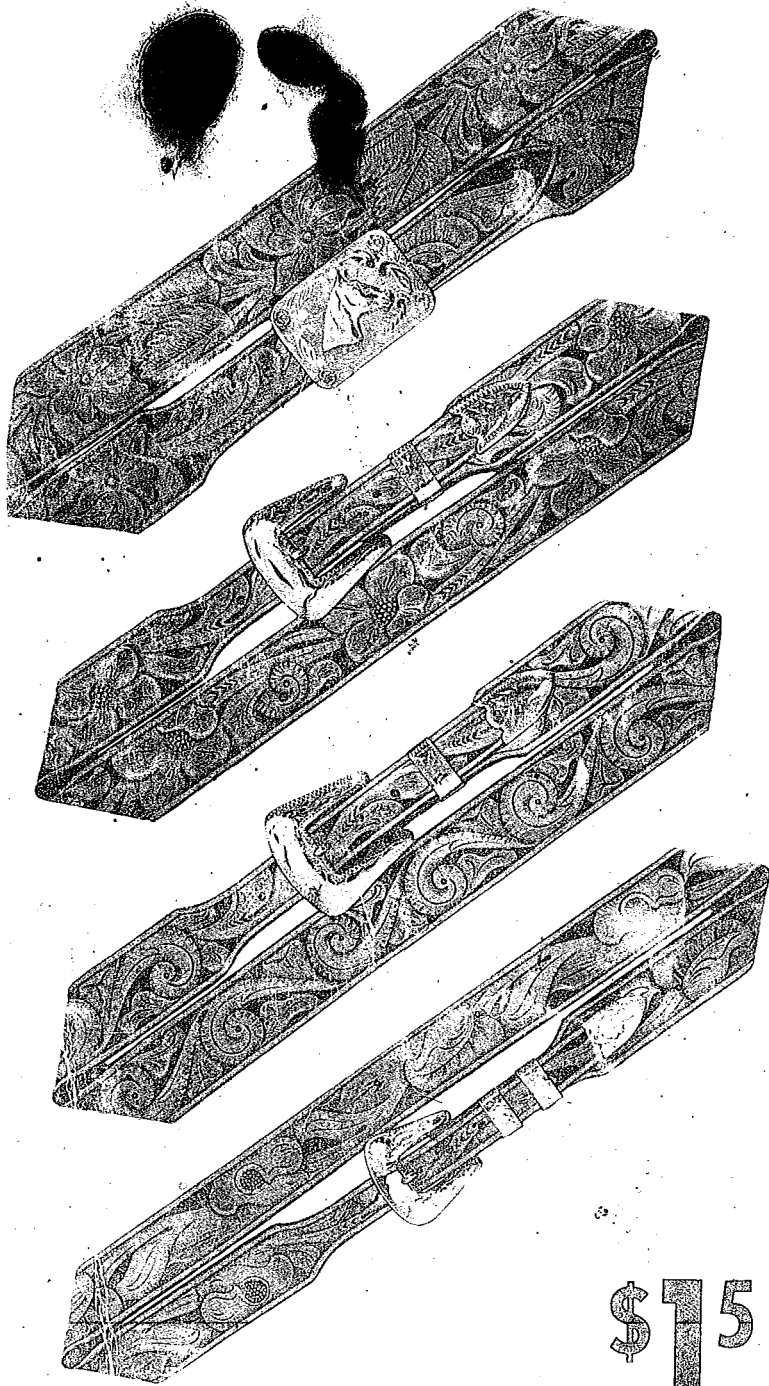


No. 32

Style 

TEXT BOOK  
OF  
INSTRUCTIONS  
AND PATTERNS  
FOR  
HAND-CARVED  
WESTERN BELTS



- STEP-BY-STEP CARVING AND STAMPING INSTRUCTIONS
- HOW TO SKIVE
- HOW TO USE THE EDGER AND CREASER
- SETTING SNAPS
- PHOTO PATTERNS
- TRACING PATTERNS
- BOTH NARROW AND WIDE BELTS

\$150



*Tom 15-15"  
from buckle  
fold*

## INTRODUCTION

STYLECRAFT presents a textbook of designs and instructions for leather carvers with instruction on hand carved belts.

One of the projects in western leather carving that is in popular demand is the hand carved belt. The information, instructions and patterns which we are offering on the following pages are aimed primarily at helping you improve your belt work; or, in the case of beginners, to get you off to a good start with this simple and inexpensive project.

Several important points must be considered before starting. First, you must remember that belt patterns will call for working smaller figures in smaller areas. Therefore, simplicity of design is essential. Second, belt patterns are composed of "repeats", which means that equal spacing of flowers and leaves is important. Third, and perhaps most important, you must remember that the belt you are making is a useful piece of apparel and must stand long, hard usage. Therefore, it is important that it be well made, durable and neat in finished appearance. By following the steps described and illustrated on the following pages, the home or class craftsman should experience little difficulty in completing a satisfactory and presentable project.

The following is a list of tools required for carving belts:

1. Marble Slab
2. Mallet
3. Swivel Knife
4. Camouflage Tool
5. Pear Shader
6. Large Beveler
7. Small Beveler
8. Veiner
9. Mule Track
10. Seeder
11. Background Tool
12. No. 5 Creaser
13. No. 2 Edger
14. Cutting Knife
15. Skiving Knife
16. Revolving Punch
17. Snap Setter

## MAKING A TEMPLATE PATTERN

The authors of STYLECRAFT feel that the elimination of tracing the pattern on the entire belt will greatly increase the popularity of the western carved belt as a suitable leathercraft project. Template patterns, or "tap-offs" as they are called in the trade, have been used for many years by professional leather carvers for transferring designs. Template patterns greatly increase the speed and ease with which belt patterns may be applied. They also insure uniformity of design and provide a means of preserving a pattern over a long period when the design might become torn or mutilated if kept only on paper. Now, let's make a template.

Place a piece of transparent paper over the tracing pattern and trace all the lines of the pattern with a soft lead pencil. Select a piece of 9 oz. cowhide  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " wide and as long as the tracing pattern. Case the piece of leather by immersing it in water for a few seconds. Allow it to stand until the surface has nearly returned to its natural color.

Center the tracing pattern on the leather and trace all the lines of the pattern with the ball point stylus. **Do not trace border lines.**

Crease the borders in with the No. 5 edge creaser. (See figure 1). Cut the creased lines with the swivel knife. **These borders must be even.**

Carve the pattern starting with the top figures, working down the pattern to the end. Cut the lines deeply because the template may be used to transfer the design to many belts. When all the lines have been cut, allow the leather to dry thoroughly. It is a good idea to dry it rapidly by placing it on the open door of a warm oven. When it is completely dry apply a heavy coat of shellac or lacquer and allow it to dry slowly. When the template is completed you have a method of applying the pattern which is far superior to the laborious tracing method and which will last for several dozen belts.

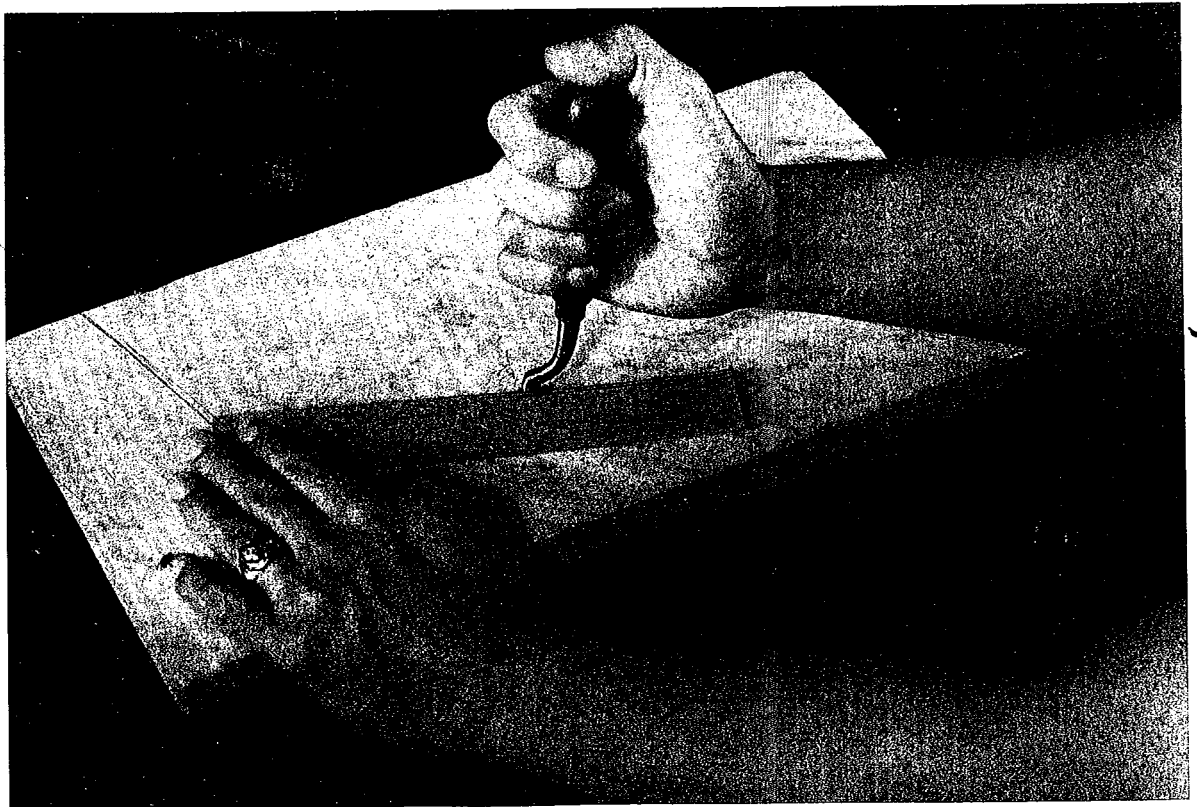
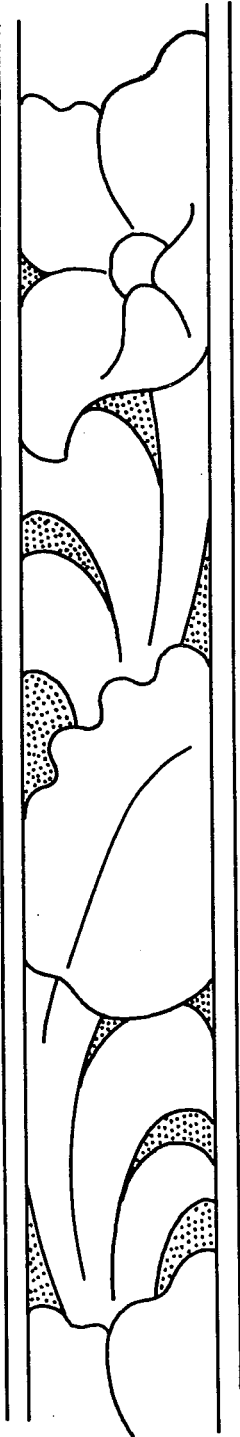


FIG. 1



# CUTTING THE *Stylowave* BELT

Select a strip of 8 to 9 oz. natural carving cowhide  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " x waist measure plus seven and one-half inches. (That is, if the desired finished size is 36" waist measure, then it will require 36" plus  $7\frac{1}{2}$ ", or  $43\frac{1}{2}$ ".) Compare the two ends of the strap and choose the end which has more firmness. We will designate this as the "billet" end, or "tip" of the belt. The other end we shall call the "buckle" end. Lay the belt flat on the bench and measure five inches from the tip end and make a dot with a pencil. (See diagram) From this point to the slot for the buckle is the waist measure minus one inch (i.e., if the belt is to be a 36" waist, measure 35" between these two points.) (See diagram) The actual carving on the belt will occur in the space between the "tip" end and a point six inches from the buckle end. Cut the tip as shown in the diagram.

Case the belt by immersing it in luke warm water for a few seconds. Place the belt on the marble slab smooth side up and allow it to dry until the surface starts to regain its natural color. Place the template pattern face down on the "tip" end of the belt so that the first flower in the pattern is at the extreme "tip" end. (See fig. 2).

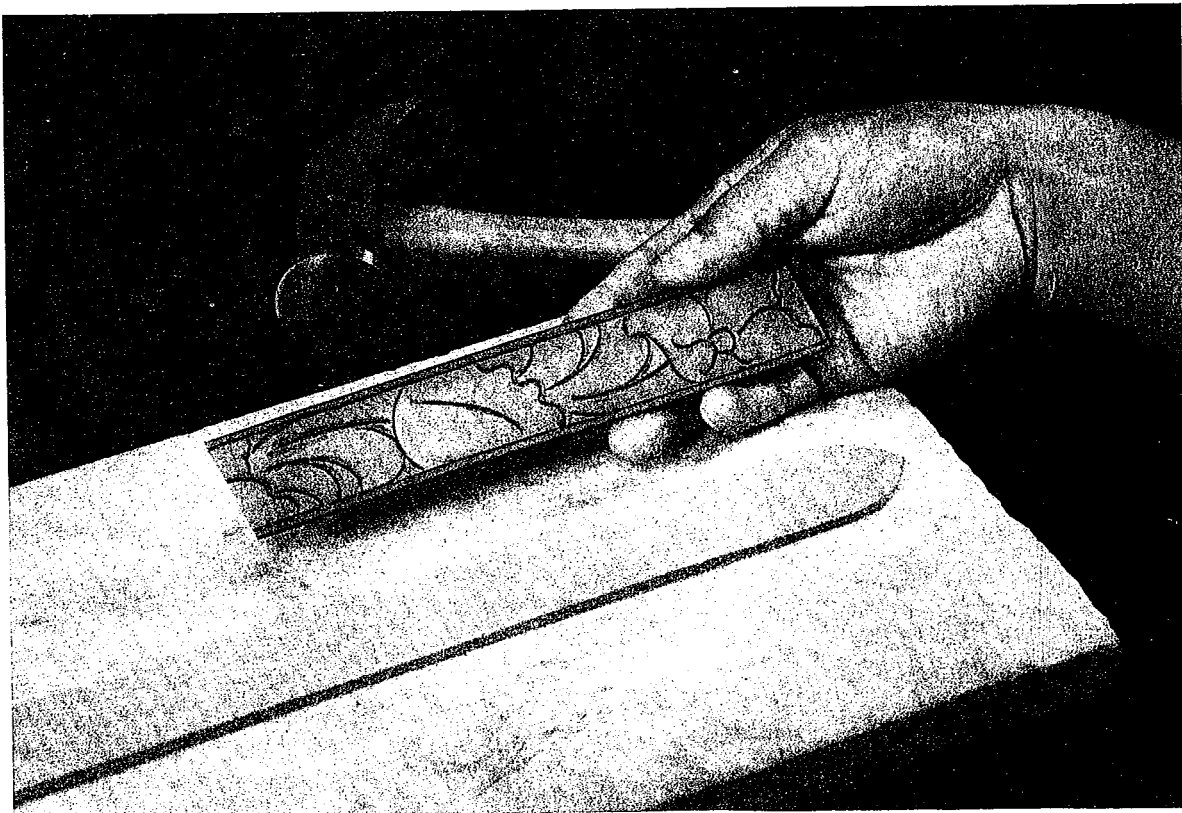
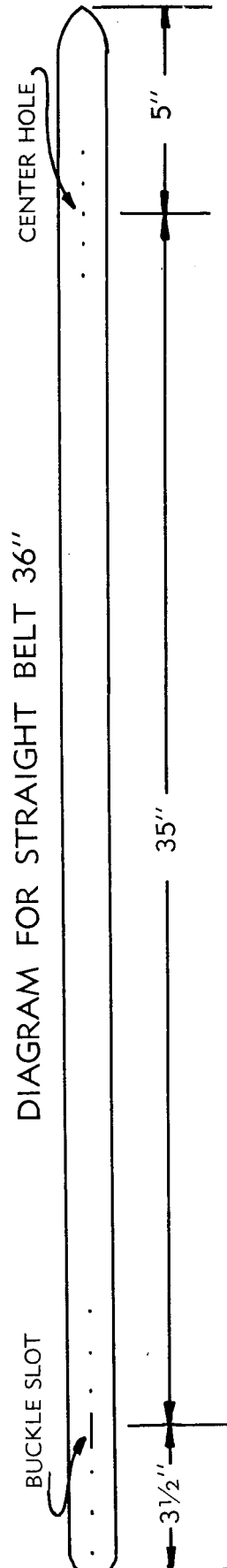


FIG. 2



## APPLYING THE DESIGN

Be sure that the edges of the belt and the edges of the template are evenly aligned. Hold the template in place and strike it sharply with a round, smooth face hammer. (See fig. 3). Remember a great deal of force is not necessary, but the entire surface of the template must be covered in order that each line of the design will be transferred to the belt. After the entire length of the template has been transferred to the belt, move the template down the belt and place the first flower of the template in line with the end of the design already on the belt. Tap off the pattern again and repeat the process until the design is complete. Be careful to keep the edges even, and to cover the entire surface of the template when you are tapping with the hammer.

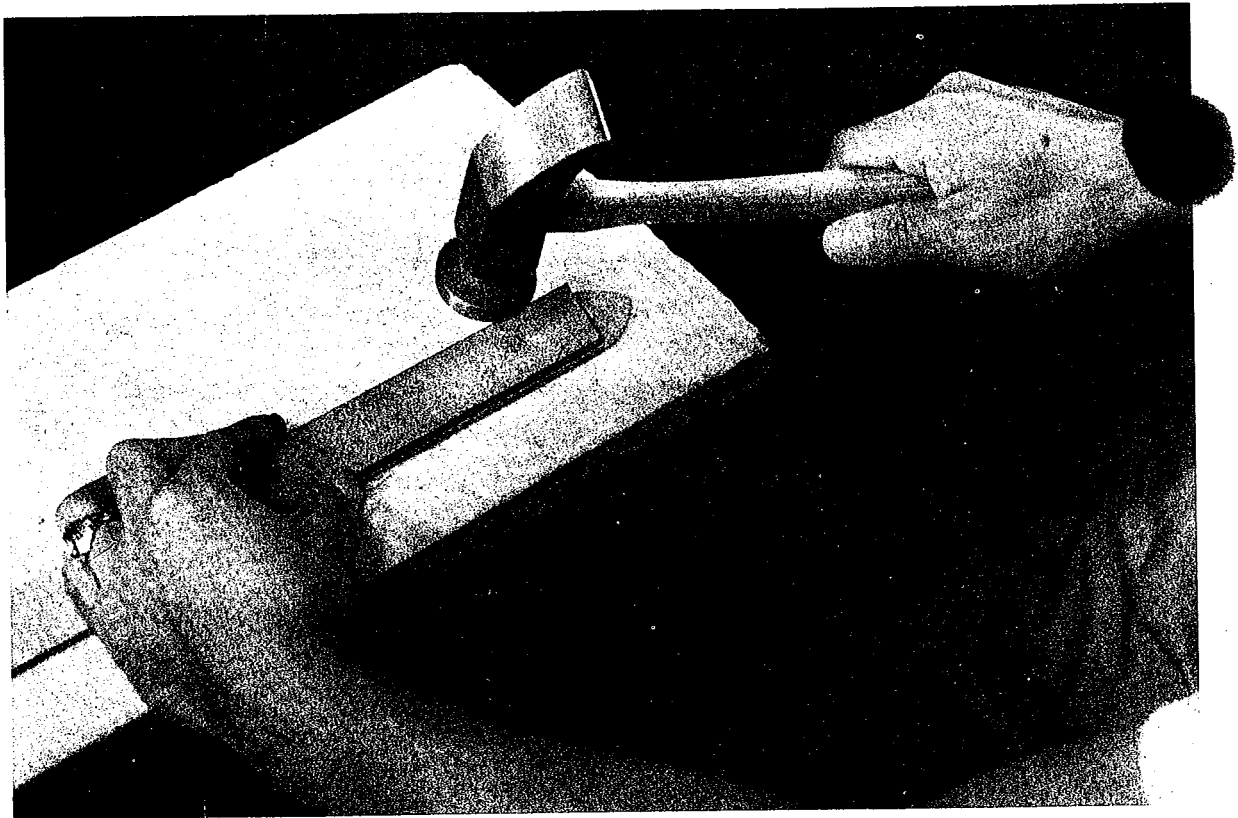
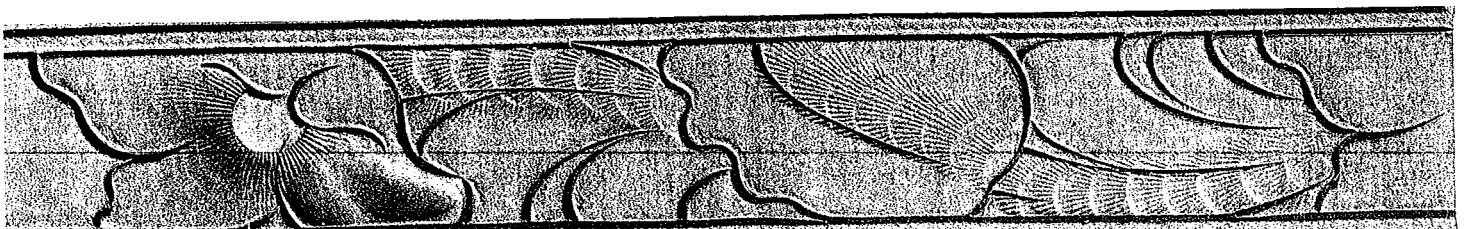


FIG. 3

## CARVING THE BELT

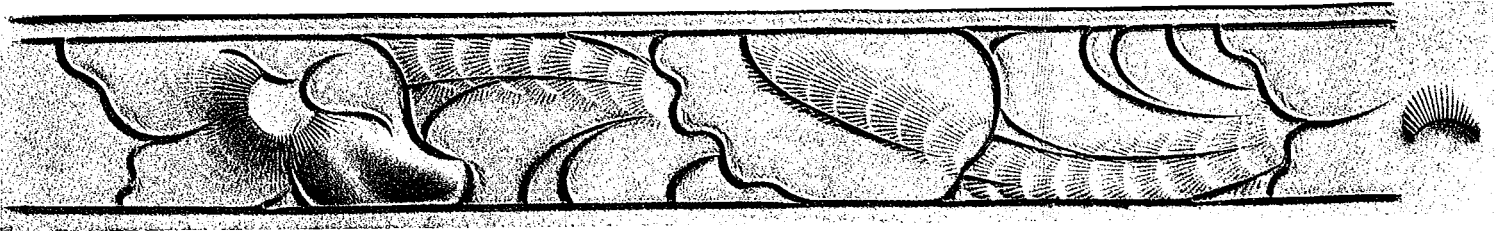
Crease the edges of the belt with a No. 5 edge creaser.

Cut the border with the swivel knife. **The border must be even if the belt is to look well when completed.** Try the edge cutting attachment in your swivel knife. After the border has been cut, you are ready to start carving the design. Start at the tip end where you started the template pattern and carve the flower first, then the stem and leaves. Carve the entire belt length.



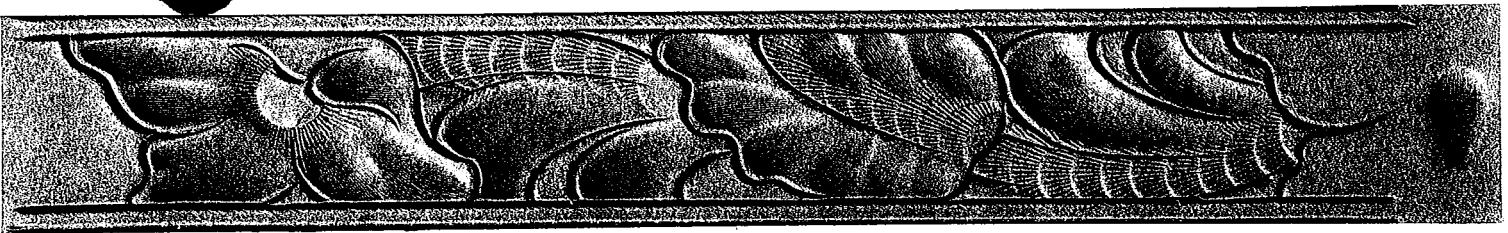
## CAMOUFLAGE

Use the camouflage tool on the stem and on the large leaf and flower petals. Refer to the photo pattern and notice how the camouflage impressions are evenly spaced. Camouflaging should be deep enough to make a clear impression but not "dug in".



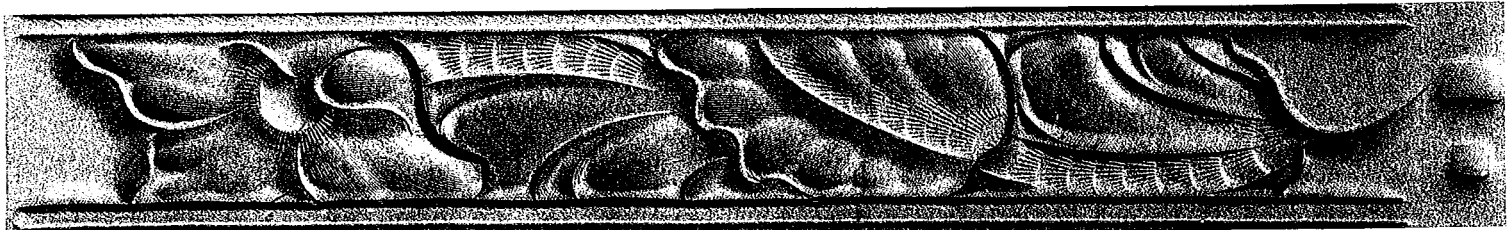
## PEAR SHADER

The pear shader is used to give a contoured effect to the petals and leaves. It is not used on the stem. The tool is struck harder than the other stamps and the shaded area should conform to the general outline of the figure being shaded. Smoothness is easier to attain if you use the largest pear shader that will fit the area to be shaded.



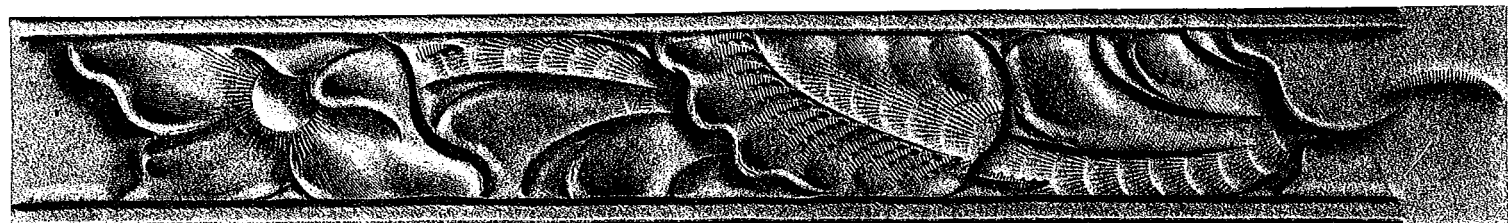
## BEVELER

Two bevelers are used in belt carving. The long beveler for borders and straight stem lines, and the small beveler for the flowers and leaves. Beveling must be smooth and free from the small marks caused by allowing the tool to twist in your hand. Always keep the beveling edge of the tool flush against the side of the cut. Repeated practice will soon teach you to "walk" the beveler along quickly and smoothly. Go over your beveling twice to smooth it out if necessary.



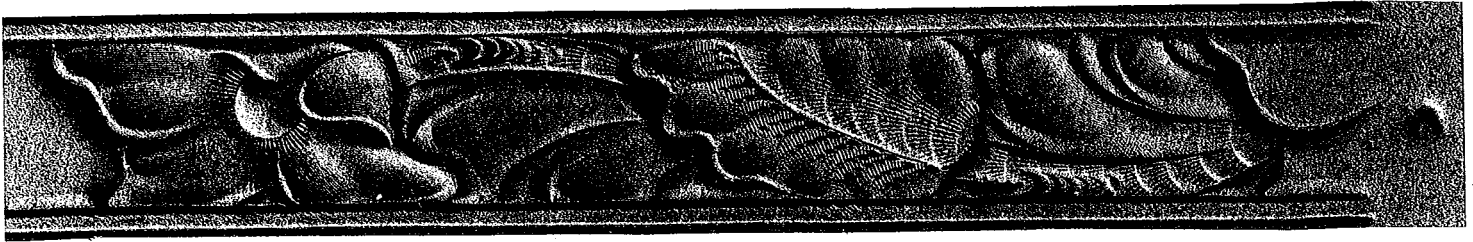
## VEINER

Use the veiner on the large leaf as shown in the step by step photographs. Space the impressions evenly and tip the tool so that the vein marks curve upward and outward from the center line of the leaf. The veiner is used also to accent the stems at the base of the flower and the leaf.



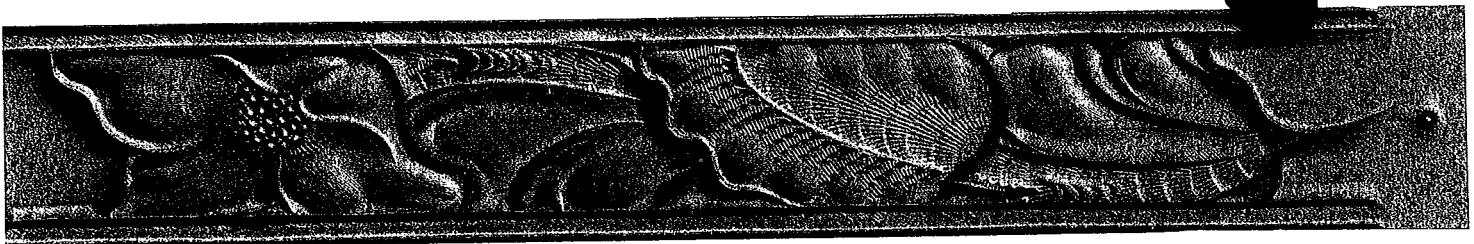
## MULE TRACK

The mule track is used on the stems to give direction and "movement" to the design. Notice that the depth of each impression diminishes as the marks move down the stem.



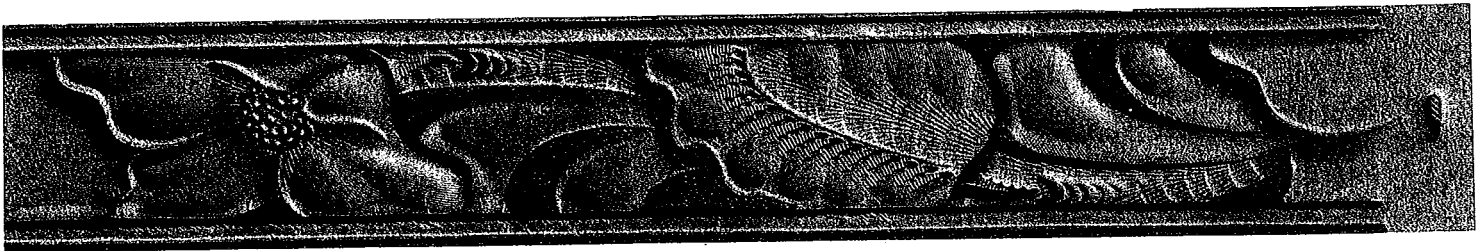
## SEEDS

Use the small seeder to fill in the flower center as shown in the photo pattern. Seeds must be even and closely grouped. Make the top row of the flower center first then fill in the middle.



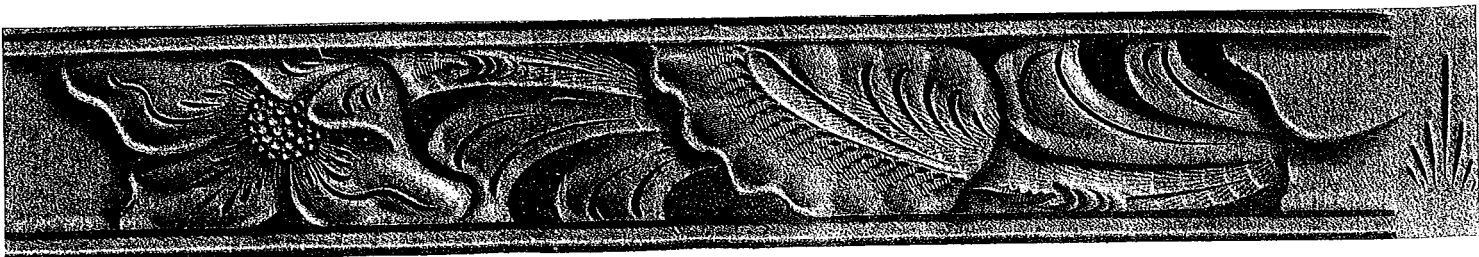
## BACKGROUND

Backgrounding is last and should be neat and of even depth. In this pattern, the small, wedge shaped tool was used because it makes it easier to get into small areas and sharp corners. The leather should be nearly dry for backgrounding.



## DECORATIVE CUTS

The last operation in carving is the decorative cutting. Practice the cuts on scrap leather first and develop freedom of movement with the knife. Study the photograph pattern closely and note that the direction of the cuts conform to the general shape of the leaf or petal. Try to duplicate the cuts as closely as possible. Remember: Practice will bring perfection.



## FINISHING THE BELT

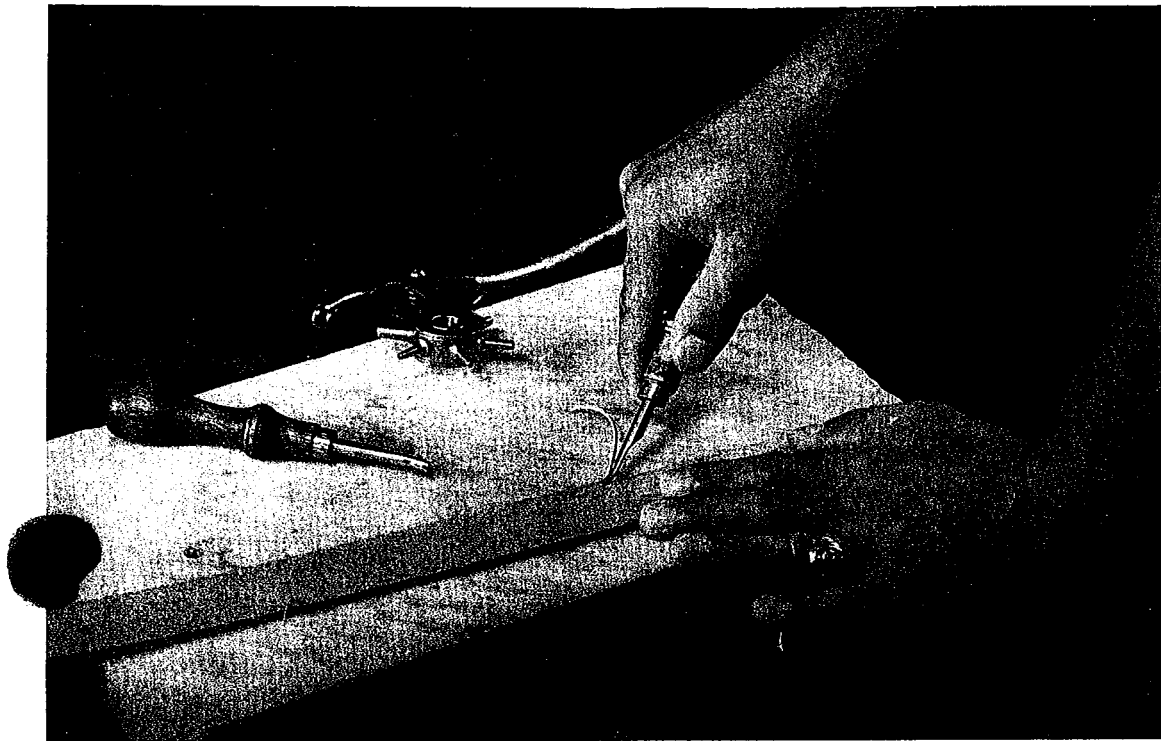


FIG. 4

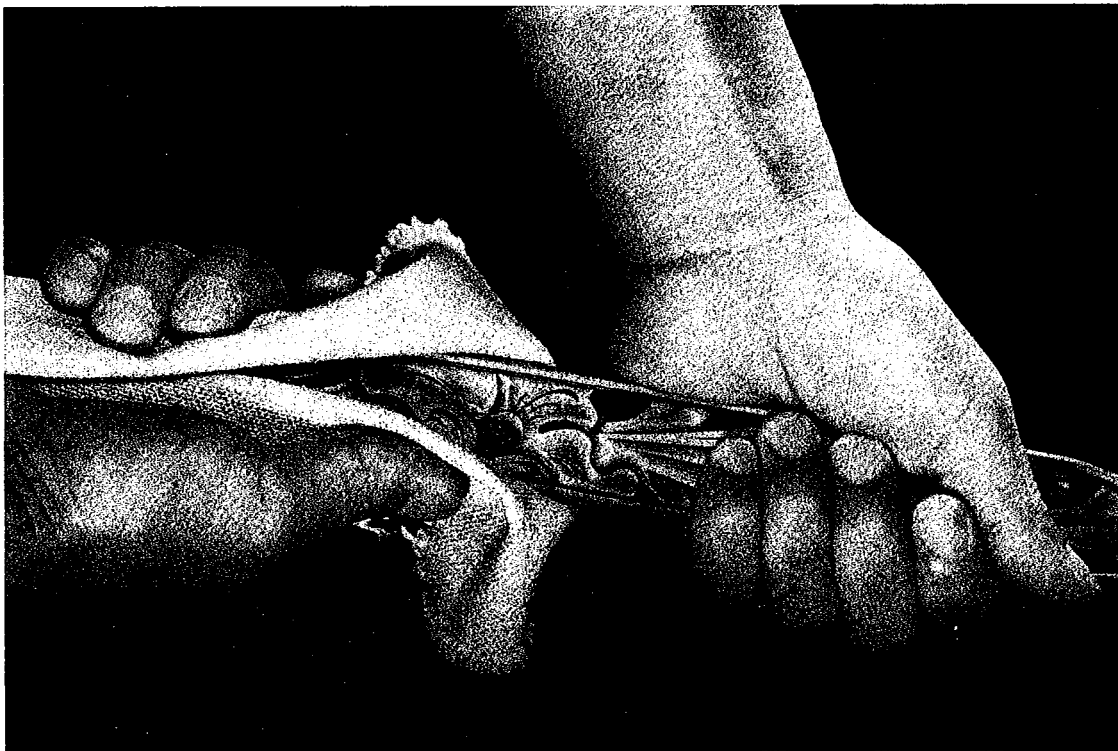


FIG. 5

Edge both sides of the belt with the No. 2 edge beveler. (See figure 4). Moisten the edges with water and burnish them by rubbing with a piece of canvas. (See fig. 5). Allow the belt to dry thoroughly and apply the desired dye or dressing. In applying the finish it is important to keep the belt clean and free from excess dye or dressing. If necessary, apply the same finish to the back for clean, smooth appearance.



## INSTALLATION OF THE BUCKLE



FIG. 6

The buckle end of the belt must be skived to approximately one-half its original thickness for a distance of six and one-half inches. (See fig. 6) This skiving is done on the flesh side of the leather. Next, consult the diagram on page 9 and mark the location of the snap fasteners. Location of snaps is the same for both the straight and tapered ends. Punch the holes for the snaps and the bag slot for the buckle. Install the snap fasteners.

Refer to fig. 7 which depicts the method used to set the snaps. The button and socket are set in the No. 5 holes at the extreme end of the belt and the post and eyelet are set in the No. 2 holes. To set the button and socket, place the socket in the No. 5 hole from the flesh side of the leather and turn the belt over so that the socket may be fitted over the large anvil on the snap setting plate. Place the button over the top of the socket on the smooth side of the leather and set the snap using the setting tool with the concave surface at one end. Strike the tool sharply with the mallet and inspect the button for tightness. If the button turns with the fingers, it is not sufficiently set. Following this procedure, set the three buttons and sockets.

Next, install the eyelets in the No. 2 holes, inserting them from the grain or smooth side. Turn the belt over so that the eyelet can be fitted over the small anvil on the snap setting plate. If the covered belt eyelet is used, the flat surface of the setting plate will be satisfactory as an anvil. Place the post over the eyelet on the flesh side of the belt and set the post and eyelet using the setting tool with the hole in one end. Strike the tool sharply with the mallet. Finish setting the three posts and eyelets and check to see if they snap into the sockets satisfactorily. For this project, sixteen ligne snaps and a No. 29605 setter were used.

**Caution: Always be sure you are using the size and type of snap that correspond with your setting tool!**

Cut two strips of 4 oz. leather  $5/16''$  wide and  $3 \frac{1}{8}''$  long. Crease the borders and staple the two ends together. (See drawing page 9). Apply the same finish to the loops as you used on the belt. After the loops are dry, install them on the belt with a  $1 \frac{1}{4}''$  wire belt buckle. Punch five holes in the tip end. Start at the center hole, (5 inches from the tip) and punch two holes on each side of it spaced  $3/4''$  apart. (See drawing page 9). The belt is now complete. If desired, the edges may be coated with enamel. Apply the enamel with a small square of felt. A prepared leather edge enamel may be obtained at your craft dealer's, and will greatly add to the finished appearance of your project.

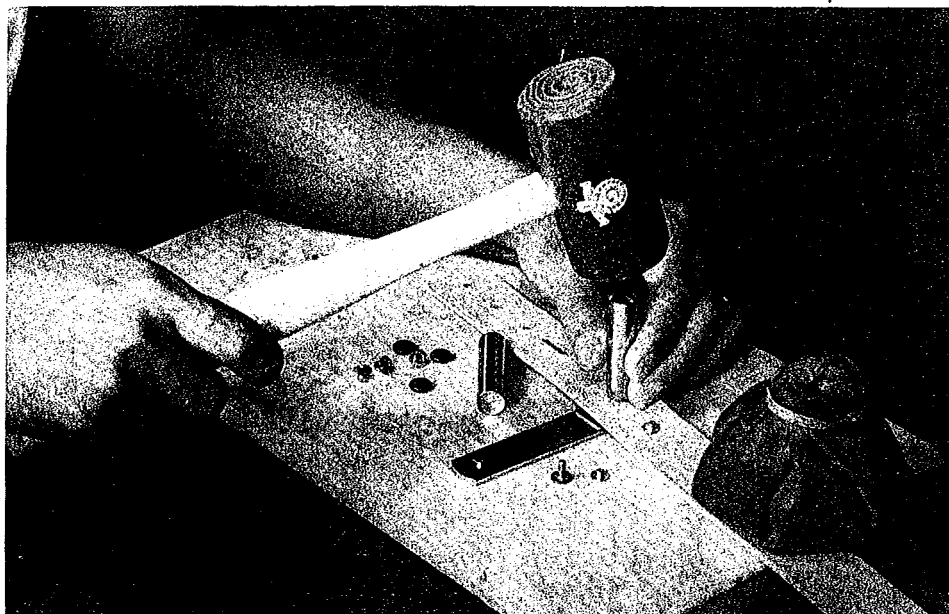
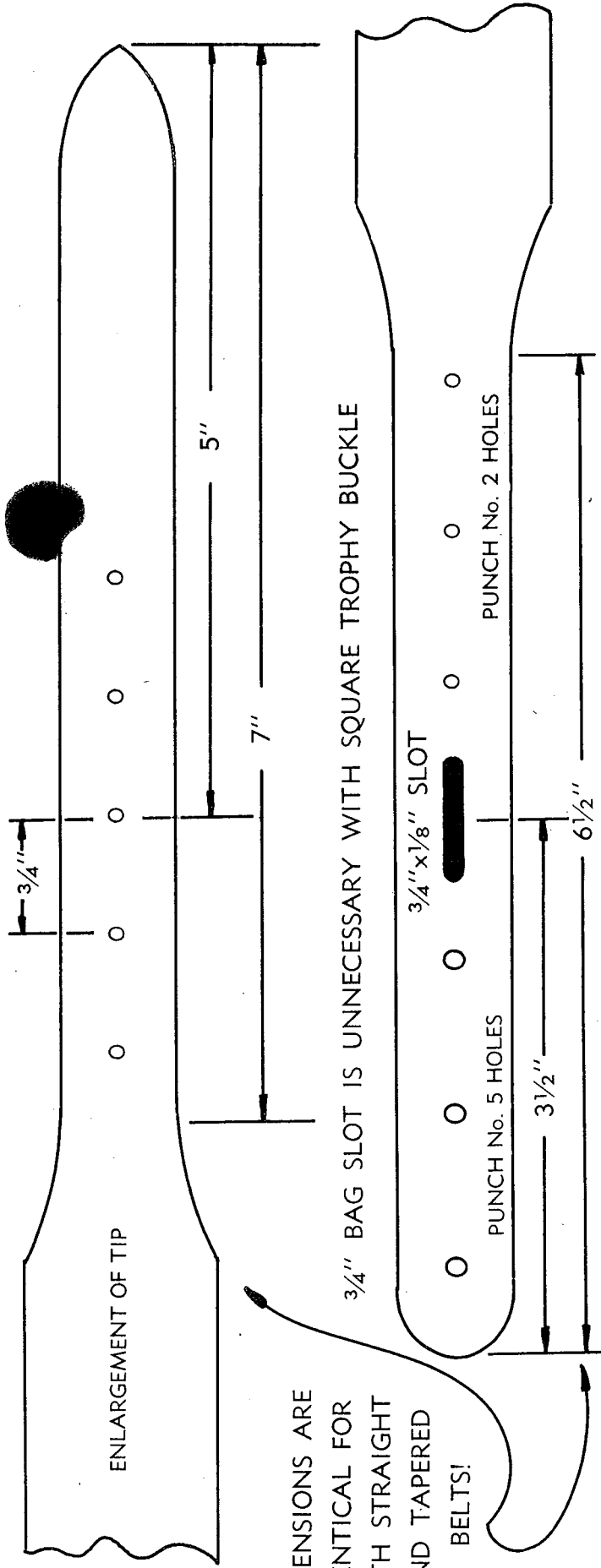
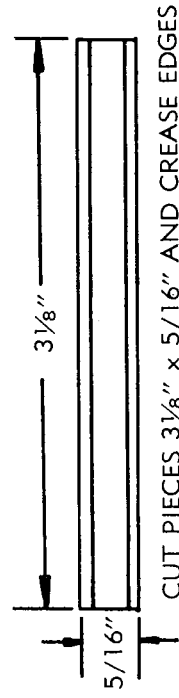
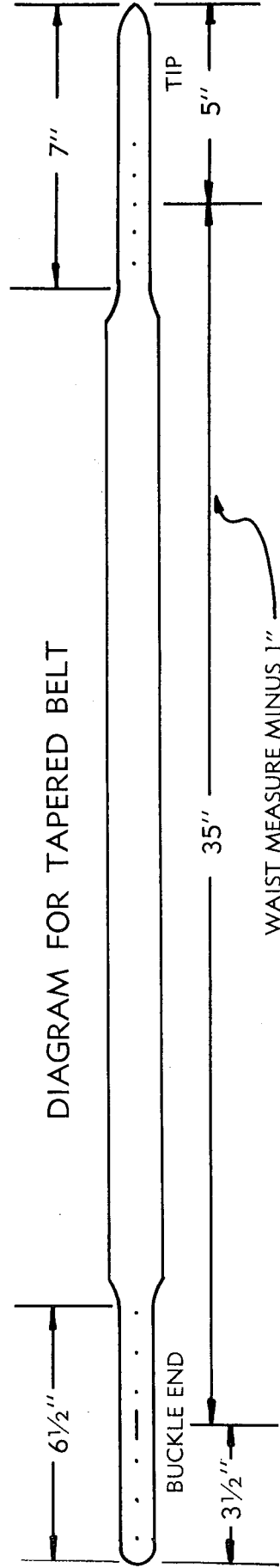


FIG. 7

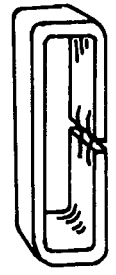
# Staple Belt PATTERNS



DIMENSIONS ARE IDENTICAL FOR BOTH STRAIGHT AND TAPERED BELTS!



MOISTEN LEATHER AND FORM TO THIS SHAPE. MAKE TWO.



ASSEMBLY OF KEEPER

ORDINARY OFFICE STAPLES MAY BE USED



## BELT PATTERNS

The belt designs included on the following pages have been designed and carved with the idea of giving you an assortment of sizes and patterns for your various belt projects. They may be tapered or straight as desired. Some of the patterns are variations of popular designs that originated in the Southwest many years ago. Others are original with STYLECRAFT, but we feel that all will add to your collection of suitable belt designs. The same sequence of tools should be used as in the step-by-step with a few stamps added for the more elaborate patterns.

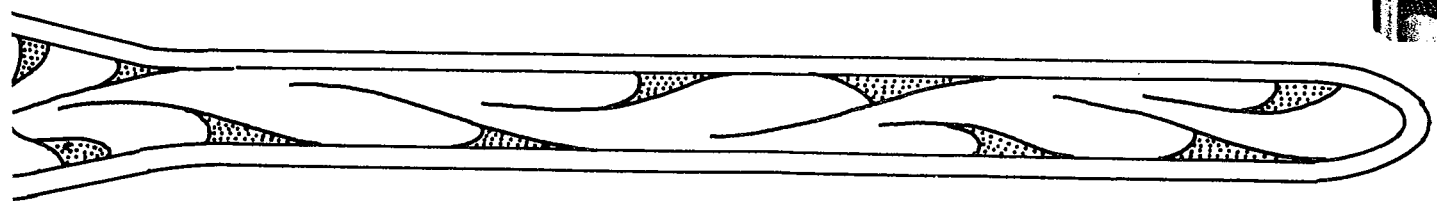
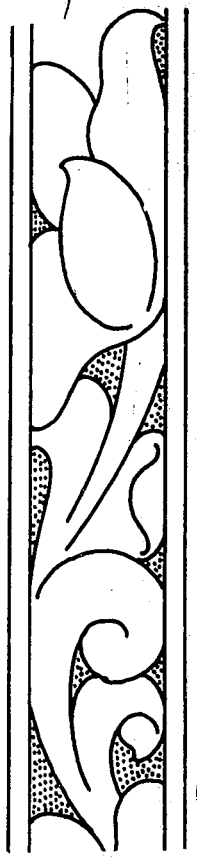
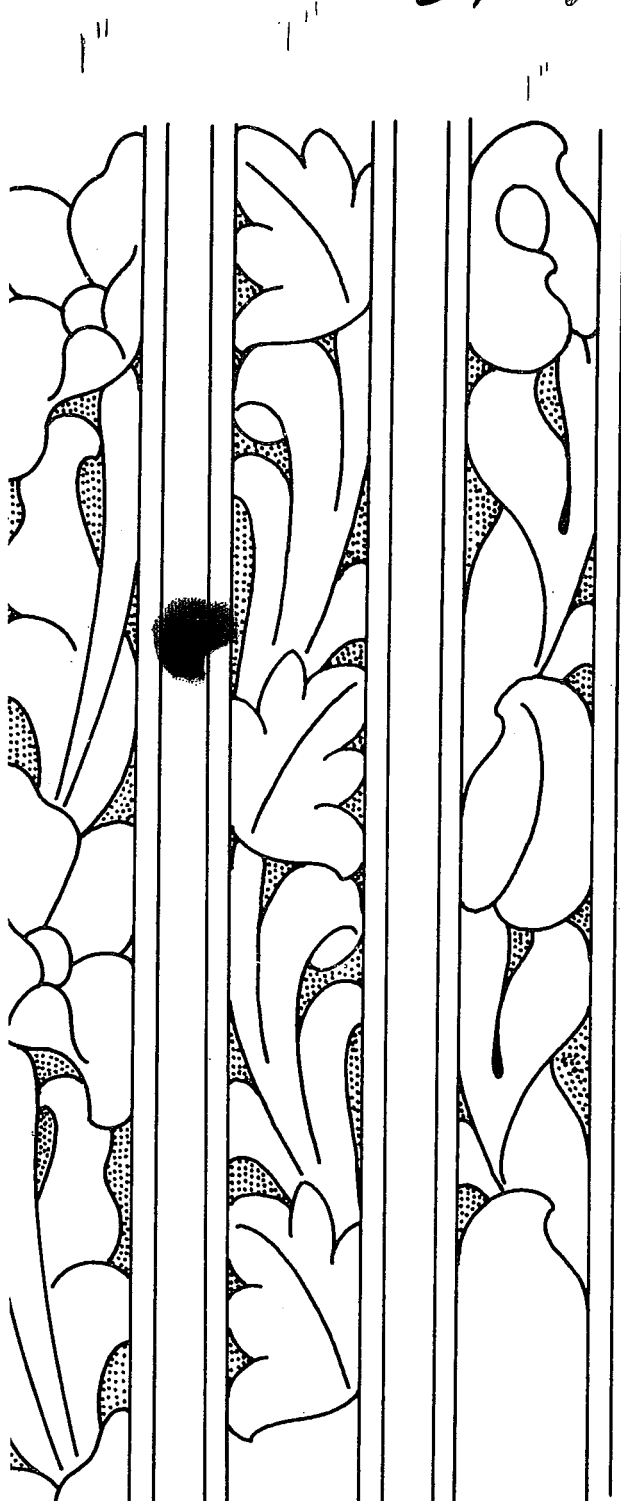
### A FEW HINTS ABOUT BELT WORK

1. **Be sure the belt is cased properly — don't try to stamp while it's too wet!**
2. **When the figures are small, don't try to cut too deeply. The appearance of depth is attained by the careful use of the stamps, especially the pear shader, beveler and background tool.**
3. **Borders and edges are extremely important and will always tell whether the belt was made by an accomplished or a careless craftsman.**
4. **Keep the back of the belt clean! When the stamping is completed, both sides may be cleaned by applying a solution of oxalic acid cleaner.**
5. **If the belt is tapered, be sure that the cutting is clean and the tapers are symmetrical.**
6. **In selecting belt leather, always look at the back, or flesh side. Be sure it is smooth and firm. A few scars or blemishes on the smooth side don't matter, since the carving will conceal them.**
7. **Always use the correct size edger and creaser. A number five creaser is recommended here, and a number two edge beveler is generally satisfactory. Remember: There is no substitute for the correct tool!**
8. **In backgrounding, if the bar grounder is used, try to keep the rows of background running parallel to the stem of the pattern or to the border of the belt.**
9. **Don't "over-stamp"! Too many tool impressions can spoil the belt's appearance, even though you may think you are making a more elaborate or intricate design.**
10. **Last of all, MAKE ALL MEASUREMENTS CAREFULLY — it is always disappointing to do a beautiful job of carving and stamping, only to find you have made the WRONG SIZE!**

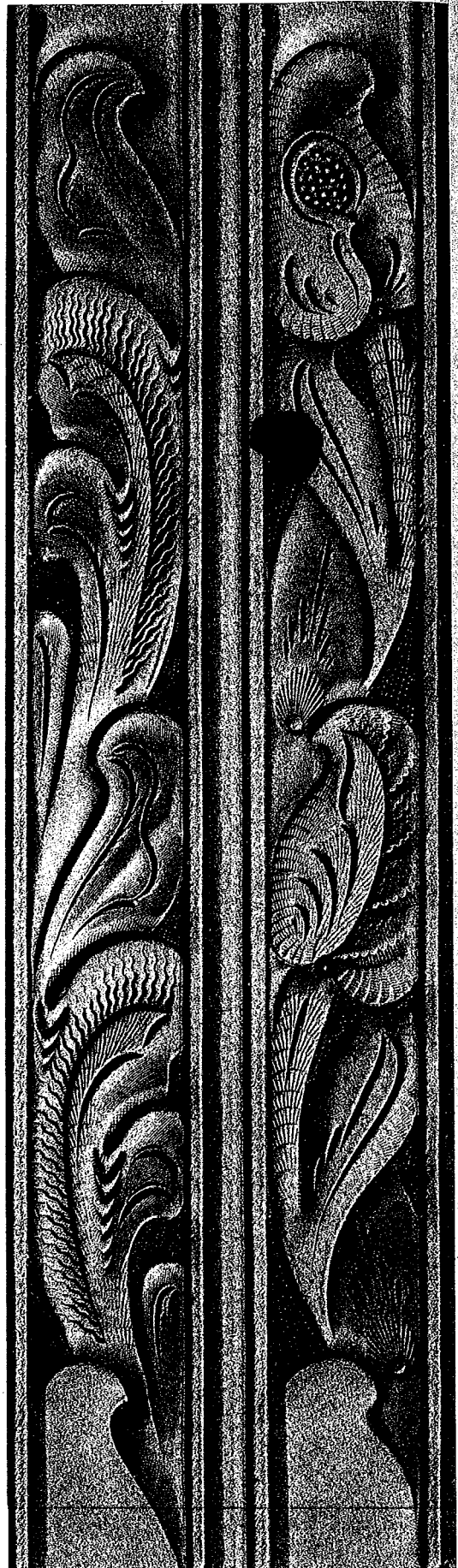
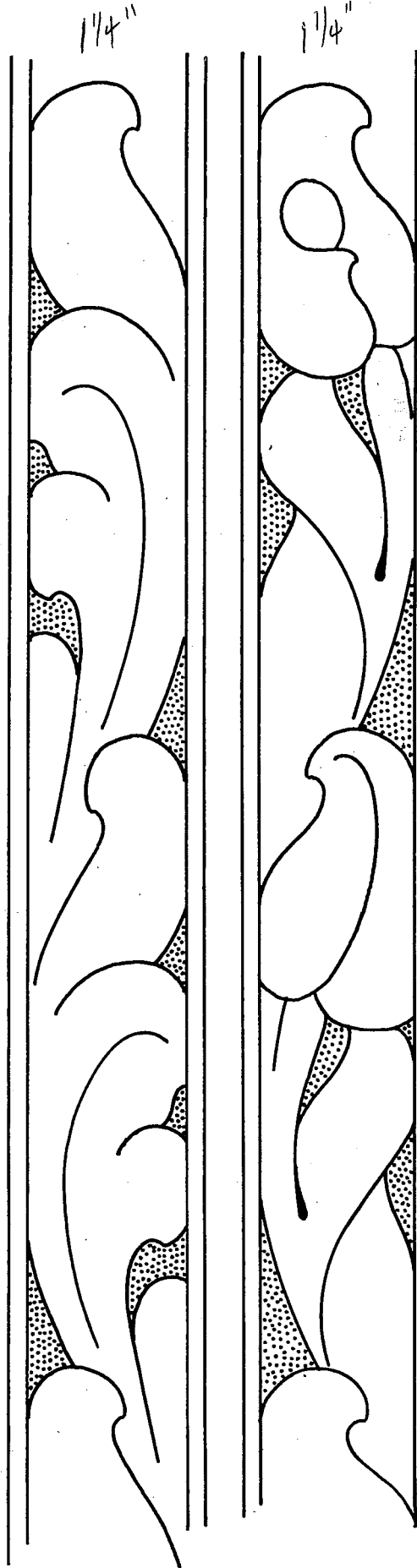
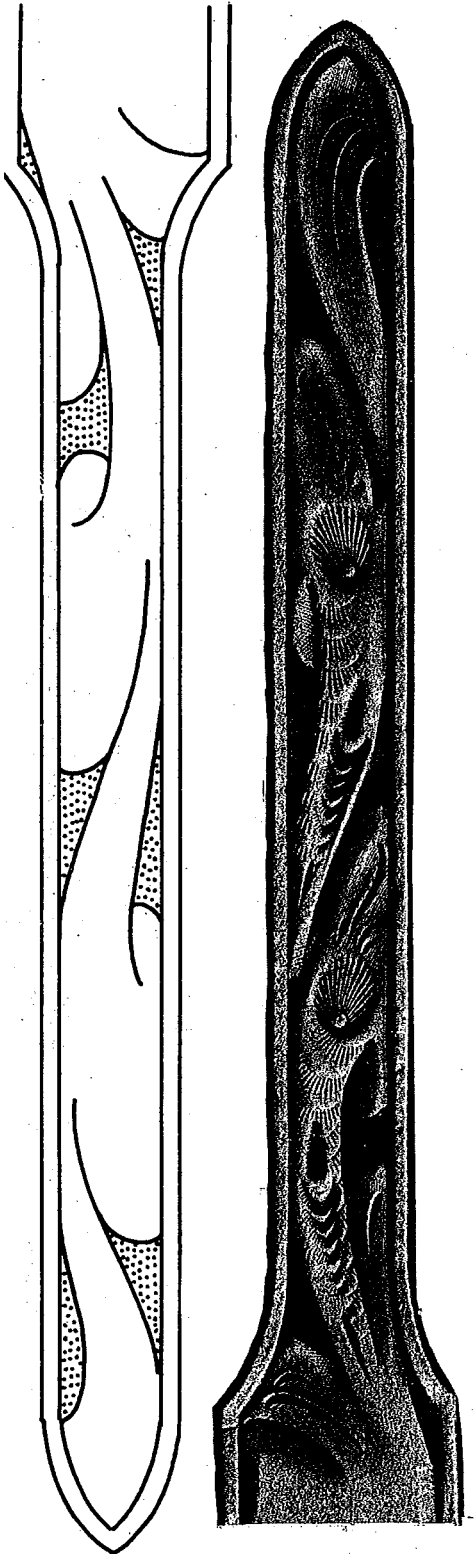
*Stylecraft*

BELT PATTERNS

Revised 1911



*Stylecraft* BELT PATTERNS

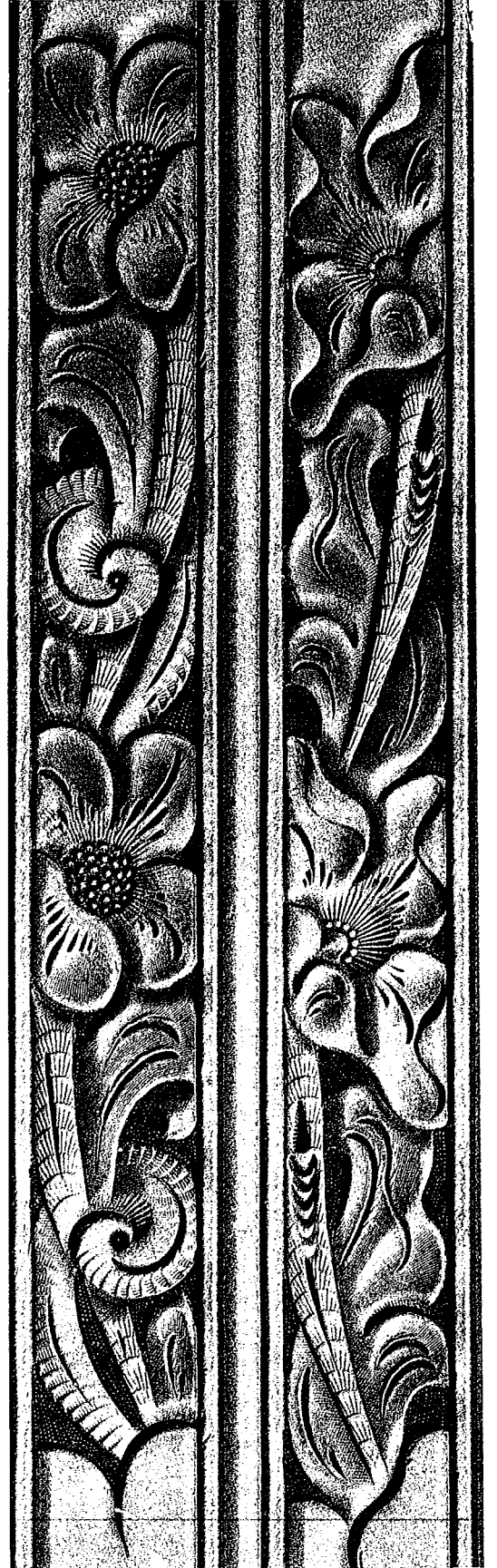
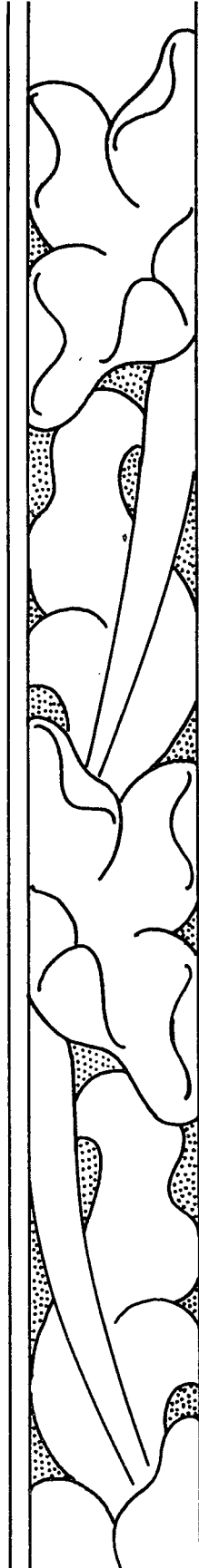
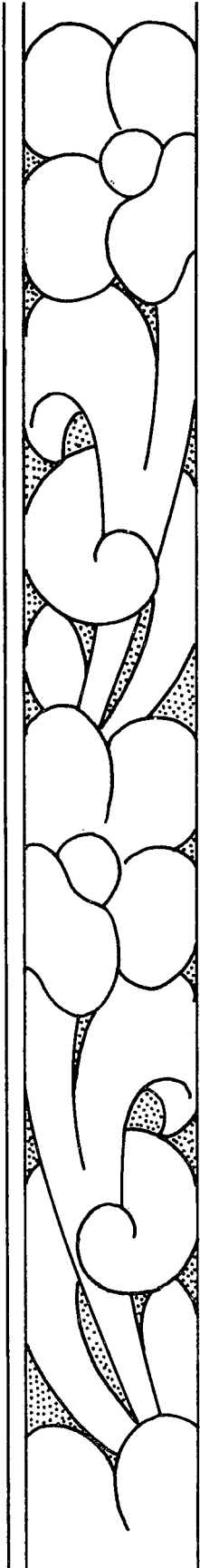
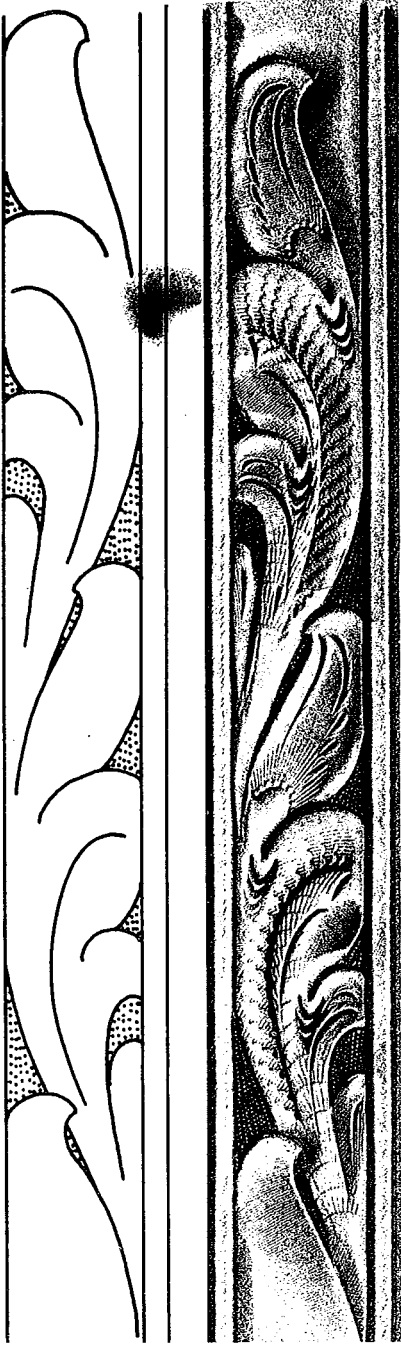


*Stylecraft* BELT PATTERNS

1 1/4

1 1/4

1"



*Stylcraft* BELT PATTERNS

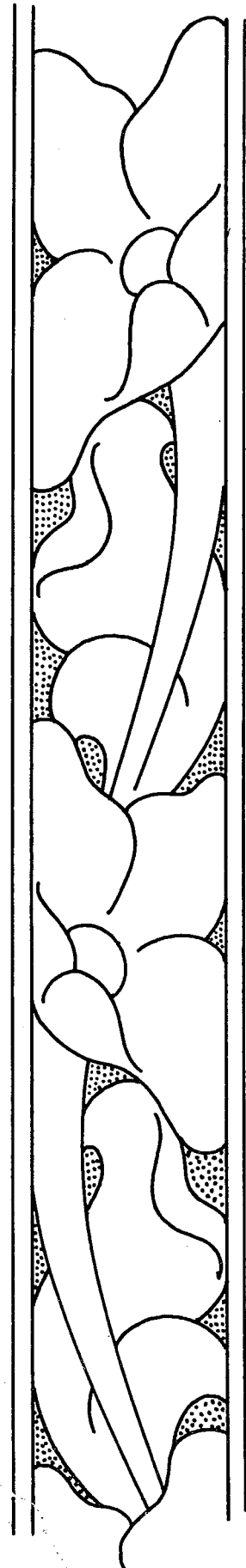
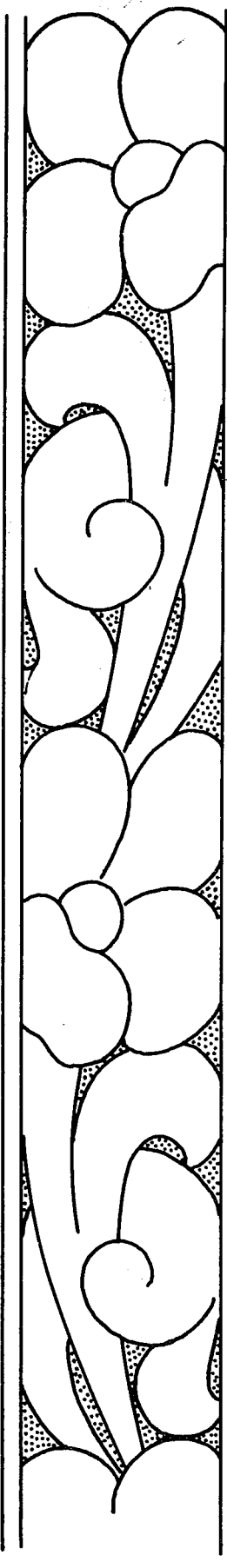
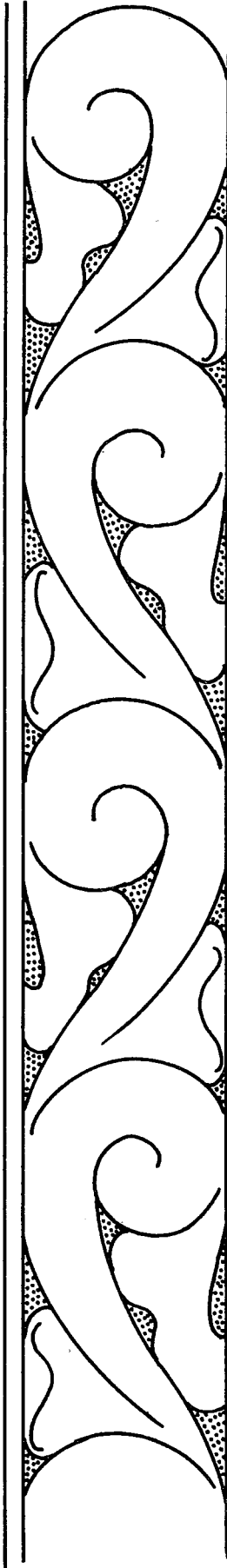
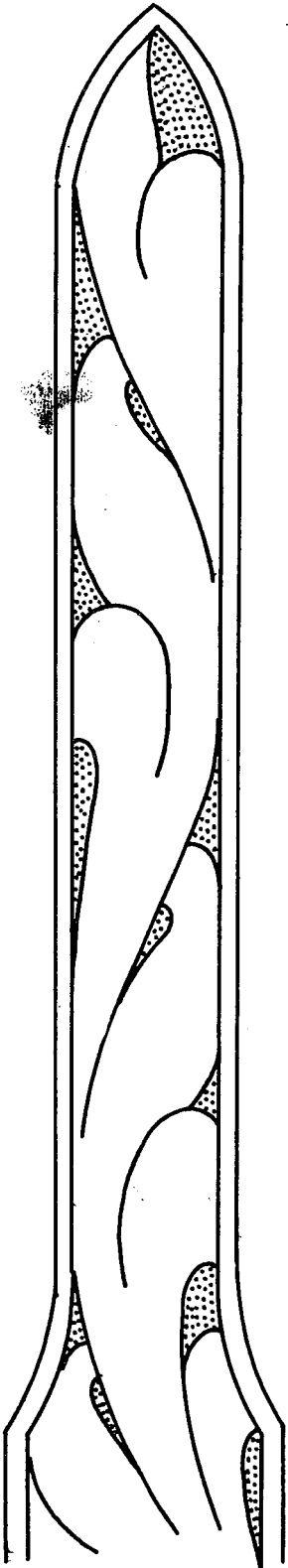


*Stylecraft* BELT PATTERNS

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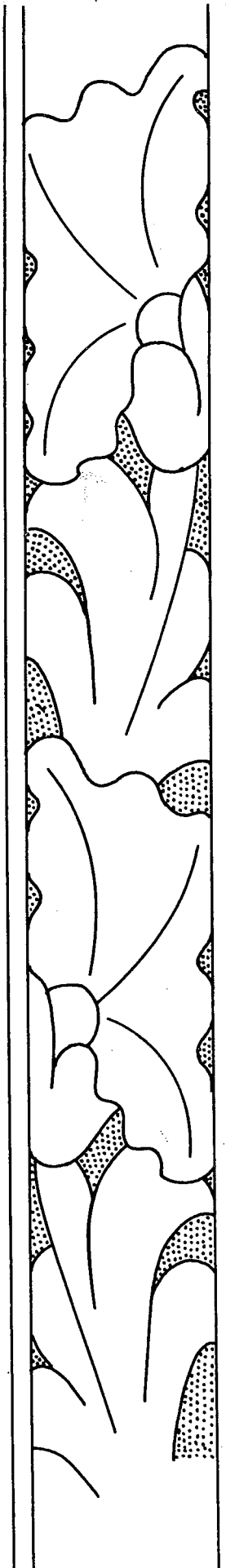




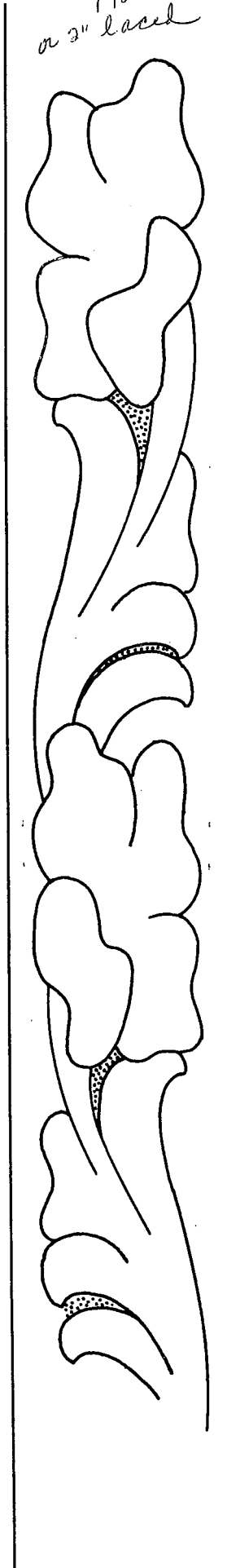
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BELT PATTERNS

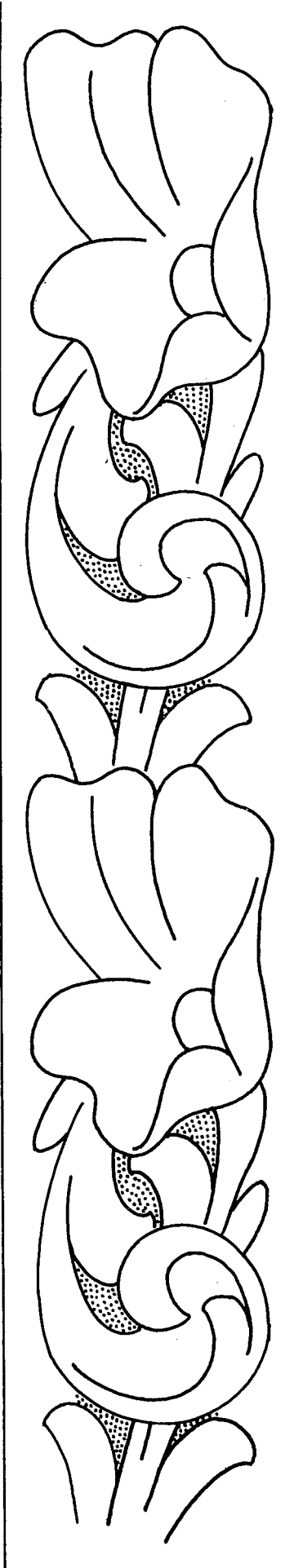
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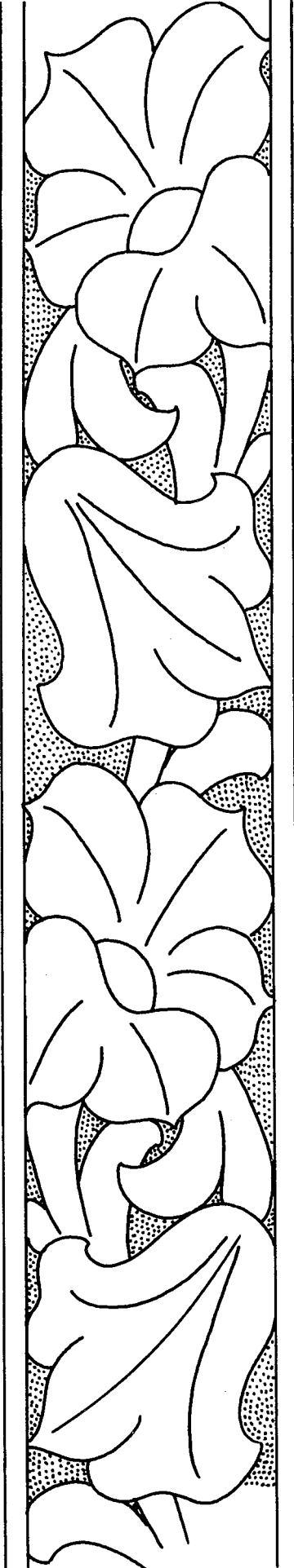
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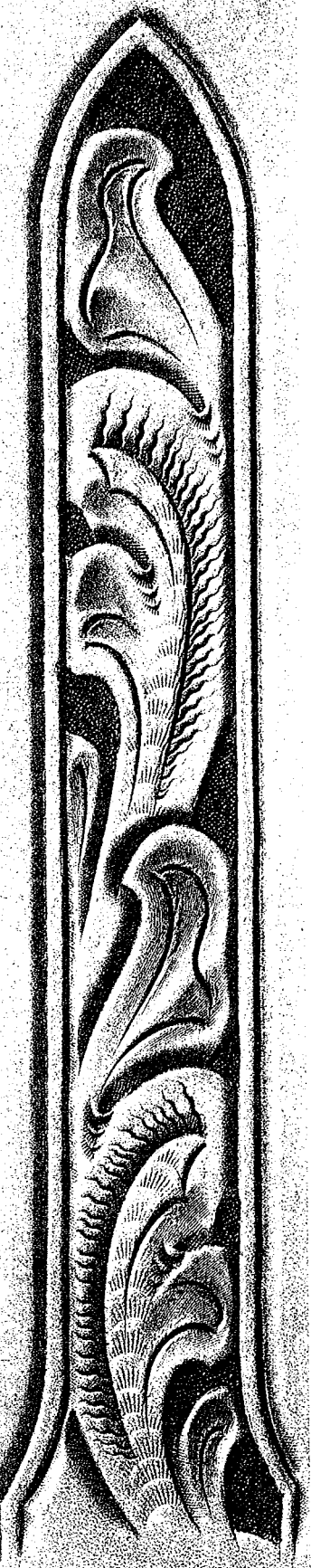


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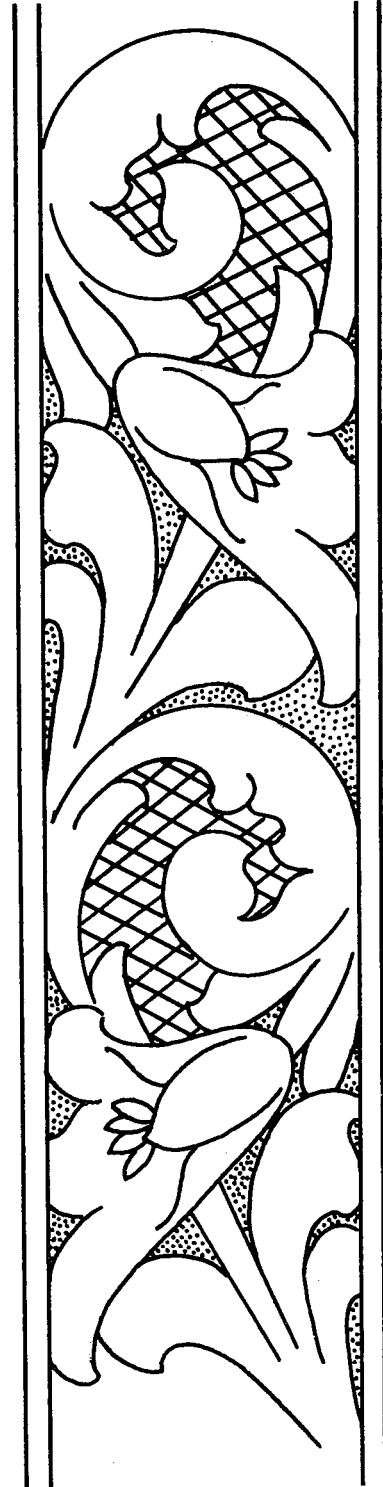
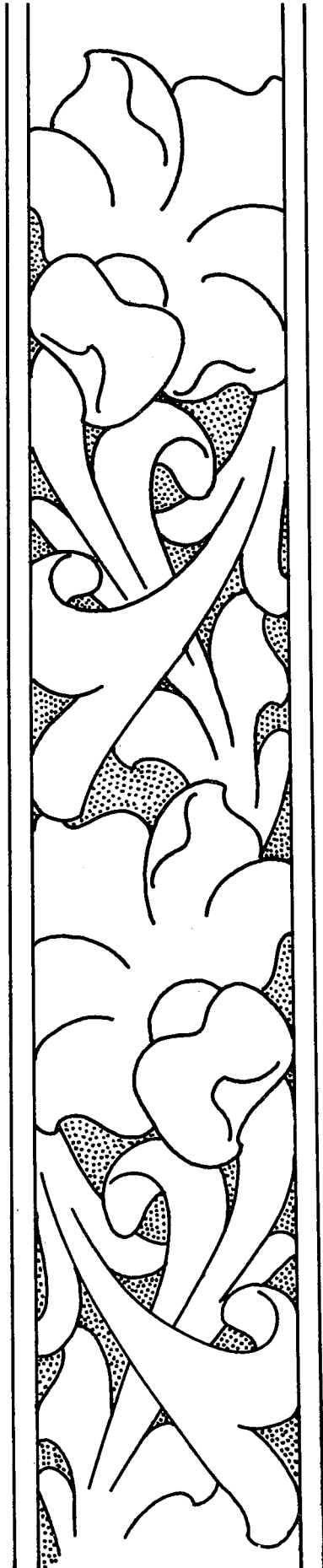
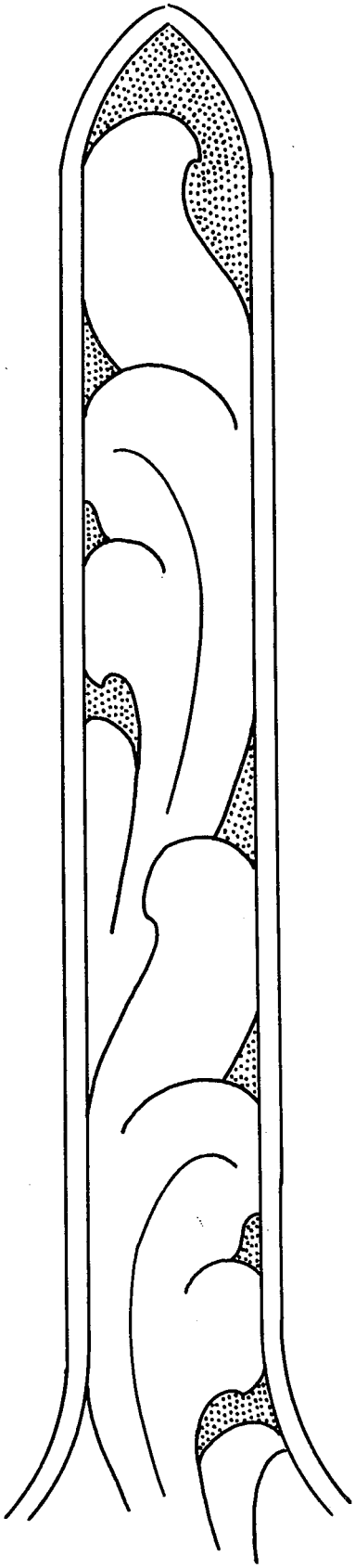
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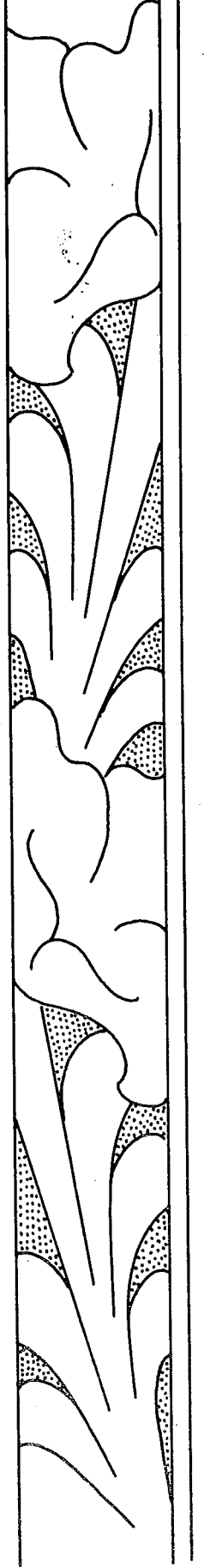
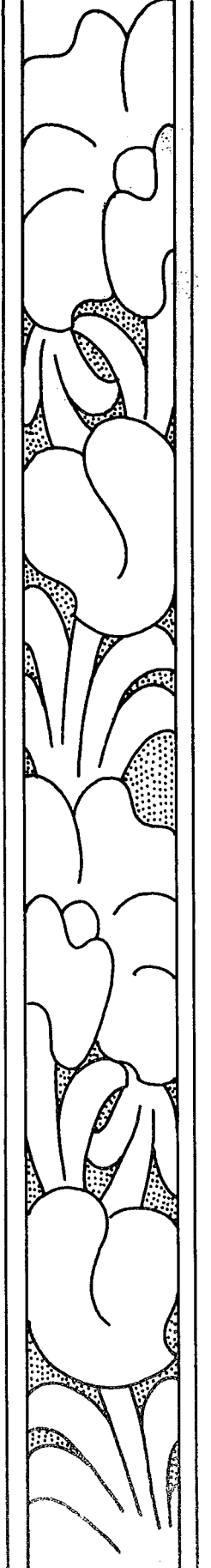
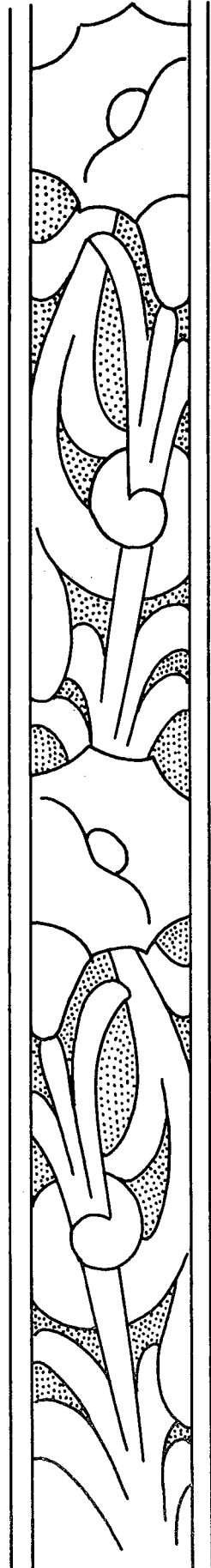
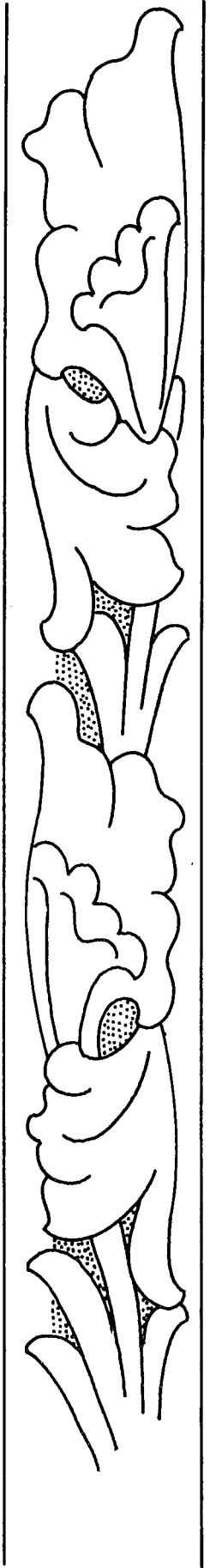
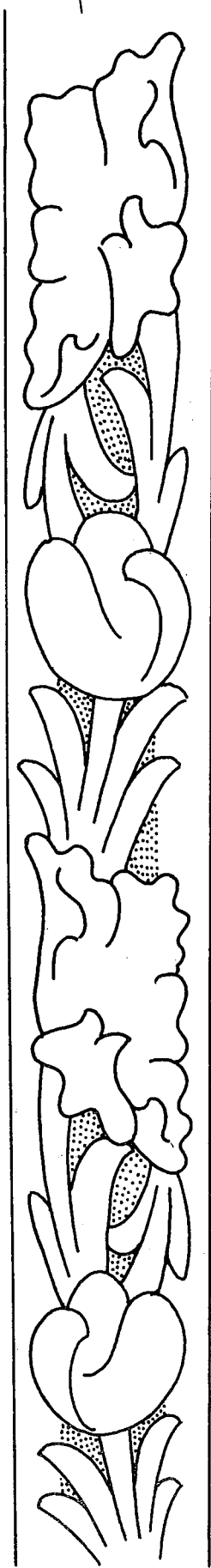
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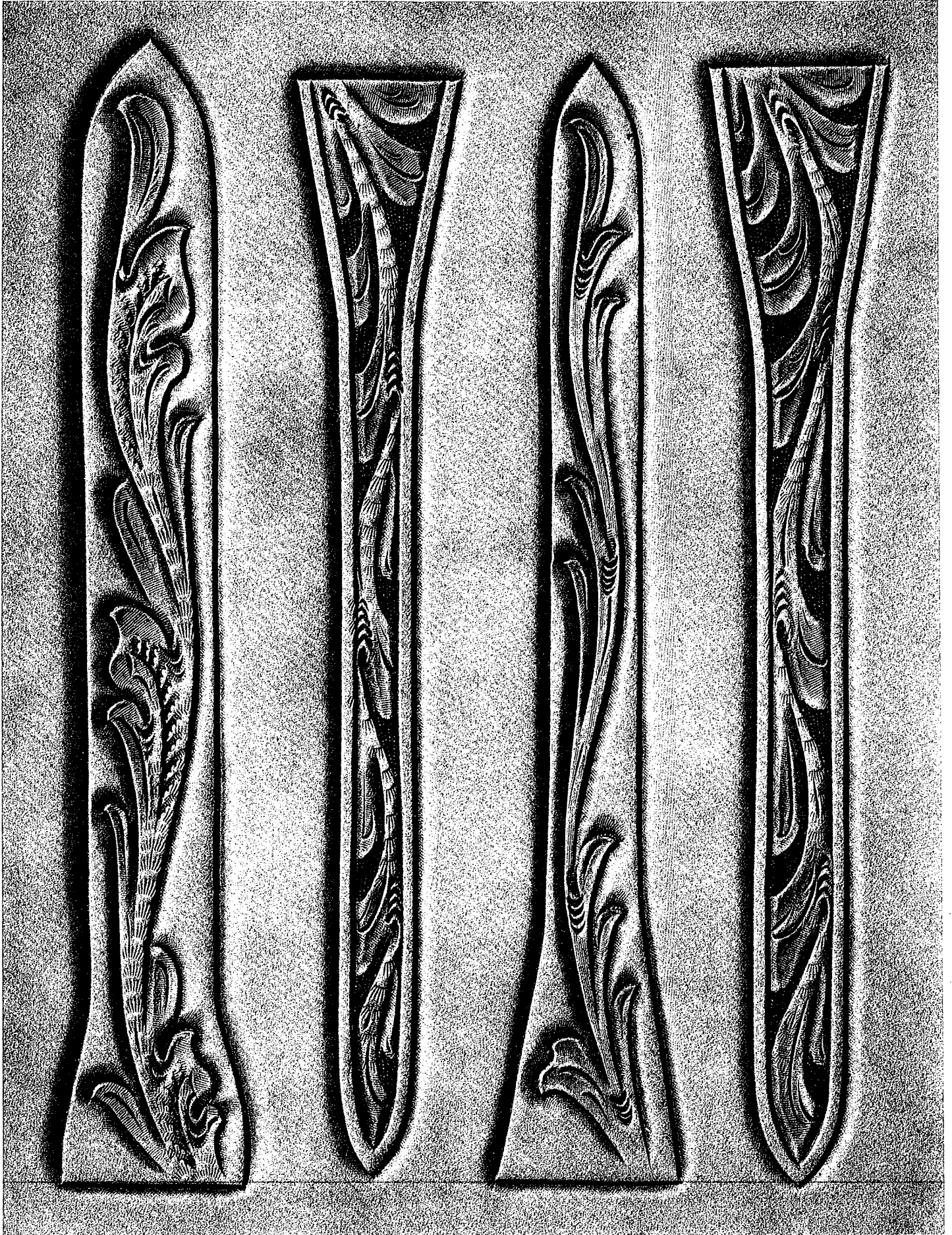
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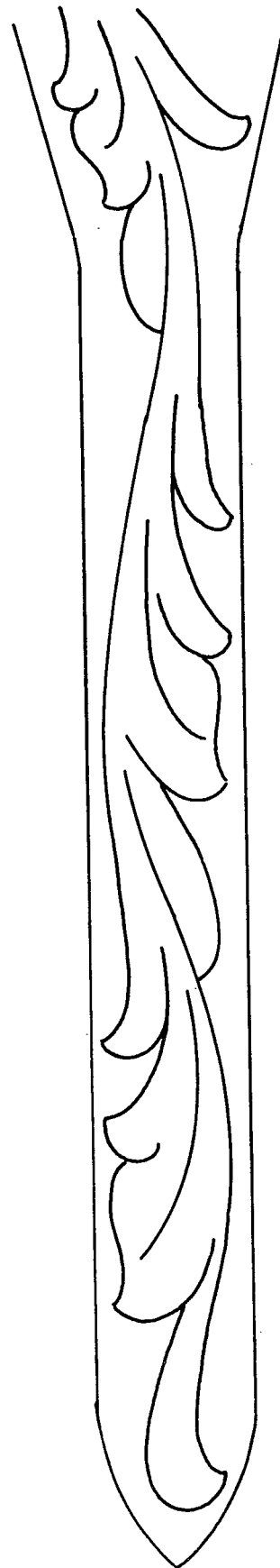
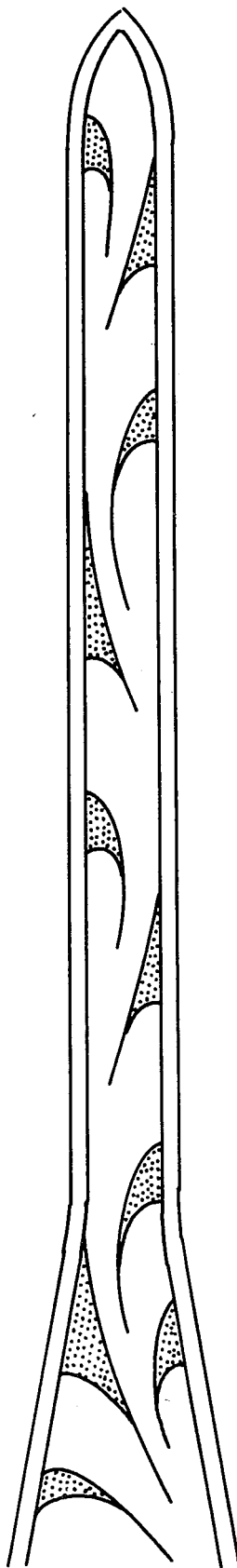
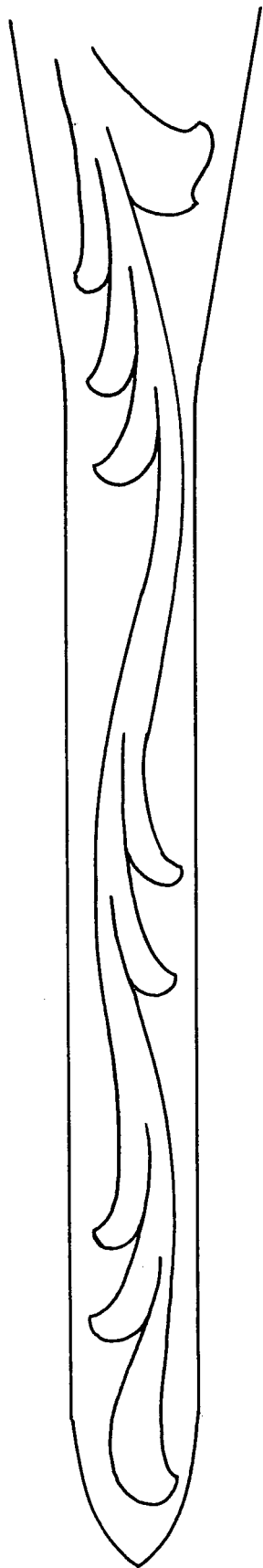
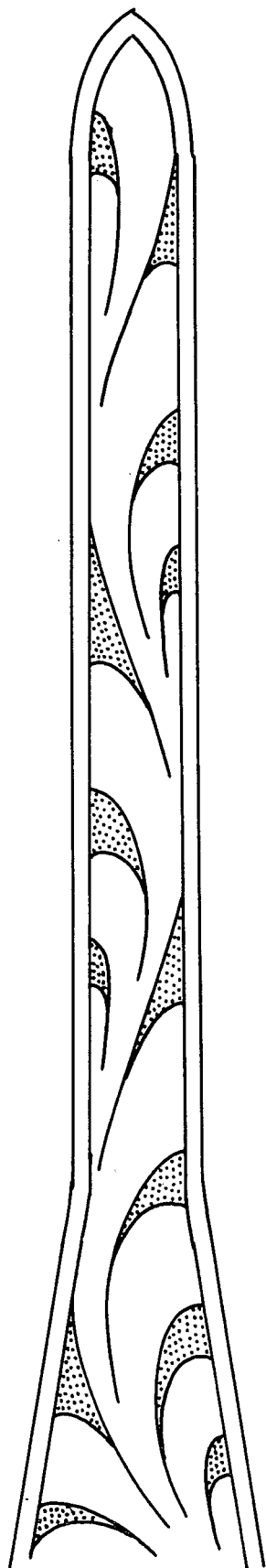
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*Stylecraft*

BELT PATTERNS







*Stylecraft*

BELT PATTERNS

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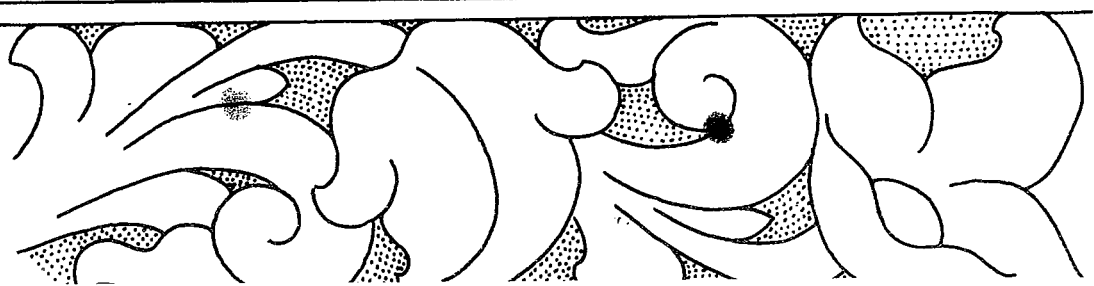
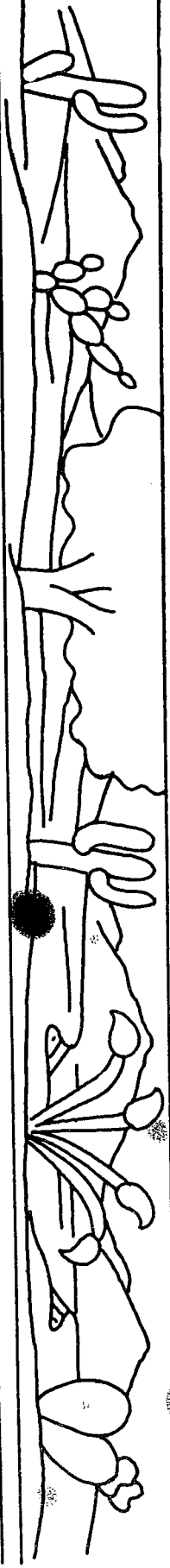
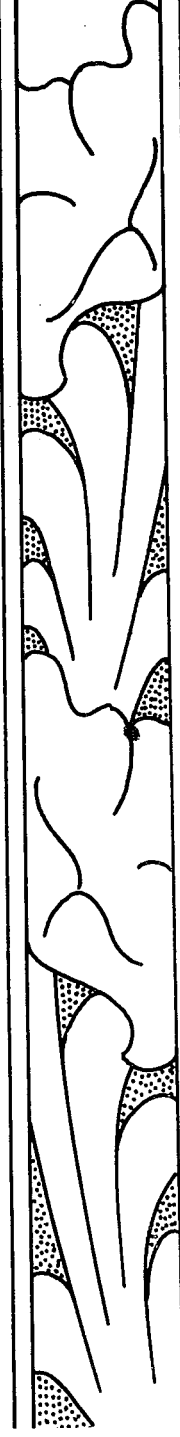
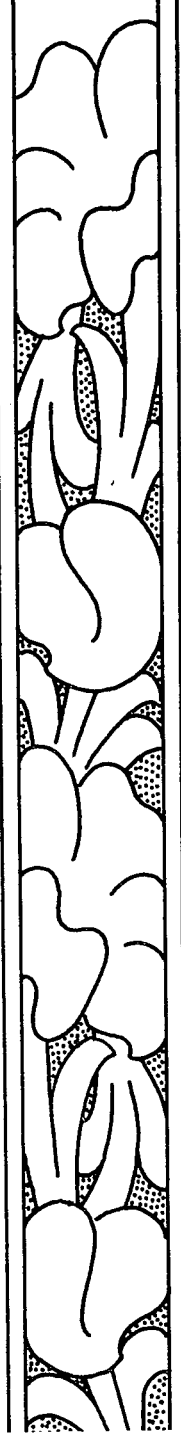
3/4"

3/4

1"

1"

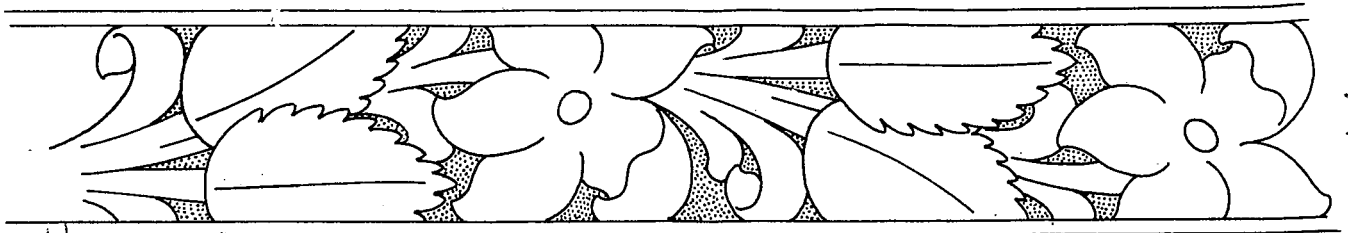
1 1/4



*Stylecraft* BELT PATTERNS

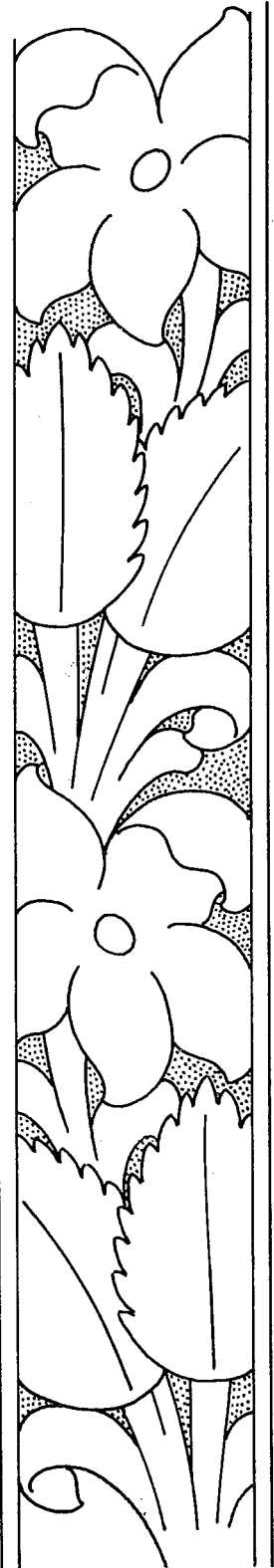
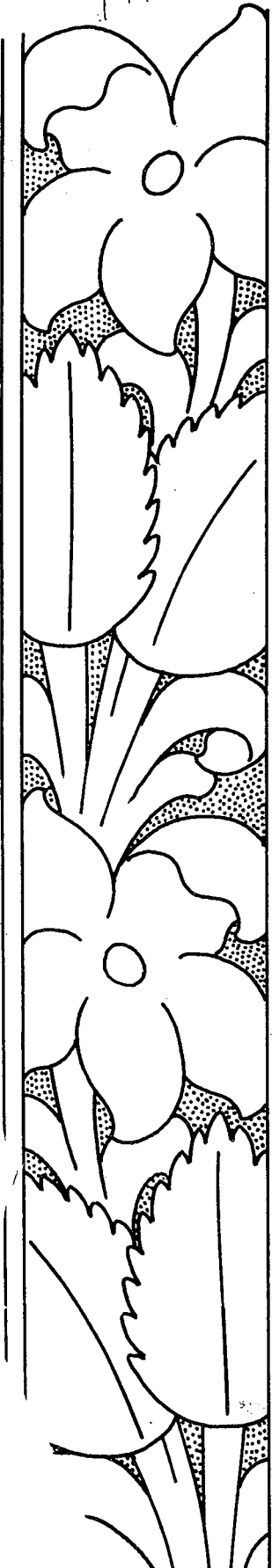


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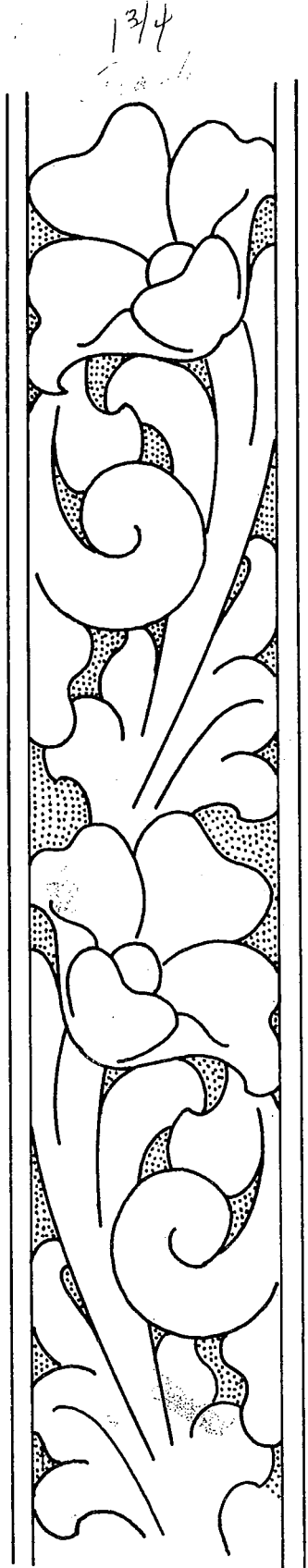
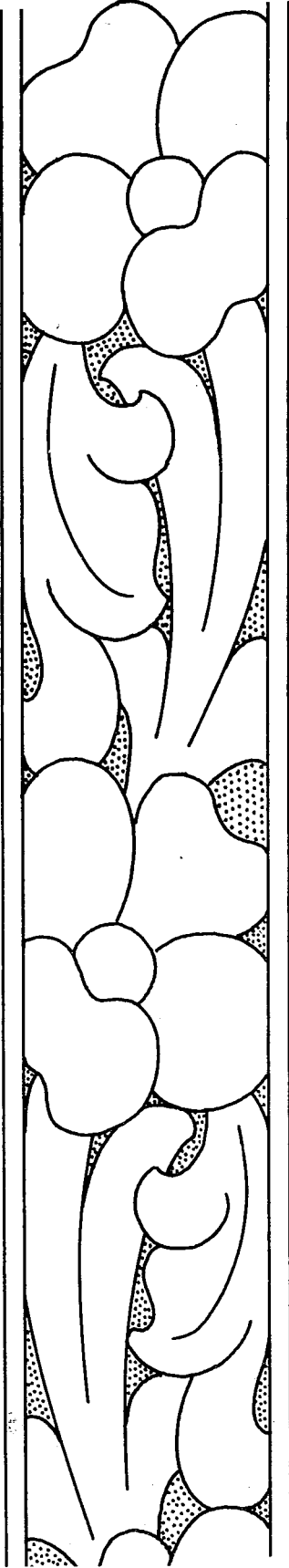
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1 1/4



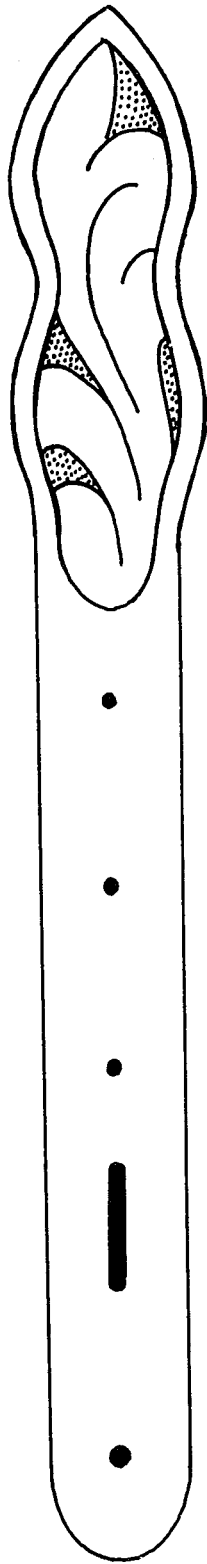
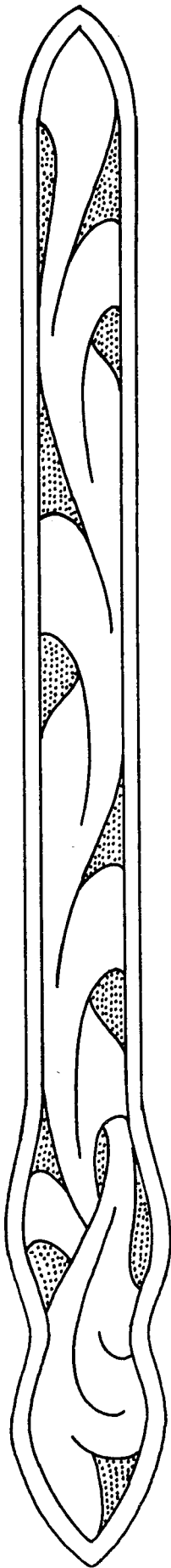
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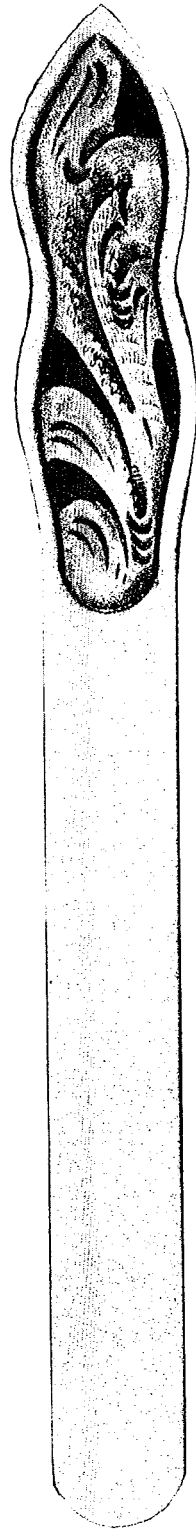


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1 3/4



BUCKLE



### RANGER TYPE WESTERN BELT

One of the most popular styles of the western hand carved belt is the "Ranger" type. This is the style on which the buckle and billet are stitched on the belt strap.

On page 28 you will find the buckle and billet patterns for a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " buckle. These straps may be used on either the  $\frac{1}{4}$ " or  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " belt patterns.

The regular belt patterns may be used on the belt itself, the only difference being that the pattern does not extend all the way to either end of the belt, but only as far as the billet and buckle straps. Usually the remaining leather is border stamped to relieve the plain leather beneath the billet and buckle straps.

One of the major differences between the ranger style belt and the straight or tapered belt is the overall length of the belt strap. Since no turn back is required to hold the buckle, the strap will be shorter. Cut the main belt strap waist measure plus  $5\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Consult the diagram for the proper position of the two straps on the belt. You will also find the carved area marked on the diagram.

When carving and stamping are completed, stitch the straps in place as shown in the diagram. Use six strand linen thread, and No. 2 blunt harness needles. Saddle stitch

A B C D E

F G H I J

K L M N O

P Q R S T

U V W X

Y Z

A B C D E F G H I

J K L M N O P Q R

S T U V W X Y Z

A B C D E F G  
H I J K L M N  
O P Q R S T U  
V W X Y Z

**1-INCH LETTERS FOR 1¼-INCH BELTS**

A B C D E F G H I  
J K L M N O P Q R  
S T U V W X Y Z

**¾-INCH LETTERS FOR 1-INCH BELTS**

A B C D E F G H I J K L M  
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

**½-INCH LETTERS FOR BILLFOLDS, ETC.**