

Carving Native American Faces



by Russell Scott

Step-by-step instructions for carving in basswood and cottonwood bark. Including patterns and gallery.

Native American Faces

Native American Man and Woman Subjects

Written by Russell Scott
Photography by Russell Scott

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the following key individuals who have contributed to making this book possible. The greatest consideration and thanks is to my wife Lynne for her invaluable assistance in the writing and editing process while constructing this book. I thank Diane Nelson for advice regarding the publishing process to bring this book to print. Also, I would like to thank all of the talented wood carvers and wood sculptors who had a hand in helping me learn the art of wood carving that I certainly would not have achieved by myself. Learning woodcarving and developing carving techniques is an ongoing process and I continue to learn by taking classes from other woodcarvers and artists, from observing, studying and practicing the art.

- Russell Scott

Visit my web site at:

ScottCarvings.com

Pinterest.com/rscott56

YouTube.com/ScottCarvings

Check out my rough-outs at: www.scottcarvings.com/scott-carvings-rough-outs

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Introduction

I create family heirlooms that descendants will be arguing over for generations.

I am Russell Scott, a wood carving artist from Saint Paul, Minnesota. I have a passion for wood carving and a desire to bring out the beauty that lies in each piece of wood. I have been carving since 1999. I inherited my interest in wood working from my father, Bob, who spent many hours designing and building wooden model airplanes from scratch and from my ancestors who were involved in the logging industry in northern Wisconsin. I also have artistic interests in drawing, photography and fly tying.

I carve mainly in basswood, butternut, Honduras mahogany, walnut, pine, and cedar. I carve cottonwood bark into wood spirits, Santas, Native Americans and NOME houses.

I focus mainly on carving human figures, including holiday figures, cowboys and females. My carvings have received awards at carving shows, county and state fairs, and national carving contests. I am a member of several professional carving organizations, local and national.

I teach woodcarving classes and as a result have developed instructional DVDs, YouTube videos, books and rough outs.

I have showcased some of my work and invite you to visit my web site at **www.ScottCarvings.com**

Philosophy about woodcarving

My passion for woodcarving is all about the search for the mystery of what can be found in a piece of wood. What's really possible and what is worth the search? There is a genuine treasure that lies deep in the wood. I like to dive as deep as I can to reveal that precious treasure.

Each one-of-a-kind carving is a reflection of the eternal spirit that lies in the wood. I use chisels and knives to bring out the wood's own quiet personality. Woodcarving is a slow, tough process; each carved piece presents unique challenges. I can't make multiple prints or cast additional pieces to recreate the uniqueness of an original woodcarving.

Each carving is done entirely by hand, carved free form from a model that exists only in the mind of the creator. After carving each character, I paint it with colors that enhance the image my tools have begun.

Scott Carvings

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Native American Woodcarvings

Native Americans are noble people who have played a significant role in the history of United State and in our society. They have unique facial structures and expressions. Their faces tell a story that is fascinating. The angles of their cheek bones and their strong jaw lines are excellent subjects for carving in wood.

My initial interest in Native Americans resulted after meeting a man wearing a full headdress. He may have been there for the sake of tourists but as a youth I was fascinated and believed him to be a real chief.

While learning to carve Native Americans carvings I used mainly basswood. I studied the history of Native Americans in Minnesota and the surrounding states and tried to put the spirit of those who have passed before us. I hoped to show the beauty and dignity of Native American people. I became interested in trying my skills using cottonwood bark found in my area.

Cottonwood trees grow in the St. Croix River valley of Minnesota near Pikes Island. Many of these old trees have trunks that grow to approximately five feet in diameter and produce bark thick enough to carve excellent Native Americans faces. Some of these trees are more than 150 years old and have many rings as a testimony to the timeline of our own American history. These trees were alive and growing not far from the very site where many Dakota (Sioux) were held prisoner after the Minnesota Indian uprising of 1862. Many Native Americans died in that prison on Pikes Island while others suffered to near starvation. This is a sad part of our American history that should never have happened and cannot be forgotten.

Every carving seems to tell its own story, a way to show off the life of the wood. This book is used to demonstrate my method of carving Native American faces in wood.

Other Wood Carving Instructional Books and Videos

Vintage Santa Claus - Carving Native American Faces

15 Woodcarving Patterns - Carving Women Caricatures

Videos

Each video was created over my shoulder giving you the impression that I am sitting next to you, teaching you how to wood carve. These wood carving videos are fast-paced to fit an entire session. You can stop at any time to work on your carving.

Old World Santa - Carving the Snowman

Carve the Santa Face - Carving the Walking Nome - Carving

Santa Carrying the Tree - Carving Saint Nicolas

Carving the Nome House Ornament - Young Witch

Carving Christmas Ornaments - Cottonwood Bark Carving

Carving the Laughing Pumpkin

Caving the Female Figure - Native American Face in Bark

Carving the Snoring Moon - Carving the Surprised Bottle Rocket

Caving the Viking Bust - Carving the Abe Lincoln Bust

Absolute Beginning Wood Carving

Check out the ScottCarvings.com website for new videos and books.

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Wood Carving Safety

For Hand Carving...

- **Safety Glove** – Kevlar threaded gloves are useful when holding small wood carvings to help prevent cuts to the hands or fingers. Leather gloves are useful when using the knife, chisel or while handling power tools.
- **Leather Finger Tabs** – A thumb tab is worn on the hand holding the knife to help prevent cuts.
- **First Aid Kit** – To be used for minor injuries. Include bandages, gauze, and tweezers.
- **Work Aprons** – Heavy duty cloth is acceptable for carving operations and to protect the arms and legs during power and chain saw carving.
- **Vinyl Gloves** – For handling paint, oils, turpentine or mineral spirits. Latex gloves sometimes produce skin reactions.

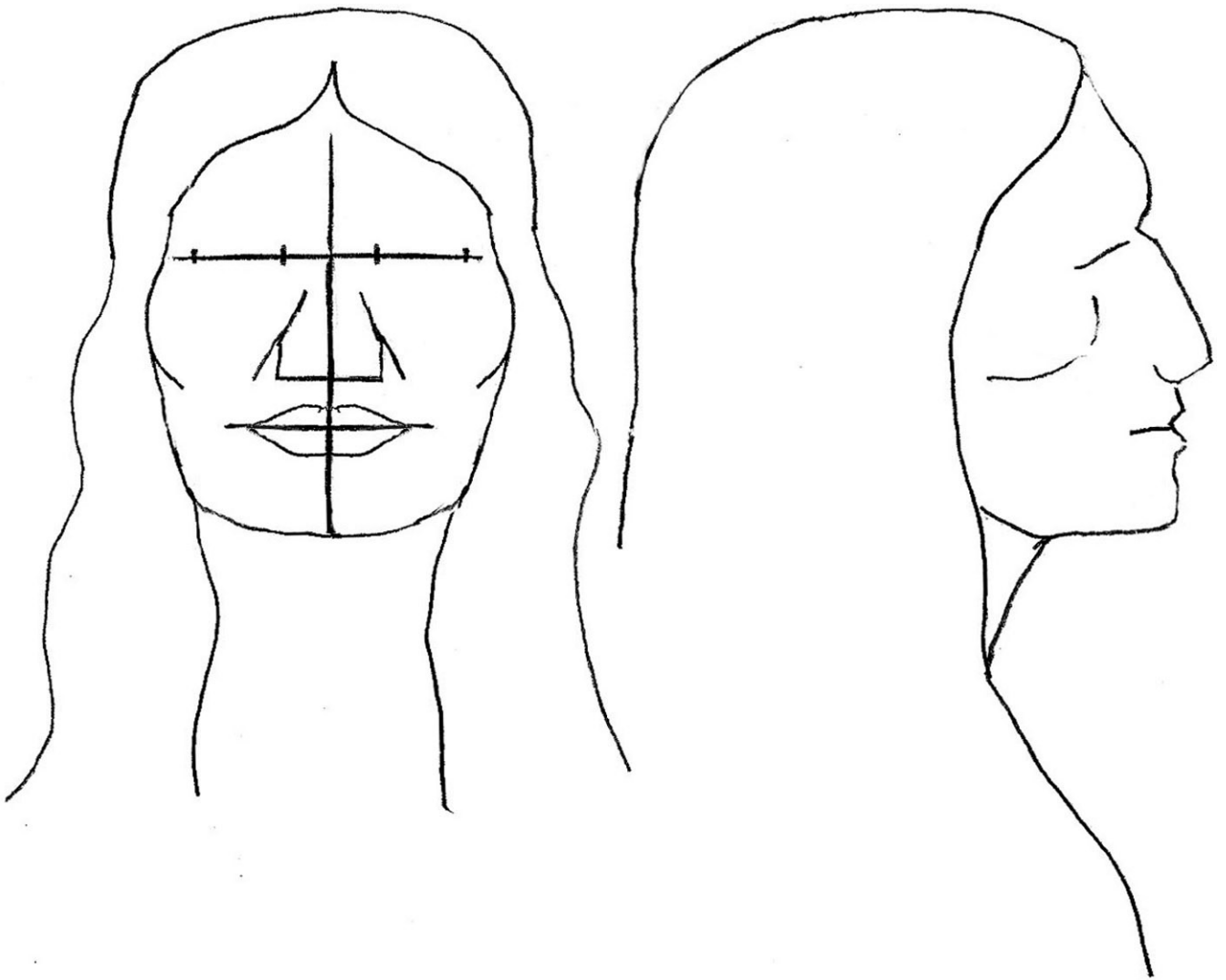
For Power Carving...

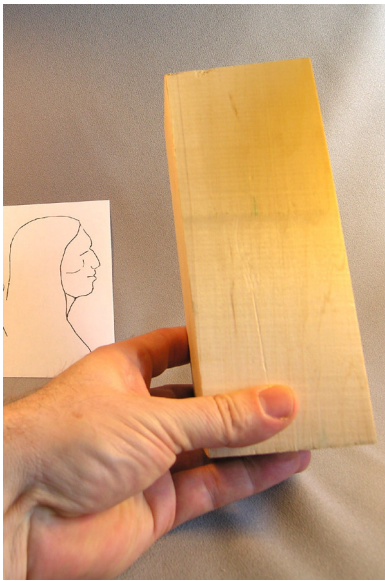
- **Eyewear** – Face shields are required for all grinding and power carving type operations. Safety glasses with side shields provide protection for the eyes but leave skin unprotected. Prescription glasses are not sufficient. Use safety goggles while handling liquids.
- **Respirator** – Used while sawing or power carving wood. Minimum requirement for particulate masks is the governmental standard, N95.
- **Ear Plugs or Muffs** – Extensive work with equipment producing noise levels above 85 dB can cause hearing loss.
- **Shoes** – Work shoes are advised when working with power equipment or sharp hand tools.
- **Room Ventilation** – Ventilation to 8-10 air changes per hour is desired. When locating these units consider work activities and location of HVAC ducts. Don't forget to periodically check, clean or replace filters.
- **Fire Extinguisher** – type A,B or A,B,C
- **Electrical Cords** – Always use cords with a grounded plug. Do not use cords that have been taped. Frayed cords should be replaced.
- **Safety Guards** – Make certain equipment safety guards are in place and securely attached.

Native American Man

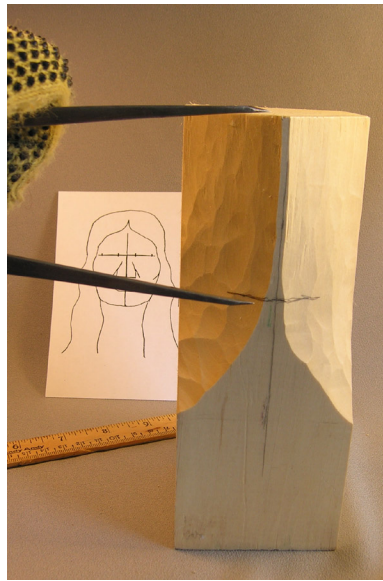


Native American Man Pattern





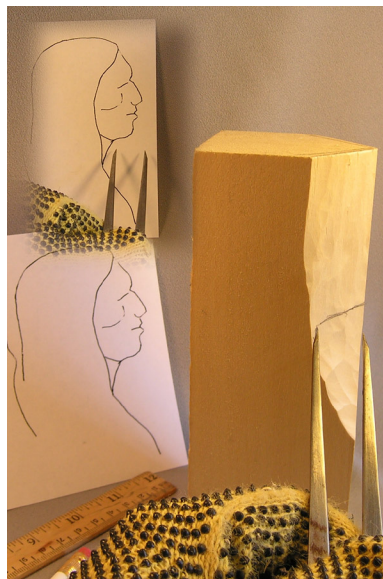
This project starts from scratch. Print the pattern so that the profile fits the block. If not, select a block of wood for this project. I choose a 3"X 3"X 8" piece.



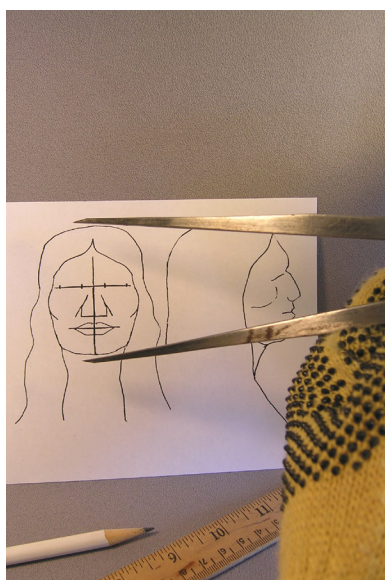
then mark where the chin should be on the wood.



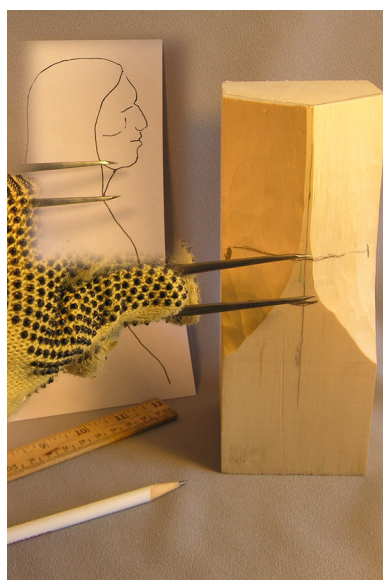
Draw a center line down the middle of the front. Then carve 90 degrees to that center line is marked for about 2/3 the block.



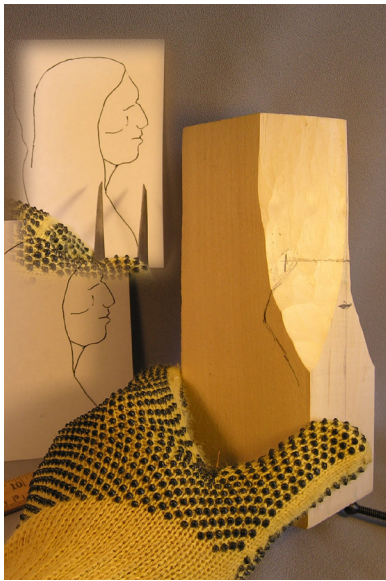
Measure the length of the chin and mark that on the block's profile.



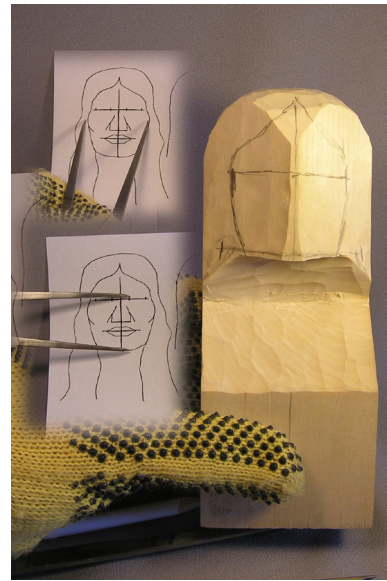
Measure the pattern from the top of the head to the chin.



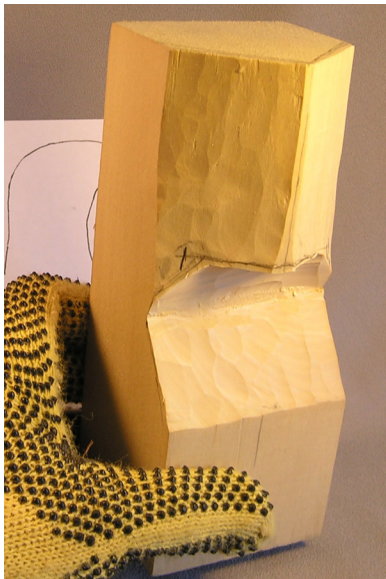
Measure the length of the neck and mark that on the block's profile.



Complete the measurements and markings as shown..



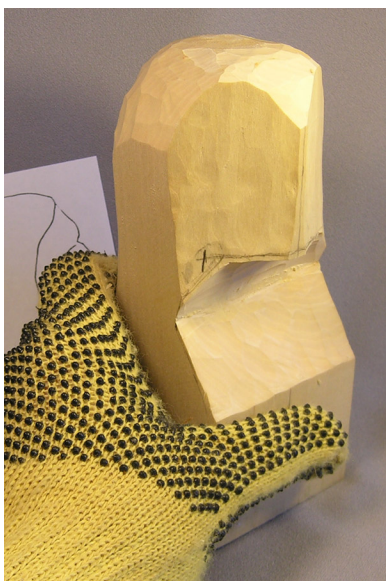
Make measurements and draw out the face.



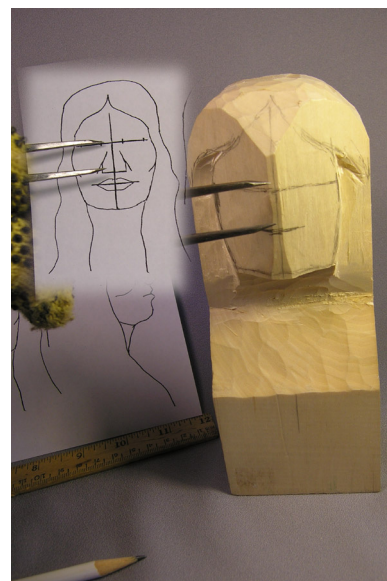
Block out the chin, neck and chest.



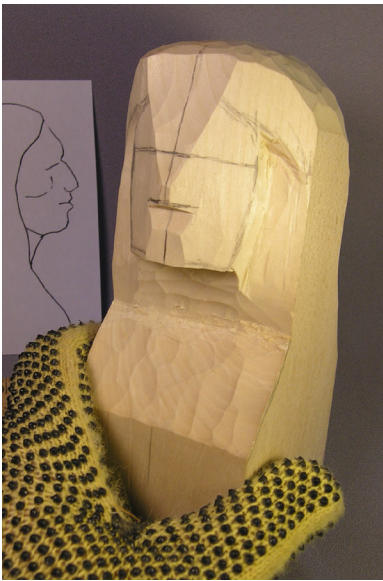
Block out the hair from the side of the face.



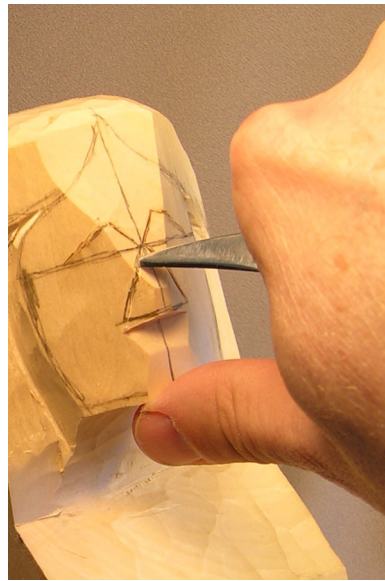
Round off the top of the head.



Measure the center between the top of the head and chin. Draw in the eye line. Measure and draw in the nose line.



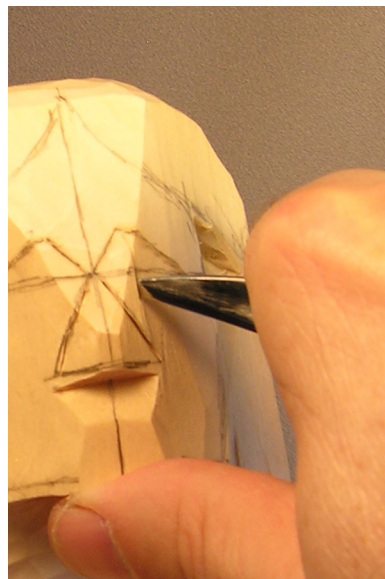
Make a stop cut at the nose. Carve back from the tip of the nose to the forehead about a 30 degree angel. Redraw the center and eye line.



Use the tip of the knife to cut at an angle on the nose.



Make diagonal lines for the nose and eyes.



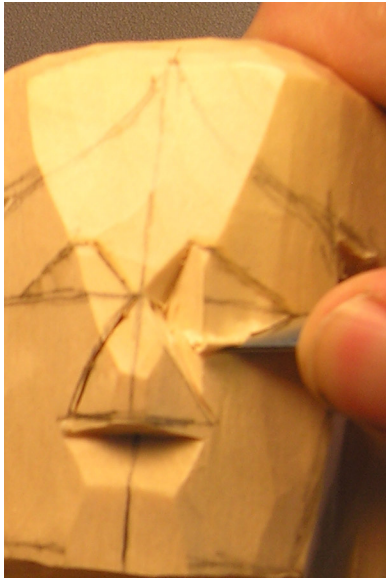
Use the tip of the knife to cut at an angle straight down from the top of the nose to the nostril. Carve lightly on the top of the eye, deeper where the eyeball is, then shallow again at the nostril to complete a chip cut.



Use the tip of the knife to cut at an angle on the two upper eye lines with the tip pointing towards the eyeball.



Chip is cut out as shown.



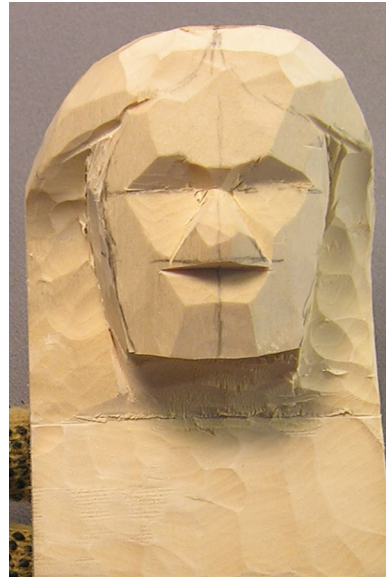
From the middle of the nose cut at an angle down towards the eye line. This should produce a second chip cut.



Cut out a chip at the bridge of the nose as shown.



Chip is cut out as shown.



Another angle.



Repeat steps 18 – 20 for the right eye.



Draw in cheek bones so they will not be accidentally cut while smoothing the face. Cut sides of the jaw as shown.



Mark off the connection of the chin and neck...



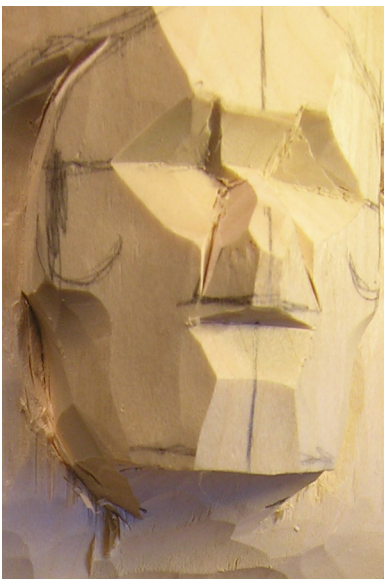
Draw in the cheek/mouth line up to the top of the nostril.



then round that area.



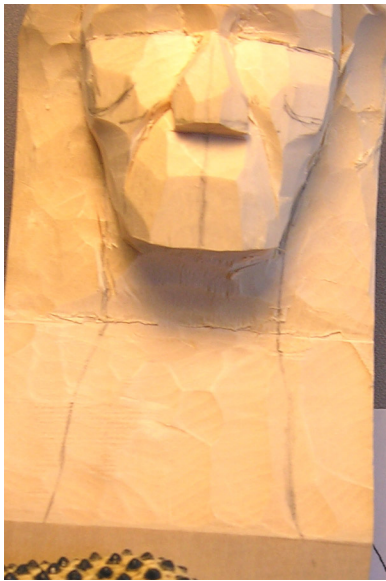
Draw the tip of your knife straight down on that line, then round the nostril.



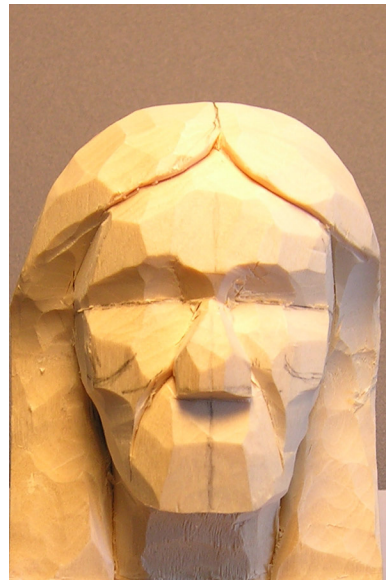
Carve a dent below the cheek bone, down the jaw, but leave the bottom jaw wide.



Round the top of the mouth leaving that line like a V cut and the nostril a chip cup.



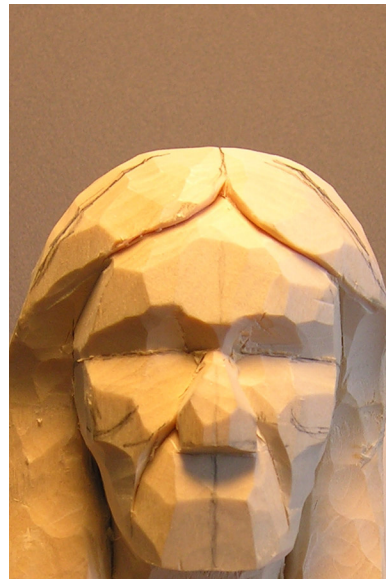
Draw lines that separate the hair from the neck/ chest...



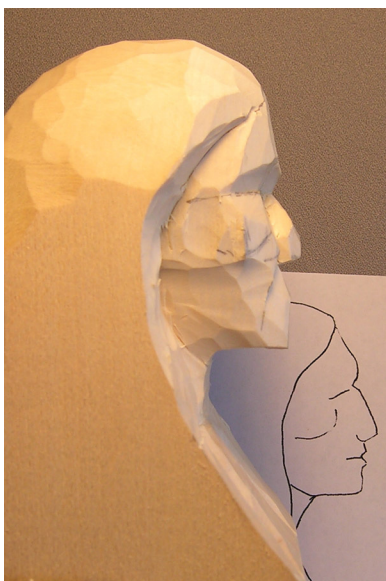
Hold the carving at a 45 degree angle and make 45 degree cuts coming towards the eye line (like step 19). Do this on both eyes. Then draw the hair line and use a V tool to cut the line out.



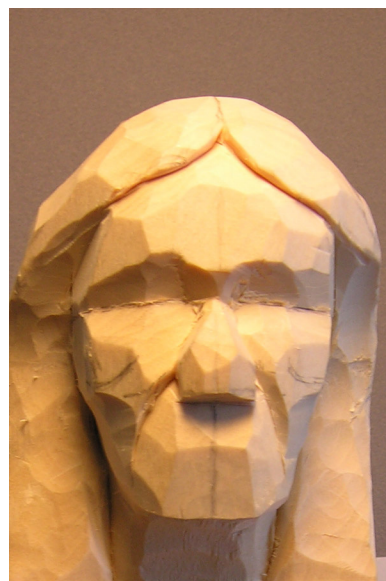
then use a V tool to carve those lines out.



Make lines on the tip sides of the head as shown.



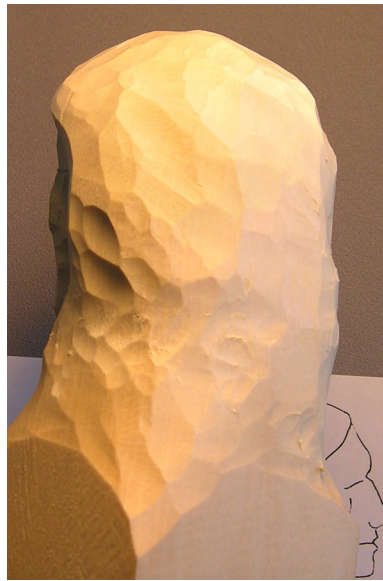
Check the profile and make adjustments.



then cut that portion out.



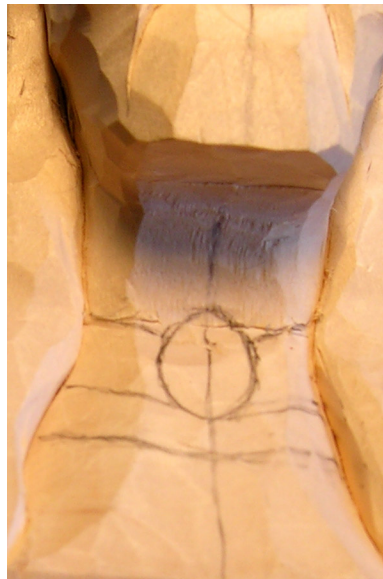
Make lines on the top sides of the hair as shown...



Round out the hair in back. Make the cuts wavy.



then cut that portion out.



Draw in desired neck ornaments at this time so that when the neck is carved there is enough wood for this.



Round out the hair in front. Make the cuts wavy.



Use a V tool to cut out the pencil marks.



Smooth the neck to the top of the neck ornament. This will bring the neck ornament forward.



Another view.



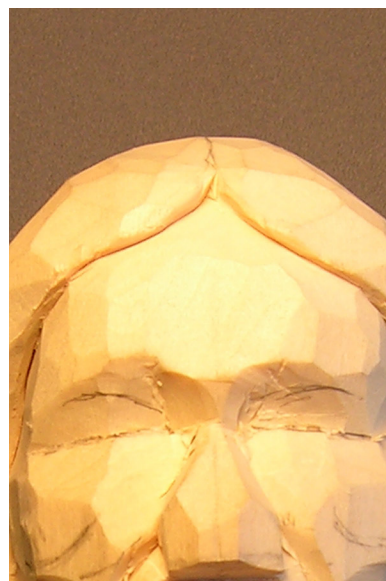
Draw two lines on the neck as show.



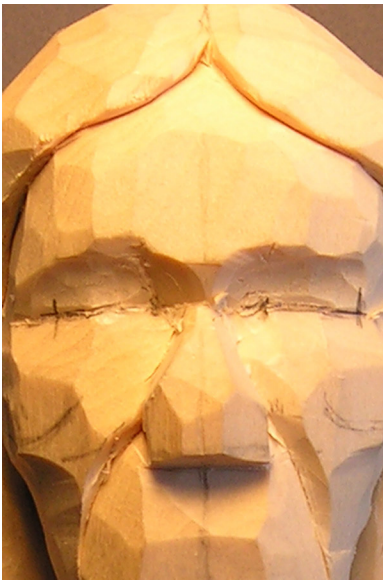
Round out the hair completely leaving no saw marks.



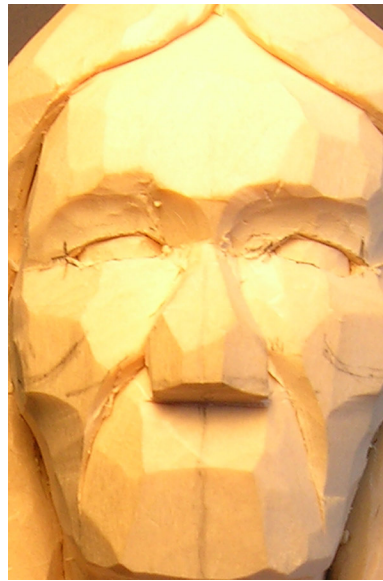
Carve those lines out with a #7 or #5 chisel.



Make lines on the upper sides of the eyes as shown. Use a small #9 chisel and carve out the pencil marks.



Measure out the eye width and distance between the two eyes according to the pattern.



Round the bottom of the eye with the knife carving the front of the eyeball down.



Draw the eye line as shown.



Another view.

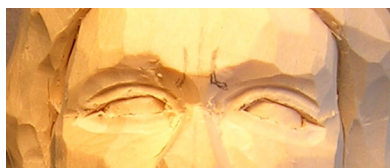


With the tip of the knife draw straight down on the eye line. Carve out the corner of the eyes like a chip. Draw the knife from the bottom to the top, rounding the eye.



Carve with a #9 chisel on the face below the eyeball to create a bottom eye lid. Use a V tool about the eye ball to create the upper lid. Make a chip cut on the outer lids.

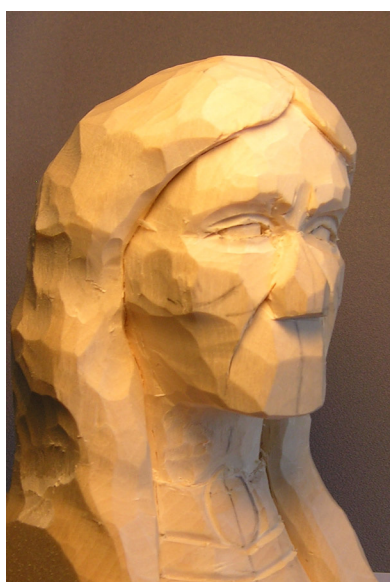




Draw in lines on the forehead for the brow. Carve with the tip of the knife straight down. Carve out the wood between the brows, and then round out the brow.



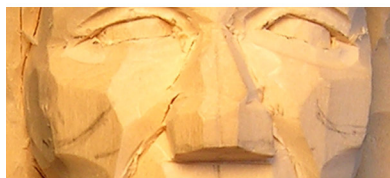
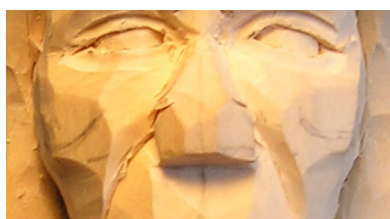
Use a small #9 chisel to create the nostril holes. Round out the nose as shown.



Round the forehead with the brows protruding out. Separate the hair from the face with the tip to the knife.



Pencil in the jaw line.



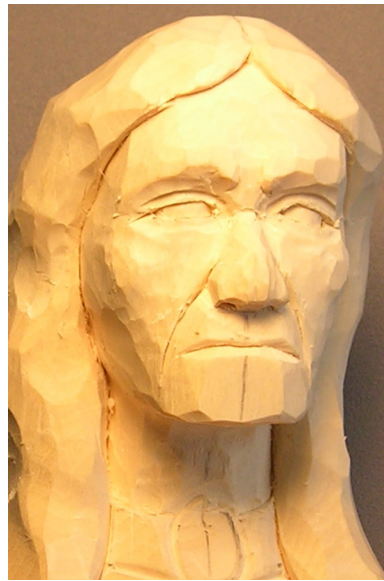
To round the nose, cut in the upper nostril. Then like a V, cut from the other angle. Smooth the middle bridge of the nose.



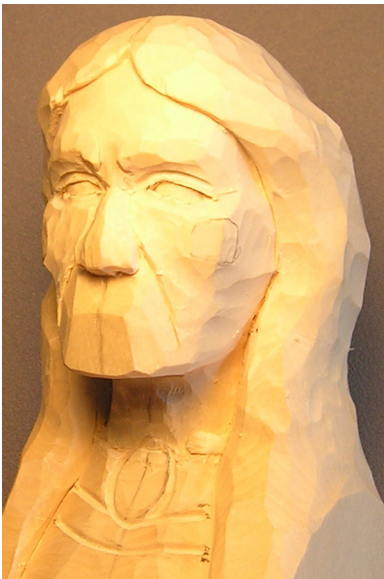
Cut jaw out as shown.



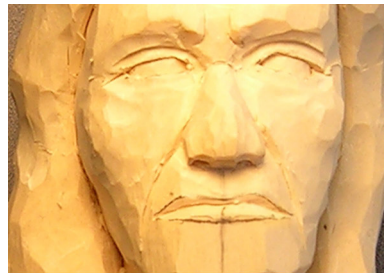
Draw lines
between nose and
cheek bone.



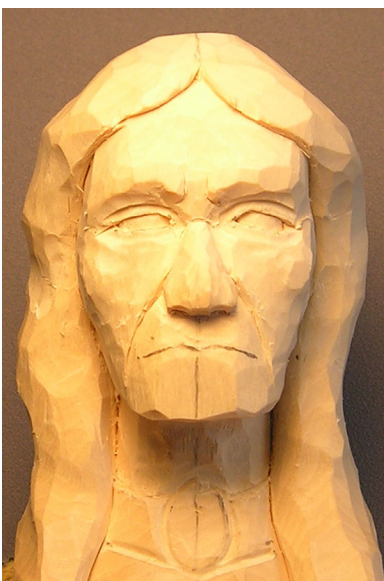
Use a V tool to cut
out the mouth line.



Use a #7 chisel
to scoop out the
lines.



Draw in where the
border of the lips
will be. Cut from
that line to the
mouth.

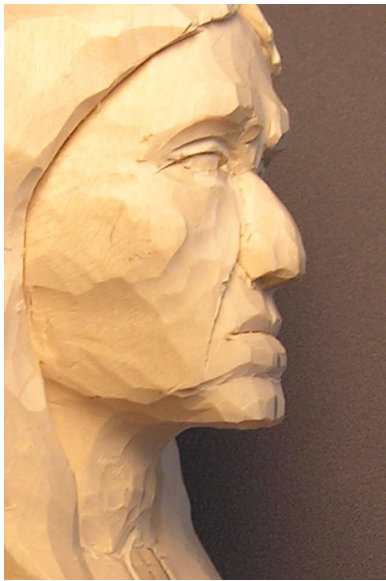


Measure where the
mouth line would
be according to
your pattern. Draw
the mouth line as
shown.



Draw the chin
line below the
bottom lip. That
line should be just
above the half
way point
between the
mouth and chin.
Use a small #9
chisel to remove
the chin line.

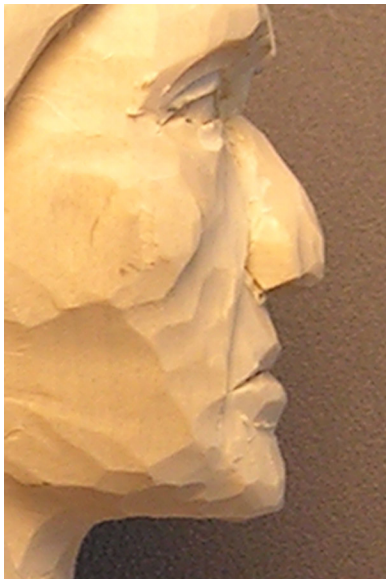




Round out the chin as shown.



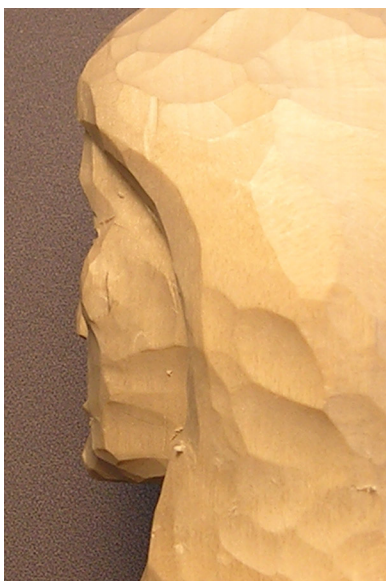
Shape the lips and chin as shown.



Shape the side of the lip as shown.



Make hair wave marks.



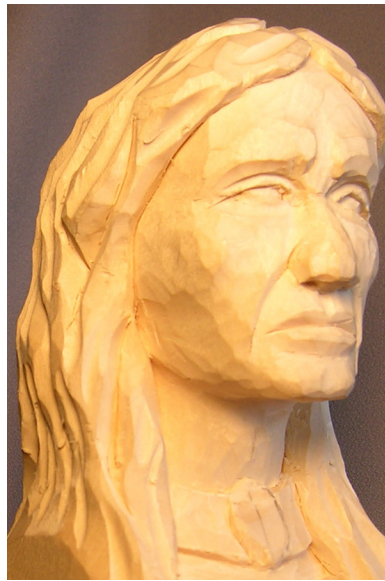
Back angle view for the lips, cheek bone and eye socket.



on both sides.



Use a large V tool to gouge where the pencil marks are drawn in the hair.



Use a V tool or small gouge to add refinement to the hair.



Use the tip of the knife to dig deep to create more realistic hair waves.



Use a V tool and knife to bring out the necklace. Bring the center piece out.



Shape the waves as separate segments.



Draw ornament lines as shown.



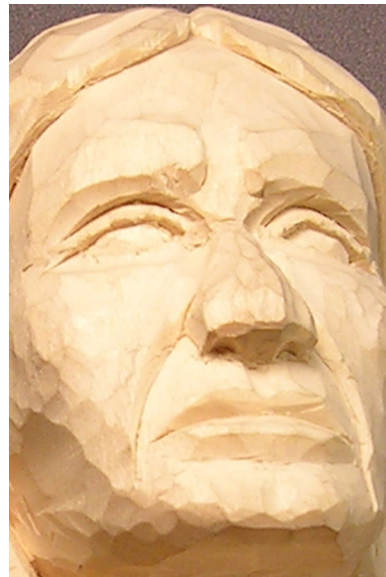
Use a V tool to gouge pencil lines. Use the tip of the knife and/or flat chisels for detail. The center piece should be concave to the two beads.



Use the tip of the knife to gouge above the eye lid.



Pencil in lines in the chest plate as shown. Use a V tool to gouge pencil lines.



This brings the eye lid out.



Use the tip of the knife and/or flat chisels for detail.



The eye ball could be painted in or carved. Pencil in a dot for the pupil. With the tip of the knife, cut around the pupil and $\frac{1}{4}$ " on the top away from the eyeball. Carve the iris at a 45 degree angle. Remove the pencil mark of the pupil.

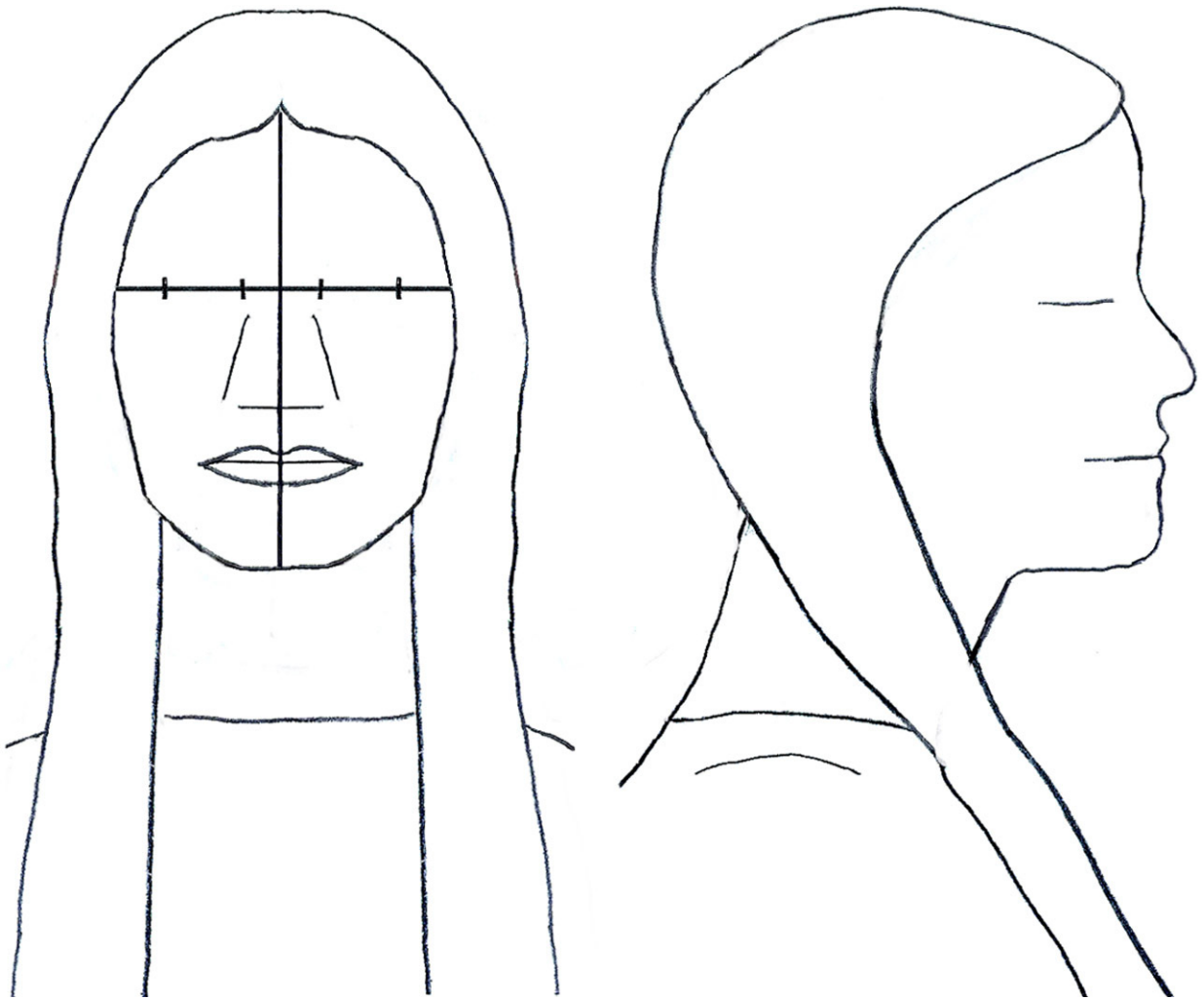


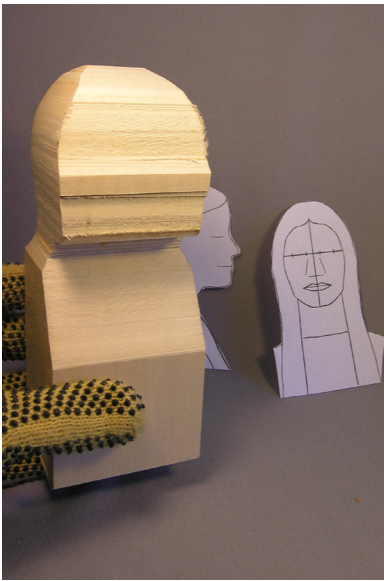


Native American Woman

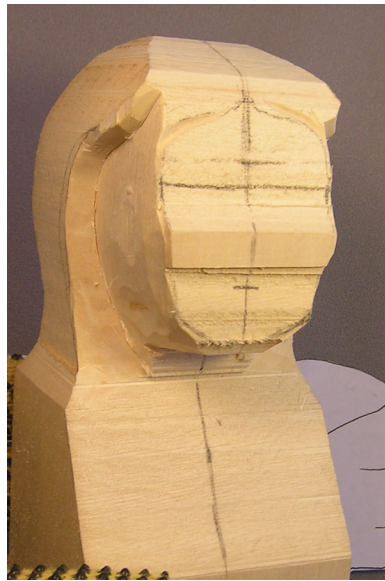


Native American Woman Pattern

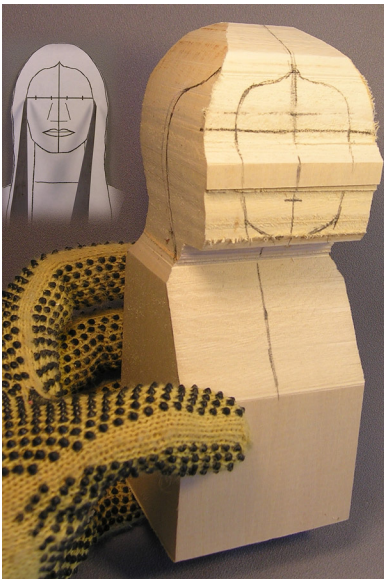




This project starts with a cutout from the pattern shown.



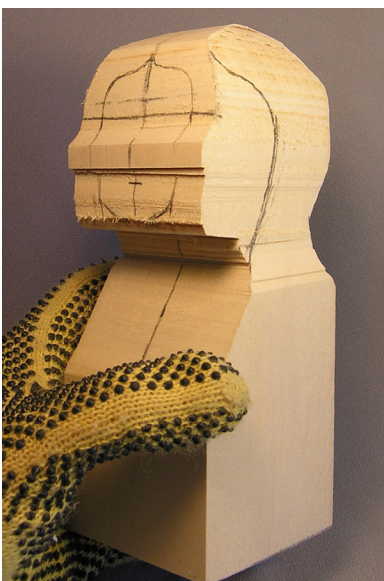
Block out.



Draw a center line down the middle of the front. Measure the face height, width and depth.



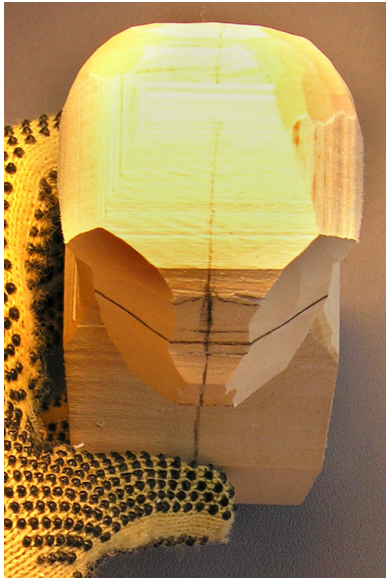
Round off the top of the head.



Another view.



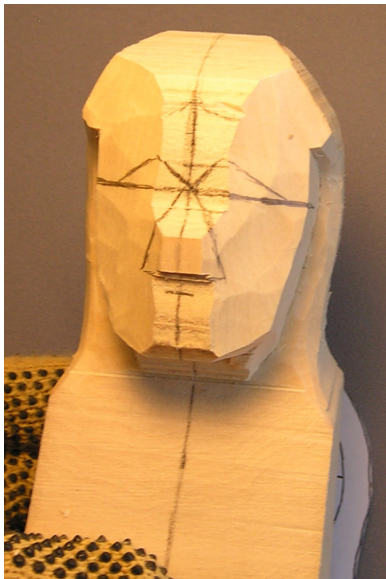
Measure the center between the top of the head and chin. Draw in the eye line. Measure and draw in the nose line.



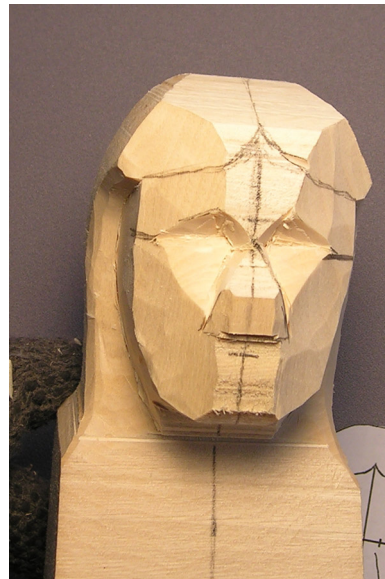
Draw a center line down the middle of the front. Then carve 45 degrees from that center as shown.



From the middle of the nose cut at an angle down towards the eye line. This should produce a second chip cut.



Make diagonal lines for the nose and eyes.



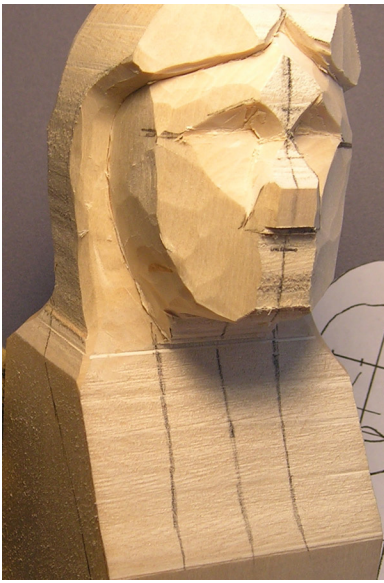
Repeat steps 9 -10 for the right eye.



Create the eye socket using steps 15 – 17 from the Native American Man instructions in the first part of this book



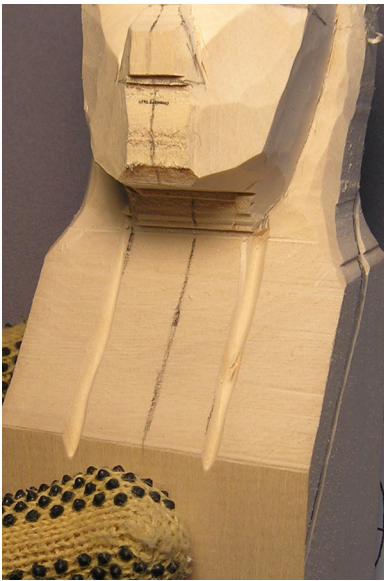
Then draw the hair line.



Use a V tool or knife to cut the line out.



Draw in desired neck ornaments at this time so that when the neck is carved there is enough wood for this.



Draw lines that separate the hair from the neck/chest.



Use a V tool to cut out the pencil marks.



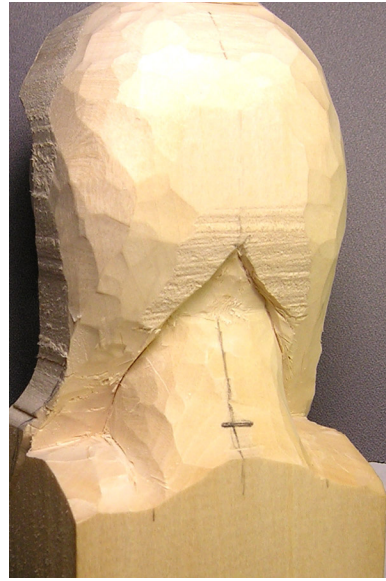
then use a V tool to carve those lines out.



Smooth the neck to the top of the neck ornament. This will bring the neck ornament forward.



Draw in the shoulder and hair line as shown.



Carve out the back hair line and round the neck.



Block out the shoulder and neck.



Round out the hair from the sides.



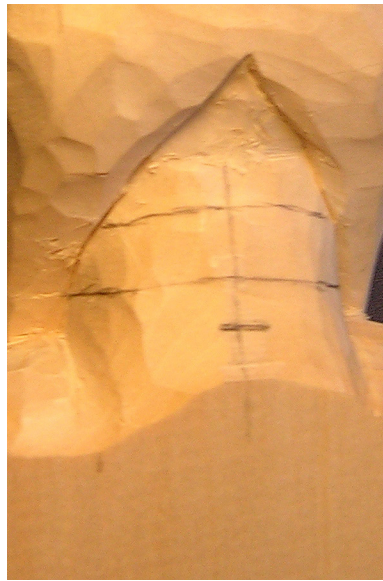
Draw in the neck and hair line as shown.



Draw the pigtail lines.



Block out the
pigtails from the
shoulder.



Draw in the
necklace for the
back of the neck.



Do this on both
sides.



Carve out the
necklace using V
tool and knife.

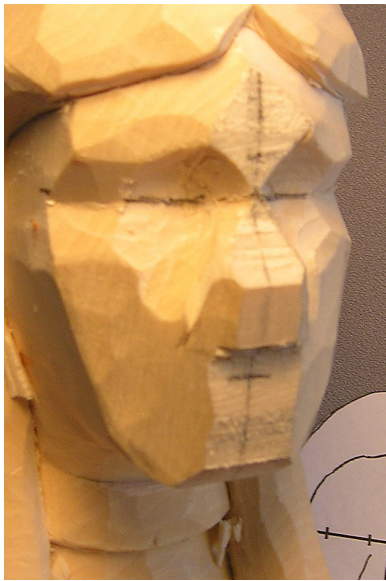


Carve out the
necklace from the
neck.



Pencil in the neck
and clothing line.
Use a V tool to
remove the pencil
line, then smooth
the neck.

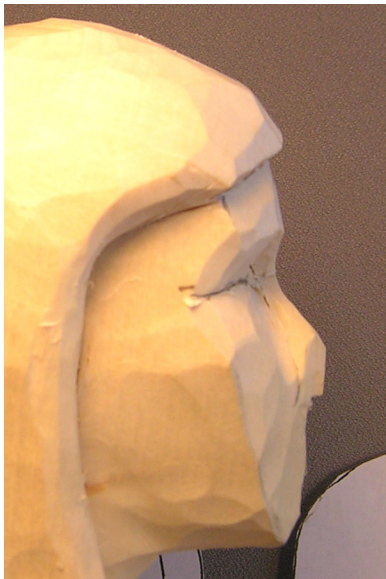




Hold the carving at a 45 degree angle and make 45 degree cuts coming towards the eye line. Do this on both eyes. Then draw the hair line and use a V tool to cut the line out.



Smooth the middle bridge of the nose.



Side view for the eye socket. Use a knife to round the nose up to the forehead. This area should be smooth with no stop cuts like the Native American Man.



Use a small #9 chisel to create the nostril holes. Round out the nose as shown.



Pencil in the nostrils of the nose. Draw in the cheek/mouth line up to the top of the nostril. Round the top of the mouth, but not deep.



Remove all saw marks from the mouth. Measure the mouth line using the pattern to determine where the mouth should be. Draw the mouth line as shown.



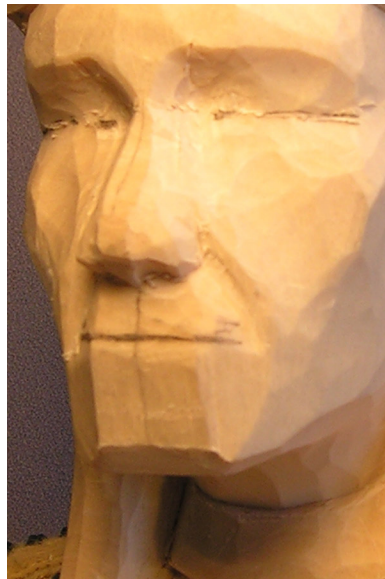
Cut the sides of the jaw as shown.



Use a #7 chisel to scoop out lines.



Pencil in the jaw line. Cut jaw out as shown.



Here is the face, so far, at this angle. Make adjustments as needed.



Draw lines between nose and cheek bone.



Measure out the eye width and distance between the two eyes according to the pattern.



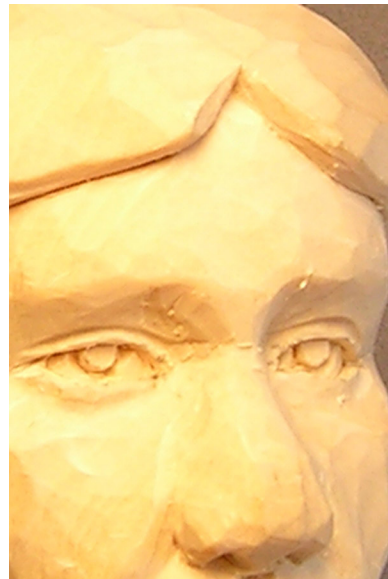
Draw the eye line as shown. With the tip of the knife carve straight down on the eye line. Carve out the corner of the eyes like a chip. Carve from the bottom to the top, rounding the eye.



The eyeball could be painted in or carved. Pencil in a dot for the pupil. With the tip of the knife, cut around the pupil and 1/4" on the top away from the eyeball. Carve the iris at a 45 degree angle. Remove the pencil mark of the pupil.



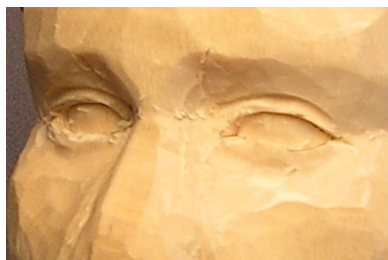
Round the bottom of the eye with the knife carving the front of the eyeball down. Clean off pencil marks.



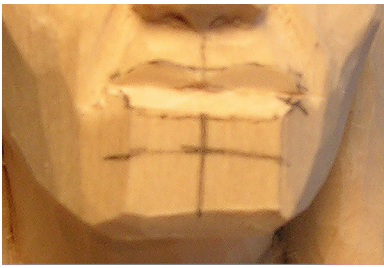
Round the forehead making the eyebrow area come out.



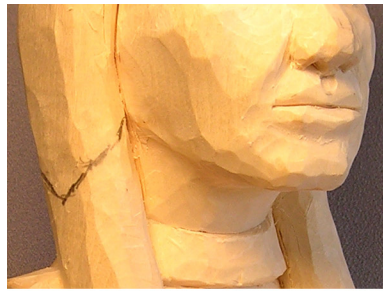
Draw a #9 chisel on the face below the eyeball to create a bottom eye lid. Draw a V tool about the eye ball to create the upper lid. Make a chip cut on the outer lids.



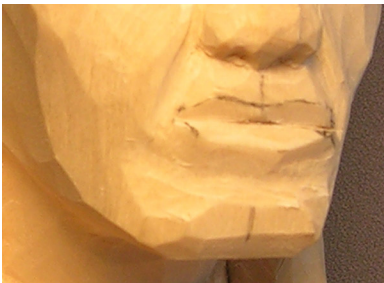
Use a V tool to cut out the mouth line. Draw in where the border of the lips will be. Cut from that line to the mouth.



Draw the chin line below the bottom lip. That line should be just above the half way point between the mouth and chin. Use a small #9 chisel to remove the chin line.



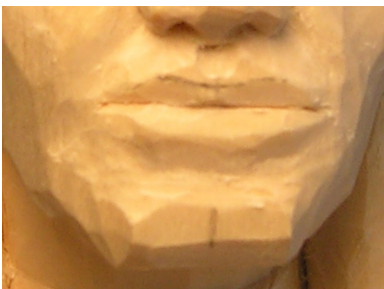
Pencil in the line where the braid will start. Use a V tool to make a stop cut removing the pencil mark.



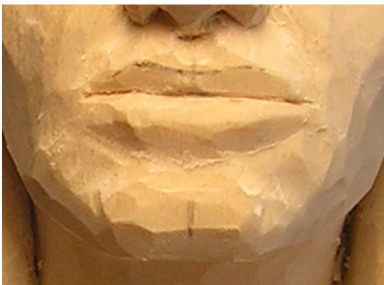
Round out the chin as shown. Shape the sides of the lips as shown.



Pencil in a center line down the braids. Create braid patterns as shown.



Different angles for lips and chin.



Use a V tool to create stop cuts for each braid strand.



Use the tip of a knife to round out each braid strand.



Use a large V tool to gouge where the pencil marks are drawn.



Make hair wave marks...



Use the tip of the knife to dig deep to create more realistic hair waves. Shape the waves as separate segments.



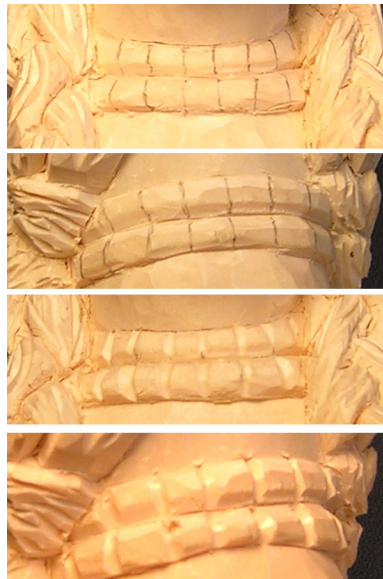
on both sides.



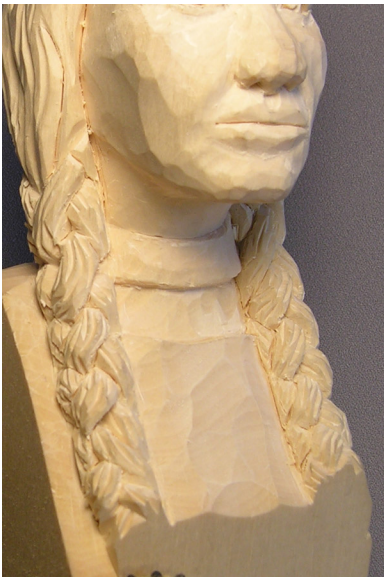
Use a V tool or small gouge to add refinement to the hair.



Back view.



Pencil in separation lines for each bead. Use a V tool to gouge a stop cut long the pencil line. Use the tip of a knife to round out each bead.



Use a small V tool to carve in the hair line.



Pencil in the decoration as shown. Use a V tool to remove the pencil lines.



Pencil in a center line around the neck bracelet. Use a V tool to gouge a stop cut long the pencil line.



Pencil in the decoration as shown. Use a V tool to remove the pencil lines.

Native American Woman Finished





This project starts from scratch. Print the pattern so that the profile fits the bark.



Draw a center line down the middle of the front.



Strip the top of the bark only where the head and chest would be. Leave outer layer of the bark about and below to give a rustic flavor. I use an old knife to strip off the outer bark so I don't damage my good carving knives.



Then carve 90 degrees to that center line.



Measure the wide of the bark.



Make facial measurements.



Draw the face on the bark to see that this pattern will fit the bark.



V tool the penciled marks for stop cuts. Use the tip of the knife to shape feather, neck ornament and braid.



Repeat steps 8 – 34 and 61 – 64 from the step by step guide in the Native American Man section of this book. Pencil in a feather on right, hair braid on left and neck ornament.



Use a small V tool to make hair. For eyes, nose and mouth use steps 48 – 70 in the Native American Man section of this book.



Another angle.



Select colored shoe creams, but acrylics will also work.



Apply white on the feather.



Short tipped horse hair brushes work the best.



Apply yellow on the clothing.



Apply natural on the base of bark.



Mix different variety of browns with the use of brown, white and yellow. Apply these variety colors to the necklace and the braid dressing.



Apply medium brown on the face and neck.



Apply red above the eye lid. The red should not be overpowering on top of the medium brown.



Apply black to the hair.



After the shoe creams are applied, wait 10 minutes, then buff.



Apply red to the lips and cheeks. The red should not be overpowering on top of the medium brown.



Paint the eyes with acrylics, first the white eye ball, then the brown iris ending with the black pupil.

Native American with Blanket





Native American Woman #2





Native American in Pig Tails





Native American Woman #3





Cottonwood Bark



Cottonwood Bark



Examples of my first Native American Carvings





Carving Native American Faces



***Written and Photographed by Russell Scott
ScottCarvings.com***

Russell Scott is an award winning carver with over 15 years of carving experience. He enjoys carving Native American figures. These patterns will add to your carving collection.

***Create heirlooms that family members
will argue over for generations.***

