



Saturday & Sunday, May 20-21, 2023  
10 a.m. – 4 p.m. both days

A celebration of rare, historic and *adorable* heritage breed sheep, textiles, and wool-processing in New England.

This weekend in Historic Deerfield, you can meet heritage breeds of sheep and lambs, and watch sheepdog herding, shearing, spinning, weaving, and other demonstrations. You can also try your hand at washing, carding, dyeing and weaving wool, browse vendors' wares, and enjoy games, a scavenger hunt, and craft activities for all ages.

**Please note: Outdoor activities are held weather permitting.**

*Special Event included with General Admission: \$18 adults, \$5 youth (13-17), free for youth 12 and under, Historic Deerfield members, and Deerfield/South Deerfield residents.*

# Saturday & Sunday, May 20-21

Daily schedule for both days

10 a.m. – 4 p.m. / Big Tent

## Heritage Breed Sheep

Meet shepherd Peter Cook and see 4 breeds of heritage sheep.

11 a.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m. / Behind the Flynt Center

## Sheepdog Herding

Watch a sheepdog herd sheep with Barbara Ericksson.

11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 2:30 p.m. / Flynt Center Oval

## Shearing

Watch sheep being blade-sheared with Kathleen Markiewicz.

10 a.m. – 4 p.m. /  
Dwight House South Lawn

## Washing

Hands-on for visitors! Wash dirty wool and pick bits of grass and sticks out of clean wool.

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. /  
Dwight House South Lawn

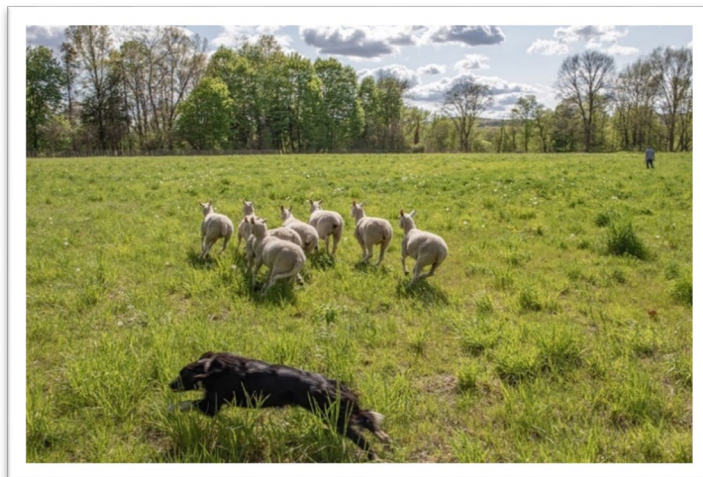
## Carding

Hands-on for visitors! Learn how to card wool.

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. /  
Dwight House South Lawn

## Spinning

Meet Nancy Bell and see her spin on a great wheel.



10 a.m. - 4 p.m. / Dwight House South Lawn

## **Yarn Dyeing**

Hands-on for visitors! Dye a small bit of wool yarn with natural dye made from marigold blossoms.

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. / Dwight House South Lawn

## **Knitting**

Meet Nancy Cook and see items that she knitted from heritage breed wool!

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. / Dwight House South Lawn

## **Weaving**

Hands-on for visitors! Meet Jen Roy and watch a demo tape loom. Try weaving on a four shaft loom.

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. / Dwight House South Lawn

## **Make & Take Crafts**

Hands-on for visitors! Make a woolly sheep and a yarn figure.

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. / Flynt Center Lobby

## **Finished Fabrics**

Hands-on for visitors! Handle and look at wool fabric.

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. / Flynt Center Lobby

## **Mystery Objects**

Hands-on for visitors! Play a fun guessing game. Do you know a niddy noddy from a teasel?

9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. / Helen Geier Flynt Textile Gallery in the Flynt Center

## **Woolen Objects**

View Woolen Objects from the Historic Deerfield collections.

9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. / Flynt Center Second Floor

## **Sheep in the “Attic”**

Scavenger hunt! Find objects in our collections.

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. / Visitor Center at Hall Tavern

## **Open Hearth Cooking**

Visit with our hearth cook who is making a recipe using lamb!



## Vendors and Information Tables

**Walking Cloud Farm:** Fibers prepared for hand spinning, from Finn Sheep. Shelburne Falls, MA

**Sheep and Shawl:** Knitting supplies (patterns, needles, and notions). Cute sheep-themed notions. Deerfield, MA

**Western Mass Fibershed:** Knitting yarns, cloth, and blankets all made from local wool from all over Western Mass. A collaborative group from Western Mass.

**Sustainable EWEMass:** Information about sheep and their role in climate change, sustainable agriculture, land management, and art! Amherst, MA

**Meadowfed Lamb:** Yarns from Finn Sheep. Hadley, MA

**Museum Gift Shop & Bookstore Pop-Up Shop:** Popcorn, snacks, cold drinks and more!

---

## Guided Tours on the Hour

**Wells-Thorn House:** Tours at 10, 11, 1, 2, 3, 4  
[closed at 12 p.m. for lunch]

**Barnard Tavern:** Tours at 10, 11, 1, 2, 3, 4  
[closed at 12 p.m. for lunch]

**Frary House:** Tours at 10, 11, 12, 2, 3, 4  
[closed at 1 p.m. pm for lunch]

**Williams House:** Tours at 10, 11, 12, 2, 3, 4  
[closed at 1 p.m. for lunch]

---



## Tour at Your Own Pace

**The Flynt Center of Early New England Life:** 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Explore special and permanent exhibitions of early American textiles, furniture, and more.

**Sheldon House:** 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Visit the home of a farming family.

**Wright House:** *Saturday only*, from 9:30am - 1 p.m. & 2 p.m. - 4:30 pm

Featuring "Furniture Masterworks: Tradition and Innovation in Western Massachusetts"

## Food and Drink

**At the Event Site:** Popcorn, snacks and cold drinks will be available on site at the pop-up Museum Store tent.

### **Champney's Restaurant and Tavern**

at the Deerfield Inn will be offering their full spring lunch and dinner menu featuring local farm products. To-Go, Dine-In, Dine Outside.

Lunch 11:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Dinner 4 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Call 413-774-5587 for reservations and to place to-go orders.

**Museum Gift Shop & Bookstore** features books, gifts, jewelry, snacks, and cold drinks. Open 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.



---

## About the Sheep

### **What are Heritage Breeds?**

The living creatures here today are not historical objects, but they are part of an historical tradition. Products of generations of skilled breeding, they were selectively developed to thrive in specific environments and to provide people with certain kinds of wool, meat, or both. As such, they are examples of human ingenuity like the objects in Historic Deerfield's collection. Keeping the breeds alive is a different kind of preservation than the work we do with our houses and artifacts—but it is historic preservation nonetheless. Some of these breeds are critically endangered and possess important genetic qualities that we continue to discover and use today, making their continued existence all the more important.

## Sheep in England?

The fleeces of **Lincoln Longwool** and **Romney Marsh** sheep (both on display here) were extremely important to the woolen mills of Britain in the 18th century. Norwich, one of the major woolen manufactory centers, exported huge amounts of woolen cloth to colonial America. Many of the imported woolen textiles used in the production of bed hangings, clothing, upholstery and window treatments were the product of the English long wool sheep. Historic Deerfield's textile collections on display in the Flynt Center and historic houses possess longwool sheep's wool.

## Sheep in New England?

Sheep were already important to the lifeways of English settlers who colonized what is now New England in the 1600s and 1700s. Colonists brought sheep over from England very early on: English settlers landed at what's now Plymouth in 1620 and first imported **Romney Marsh** sheep to Massachusetts between 1624 and 1629. Sheep provided meat, milk, and manure to their small subsistence farms and homesteads. As English colonists moved into and colonized the fertile areas (such as the town of Deerfield), the introduction of new animal species irreparably transformed the environments that had sustained the Indigenous peoples of New England for centuries.

By the 1800s, farmers in the rocky, poorer-quality soil of the hilltowns in Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire went all-in on sheep who were well-suited to that terrain. They were able to eat the scant grass in rocky pastures that could not produce the lucrative cereal crops of the fertile lowlands. The growth of factories and mills in New England in this same period meant that there was a local market for good-quality wool that could be spun into yarn to make cloth. Expanding market economies made self-sufficient farms increasingly rare, prompting more farmers to focus on cash crops, such as wool.

Thus the introduction of **Spanish Merino** sheep (also on display) to New England in the first decade of the 1800s dramatically changed this area's economy and even landscape. Networks of stone walls enclosed the pastures, many of which had been ancient forests cleared just for sheep. The Merino produced the finest fiber wool in the world, and produced it in huge volumes. By 1837, there were over 55,000 sheep in Franklin County, Massachusetts. Just three towns along the Connecticut River in New Hampshire had 10,000 sheep among them. That's a lot of sheep!

By the middle of the century, however, oversupply and the end of a protective tariff destroyed the price of wool and the Merino boom was over. The farmers' preference for huge flocks had depleted their environments and the globalization of trade and the expansion of the American west played a part too: small New England pastures couldn't compete with the space afforded to flocks by the Midwest, Australia, and New Zealand. Sheep never regained their prominence in New England. Between 1840

and 1870, the Vermont sheep population declined by 64 percent and the New Hampshire population by 59 percent. Bye-bye, sheep!

### Sheep to Shears to Shawl?

How did wool go from a sheep to a person's back in the 18th century? This was a complicated process involving many hands, skilled techniques, and some fun new words.

First, wool was *sheared*, or cut from the animal. It was then sorted, washed, and picked clean of debris. It was either *combed* (for fine, smooth *worsted*s) or *carded* for ordinary, fuzzy *woolens* into a *rolag*. This was then *spun* or twisted on a *wool wheel*, transforming the wool into usable yarn. The spinner took the wool off the wheel by winding it onto either a *niddy noddy* or a *clock reel*, stretching and measuring the yarn into a *skein*. This yarn was dyed, and at this stage could be *knit* into simple clothing. *Swifts* also helped spool the yarn onto *bobbins* or *warping frames*, which prepared the yarn for a *weaver*. The weaver used a *loom* to *weave* the individual yarn strands into bolts of cloth which had to be *fulled*, or shrunk and tightened, and then *napped* (having its fibers gently raised) before use.

Additionally, knitting was a constant domestic activity. Clothing was used, repaired, discarded and replaced throughout each year. Woven cloth was more durable and was usually saved. In many households, making and repairing cloth and household textiles was a constant, and female, task. However, few homes would have relied entirely on self-made cloth; most would have imported some of their fabrics from England.

By the time of the great sheep boom in New England, much of the production of woolen cloth was moving to industrialized mills. The complicated, skilled, labor-intensive process described above was lost. The spinning wheel became one of the great symbols of the past: an icon of hard work and handcraft in a society increasingly dependent on industrialization. This had both advantages and disadvantages. Factory-made goods were cheaper for the consumer, but the growth of factories hurt the environment and made many women's textile skills seem obsolete.

You can follow this older process through the stations of our displays here at Woolly Wonders.

# Meet our Heritage Breeds!

## MERINO

*Prada de Lana Sheep Farm, Stockbridge, MA*

This is the breed that changed the culture of the Connecticut Valley. The breed originated in 12th century Spain and was closely guarded as an economic asset to the country. The fine-fibered wool quickly competed with the British wool industry and, once established in America, became a huge success. Merinos were introduced to America by Sir David Humphreys in 1802.



The fleece of the Merino is the finest fiber domestic wool in the world. The breed quickly adapted to New England and became extremely popular and profitable.

The medium sized breed is predominantly white and colored strains are also being bred. They adapt well to the New England climate and lamb easily. Horns are common and curl tightly against the head.

---

## LINCOLN LONGWOOL

*Rocks and Rills Farm, Hancock, NH*

The Lincoln Longwool is the largest of the British breeds. The long lustrous wool was ideal for the worsted wool mills that flourished in Norfolk, England. Many of the 18th century English woolen textiles in the Historic Deerfield collection were the product of the British longwool breeds. Many regional English breeds were improved by using Lincoln Longwools as foundation stock for breeding. The longwools were found throughout New England in the colonial period and today fleeces are sought after by hand spinners and weavers pursuing traditional craft designs.





## SHETLAND

*Silver Bell Farm, Westminster, VT*

Shetland sheep have evolved as a small, short-tailed breed common to the Shetland Islands of Scotland. The wool fleeces of the Shetlands are fine and soft. Fiber artists, knitters, weavers and handspinners enjoy working with these popular fibers. The Shetlands may sometimes be double-coated with a coarse outer fleece for weather protection and a softer inner fleece for warmth.

The breed is small, with a weight averaging less than 125 lbs. A great asset is the diversity of color in the fleeces. Historically, Thomas Jefferson owned Shetland Sheep at Monticello. The breed was re-introduced to America in 1980 and a registry was established.



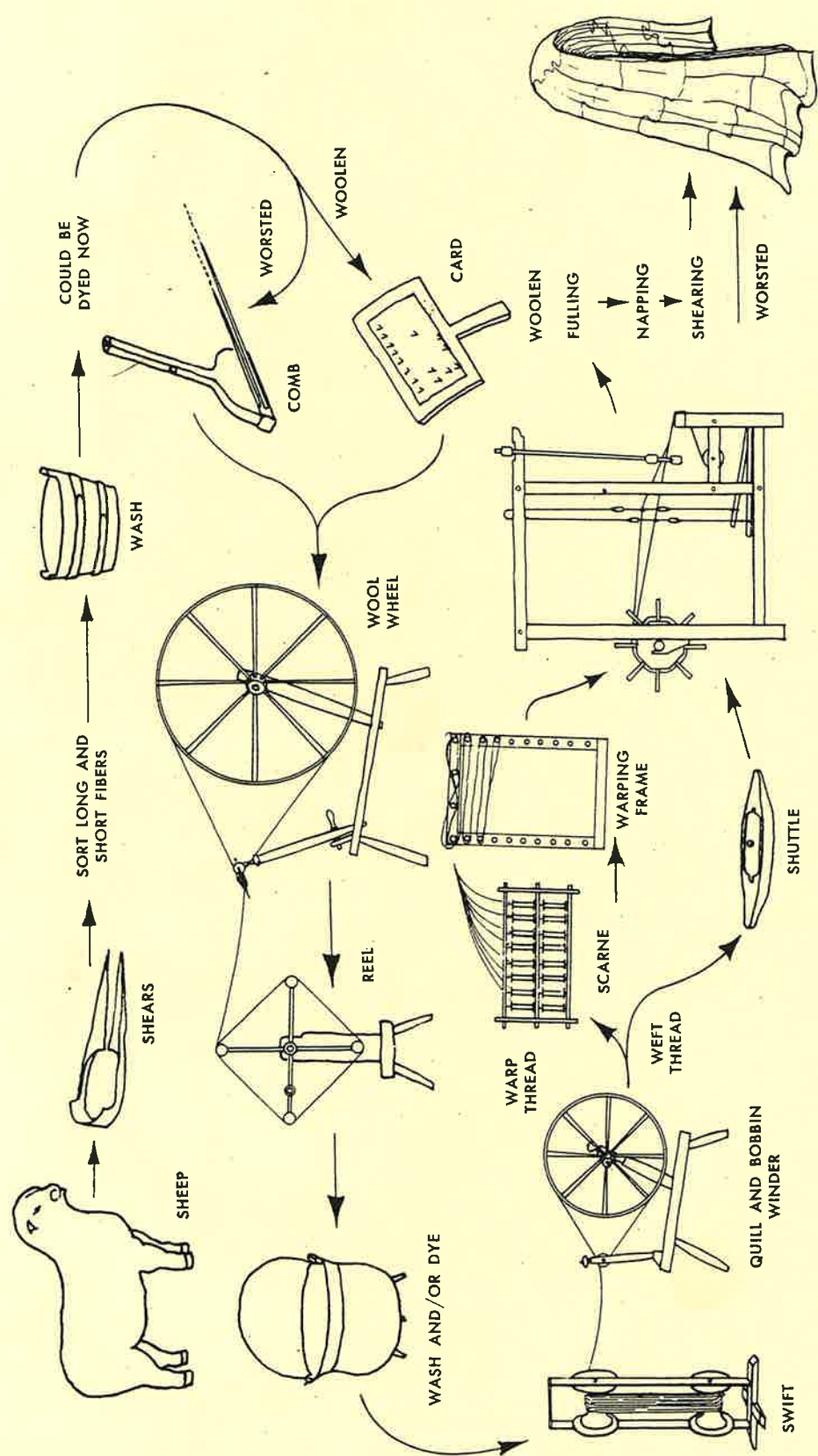
## ROMNEY (ROMNEY MARSH)

*Prada de Lana Sheep Farm, Stockbridge, MA*

An historic longwool breed from Southern England and the first type of sheep introduced to Massachusetts, Romneys played a major role in the development of the English woolen industry. The long wool of the Romneys occurs in both natural-colored and white fleeces. Hand spinners and weavers have found the wool ideal for dyeing and producing a wide variety of knitted and woven projects.



The Romney is a hardy and adaptable breed. They do well on limited vegetation and are particularly resistant to foot rot and other diseases, making them some of the most environmentally adaptable in the world. This led to their becoming the dominant sheep breed in New Zealand. Historically, the breed and its wool quality was improved through crossbreeding with the Border Leicester in the late eighteenth century. Much of the woolens produced in the American Colonies prior to Independence depended on long wool breeds similar to the Romney.



Process Chart for Wool — Woolen and Worsted

v

Marion L. Channing

The Textile Tools of Colonial Homes

**Be sure to complete the  
Wooly Wonders Seek and Find  
(on the back of this page)  
and bring your completed sheet to  
the Museum Store pop-up tent  
to get your prize plus a 10% off coupon  
to use at your next visit to our store!**

## Wooly Wonders Seek and Find

Fill in the blanks as you visit the sheep and demonstrations!

Write your answers in the blank boxes.

When you have filled in all the blanks, visit the Museum Store pop-up tent and get a sticker!

<b>Heritage Breed Sheep</b>	How many breeds of sheep are in the Big Tent?	
<b>Sheep Dog Herding</b>	What is the name of the sheep dog?	
<b>Shearing</b>	What tool did Kathleen use to shear the sheep?	
<b>Washing Wool</b>	What did the wool feel like before you washed it?	
<b>Carding Wool</b>	On a scale of 1-10, how fun was it to card wool?	
<b>Spinning Yarn</b>	What is Nancy's spinning wheel called?	
<b>Yarn Dyeing</b>	What flowers were used to make the dye bath?	
<b>Knitting</b>	What surprised you about the Nancy's demonstration?	
<b>Tape Weaving</b>	Ask Jen what people used woven tape for long ago!	
<b>4-Shaft Loom Weaving</b>	How fun was it to weave on the loom?	
<b>Make and Take Crafts</b>	Did you make a yarn figure or a wooly sheep?	
<b>Finished Fabrics</b>	What fabric did you like the best?	
<b>Mystery Objects</b>	How many did you guess correctly?	
<b>Sheep in the Attic</b>	Did the sheep in the attic make any noise?	
<b>Woolen Objects from the Historic Deerfield Collection</b>	Name one wool item you saw in the Flynt Center Textiles Gallery!	