

NOVEMBER, 2022
BLOCK OF THE MONTH
Aunt Mary's Double Irish Chain



Aunt Mary's Double Irish Chain is a variation on a block designed back in 1906 by Clara Stone for publication in her booklet *Practical Needlework Quilt Patterns*. I think this block is lovely on its own, but put four together and WOW. The large center gives lots of opportunity for creativity.

The block is easy using all Half Square Triangles (HST). As with most of the old blocks, it was originally designed for templates. Oh, the nightmare. All of the Blocks we will be making were originally done with templates. Our more modern, more mathematical methods make piecing faster, easier and more accurate. The Block is from *Best Blocks*, by *Quilter's Newsletter*.

This 12" finished block is "easy as pie" if you have a plan. Starting with small squares to make HSTs, this block uses little fabric, so it is a good time to hit up your scraps. Using just fabric values as a guide, this block could be terrific done scrappy. Before you cut, I suggest starch, Best Press, or Faultless Fabric Finish to help stabilize your fabric.

You will need 6 fabrics:

One (1) dark

Two (2) different lights. *Identify as Light A and Light B*

Two (2) different mediums. *Identify as Medium A and Medium B*.

6. One beautiful focus fabric for the center.

After picking your fabrics, make a little sample board.



CUT the following at $2\frac{7}{8}$ " x $2\frac{7}{8}$ ". Be accurate on these cuts.

DARKest — cut 4 squares

LIGHT A — cut 2 squares

LIGHT B — cut 2 squares

MEDIUM A — cut 2 squares

MEDIUM B — cut 2 squares

Cut each of the $2\frac{7}{8}$ " squares in two on the diagonal, from corner to corner creating half square triangles. Set aside.

Cut the following at $3\frac{1}{4}$ " x $3\frac{1}{4}$ ". Measurement is generous, you will trim after sewing.

DARKest — cut 2 squares

LIGHT A — cut 3 squares

LIGHT B — cut 3 squares

MEDIUM A — cut 2 squares

MEDIUM B — cut 2 squares

Cut the large piece of FOCUS FABRIC $5\frac{1}{8}$ " x $5\frac{1}{8}$ " (**See Size Correction Note Below)

FOCUS Fabric — cut 1 square

LIGHT A — cut 1 square

Cut the $5\frac{1}{8}$ " FOCUS PRINT and the LIGHT A from corner to corner on the diagonal creating half square triangles.

Sew using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam. Scant or full, it doesn't matter, just be consistent. Using a scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam, my block is $12\frac{3}{8}$ " square. Finished and set in, it will be $11\frac{7}{8}$ " square. Obviously my scant was not perfect.

From the $3\frac{1}{4}$ " squares:

1) Draw a diagonal line on the wrong side of all of the $3\frac{1}{4}$ " LIGHT A and LIGHT B squares.

Using $3\frac{1}{4}$ " squares only:

2) Pick up two MEDIUM A and two LIGHT A squares. Right sides together, place one MEDIUM A on top of one LIGHT A. Sew $\frac{1}{4}$ " from each side of the marked line. Repeat on second pair. Cut each on the marked line after sewing. Iron or finger press to the darker fabric. You should have four HST units.

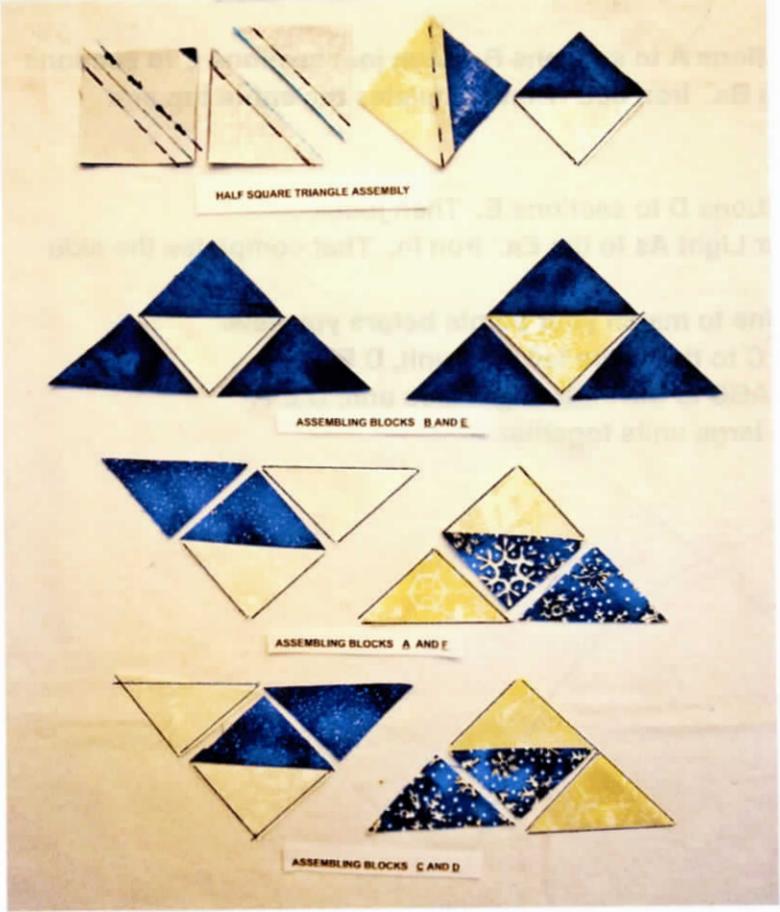
3) Pick up one DARK and one LIGHT A. Sew, cut, and iron as above. You should have two HST units.

4) Pick up two MEDIUM B and two LIGHT B. Each MEDIUM B goes with a LIGHT B. Sew, cut, and iron as above. You should have four HST units.

5) Pick up one DARK and one LIGHT B. Sew, cut, and iron as above. You should have two HST units.

6) Carefully trim all of the just sewn pieces and pressed HST units to $2\frac{5}{8}$ " x $2\frac{5}{8}$ ".

**** The Center Focus fabric & Light Fabric should be cut larger. Best to cut the center focus fabric $5\frac{5}{8}$ " - $5\frac{3}{4}$ " for the 12" version and $3\frac{1}{2}$ " of more for the 6" version. Attach as a sew and flip, press flat and trim to match the slant of the complete unit it attaches to.**



**ONE COMPLETE SIDE
YOU WILL HAVE FOUR**

To avoid any funky Y seams, I divided the block into easy to handle sections. A, B, C section has a mirror image on the opposite side, as does D, E, and F. See color map and layout map.

Be careful that the wings lay out straight; no flapping wings. All will be pressed to the darker fabric.

When you have assembled all of the sections, it is time to put them together into larger units.

Following the layout map, join sections A to sections B. Then join sections C to sections B. Add your PRINT FABRIC to the Bs. Iron out. That completes the entire top and bottom units.

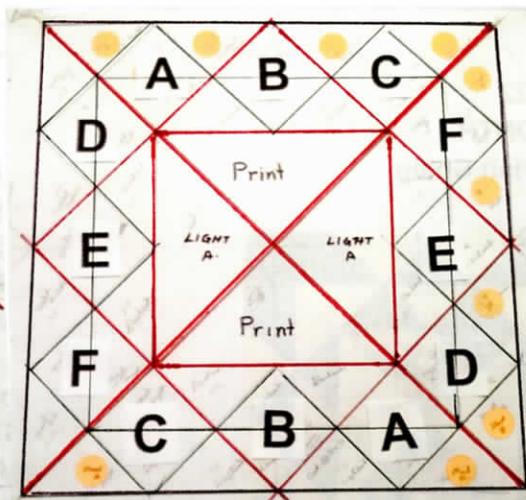
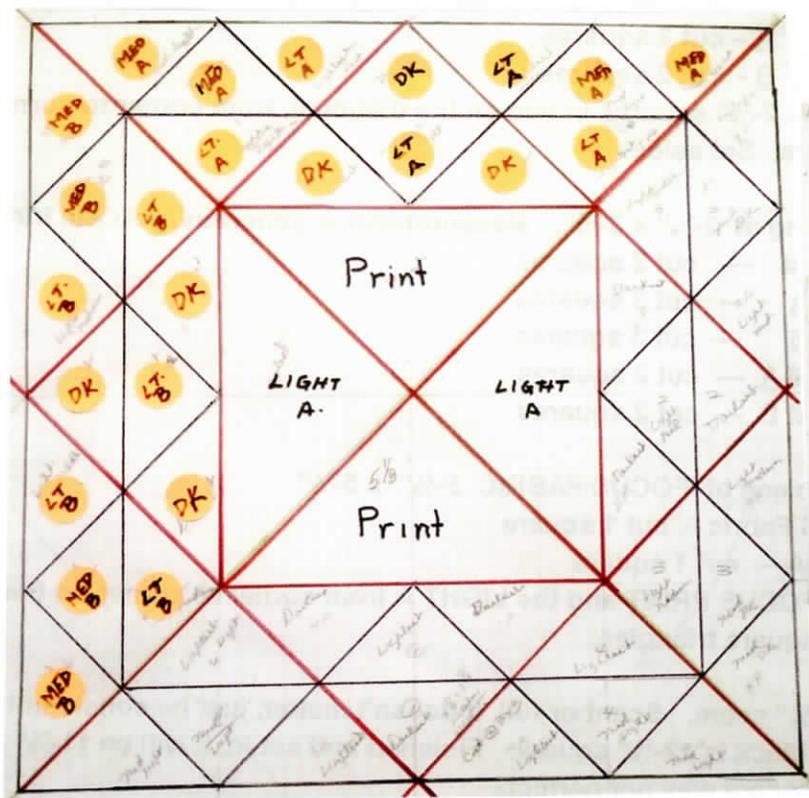
Following the layout map, join sections D to sections E. Then join sections F to sections E. Add your Light As to the Es. Iron In. That completes the side units.

This is a good time to use some pins to match your points before you sew.

Join the entire top unit A B C to the entire left side unit, D E F.

Join the entire bottom unit ABC to the entire right side unit, D E F.

You guessed it ! Now join the two large units together.



6" x 6" FINISHED BLOCK is done exactly like the 12" block.

12" Block square used 2-7/8" -- 6" block uses 1-9/16 x 1-9/16

12" Block square used 3-1/4" -- 6" block uses 2-1/4 x 2-1/4 trimmed to 1-5/8 after sewing HST

Focus fabric and (1) one Light A, cut 2-7/8 x 2-7/8

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