

March, 2017: TILE QUILT BLOCK

Traditional tile quilts, also known as Boston Pavement and Stonewall, are unique forms of appliqué quilt. The names are appropriate since the quilts are constructed with small pieces of fabric appliquéd to a solid background. This leaves a narrow space between the pieces and serves as the "grout" between the tiles or "mortar" between the pavers. On some quilts, the small pieces of appliqué are randomly shaped, while other quilts contain recognizable cut out images, or geometric shapes.

Little documentation can be found about this type of quilt. The earliest one found is 1865. And the latest is dated 1900. The quilts origins are mostly attributed to New England. However, examples that are very similar can be found in great Britain in the same time period. The pattern was first printed in 1898, and consisted of odd shaped triangles to be appliquéd with narrow paths between them.

This month we will be using our first bird design for this type of appliqué.

1. Cut the outline of the bird ignoring the crest, tail, and legs.
2. Cut along the outline of the wing, and remove it from the bird.
3. Trace both of these pattern pieces onto the dull side of freezer paper.
4. Cut the freezer paper apart along the pattern lines. Also cut the line down the center of the wing.
5. Iron each freezer paper pattern piece onto the right side of the chosen fabric.
6. Cut each fabric shape right along the edge of the freezer paper. Don't forget the line down the center of the wing.
7. Reassemble the pattern on a piece of background fabric in the position you want it to be.
8. Remove the freezer paper.
9. Baste the fabric shapes onto the background fabric
10. Appliqué

Choose a thread color that matches the piece to be appliquéd.

Stitch by hand, turning 1/8 inch under with the needle as you go, or press 1/8 inch under and machine stitch with a narrow, long zigzag stitch

As the seam allowance on each fabric shape (tile) is turned under and sewn, a line of background fabric will be revealed. This finished space will be approximately 1/4–3/8 inch.

Now, return to the outline of your bird, and add the crest, tail, and legs. You may do this with feathers, yarn, or hand embroidery. Any other solutions you think up will also be fine. Add a button or handstitched French knot for his eye. Add any other embellishments to the background that you wish.

