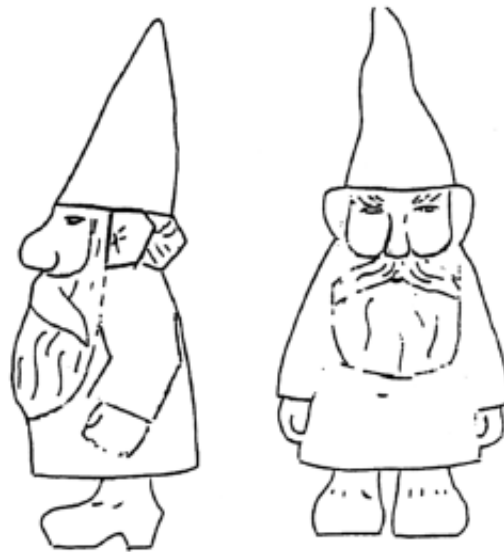


Norwegian Cultural Skills Program

Unit 9: Figure Carving (Norwegian Motif)



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*Sons of Norway
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FIGURE CARVING

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Unit 9: Figure Carving

INTRODUCTION*

When the Viking grave on the Oseberg farm in Vestfold, Norway, was excavated in 1904, an inestimable treasure was revealed, not only to historians, but also to Norwegian craftsmen. The grave contained the oldest existing collection of Norwegian woodcarving, dated back to the 800s, the beginning of the Viking period. Geometric designs and animal ornamentations offered new knowledge and inspiration to woodcarvers of modern times.

The art of a certain historical period is often heavily influenced by the general cultural trend of the period and place where this art is created. The vital, heathen Viking art acquired a more serene tone when Christianity exposed the Viking woodcarvers to foreign influence. The Christian symbol, the grapevine, was easily adaptable to the Norwegian woodcarving style, and the building of stave churches that peaked around 1300 offered a great opportunity to follow the Romanesque and Gothic trend of creating carvings of huge dimensions. The exteriors of these churches were lavishly ornamented, especially the portals. The ancient interlaced ribbon and animal motifs, the European-inspired vine, lion, eagle, and the oriental dragon decorated important doorways as late as the 18th century. Woodcarving was, however, largely cast aside in the churches after the Reformation in 1536.

The Renaissance started a new blooming of woodcarving in the 17th century. The new methods of furniture construction inspired woodcarvers to find new outlets for their creativity. Solidly carved decorations were replaced by panels of complex outline. Special motifs and a spindly type of naturalistic vine were adapted but didn't come to life until the Baroque and Rococo made their entry on the Norwegian scene. The Baroque paneling and carving, with its sometimes grotesque lines and deep relief, was in accord with the Norwegian nature; the gaiety of the Rococo even more so. These styles inspired woodworkers to create the intricate, lively, flourishing carvings that come to mind when we think about Norwegian woodcarving in general. Other areas also developed characteristic carving styles, and these were complemented by chip-carving and woodburning. Not only were buildings and furniture decorated, but also tools and household equipment. Intricately carved butter, cheese and porridge boxes were common, along with bowls and drinking vessels, *mangletré* (for "ironing"), and chests displaying many artistic designs.

**Quoted from Sons of Norway's Information Bank Unit #6, Woodcarving, by Liv Nordem Lyons.*

Tools used were the axe and broadaxe for constructing furniture (the plane and saw came after the Reformation), draw-knife for smoothing, the bowed axe for hollowing out wood, and the lather for making bowls. Finishing was done with a curved gouging iron, while various types of knives, routers and special-curved rabbeting planes were used for the carving of ornaments. There were also simple types of calipers and compasses. These tools made possible the abundance of moldings that characterize the Norwegian woodcarving.

The art of woodcarving is still alive in Norway, but the era of excellence in terms of developing and consolidating new styles has drawn to a close. In America, Norwegian immigrants and their descendants have carried on the woodcarving traditions of the old country. Some of these woodworkers excel in the application of traditional styles and designs, and their skills match the best of Norwegian craftsmanship. Inspired by the old woodcarving masters, people on both sides of the Atlantic still feel pleasure and excitement in giving form to a piece of wood.

GUIDELINES—LEVEL I

The objective of this unit is to acquaint you with the basic knowledge and skill of figure carving. You will select wood and a carving knife, make a leather strop and use it, draw a pattern on a block of wood, carve and complete a small figure carving of your choice. Please complete all the starred items and one of the Optional Activities. For children's project, see #8 below. Submit a Final Report.

Required Activities—Level I

- *1. Learn about the history of Norwegian Folk Arts (see attached partial list of sources available from Heritage Books, or your public library). Using more than one source, write a short report (300–500 words) on what you learned about wood carvings, particularly Norwegian wood carving. Some hints: Have the types of carvings stayed the same? What types of paints are used? Is it heavy or thick paint, or thinned so you can still see the wood and grain? Or it is not painted at all? Collect pictures to prove your point. What types of tools and wood are used in the United States, Canada and Norway for wood carving?
- *2. Explain, by drawing, how to use a sharpening stone and leather strop to sharpen and keep sharp your carving knife. Draw arrows indicating direction to guide knife when sharpening. You may get this information from carving books or hands-on demonstration from a wood carver in your lodge or area. Include a clear, xeroxed copy of your sharpening stone and leather strop drawing with your report (see #9).

- *3. Make a leather strop which will keep your knife sharp. You may find this information in a wood-carving book or work with a wood carver in your lodge or area. Take a photo and include it along with your report (see #9).
- *4. Select a pattern* (simple) in which you can demonstrate the art of Norwegian figure carving on a block of wood. Trace the pattern on a block of wood. Include a clear xeroxed copy of pattern with your report. (see #9). For children's projects, see #6 below.
- *5. Complete one project out of wood (or soap—see 6 below) and make a photograph of the carving to submit with your Final Report. Suggested items: Simple stylized reindeer, troll, farmer nisse. You may want to contact a wood carver in your Sons of Norway lodge or local carving club to help in this project. Remember, keep it simple. Paint and/or put a seal coating on your project.
6. For those under the age of 16, design and carve something that reminds you of Norway or Norwegian heritage. Use balsa wood or a bar of soap. The individual should have enough strength to carve when using the above two types of carving material. If using wood, paint and/or put a seal coating on your project.

Optional Activities—Level I

7. Visit a carving show, exhibit or sale and study the figure sample. Interview one of the artists. Give a report to your lodge or in your community by means of a talk (with slides, if possible) or videotape. Invite to your lodge a wood carver who carves in the Norwegian tradition.
8. Form a carving group in your lodge or join a local wood-carving group.

Final Report—Level I

- *9. Complete the Final Report on your chosen and required activities. Include the xeroxed copies of your sharpening stone and leather strop drawings, pattern and photograph of your leather strop and completed project.

***See page 7 for sample pattern**

GUIDELINES—LEVEL 2

The objective of this unit is to expand your knowledge of wood and wood grain and acquaint you with the appropriate tools for carving. You will be required to choose an appropriate pattern and complete a more detailed carving.

Required Activities—Level 2

- *1. Collect at least one, preferably two catalogs which sell wood carving tools. Write a short report (100-300 words) showing that you understand how to identify tools by size and weight. For example, which number indicates the sweep on a gouge?
- *2. Make a sample board using at least four differently shaped carving tools. There should be a stop cut for each tool with a corresponding slant cut into the stop cut. Label each tool cut giving type of tool and dimensions of the tool. Example: Number 7 straight gouge 10 mm. Also, indicate the direction of the grain on the sampler board. Use an arrow to show in which direction the wood carves smoothly. Hint: the wood will lift or splinter or the tool will seem to “dive” into the wood if you are carving against the grain.
- *3. In a brief report (100-300 words), explain basic tool sharpening theory from grinding to honing to buffing tools. How do you determine if a tool is dull? How do you determine if it is sharp? Having sharp tools is very important in wood carving. Carving with sharp tools is enjoyable, while carving with dull tools is frustrating and reduces the quality of the product.
- *4. Choose an appropriate pattern. Research figure carvings that have been done by people in Norway as well as ancestors of Norwegians or Norwegian emigrants living in Canada or the United States. Try to find out about older carvings as well as work done in recent years. What subjects did they use? Were the subjects true to life or were they exaggerated? If exaggerated, in which way?
- *5. Draw a pattern or select a pattern and perhaps modify it. For example, you could add a belt knife or change the clothing a bit. Show both a front view and a side view. (Add the drawing to your final report.)
- *6. Complete the project out of wood (or soap); see note below. You may want to contact a carver in your Sons of Norway lodge or local carving club to help in this project. This piece should have more detail than the first. It can be painted or have only a sealer coat or left raw wood, whichever is most appropriate. Important: sign and date the carving on the bottom. Make two sharp color photographs—front and side views—to enclose with your report.

Note: For those under age 16, design and carve something that has to do with ancient Norsk mythology. You may use soap or soft wood and you can have some help in carving by an experienced carver.

Optional Activities—Level 2

7. Visit a museum that contains carvings done by Norwegians or Norwegian Americans. If possible, photograph three examples or sketch three examples. Give a report to your local lodge and/or your school class.
8. Take an instructional class from a person who teaches carving in the Norwegian tradition.
9. Organize a display of carving or pictures of carving for your Sons of Norway lodge meeting. Be there to answer questions.

GUIDELINES—LEVEL 3

The objective of this unit is to continue to learn more about tool care and sharpening. You will also continue to learn about developing a good pattern. You will study figure proportions. You will complete an original figure carving in the Norwegian tradition which is interacting in some way with someone or something.

Required Activities—Level 3

- *1. Learn to flat grind or hollow grind carving tools. Be sure to follow all safety requirements in using the grinder.
- *2. Make a useful article to safely store and transport carving tools. This can be a box type container or a tool roll to protect the edges.
- *3. Study proportions of the human figure. What are the differences in proportions for real life carvings compared with a caricature carving? Which parts of a caricature are exaggerated most? What are the proportions of the head with regards to the placement of the eyes, nose, mouth and ears?
- *4. Draw an original pattern which is significant to Norwegian or Norwegian American culture.

Optional Activities—Level 3

5. Take a drawing class in the human form.
6. Take a carving class from a person who teaches carving in the Norwegian tradition.
7. Make arrangements to have a display of Norwegian style at your Sons of Norway lodge meeting.

**PARTIAL LISTING OF BOOKS ON WOODCARVING
AVAILABLE IN NORTH AMERICA**

<u>TITLE:</u>	<u>AUTHOR:</u>
<u>The Folk Arts of Norway</u>	Stewart, Dover Publications, Inc.
<u>Chip Carving Designs</u>	Crowell, Dover Publications, Inc.
<u>How to Carve Folk Figures</u>	Enlow, Dover Publications, Inc.
<u>Chip Carving</u>	Moore, Dover Publications, Inc.
<u>Creative Chip Carving</u>	Manning, Dover Publications, Inc.
<u>Norwegian Wood: A Tradition of Building</u>	Holan, Rizzoli International Publications
<u>Ornamental Woodcarving in the Norwegian Tradition</u>	Johan Amrud (1992) Heart Prairie Press
<u>Woodcarving in the Scandinavian Style</u> New York 1992	By Harley Refsal, Sterling Publishing Co., Inc.,
<u>Sculpture in Wood</u>	Heart Prairie Press. 1992
<u>Treskjærer Kunsten</u>	Else J. Bigton and Phillip Odden (1996) Universitetsforlaget AS
<u>Woodcarving: Techniques and Projects</u>	Johnstone, Lane Publishing Co.

Some of these books are available from:

Heritage Books
502 W. Water St.
Decorah IA 52101
Toll free: 1-888-838-BOOK (2665)

SAMPLE PATTERN

(You may use this or another of your choice for Level I)



REPORT FORM

NORWEGIAN CULTURAL SKILLS PROGRAM

UNIT 9: FIGURE CARVING, LEVEL 2



I have completed the requirements in Figure Carving, Level 2.

- I. Attached are:
1. My report on tools, how they are sold and referred to by size, sweep and style
 2. My report on tool sharpening theory
 3. Xeroxed copies of:
 - a. A sampler board with a least four different tool cuts (arrow indicating grain direction on wood surface)
 - b. Pattern drawing showing both front and side views
 4. Photo of completed sampler board and color photos of finished carving

II. I chose 7 8 9 (circle one) as my optional activity. My report and attachments are enclosed.

Name: _____ Lodge Name and No: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Sons of Norway Membership # (optional): _____ Tel. No. _____

Pin applied for: Generalist Specialist Mentor (check one)

Have you completed cultural skills categories before? Yes No If yes, please specify: _____

This report is for: (Check one)
 Part 1 Part 2 Part 3

Signature (Applicant) Date

Signature (Lodge Cultural Director/Social Director, Secretary or designated person) Date

Complete Mailing Address (Cultural/Social Director, Secretary or designated person) City State Zip

Signature (International Headquarters) Date

REPORT FORM

NORWEGIAN CULTURAL SKILLS PROGRAM

UNIT 9: FIGURE CARVING, LEVEL 3



I have completed the requirements in Figure Carving, Level 3.

- I. Attached are:
1. Explanation and photo of either a flat ground or hollow
 2. A photo of a tool storage article
 3. A brief explanation of the significance of the carving pattern to Norwegian or Norwegian-American culture
 4. A copy of the front and side views of original pattern
 5. A photo of completed carving along with carving tools used

II. I chose 5 6 7 (circle one) as my optional activity. My report and attachments are enclosed.

Name: _____ Lodge Name and No: _____

Mailing
Address: _____

Sons of Norway Membership # (optional): _____ Tel. No. _____

Pin applied for: Generalist Specialist Mentor (check one)

Have you completed cultural skills categories before? Yes No If yes, please specify: _____

This report is for: (Check one)
 Part 1 Part 2 Part 3

Signature (Applicant) Date

Signature (Lodge Cultural Director/Social Director, Secretary or designated person) Date

Complete Mailing Address (Cultural/Social Director, Secretary or designated person) City State Zip

Signature (International Headquarters) Date

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please keep this original and make the necessary copies to complete your report.)

CULTURAL SKILL COMPLETED _____

INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the 7 questions below, please check the box which fits your opinion most accurately. The choices are: Agree (A), Neutral (N) and Disagree (D). It would be helpful for improving the unit if you would also add your specific comments in the space provided.

- | | A | N | D |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The instructions for this unit were easy to follow: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The requirements for this unit were reasonable: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. There were enough varied choices for optional activities: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. There were enough instructions and guidelines for doing the activities: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. The unit provided interesting activities: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. The unit increased my understanding of Norwegian heritage: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. The unit promoted my involvement in the lodge: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



SPECIFIC COMMENTS: In the space below, please add other comments and suggestions you may have with respect to this unit. Your comments are confidential and in no way affect the awarding of your completed pin/bar.

Return to: Fraternal Dept./ Culture
Sons of Norway
1455 W. Lake Street
Minneapolis, MN 55408

SONS OF NORWAY

Norwegian Cultural Skills Program

Specialist	Person who wishes to go in depth in one area, e.g. Hardanger embroidery or genealogy, etc.
Generalist	Person who decides to sample several skills and qualify for the basic level in each, for example: stamp collecting, crafts, and Norwegian foods.
Mentor	Person who is skilled in activities offered in the Norwegian Cultural Skills Program can do a different challenge: mentor others who need formal or informal instruction. The mentor is an extremely important person in passing on the Norwegian heritage to others.
Master of Cultural Skills	Persons who have completed at least three levels of three different skills, or nine individual basic activities.

1. TRADITION NORWEGIAN COOKING

- Level 1 Your Favorites
- Level 2 Baked Goods and Desserts
- Level 3 Meat or Fish Dishes

2. READING NORWEGIAN AND NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN AUTHORS

- Level 1 Your Favorites
- Level 2 Fiction
- Level 3 Nonfiction

3. COLLECTING NORWEGIAN AND NORTH AMERICAN STAMPS

- Level 1 Collect General Norwegian and North American Stamps
- Level 2 Specialize Your Stamp Collection
- Level 3 Complete a Collection of a Ten-Year Period

4. NORWEGIAN ROSEMALING

- Level 1 Basic Strokes, Flower Form and Scroll
- Level 2 Completed Design
- Level 3 Create an Original Design

5. GENEALOGY—FAMILY HISTORY

- Level 1 Complete people 1-7 on a four-generation ancestor chart, etc.
- Level 2 Complete four more people on the ancestor, family group chart and document
- Level 3 Complete all information for 15 people on the charts—document and write an essay

MENTOR

Many people are already skilled in the activities offered in the Norwegian Cultural Skills Program. To those, a different challenge is available: Become a mentor. A mentor is a person who becomes a formal or informal teacher, leading other individuals along the generalist or specialist tracts. The mentor is an extremely important person as he/she plays a key role in passing on the Norwegian heritage to others.



EXAMPLE 1

Meet John. He has spent a lifetime doing beautiful wood carving. He decides to become a mentor in his lodge by teaching relief carving. When he has taught a minimum of five people the basics of relief carving and they complete level one* of that activity, John applies for the specialist pin (he intends to continue teaching relief carving). He receives the specialist pin and three bars: Mentor, Relief Carving and level one. When at least three of his students have qualified for level two*, John receives his level two bar. If John can assist at least one* student all the way to the top, John is awarded the level three bar. See illustration.

*Note that these people must send in their reports to the Norwegian Cultural Skills Program.



EXAMPLE 2

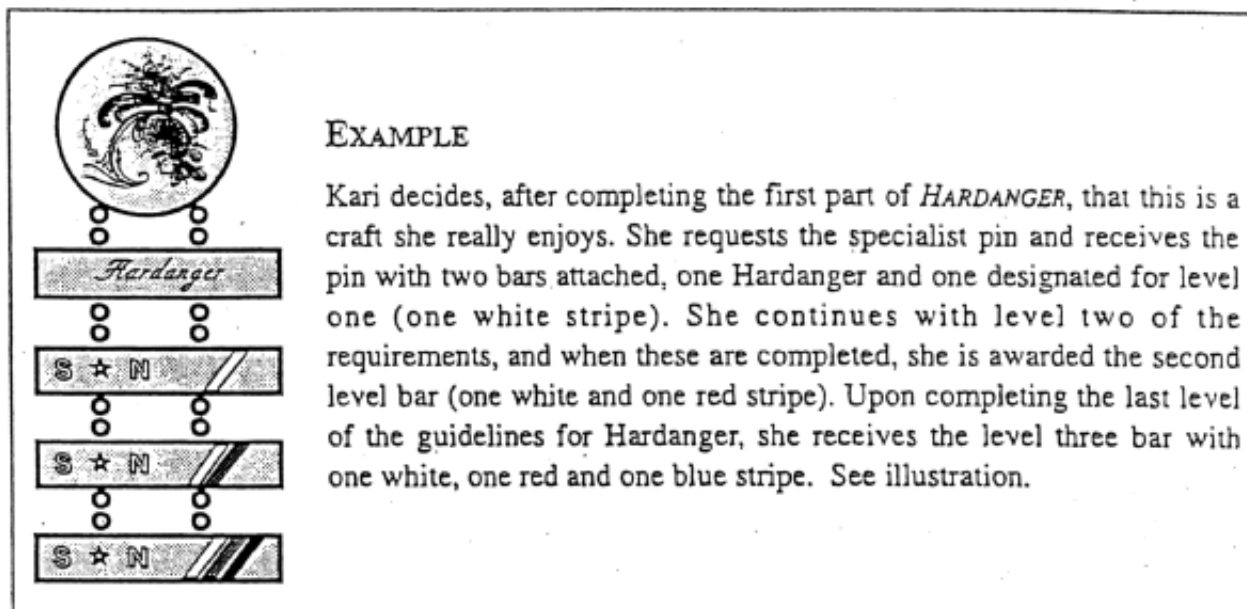
Irene is cultural director of her lodge. She decides to get a number of cultural skills activities going. She starts a crafts club. She encourages the group to try knitting, *Hardanger* embroidery and *rosemaling*. Irene's strongest suit is *rosemaling*, but she knows enough about *Hardanger* embroidery and knitting to instruct her fellow members in the basics. Irene is on her way to becoming a mentor on the generalist track. When at least five of her fellow club members qualify for part one of *Hardanger* embroidery, Irene receives the generalist pin with two bars: Mentor and *Hardanger*. When five more of the participants qualify for part one of Knitting, Irene receives one bar: Knitting, and when yet five others qualify for part one of *Rosemaling*, Irene receives another bar: *Rosemaling*. See illustration.

NORWEGIAN CULTURAL SKILLS PROGRAM PINS

REVISED POLICY (MAY 1999)

SPECIALIST*

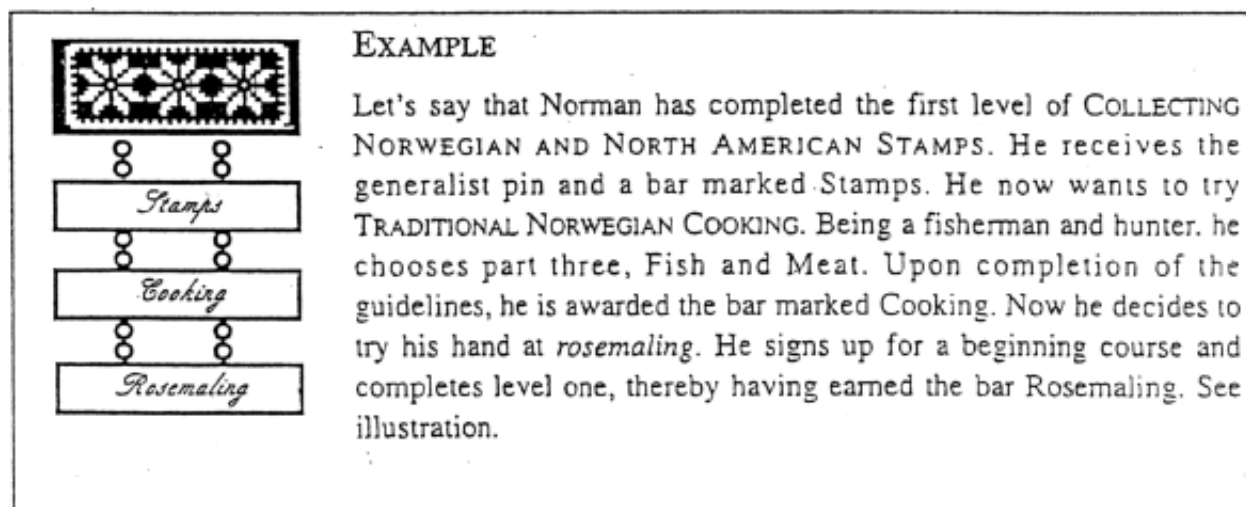
The specialist pin is earned by people who wish to go into some depth in one area, e.g. *Hardanger* Embroidery. The pin was designed by Marilyn Olin, a Vesterheim Gold Medalist in *Rosemaling*.



GENERALIST

The generalist pin is awarded to any person who decides to sample several skills and qualify for the basic level (e.g. in stamp collecting, genealogy and a number of crafts), or any one part of the following units: Traditional Norwegian Foods, Reading Norwegian and Norwegian-North American Authors, Norwegian Language and Culture.

The design of the pin is based on the Selbu rose, chosen to honor the founding fathers of Sons of Norway who hailed from the Selbu community. It was designed by Krista Lauritzen and Liv Dahl.



*Please note: Only one specialist pin is given per participant. Bars will be awarded to be affixed to the original pin. Thus one pin may reflect one or several activities.