



Colonies: Cheddar and Poison Green, 1830-1860

By Nancy Gere

In the early to mid 1800s, “poison” greens and “cheddar” yellows were very popular colors, a pleasant diversion from the browns, indigos and turkey reds that were previously used in both garments and quilts. The contrast of the wonderfully bright colors afforded dress makers and quilters more creative possibilities than ever before. Although it wouldn’t be until the 1870s for synthetic dyes to enter the market, these particular colors, achieved with natural dyeing elements, were overdyed to yield bright, intense hues.

The origin of the name “Poison” green offers several explanations: most believe the name comes from its similarity to the arsenic-based and toxic “Scheele’s Green” wall paper, used throughout much of the 19th century. Others argue that the original poison green dyes came from “wormwood”, while another audience believes that it is aptly named for its use of arsenic as a mordant to fix dyestuffs; however, there is no evidence supporting these last two definitions.

Cheddar, so named for its resemblance to the color of the cheese, was often the base dye of the vivid poison greens. Cotton was dyed yellow and then dyed again with indigo or Prussian blue. This double process was extremely labor intensive and time consuming, but the results were beautiful “poison greens”. In other instances, both the yellow and blue were printed together to achieve the same result.

Be sure to visit www.windhamfabrics.com to see the complete collection.

 Windham Fabrics

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Elm Park

by Jill Reid



Featuring fabrics from the
Colonies: Cheddar and Poison Green collection, 1830-1860, by
Nancy Gere

 Windham Fabrics

Elm Park

Designed and quilted by Jill Reid

48" x 48"

Fabric Requirements: All fabric is from the "Colonies: Cheddar & Poison Green" fabric collection by Nancy Gere for Windham Fabrics.

You will need:

1/2 yd. #28423-4 (poison green)

1/2 yd. #28424-4 (poison green)

1/2 yd. #28418-1 (navy)

1/4 yd. #28428-4 (poison green)

1/2 yd. #28426-2 (cheddar)

3/4 yd. #28422-1 (navy)

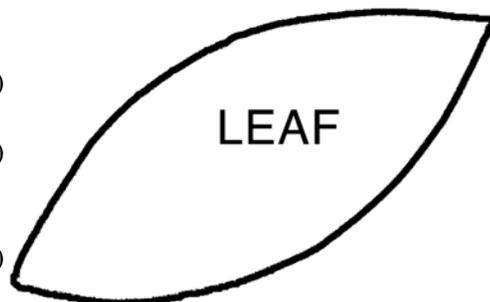
3/4 yd. #28421-4 (poison green)

3/4 yd. #28423-3 (cream)

Fat quarters of assorted cheddar, navy & poison green

3 yds. #28417-3 (cream) – backing

1/2 yd. #28426-4 (poison green) - binding



Cutting & Assembly:

Center Square: cut 8-1/2" square of #28426-2 (cheddar). Trace and cut out of fusible web, 12 leaves (4 of #28424-4 and 8 of #28423-4 poison green). Arrange and fuse to center square. Stitch around each leaf using invisible thread and a small zig zag stitch.

Border #1: cut: (2) 2-1/2" x 8-1/2" & (2) 2-1/2" x 12-1/2" strips of #28418-1 (navy).

Border #2: cut: 2 7/8" squares of the following:

#28422-1 (navy)

#28428-4 (lt. green)

(16)assorted cheddars

(16)assorted poison greens

Make half square triangle units by drawing a diagonal line on the back of

the light fabrics. Stitch 1/4" on both sides of the drawn line and cut them apart on the drawn line. Press open to the dark side of the fabric. Make (9) navy/cheddar combinations, (9) navy/poison green combinations, (7) light green/cheddar combinations and (7) light green/poison green combinations. Assemble into blocks, per photo, with light green on the inside and navy toward the outside of the blocks.

Border #3: cut: (2) 2-1/2" x 20-1/2" & (2) 2-1/2" x 24 -1/2" strips of #28426-2 (cheddar).

Trace and cut out of fusible web, 44 leaves, 24 of #28423-4 & 20 of #28424-4. Fuse leaves to border at a 45 degree angle every 2" and add a perpendicular leaf at each corner. Stitch around leaves with invisible thread with a small zig zag stitch.

Border #4: cut: (2) 2-1/2" x 24-1/2" & (2) 2 -1/2" x 28-1/2" of #28418-1 (navy).

Border #5: cut: (2) 2-1/2" x 28-1/2" & (2) 2-1/2" x 32-1/2" of #28422-1 (navy).

Border #6: to make 36 square-in-a-square blocks (4" finished), cut:

(12) 3-3/8" navy squares

(12) 3-3/8" cheddar squares

(12) 3-3/8" poison green squares

(72) 2-7/8" cream squares #28423-3, cut in half diagonally

For each square, add a cream triangle to opposite sides of the square, press open, add triangles to remaining two sides and press open.

Border #7: cut (2) 4-1/2" x 40-1/2" & (2) 4 -1/2" x 48-1/2" of #28421-4 (poison green).

Layer, quilt as desired and bind.