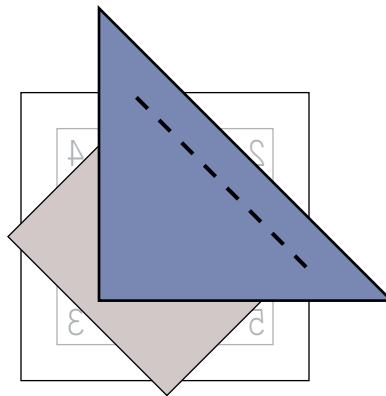


Fig. 13

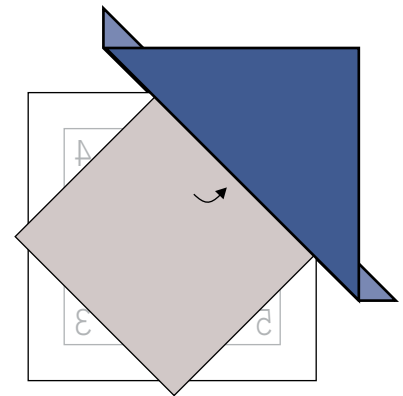


Fig. 14

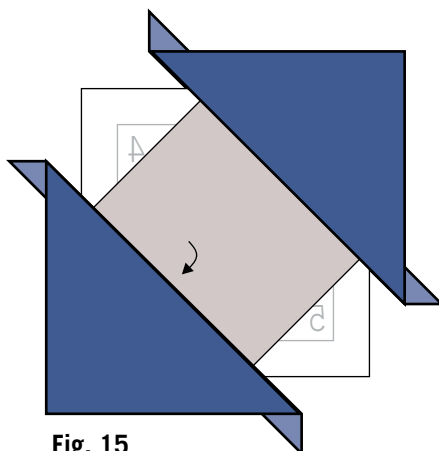


Fig. 15

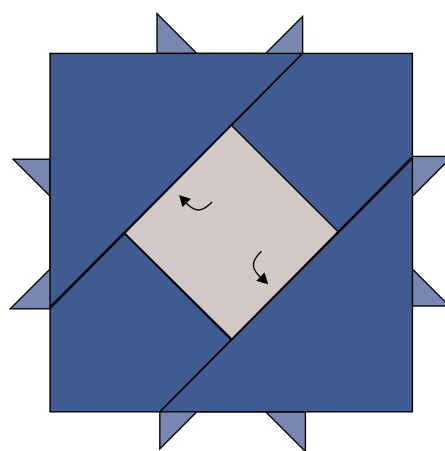


Fig. 16