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STATE-WIDE RECREATION PROJECT

July 18, 1939

ARTS & CRAFTS SERIES: No. 14

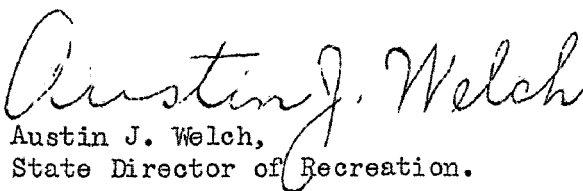
BONE CARVING

Bone ornamentation is one of the most primitive arts of man. Historians rely on the ancient man's artistic effort at carving in ivory, bone, shell, and stone for their cultural record of prehistoric tribes. Archeologists are spanning the universe in search of new evidence of this art. It has withstood the test of time, and today is one of the greatest of the fine arts.

We are indebted to the National Recreation Association for their kind permission to reprint this bulletin.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harry Jackson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Harry Jackson,
Supervisor of Arts and Crafts

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Austin J. Welch". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Austin J. Welch,
State Director of Recreation.

BONE CARVING

by

Frank A. Staples
National Recreation Association

Bone carving is an ideal craft for boys and even girls find it a craft that they can enjoy. It is an inexpensive craft, there being only a few tools needed. After the beef shin bone has served its purpose as part of the soup dish, it can be dried and cut into many interesting and useful articles. No knives are necessary as part of the bone carving equipment thus eliminating the danger of children cutting themselves.

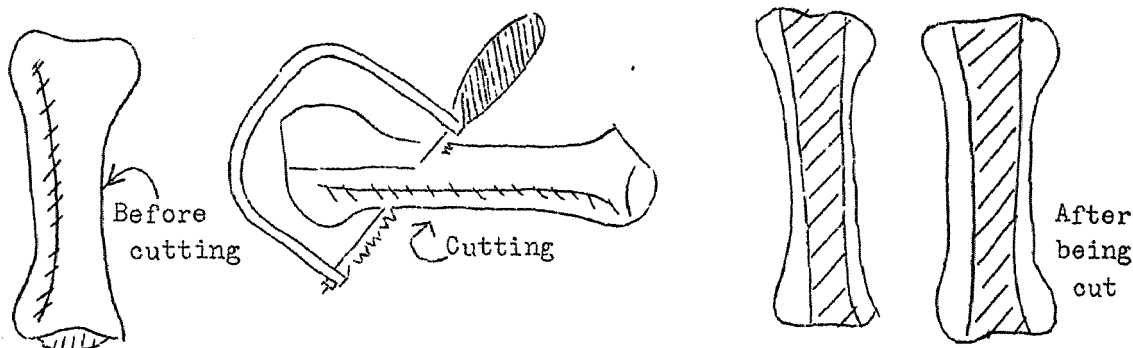
The most interesting bone work has been done without any preconceived pattern. The shape of the bone will suggest the article and then an original design is created to fit the character and contour of the bone. The gradual changing of a piece of bone into a useful and beautiful article is a thrilling and fascinating experience. All the real joy of creating is gone when you use a pattern that someone else made or one that really is not determined by the piece of bone. It is then a cold blooded affair and has no real meaning. Anybody can copy someone else's work, to plan and work out your own ideas is real accomplishment.

Materials Needed

1. Beef bone - preferably a long shin bone
2. A coping saw
3. A fairly coarse wood file and one or two small medium and fine files
4. Pumice and a piece of chamois
5. A vice (not necessary, but useful)
6. A bench stick (not necessary, but useful)

Method of Preparing the Bone

1. Boil a piece of beef shin bone for about two hours.
2. Clean off all meat, fat and gristle
3. Saw the bone in half longitudinally. (This may be done before the bone is boiled) See diagrams below.



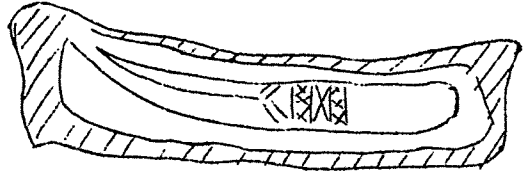
4. Hang up to dry. It will take two or three days for the bone to dry out. Note: If there is still some meat, gristle or marrow on the bone after it is boiled that you cannot remove, put it in an ant hill. The ants will clean it for you. Be sure that you protect the bone from dogs, or you may lose your bone.
5. Wash the bone to free it from all dried particles. It is now ready to be carved into some useful and beautiful article.

Method of Carving Bone

1. Look at the bone and decide what type of article it could be carved into. Then draw a design that would fit the bone. Interesting curves and twists in the bone should be utilized, for they always add to the charm of the finished product.

Some suggested articles that can be made from bone are, paper knives, buckles, buttons, pins, olive forks and other similar small articles.

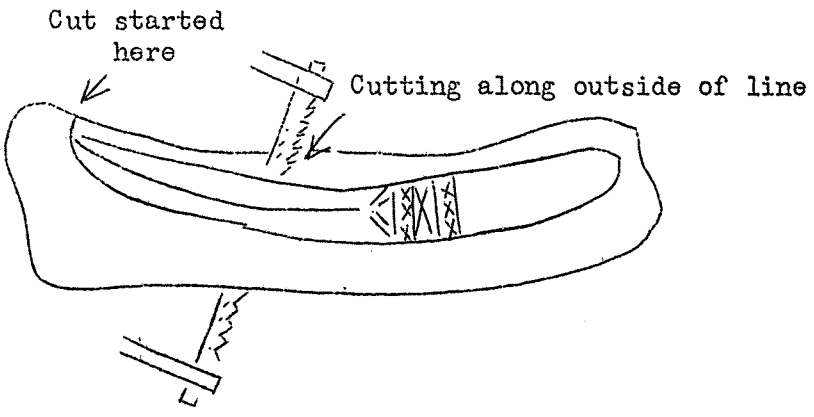
The design may be first drawn on a piece of paper and then this paper be pasted to the bone, or the design may be drawn with pencil directly on the bone. The second method is apt to give better results, as you are more likely to keep the shape of the bone in mind as you create your design.



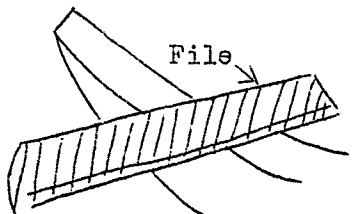
Design drawn on paper - Paper pasted on bone

Design drawn directly on the bone

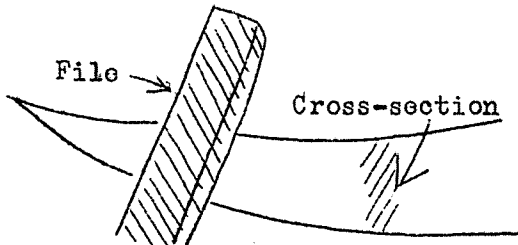
- 2. With a copying saw cut out the article. Be sure to cut along the outside of the line.



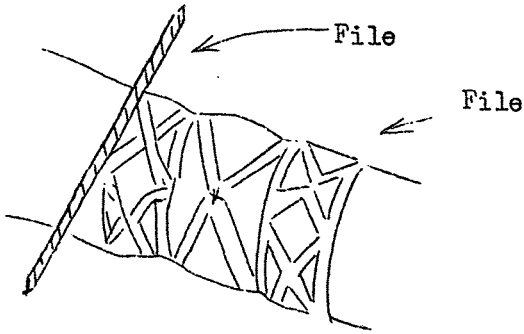
- 3. File contour edges smooth and true.
Note: For first filings use course rasp file, then finish off with a finer file.
You will find it much easier to file away the bone if you moisten the part being filed with turpentine.
- 4. File surfaces the correct thickness: All curved, around, square and all complex surfaces should be filed smooth and true before any applied design is added.
- 5. Add any needed applied design. File slightly deeper than desired, as polishing will wear the surface down slightly.
- 6. Polish the bone with pumice and water. For polishing use a wade made of chamois skin or felt.



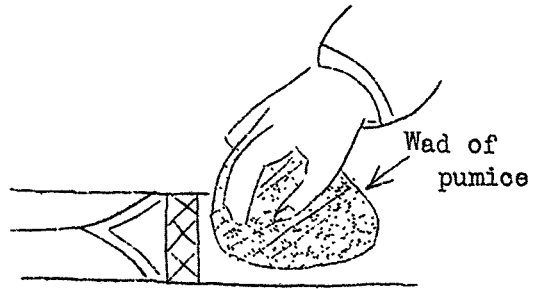
3. File contour edges smooth



4. File surfaces the correct thickness and shape.



5. File applied design details



6. Polish with pumice and water.

Method of Designing

1. Consider outside shape - length, width, thickness and profile. Until these proportions satisfy do not consider the decoration. These outside proportions should fit the uses that the object will perform. For example, a paper knife is used to open letters, and needs only a section to hold and one for cutting. These two sections are structurally all that is needed, if other parts are included they will be superficial and detract from the fundamental beauty of the article. As the handle is used to hold in the hand, it should be so shaped as to fit comfortably in the hand; and the blade should likewise be so shaped as to perform its function.

2. Any decoration added to the simple structural form should be used to enhance the beauty of this form and not be so conspicuous as to be the dominating feature. Over decorated articles are never beautiful. The applied decoration should help emphasize the structural shape and use. It is obvious, then, that applied decoration should be simple and subordinate and often is not needed.

3. Just as the applied decoration should be subordinate and emphasize the structural shape, so should the component parts of the decoration do likewise. Each part of the decoration should be part of the whole and the characteristic line, shape, form and color should be dominant throughout.

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