

# Little Pilgrim

With a splash of paint and just a few tools, you can add this classic character to your harvest collection

By Alex Joiner

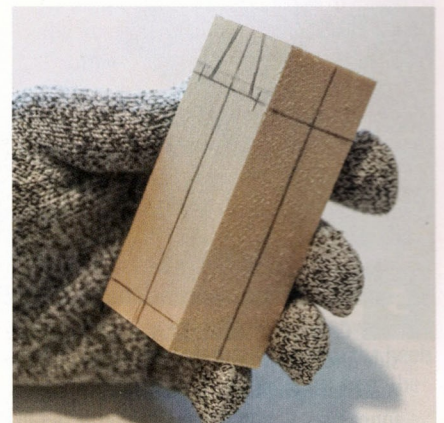


For an extra challenge, give the pilgrim open eyes.

**T**hanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays. You get to stuff yourself with food and spend time with family—what's not to love? This year, I designed a little caricature to honor a classic fixture of the season. With small dimensions and minimal painted details, this pilgrim is sure to warm the hearts of your friends and family the next time you gather under one roof.

## Getting Started

Strop your tools so they're razor sharp. With a pencil, draw a centerline on the blank from top to bottom on all four sides. Next, draw a horizontal line  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (1.9cm) down from the top all the way around. On the front of the blank, draw another horizontal line  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3cm) up from the bottom. Make a mark  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) in on both sides of the top horizontal line and draw the basic landmarks for the hat.



## CARVING THE HAT & HEAD



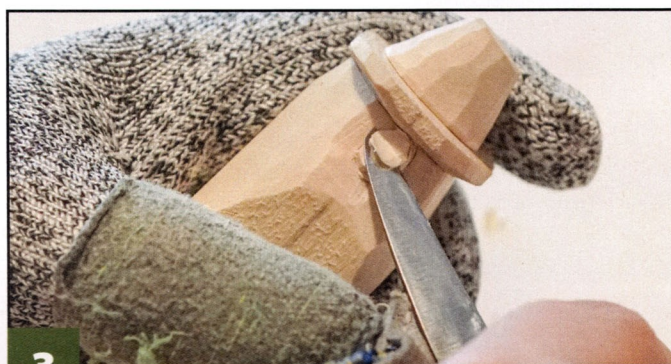
1

**Rough out the hat.** Remove all four corners on the hat with a rough out knife, starting  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) down from the top and slicing upward. Next, make a stop cut all the way around the blank at the  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (1.9cm) line. Then carve down to that line at an angle all the way around. Carving toward the top, taper the hat into a cone-like shape, leaving some flat space at the very top.



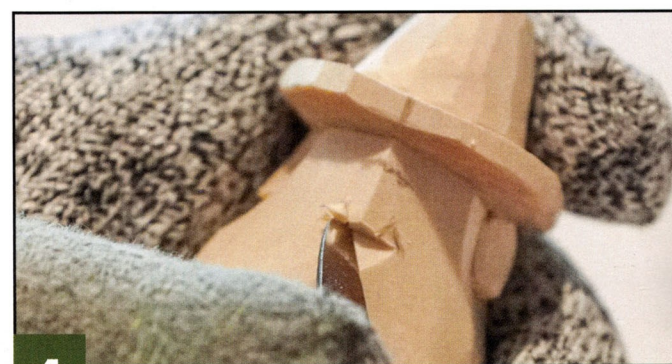
2

**Shape the head and hat brim.** Draw a horizontal line  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) down from the  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (1.9cm) line where the hat starts; this marks the hat brim. Push your knife straight in to make a stop cut along this line, and then cut up to the line all the way around. On the front of the blank, starting  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (1.9cm) down from the hat brim, round this area until you reach the centerlines on the front and sides. On the back, carve up to the hat brim from  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (1.9cm) down, but don't round this area yet. Taper the top of the head into the hat on all sides so the hat brim sticks out.



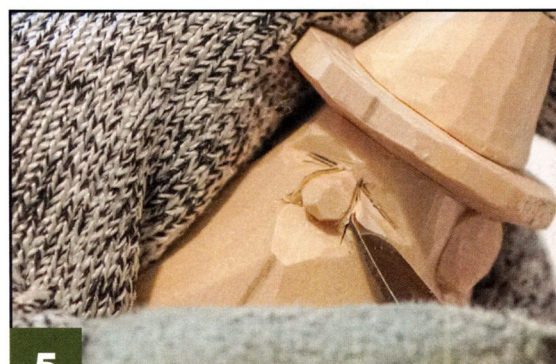
3

**Carve the ears.** On the centerline for each side, draw an egg shape that extends  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3cm) down from the bottom of the hat brim and  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) in front of the centerline. Using a detail knife, follow these lines with one continuous stop cut. Relieve the area behind each ear using the rough out knife, to separate the ears from the head. The front of the ear should be flush with the face. Next, draw a triangle in the center of each ear and carefully push the tip of your knife in at an angle on all three sides to remove the chip.



4

**Shape the face.** Make two small horizontal lines with the pencil: one  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) down and one  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3cm) down from the bottom of the hat brim. At the  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3cm) mark, make a deep stop cut and carve up to it. Cut out a small triangle on both sides. Make a stop cut along the  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) mark and cut down into it at an angle from the forehead. Next, draw a diagonal line  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3cm) long on each side of the nose to mark the eyebrows. Follow the lines with stop cuts, and then carve up to the cuts to define the brows.



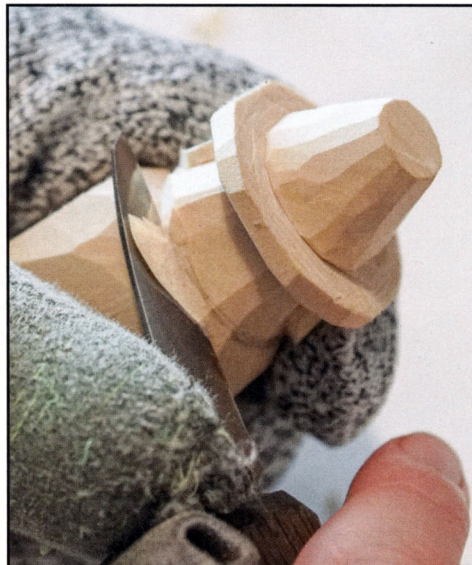
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**Carve the nose.** Draw a diagonal line on each side and follow the lines with stop cuts. Then slice away material along the sides of the nose, carving toward the inner eyes. Round the nose with the detail knife.



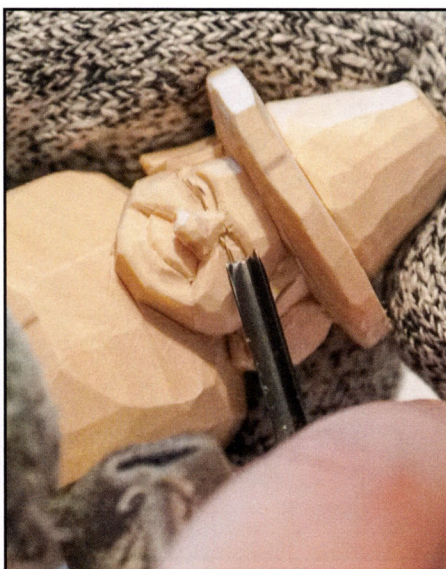
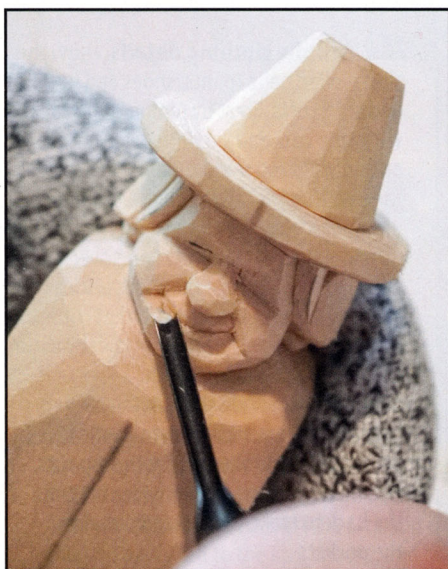
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**Add the sideburns and smile lines.** Draw lines on both sides of the face, and follow the lines with the detail knife. Cut up toward the smile lines from the upper lip area to define them. Then carve in toward the sideburn lines, slicing away material from bottom to top on the front of the face.



7

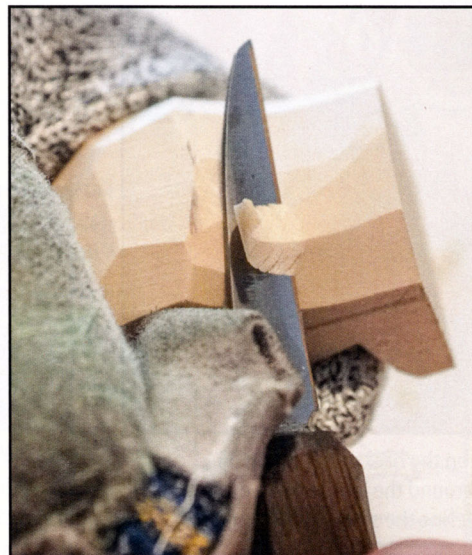
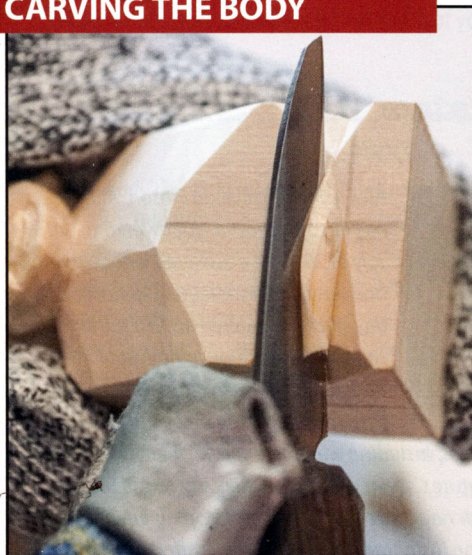
**Define the chin and the back of the head.** Draw curved lines for each, starting roughly at the bottom of the ears. The chin will be slightly pointier than the back of the head. Follow the chin line with a stop cut, and then carve up to that line with the rough out knife. Thin out the sides of the face and neck and continue to round the face. Flip the piece over and follow the line for the back of the head with a stop cut. Carve into that line from above and below to make a V-cut. Next, use the tip of the knife to cut out a triangle underneath each ear to separate the hair from the jawline.



8

**Add the lips and eyes.** Draw the lips, follow the line with a stop cut using the detail knife, and carve down toward the line at an angle. Round over the lower lip with the same tool. With a  $\frac{1}{16}$ " (2mm) micro U-gouge, carve a channel directly under the lower lip. Flip the gouge upside down and push it into the edges of the nose to create a stop cut for the nostrils; then separate the chips at the bottom with the detail knife. Draw the squinty eyes, follow the lines with the detail knife, and cut up to the line on each side to remove small slits. Draw the upper eyelid and define it with a  $\frac{1}{16}$ " (2mm) micro V-tool. Then scoop out a channel from the top of the nose up to the hat brim using a  $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) micro U-gouge. Define the upper eyebrows with the  $\frac{1}{16}$ " (2mm) micro U-gouge.

## CARVING THE BODY



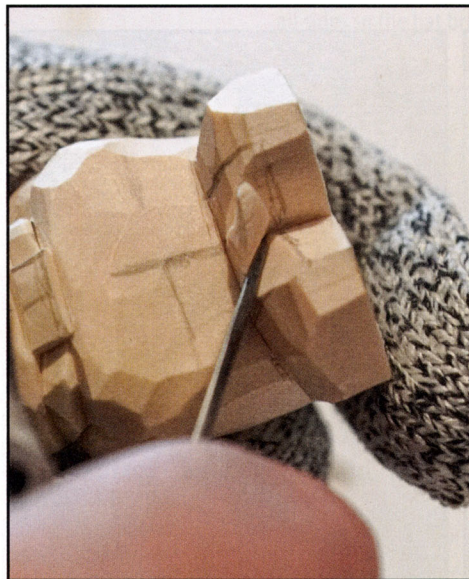
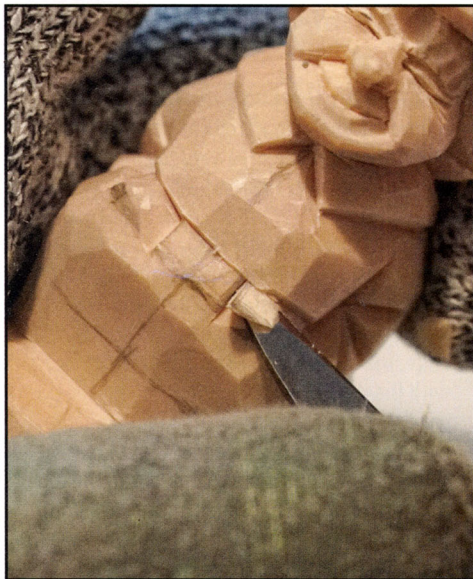
9

**Shape the torso.** With the rough out knife, make V-shaped cuts  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (1.9cm) up from the bottom, and begin rounding the front of the body into those cuts. Then carve up along the chest to the head to make the head stick out more. Carve the front corners only up to the side centerlines. On the back, carve down from the waist area to taper the legs slightly forward and round the bottom. Do not round into the sides yet. At  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3cm) up from the bottom, make stop cuts to define the tops of the shoes and carve into those cuts from above and below. Taper what will be the stockings into the shoes so the heels stick out. Round the side corners from the waist to the feet.



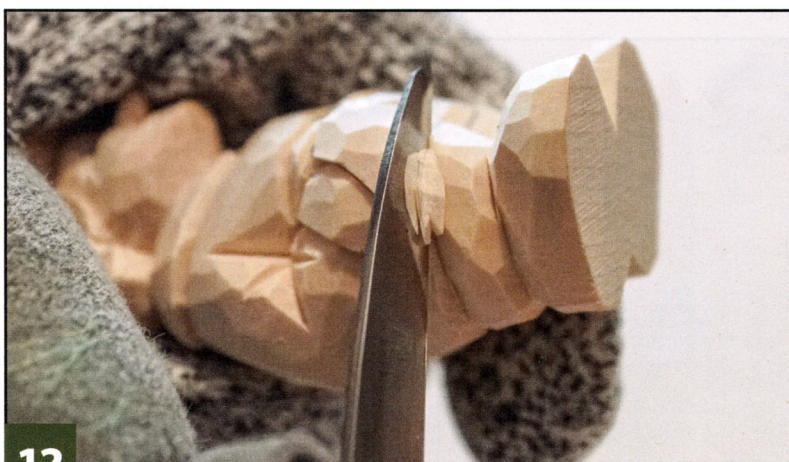
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**Add the arms.** Draw them onto the sides and cut from the top of the shoulder down into the elbow crook. Define the bottoms of the arms and round them. Draw the pockets, follow the lines with stop cuts, and carve in toward those cuts from the back to define the pockets. Add two to three V-cuts in each elbow crease to create the clothing wrinkles. Draw the backs of the arms, follow those lines with vertical stop cuts around 1/2" (1.3cm) long, and carve out toward them from the center of the back to make them stand out.



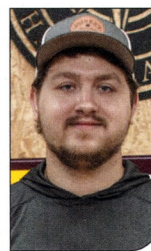
11

**Add the clothing details.** Draw the shirt, collar, belts (pants, shoes and hat), and shirt cuffs. Start by defining the collar with stop cuts and carving up to those at an angle. Round the shoulders. Separate the belt from the shirt and use the same method of stop-cutting and carving in at an angle to make the shirt hang over the belt slightly. Separate the shoes with a stop cut, and then carve in toward that cut from both sides. Taper the legs into the shoes on both sides and round over the shoes with the detail knife. Add the belt buckle details, hollowing them with a micro gouge of your choice. Add the cuffs with stop cuts, and then carve in toward those cuts from the back to make them stand out above the pockets.



12

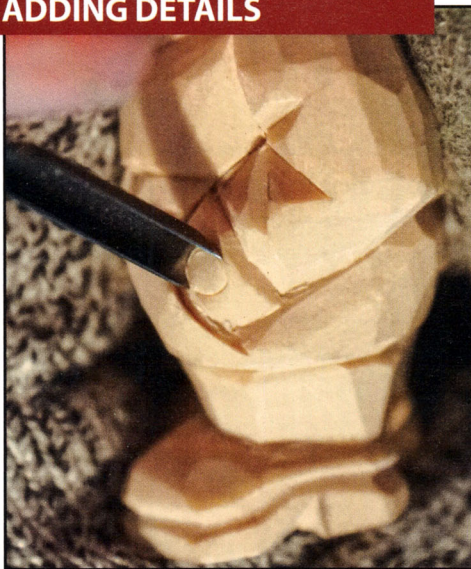
**Detail the leg area.** Separate the legs on the back and front. At 3/4" (1.9cm) up from the bottom, make stop cuts around the legs and carve in toward those cuts from above and below to define the stockings. Round the socks with the detail knife.



*Alex Joiner, 24, lives in Pinson, Ala. He has always enjoyed woodworking, but in July of 2018, he discovered woodcarving and has carved something almost every day since! He entered his first national carving competition in August of 2019 and got 3rd and 4th place ribbons. Since then, he has placed in several other*

*competitions, including winning a special merit award from the Caricature Carvers of America. Alex has found his passion in woodcarving and doesn't plan on stopping anytime soon. Find him on Instagram @joiners\_handcrafted.*

## ADDING DETAILS



13

**Add texture.** Draw the shirt crease, and then follow the line with a stop cut. Carve in at an angle toward the cut from one side to create the illusion of overlap. Draw the shirt and cuff links. Then push straight into them with the 1/8" (3mm) micro U-gouge, making two crescent-shaped cuts that meet. Relieve the areas around the cuff links with the detail knife or micro gouge. Create the shoe heels with a stop cut at the start of the heel, and then carve back toward it from the toe area at an angle. Define the soles by running a 3/16" (5mm) micro U-gouge around the shoe a short distance from the bottom. Define the inner thigh area on the front and back with a few V-cuts. Add hair texture with a 3/16" (5mm) micro V-tool.



14

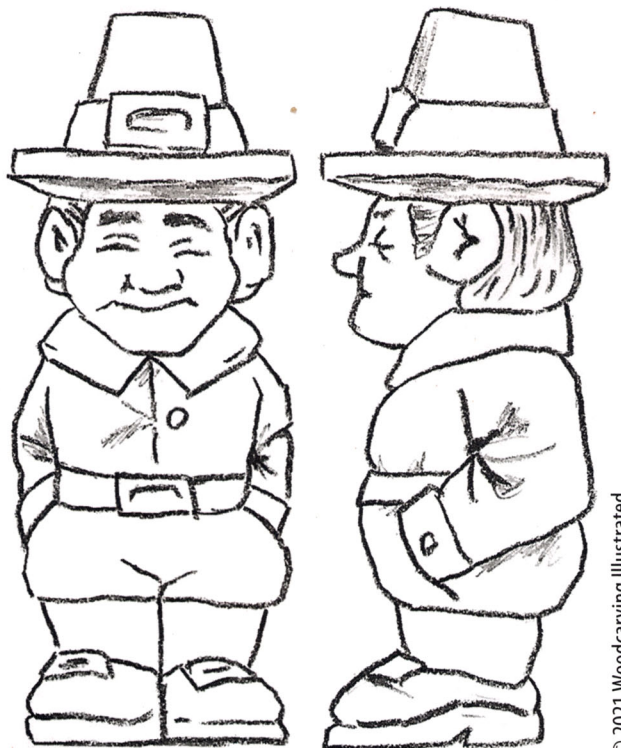
**Prepare the carving for paint.** Wash it lightly with water and a toothbrush to remove any dirt. While the carving is still damp, mix yellow ochre and apple red until you achieve your desired shade, thin with water, and paint this on the face and ears. With a small brush, apply thinned apple red to the lips, cheeks, and the tip of the nose. Paint the collar, cuffs, and socks with matte white. Paint the shirt, hat, and shoes with licorice; then paint the belts with thinned burnt umber and the buckles with brushed silver. Paint the hair and sideburns with thinned yellow ochre. Once dry, apply a clear finish of your choice.

**TIP**

### BEFORE YOU PAINT

*After every color change, be sure to wash your brush; if you have a hair dryer, dry the paint after painting each color, too.*

## Little Pilgrim Patterns



### materials & tools

#### MATERIALS

- Basswood, 1 1/2" (3.8cm) square: 3 3/4" (9.5cm) long
- Pencil
- Acrylic paints, such as Apple Barrel®: matte white; such as FolkArt® matte: apple red, brushed silver, burnt umber, licorice, yellow ochre
- Finish: clear matte acrylic

#### TOOLS

- Knives: rough out, detail
- Micro V-tools, such as Flexcut®: 1/16" (2mm), 3/16" (5mm)
- Micro U-gouges, deep, such as Flexcut®: 1/16" (2mm), 1/8" (3mm), 3/16" (5mm)
- Paintbrushes: small, medium
- Toothbrush
- Hair dryer (optional)

*The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.*