

## CHAPTER 9



# Artistic Effects Using Adjustments and Filters

Pixlr Editor is a useful tool for adding effects to images to achieve a variety of artistic results. In Chapter 3, we looked at each adjustment and filter to see what effect is produced. In this chapter, we'll work with a few in the upcoming tutorials to see get a good idea of the editing potential they offer.

In this chapter, we'll learn the following:

- *Creating Shallow Depth-of-Field:* In this part, we'll use the Gaussian blur filter and the layer mask to emphasize the subject of an image.
- *Creating a Partial Effect:* In this tutorial, we'll apply the Old Photo adjustment to part of the image while leaving the rest as is.
- *Creating a Distressed Fence Mural:* This part demonstrates how to use a combination of filters and layer blend modes to create a fence mural.

## Creating Shallow Depth-of-Field

In this tutorial, we'll learn how to put more emphasis on the macaw by digitally creating a shallow depth-of-field effect.

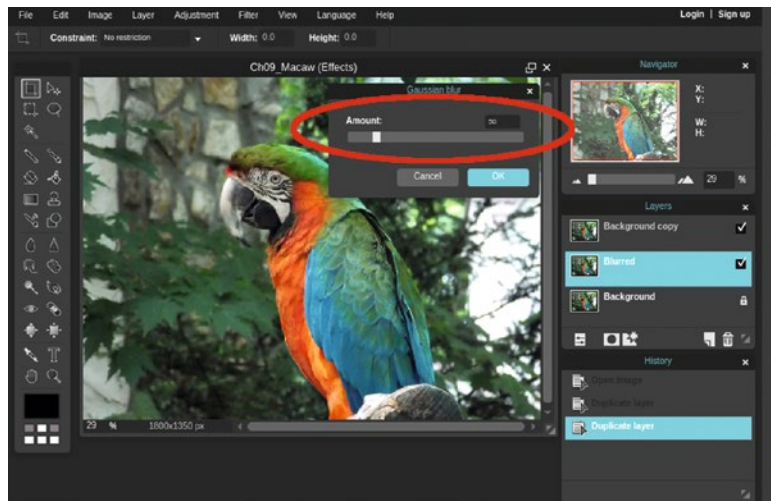
### TUTORIAL 20: DEPTH-OF-FIELD TO EMPHASIZE THE SUBJECT

#### Using Gaussian Blur and the Layer Mask

To do this exercise, follow these steps:

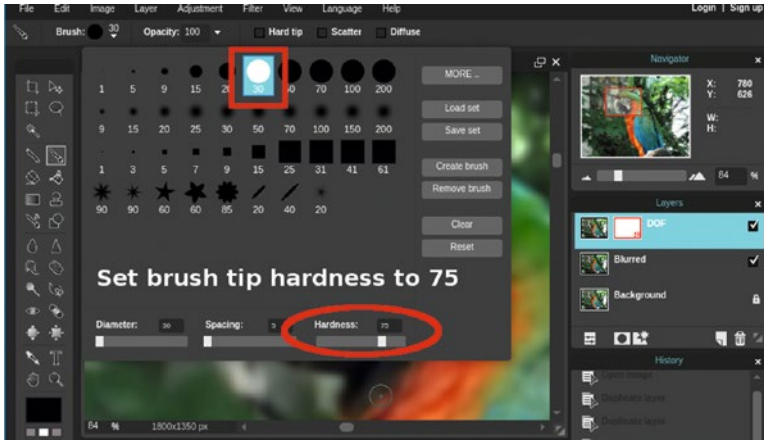
1. Open the image titled Ch09\_Macaw (For Effects).jpg found in the Ch09 Practice Images folder.

2. Duplicate the background layer *twice* (Layer ► Duplicate Layer).
3. Click the first duplicate layer to make it active. Rename it **Blurred** using the layer thumbnail's textbox.
4. Open the Gaussian blur dialog box (Filter ► Gaussian Blur). Leave at the default radius setting of 50 (Figure 9-1), then click OK to apply the filter.



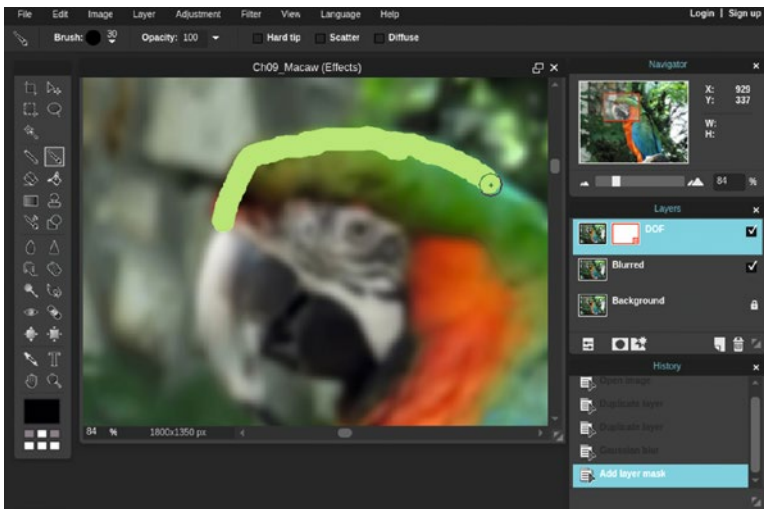
**Figure 9-1.** Leave the Gaussian blur filter setting at 50, then click OK to apply

5. Click on the second (top) duplicate layer to make it active. Rename it **DOF** (short for depth-of-field) using the layer thumbnail's textbox.
6. Add a layer mask using the Toggle Layer Settings dialog (the DOF layer will seem to disappear, but it's still there).
7. Click the zBrush tool icon (or press B on your keyboard). Select the hard, 30-pixel diameter brush from the presets.
8. Using the slider, set the hardness value to 75 (Figure 9-2).



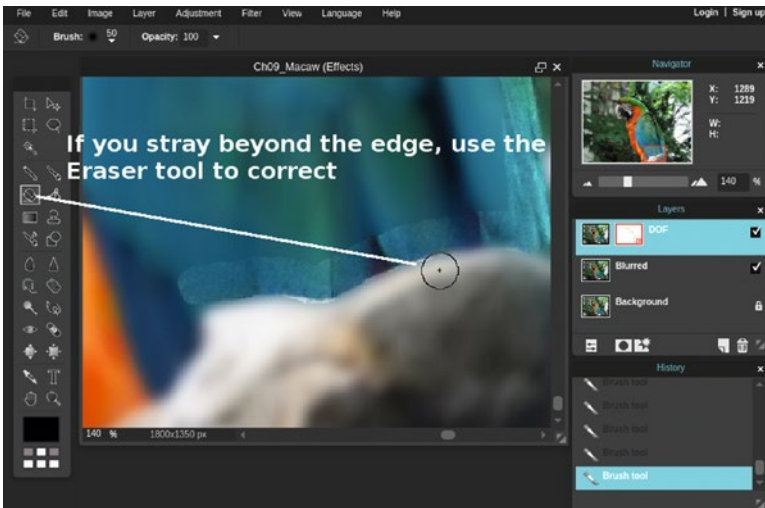
**Figure 9-2.** Set the hardness value to 75

9. Click in the layer mask to make it active and paint along the edge of the macaw to apply the overlay (Figure 9-3). Work in a series of short strokes (zoom in close as needed).



**Figure 9-3.** Paint in the layer mask to apply the overlay along the edge

10. Continue working all the way around—if you go outside of the edge, use the Eraser tool to correct (Figure 9-4).



**Figure 9-4.** The Eraser tool can be used to make corrections if you mistakenly go beyond the edge of the macaw

11. Once you've gone all the way around the macaw, increase the Brush tool's tip size to 100 and paint in the layer mask to reveal the rest of the macaw in focus (Figure 9-5).



**Figure 9-5.** Increase the brush size to reveal the rest of the macaw in focus

Figure 9-6 shows the before and after comparison. This technique helps the subject stand out from the background. When finished, either close the image without saving or save it as a PSD file for future reference. *If you are a student, your teacher may instruct you to save the image with a certain name and in a certain location (such as a flash drive).*



**Figure 9-6.** Before and after comparison

## Creating a Partial Effect

In this tutorial, we'll work with the image of an old car. The Old Photo adjustment will be applied to background of the image, while revealing the rusty "patina" of the car.

### TUTORIAL 21: CREATING A PARTIAL EFFECT

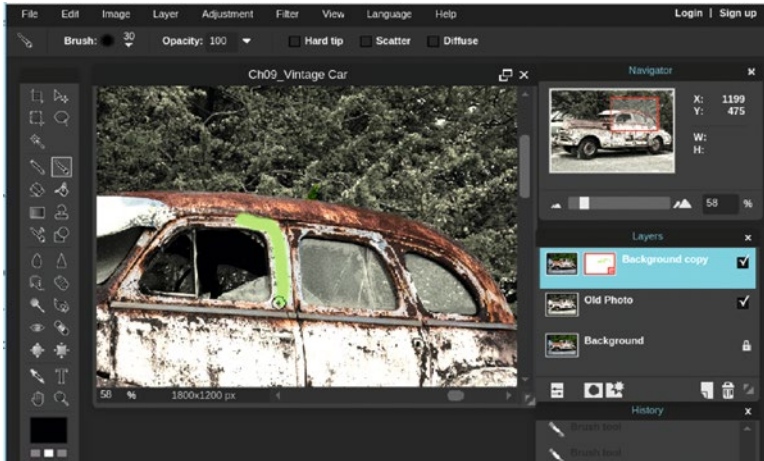
#### Applying the Old Photo Adjustment to Part of an Image

In the upcoming exercise, we'll work with an image of an old car and applying the Old Photo adjustment to portions of the image.

To do this exercise, follow these steps:

1. Open the image titled `Ch09_Vintage Car.jpg` found in the `Ch09 Practice Images` folder.
2. Duplicate the background layer *twice* (Layer ► Duplicate Layer). Rename the first duplicate layer `Old Photo` using the layer thumbnail's textbox.
3. Rename the second duplicate (top) layer `Partial Effect`.
4. Click the layer named `Old Photo` to make it active. Apply the Old Photo adjustment (Adjustment ► Old photo).
5. Click the layer named `Partial Effect` to make it active.

6. Add a layer mask using the Toggle Layer Settings dialog box (the Old Photo layer should be revealed).
7. Click the Brush tool icon (or press B on your keyboard). Select the hard, 30-pixel diameter brush from the presets.
8. Using the slider, set the hardness value to 75.
9. Paint in the layer mask around the edge of the car. Work around the windows (Figure 9-7).



**Figure 9-7.** Work around the edge and the windows of the car

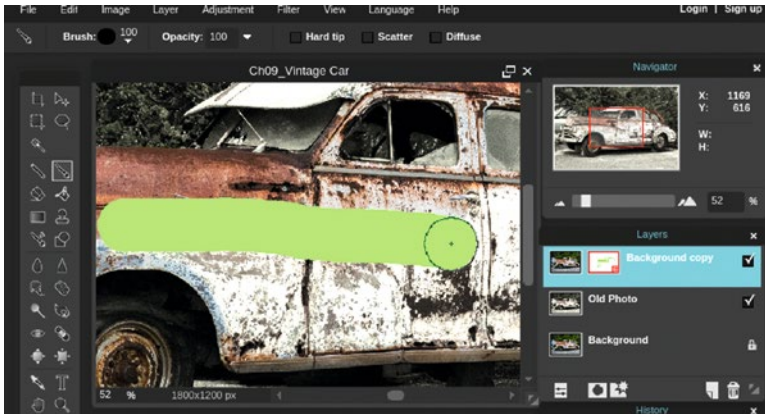
10. Paint within the wheel hubs to reveal the rust (Figure 9-8).



**Figure 9-8.** Work within the wheel hubs to reveal the rust



11. Select the 100-pixel diameter brush and work within the rest of the layer mask to reveal the rest of the car's original "patina" (Figure 9-9).



**Figure 9-9.** Use a large brush to reveal the rest of the car's patina

Figure 9-10 shows the before and after comparison. This technique helps create an interesting effect. When finished, either close the image without saving or save it as a PXD file for future reference. *If you are a student, your teacher may instruct you to save the image with a certain name and in a certain location (such as a flash drive).*



**Figure 9-10.** Before and after comparison

## Creating a Distressed Fence Mural

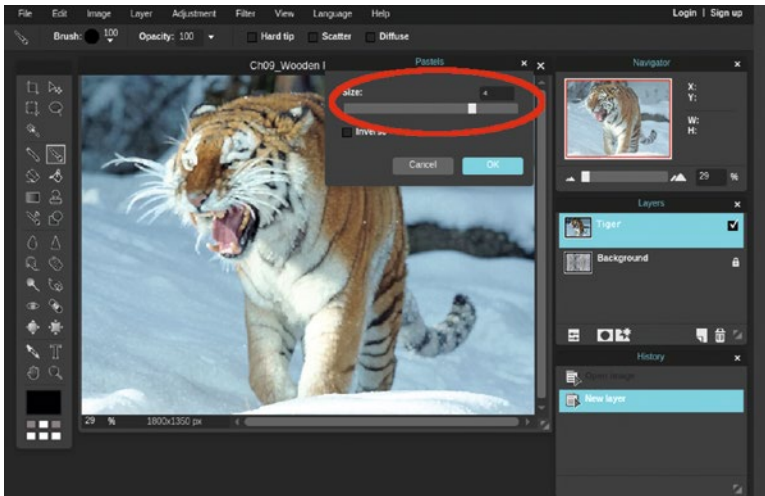
In this tutorial, we'll apply the image of a tiger to an old, wooden fence create the effect of a distressed mural.

## TUTORIAL 22: CREATING A DISTRESSED FENCE MURAL

### Using A Combination of Filters and Blend Modes

To do this exercise, follow these steps:

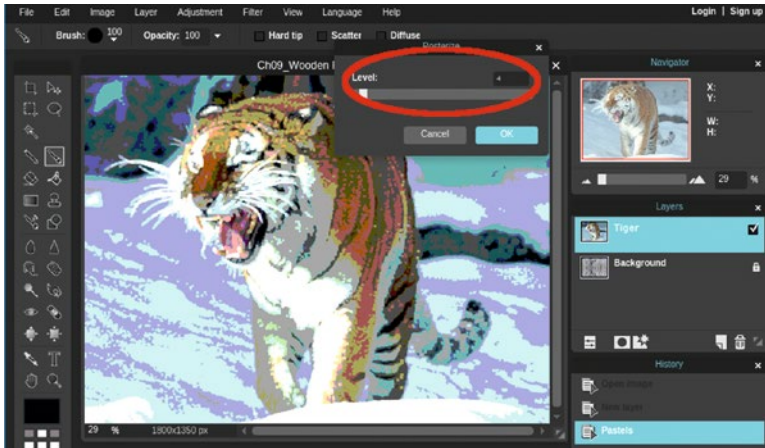
1. Open the image titled `Ch09_Wooden Fence.jpg` found in the `Ch09 Practice Images` folder.
2. Open the image titled `Ch09_Tiger.jpg` found in the `Ch09 Practice Images` folder as a layer (`Layer ► Open Image as Layer`).
3. Rename the layer `Tiger` using the layer thumbnail's textbox.
4. Open the Pastels dialog box (`Filter ► Pastels`). Set the Size to 4 then click OK to apply the filter (Figure 9-11).



**Figure 9-11.** Set the Size setting to 4 in the Pastels filter dialog box, then click OK to apply the filter

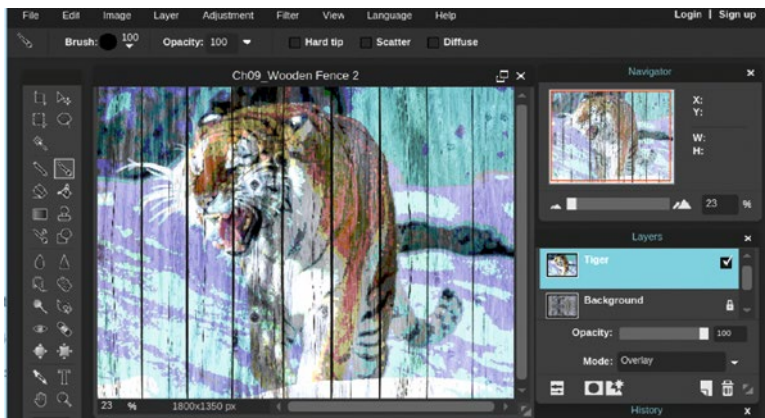
5. Open the Posterize Adjustment dialog box (`Adjustment ► Posterize`). Set the Level to 4 (Figure 9-12).





**Figure 9-12.** Set the Level setting to 4 in the Posterize Adjustment dialog box, then click OK to apply the filter

6. Using the Toggle Layer settings, change the blend mode from Normal to Overlay (Figure 9-13). The tiger image has the appearance of being painted on the fence.



**Figure 9-13.** The tiger image has the appearance of being painted on the fence

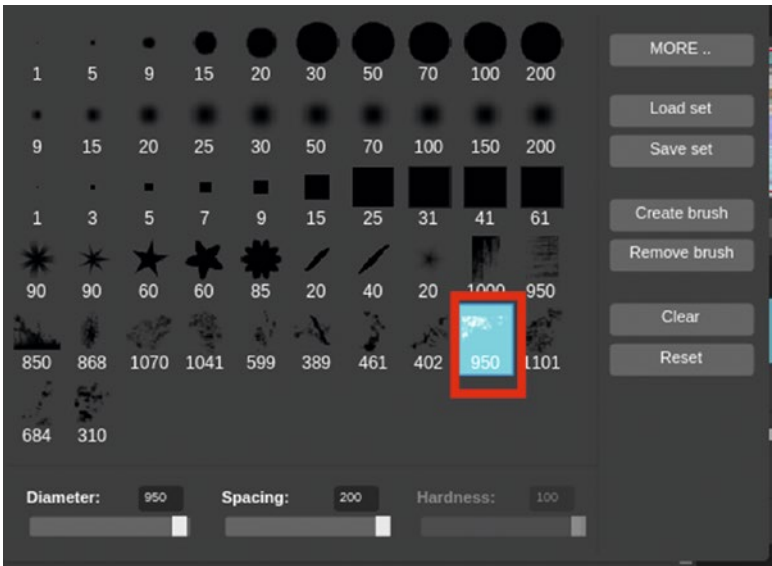
7. Click the Eraser tool icon (or press E on your keyboard). Select the hard, 30-pixel diameter brush from the presets.
8. Open the Brush Presets dialog box, then click More.

9. Under the Artistic heading, click the option labeled **Dirt-2mb** then click **Add** (Figure 9-14). These brushes will now be loaded into the Brush Options dialog box.



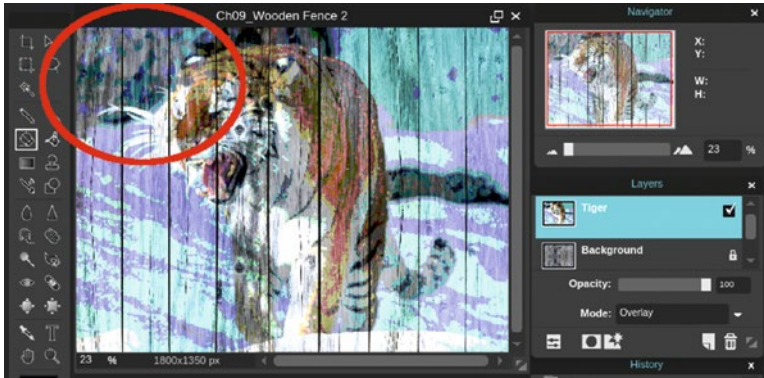
**Figure 9-14.** Under the default Artistic heading, click **Dirt-2mb**, followed by **Add**

10. Select the 950-pixel wide brush indicated in Figure 9-15.



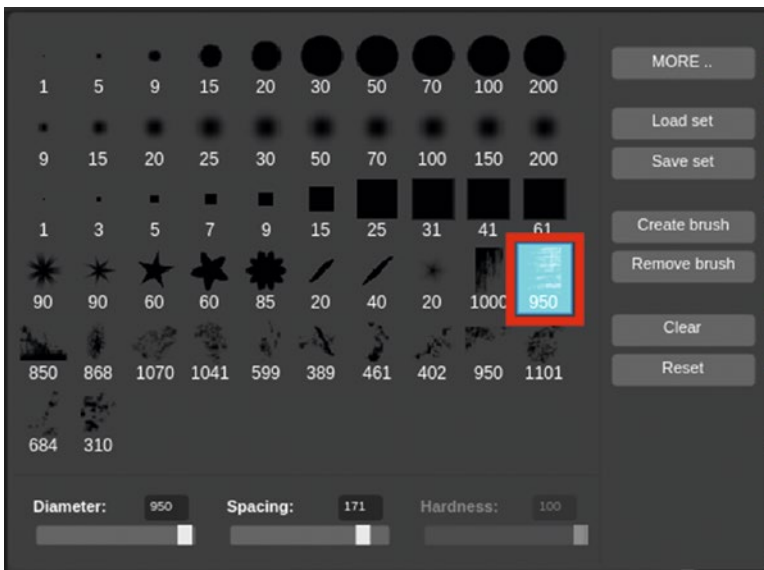
**Figure 9-15.** Select the 950-pixel wide brush indicated in this figure

11. Position it in the upper-left corner and click. This will erase the pixels in the shape of the brush and create a weathered, worn effect, revealing the underlying wood of the fence (Figure 9-16).



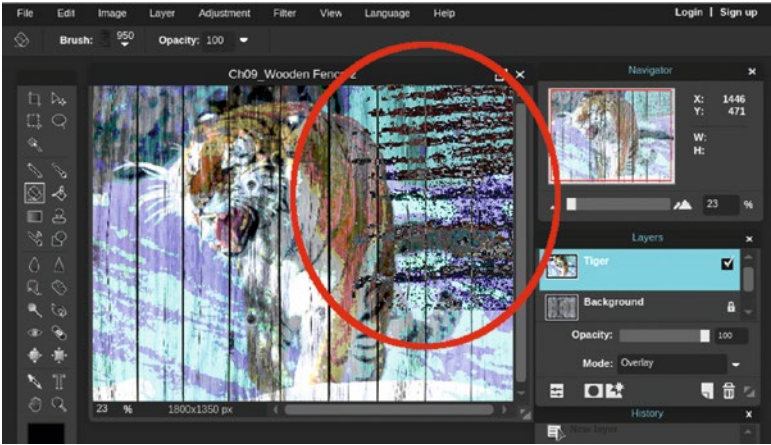
**Figure 9-16.** Click in the upper-left corner to erase the pixels as shown

12. Next, select the brush indicated (also 950 pixels wide), as shown in Figure 9-17.



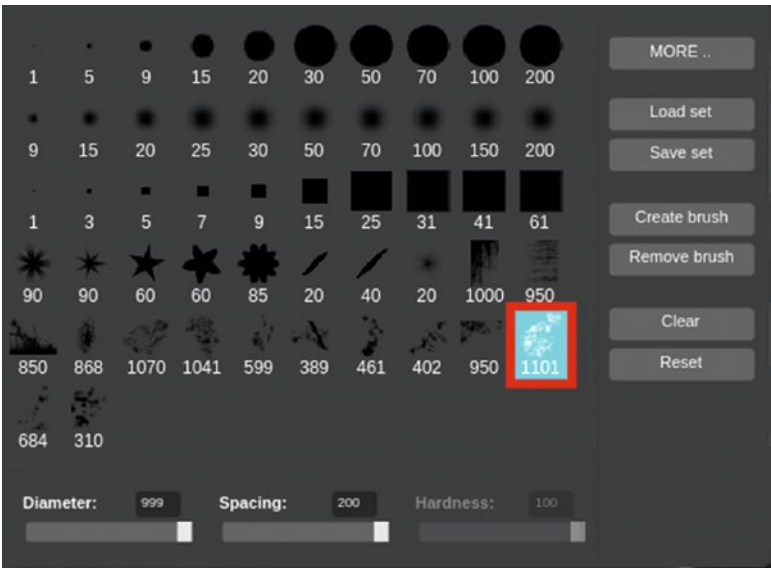
**Figure 9-17.** Select the 950-pixel wide brush indicated in this figure

13. Position the brush in the right side as indicated in Figure 9-18. Click to erase the pixels.



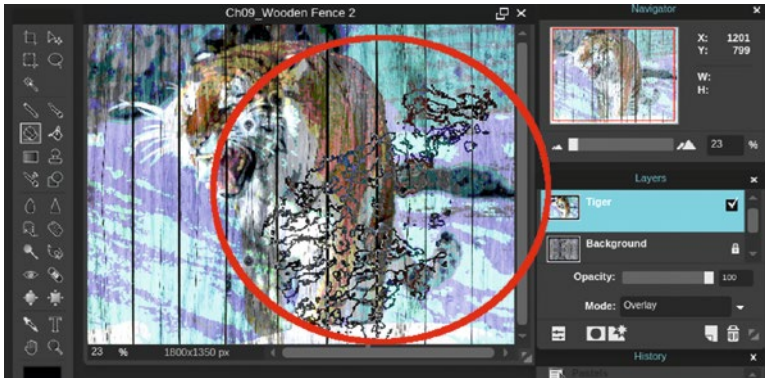
**Figure 9-18.** Click in the right side to erase the pixels as shown

14. Select the 1101-wide brush indicated in Figure 9-19.



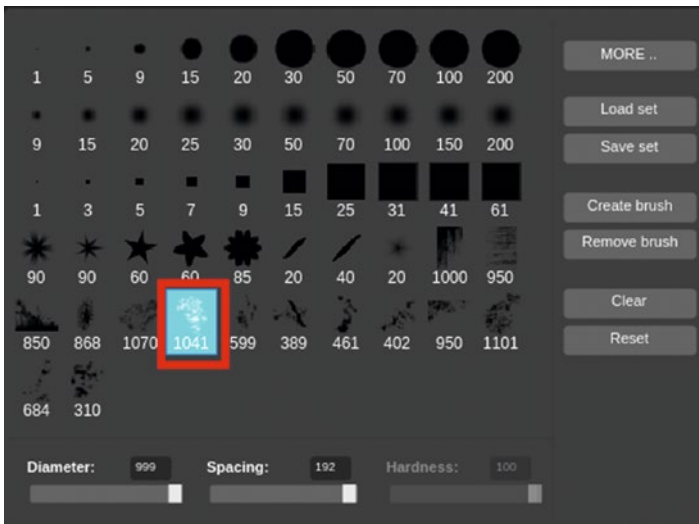
**Figure 9-19.** Select the 1101-pixel wide brush indicated in this figure

15. Position approximately as shown in Figure 9-20 and click to remove the pixels.



**Figure 9-20.** Click in the area indicated in this figure to remove the pixels

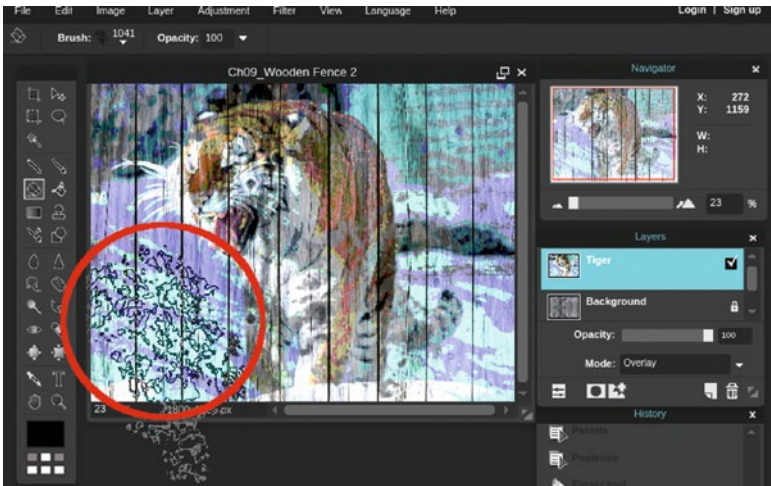
16. For the final brush, click the 1041-pixel wide brush indicated in Figure 9-21.



**Figure 9-21.** Select the 1041-pixel wide brush indicated in this figure

17. Position most of the brush in the lower-left corner, as indicated in Figure 9-22. Click to remove the pixels.





**Figure 9-22.** Click in the area indicated in this figure to remove the pixels

Figure 9-23 shows the final result—your version should be reasonably close to this example. When finished, either close the image without saving or save it as a PXD file for future reference. *If you are a student, your teacher may instruct you to save the image with a certain name and in a certain location (such as a flash drive).*



**Figure 9-23.** The final result should bear a close resemblance to this example



## Summary

This chapter described several techniques for using adjustments and filters for creating artistic effects.

The Gaussian blur filter was used to create a shallow depth-of-field effect on the image of the Macaw, helping it to stand out from the background.

In the next tutorial, a partial effect was applied. The Old Photo adjustment is a good fit for the image, but by using a layer mask, the “patina” of the old car was maintained.

In the last tutorial, a “distressed” mural was created by applying the image of a tiger over a wooden fence and using a combination of the Pastels filter, the Posterize adjustment, the Overlay Blend mode. An assortment of brushes to erase certain areas of the image were used to give it a weathered appearance.

In the next chapter, we’ll use Pixlr Editor to create two graphic illustrations and a (fictitious) business card.