

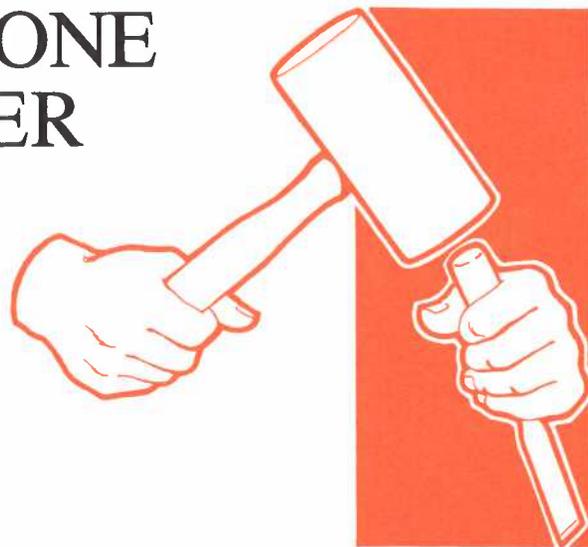
BE A STONE CARVER

For thousands of years the people of Vermont — first native Americans and then European settlers — have made useful objects of stone. They made tools and weapons. As farmers cleared the land, they built stone walls. Later they made gravestones, millstones, roofs, and roads. For the last hundred years or more, Vermont's artists have made stone statues.

Shaping the stone into carved objects is hard work and takes practice. The hardest stone to carve is granite. Marble, which is softer, is easier to sculpt. The easiest stone to carve is the softest, soapstone. A block of plaster is a good substitute for soapstone and will give you a chance to try your hand at carving. Here's how:

YOU WILL NEED:

Small box of plaster of Paris
Plastic pail or bowl
Large spoon or stick
Empty milk cartons
Newspapers
Paring knife or small chisel
Large nail
Small mallet or hammer
Pencil



HERE'S WHAT TO DO:

1. Put powdered plaster of Paris in the bowl and carefully stir in enough water to form a stiff paste.
2. Pour mixture into milk cartons and allow to dry for thirty minutes or more.
3. Clean pail and spoon outdoors, *not* in the sink, since plaster will clog the drain.
4. When plaster is set, it will feel cool. Then tear away the paper carton.
5. Use a soft pencil to sketch the outline of what you plan to carve onto the surface of the plaster. Spread newspapers to catch the chips when they fly.
6. "Rough out" the block using chisel and hammer. Remove only small amounts at a time. Sculptors say, "You can take it off, but you can't put it back on!" Then carefully carve the shape you want. For safety, aim the blade of the knife or chisel away from — not toward — yourself. Scratch on fine details with the nail.
7. Place a soft cloth or block of wood under your carving to protect furniture, and invite your friends in for a look.