Drunkard's Path

This scrappy quilt is from the International Quilt Study Center & Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska. Although this design is commonly known as Drunkard's Path, it originally had several other names. Notice the left side of the quilt— the quiltmaker trimmed her quilt—perhaps it was too wide?

Size: 70" × 77"

Blocks: 110 (7") blocks

FAT QUARTER *Friendly*

MATERIALS

22 fat quarters* assorted prints in blue, red, black, and brown

4 yards cream print

⅝ yard red print for binding

Template material

4¾ yards backing fabric

Twin-size quilt batting

*fat quarter = 18" × 20"

CUTTING

Measurements include ¼" seam allowances. Patterns for Take–Away and Fill–In templates are on page 4.

From assorted print fat quarters, cut a total of:

- 44 (4"-wide) strips. From strips, cut 220 (4") C squares.
- 37 (2¾"-wide) strips. From strips, cut 220 (2¾") B squares.

From cream print, cut:

- 11 (7½"-wide) strips. From strips, cut 55 (7½") A squares.
- 16 (2¾"-wide) strips. From strips, cut 220 (2¾") B squares.

From red print, cut:

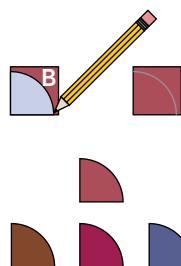- 8 (2¼"-wide) strips for binding.

BLOCK ASSEMBLY

1. Position Take–Away template on 1 corner of A square, aligning edges as shown in *Cutting Diagrams.* Trace curved edge; cut on line. Repeat for remaining corners.
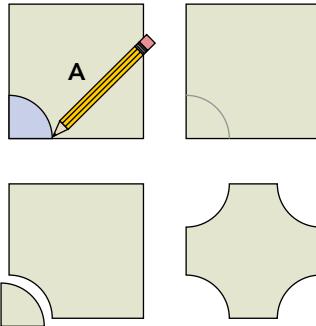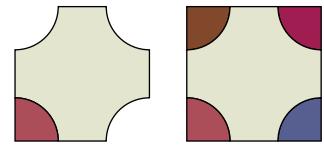

Cutting Diagrams

2. Position Fill–In template on 1 corner of print B square, aligning edges as shown in *Cutting Diagrams.* Trace curved edge; cut on line to make 1 quarter circle. Cut 4 quarter circles using assorted print B squares.
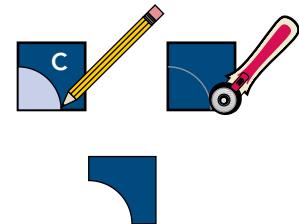

Cutting Diagrams

3. Referring to *Sew Easy: Piecing Curves* on page 5, join 1 print quarter circle to each corner of trimmed A square as shown in *Block 1 Diagrams.* Make 55 Block 1.
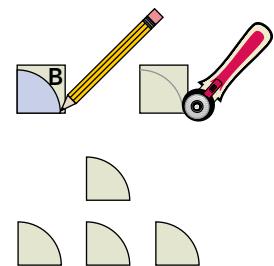

Block 1 Diagrams

4. Position Take–Away template on 1 corner of print C square, aligning edges as shown in *Cutting Diagrams.* Trace curved edge; cut on line to make 1 background piece. Make 4 background pieces.

Cutting Diagrams

5. Position Fill–In template on 1 corner of B square, aligning edges as shown in *Cutting Diagrams.* Trace curved edge; cut on line to make 1 quarter circle. Cut 4 quarter circles using B squares.
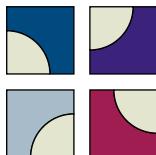

Cutting Diagrams

6. Referring to *Sew Easy: Piecing Curves* on page 5, join 1 quarter circle to 1 print background piece to make 1 Block Unit. Make 4 Block Units.
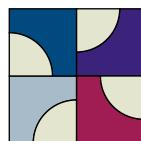

Block Unit Diagram

7. Lay out 4 Block Units as shown in *Block 2 Assembly Diagram*. Join into rows; join rows to complete 1 Block 2 *(Block 2 Diagram)*. Make 55 Block 2.
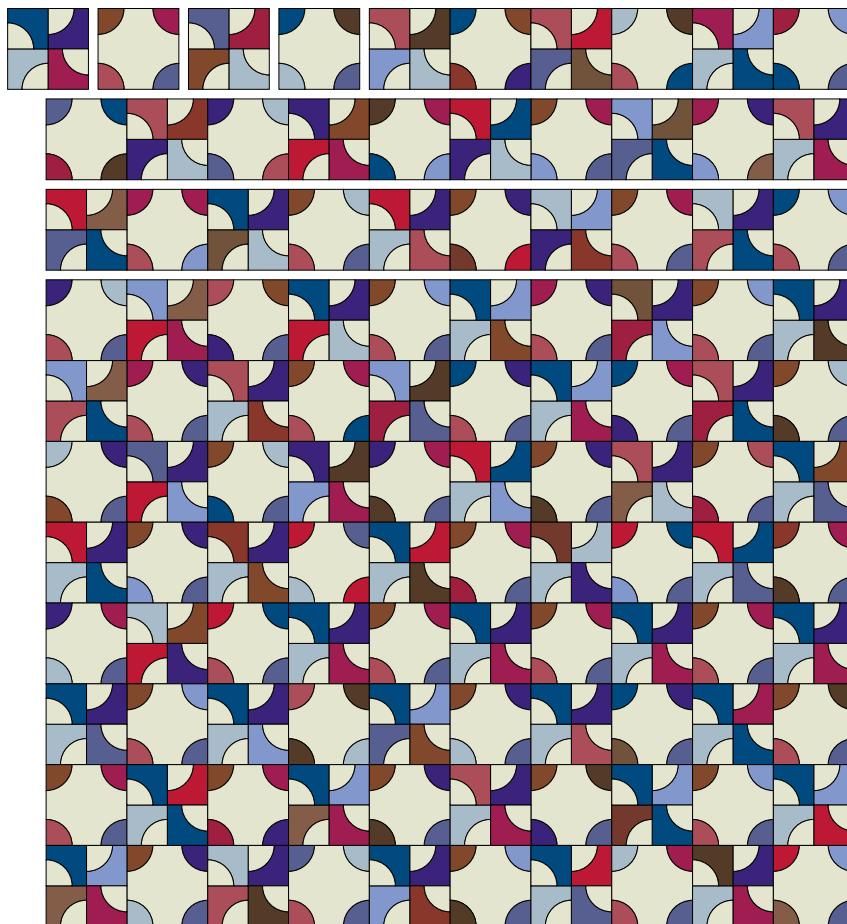

Block 2 Assembly Diagram


Block 2 Diagram

QUILT ASSEMBLY

1. Lay out blocks as shown in *Quilt Top Assembly Diagram*.

2. Join into rows; join rows to complete quilt top.

FINISHING

1. Divide backing into 2 (2⅜-yard) lengths. Cut 1 piece in half lengthwise to make 2 narrow panels. Join 1 narrow panel to each side of wider panel; press seam allowances toward narrow panels.

2. Layer backing, batting, and quilt top; baste. Quilt as desired. Quilt shown was quilted with crosshatching in Block 1 and diagonal lines in Block 2.

3. Join 2¼"-wide red print strips into 1 continuous piece for straight-grain French-fold binding. Add binding to quilt. ✳

Quilt Top Assembly Diagram

Fill-In Template

Take-Away Template
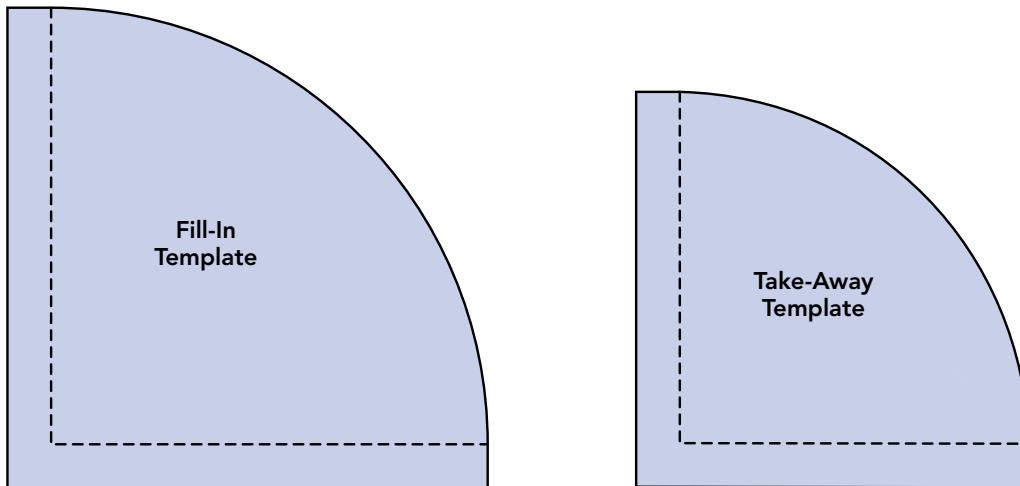
FROM THE CURATOR

Very little is known of the origins of this circa 1900 Drunkard's Path quilt (68½" × 79½"), except that it is a classic pattern, usually rendered in solid fabrics or calico. Originating in England, the pattern was known as Wanderer in the Wilderness, Rob Peter to Pay Paul, or Mill Wheel. The Amish later called it Solomon's Puzzle or Old Maid's Puzzle. Legend has it that some quilters believed that it was bad luck to piece a Drunkard's Path quilt—the person who slept under it might develop a thirst for drink and wander far from home.

In the 1870s and 1880s, quilt styles changed and women began making pieced quilts of designs that were composed of many small pieces. Quilters used the multitude of calico fabric available to them in the United States after the Civil War. "This quilt illustrates a classic color combination of the era, incorporating deep indigo blues, light sky blue, black, gray, and deep burgundy, in combination with shirting prints." says Carolyn Ducey, Curator of Collections at the International Quilt Study Center & Museum. "Shirtings are light-colored cotton fabrics with small printed motifs that were popular for clothing."

The pattern maintains its graphic quality with the contrast of small prints set on an off-white ground. "The interplay of the individual blocks, with no sashing and blocks stitched directly next to each other, creates dynamic secondary patterns," says Ducey. "The balance and distribution of the light and dark fabric is very successful."

ABOUT THE COLLECTION: In each issue, *Love of Quilting* features an antique quilt and pattern from the International Quilt Study Center & Museum at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The Center has the largest publicly held quilt collection in the world. See other gorgeous quilts from the collection and enjoy interactive Web features at www.quiltstudy.org under Quilt Explorer.

Piecing Curves

Follow these instructions to piece perfect curves.

1. Mark center of curve on both background and quarter circle pieces by folding in half and creasing or by making a small clip *(Photo A)*.
2. Working with background piece on top, pin at curve centers, taking a small bite with the pin. Pin at end of seam, taking a deep bite with the pin *(Photo B)*.
3. Align pieces at beginning of seam. Stitch to middle of curve. Use your fingertips, a stiletto, or a wooden skewer to help keep curved edges aligned as you sew *(Photo C)*.
4. Leaving needle in fabric, raise presser foot. Adjust top fabric away from you toward the area you have already sewn *(Photo D)*.
5. Align curved edges for second half of seam and stitch to about 1" from end of seam. Stop again and adjust top fabric so ending edges are also aligned.
6. Gently press seam allowance toward background piece.

A

B

C

D