

Chipping Away
presents

**Chip
Carving
Classics
"One"**

by Lora S. Irish

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Chip Carving Classics “One”

by Lora S. Irish

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this book to my father, Ralph Cunningham,
who taught me that it wasn't that you could not do it ~ it was that
you just hadn't learned how to do it yet!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dennis Moor of Chipping Away for inviting me to work on this project. His support and encouragement has guided me through many tough spots along the way. Dennis even kindly sharpened his own knife and helped tremendously with some of the carved samples shown throughout the pages.

Also I would like to thank Michael, my husband and webmaster, for all his extra efforts throughout this project. He has unerringly picked up the extra load that fell upon his shoulders around the studio and home as I worked on the manuscripts and drawings.

It is not hard to return to thanking my parents. Michael and I worked with them for nearly 15 years in their craft/hobby business. Working for your parents can be one of the worst/most wonderful experiences there is. They not only expect much more of you than anyone else in the world they also believe much more than anyone else that you can succeed at it.

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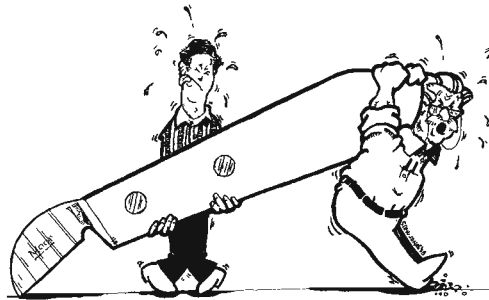
Table Of Contents

Forward	4
Preface	5
Chip Carving Techniques	7
Quick Tips	12
Positive and Negative Space	13
Patterns	
Borders	18
Stylized Accents	28
Grids	33
Fish and Birds	37
Rosettes	44
Special Occasion Designs	49
Miscellaneous	55

Forward

Chipping Away is absolutely delighted to bring you two books by Lora S. Irish; Chip Carving Classics "One" and "Two". Chip carving has a long history of use in decorating various wooden household items including furniture, as well as in creating purely artistic pieces. Although the finished chip carved pieces often display an intricacy and beauty one may think is attainable only by a long-lived master carver, chip carving can be surprisingly easy to learn. Let Lora Irish guide you through some of her techniques and you will soon be creating your own beautiful carvings.

In a few short years *Chipping Away* has become the largest chip carving organization in the world. Our humble beginning of teaching a few chip carving classes and exhibiting at woodcarving shows is our strength. We now have a growing Family of *Chipping Away* Teachers, a Family of *Chipping Away* Dealers, and an ever growing student body of over 2500 chip carvers. *Chipping Away* produces a complete line of superior chip carving tools under the 'Moor' label that are designed to make chip carving easier and eliminate the most commonly experienced difficulties. We are dedicated to the promotion of chip carving and take delight in teaching others an enjoyable style that is attainable by all.



...We Deliver Fun!

The *Chipping Away* line of tools and books are sold by dealers throughout the world, for details or dealer locations near you call, write, or visit our website on the Internet.

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Preface

There was always something happening around our house, some new hobby or craft to be learned, some new art style to be explored. Dad might be puttering with his jewelry castings or restoring some antique tool. He could be working on his leather carvings and he tried stained glass for awhile. Something was always going on.

But I must admit it really caught my attention that autumn when Dad set up an old work bench right in the middle of the family room. With his bench dogs he clamped a long pine board that had a star design traced on it's face on to the table. Next, he surrounded himself with all sorts of books, instruction manuals, wet stones, and a felt bag full of odd looking knives. Now, Dad trying a new hobby was far from surprising, but I had never seen him work with wood before and the pictures in the books showed these fascinating designs. Dad said it was Chip Carving.

Dad worked on those pine boards all autumn long. Sometimes the cuts would be hard to make and we could hear him muttering under his breath even over the sounds of the new black and white television set. Sometimes he missed and cut his finger instead of the wood. Then there would be this quick flurry of activity as he 'bandaged the wound' before he returned with intensity to what he was carving. Later I would learn that pine is not the easiest wood on which to chip carve. Sometimes we would hear this little 'AHHH' come from Dad's corner of the room as he delighted in some new part of the carving that had finally been revealed.

Now what Dad was doing became a real mystery in the house. He would finish one long pine board full of chip carved stars and it would disappear to be replaced with a new one ready to be carved. Board after board found it's way to the work bench. If any of us kids asked him, he'd just say he was "chipping".

Then, late fall a large board, bigger than all the others, showed up to be carefully clamped onto the table. This one had a totally different design. The triangles didn't make the star pattern, they seemed to bend and curve away from the center. I couldn't figure out what he was doing now. All of us watched in fascination as Dad made each cut so carefully. As he worked that evening two fighting cock roosters appeared out of nowhere on the center of that pine board. Neck feathers ruffled, heads pushed forward, tails fanned, and all made out of little triangles. This was truly magic.

After the fighting cocks were carved everything disappeared. The boards with the stars were gone, the work table made it's way back to Dad's corner of the basement, the tools and books found themselves placed on the tool shelf. Dad seemed to go off into some new endeavor.

I didn't see any more of those chip carved boards until Christmas morning. There sitting under the Christmas tree was this big beautiful pine hope chest decorated with wonderful stars. In the center of the lid were the two fighting cocks shining in golden amber tones. And on top of the hope chest was a little gold key with a big red bow and a tag that said "To Susan ... From Santa". The inside of the hope chest was filled with gold foil chocolate coins laying on a red velvet lining.

I was eleven that Christmas, a young girl just getting ready to become a woman. My Dad had spent hours and hours and hours to make something just for me to mark the coming changes in my life. It may be made of plain pine. It may have just a very simple star design of chip carving on it. It has a few mistakes and even some dents. But my Dad made it just for me! This box is still my most valued possession because it was made with love.

It would not be until many years later that I would discover my Dad had given me a lot more than a Chip Carved chest that morning, he gave me the love for creating, for exploring new arts, for wood carving. Today, Michael, my husband, and I focus our lives on the joys of carving. Working from our home studio we run our Websites "Classic Carving Patterns" and "Fine Art Dog Prints". I create the carving patterns or work on a new oil painting, while Michael maintains the web and answers your e-mails. Chips from the carving samples, just like with my Dad, cover the family room floor and the studio is filled with the smell of paints and turpentine. Our teenage son, cats, and a pound puppy named Peabody all look to me to feed them at appropriate times of the day. It's a great way to live.

It is my truest hope that somewhere within these pages you may find that special pattern for that 'precious gift' that you will one day create.

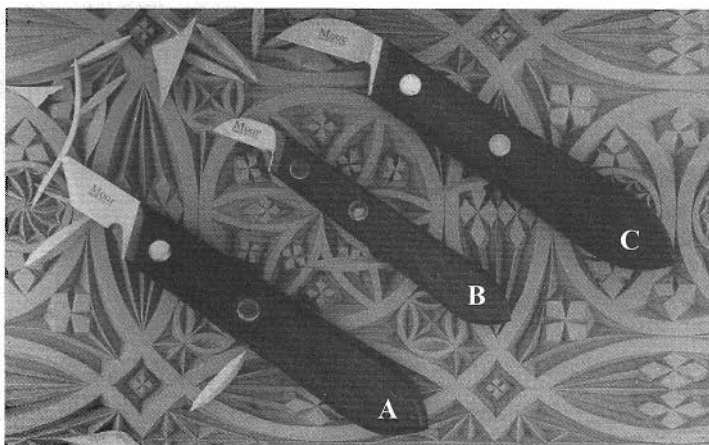


Chip Carving Techniques

Chip carving has become for the woodworker an art form complete in itself. This technique uses triangular shaped cuts that create intricate and intriguing designs dancing across the surface of the wood. Patterns for chip carving are defined with the basic element, the triangle, yet by varying the size and position of the triangles new patterns are created.

Because the chip carving technique employs one very basic shape it would seem that the patterns created would be static, however this is far from true. The triangles can be long narrow shapes or very short and fat in appearance, even curves are included within the triangles outlines. Chip carving is extremely appropriate for ornate jewellery boxes, shelf supports, and breadboards that will decorate your kitchen.

This technique is basically created with the chip knife. I highly recommend Moor's Chip Carving Knives. This set of three is specifically designed for chip carving work and will last you a lifetime.



Moor Stabbing Knife (A) 5 3/4" in length

The Moor Stabbing Knife has had its point honed to a 65% angle to make those wonderful accents wedge marks that enhance any chip work. Because of the stabbing/pushing design of this tool, you will also find it an excellent addition to your relief carving work for creating textures.

Small Moor Knife (B) 4 1/2" in length

The Small Moor Knife is perfect when you want something small to give you more control over those delicate cuts. This little gem of a cutting tool just cradles right into the fold of your palm giving you more cut for a lot less pressure. But be careful, you are as likely to find this tiny titan in your relief tool kit as in with your chip knives, because of the fine work you can create with it.

Large Moor Knife (C) 5 3/4" in length

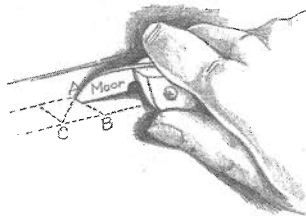
The sharp angle of the steel on the Large Moor Knife places the tip of your tool in perfect angle for the cut as soon as your hand hits the wood. Cuts become more consistent, angles more even. The wide throat, where the handle and blade intersect, makes it easier to find the correct grip regardless of your hand or thumb size.

Chip carving as an art takes two directions. First is the pattern that is created from triangular shapes or traditional chip carving. Free Form chip carving is made with fine cut lines that vary in their shape and direction. Traditional chip carving can be broken down further into fine chip carving and large chip carving.

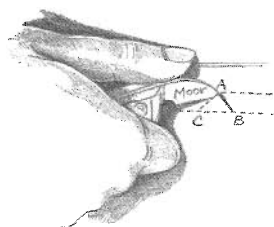
Fine Chip Carving

With fine chip carving most of the right angled triangles that you will be working on are about 1/4" or less in size. So the first two basic cuts are not pull cuts but instead a push or plunge motion into the wood.

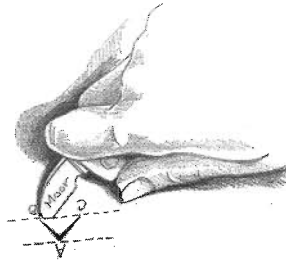
The knife is held at a 65 degree angle to the wood surface with the blade of the knife facing you. You will be making this first cut toward you. Let the tip of the knife rest at point A, then push or plunge the knife into the wood toward point B. This creates a cut into the chip that is deepest where the point enters and shallow at the intersection of the next angle of the chip. Back the knife out of the cut, do not pull it out in the direction of the line. This will make a fine cut past the end of the line where you do not want it.



Flip the knife over in your hand, the blade will now be facing away from you. Turn your work so that it is opposite its original position. You are ready for the second cut which will be a push cut into the wood. Begin again at point A, holding the knife at 65 degrees. Again, push or plunge the knife into the wood along the chip line toward point C. Then bring it straight out from the cut. Just as with the first cut, the second one is deepest at point A and becomes shallow toward the next intersection.



The third cut is a pulled cut. Return the knife to a position in your hand where the blade faces you. Place the tip of the blade at Point B, 65 degrees. Now slowly push the knife into the wood, pulling it along the line. As you reach the center of the line begin to bring the knife out of the wood until just the tip makes the cut at Point C.



The chip should now slip off the wood. If not, recut the chip, do not pry or force it. This can cause splitting in your work or the loss of the fine crisp edges that you are trying to achieve.

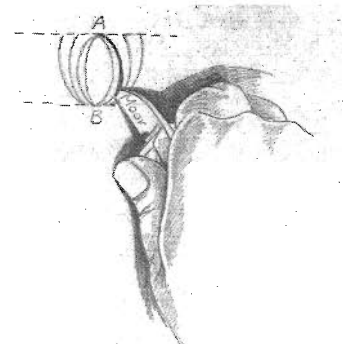
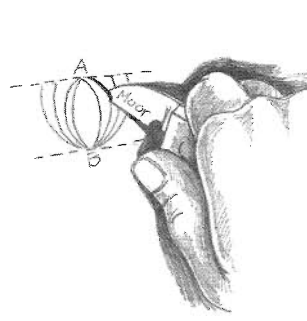
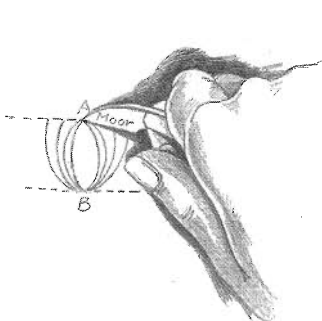
Long Tapered Triangles and Free Form

For triangles that have long tapering sides and free form lines you will need to pull slightly for the first and second cuts to reach the end of the chip. Work from the tightest point of the triangle toward the more open side of the chip. In long tapered triangles begin with the knife in an upright position, almost 90 degrees to the wood. As you make the cut slowly drop the blade back down to the 65 degree angle. This will keep your points crisp with less pop out sections where the tapers meet in the center of the rosette.

I prefer to work all tightly tapered chips away from the narrow point. It is helpful to pre-score the cutting line of a tight taper. Just gently cut a fine shallow line before you do the actual cut of the chip. This can reduce pop outs in the work.

For free form lines use the same almost upright position to start the stroke. As you pull the line begin to drop the blade down toward the 65 degree angle at the center of the line. Past the center point again bring the knife slowly back into an upright position. Your hand will roll slightly during the entire pull stroke. This keeps the cut tight at the points but allows it to belly out in the middle of the stroke.

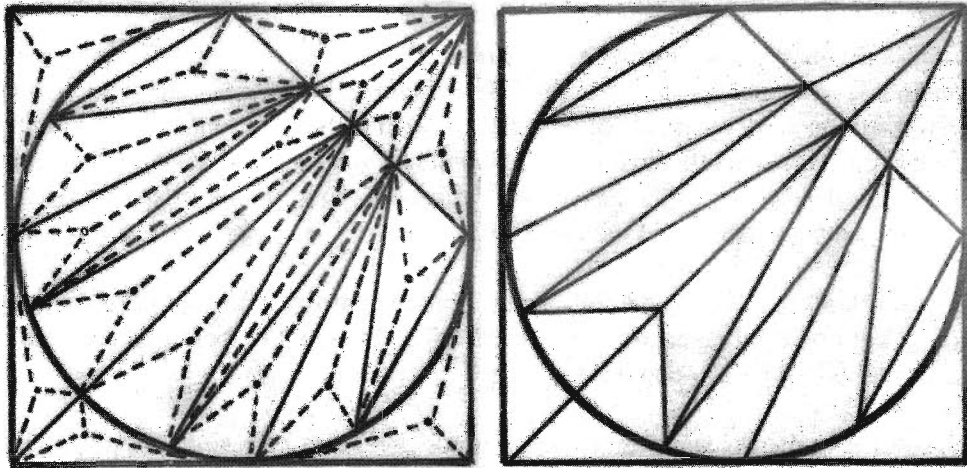
As you work free form designs varying the width of each cut and position of the belly within the cuts will add interest and movement to the work. Keep the lines changing in form and shape.



Large Chip Carving

For some designs you will want the triangle chip to be fairly large. Trying to cut large chips can be difficult because of the long pull strokes needed to reach from edge to edge and the depth at which they need to be cut. I have found it easier to make three small chips into one large one.

With Traditional chip carving, the pattern that you trace will be made up of many triangles. For large chip designs each triangle will be sectioned into three smaller triangles that you will cut down toward a central point. In fact, each triangle unit that you trace will become three triangles to carve.

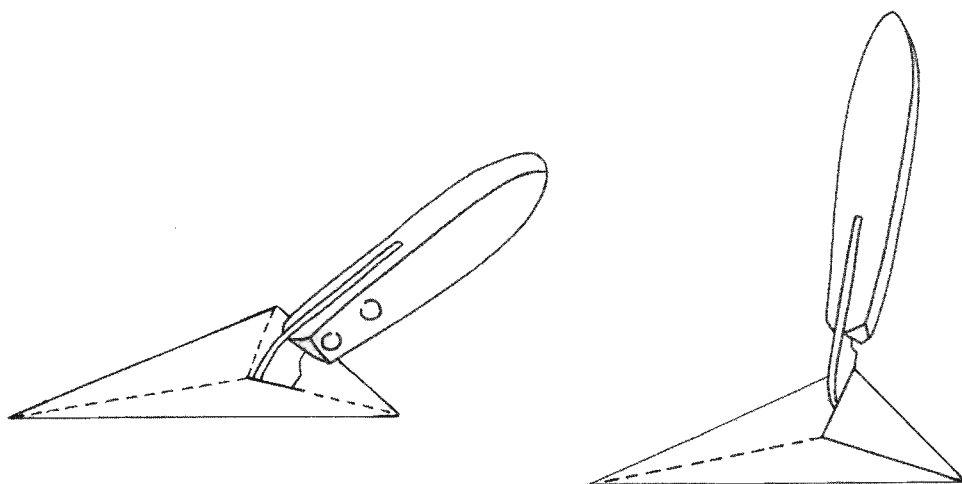


The pattern above and to the right shows the original tracing lines. The pattern on the left shows how each triangle unit will be subdivided into three sections. Once the pattern has been traced, with a red pencil mark a dot where the center of the unit seems to be. With a blue pencil pull a line from this red dot to one corner of the triangle unit. Pull blue lines for the remaining two corners of the unit. Since everything inside the units outlines will be carved away neither the red nor blue pencil lines will show after the carving is complete, but by using different colors than the basic pattern you will not become confused as to where the next carving area is.

Only the basic outlines of the tracing will remain after the chip carving has been done. Take care to make each cut within the unit so that the outlines remain crisp and straight.

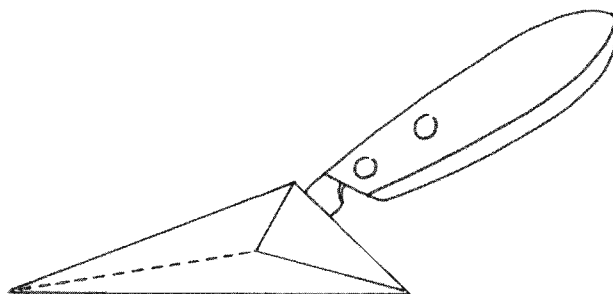
Each small triangle within the unit is treated separately. Begin carving with your large Moor chip knife at the red dot, this will be the deepest point of the stroke. Cut along the line toward the corner gradually tapering the cut up to the surface of the wood block. Take this stroke right to the corner of the triangle. Keep the cut as vertical as possible on this stroke. Return to the red dot and repeat this stroke toward the second corner of the small triangle, again tapering upward to the point. Again hold the blade in a vertical position.

Place your large Moor knife blade at a 65 degree angle along the outer edge of the small triangle so that the point of the blade reaches toward the red dot. Gently remove the chip. This stroke will begin shallow at the point of the triangle, become deepest at the red dot, then taper back toward the surface of the wood block as you reach the second point of the triangle. When you have completed the chip you will have a three dimensions triangle that reaches deep into the wood surface. Repeat this process with the remaining two smaller triangles of the unit. Each of these will also use the same red dot as their deepest points.



These three chips create the look of one large chip when you are finished.

Smooth walls and crisp lines, both in the depths of the chip and at the top edge where one chip connects to another, is what creates excellence in this technique.



A Few Quick Tips

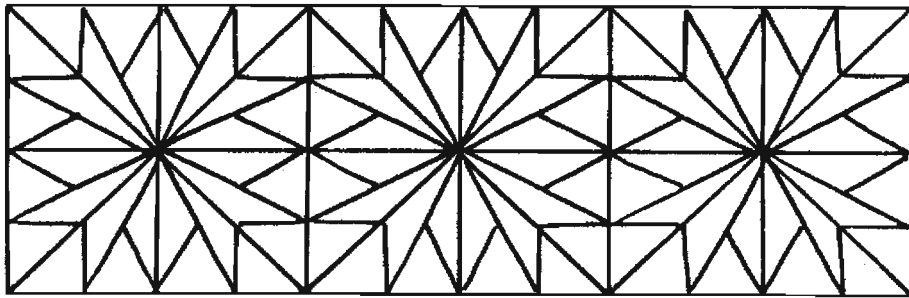
1. Keep your thumb from resting on the work during cutting. The tip of your thumb should always be in contact with the wood. Letting your thumb ride along with the stroke lets you guide the cut both in direction and depth.
2. Try to keep your wrist straight during the curved cuts. Make the curve with your elbow, not the wrist. This will make the lines smoother and avoid sudden angle changes in the curves. Treat your hand, wrist, and elbow as one unit! This is extremely important when you are working on long straight border lines.
3. Gang cut your work whenever possible. If you have a long line of similar triangles to cut, make all of the Position One cuts first, then return for Position Two cuts, and finally the third cut. Using gang cutting will keep the triangles even and straight, avoiding variations in the work.
4. If your hand has begun to tighten up on the knife or even hurt, STOP! Take a few minutes to strop the blade. This gives your hand a chance to relax. A relaxed hand makes a smooth cut. And, of course, you can never strop your knife too many times during carving.
5. When I work on chip carving I use a terry cloth towel on my lap to catch the chips. It makes for very easy clean up later and keeps the wood clean during the working process.
6. Personally, I do the worst first. For some patterns there are cuts that I find myself holding my breath as I make them. I prefer to get those chips out of the way quickly. The hardest work is then accomplished while I am very fresh and excited about the project.
7. I keep a practice board in my kit. Before I begin work on the project I will make a small line of chips on this board, just to loosen my hand and to get the feel for the condition of the knife blade. This only takes a few moments and has often avoided miscuts at the beginning of any session.
8. Have fun, that's what it's all about.

Positive and Negative Space in Chip Carving

Just because a pattern in a carving design book shows a certain number of triangles to chip carve does not mean that you, as the carver, must cut every one. Choosing to cut some but not other pattern lines can dramatically change the look of a design as well as increase the number of possible chip carvings that can be created from just one pattern. Through positive and negative space it is possible for you to take one chip carving design and create a multitude of patterns.

Positive space for chip carving is the area that you will be chipping away within the design. An easy way to remember the positive space in your designs is that it is those chips you "positively will be carving". Negative space therefore becomes those areas that you will not be carving, or in essence, "No, I'm not carving these chips". By choosing to carve some triangles but not others you begin to create patterns with the chips as well as patterns in the smooth background that surrounds those chips.

Using positive and negative space within your chip work not only changes the look of the design but also the feeling of weight on your project. The more you chip carve the more intricate the design becomes and therefore the heavier the pattern looks on the project. Using a design that involves numerous cuts and that covers a large area creates a finished effect that is heavy and dark because of the number of shadows. An open chip work that incorporates a large amount of uncarved area creates a lacey and light style of design.



Basic Pattern

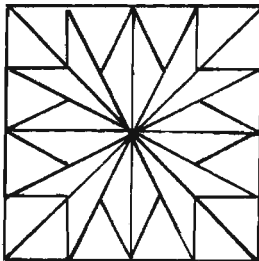
To start your work with positive and negative space, let's begin by making several copies of the Basic Pattern. All of the patterns used in this section are worked from the Basic Pattern, shown here. Once the copies are made you will need a colored pencil. You will be using the colored pencil to block in those chips that you "positively will be carving" or the positive space of the design. In the pattern samples in this sections (except for the Basic Pattern) those areas that are colored black will be the areas of the design that will be carved. The areas that have been left white will not be carved and so remain open spaces within the work, the negative.

Note that this design can easily be broken down into groups of repetitive triangles within the square. The first group of repeating chips are those that border the design. Each small triangle has basically the same size and shape, and each touches the outside edge of the pattern. The finished work becomes a floral like image or rosette design. In the Basic Pattern sample the focus is on the positive space in the design, the cuts you have made. Now, in Sample One, the focus has changed to the negative space in the work, your eye is pulled to the uncut area captured inside the chips.

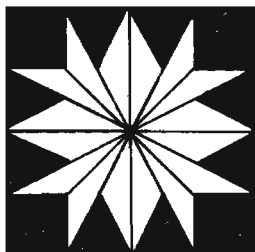
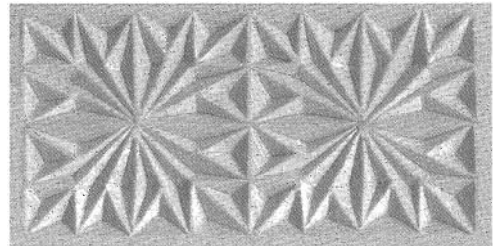
Sample Two shows the second obvious group of related chips. Here each triangle is placed on the diagonal of the pattern and together they create a Celtic Cross impression. This pattern keeps the focus on the cut chips and gives a wonderful lacy look to the work with lots of open space. This would be an excellent design to use where you wish to cover a very large area of the wood without doing a lot of work in the carving.

The triangles that create the diamond shape along the vertical and horizontal lines of the pattern make up Sample Three. Again you have made an open worked design that contains lots of unfinished wood. This also would be a good filler design.

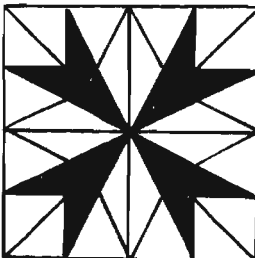
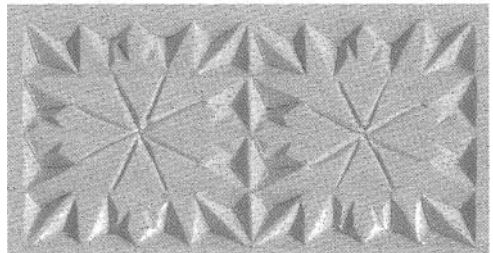
Finding new patterns hidden within one design becomes simple by using these individual units. You can see how dramatically different these four carvings are from each other, yet they are worked off the same Basic Pattern.



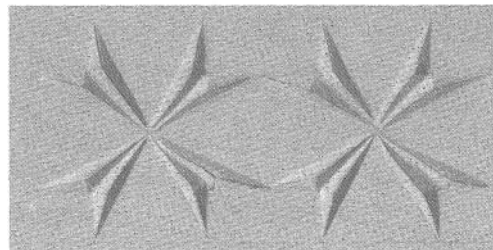
Basic Pattern

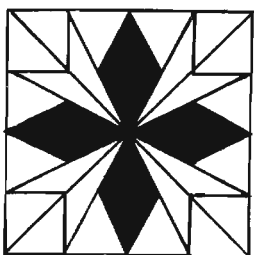


Sample One

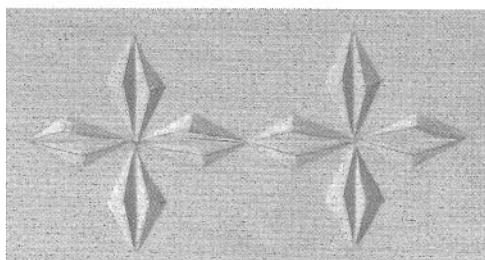


Sample Two

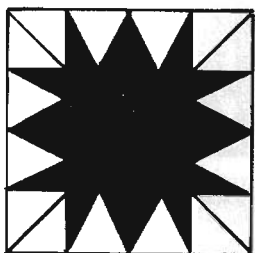




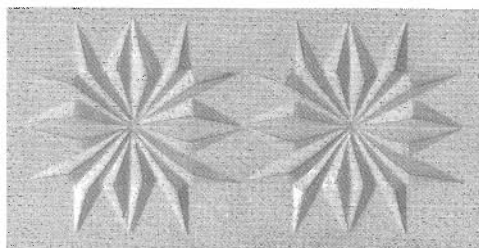
Sample Three



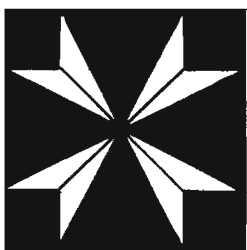
Let's return to your pattern copies and colored pencil. Again find the groups of related chip triangles but reverse which ones you will and will not carve. In Sample Two you chose to carve only those chips that were along the border. In this pattern, Sample Four, carve any chip that is not along the border, and reverse the Sample One pattern. The central area of the design is the focus point just as in Sample One, but this time it becomes a multipoint star. Note the two diamond shapes trapped within the points of the star. These are uncut yet becomes a distinct part of this work.



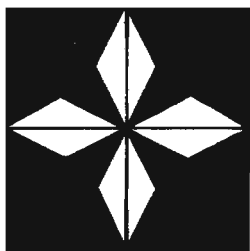
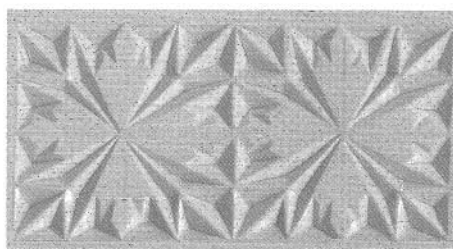
Sample Four



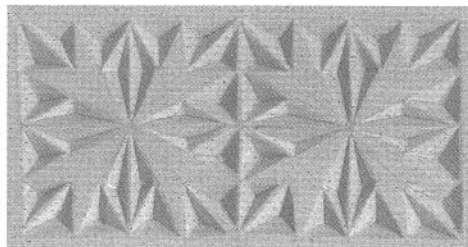
Sample Five shows everything but the Celtic Cross triangles cut and Sample Six leaves the triangles that form the centre diamonds unfinished. These two carvings begin to show how using positive and negative space can create designs in the carving both in the cut areas and in the uncut regions. The star look from Sample Four has now become a snowflake. Sample Six is creating the impression of a repetitive leaf pattern



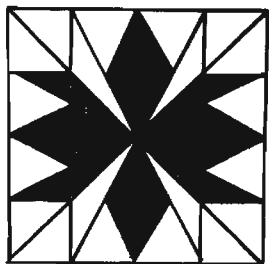
Sample Five



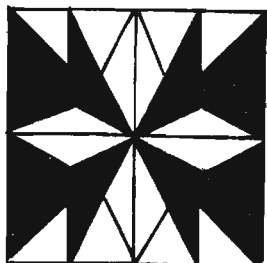
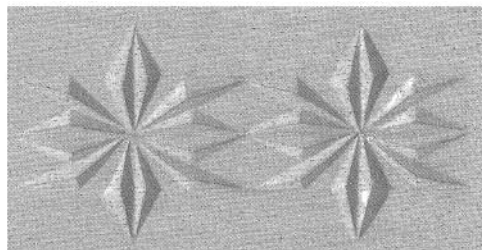
Sample Six



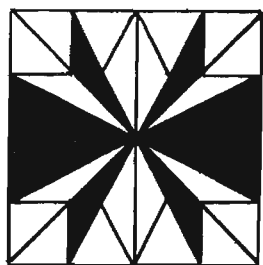
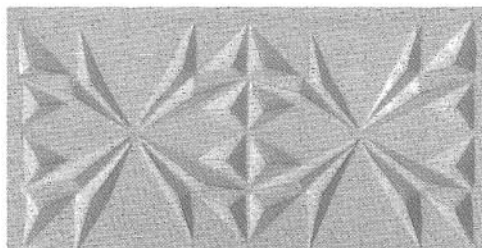
As you work with positive and negative space it is fun to mix and match the units that are to be carved. Samples Seven, Eight, and Nine show this combination of units. Notice in all three examples how the background uncarved areas are forming their own repetitive patterns that accentuates the carving.



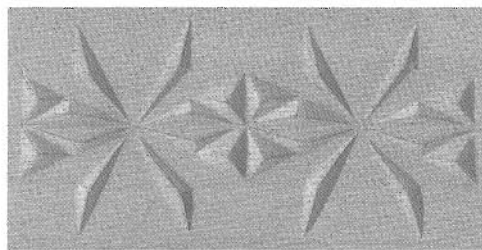
Sample Seven



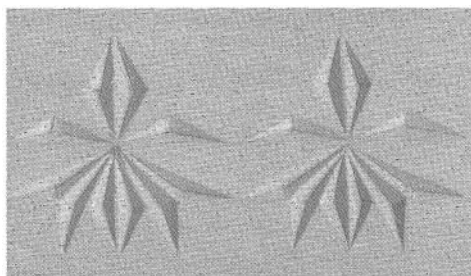
Sample Eight



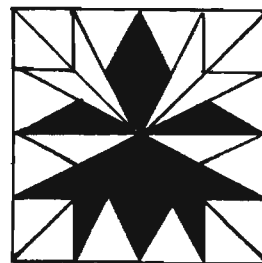
Sample Nine



To this point I have chosen to mirror the areas that are to be carved. What is to be cut on the left side of the central line is the same as that on the right. What is to be cut above the central line is the same as that below. But it is not necessary to maintain this mirror image look in chip carving. The pattern below, Sample Ten, shows a design where the top section is totally different from the bottom half, creating a floral look to this carving.

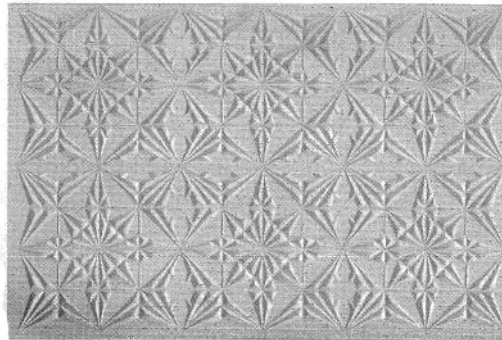


Sample Ten

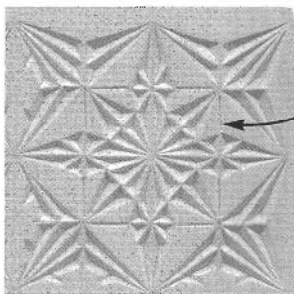


So, with just a little work, a few copies of my Basic Pattern and a colored pencil, I have already discovered ten new possibilities from just one pattern, each design having it's own unique feeling and look.

This large box lid is a fine example of how positive and negative space looks in a finished chip carving. The uncut areas of the pattern are what focus your eye toward the eight point stars throughout the carving. These stars would have been lost if every triangle within the pattern had been worked. Even as the background brings the stars forward, the background also creates it's own unique design. Note the four-point leaf pattern that runs along the sides of the work and through the center panel. In this case it is the surrounding chips that make the leaf design prominent.



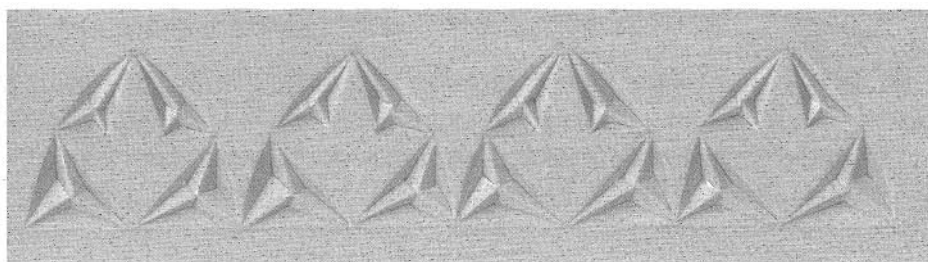
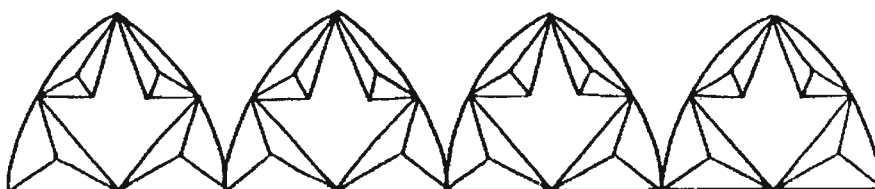
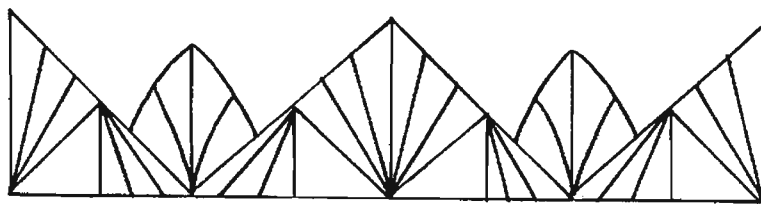
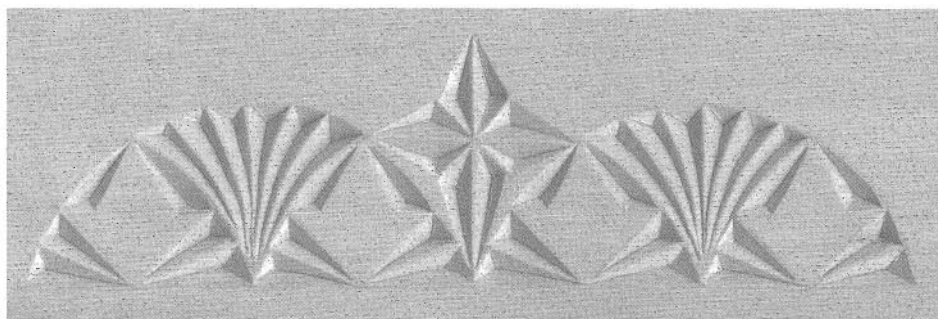
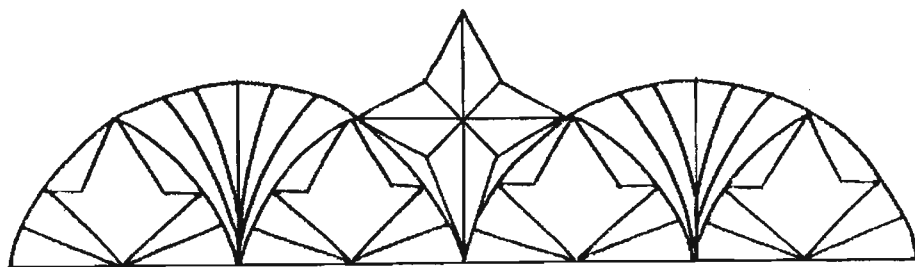
When working with this design I wanted to keep the look of the square that is part of the eight point star, but did not want to carve the chips that would define that very square. So I have accented the square by carving a fine line where the chip would have intersected.

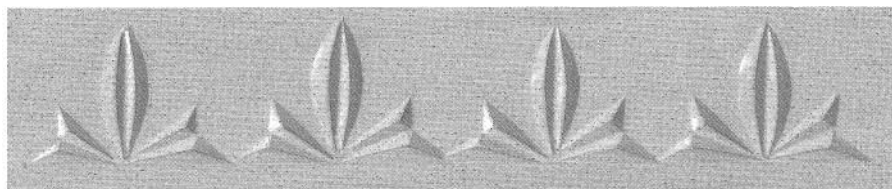
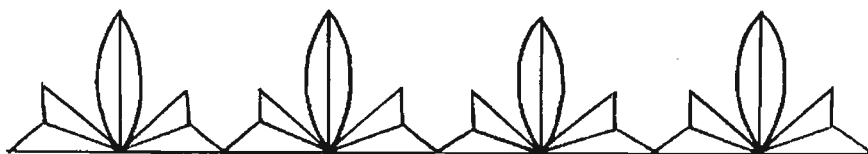
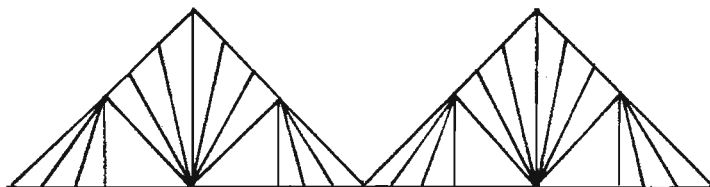
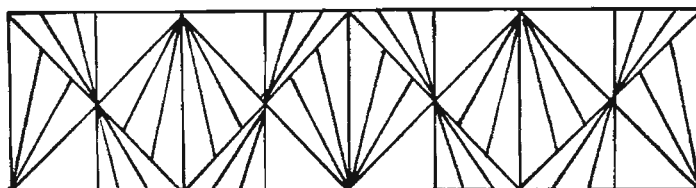
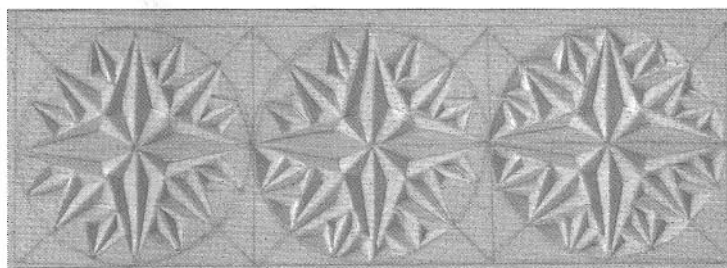
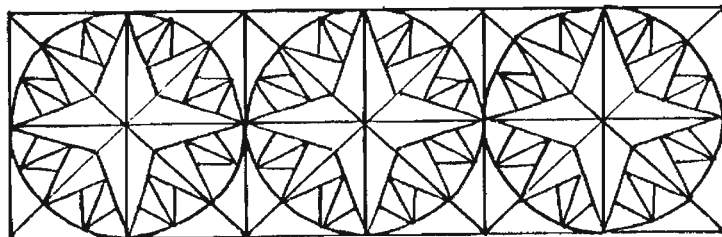


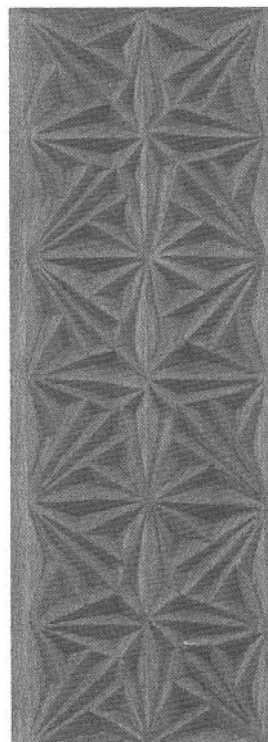
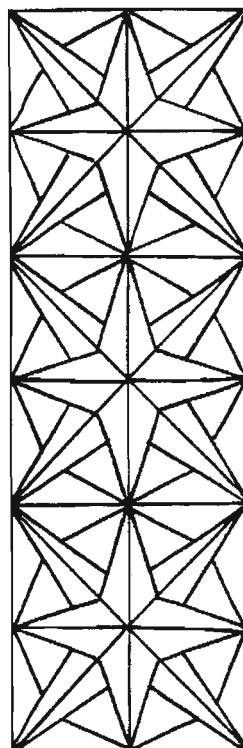
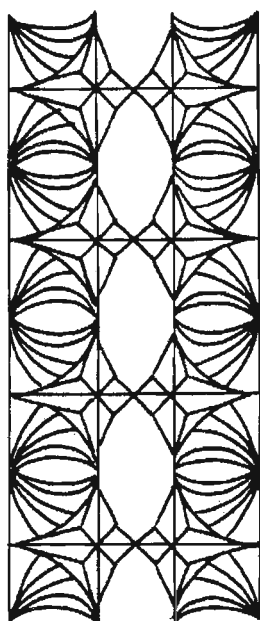
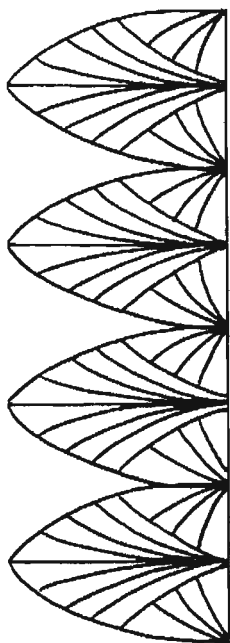
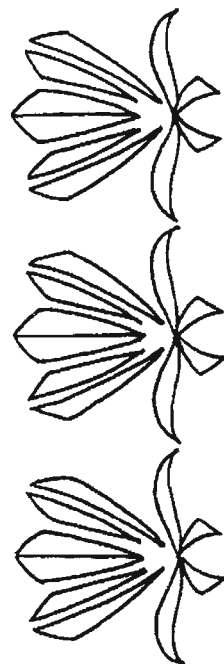
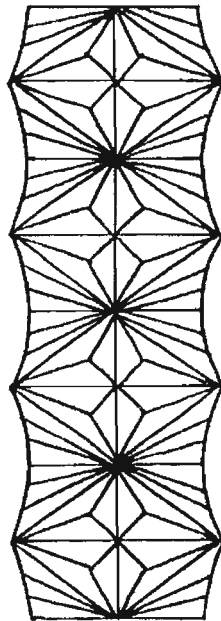
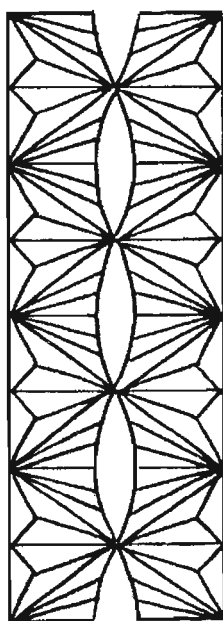
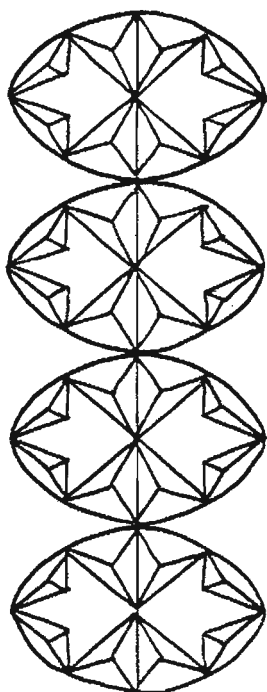
This is the basic pattern used on the box lid. Note the fine lines that have been carved to keep the look of the square the surrounds the eight-point star.

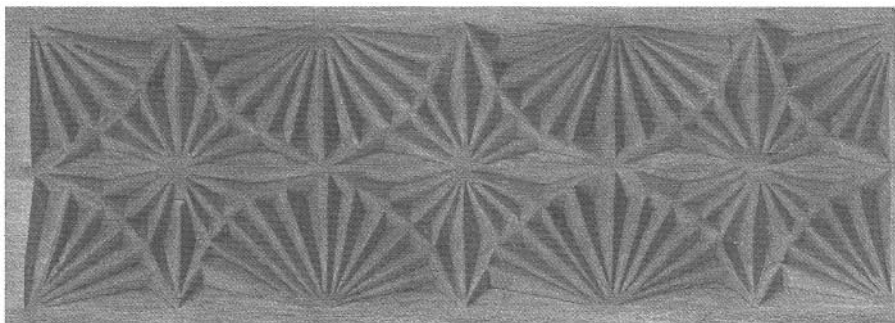
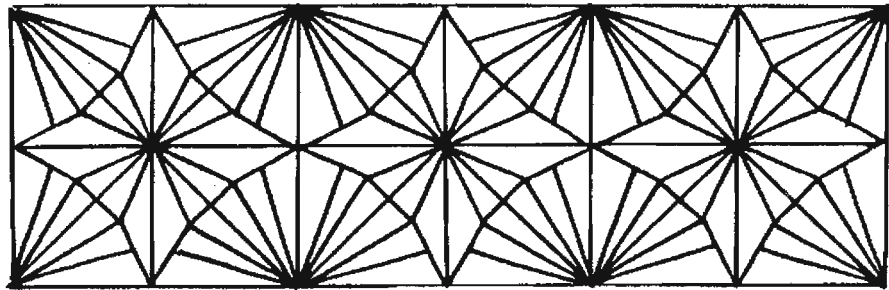
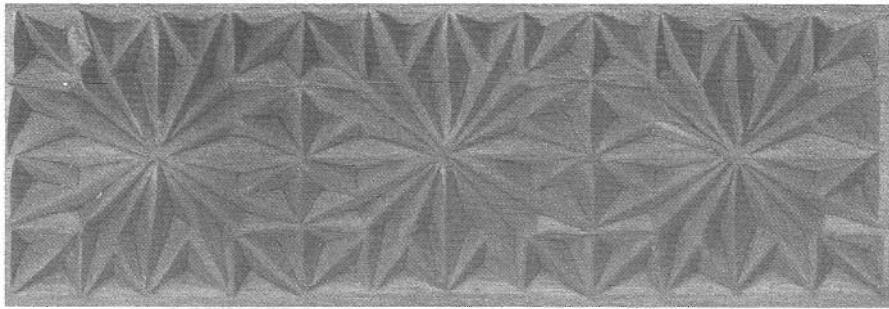
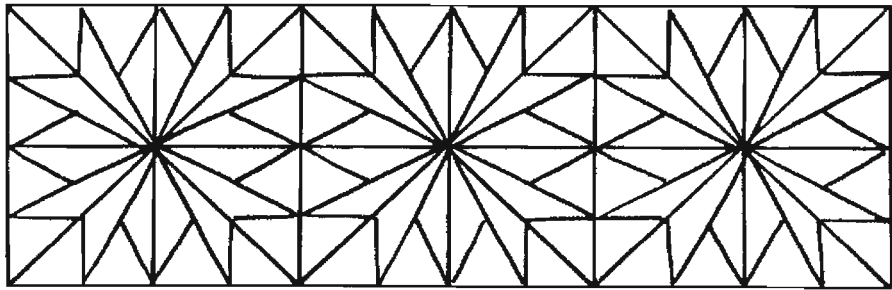
When I work with a design that will contain positive and negative spaces I like to mark the pattern both on the paper and on the wood for easier carving. Just as we have worked here I will make a copy of the pattern and colour pencil in those areas that I will be carving. Once the pattern has been transferred or traced to the project I use a regular pencil and make a small mark or "X" on every triangle that is to be carved, the positive units of the work. Since these chips are to be removed the "X" mark does not effect the final look of the piece.

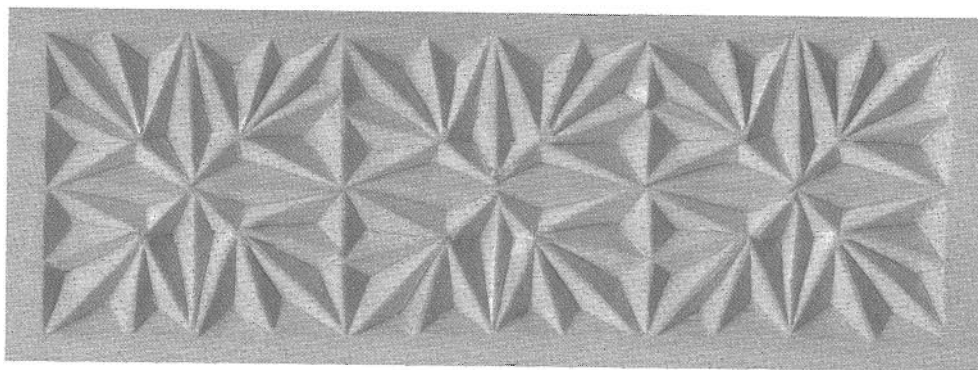
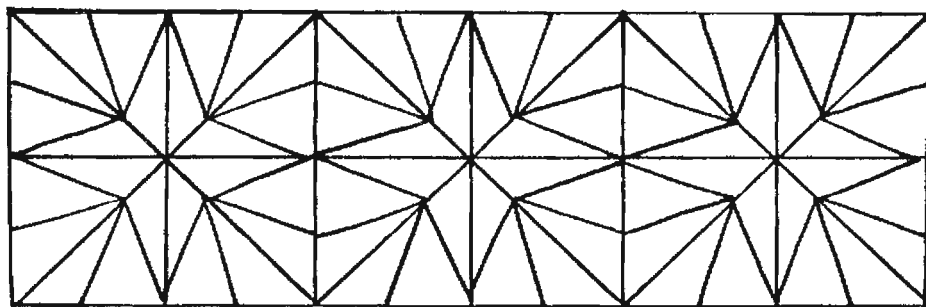
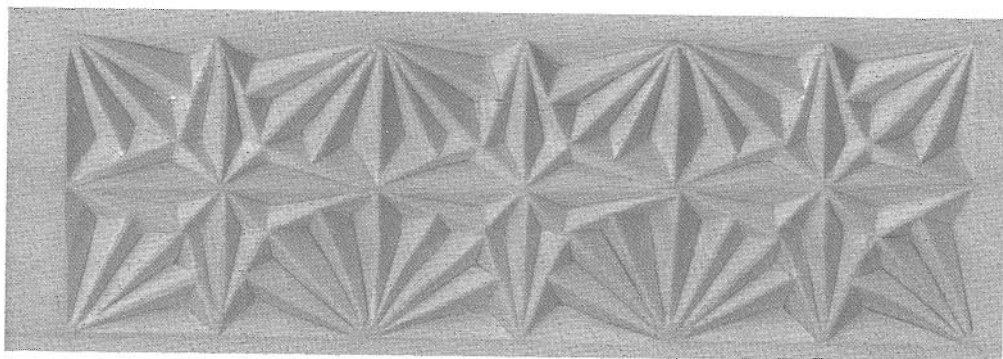
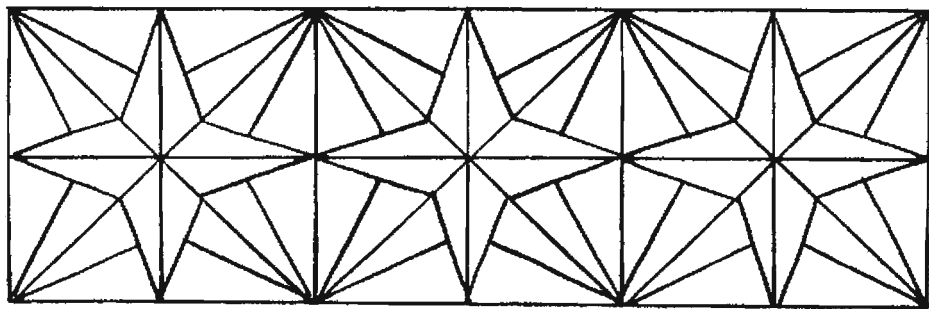
I like surprising the viewer of one of my carvings so I have also made a small border chip carving on the inside of this lid. It is human nature for an individual that is looking at a chip carved box to open the lid and peak inside. When they do, they will be rewarded with a little extra!

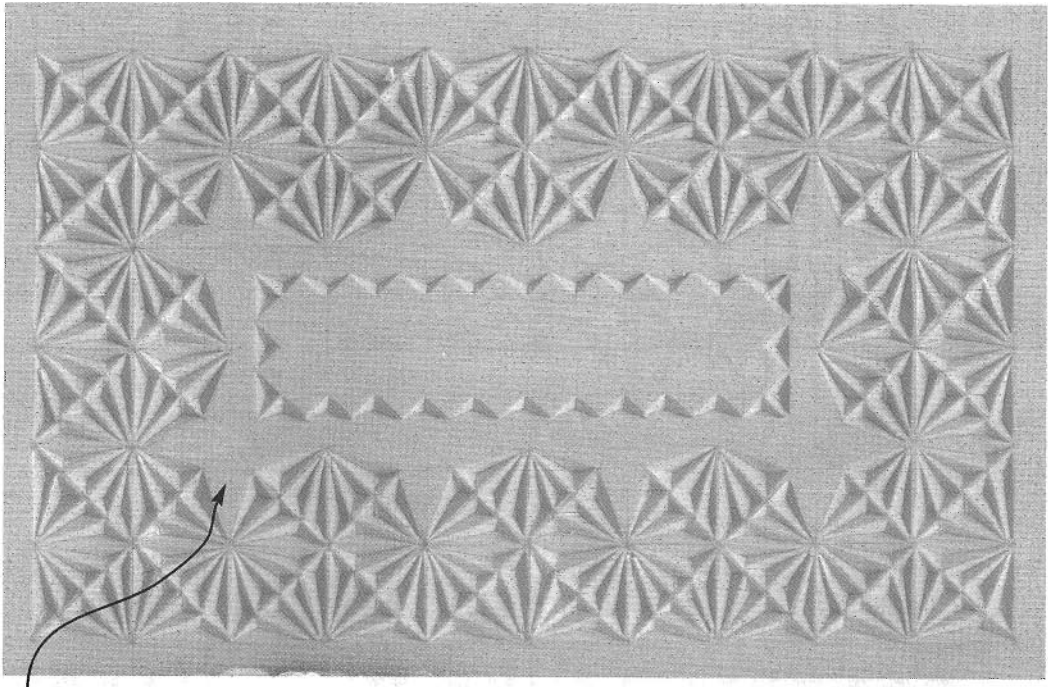




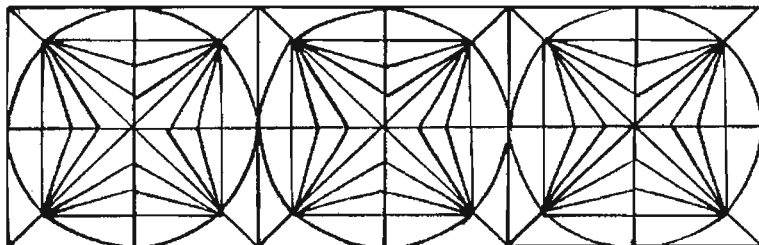
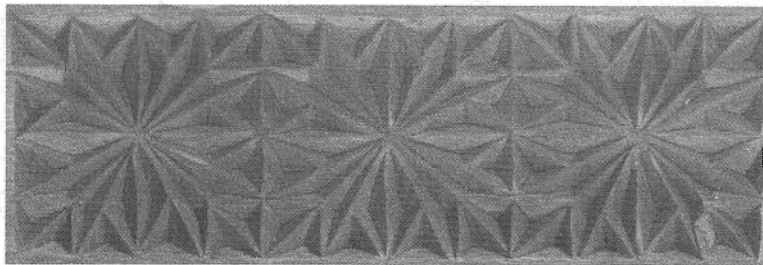
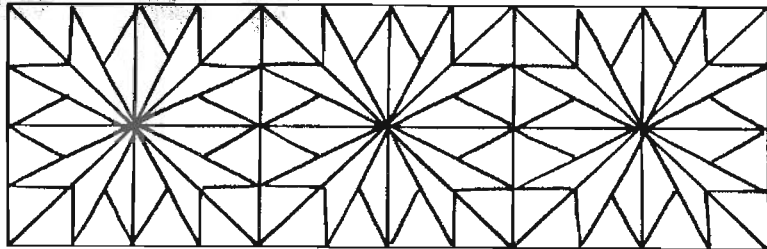


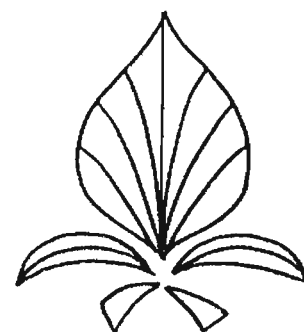
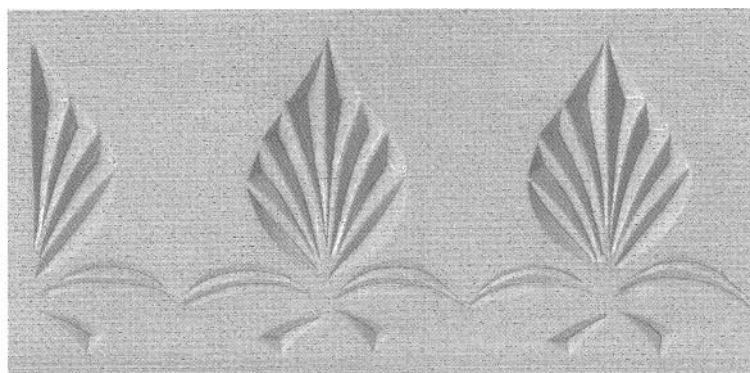
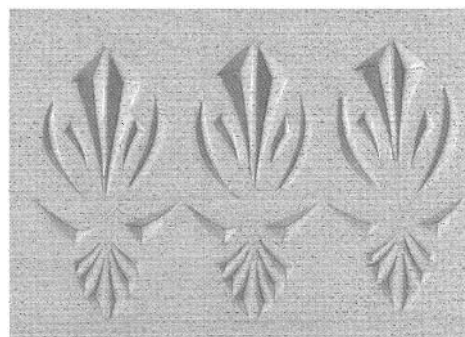
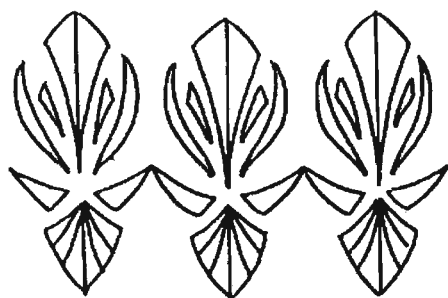
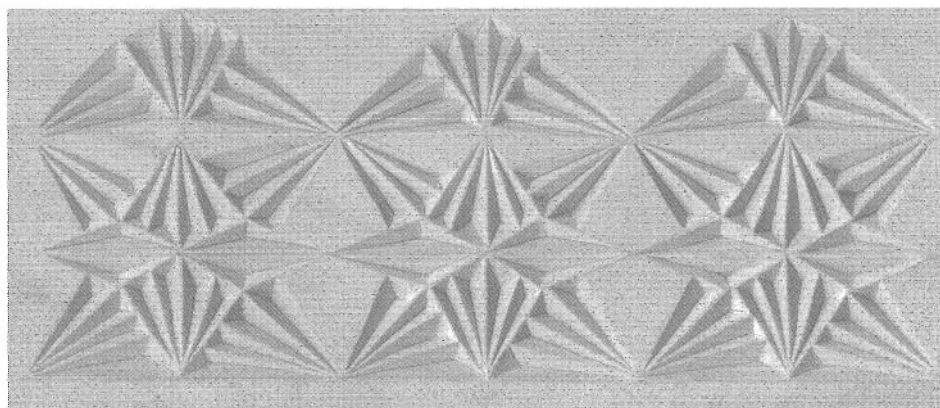
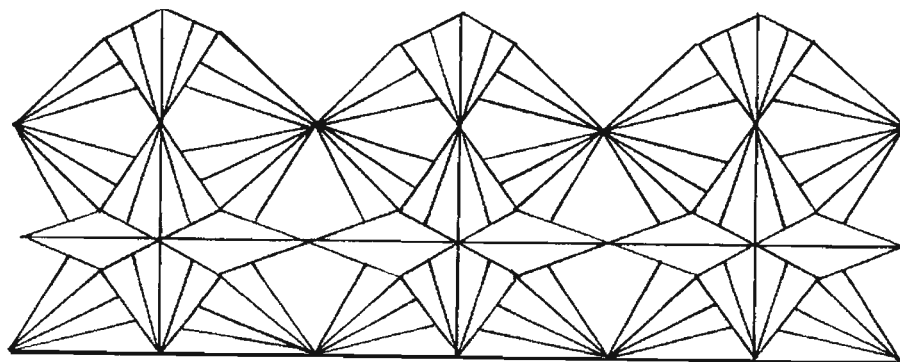


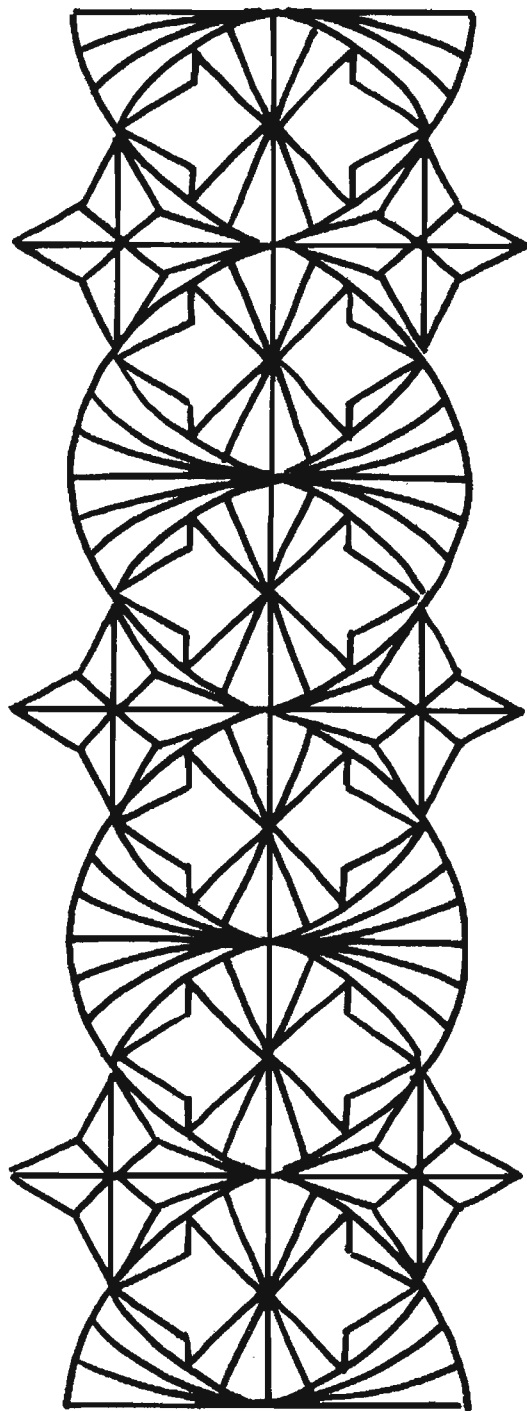
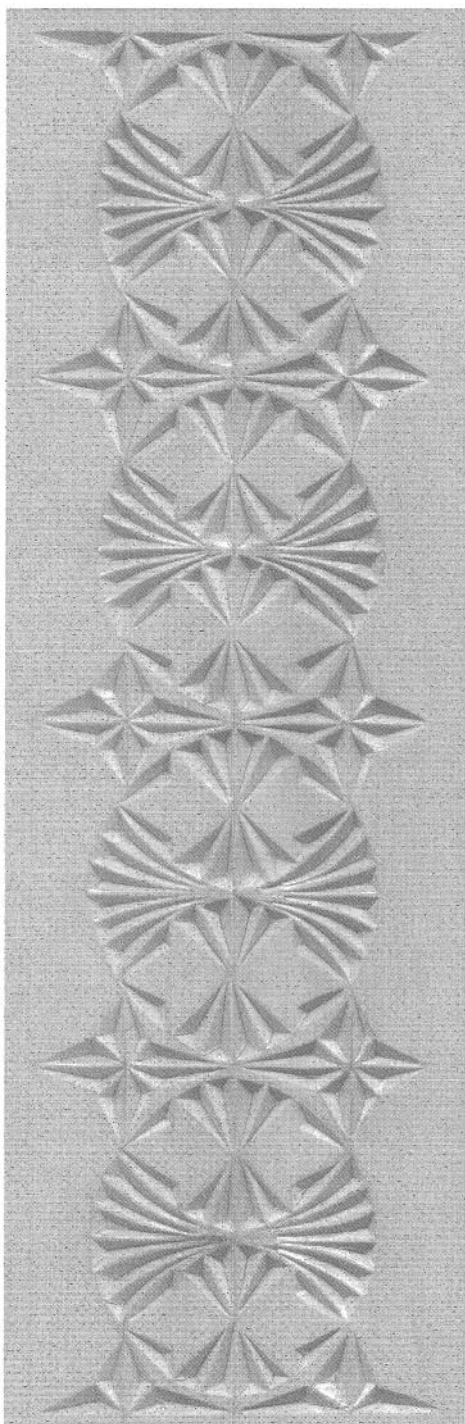


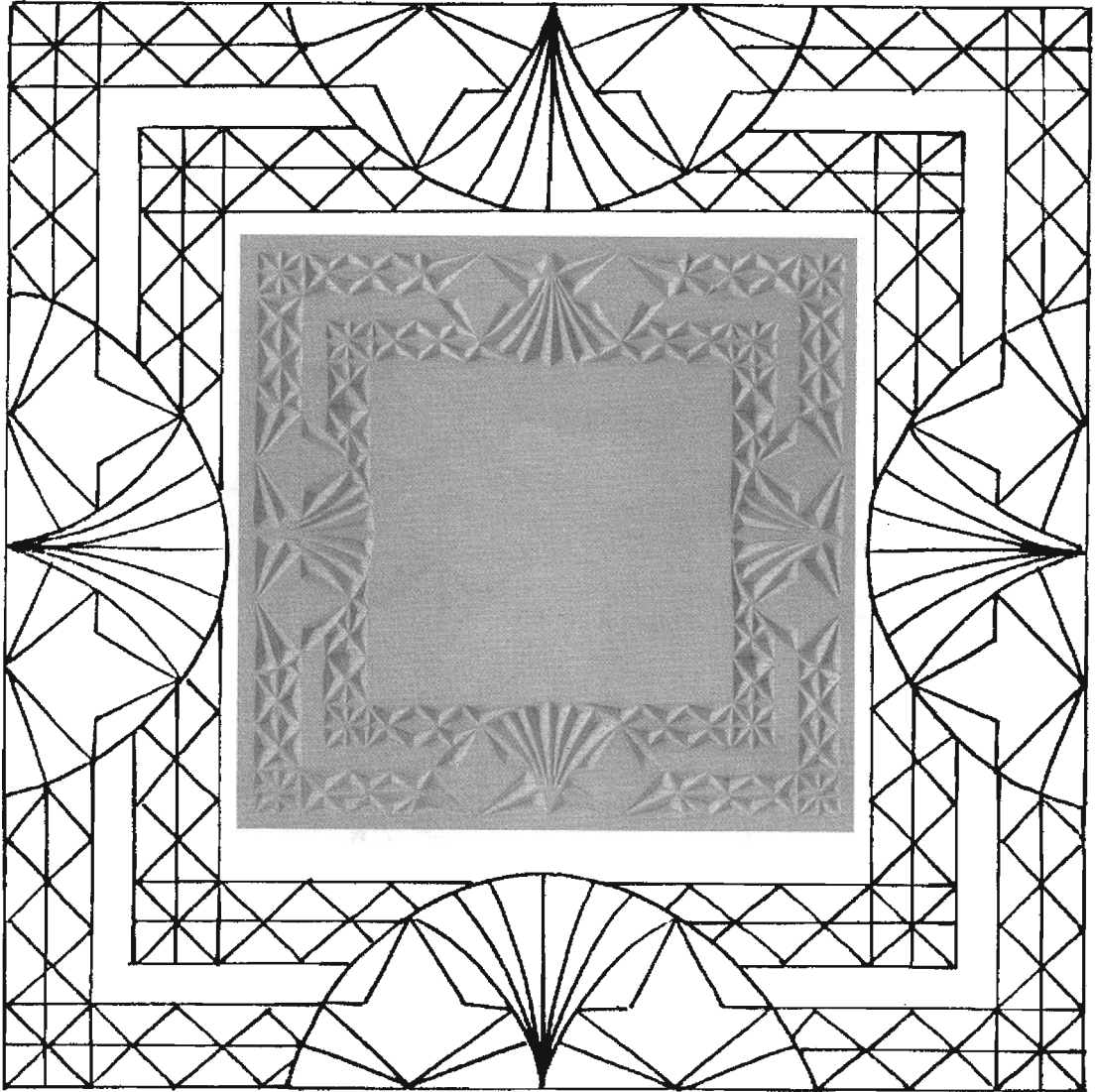


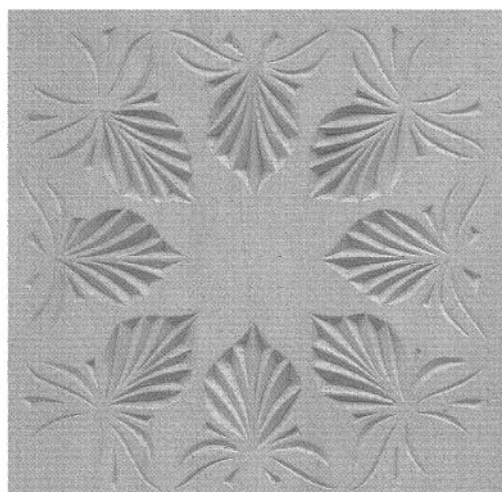
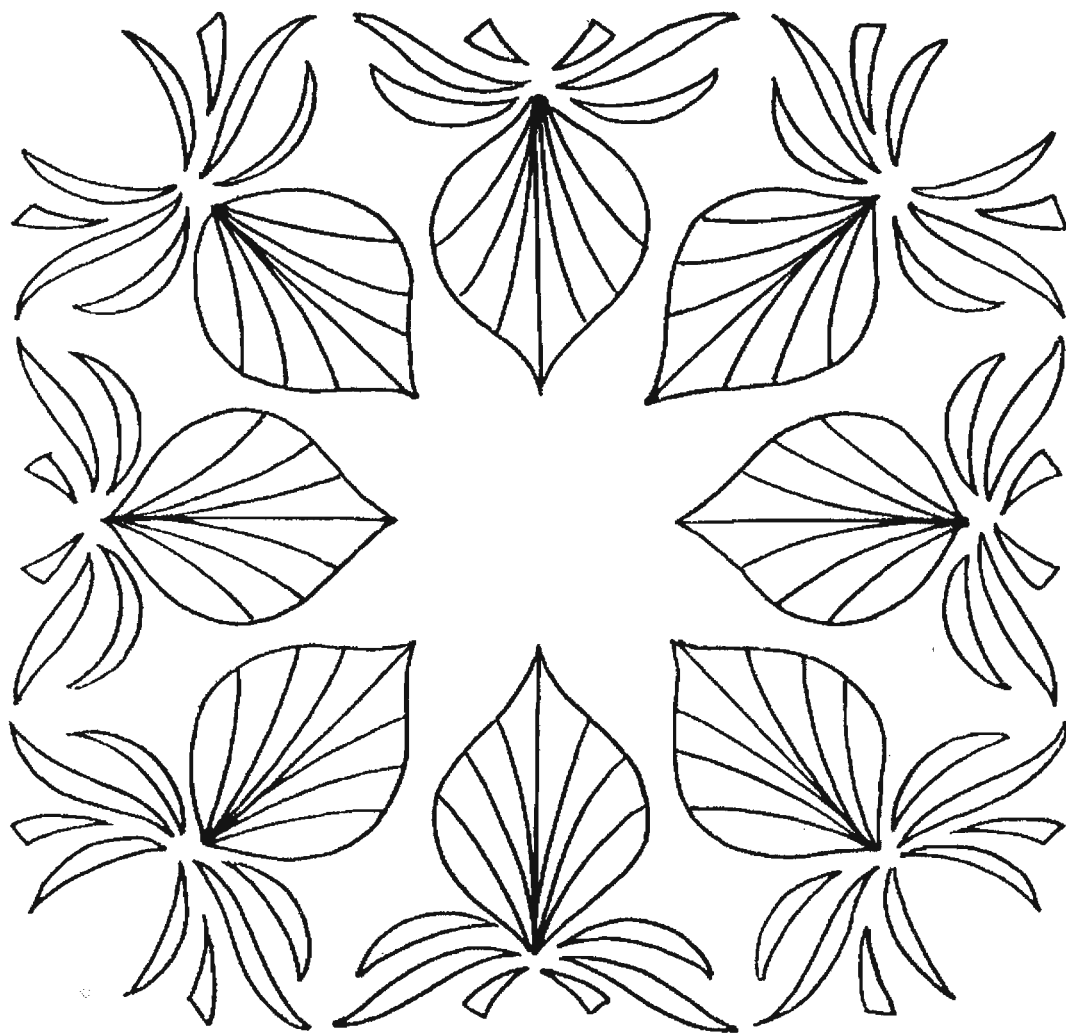
See how this section was left uncarved!



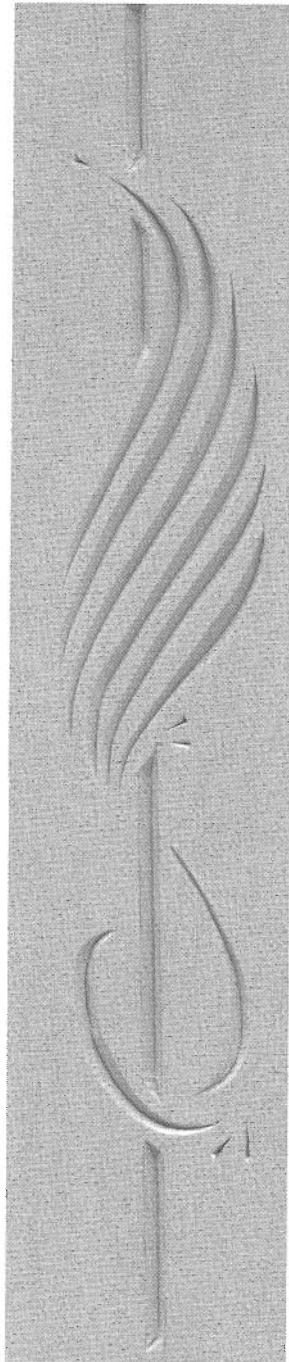


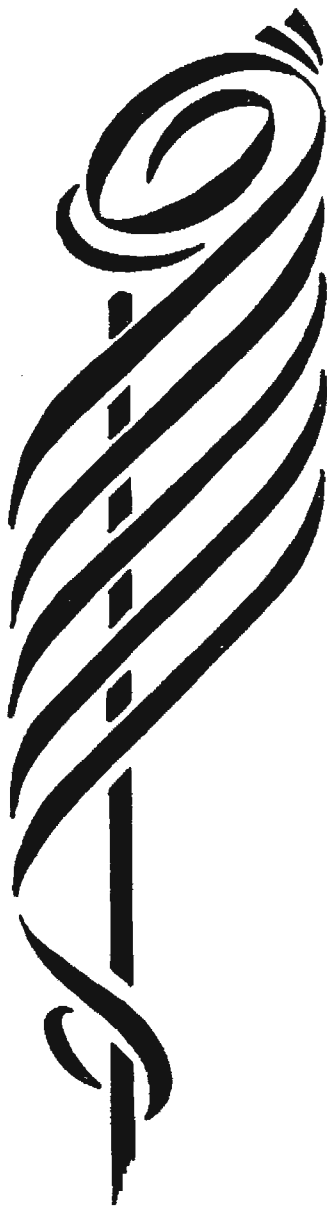






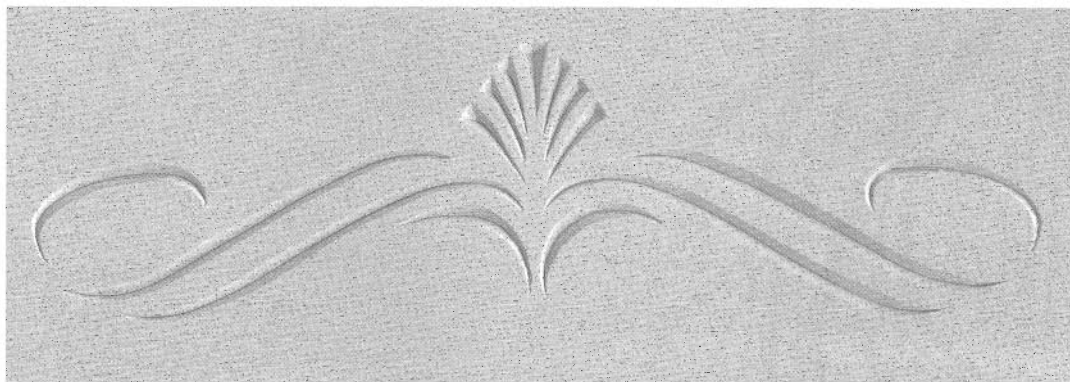
This pattern makes
a great border...
enlarge simply by
adding more
individual patterns.

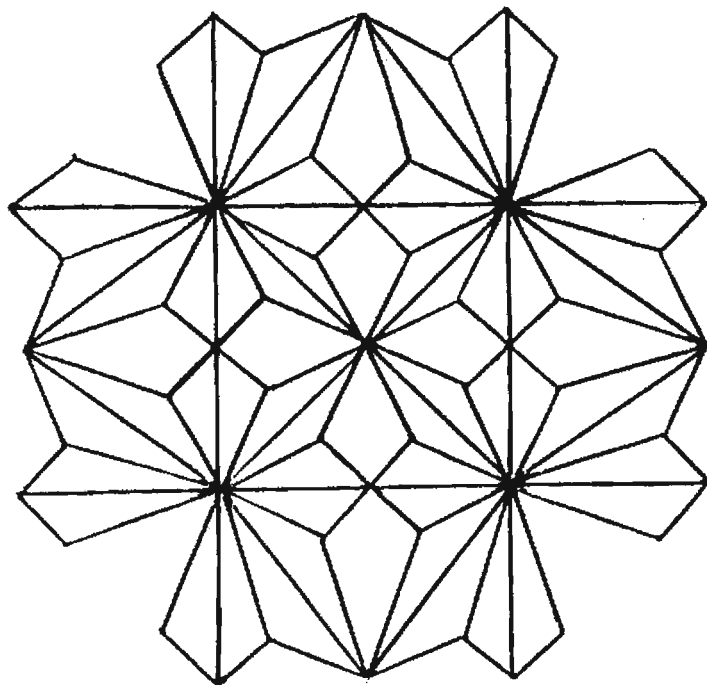
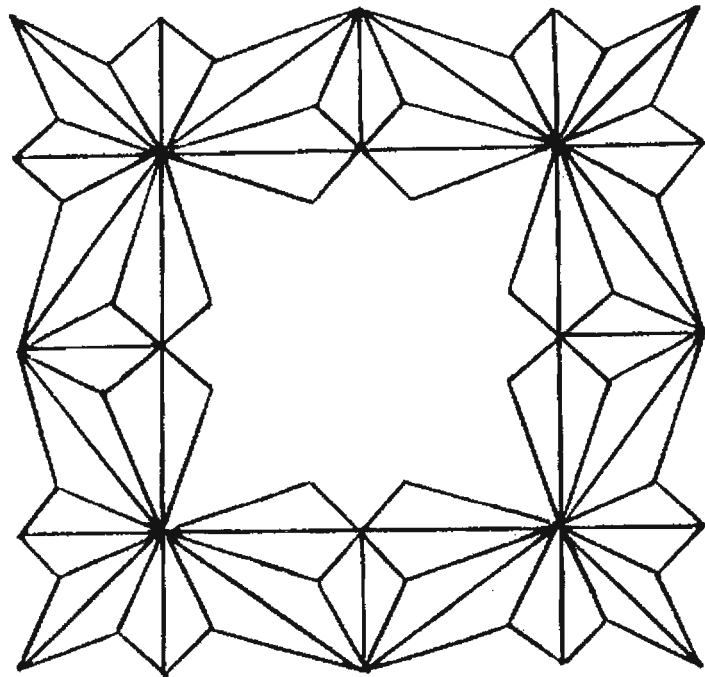


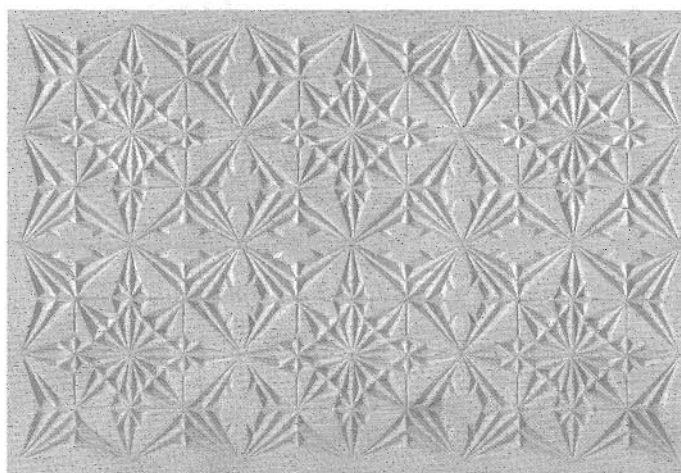
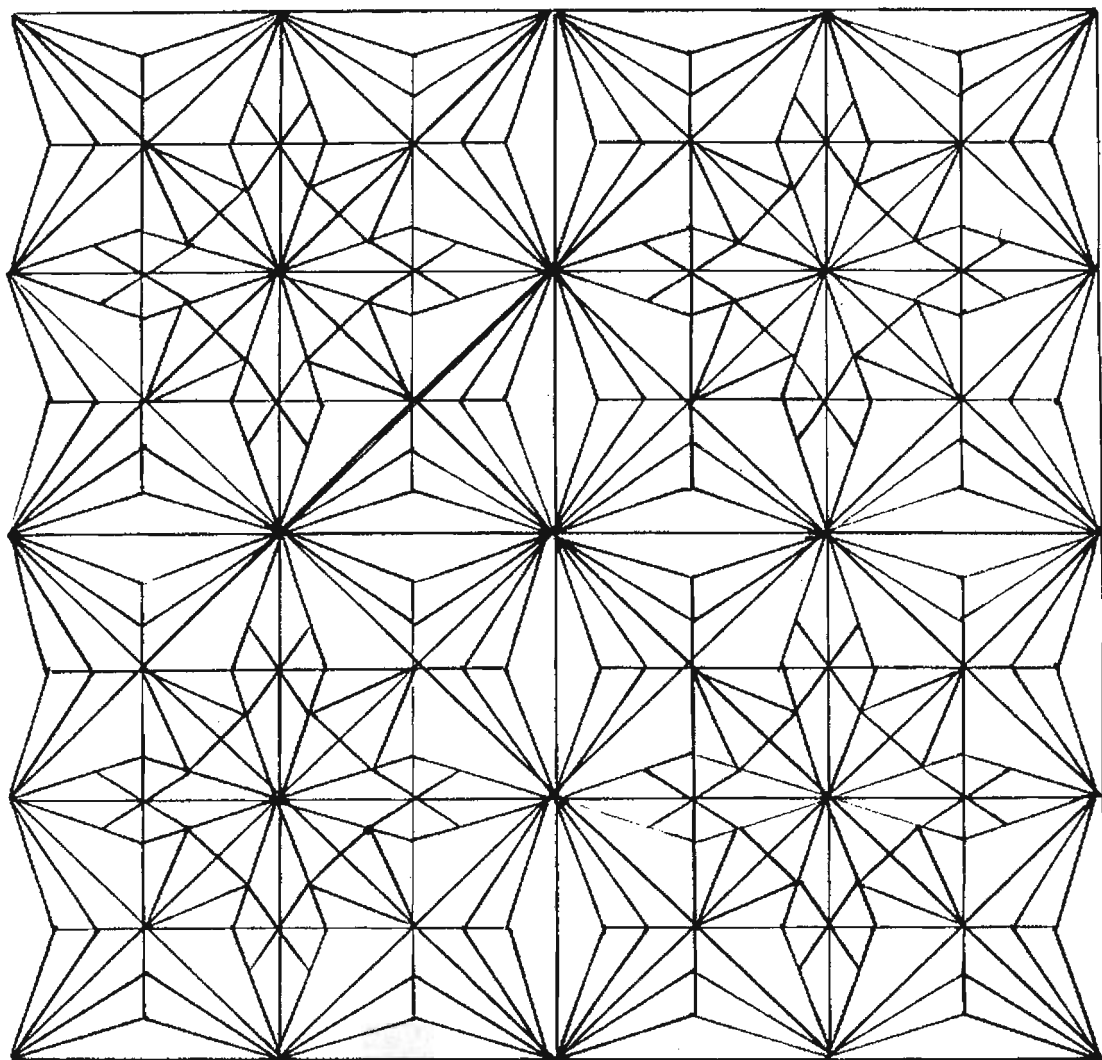


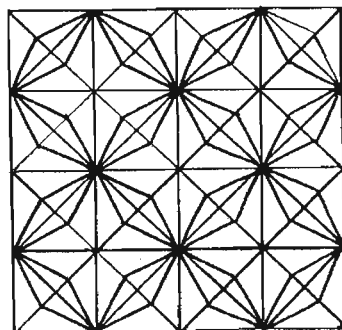
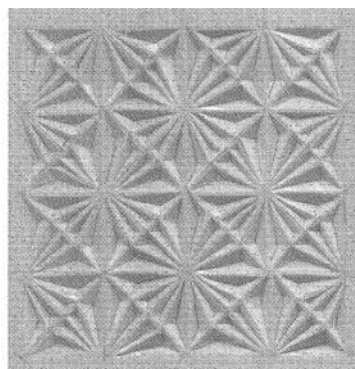
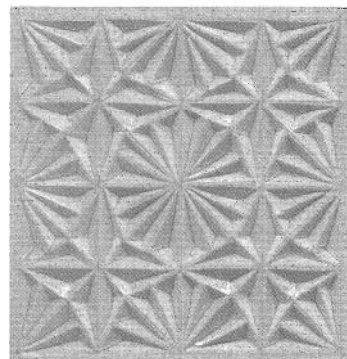
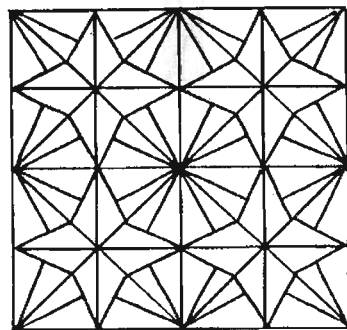
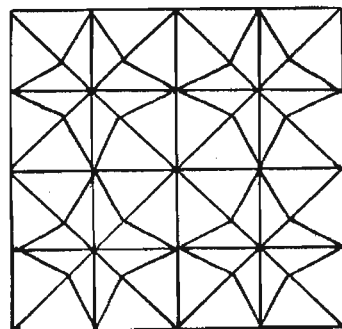
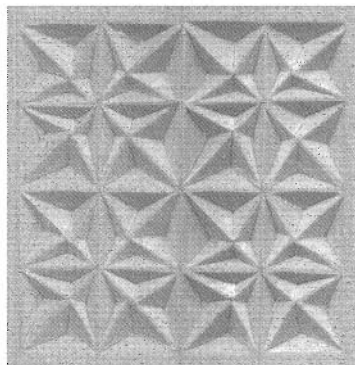
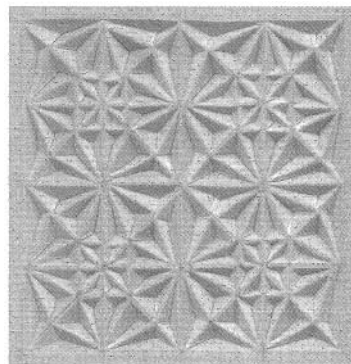
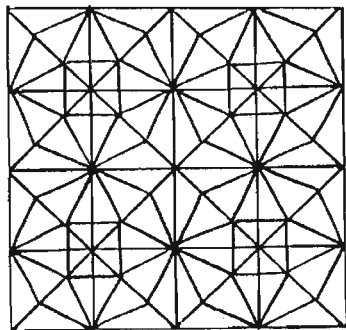


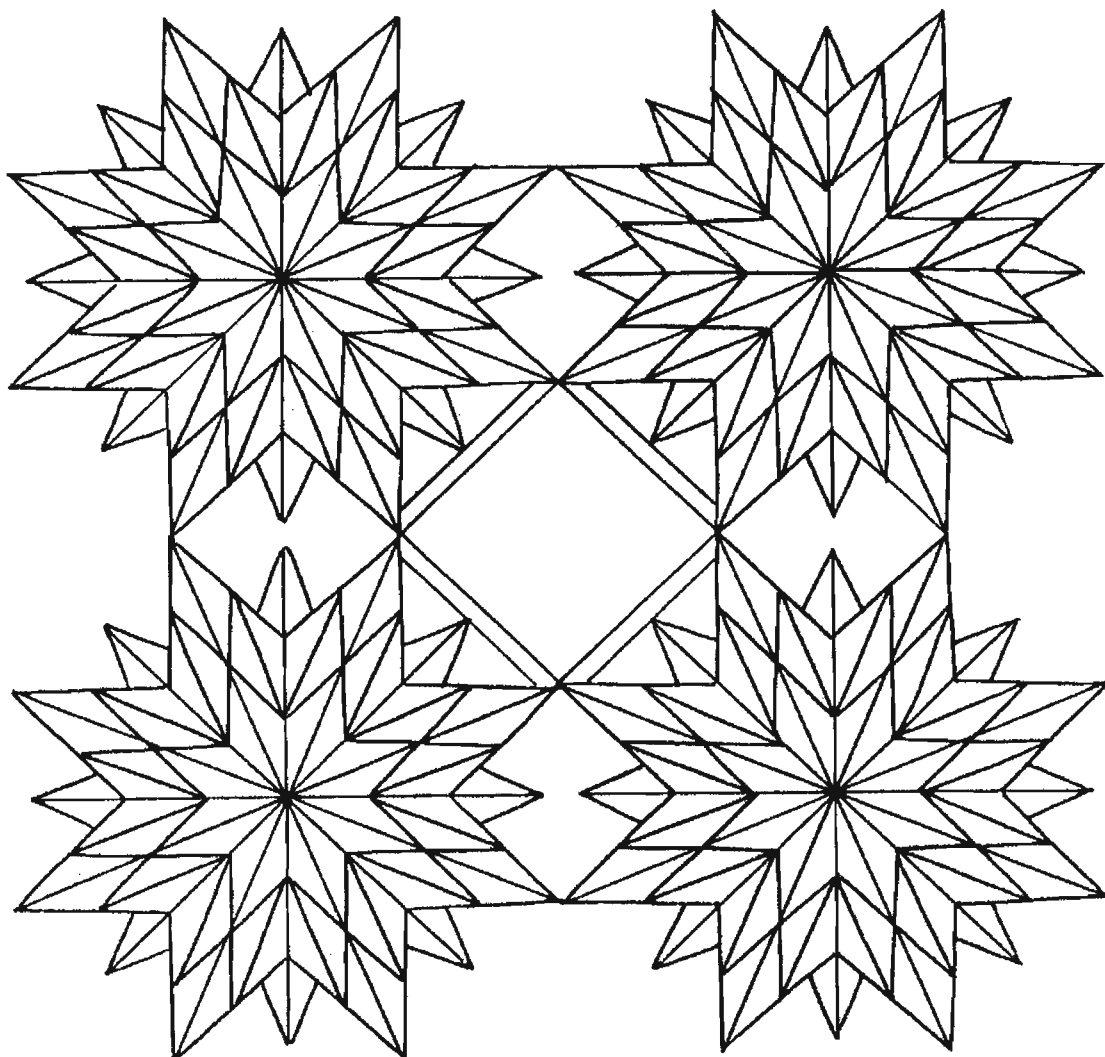






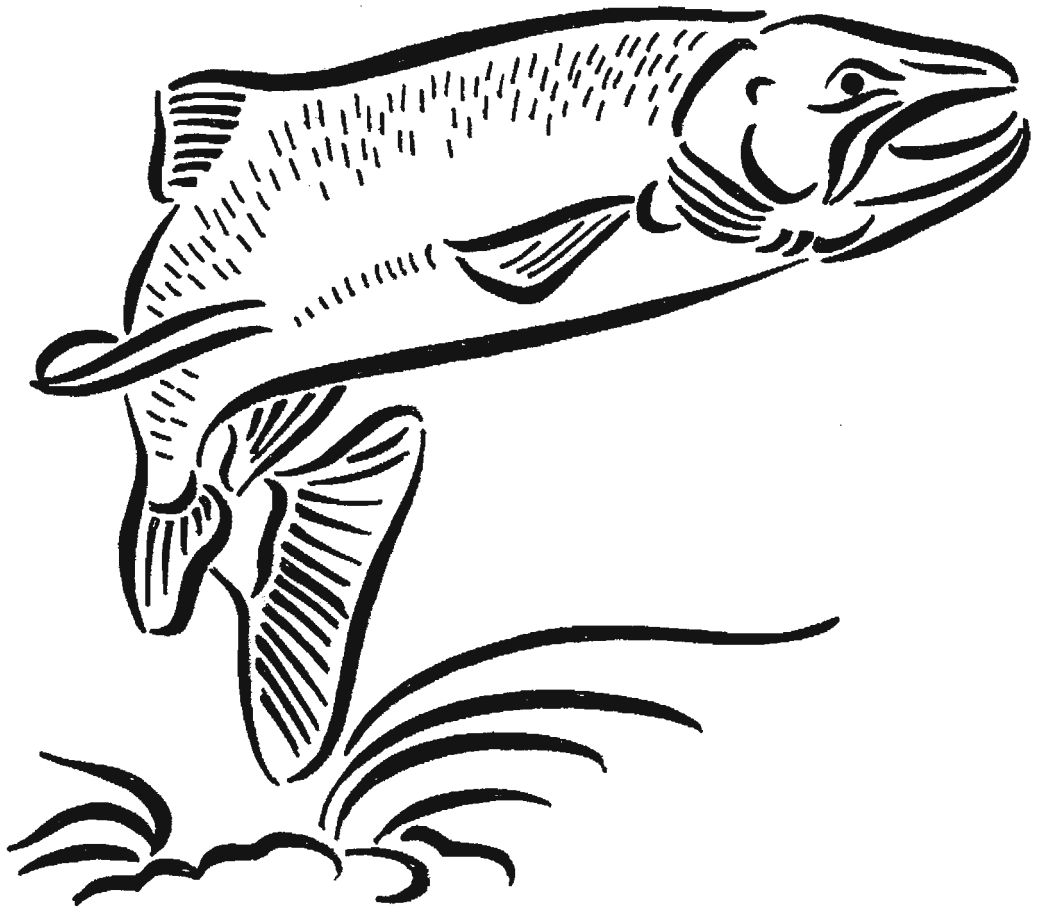




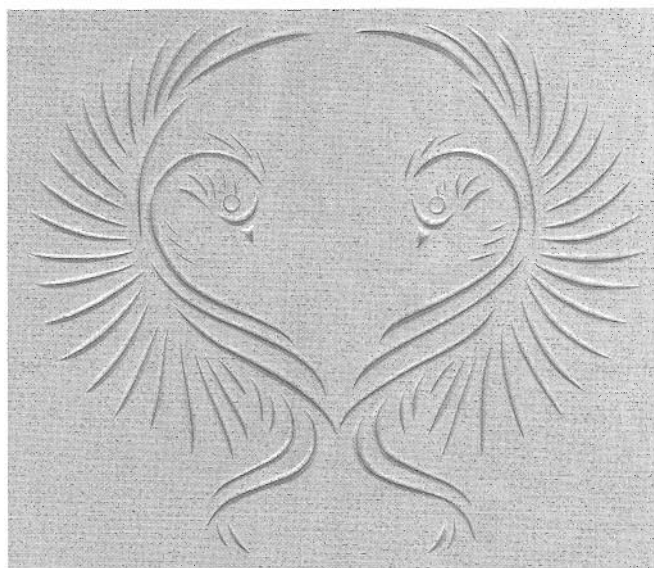
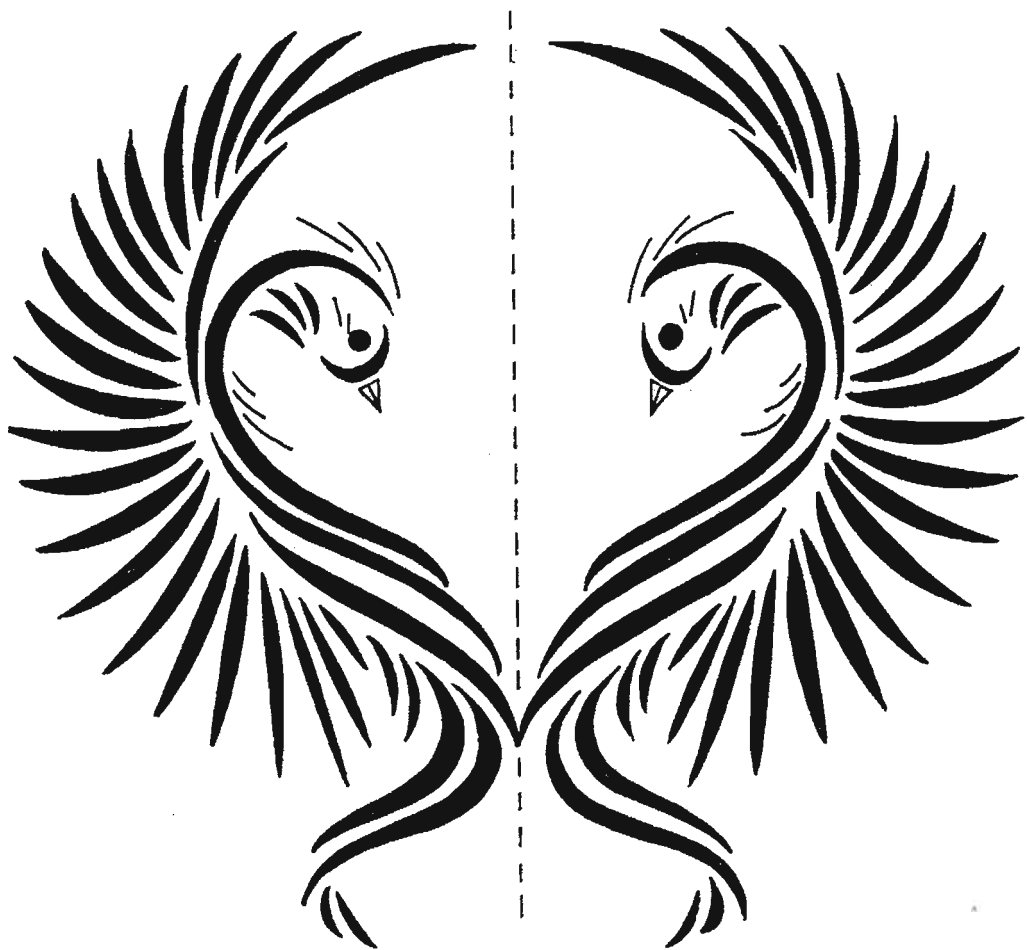


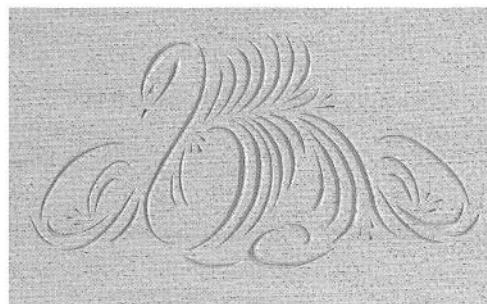
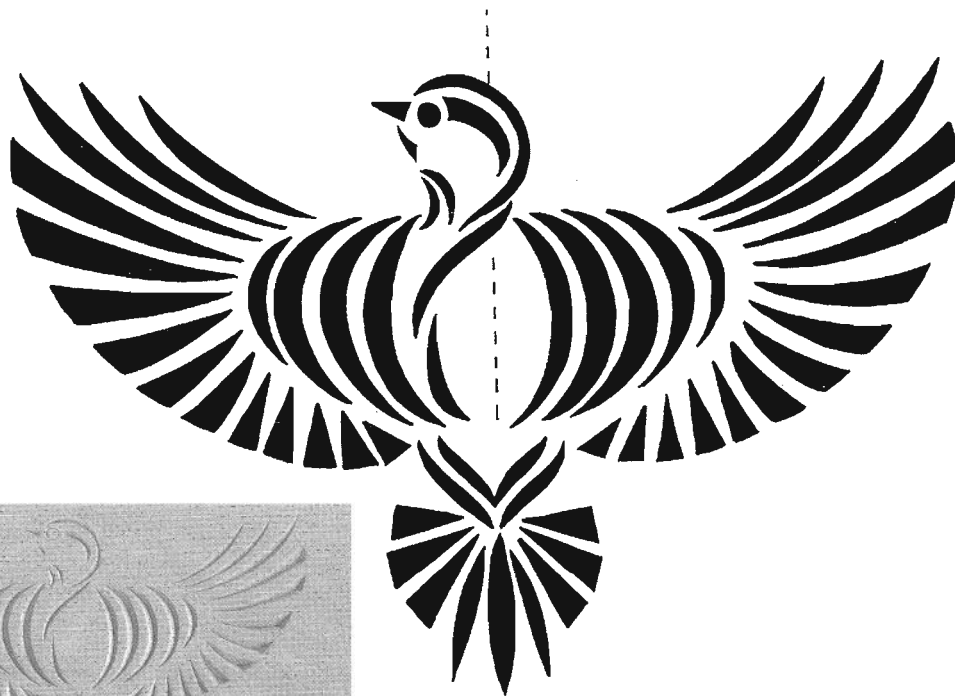


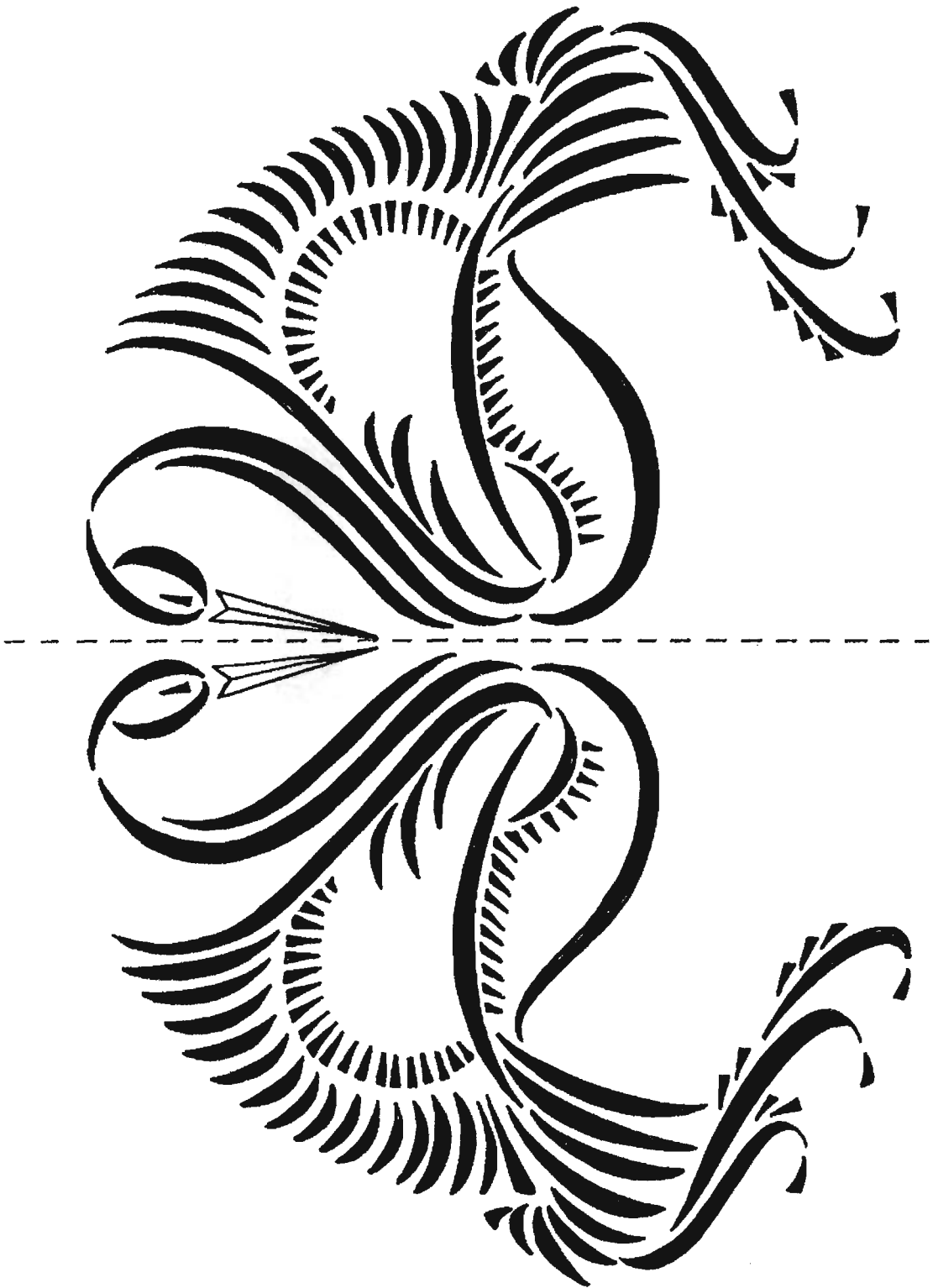


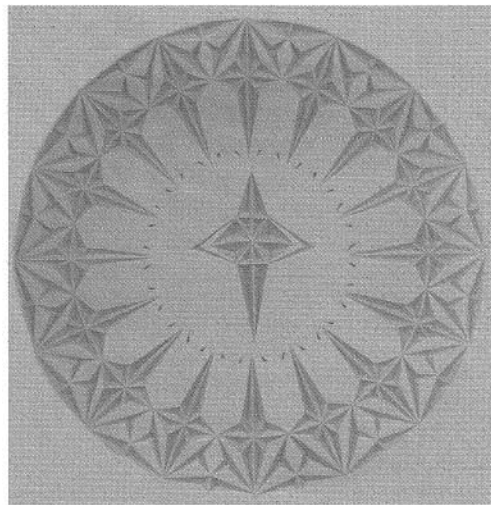
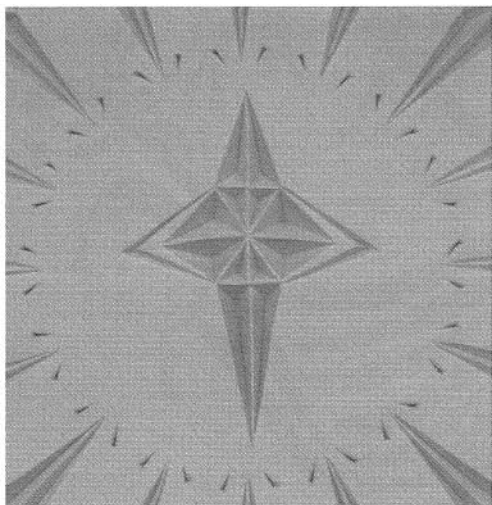
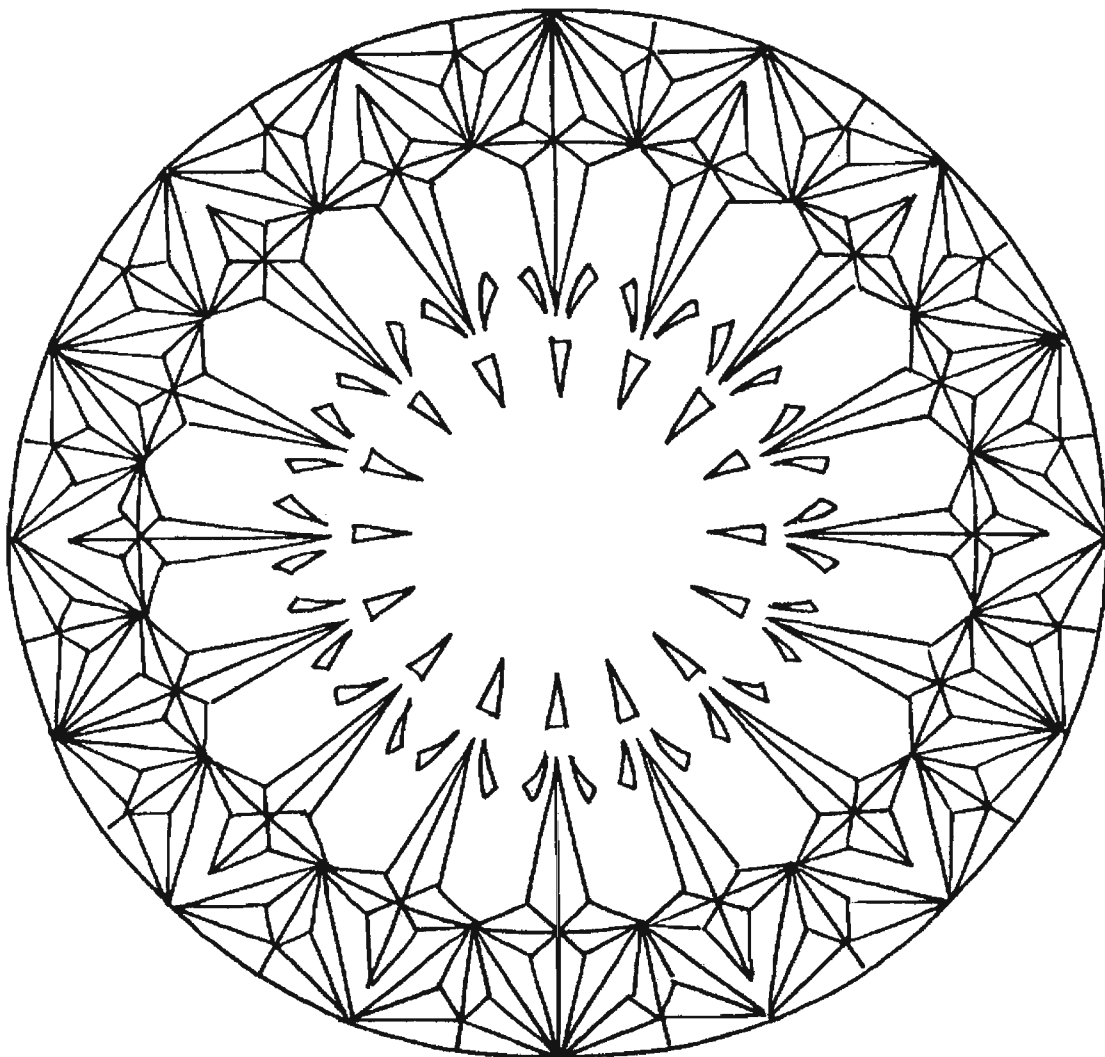


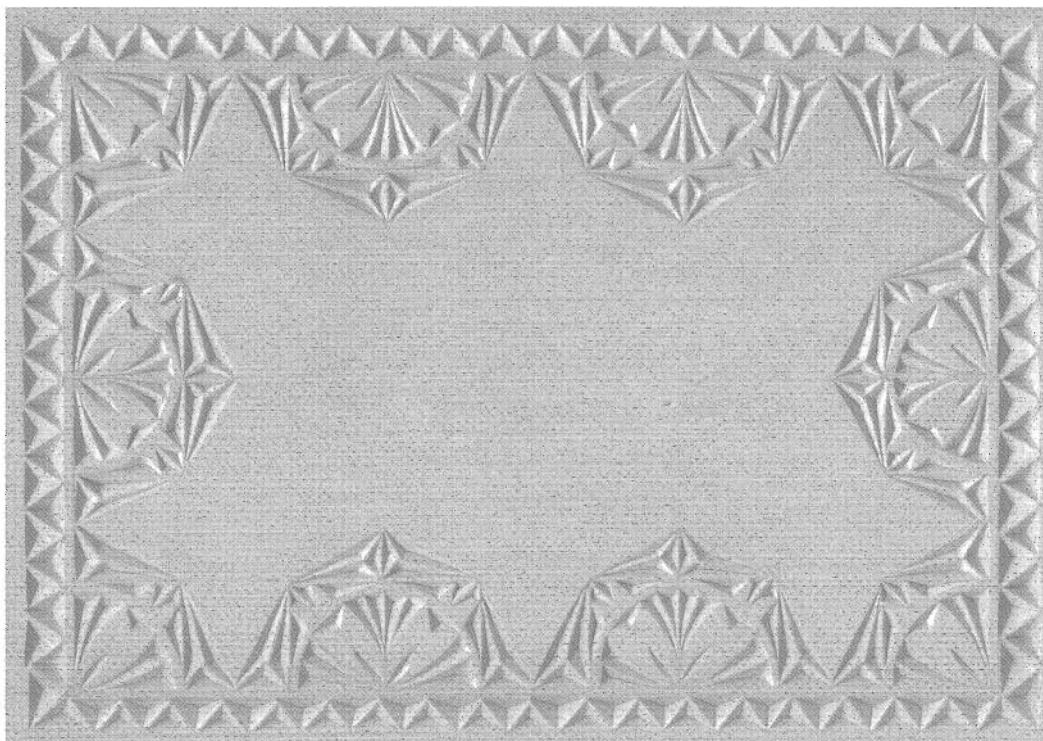
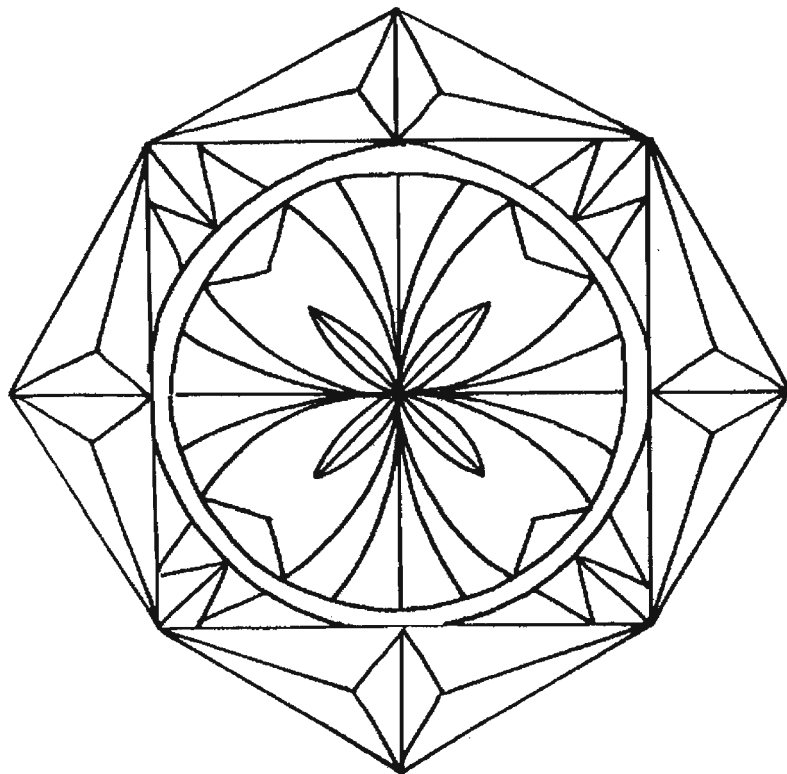


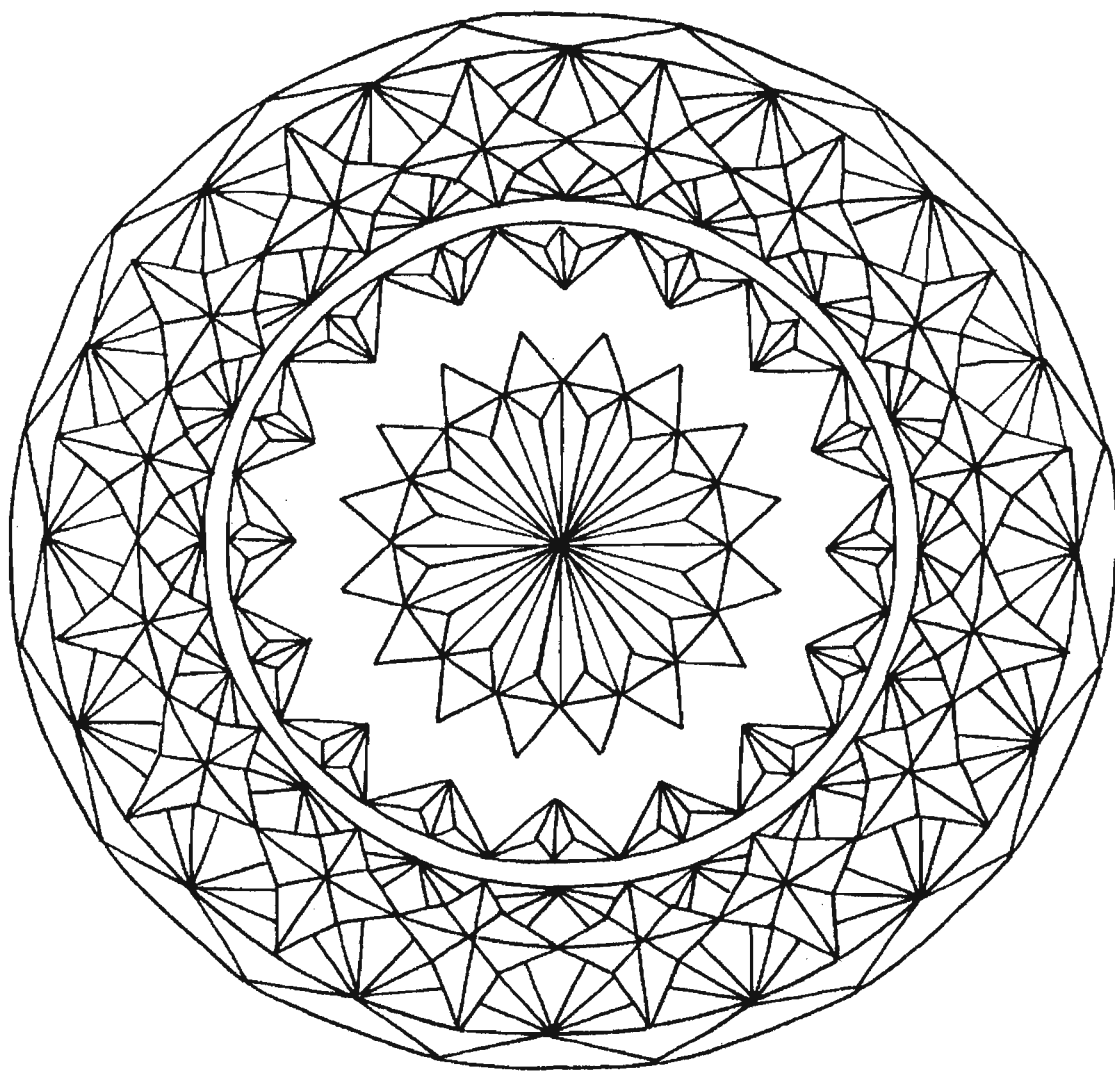


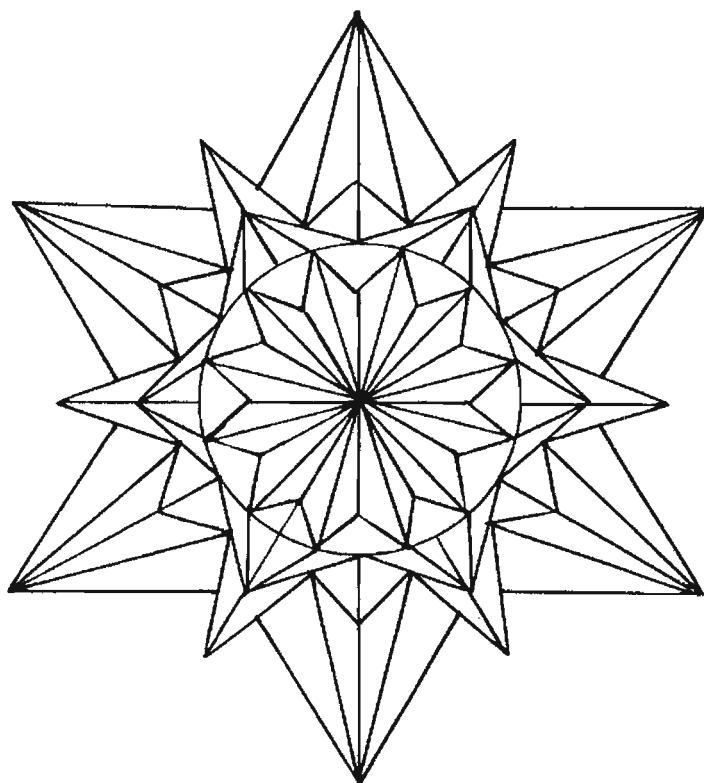
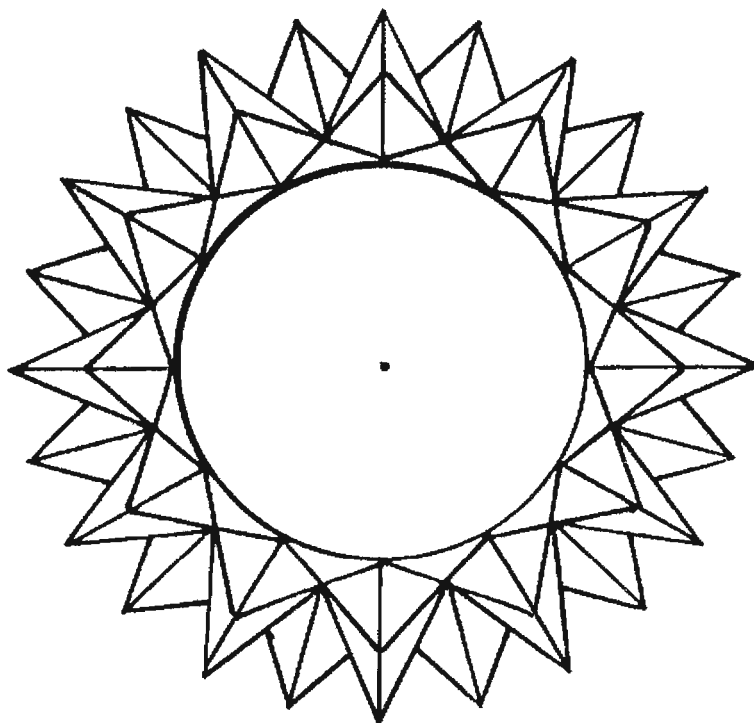


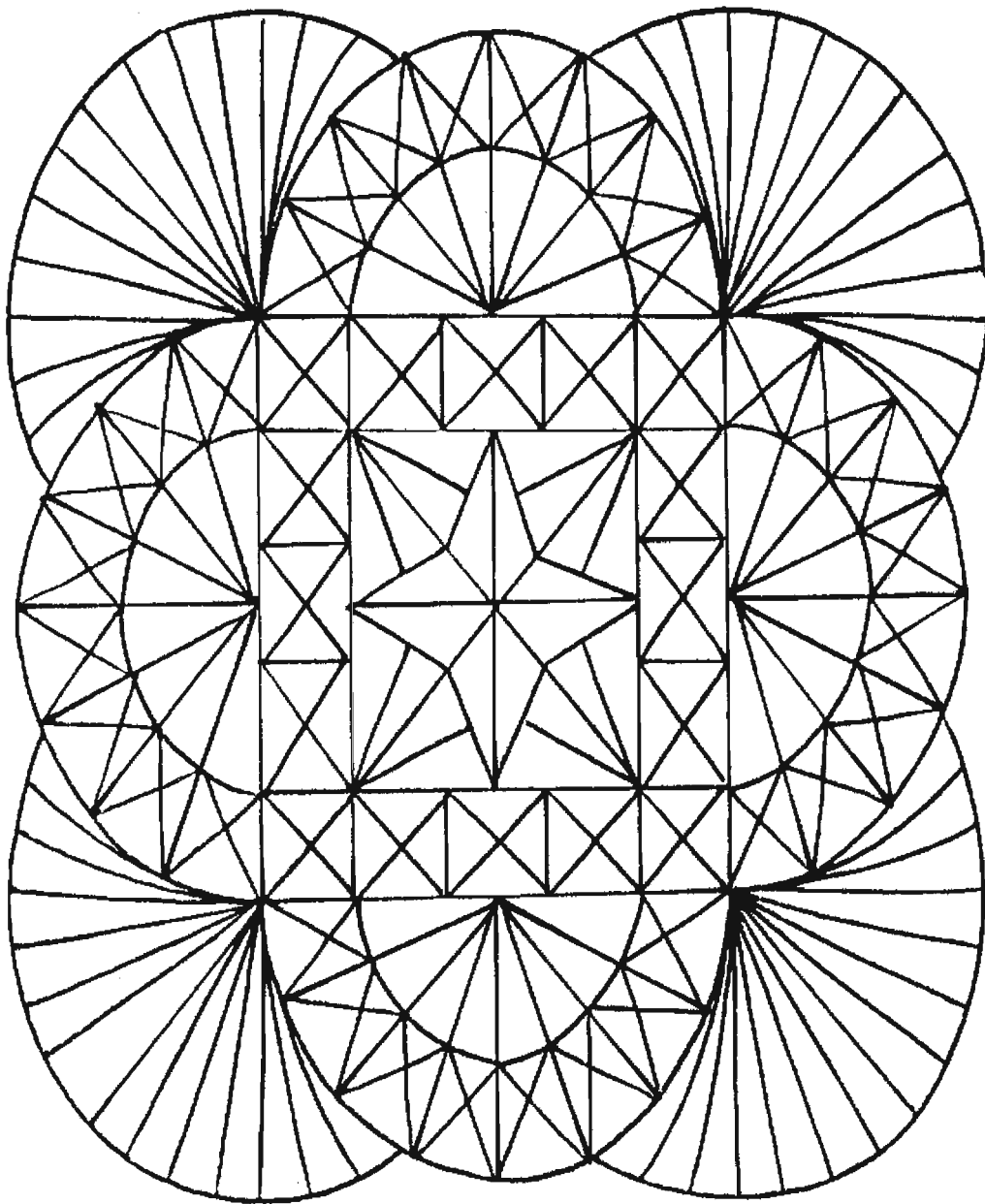


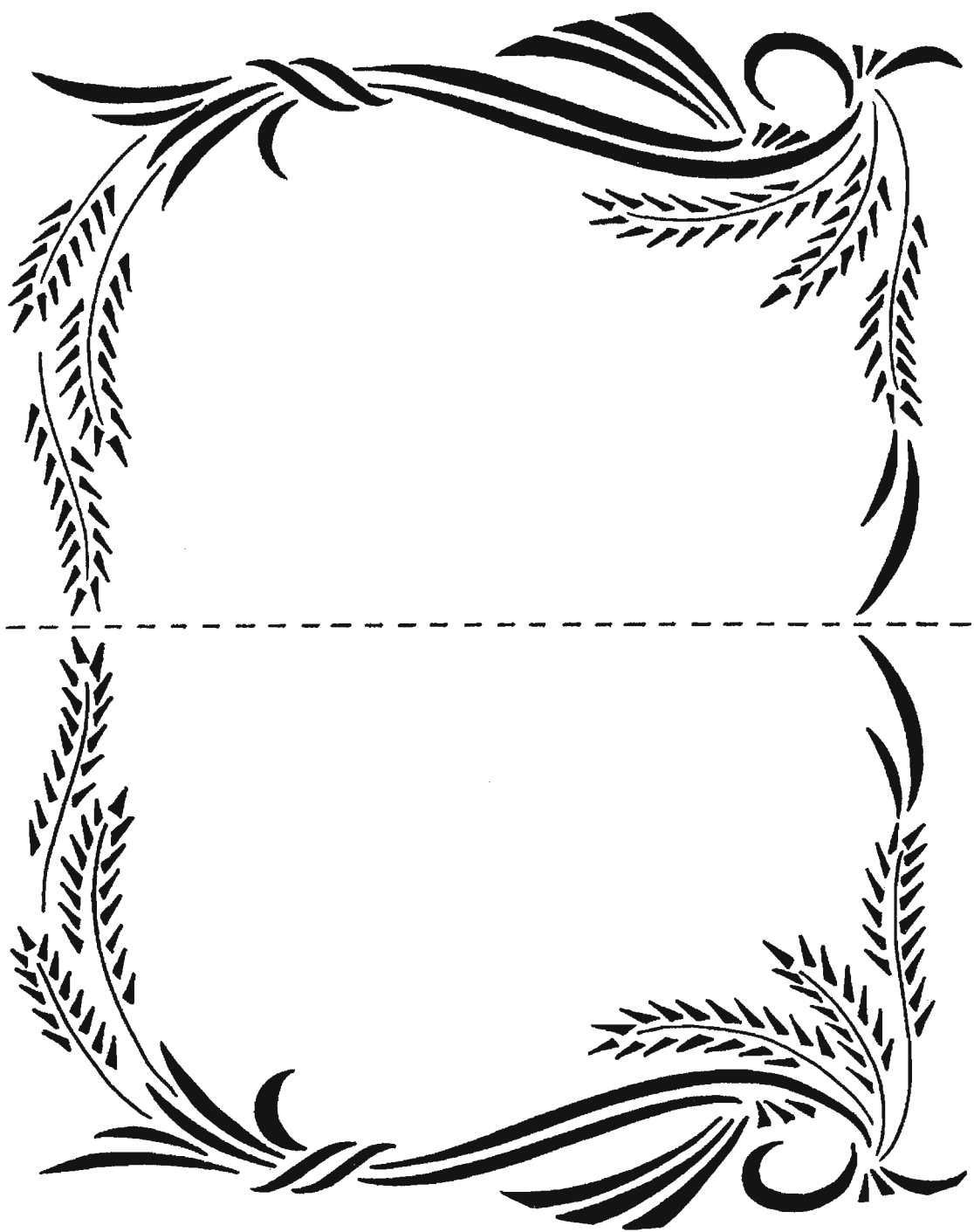


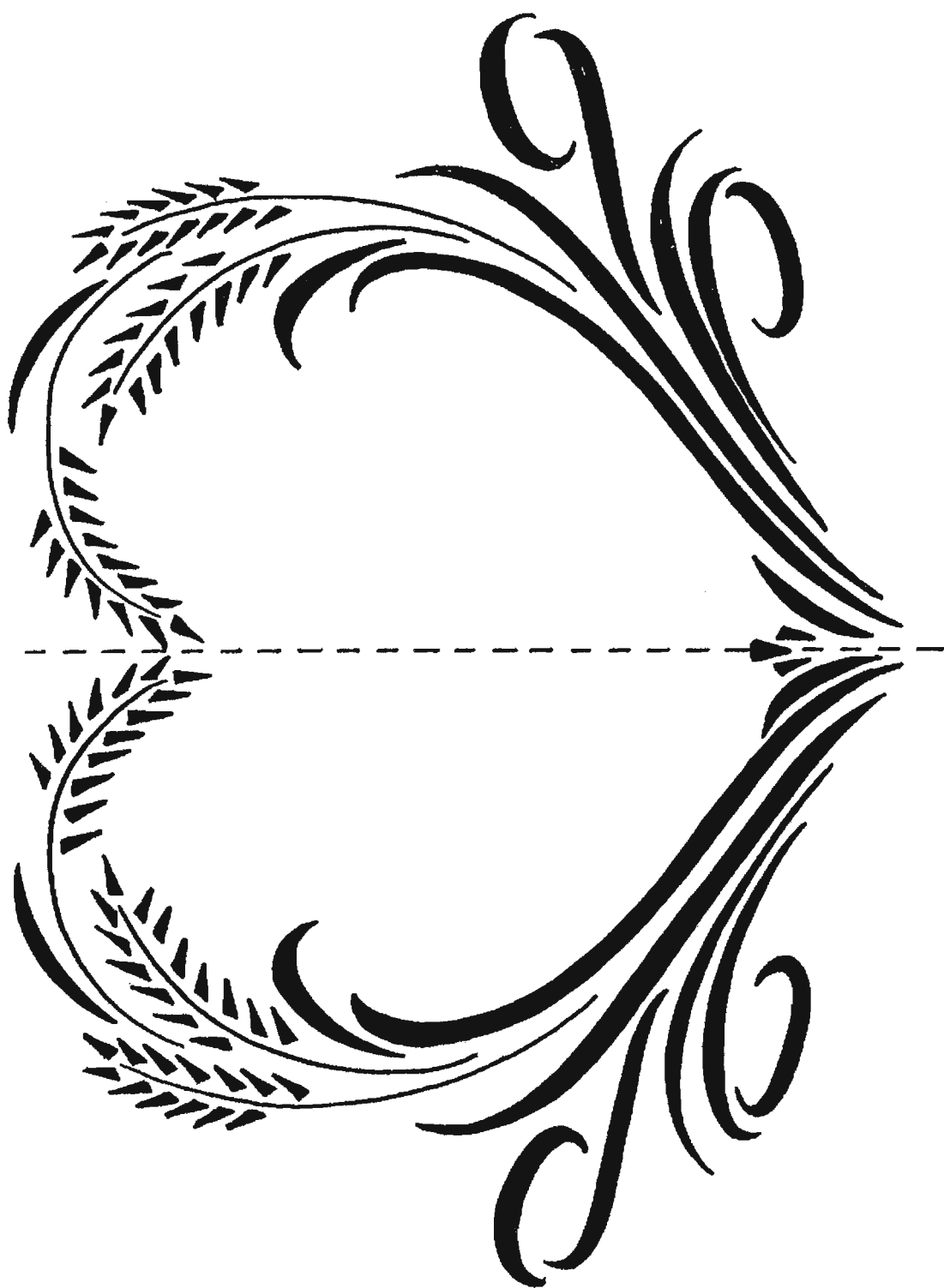


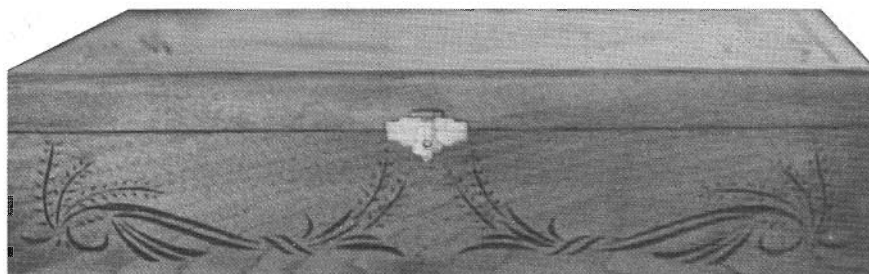






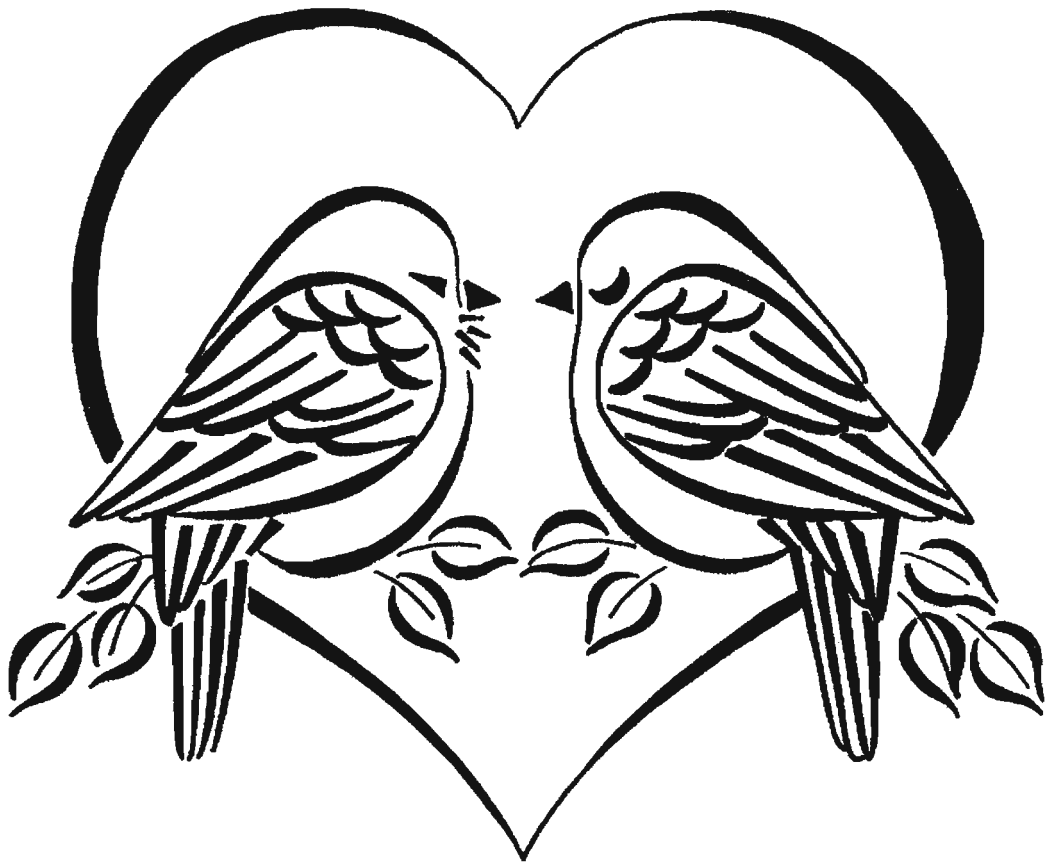


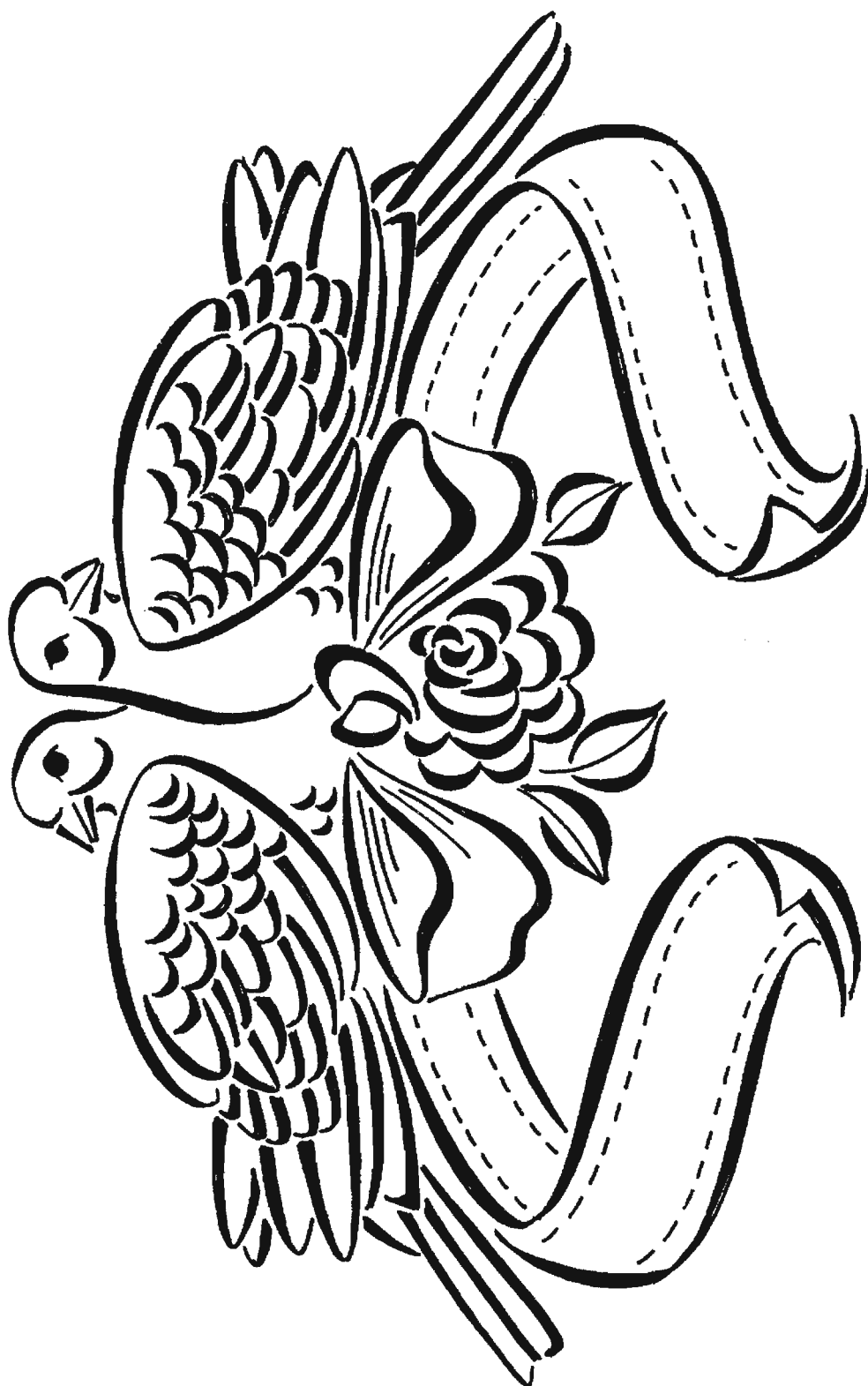




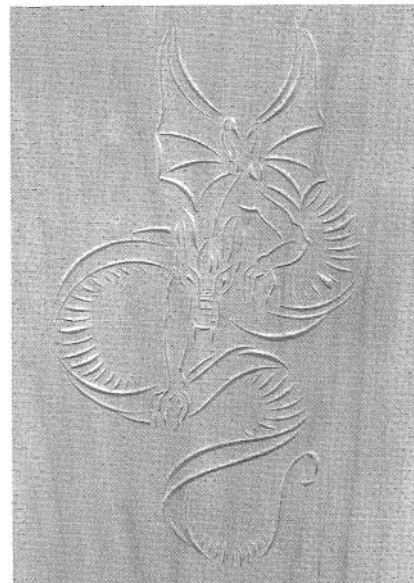
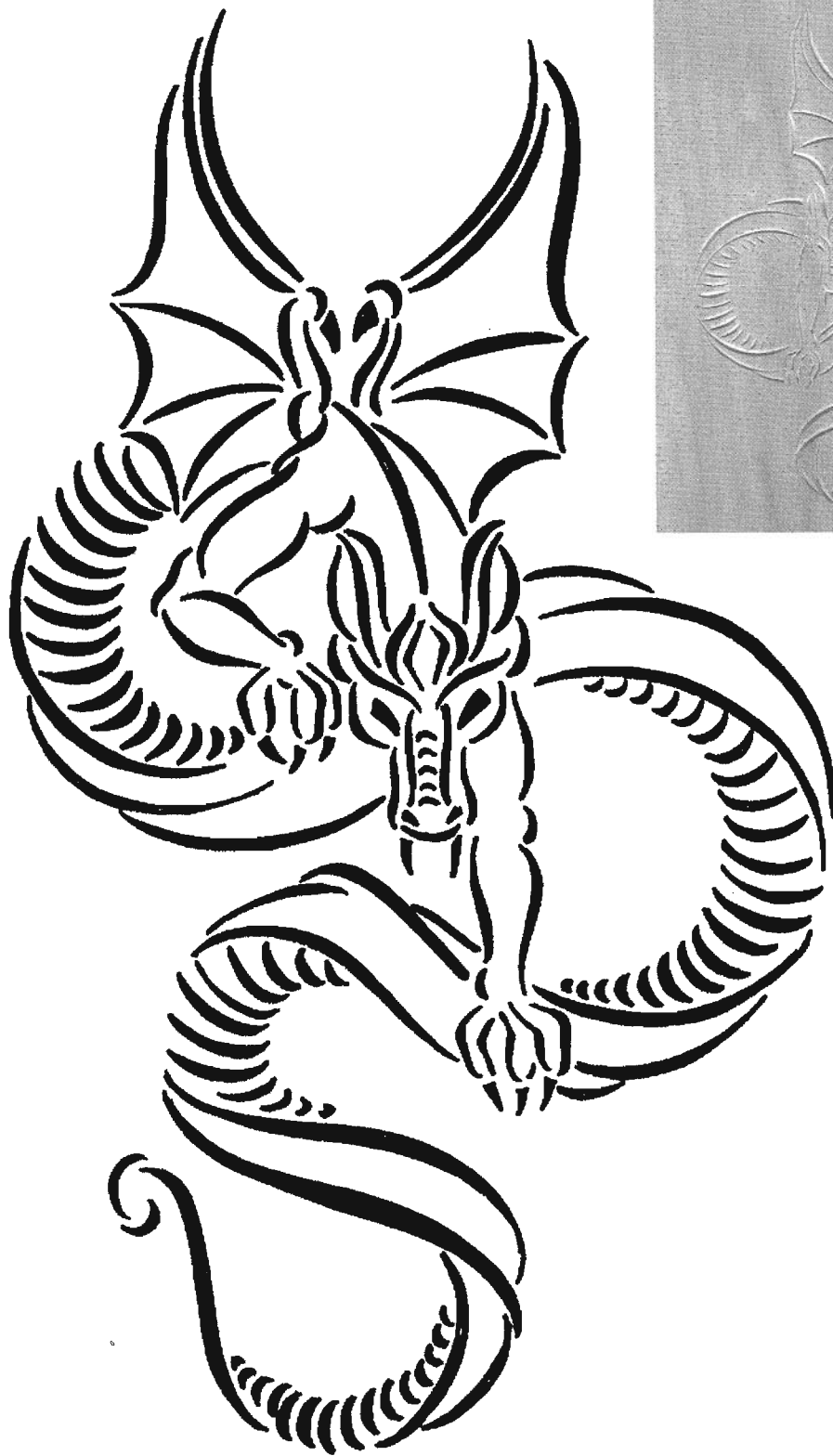
This stationery box was made as a wedding gift. Notice the way the top pattern was modified and used on all sides of the box to present a complete and unified look.



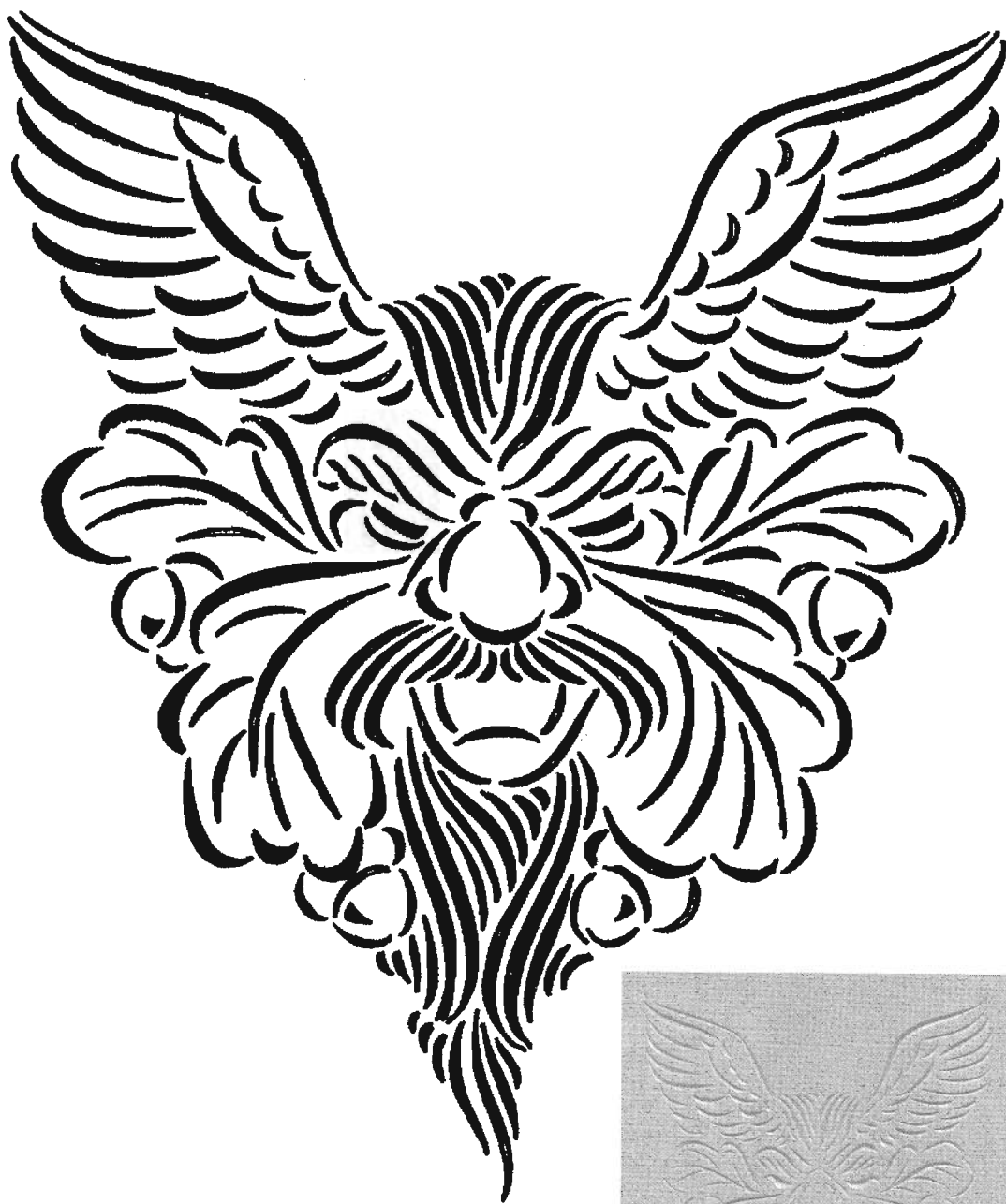






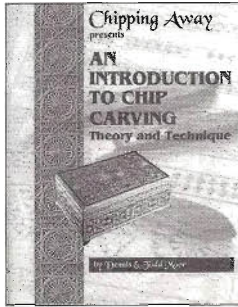








Other Books By Chipping Away

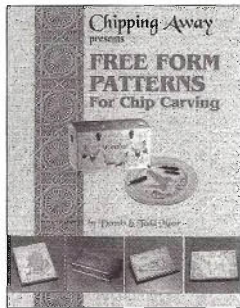


An Introduction To Chip Carving Theory and Techniques

by Dennis and Todd Moor:

is an introduction and how-to book with everything the novice chip carver needs to know, plus many little tips for the more experienced.

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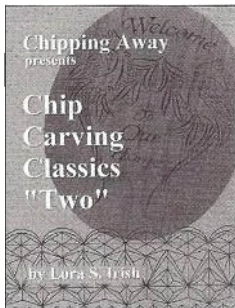


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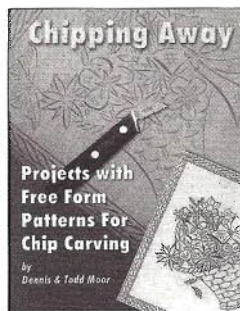


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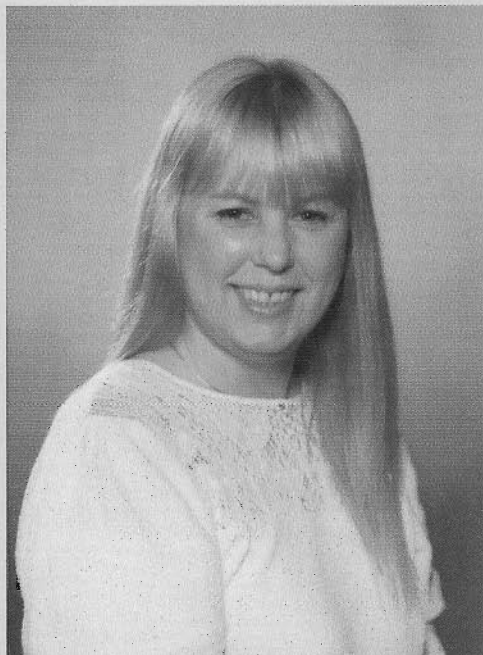


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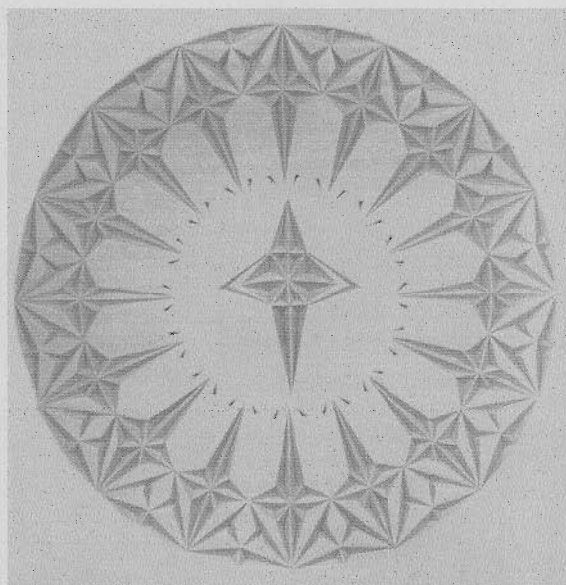
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Woodcarving enthusiasts love books, especially new books full of new patterns and ideas. When a new artist/author like Lora Irish comes along it is exciting for all of us. Lora is well known for her oil paintings and her Classic Carving patterns, but this is her first book dedicated to the art of chip carving. While she has a rich history in the traditional or Old World approach and motifs, she also has a refreshing flair for contemporary and stylized patterns.

You will enjoy carving Lora's beautiful and impressive patterns while learning some of her techniques and helpful tips. We are pleased to present Chip Carving Classics "One" with over 65 individual patterns, many of which are accompanied by chip carved samples.

Enjoy!



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Chipping Away