

## CARVING NATURAL FEATHERS.....DONNA MENKE 7-2005

### PLANS:

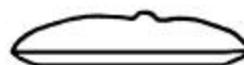
Top View



Side View



End View



### MATERIALS:

Basswood, 1/4" x 3" x 1 1/2"; or hardwood

1" – 1 1/2" pin back; or magnet

Clear acrylic for basswood pins; or oil and wax finish for hardwood feathers

### TOOLS:

Bench knife

#11 (veiner) or #9 gouge, 1/8" wide

#7 or #5 gouge, 3/8" or 1/2" wide

#3 gouge, 3/4 or 1" wide

### CARVING:

#### Front:

1. Draw the quill lines along the center of the feather.
2. Use the 1/8" veiner to make shallow grooves along both sides of the quill.
3. Make a stop cut between the flat and fluffy feathers.
4. Carve the top of the flat feathers in a gentle curve down to 1/16" from the back.  
 Use your bench knife or #3 gouge  
 Start the tip curve 1" in from the tip, and then redraw the quill lines.  
 Advanced carvers may make the edge wavy in some areas, like a real feather.  
 Use the #7 gouge to indicate rippled areas before rounding.  
 Emphasize the splits by continuing them into the body of the feather.
5. Carve the top of the fluffy feathers from the surface at the tips down 1/16" at the quill end using the #7 gouge.
6. Make some of the fluffy feathers higher than others by removing some of the tips.
7. Draw in the guide lines and carve the 'V' grooves with your knife as though it were a chip carving.  
 Make vertical stop cuts at the low spots, and cut in to them from the high spots, using a chopping stroke that won't tear the cross-grain fibers.
8. Use your knife to carve the top and sides of the quill end in gentle curve towards the backside.

**Back:**

9. Carve a depression in the back of the blank for the pin or magnet.
10. Use the #7 gouge to carve the back of the end of the quill. Finish rounding the quill.
11. Taper the fluffy feathers to make the ends thinner, and then cut them to match the front profiles using the same technique of stop cuts and chopping strokes.
12. Taper the flat feathers on the backside, but leave at least a pencil line of thickness along the edges for strength.
13. Make some slicing cuts on the edges in the splits so they do not appear too thick.

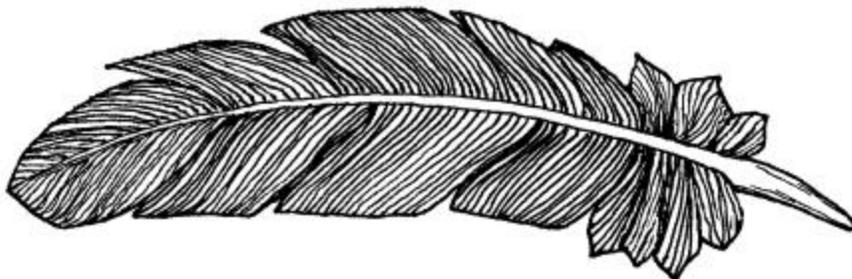
**SANDING:**

For basswood feathers that are going to be wood burned, sand only as much as necessary to remove the fuzzies. Leave the carving facets left by the tools so that it looks like a woodcarving.

For hardwood feathers that are not going to be wood burned you have a choice to either leave the tool marks or sand the piece to smooth. For fantastic woods with great figure, you will want to sand from 120-grit through 220, 320, 400, and 600-grit.

**BURNING:**

Plan:



- Use the writing tip to sign the back of the carving.
- Use the skew tip for making the barbs on the feather.
- Draw the pattern for the feather barbs on the carved feather. As you get more experienced you can draw just a few lines to act as guides.
- Notice that the barbs on the outside of the feather are at a 30-degree angle to the quill, and the inside barbs are at a 45-degree angle. More or less, that is how they grow.
- Although it is possible to burn 80 lines per inch, these feathers look good at about 30-40 lines per inch.
- Keep the lines parallel, but if they get crooked don't worry. Just run them into the side of a split and start the next bunch straight.
- Make the lines for the fluffy feathers slightly erratic, so they look fluffier. Start with a straight line on the ridge, and then work your way down.
- After you have completed the front of the feather, continue the burning of the splits and the edges of the barbs a little into the back area, making a serrated edge.
- Erase any pencil guidelines before applying finish.

**FINISH:**

- Use epoxy to attach the pin back or magnet.
- You may use cyanacrylic glue to reinforce the edges of the pin.
- On basswood, any clear finish will look fine. Clear acrylic is fast and easy.
- For hardwood feathers oil the wood with Tung oil or Watco oil, and then follow with wax for a lustrous finish.