



Carving the Acanthus Leaf

By Mary May

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Written & Illustrated by Mary May



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Contents



Foreword vii

Introduction xiii

Acknowledgements xvi

1. <i>The Acanthus Leaf: A Rite of Passage for the Classical Woodcarver</i>	4
2. <i>Getting Started with Woodcarving</i>	18
3. <i>Getting Started</i>	36
4. <i>The Basic Acanthus Leaf</i>	58
5. <i>The Basic Acanthus Leaf With a Twist</i>	74
6. <i>Acanthus Leaf on a Moulding</i>	94
7. <i>Rosette</i>	112
8. <i>Acanthus Leaf on a Cabriole Leg</i>	126
9. <i>Acanthus Leaf on a Turning</i>	144
10. <i>Acanthus Leaf on a Bracket</i>	162
11. <i>The Italian Renaissance Leaf</i>	186
12. <i>Italian Renaissance With an Added Twist</i>	212
13. <i>Scandinavian-style Leaf</i>	226
14. <i>The Greek Acanthus Leaf</i>	246
15. <i>The French Rococo Leaf</i>	266
16. <i>The Baroque Leaf</i>	288

Afterword 312

Bibliography 315



Foreword



Experiences in life often grow us and define what we become. But certain attitudes and ways of living create who we are. I can easily pinpoint various times and events throughout my life that steered me toward a somewhat curious life. This is the story of how I went from being a shy but adventurous girl to discovering woodcarving as a way of life.

My mom, the second oldest of seven children, was born to a conservative Calvinistic minister with a small church in Denver, Co. My dad was the oldest of 13 in a hardworking Dutch farm family in Iowa. They married just out of college, and within seven years had a brood of five rambunctious children.

Dad, even as a young man, dreamt of building a sailboat and traveling the world. Perhaps he imagined the seafaring adventure stories of his youth, or maybe he just thought it would be an opportunity to see the world. He was a man of few words, so it was often a mystery as to why dad did some of the things he did. But he was going to achieve his dream of building, traveling and living on a boat ... and his wife and five children aged 4 to 11 (I was the 4 year old) were going to join him. My parents saved every penny

and headed toward their dream. At the time, my dad was working as a systems analyst – a first-generation computer programmer. I remember long lengths of paper tape with multiple holes in it that we had a lot of fun with (as frugal as my parents were, we had to be creative with our toys).

Dad started building our 50' trimaran in the back yard of our home in West Chicago, Ill., in the evenings and weekends. Trimarans consist of three complete boat hulls joined together, with the largest hull in the center and two smaller hulls on either side. Curious neighbors would ask why my dad was building three boats. Was he expecting a flood? In



The "brood." I am the one with ponytails sitting on dad's lap.

his quiet, humorous Dutch way, Dad let them guess for a while.

It took three years of hard work, discipline, countless focused hours and all of our family's resources to build dad's (and now the family's) dream. When the boat was finished, dad christened it "Pilgrim," a name he chose after being touched by a sermon where the minister spoke of life being a day-to-day journey or pilgrimage. The minister expressed that if we live too much in either the past or future, we forget to experience the "pilgrimage" or "now" of life. Dad was deeply moved by that sermon and whether he realized it or not, this pilgrimage of his started all of his children on a course of unique and adventurous lives.

Where some have created a wall in their life that says, "here and no further," dad taught us that it was OK to step over that wall and see what was on the other side. What touches me deeply to this day is that dad was not trying to prove anything to anyone through this adventure. Dreaming is one thing, but living that dream is so much more. He taught us not so much with words, but by how he lived.

The next year was spent experiencing the "live-aboard" boater's life, enjoying the scenic river towns while traveling the length of the Mississippi River. Then we sailed to the Bahamas, visiting and exploring both inhabited and uninhabited islands. The early '70s were a unique time to live on the water as many fellow boaters were hippies who had dropped out of society. From my 4-year-old vantage point, life was very curious. I remember a man with his long hair and a beard, rowing by our boat stark naked. (Is it possible to get this image out of my head?) After a while, nothing in the boating world seemed out of the ordinary. I just hope the man remembered to put sunscreen on.

We returned from this wondrous trip, adjusted to a "normal" life on land and within seven years, dad got the boating bug again. He, along with our uncle Don, built another boat: Pilgrim II, a 54' motor-sailer. By this time we had reached the wonderful teenage years. How my parents survived on a boat filled with five smelly teenagers for an entire year escapes comprehension.

On our second boat trip I was older and



Pilgrim II, a 54' motor-sailer.

remember much more. We spent another year living aboard, and I cherish memories of exploring more islands, snorkeling in crystal blue waters, catching fresh fish and throwing my brattiest brother overboard when my sister and I thought he deserved it. Some islands we visited were uninhabited, and our five young imaginative minds lived our own "Gilligan's Island"... I mean "Van Abbema's Island."

Because the boater's life was our day-to-day existence, it became normal. We were not immune to the typical problems that arise in family life – teenage woes, the stress of living closely together and the Spam-inspired doldrums of eating it and canned corned beef day after day. We may not have



My sister Ilene and I in our bleach-blond island girl mode.

recognized it or appreciated it as teenagers, but our boating adventures taught us that life is to be experienced, and dreams are to be lived.

And that story leads to how my hands learned to think.

With the wandering spirit instilled in me as a young child, my head was filled with dreams of travel and adventure. During my second year in college I spent an amazing semester studying in London. Much of my time was spent exploring its museums, grand cathedrals and glorious architecture. My mediocre grades proved I was not a great book student, but London's sidewalks became my school, and my textbooks were its historic buildings. After completing my semester of study in London, I spent an adventurous month backpacking across Europe and becoming even more enchanted with the carved details found in the historic art and architecture. The seed of desire to learn carving was solidly planted.

When I returned to Minneapolis, I began to search ways to learn woodcarving. I did not want to learn just any woodcarving; I wanted to learn how to carve the beauty I had been captivated by throughout Europe.

For \$5 at a garage sale, I bought a beginning woodcarving and whittling book, plus a large

curved gouge and a heavy rubber mallet. I picked out a project from the book and dove in, teaching myself woodcarving using a salvaged piece of wood from a pile of my neighbor's construction debris. The project I chose was to carve a mask of a man's face. Despite that my carving gouge was dull, the wood was dense and splintery, and that I didn't have a clue what I was doing, I completed my first carving project and it looked somewhat like a man's face. The only reason I was able to achieve what I did was that my mallet was massive and my determination equal to it. Perhaps a butter knife would have been a better tool. My first attempt at carving taught me that if I wanted to carve anything close to what I saw in Europe, I would need to find a teacher.

Where to start? I looked in the Yellow Pages under "Woodcarving" and discovered "Artistic Woodcarving Studio." "Art" and "woodcarving" sounded exactly like what I was looking for. I called and spoke with Greek master carver Konstantinos Papadakis. After explaining my desire to carve, he invited me to his workshop, and from the moment I walked in I was in awe. I tried not to blink for fear of missing some amazing detail. I was consumed by the wood smell, the carving tools lying amongst the workbenches, the half-finished carvings hanging on the walls or sitting in corners or clamped to benches. I knew this was my world.

Mr. Papadakis began his training in Greece as a boy of 12. Like many young European men learning a trade, he spent years studying as an apprentice, then progressed to a journeyman, after which he was respected as a highly skilled master carver. I wonder if I would have made the best career choice if I were required to make a life-long decision at the age of 12. I doubt it, as I seem to remember wanting to be an Olympic gymnast at that age.

Within months of studying with Mr. Papadakis two nights a week, it seemed that every moment of my day was consumed with thoughts of woodcarving. I was happily obsessed with this new art, as an amazing and exciting new world opened to me. I discovered something that I truly loved to do. Every aspect of this work – from designing it, to learning its tools, to exploring forms and shapes in wood – I loved it all.



My first carving project.



Byzantine carved icon stand, carved by Mary May.

As Mr. Papadakis learned the “old world” ways of carving as a young man in Greece, these were the techniques and styles he graciously shared with me. I learned to carve various styles of classical European carving, but focused primarily on the Byzantine style that is often seen adorning the interiors of Greek Orthodox churches.

In an attempt to be a responsible citizen and have a “real” job, I spent several years studying graphic arts and design. This paid the bills and put food on the table while I became engrossed in my new love of woodcarving.

While working as a graphic artist, I focused every minute of my extra time to learn carving. As time went on, my day job became less interesting as I found myself drifting off, daydreaming of the carving designs I had waiting for me when I got home. There were clear signs that I was becoming obsessed. Sometimes when I was having conversations with people, I would catch myself studying the details and shapes of their faces and taking note of what tools I would use to carve that particular

feature. I knew I was going down a path of no return.

Restless and eager to carve full time, I tried to discover a way to make that a reality. The sensible side of me said, “That is so irresponsible to give up a lucrative, secure job and to jump into an unknown dream.” But my not-so-sensible (and more influential side) said, “Why not?” As I was pondering when and how to make this major change in my life, the decision was made for me. I was laid off from my job. I even got severance pay.

After Mr. Papadakis generously shared and passed on his carving skills to me for three years, I thought it time to venture out and learn more and different techniques from other masters. To give me his blessing on this new venture, Mr. Papadakis connected me with a third-generation carving shop in Athens, Greece. It was a workshop where he first worked when starting his carving career. I traveled overseas again to the studio of Theofanis Andravidiotis and learned and worked alongside several Greek master carvers and their apprentices for three months. The workshop was famous



Byzantine carved icon screen, St. Dionysius Orthodox Church, Athens, Greece.

for its carved interiors of Greek Orthodox churches in two classical styles: the Byzantine and Cretan (a style similar to Rococo and Baroque, also called Barocco). I spoke just enough Greek to lose an argument with a taxi driver and to recognize when I was sworn at by others in the workshop, which fortunately was not frequently. The other carvers must have thought it peculiar for a young American female to work in a traditional all-male workshop



Carving detail I made while working at the workshop of Theofanis Andravidiotis, Athens, Greece.

in a foreign country. I enjoyed the unique learning experience, so the environment was all part of the adventure. The workday consisted of starting precisely at 8 a.m., taking a break for thick, Greek coffee and tasty pastries around 10 a.m. and stopping for lunch at 1 p.m. After lunch we rested, started up again at 3 p.m. and continued until 7 or 8 p.m. They were long days, but it was fascinating to work as carvers have done for countless generations.

After my Greek adventure, I returned to London with a desire to study with more and varied master carvers. I attended City & Guilds of London Art College, focusing again on traditional classical carving designs and techniques. For three months I studied with several highly talented woodcarving instructors. During this period, I continued to spend time studying and absorbing the multitude of carved details of historic buildings throughout London. I also drank a lot of tea and feasted on deep-fried fish and chips wrapped in newspaper. I love England.

While I was studying in England, I jumped at an opportunity to work as a stone carver in Malaysia. You can read the full story of this in Chapter 10.

After so much traveling, learning and studying,

it was time for me to settle down, stay in one place and focus on what I hoped would become my career: that of a professional woodcarver. I settled in an area that I thought would appreciate and recognize the type of work I do because of the historic nature of the city: Charleston, S.C. That was where I met my wonderful and patient husband, Stephen, who built a cozy carving studio for me. It is my sanctuary, and I spend countless hours joyfully lost in my carving world. The fateful story of how Stephen and I met is shared in Chapter 5.

The early part of my career was spent happily sequestered in my workshop to carve commissions for architects, furniture makers and designers. This time was spent fine-tuning the techniques and skills I had learned from the European master carvers. I was content to continue working in this secluded and isolated way, but life had other plans.

The next stage of my carving journey brought me out of my quiet workshop and dragged me kicking and screaming to once again socialize with my fellow man. Several members from the Society of American Period Furniture Makers (sapfm.org), a wonderful organization focusing on all aspects of traditional period American furniture, discovered that I carved furniture details in this style and asked if I would be willing to teach a class on carving the ball-and-claw foot. I reluctantly agreed, but I'm so glad I did. Since that time, the exciting world of teaching and sharing woodcarving has opened wide and has been yet another amazing journey for me. It was time for me to step out, get past being a wallflower and share what others had taught me. I



St. Paul's Cathedral, exterior limestone carved detail, London, England.



My workshop in South Carolina.

had been perfectly happy making chips in the solitude of my workshop, but now it was time to share.

I was pleasantly surprised to discover that sharing this art was fun. As I began to teach at woodworking clubs and schools around the country, my "shyness" quickly disappeared as I discovered how many people had a desire to learn. It's exciting to see the look on students' faces as they grasp difficult concepts such as "carving with the grain." When they share their completed carvings, it is rewarding to have been a part in their carving success.

Traveling and taking classes at different locations can be challenging for many people for any number of reasons. My ultimate desire is to make this art available to all, and as I recognized the difficulty for some to attend in-person classes, I started "Mary May's Online School of Traditional Woodcarving." Students with access to the Internet are now able to learn carving from their home and workshop. Starting with a single standard-definition video camera, we have grown to three high-definition camera angles, and my son, Caleb, is now my video editor (so I have time to do other things, such as write books). The carving topics range from simple beginner lessons to highly detailed ornamental

carving, and a new video is added each week. The video lessons are virtually "real time" without much of the process removed. I even leave the mistakes in so that students can learn from me before making their own "oops." I have been asked whether I will ever run out of carving topics to teach, and the answer is a definite "no." I am eager to discover the new directions my school will lead.

With my parents introducing me to such an adventurous life at a young age, I recognize now how those experiences pre-

pared me. They taught me to be unafraid of living my dreams and that seeking a dream is a way to a fulfilled life. Some people have commented, "You're so lucky to have a hobby that has turned into your career." I feel fortunate, but I believe it is far more than luck, as I see the hand of God in every opportunity that came my way. I am excited to see what my next adventure is.

Mary May

August 2017

www.marymaycarving.com/carvingschool



Introduction



The word “author” comes from Old French “autor,” which is from the Latin “auctor” and “augere,” meaning “increase, promote, honor.” When I learned of this definition, I was delighted. My sincere hope in authoring this book is to increase, promote and honor the beauty and art of the acanthus leaf. Being a student of classical woodcarving, I have always been captivated by this design. Even before learning to carve, I admired its beauty from a distance.

I could have easily kept this book a strictly technical “how-to” book. But to make it more personal, I have chosen to share a variety of stories throughout. Some are relevant to that particular chapter, while others are experiences I have had in my life as a carver that I hope you find interesting.

When I began writing this book, I quickly discovered I would barely touch the surface of the vast topic that the acanthus leaf offered. I realized several volumes could be written and still not properly represent the countless variations in designs that have been expressed over the past 2,500 years. At first I thought I would include seven or possibly eight styles of the leaf. Then it grew. And grew. And it was difficult to know where to stop

Choosing which designs to include in this book was based on my ability to easily explain a particular process or technique. I have tried to keep the entire book as teachable as possible, because the acanthus leaf has the potential of becoming extremely complex. Many of the individual lessons in this book could have easily become an entire book.

As this stylized, historical leaf has evolved and

changed, individual artists, sculptors and designers have modified this design to create unique variants. As you walk through the individual lessons, you will discover that different designs are based on various historical styles, but I have also adapted them to be uniquely “Mary May.” After going through the lessons, I encourage you to also make them your own.

By writing this book, I have learned more about acanthus leaves than I ever thought there was to know. I started this process because I simply love to carve these leaves. At the completion of this book, my head was swimming with all the possibilities, but alas, I had to stop somewhere. There are many more styles that I simply did not have room for. These leaves show up everywhere, and my family groans when I excitedly point out details in the wallpaper: “Look, there’s another one.”

I encourage you to take your time working through this book. Enjoy the journey and don’t think it is a race to the finish line. If you put in the time at your workbench, tools in hand, the speed and accuracy of your carving will naturally increase. There is no need to force it.

Each project chapter (chapters 4 to 16) has a video lesson that shows how to carve that particular leaf and follows closely the process shown in this book. These are available for purchase separately. Resin castings of the leaves are also available to assist in the learning process. Please go to www.marymaycarving.com/carvingschool.

And don’t forget to have fun!

Happy carving everyone!



HOW MARY MADE HER MARK

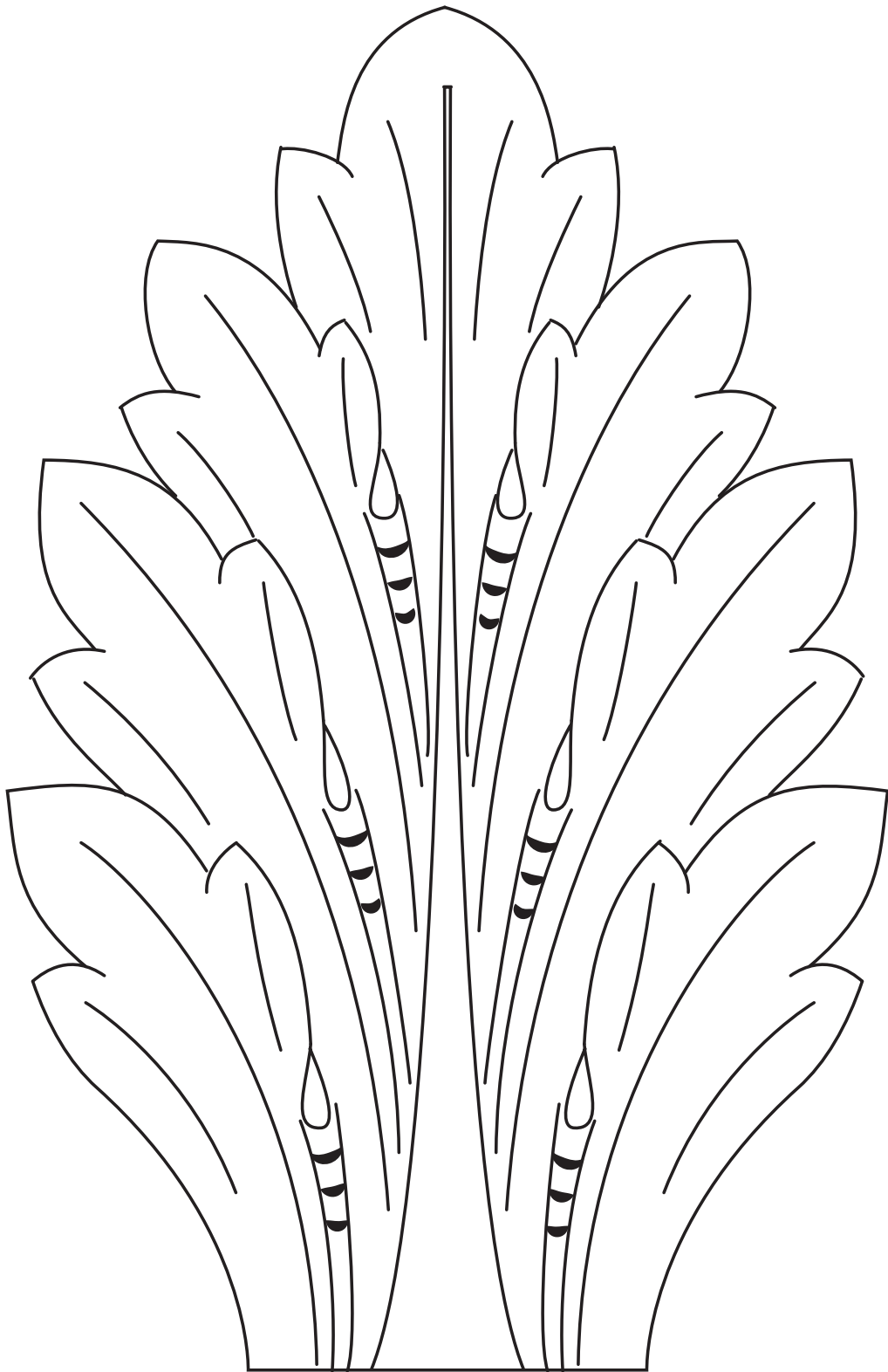
My first experience with woodcarving occurred when I was 6. I had just made the big move from kindergarten to first grade and we were all excited to have learned a new skill. With a big yellow pencil and some lined paper, our task was to neatly print our names in capital letters. Fortunately, my name is mostly straight lines, so writing M-A-R-Y came easily. Proud of my new skill, I practiced this new art form wherever I could.

As it happened, there was a lovely, nine-drawer antique pine dresser in my bedroom. It seemed obvious that the smooth surfaces of the wooden drawers were a perfect canvas to show off my penmanship, but the lines from the big yellow pencil did not show up well. I borrowed one of my dad's screwdrivers and proceeded to carefully etch my name on the surface of each and every drawer. I was able to scratch the soft pine deeply without much effort, and while I was proud of my new masterpiece, I was already looking for more places to share my art.

However, it soon dawned on me that not everyone would appreciate my creativity. I loved it, but would they? My inventive (and manipulative) young mind started figuring a way to keep myself squeaky clean. In a moment of sneaky inspiration, I realized that my brother's name "MARK" might provide the perfect cover. I thought, "I'll just draw an extra line on the Y and make it look like a K." I was sure everyone would think that Mark did it! So I altered the Y on every drawer with an extra, diagonal scratch to complete the transformation. I was so impressed with my cleverness that it was a real shock when my parents immediately blamed me! How did they know?

The wise punishment from my parents was to make me use that dresser all the way through high school, facing my "Mark" every single day. My love for carving only increased from that young age, as has my respect for parents who recognize the passions of their children and help foster them into their future work.

A hand-drawn word "MARK" in capital letters. The letters are formed with simple, slightly irregular lines, suggesting they were drawn with a pencil or a similar tool. The 'M' is the tallest, followed by 'A', 'R', and 'K'. The 'K' has a distinct diagonal line crossing the vertical stem.



FULL-SIZE DRAWING OF THE BASIC ACANTHUS LEAF



FIG. 4.1



The Basic Acanthus Leaf

Referring to this as a “Basic Leaf” is a bit misleading. There are just as many challenges as with more ornate leaves, but starting with the basics is the best way to begin learning any new design. This leaf is symmetrical without complex curves or shapes. It also includes many of the details seen in other acanthus leaves, such as eyes, pipes, veins and overlapping lobes. This leaf introduces the importance of all detail lines flowing in a gentle curve while aiming toward the base of the leaf and blending with the center of the leaf or midrib. Once the challenges of this basic leaf are mastered, you can add more movement and flow as shown in subsequent chapters. Take this symmetrical design one step further into 3D illusion by curling the tip of the leaf over and you get designs such as leaves on a turning (Chapter 9), lengths of moulding (Chapter

6) or leaves on corbels (Chapter 10).

This simpler, symmetrical style can be added to furniture as a detail on cabriole legs, the curved arms of a chair, the surface of a bracket or corbel or just about any place that begs for an extra decorative feature. This style of leaf has been added as an ornamental detail as far back as the Roman era, and is commonly seen in antique reproduction furniture and interior design today.

Draw and carve this leaf as many times as needed. It’s not a race! Each time you repeat the process, your hands and eyes will become more familiar with the correct shape and nuances of the

design. After carving several leaves in this style, look back at the first one you ever completed and you will see how much you have progressed.



FIG. 4.2 *Modern resin wall design, faux gold painted.*



FIG. 4.3 Plaster casting of the hall ceiling medallion, Joseph Manigault House, Charleston, SC. Provided by David Hoffman.



FIG. 4.4
Acanthus
leaf carved
in mahogany
by Leslie
Dockeray.
Photo by
Richard
Bergen.



FIG. 4.5 Carved arm on antique chair, Arthur Smith Antiques, Savannah, Ga.



FIG. 4.6
Corbel on
a fireplace
mantel,
the John
Fullerton
House, 15
Legare St.,
circa 1772,
Charleston,
S.C.

HOW TO DRAW THE LEAF

Follow the step-by-step instructions below to draw this symmetrical leaf. I suggest tracing the template with tracing paper or velum first to become familiar with its flow and feel. You can then try drawing several leaves freehand. Finally, feel free to design your own.

After drawing this design several times, you might want to try skipping steps 2 and 8 (using guidelines). The more acanthus leaves you draw, the more your pencil and eyes will automatically recognize when the spacing and positioning of the details are correct.

Refer to Chapter 3 to learn more about the specific details, such as eyes and pipes.

STEP 1: Draw the basic outline of the entire leaf. Draw the midrib down the center of the leaf, splaying out toward the base, and coming closer together as it reaches the tip.

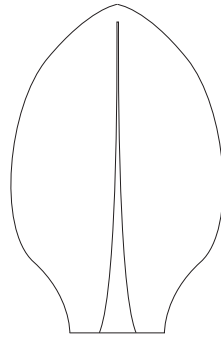


FIG. 4.7

STEP 2: Draw four horizontal lines on the leaf that get closer together as they reach the leaf tip. Draw two straight lines starting from the tip of the leaf and angling out toward the base of the leaf. The top three horizontal lines locate the edge of the overlapping lobes. Draw six eyes where the lower three horizontal lines intersect with the angled lines.

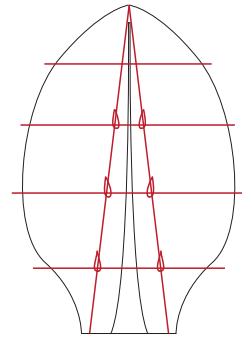


FIG. 4.8

The location and spacing of these lines varies with different designs.

STEP 3: Draw six circles touching the upper three horizontal lines where they intersect with the outer edge of the leaf, descending in size as they go towards the tip of the leaf. These should touch the eyes at the approximate half-way point on the circle.

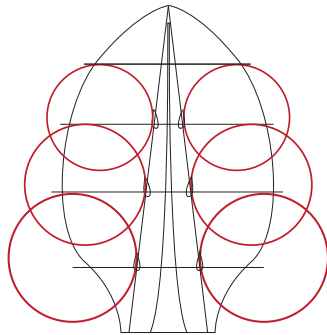


FIG. 4.9

STEP 4: Erase any unnecessary sections of the circles, leaving the quarter-round part that defines the upper edges of the lobes. Connect these lines to the pointed end of the eye.

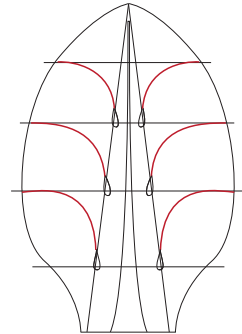


FIG. 4.10

STEP 5: Starting at the pointed end of each eye, draw the lower edge of each lobe. The dotted lines represent the hidden edge of the lobes underneath.

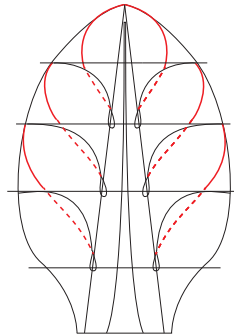


FIG. 4.11

STEP 6: Erase unnecessary lines. Draw two lines that flow from each side of every eye down the leaf toward the midrib to define the pipes. They should curve gently so they run alongside the midrib.

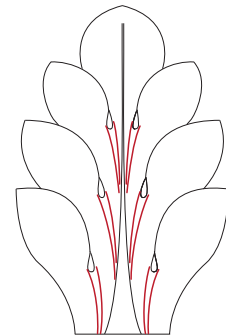


FIG. 4.12

STEP 7: Draw the primary vein lines down each of the lobes. These should start just shy of the tip of each lobe and flow in a gentle curve down the leaf and alongside the midrib. Make sure these lines are positioned between the pipes and follow the same curvature as the pipes.

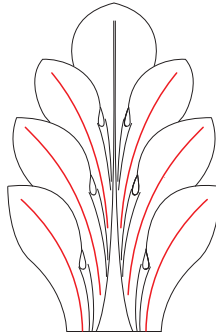


FIG. 4.13

STEP 8: To locate the positions of the serrations on every lobe, draw lines halfway between the eye and the tip of the lobe. Position these lines so they are roughly perpendicular to the primary vein line of each lobe.

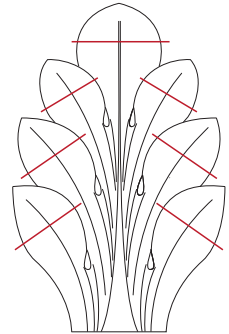


FIG. 4.14

STEP 9: Draw a series of circles to locate the serrations on each of the lobes. These are positioned at the intersection of the line drawn in STEP 8 and the outer edges of the lobes. This step can be skipped once you understand how these serrations are positioned in STEP 10.

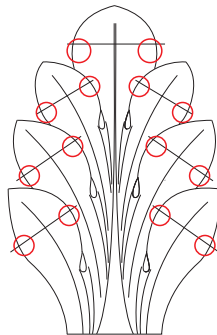


FIG. 4.15

STEP 10: Erase the unnecessary parts of the circles, leaving small curves for the serrations. These should start at the edges of the lobes and curve down to the straight guidelines drawn in STEP 8. They should curve in the direction of the dotted lines.

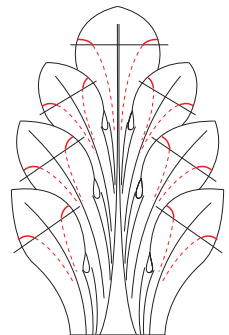


FIG. 4.16

STEP 11: Complete the edge of the primary lobes by drawing a curved line from the inside of each serration line to the tip of each lobe.

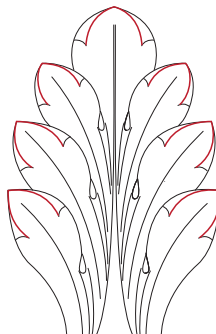


FIG. 4.17

STEP 12: Draw the secondary vein lines flowing from just inside the tips of the secondary lobes. These lines should flow toward the primary vein lines of each lobe.

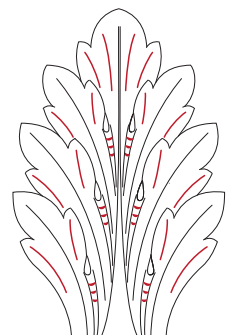


FIG. 4.18

HOW TO CARVE THE LEAF

STEP 1: Prepare the Wood. Study Chapter 2 on the different ways of transferring designs to wood, cut the wood blank and attach the wood to a temporary backer board. I transferred the design using carbon paper, cut out the leaf with a scroll saw and attached it to a temporary backer board using double-sided tape.



FIG. 4.19

STEP 2: Define the Edges of the Midrib. Using a 6mm V-chisel, carve along each side of the midrib starting at 1/8" deep at the base of the leaf and getting gradually more shallow toward the tip of the leaf. These cuts should terminate gently about 1/2" to 3/4" before reaching the end of the leaf.



FIG. 4.20

Materials Needed

- Double-sided tape
- Solvent to remove double-sided tape
- Rubber gloves to use with solvent
- Paintbrush to spread solvent
- Backer board to attach carving to
- Carbon paper or transfer paper
- Pencil or pen

Tool List

- 6mm V-chisel
- #3, 6mm
- #3, 14mm
- #4, 18mm
- #5, 14mm
- #7, 6mm
- #11, 3mm veiner

Wood

- Basswood, 7/8" thick

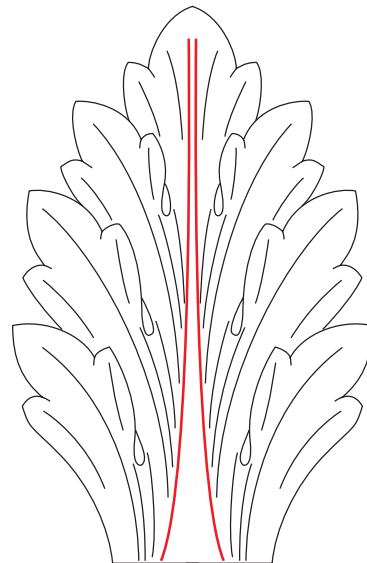


FIG. 4.21

STEP 3: Rounding the Leaf Along the Midrib. Use a #3, 14mm to round down both sides of the leaf to the V-cut made in STEP 2. This rounding should start at about 3/8" from the edge of the midrib at the base of the leaf and taper off as it reaches the tip of the leaf.



FIG. 4.22

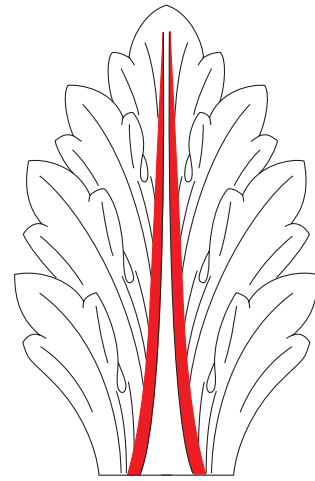


FIG. 4.23

STEP 4: Round the Outside Edge of the Leaf. With a #3, 14mm, round over the outside edge of the leaf about 1/4" down. This can be rounded down farther to create more curve in the leaf. Start this cut 3/4" to 1" from the edge of leaf.

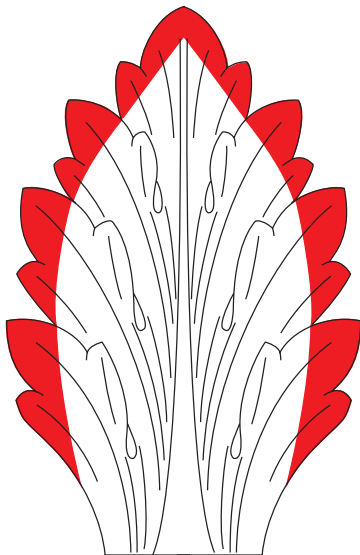


FIG. 4.24



FIG. 4.25



FIG. 4.26

STEP 5: Define the Overlapping Lobes. With a 6mm V-chisel, make a cut that starts at the center of each eye and continues up the edge of the overlapping lobe, leaving the line visible. This cut should be $\frac{1}{16}$ " deep when starting at the eye and go down to $\frac{1}{8}$ " deep off the edge of the leaf.

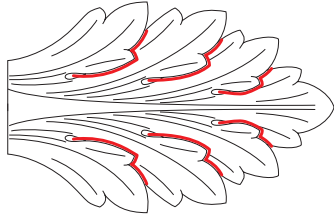


FIG. 4.27

STEP 6: Define the Edge of the Overlapping Lobe. Starting just past the eye, make vertical cuts along the edge of the overlapping lobe directly on the line drawn. Use the #3, 14mm on the longer sections and the #3, 6mm on the small leaf serration. Make these cuts slightly deeper than the V-chisel cut. This will define the edge of the overlapping lobes.

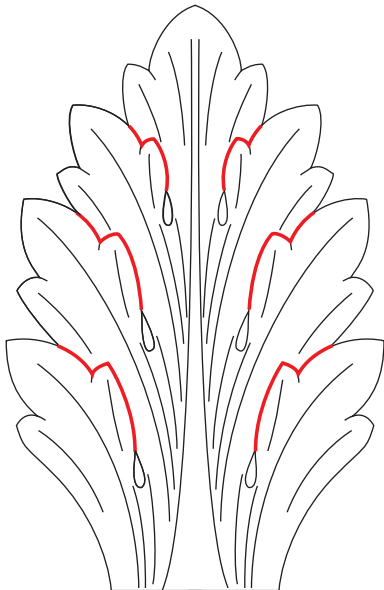


FIG. 4.29



FIG. 4.28



FIG. 4.30



FIG. 4.31



FIG. 4.32



FIG. 4.33



FIG. 4.34

STEP 7: Carve the Eyes. Study Chapter 3 to learn more about carving eyes. With a #11, 3mm veiner, make a 45° cut at the rounded end of the eye and define each side of the eye with a #3, 6mm to create a teardrop shape. Make sure these cuts are made at a slight angle to create a sharp, inside corner.

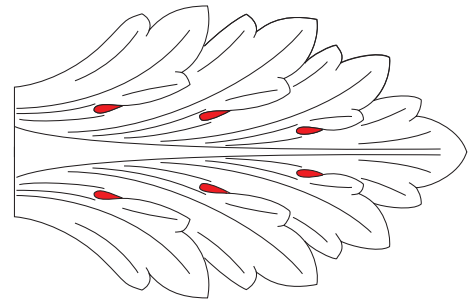


FIG. 4.35

STEP 8: Carve the Underlying Lobes. Use a #3, 14mm to carve down the underlying lobes. Gently fade this cut about halfway into the lobe to prevent an abrupt downward angle. This should give a clear overlapping appearance between the lobes.

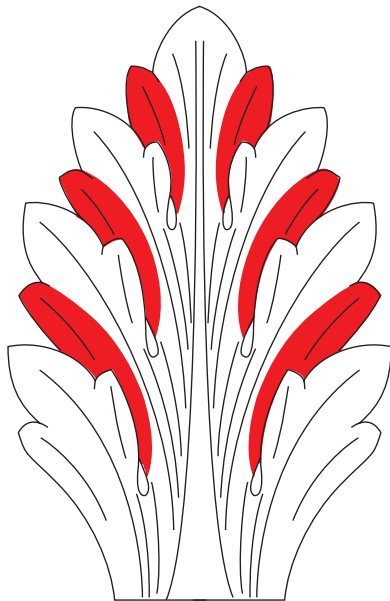


FIG. 4.36



FIG. 4.37



FIG. 4.38

STEP 9: Round the Upper Edge of the Lobe. With a #3, 14mm, round over the upper edge of each lobe, starting about 1/4" from the edge. This cut should start at the edge of the eye and continue to the tip of the lobe.



FIG. 4.39

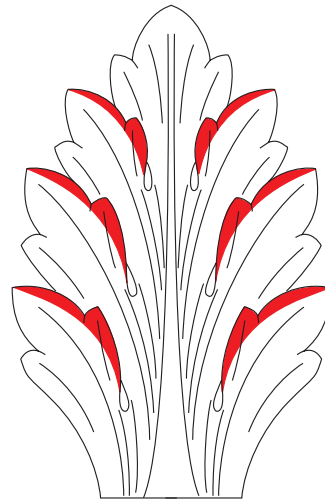


FIG. 4.40



FIG. 4.41



FIG. 4.42

STEP 10: Carve the Pipes. Study Chapter 3 on carving the pipe to understand this important detail. With a #11, 3mm veiner, make two long, flowing cuts 1/16" deep. These cuts should start on either side of the eye and flow toward the midrib and should appear to converge gently as they get closer to the midrib.

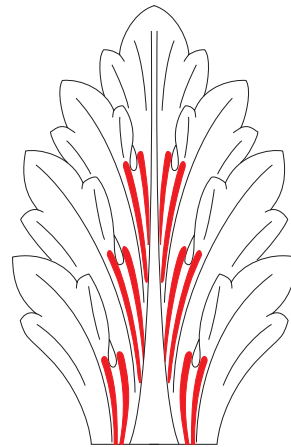


FIG. 4.43

STEP 11: Round the Pipes and Lower the Leaf. Using a #3, 6mm, remove the sharp corners that were created by the veiner cut in STEP 10. Round the sharp corners of the pipes and lower the sides that blend into the surface of the leaf so the pipes appear to be higher than the leaf surface. The illustration below is a profile of the pipe area and shows how it should appear before and after this step.

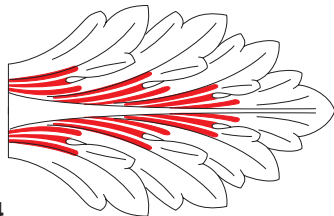


FIG. 4.44

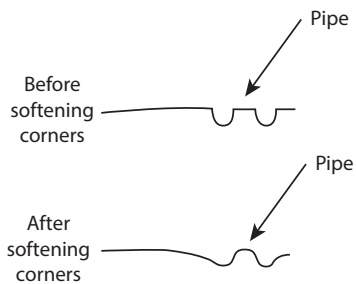


FIG. 4.45



FIG. 4.46



FIG. 4.47

STEP 12: Carve the Vein Lines. Refer to the template and redraw all the vein lines. With a 6mm V-chisel, make a gently flowing V-cut along these lines. Let these cuts gently fade and end before reaching the leaf tips.

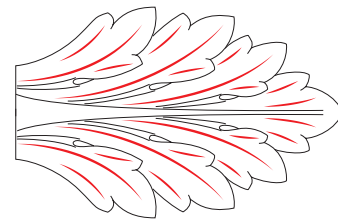


FIG. 4.48



FIG. 4.49



FIG. 4.50

STEP 13: Make Serration Notch Cuts. Study Chapter 3 to understand how to carve these notch cuts on each serration. This step requires two small cuts but results in a significant defining detail. Use a #3, 6mm to make a vertical cut that defines the serration edge. Make a second cut slightly higher but this time at 45° to cut out a triangular notch of wood.

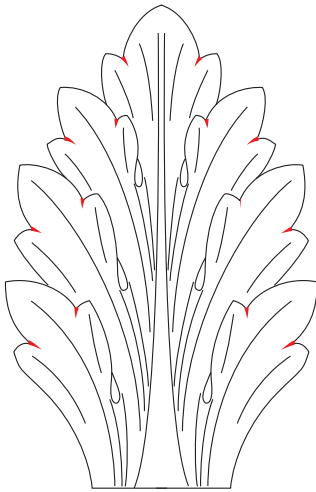


FIG. 4.51



FIG. 4.52



FIG. 4.53

STEP 14: Carve Wrinkles on the Pipes. Carve small, curved notches on each pipe to give the appearance of a wrinkle running down the surface of the pipe. This gives the leaf a more 3D appearance with the illusion that the edge of the eye is lifted and causes the pipe to wrinkle. With a #7, 6mm, make a vertical cut on the upper line of each notch, then cut the lower line at a 45° cut to create a crescent moon-shaped notch in the pipe. The notches on each pipe should be slightly larger the closer they get to the eye.

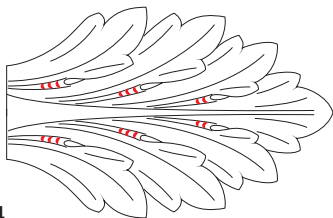


FIG. 4.54



FIG. 4.55



FIG. 4.56

STEP 15: Hollow the Midrib. Use a #5, 14mm to hollow the midrib slightly.



FIG. 4.57

STEP 16: Make a "Clean-up" Cut. With a #3, 6mm, make a 1/32" cut at 45° along all outside edges of the leaf. This gives a crisp edge, reduces the sharp or fragile areas that might break and creates a tiny shadow line along all the edges. It has the added benefit of removing any stray template lines that didn't get carved away.



FIG. 4.59

STEP 17: Undercut the Outside Edge. With various gouges that fit the edge of the leaf (#3, 14mm and #3, 6mm), undercut the outside edge at a slight angle so that the original sawn surface is not visible.

* * *

After learning to carve this basic leaf, why not try and add more shape to it? Round the outside edges even more to make it appear more 3D. Perhaps you could round the base or the tip of the leaf down so it appears to curve more. For more adventure, make the tip of the leaf curl over. You can see this process for drawing and carving this extra detail in Chapter 10 on carving a corbel. The possibilities are endless.



FIG. 4.59