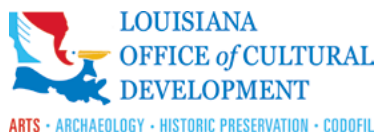


# Make a Community Quilted Wall Hanging Using Fusible Appliqué



*The Baton Rouge Traditions Quilted Wall Hanging*



*The Giving Quilt, Inc.*

This activity kit is provided by  
Louisiana Division of the Arts Folklife Program and The Giving Quilt  
as part of the Baton Rouge Traditions Project  
[www.louisianafolklife.org/batonrouge](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/batonrouge)

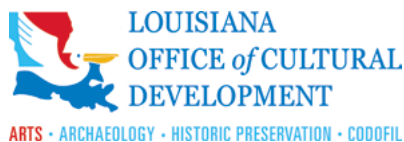
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Written in collaboration by Renee Hoeprich, Judy Holley, and Maida Owens.

Photos provided by Renee Hoeprich, Judy Holley, Peter Jones, and Maida Owens.

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The Giving Quilt, Inc.



## Introduction

The tradition of making quilts that reflect important moments in our individual or community lives is a longstanding one. The Baton Rouge Traditions quilt features iconic images of Baton Rouge including locations (the old and new state capitols, churches, the Baton Rouge dock, riverboats, houses) in addition to common landscape features (magnolias, cypress trees), animals (alligators, egrets), cultural activities (choirs, LSU tigers and Southern jaguars, cooking ingredients and foods), and vehicles (school bus, police car, EMS).

Many are shared with other communities in the state, but your community has its own. The techniques used here are those that will provide a good outcome for organizers and participants without a quilting background.

Use this activity—whether or not you are hosting the exhibit—to make a quilted wall hanging of iconic images of your community. The technique is fusible appliqué and the activity provides a way for inexperienced sewers to participate, while allowing others to make their own designs. This activity provides a way for the public to engage with the exhibit and leaves the host site with a memento of the community that can be displayed.



*Quilters help people make quilt blocks for the Baton Rouge Traditions quilt.*

This activity gives directions for making a fusible appliqué quilt with public participation. It does not include basic quilting instruction. If no one on your staff is an experienced quilter, we recommend that you contact local quilters or quilting guilds to help with basic skills, tools, and a readymade fabric stash! See below for how to find quilters. And note that if you don't have access to a quilter, it can be a wall hanging. It's better to be a wall hanging than a poorly quilted quilt! Just skip that step.



*Quilters help people make quilt blocks for the Baton Rouge Traditions quilt.*

The Giving Quilt, Wasted Women's Bee, and other quilting bees in the greater Baton Rouge area collaborated to create the Baton Rouge Traditions commemorative quilted wall hanging to reflect what Baton Rouge means to the community. The public participated by creating quilt blocks.

We'd like to know if you use this activity! We'd like to improve it so that it can help more communities. Just send an email to [folklife@crt.la.gov](mailto:folklife@crt.la.gov) and [reenehoeprich@yahoo.com](mailto:reenehoeprich@yahoo.com).

## **Planning Your Quilt Project**

You will need to consider several things before starting your project, including the size of your quilt, the number of quilt blocks, costs, and whether fabric will be donated, and the number of events when the public can participate. How you finish the quilt will depend on whether you are working with an experienced quilter.



**Size of Your Quilt and the Quilt Blocks:** First you will need to decide the size of your quilt and the size of the quilt blocks. They may be the same size or vary. The Baton Rouge Traditions quilt is an asymmetrical sampler in the folk-art tradition. Finished block sizes include 6, 9, and 12-inch blocks; 6 x 9 and 6 x 12-inch rectangles; and pieced filler blocks of 3 inch 9-patches. The set may seem ambitious but as long as all sides of every block are divisible by the number 3, the pieces of the puzzle will fit together. Just arrange the blocks in any pleasing manner. The possibilities are endless!

If you use a combination of block sizes, inevitably you will end up with some gaps. You can fill in the gaps with pieced or non-pieced fabric squares/rectangles.

Of course, your quilt can also be a simple straight set with all blocks being the same size, say 9 or 12- inch blocks. It does make the set easier.

So why use rectangular blocks? Consider the old State Capitol, a large block castle that looks fine placed on a 12-inch block. But the new State Capitol is a tall slender building that looks better on a rectangle, as does the Mississippi River Bridge and the USS Kidd. Block sizes were chosen to fit the image.

**Fabric:** Regardless of your fabric source (purchased or donated), select 100% cotton fabric. Neutral backgrounds will allow the fabric images to take center stage. A good contrast between the background value (light or dark) and the fabric images (dark or light) is a good formula for graphic impact. A variety of background colors and values (darks and lights) will allow each block to stand on its own in the finished wall hanging.

**Cost of Materials:** Of course, the costs depend on the size of the quilt, whether you get fabric donated, and whether you make the minimum number of blocks or make extras that the visitors can take with them. The BR Traditions quilt was made with a combination of donated and purchased fabric so the exact cost is not known, but it is 76" x 62" with 81 blocks. Plan on paying a minimum of \$8 per yard for fabric with a waste/seam allowance percentage of 15 percent.

## **Making the Quilt Block Kits**

The host site will need to prepare quilt block kits for the visitors to assemble. Take time for this step because it is critical to the overall look and ability to work with what you bring to the event site. However, there's a lot of flexibility in this project. You will find that some participants will take the provided kit and change it to make it their own. If possible, have an experienced quilter involved to ensure that all the construction issues are addressed.

First, select from the examples provided and determine if you will make kits for your community's iconic images. Plan to make kits of varying levels of skill so that both adults and youth can participate. Some visitors may want to use their own designs, so bring extra pre-fused fabric and scissors.

**Select Images:** You will need to decide what images you would like to feature. You can find simple images in coloring books, clip art, or even fabric. The dragonfly below was found in fabric.



If you want to feature local landmarks from your community, start by photographing them. Keep it simple and go for straight-on shots or profiles rather than from an angle. Focus on the major lines of the image and eliminate as much detail as possible. Sometimes just the outline of a building is all you need. The church and new state capitol were not even drawn! Judy Holley, who created the kits and pieced the Baton Rouge Traditions quilt, folded a piece of paper, eyeballed it, and cut out the shape of the building to get it symmetrical. Let fabric choice and a few key details (doors and windows) do the rest.

For some images try enlarging or reducing them on a copy machine. Print several different sizes so you have several options to choose from or use them all.

**Prepare Fabric:** Before cutting, wash the 100% cotton fabric with detergent and color catchers. Dry it without using fabric softeners to help ensure that the iron-on fusible will permanently bind the fabrics.

Iron the fabric before cutting. Cut the background fabrics for blocks  $\frac{1}{2}$ " larger than the finished size (6  $\frac{1}{2}$ " squares or 6  $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 12  $\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangles) to allow for sewing them together.

**Select Fusibles:** All fusibles are slightly different so follow the manufacturer's directions. Note that some fusibles are susceptible to overheating which will destroy the glue and cause premature separation of the image from the background. Allow the piece to cool before handling to ensure a more permanent bond.

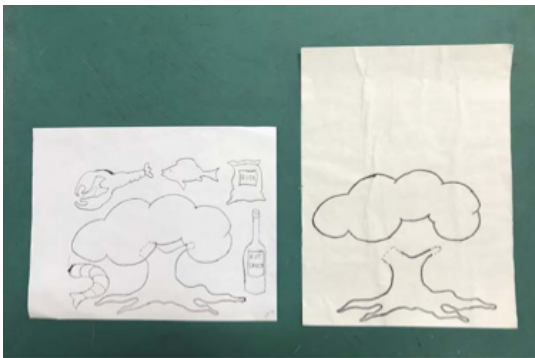
The Baton Rouge Traditions Quilt was made with Lite Steam-A-Seam 2. This product is tacky for fabric placement and is great for working with kids in outdoor settings. Once ironed, it will hold the pieces in place until topstitched. While the directions do not require topstitching, we recommend it to ensure a permanent bond in case the fabric wasn't prewashed, the iron wasn't hot enough, or the heat wasn't applied for the required time. Topstitching after the wallhanging is layered for quilting will also add dimension. Note that some fusibles will totally dissolve after 7-9 seconds of heat so they will lift off when cooled if not stitched down. Steam-A Seam can take the heat. The following directions are for Lite Steam-A Seam 2.

For the fusible web, flat sheets are preferable to folded ones. A roll allows for a multitude of sizes and efficiency in cutting shapes. Steam a Seam 2 has a sticky side allowing easy, temporary placement of pieces before they are ironed in place.

Generally, place your pattern on a light box or tape it to a window with daylight shining through. Place Steam-A-Seam 2 on top, the gridded side down, and trace with a fine point Sharpie on the "blank page" side of Steam-A-Seam. Only trace one color section of a motif at a time as this makes cutting out pieces from one fabric much easier.

If making multiple blocks of the same image, trace several from one side of the pattern and then flip the pattern over and make tracings from the other side. This will give you some images facing left and the others facing right. This is great for animals but unnecessary for symmetrical shapes like the guitar. NOTE: All tracings for lettering will have to be done from the "wrong" side of the pattern to be read correctly!

**Cut Out Shapes:** Next you will cut out the shapes. Here is an example for making trees. Trace the trunk and select fabrics. Trunks are browns or blacks and leaves are green. Move the sheet of fusible to leave a margin around the trunk so it can be cut out separately with a margin of fusible around it. Trace the leaves. Again, leave a margin of fusible around the tracings of each image. Rough cut out the tracings to keep those margins intact!







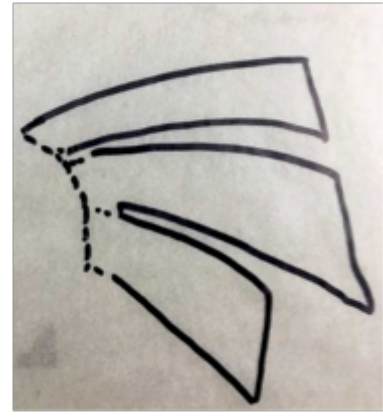
Here is another example for making birds.



*Above is the image, before adapting for use with this project. Note that the legs can be drawn in with the Pigma pen after the fabric pieces are fused.*



*The template to cut the fabric.*



*A detail showing the dotted line marking which part of this piece will go under the body of the bird.*

Choose fabrics that contrast, so wings will show up on the body, and the iconic image as a whole will show up on the background. Note from the finished samples how there is no one correct fabric.

Now cut out both images following your traced lines on the fusible side.

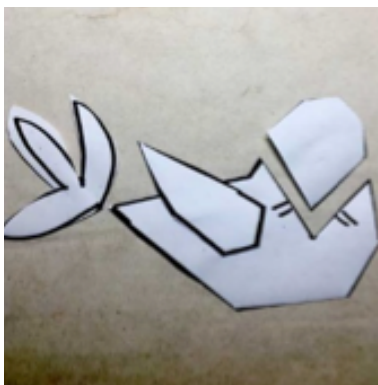
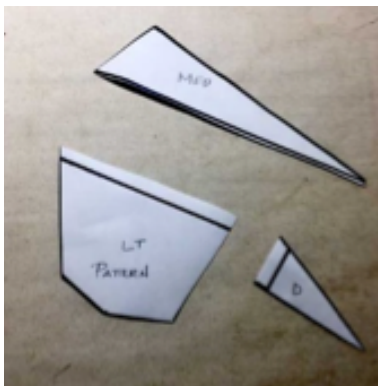
Below are three examples made from the same template.



Have the trunk fabric pressed and ready, wrong side of fabric facing up. Peel gridded side of Steam-A-Seam off your trunk tracing and place it into position on the fabric. Pat in place and then press the iron down for 10 seconds. Be sure to not move the iron back and forth. Use an up\down motion to avoid moving the pieces. Flip over and press from right side. Repeat for your leaves.

Videos online may help. Here are two: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVszGkO5LSU> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u12Slq-C5sl>

Some shapes are simpler to cut and prepare, such as the birds shapes used in the A Garden Grows Here wall hanging.



**Assemble Kits:** Put all the cut out shapes needed for the block into a plastic bag—probably a pint or quart size—along with a diagram of the pattern. Before pieces are adhered to the background, be mindful of the ¼ inch seam allowance around the block—any images in this perimeter will be sewn into the seam.

### **The Visitor Experience – Making Blocks Using Kits**

At your quilt-block making event(s) help visitors assemble a kit. Each visitor selects a quilt-block kit and a background if it wasn't included in the kit. If you are having several events, display the quilt blocks that have been finished.

The visitor assembles the fabric pieces onto the background after removing the paper from the adhesive. The tackiness will hold the pieces in place temporarily. Using an iron, adhere the pieces to the background. Until all the layers have been lightly ironed into place, avoid doing a final, long press with the iron. Keep in mind you do not want to completely use up the glue. The visitor may embellish the square using a pen with an archival quality ink. It should be waterproof, fade resistant, quick drying, and pH neutral, such as Micron Pigma pens made by Sakura of America. Some will want to not use a kit and will freehand a design of their own. Sometimes the participant will use a basic kit and add elements. See the sample wall hangings where branches and other details were added.



**Supplies Needed at the Event:** You will need the pre-assembled appliqué kits, pre-cut background material, archival-quality pens, straight pins, an iron, freezer paper, parchment paper or a Teflon pressing sheet, and an old towel to protect the table if you aren't using an ironing board.

If you want some visitors to make their own patterns, provide some pre-fused fabric in basic colors and some scissors. Make sure that the scissors are sharp and in large and small sizes. Then let them be creative. They will surprise you!! Once they start, they can't stop. Also, save your scrap fabric with fusible on it for free hand cutting small shapes. Nothing goes to waste!

**The Process:** The visitor works from the background to the foreground of the desired image/scene. Remove the paper backing from the fusible prior to placing the icon image fabrics on the background fabric. The sticky side of the fabric will hold the pieces in place yet still allow them to be moved to place the edge of a piece under it.

They can use a straight pin to score the paper side of their appliqué piece to make it easy to peel off the paper. They can play with various positions. When satisfied with their efforts, they can press everything from the right side and then flip the block over and press on the wrong side.

Place parchment paper or a Teflon pressing sheet between the iron and the fabrics to prevent transfer of the adhesive. Adhesive from the fusible on the soleplate of the iron will end up on projects and is almost impossible to remove.

You can use old, thick towels to protect the tables from the heat of the iron.

Some images, like the tree, will have a slight under-tuck with the leaves covering the forked branches of the trunk. Most patterns will have a dotted line to show when the under-tuck is needed. The leaves cover the top of the forked branches, hence the under-tuck.

1. Place background fabric on work surface, right side up.
2. Position tree trunk in desired location, after removing paper portion of fusible.
3. Lift the edge of the tree branch to allow placement of the leaves, either by participant's design or as indicated in the provided instructional drawing.

If the kit has a second layer of appliqués, such as windows and doors on a building, help people arrange them where needed. Peel the paper off the back of these small shapes and using the iron, fuse them to the building before fusing the whole building to the background fabric.

Some visitors may want to embellish their finished block. Using a fabric pen, then can add details such as school bus numbers, labels on the hot sauce bottle, "EMS" on the ambulance, etc.



If you want to track who made which block, have them write their name on a piece of freezer tape. Have them include their phone number or email address if you want to contact them after the quilt is completed. Iron the tape onto the back of the quilt block so that those who made the selected blocks can be notified.

Display all the quilt blocks until the quilt is finished.



## **Finishing Your Quilt**

After you have all the blocks needed for your quilt, you need to top stitch the raw edges of each image since the adhesive is a temporary solution. Over time (especially with handling), the pieces will separate from the background.

Below are examples of how to finish the quilt blocks.



*Add decorative details with stitching*



*Note how the flower is enhanced with the stitching around each petal and leaf. This step can be done independent of the quilting. So, if your group is not quilting your piece, these enhancements on petals and the butterfly below, can still be added.*



*Butterfly Wings*



*Functional Embellishment*



*Note the ink-drawn face.*



*The thread can blend or show.*

Lay the blocks out and arrange them. Using a design wall or viewing the layout through a camera lens or as a photo will give you a better perspective. Using the monochrome filter on a camera will also help you see whether your visual balance of images is good. Determine whether you need any filler blocks. These can be solid fabric or pieced blocks. See the sample wall hangings. Next you piece the blocks together to create the quilt top. You will have to piece smaller sections together and then sew these pieced units to complete the top.

After the top is pieced, the photos below illustrate how to make the piece lie flat and square. Please supplement the photos here with your own research/consultation with local quilters.



*Square up the corners, then straighten the perimeter*



*The lines on a cutting mat or a line of tape will help cut a straight perimeter*





*Clips show how to ease in fullness*



*Secure with stay stitching*

Now, finish as any other quilt. By definition, a quilt consists of three layers: top, batting, and backing. It is better to display the piece as an unquilted wall hanging versus a poorly quilted quilt. If it is not quilted properly, the batting will eventually shift and bunch up, and detract from the beauty of your images. Proper quilting can be done on a home sewing machine or by someone with a long-arm quilting machine (there are people who do this professionally as well). Consult with your local quilting guild or librarian for information.

You may want to embellish some blocks during the quilting process. For example, on the Baton Rouge Traditions quilt, the fireworks over the Mississippi Bridge were added during the quilting.



Above are examples using the quilting lines to enhance the piece. Here, the quilting lines look like a breeze blowing through the garden from block to block. It also helps to create a continuous line of quilting so tying off the thread is minimized.

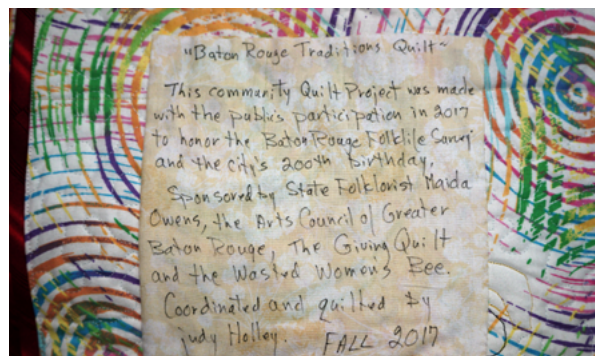
In the image below, the fireworks over the bridge were added during quilting.



Since it is a wall hanging and not a bed quilt, you can choose to attach a back without batting to secure all the raw edges and threads. To display it in this fashion, after attaching the backing, add sleeves at the top and bottom. Construct a sleeve on the top for placement of a hanging dowel rod and a second sleeve at the bottom of the wall hanging for placement of a second dowel rod to add some weight to help the piece hang straight.

Often, the quilter can attach the binding for you. Consult with your quilter about the best method for your project.

On a bottom corner, add a label with the name, date and any other details about the making of the quilt, using the Micron Pigma fabric pen. Iron a piece of freezer paper to the fabric to stabilize it during writing. Hand sew the label to the back. If the backing is plain, the information can be written directly on it.



And again, please let us know if you use this activity. If you see anything that needs improvement, we want to know! [folklife@crt.la.gov](mailto:folklife@crt.la.gov) and [reenehoeprich@yahoo.com](mailto:reenehoeprich@yahoo.com)

## **How to Find Quilters and Quilting Guilds**

Many options are available for quilting today. If a quilter is not part of your project group, there are many accomplished, professional machine quilters available to complete this part of the project. Check with quilt shops in your area for a recommendation for a quilter with a quilting style/design that will fit your budget (less than \$100 and up). If you have questions about finding a quilter or quilting guild, contact Renee Hoeprich, a longtime Community Sew Organizer with The Giving Quilt, [reenehoeprich@yahoo.com](mailto:reenehoeprich@yahoo.com).

## **Displaying and Caring For Your Quilt**

If you will be displaying your quilt long term, be sure to not place it direct sunlight. If it will be in storage, be sure to store in appropriately. The Louisiana Quilt Documentation Project listed in Resources below includes information about quilt care and exhibiting quilts. Note it is important to periodically re-fold stored quilts to avoid damage or you can store quilts rolled on a tube.

## **Resources**

Louisiana Quilt Documentation Project, <http://www.louisianafolklife.org/quilts/homemaster.shtml>

The Giving Quilt, <http://www.thegivingquiltinc.org/>. Contact Renee Hoeprich, [reenehoeprich@yahoo.com](mailto:reenehoeprich@yahoo.com). She collaborated on this project and is a longtime Community Sew Organizer.

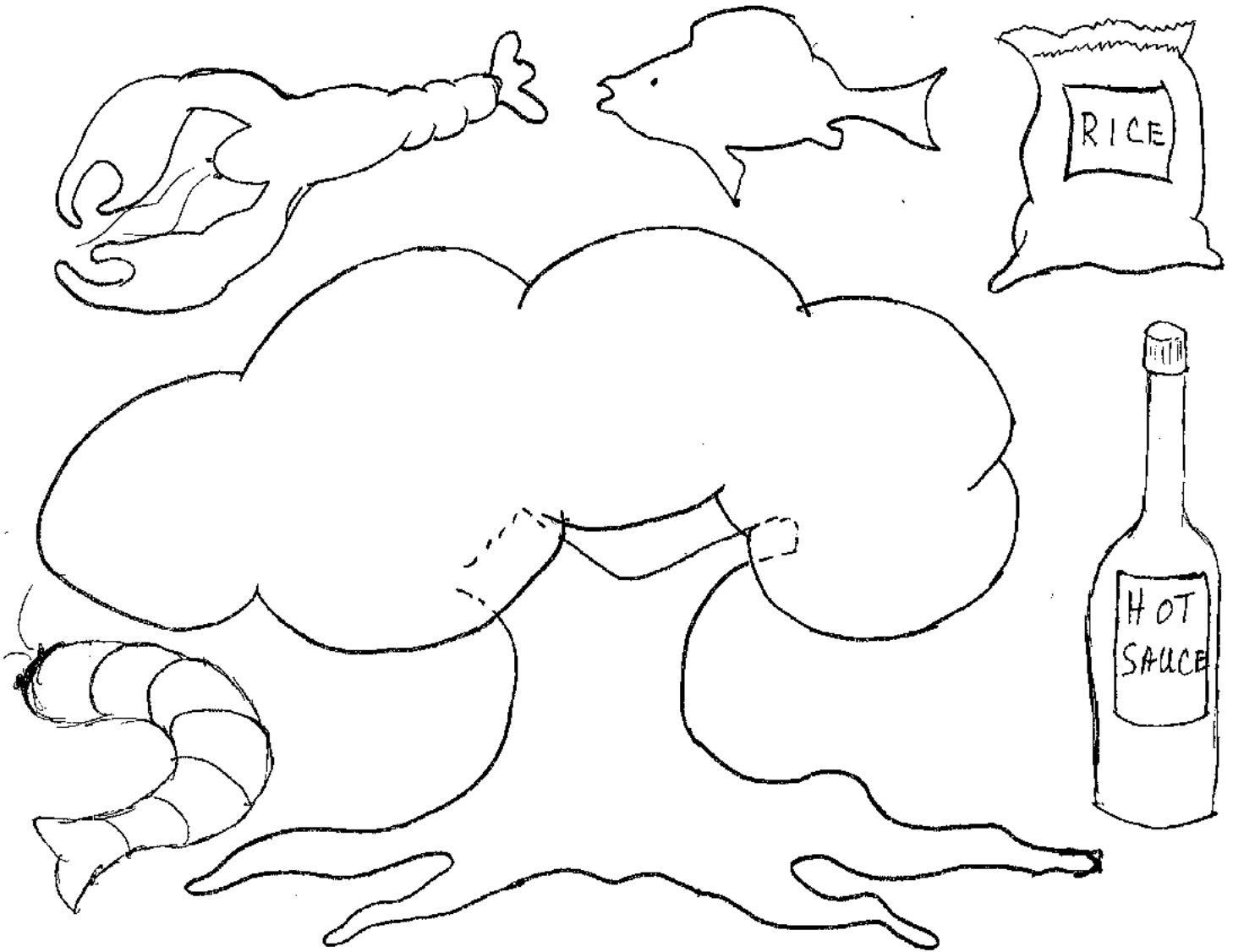
Louisiana Architectural ABC's Coloring Book, <https://www.crt.state.la.us/Assets/OCD/hp/mainstreet/Resource-Page-Documents/Louisiana%20Main%20Street%20Architectural%20Coloring%20Book.pdf>

Day, Leah. [www.leahday.com](http://www.leahday.com). Includes video tutorials for machine quilting, fusible applique technique, attaching binding, and more.

McClun, Diana. 2013. Quilts! Quilts! Quilts! The Complete Guide to Quiltmaking. Breckling Press, 3rd edition. A good instructional book. The index will help the quilter find the appropriate chapter.

## **Templates for Kits**

We've provided some templates on pages 20-25 to get you started.







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