



Nora Hall Master Woodcarver

"Everybody's only really happy when they're creating something. Carving has lots of nice possibilities to express yourself."

Nora Hall

Born in 1922 in Amsterdam, Holland, Nora (Leereveld) Hall had just completed highschool when World War II broke out, forcing her family to move to the country for safety and better access to food.

Since it was her life's dream to become a wood sculptress, her father, master woodcarver Johannes Leereveld, encouraged his daughter to attend the art academy in Amsterdam, which she did for one year. This brief study laid the foundation for an apprenticeship with her dad that continued until 1946.

As though the war years were not enough (her brother was in hiding and the last year they had virtually no food at all!), Johannes was a strict and demanding teacher, and her toughest critic! He had Nora repeat many projects to improve her skills and gain speed, and also required that she learn to carve left- and right-handed.

All her suffering and hard work did not go without reward, however. By the end of the war, she was famous as the only female woodcarver in Holland!



Nora's first carving teacher: her father, Master Woodcarver Johannes Leereveld.

In the 1950s, she left her native country and raised her family in the United States. During this time, she discovered that while many Americans had taught themselves how to carve, they had also made the task more difficult with a number of bad habits. Nora came to the rescue, and in the 1970s began teaching classical-style carving methods to American students of all ages.

Over the years, Nora has had the pleasure of having her work commissioned by the BMH Synagogue in Denver, USWest, Hugh Hefner, Gibson Guitar, and numerous private collectors. She has also had her work and life featured in such magazines as Fine Woodworking, Woodshop News, Colorado Homes and Lifestyles, and Woodworker's Journal.

She is still teaching and carving today, moved by her love of the craft to share it with as many people as possible. Her residence is in Troy, Michigan, and she can be contacted at (208) 337-2400 or www.norahall.com.

Carving Instruction by Nora Hall

One-Day Seminar

The primary focus is to give an overview of the historic decorative art of European relief carving through the use of a lecture/slide show and numerous demonstrations. Carving-in-the-round, chip and letter carving, necessary supplies such as tools, workbench, lighting, and sharpening devices will also be discussed.

Special emphasis will be given to Nora's method of approaching a project, including clay modeling done before a particular complex design.

Even though the seminar is not of a "hands-on" nature, she does encourage her participants to pick up a tool and try a few cuts to experience her unique way of carving.

The day usually lasts from 10am - 4pm; however, these times can easily be adjusted! Questions are encouraged throughout, so that everyone will leave hopefully ready to sign up somewhere, sometime for one of her more lengthy workshops!

Supplies Needed by Instructor

- Slide projector, wall or screen, room that can be darkened with ample seating and a microphone (if needed).
- Workbench raised to a height of 42 inches.

Two-Day Workshop

Old-style ornaments such as leaves, scrolls, shells, flowers, grapes, etc. will be utilized as a means of explaining classic European carving styles. The main area covered will be relief carving, though carving-in-the-round, chip and letter carving will be included.

Initially, each student will become familiar with the seven basic tools by carving a simple design. Depending on his or her progress and proficiency, Nora will suggest a second project and a third and so on. Typically, about 5 projects will be completed.

Throughout the course, much one-on-one guidance will be given to ensure that the correct technique is followed. Interruptions will also occur frequently, perhaps to stress a particular concept or enter into a short discussion on a particular student's question.

Even though this workshop is open to both experienced and novice carvers, at the end each participant will have learned how to achieve both quality and higher levels of productivity and proficiency through proper techniques.

Students are welcome to bring their own tools; they can otherwise be supplied by the instructor or the teaching institution.

Supplies Needed by Instructor

- Workspace for each student and instructor (42 inches high).
- Tools for students, if applicable!
- Wood for student projects.

Two-and-a-Half, Three, and Five Day Workshops

Essentially, as more days are added to the course, additional projects will be explored in greater depth, dimension, and detail. In addition, as time permits, high relief will be introduced and students are also encouraged to bring their current project!

Carvings by Nora Hall

