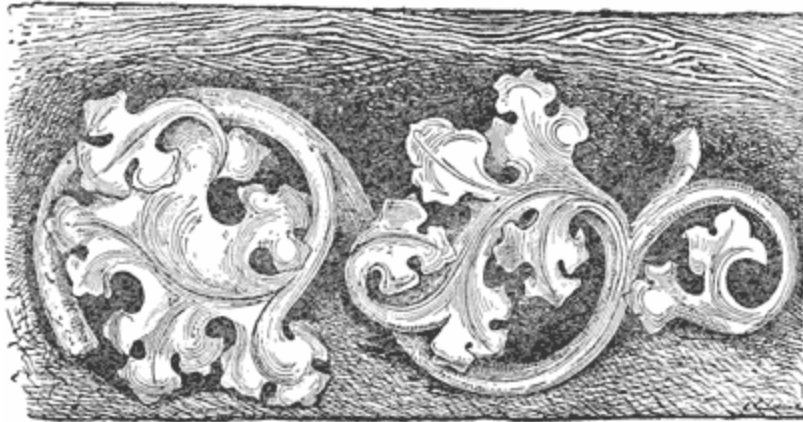


Further Application of the Sweep-Cut to Higher Relief

A leaf carved to survive dusting, not to fool anyone into believing it's real.



From *A Manual of Wood-carving* (Leland, 1891) · public domain

"Push forward, draw sideways, ride the wrist over every rise."

1 Practice the Sweep-Cut

Practise the sweep-cut on waste wood until you can work confidently in any direction with both hands. Only attempt an oak leaf in high relief once you have that confidence.

2 Study the Leaf First

Model the leaf in clay, or at least draw and shade it carefully, before you begin cutting. Keep its principal points in your memory so you know when and where to turn the tool.

3 Grip Gouge and Wood

Grasp the gouge firmly in your right hand. Press two fingers of your left hand on the surface and side of the blade, about an inch from the cutting edge.

4 Make the Sweep-Cut

Push the tool straight forward for the whole cut with your right hand, while your two left fingers push the blade right or pull it left as the slope travels. At the same time raise or lower your right wrist to carry the tool over the mounds and hollows of the leaf, all as one continuous sweep.

5 rough Out the Outline

Choose a gouge whose sweep fits the curve of the part you are starting on. Set its edge outside but close to the line, hold it sloped to cut away from itself outwards, and give it a moderate blow with the mallet. Do not drive the gouge in too deeply, and cut only the general outline at this stage, leaving the smaller hollows and notches for later.

6

Cut the Hollows

Once the whole leaf is blocked out on one side, cut away the most apparent hollows and depressions. Slant your cuts outwards rather than undercutting close beneath the leaf, since too much paring away leaves it thin and fragile instead of strong and firm.

Practise until your fingers remember it. — Widow Maker · wmc.penguinboisoftware.com · a PenguinBoi Network show