

Forged Christmas Ornaments

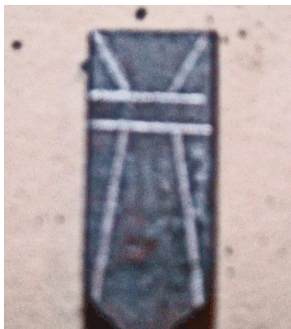
These really are “forged” in the sense of copied. Bill Clemens published how to forge angel and Christmas tree hooks in the Pittsburgh Area Artist-Blacksmith Association back in their December 2011 newsletter. I was looking for an idea for a quick project that I could hand out at Christmas. I used his design and just omitted the hooks and drilled a small hole for the wire hanger.



The material is 1/4 x 1 inch flat bar. I usually start by cutting it to somewhere between 18 and 24 inches. I cut several depending on the number of ornaments I'm making. At 2 inches from the end I fuller the bar to about 1/4 inch. While that end is cooling I work a couple more bars. When the hot end is cool or just black hot I quench it. I do not want to harden the steel as I'll be cold cutting it later.



The next step is to lay it out. I draw a line at 1/2 inch and another 1/4 of an inch (3/4 inch from the top) below it.



Then draw lines from the top corner to the first line at about 45 degrees. Then draw from about the same distance from the side on the second line to the bottom (top of the fullered space).



Then I clamp the piece to my table and use a cold chisel to mark the lines. I'm not great with a chisel so I mark them pretty deep cold. I use a soft hammer on the chisel to avoid chipping the tool.



Since I have enough trouble holding the piece, the chisel, the hammer I don't have a picture of me cutting the piece, but here is the angel after the initial cutting. It is all cut from one side. So when I get close to finished cutting, I clean up the cuts. You can use a sharper chisel, or let it cool and use a hacksaw and file.



Then you mark where you want to trim the "head" by knocking the corners off. Once the head is trimmed you just hammer the angel into a pleasing shape. If you want it to become a hook cut the bar 3 inches from the fullered space. Then forge that into a hook. For an ornament after you have a shape you like you can drill a small hole near the top for the wire hanger. If you want you can use a chisel to add a halo.



Using the straight peen you can spread the wings anyway you want. After I drilled the hole for the hanger I used a chisel to make a halo. On this one I used a chisel to undercut the groove and hammered a piece of wire in, to give the halo a "golden" color.