

# “Maximum Efficiency with the Sand Blast”

A Series of Papers on the Possibilities and Limitations of the Sand Process.

X. Some Typical Examples of Current Sand Blast Ornament,  
By Roderic Stuart

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# Maximum Efficiency With the Sand Blast

*A Series of Papers on the Possibilities  
and Limitations of the Sand Process*

## X.—SOME TYPICAL EXAMPLES OF CURRENT SAND BLAST ORNAMENT

By RODERIC STUART

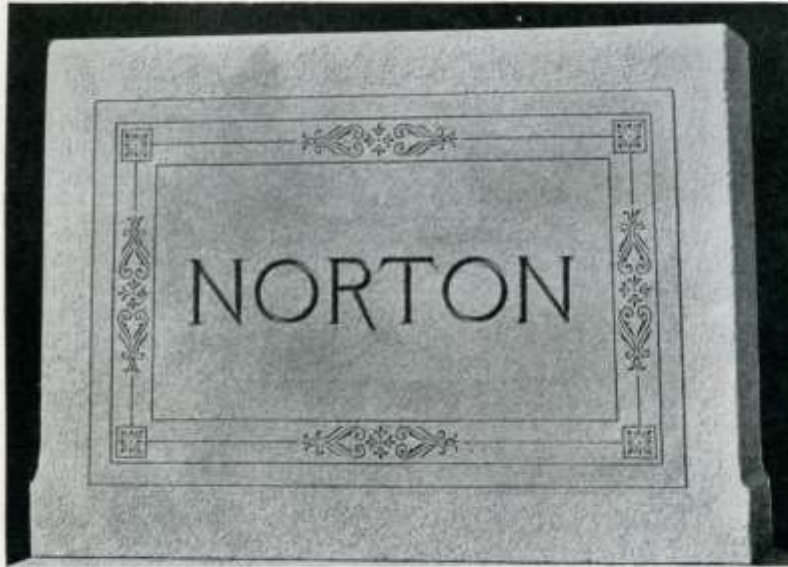


FIG. 1. SAND-BLAST DECORATION BY SMITH MONUMENTAL WORKS, NORWALK, O.

use of the sand-process in ornament we shall dwell upon types of enrichment and finish which properly belong to the work of a machine, the while casting about for a new avenue of expression and experiment. For a starting point, let us briefly consider a few of the more familiar products of sand-blast workmanship, reserving for a subsequent chapter the consideration of notable experiments and the probable trend of sand-process technique.

The incised line is obviously and logically the elementary theme of sand process ornament. From the incised letter or line, the art of 'process' technique has developed through stages, until today craftsmen have perfected manipulation of the machine for relief work, extending the scope of the device to a variety of very beautiful effects in surface finish. Figs. 1, 2 and 3 represent examples of familiar line ornament, while the others here introduced suggest a variety of treatments varying from the Egyptian "hollow relief" or intaglio, to examples of actual relief work. Figure 1 offers a lesson in

In approaching the subject of sand-blast ornament we will for convenience first consider a few examples typical of current production in this class of work. In the fourth chapter of this series on "Maximum Efficiency with the Sand Blast," the author considered a few of the essential problems anent the use and abuse of the process. In that chapter and in the subsequent paper on "Lettering," we attacked all criticism directed against the machine merely because it was a machine. Analyzing the sentiment and appeal of hand-work, we denounced as puerile any tendency to demand hand labour in work which is better done by machine. At the same time, we deplored attempts to imitate with a machine the craftsmanship of the skilled carver. The premise of the argument was that the sand-blast answered a definite purpose, was a welcome and legitimate labour-saving device, that it produced a specific type of work as well if not better than man but that beyond its proper realm the machine might become a menace to good design if unintelligently applied. The facility with which it produces results was mentioned as a danger insofar as it encourages over-ornamentation and likewise in time might surfeit our cemeteries with a monotonous recurrence of line ornament. Hence in considering the



FIG. 7. FLAT CARVING AND SUNK LETTERING, SHOWING BEAUTIFUL EFFECTS WITH SAND BLAST  
Work of Slaughter-Thompson Co., South Bend, Ind.

(photo captions) "Fig. 1. Sand blast decoration by Smith Monumental Works, Norwalk, Ohio." & "Fig. 7. Flat carving and sunk lettering, showing beautiful effects with sand blast. Work of Slaughter-Thompson Co., South Bend, Indiana.

the better use of line ornament. Here the incision has been held to a very refined line and the ornament is developed with rather more sense for design than is common to work of this kind. There is a rather pronounced contrast between the refinement of the line ornament and the bold accentuation of the name but this aspect of the subject does not concern us at this time. Of more importance now is the effectiveness of the panel lines, the interesting surface treatment surrounding the panel and the restraint displayed in development of the orna-



FIG. 9. OVERDONE ORNAMENT

ment. While the sand-blast has doubtless encouraged its use in our field, nevertheless there were many examples dating back long before the application of the sand blast to the working of stone. The best work of this kind in ancient art is distinguished by the deep groove

the appropriation would admit a little hand craftsmanship in giving more modeling to the surface of the laurel, a perfect result could be achieved without burdensome expense. The method of attaining such effects is indicated in the sketch submitted by the Eisenbrown's of Reading.

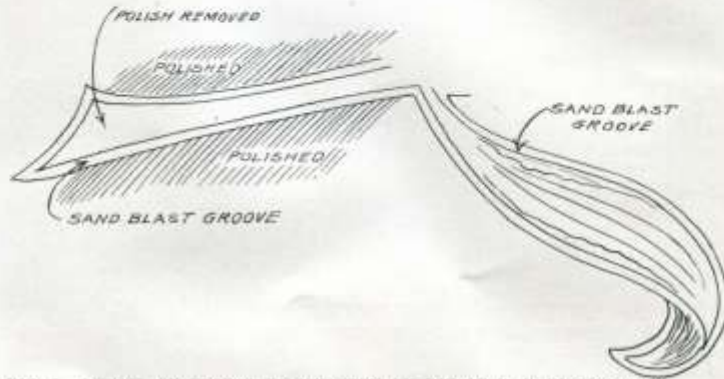
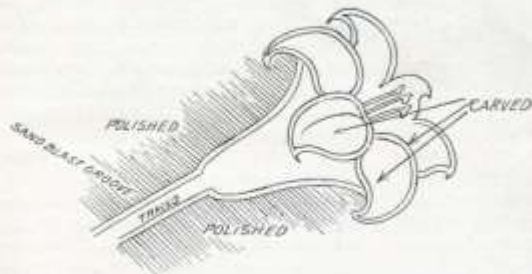


FIG. 6. DETAIL OF FLORAL DECORATION ON DIE OF P. F. EISENBROWN SONS & CO., ILLUSTRATED



DETAIL OF DECORATION ON DIE BELOW

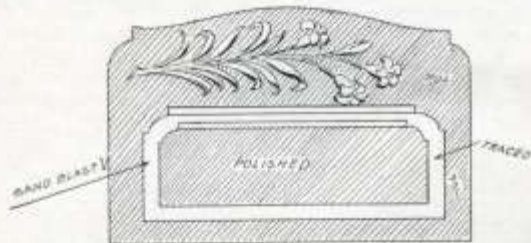


FIG. 5. Die 4-0x3.6: prepared, blown and carved complete in 16 hours by P. F. Eisenbrown Sons & Co., Reading, Pa.

ment. Contrasted with the effusion of scrolls, meaningless lines and spots so common in sand-process ornament, this example is worthy of emulation.

The sand-blast is effective in producing results which recall 'hollow-relief' cavo-relevo, intaglio rilievo and coelana-glyphic sculpture. This type of carving was highly developed by the Egyptians and illustrated examples abound in any good text-books on sculpture, archaeology or art histories in general. In present-day sculpture and architectural carving, there is a revival of interest in the qualities of the so-called 'hollow-re-

lief' and all the modeling is done below the original surface. Figures 2 and 3 suggest a modern interpretation of actual hollow carving or incised work—work which is obviously the product of sand-blast expediency. While very satisfactory effects are gained by such simple treatment, the results do not match the work indicated in figures 5, 6 and 7. In Figure 7 notably, the 'intaglio rilievo' is suggested at its best. By very clever manipulation of the sand-blast the operator here has approached the very highest order of decorative carving. Where

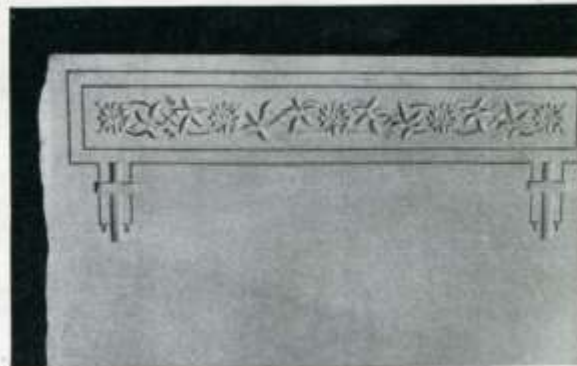


FIG. 2. SAND BLAST DECORATION EXECUTED BY JONES BROTHERS CO. FOR J. F. BLOOM & CO.

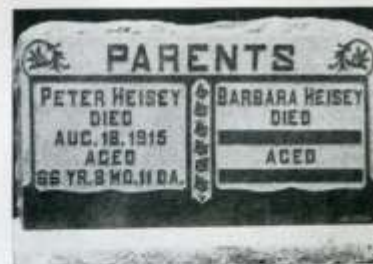


FIG. 8. Die, 3-6x1-0x2.4, cut in one hour and twenty minutes by Bolster Bros., Ephrata, Pa.

A notable example of this type of carving was illustrated in a previous chapter of this series and for the reader's convenience, the Cusick Memorial is again introduced to show the effective rendition of the rose sprays. A very little hand work was devoted to giving some expression to the modeling, but otherwise the entire spray was effected by the ma-

(photo captions) "Fig. 9. Overdone ornament; "Fig. 6. Detail of floral decoration on die of P. F. Eisenbrown; "Fig. 5. Die 4-0x3.6; prepared, blown and carved complete in 16 hours by P. F. Eisenbrown Sons & Co., Reading Pennsylvania." "Fig. 2. Sand blast decoration executed by Jones Brothers Co. for J. F. Bloom & Co." & "Fig. 8. Die, 3-6x1-0x2.4, cut in one hour and twenty minutes by Bolster Bros., Ephrata, Pennsylvania."





FIG. 3. DECORATION DESIGNED FOR SAND CARVING ON HAMMERED DIE  
By Phillips & Slack, Northfield, Va.

chine. Figure 4 is a typical example of current sand-blast design which combines incised carving with the intaglio relief work in the bands and the key-ornaments at the corners. Figure 8 was submitted by Bolster Brothers of Ephrata, Pennsylvania. It is an example of relief carving and lettering done by the sand-blast.

"Moderation in all things" is an adage as old as philosophy and it applies to art with no less forcefulness than it does to our everyday life. It has been observed that the mounting cost of labour had a healthy effect upon the design of memorials in that it encouraged a desirable simplicity. It would be altogether unfortunate if the economical productivity of the sand blast were to offset the progress we made toward fine restraint in the use of ornament. Without essaying to belabour the reader with a disser-

tation on design, or simplicity in design, we might venture with good grace to suggest that the reader compare much of the current sand-blast treated productions with the moderate cost work dating back to the days when the machine was not in such general use. The contrast, be it remembered, is not the fault of the machine. It is altogether the fault of designers and dealers who are overdoing a good thing. Figure 9, for example, may seem like a grotesque exaggeration, but unfortunately it closely resembles an actual product of current sand-blast design.

There are too many excellent fields to be explored with the process for us to confine our efforts solely to effusive line ornament. There are in all good textbooks on ornament too many excellent themes for geometrical and approved motifs for us to trifle with silly "creations" in scrolls; fussy twists and turns

and what nots. If we allow ourselves to run riot with this great labour saving device, we will hopelessly cheapen our art and bring on a reaction against sand-work which would be, to say the least, very unfortunate. Let us rather proceed slowly to develop truly beautiful ornamental motifs for the process, directing our experiments to perfect the machine as means to an end rather than an end in itself. Let us see how much we can use it to advantage in roughing-out genuine hand carving; in producing beautiful surfaces and innumerable other avenues toward expression more resourceful than cheap fancy lines and grooves. Already numerous craftsmen have achieved notable results with the sand-blast in carving heretofore costly Celtic ornament, while in one shop a strikingly novel and beautiful composition was attained by spraying a rock-face monument with sand.

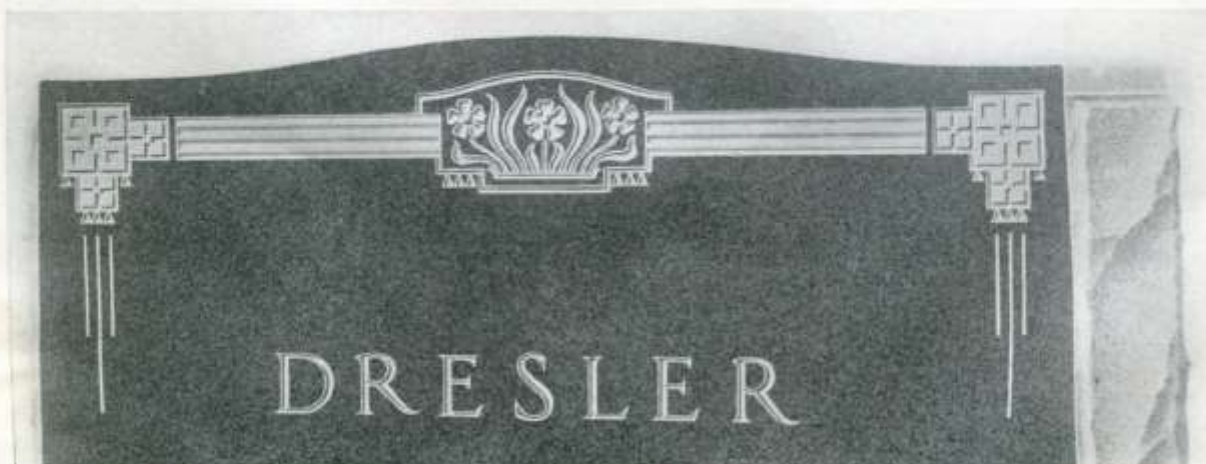


FIG. 4. DECORATION ON POLISHED DIE, DESIGNED FOR SAND BLAST EXECUTION  
By Phillips & Slack, Northfield, Va.

(photo captions) "Fig. 3. Decoration designed for sand carving on hammered die." & "Fig. 4. Decoration on polished die, designed for sand blast execution by Phillips & Stack, Northfield, Virginia."