

Ask This Honey To Join Your Heritage Contest Quilting Bee

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The fourth pattern in the Indiana Heritage Quilt Contest honors an insect that plies the Hoosier airways from the shores of Lake Michigan to the banks of the Ohio River.

The Honey Bee design combines both applique and patchwork in a pleasing pattern that, according to at least one source, dates back to the founding of this country.

One reference from the mid-'30s, *The Romance of the Patchwork Quilt in America*, by Rose G. Kretsinger, notes that the design is a "lovely old colonial pattern." The version pictured in that book shows the pattern set alternately with plain joiner blocks. The quilter has repeated the checked center of the block

in the corners of the otherwise plain border.

ANOTHER REFERENCE is in Dolores A. Hinson's *Quilting Manual* (1970). She, like Ms. Kretsinger, reports that the pattern also is called Blue Blazes, probably in reminder of a catchy slang phrase of the 1800s.

The block also is found in *One Hundred and One Patchwork Patterns*, by Ruby Short McKim (1932).

The center of the square, a small nine-patch, is reminiscent of the black and white checked flag that signals the winner at the conclusion of the 500-Mile Race. Alternating light and dark squares within a larger block also have appeared in Little Beech Tree, and this motif will be repeated in other patterns in the Indiana Heritage Quilt Contest.

As with all the patterns in this contest, the pieces are shown *without* seam allow-

ances. These must be added before the design is cut out in order for the square to end up 12 inches on a side. The usual seam allowance is 1/4-inch, although quilters sometimes prefer narrower for tightly woven fabrics and wider for looser weaves.

THE USUAL METHOD of assembling the square is to piece the center, then seam the remaining background fabric, before applying the wings and bodies of the bees. Traditionally, the wings are light blue, the bodies and dark, small squares gold and the light squares and background fabric white.

There's no reason to stick to traditional color combinations or methods. The entire block could be appliqued or embroidered instead. The pattern could be enlarged and flower motifs quilted into the central nine-patch.

