

Animals in the Colonial Era



Livestock were a necessity for farmers like the Thompson-Neely family. They offered meat and leather, but also filled important roles. Horses and oxen pulled carts and plows. Cows provided fresh milk. Sheep provided wool that could be used for clothing.

Sheep Shearing Craft

Wool in the Colonial Era: Wool was a common fiber and easily renewable. Each spring, sheep would be **shorn**, meaning the wool was cut off (essentially the sheep were given a haircut). The wool would then be **skirted**, removing any portions that can't be used. It's then **washed** and **carded** – brushed with paddles called “carders” to separate and straighten the strands. The wool was then spun into yarn, which could be woven into fabric.

Supplies	Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sheep Craft Template (attached)• Cotton balls (or colored fuzzy balls)• Glue• Crayons/Markers	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Use attached template – you'll be creating a fuzzy, colorful sheep!2. Glue cotton balls to sheep template3. Color in sheep as you want

Did You Know? The sheep raised in Colonial America were mainly British breeds like Cotswolds and Southdowns. Washington himself included Leicester Longwools in his flock at Mount Vernon. Today, you can see examples of all these breeds at Thompson-Neely Farmstead! The Farmstead is home to 14 sheep! Our Farmstead Manager Ross and dedicated Animal Care Volunteers take great care of them, but our sheep still need food, fresh straw bedding, and veterinary care. You can sponsor one of our sheep here: <https://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/sponsor-sheep/>

