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# The Trail to Treadleonia Block and Quilt

## (The Shaded Four Patch and Trail to Treadleonia Block)

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This block, known as the Shaded Four Patch, was TOBE VIII in our history of TOBE exchanges. The four patch unit made from it can be assembled into a very lovely quilt reminiscent of many of the "Road to..." quilts. There was tremendous enthusiasm over this project, and quite heavy participation, a goodly number of Onions ending up making the beautiful quilt we chose to call "The Trail to Trealeonia".

Here are complete instructions. This is a real fun block to make, because you end up making them twice as fast as you expect to.



Shaded Four Patch or Mary's Triangles Block



Four Shaded Four Patch units combined to form the Trail to Treadleonia block

This exchange, our eighth, continued Treadle On 's history of exploring basic blocks that can be combined into increasingly varied patterns. This block was known as both the Shaded Four Patch and Brave New World in the past. In more modern times, a roller cut version that actually produces two blocks at once has become popular. It is generally known as "Mary's Triangles". Under that name, it is featured in the book "Scrap Mania, More Quick-Pieced Scrap Quilts" by Sally Schneider, available from "That Patchwork Place". It has also been featured in several magazine articles in the past few years.

There are actually a variety of other names, and some different ways to construct this block. I find the modern version especially fun to make. Getting two blocks at once just seems to make it all go fast. There are numerous arrangements for the blocks. The basic structure is similar to several of the "Road toÖ " blocks, and I was moved to designate this as the " Traditional Road to Treadleonia" block when I made a scrap Barn Raising pattern quilt of it.

I am going to begin our instructions by building the basic Shaded Four Patch block. Later, I'll show how four of these units can be combined to make larger blocks, including Trail to Treadleonia.

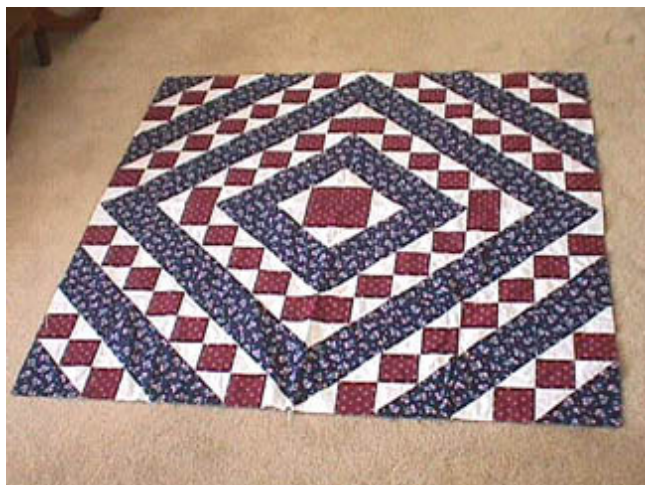
## The Exchange

This was based on 16 large Trail to Treadleonia blocks. However, to make them it takes four Shaded Four Patches each, or 64 units. That sounds like a lot, but believe me, it isn't. Once you get into the swing of these, you will be popping them out like chocolate chip cookies. Twice now, I have started quilts using this pattern and have been having such fun making the blocks, I just went ahead and made enough for a whole extra quilt! Once you get your "squishie" (packet of blocks) from the coordinator, you can have a ball playing with all the arrangements to make patterns, including a full Trail to Treadleonia quilt if you like.

The Shaded Four Patch units will be 6 1/2" squares.

This is a "mathematical" block. This is, it is one of those that if you do the math perfectly, the layout perfectly, the cutting perfectly and the sewing perfectly, is supposed to allow you to measure out oversize rectangles, cut them on diagonals, and end up with perfectly sized blocks involving triangle squares. Right and politicians never lie. I have never had much success with all that perfection, so when making triangle squares, I always make them oversize and trim them down to perfect blocks. I follow that same philosophy with this block, and the piece dimensions given allow plenty of extra size for trimming down.. If you are accustomed to doing very exact work, you can probably reduce my piece sizes and make blocks that come out at 6 1/2" without the trimming process. However, for all the newbies who have been wanting to try an exchange, I do suggest you be reasonable and do it my way (quote from Archie Bunker)

Note: In making up these instructions, I used photos from past quilts, as well as pictures of quickly made sample blocks. You will see a quilt made from 6 1/2" blocks, using three fabrics and a quilt made from 4" blocks using scraps. For this exchange, we are making the large blocks, but using scrap or varied fabric. I hope it doesn't confuse you.



Here is a picture of a quilt top in the TTT block block pattern made with three selected fabrics. The 64 Shaded Four Patch blocks have been made up into the TTT blocks, (16 of the Shaded Four Patches to each TTT block). The TTT blocks have been set in the traditional barn raising pattern. This quilt top is 48 1/2" square. With borders added it will



This is the same pattern, but made in smaller, 4" Shaded Four Patch blocks.

They have been set in the same pattern, but rows have been added to elongate the quilt for a bed. In this exchange, participants made the larger blocks, as shown above left, but in the scrap color approach, as shown directly above.

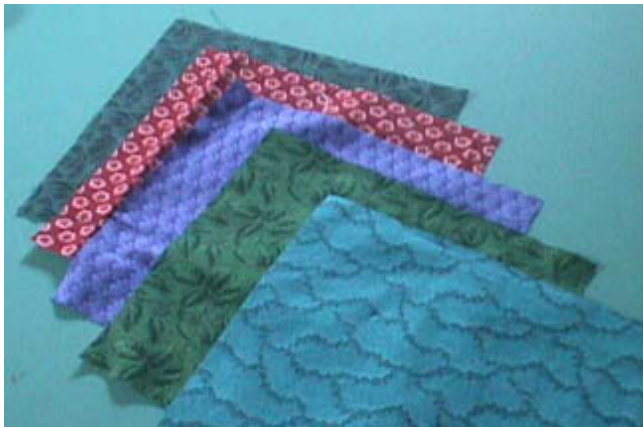
make a great lap quilt or throw.

## Fabric Selection

This is a great scrap quilt, and the more different scraps used, the better they will all work together. Twenty or more fabrics is considered good. Hence, I thought this would be an especially neat block for an exchange, and it was. I suggested that everyone use nice bright scraps—see the pictures below. Select small prints, and avoid any of the currently popular "neon bright" colors. For your own future reference, the pattern also shows well in two, or especially in three, colors— a light background, a dark and a medium or two darks (see picture above). However, for our exchange, we used varied fabrics for the scrap look.

Avoid fabrics with obvious up and down prints. The construction technique used is such that there is no way to control the orientation of particular prints.

The background, or light fabric, should be unbleached muslin. As always, use only 100% cotton fabrics and wash new fabric in hot water to shrink them.



This is the stack of fabrics I chose for the sample blocks in this project.



I stack and cut four thicknesses.

Re fabric amounts— I'm not good at this, but here is how I calculate what you will need—

For 4" squares, cut 4" strips from 42" wide fabric and you will get 10 blocks per strip, so you will need 7 strips.  $4 \times 7 = 28"$ . I would buy or use a yard, or two 1/2 yards. Remember, with 64 packets coming in, it is going to be a scrap quilt, even if everyone used only two colored fabrics— one for the square and one for the triangles. For the large squares, if you cut 8 1/4" strips and cut them into 7 1/2" pieces, you will get 5 pieces per strip. You need 32 of these pieces, so you need at least 7 strips.  $7 \times 8.25 = 57"$ , or a little over 1.5 yards. I'd figure on 2 yards, in two different colors For the muslin background, cut 4 3/4" strips and cut these into 4" pieces. You'll get 10 per strip. You need 64, so you need at least 7 strips.  $7 \times 4.75 = 33.75"$ , so you need one yard. If someone who is good at this or knows how to use the electronic programs for fabric measurement wants to provide more accurate figures, that would be great. One final reminder— for our exchange it is not critical that you use lots of colors (though it is more fun), but if in future you want to make a scrap TTT quilt for yourself, use lots of different colors.

## Initial Cutting

The nature of this block is that you will be producing two blocks at a time. Use pre-washed and shrunk 100% cotton. For each block pair, cut the following pieces:

One dark rectangle: 7 1/2" X 8 1/4" (for exchange, cut 32)

Two dark squares: 4" (for exchange, cut 64)

Two light rectangles: 4" X 4 3/4" (for exchange, cut 64)

I always recommend that anyone making numbers of blocks make at least 10% too many, to allow for those that don't come out right, so by all means make more than the number shown if you are inclined.

These dimensions will produce will produce 7 1/2" blocks if the work is perfect, but again, I trimmed mine down to get 6 1/2" blocks. Each of these sets of pieces will produce two blocks. These blocks are the basic building unit for the main pattern block, which uses four of them.

### Assembly

Begin by cutting the needed pieces as indicated above



I Cut four thicknesses at once



Here are the basic units of the Shaded Four Patch.

7 1/2" X 8 1/4" rectangles  
4" squares  
and 4" X 4 3/4" muslin rectangles

Step 1: Sew the dark squares and the light rectangles together as shown here. Iron seams to the dark side.



(YesÖ I know I am getting some puckering. I was in a tearing hurry to make these sample blocks and didn't take the time to adjust everything outÖ)

Step 2: Sew the units produced above together as shown here. Lay a piece out, face up, with a dark square to the left. Place the other piece above it, dark square to the right. Turn the top piece over onto the bottom piece and sew the seam on the top edge. This is critical. You will not end up with the correct block if you do not handle the color positioning correctly.

DO NOT IRON YET!

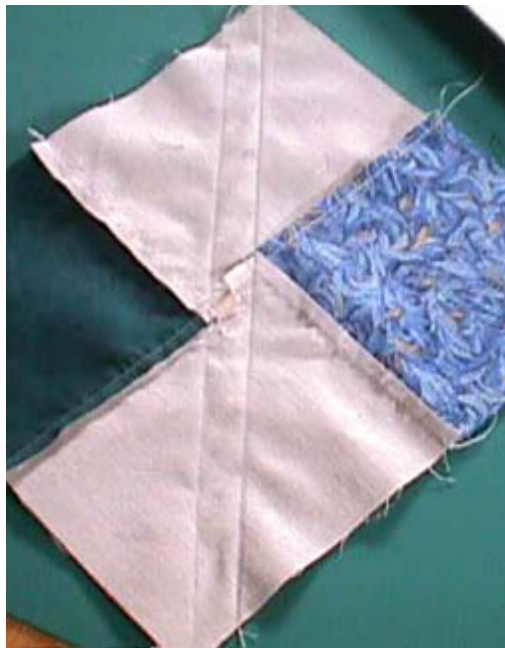


Here is the work as it appears at this pointÖ

Step 3: Take the pieces you have just sewn, look at the back. Looking at the back, you should have dark on two opposite corners, and a short length of white in between. Clip the seam in the middle of the white, clipping the seam thread as you do so. Iron the two seam pieces that result toward the LIGHT side. See picture below:

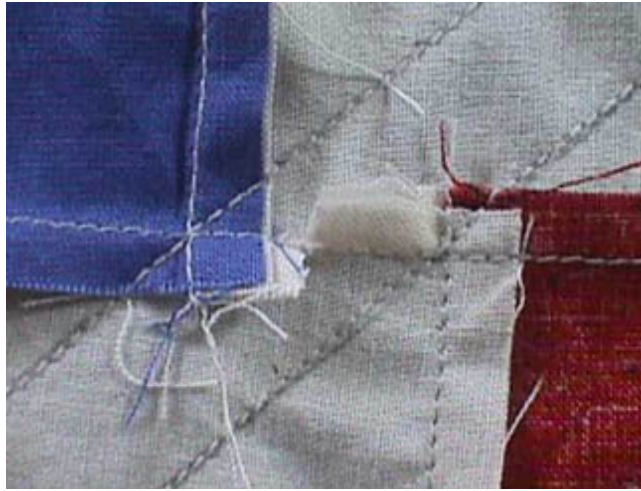


Step 4: Lay the finished piece on top of one of the larger dark rectangles, faces together, smooth nicely. Using a 45 degree triangle, very carefully draw a line from the upper light corner through the spot where the seam joins the corner of the lower right square, and on down to the bottom of the piece. Because the piece is a rectangle, not a square, the line will not come out at the corner. Rotate the piece and repeat for the other square. See photo below:



Pencil lines. Note that each line goes exactly through the corner crossing of the color block seam on it's side. This is what will produce nice exact points on the finished block.

Step 5: Sew on these lines, being very careful to have the seam hit dead on as it crosses the intersection with the cross seam at the corner of each square. Care here produces perfect joining points. See photos:



Note how exactly the diagonal seams bisect the corners of the color block seam crossing. This is also a good detail shot of the clip.

Step 6: The distance between your two diagonal seams should be roughly 1/2". Place a good clear plastic ruler on the seams so that the edge runs between them and directly through the middle intersection where the snipped fold is. Roller cut the two sides apart:



Voila! Two units instead on one! Open them up and iron seams toward the dark triangle unit.



What you have now should look like this.

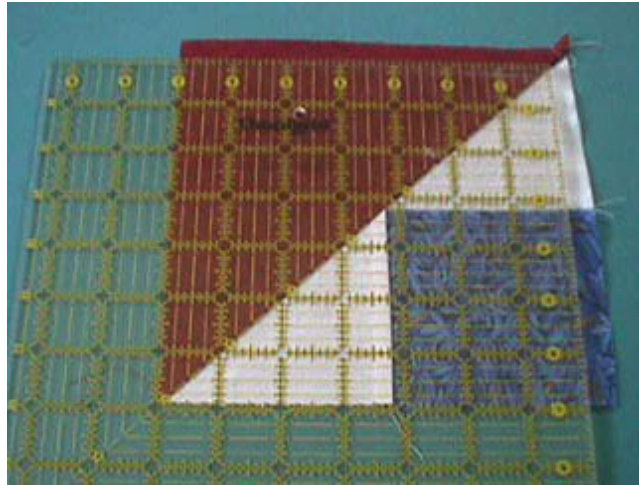
Step 7: Special note: Some ten years or more after these instructions were published, and after scores of quilts had been made using them, someone sent me a post and pointed out that there was no Step 7 and asked that I send it to them. Naturally, I was concerned and went back and checked, and, sure enough, there was no Step 7. As best I can tell, there is actually no material missing. I apparently just mis-numbered the steps. I could go through and re-number them, but it seems simpler to just put this note in. It kind of tickles me, and feels like it should be part of the "history" of this block, that we had 60 or more participants in the original block exchange, and many, many quilts made since, and no one spoke up. I think they just figured out what happened and didn't want to embarrass me. 8^)

At one point someone even lifted these instructions (which are

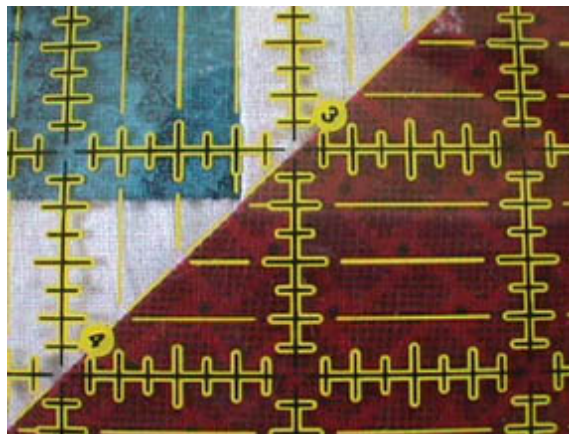
copyrighted) off of the web and was selling them. I let it pass, but I wish I could remember who it was. I might buy a set just to see if they copied the omission, as well... like the famous Japanese Singer 15 clone that was manufactured with a dent in the casting because there was one on the original they copied from.

### Captain Dick

Step 8: While these blocks may look good, they are too large for our TOBE exchange. Unless you are a perfect seamster, they will also likely have some variance in dimensions. They need to be exactly 6 1/2" for our exchange. Using a clear plastic square ruler larger than the block and having a clear 45 degree marking on it, find the spot on the ruler that would be the center of the size square you want to produce. In our case we want a 6 1/2" block, so our center will be the intersection of the 3 1/4" lines. Orient the block so the long diagonal runs NE to SW. Orient the ruler so the 45 degree angle runs from NE to SW also and put that angle line over the diagonal on the block.

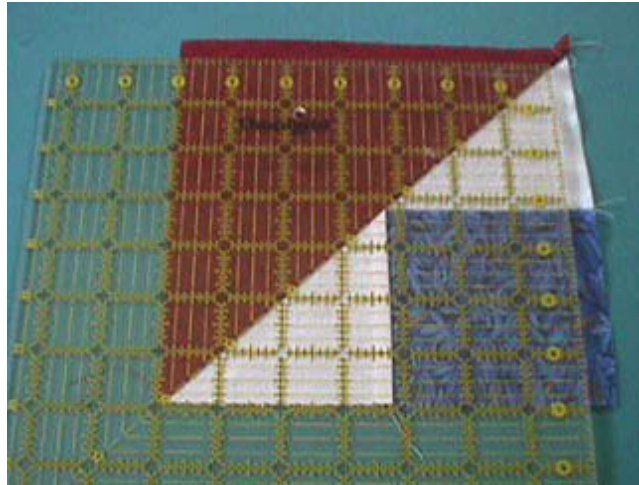


Slide the ruler down until your center point, i.e. the intersection of the 3 1/4" lines, is exactly on the point where the colored square's corner meets the edge of the triangle, keeping the ruler's 45 degree line and the diagonal of the block together. Trim the top and right side. Rotate the block and repeat the process. You should end up with a 6 1/2" square.

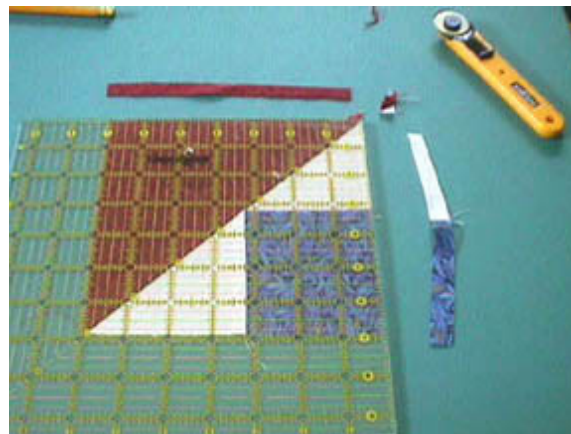


Detail shot of alignment of square for one of the trim cuts. You can see that the 45 degree line is on the diagonal so exactly that it is nearly invisible here and the 3 1/4" lines meet dead on the point where the square meets the triangle.

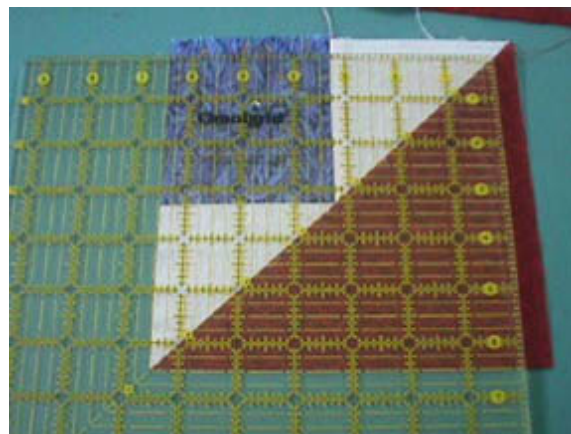




Ready to trim top and right sidesÖ



Top and right sides trimmedÖ



Work has been rotated so that the trimmed sides are now the left and bottom. The square has been centered as described above, and we are ready to trim the remaining sidesÖ



OK! A finished Shaded Four Patch square. When you have 64 of these, you're ready to move on.

You have now produced the basic building blocks for Trail to Treadleonia, and any other arrangement of them that you might care to make. Many block patterns are possible, as I'll show in a bit, or these blocks can be combined with the blocks from previous exchanges to make more varied patterns.

### **Assembling the Trail to Treadleonia Block**

Up at the beginning of these instructions, you have pictures of the combined Trail to Treadleonia block. It uses four of the Shaded Four Patch units. I did not have you combine the units for the exchange for a couple of reasons. First, as you have seen, it is easy to make the small units oversize and trim them to perfect dimensions. This is a real advantage when 50 to 60 or more people are participating in an exchange! In assembling the four units to make a TTT block, you can't work oversize; you have to get correct dimensions by correct seaming. It's very difficult to count on perfect quarter inch seams from 64 different sewing machines. Hence, I felt it was better to allow each participant to do their own assembling. Secondly, some folks may not want to make the TTT block. There are other ways to arrange the units. Also, there is an option with the TTT blockÖ you can have a square in the center, or a diamond in the center. Try both, make your choice, and then arrange your blocks accordingly.

Assuming you are going to copy the layout pattern above, to produce the Trail to Treadleonia blocks, divide your 64 sub-units into two stacks. Join the left hand stack into pairs as shown below left, and the right hand stack into pairs as shown on the right.



Now take one set from each stack and join them as shown below:

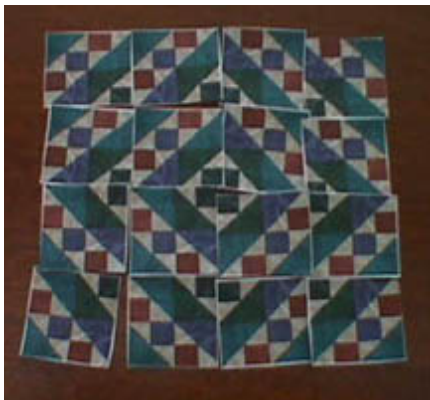


Here's our completed Trail to Treadleonia block.

### Assembling the Quilt:

Start in the middle and arrange the blocks outward. When you have the arrangement you want, sew the rows together as you would for any quilt. You might find it advantageous to make the quilt in quarters, once you have it arranged. Complete by joining the quarters.

I made computer printout pages with lots of 1.5" blocks on them, and cut these out to show some of the traditional Treadleonian designs using the TTT block:



Traditional Trail to Treadleonia

Square Center signifies that this Treadleonian pioneer has found their place, i.e. has settled



Traditional Trail to Treadleonia

Diamond Center signifies that this Onion is still "on the road", or looking for their place to settle. Note the similarity between this pattern and the Southwest Indian "God's Eye" design. The diamond center TTT layout especially signifies a journey of the spirit



"The Wells of Happiness"

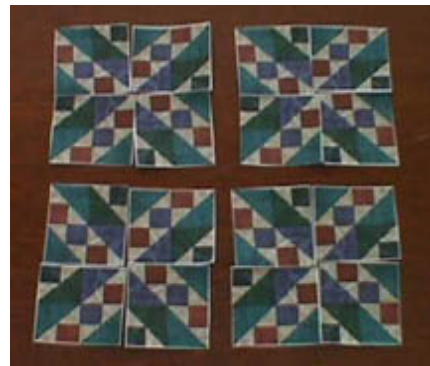
Some folks object to the fact that the diamond center can result in no center point at the top and bottom (see above and compare with square center version). If a diamond point is desired, expand the quilt by 1/2 row top and bottom. You will have to make special block parts, using the top and bottom of the TTT block, to make these special rows. Study the pattern and lay it out before sewing.

This design especially relates to a sense of community, and is popular in Treadleonia as a design for gift quilts made by a group. The design was made sometimes to signify the establishment of a community, either in real terms or a marriage, or at other times as a good-bye quilt when someone was leaving a community.



"Windmills"

A less common design, apparently made just because it appealed to someone.



Here is Windmills spread apart to allow for sashing. Don't miss this possibility with any of these designs.



"Furrows"

This design signifies a well settled person or couple.



"Zig Zag" or "Lightning"

Sometimes known as "Treadleonian Troubles"

This design was popular in Treadleonia during hard times

### Conclusion

Well, there you have it a virtual book to support one exchange block. I hope you will participate in the exchange and have fun.

If you have any problems with the instructions, give me a post and I'll try to help.

Captain Dick