

VALLEY FIBER ARTS GUILD

WORKSHOP SERIES 2024-2025 SHEEP BREED STUDY

Breed: Cotswold

The history of the Cotswold sheep is an interesting one. According to an article in Cotswold Magazine, link below, the sheep originated around AD43 when the Roman Empire invaded England. Cotswold is an area in England with rolling green hills, a spot Romans determined was ideal for raising their own breed of sheep.



Picture credit: Cotswold xl magazine

<https://www.cotswoldxlmagazine.com/articles/the-history-of-wool-in-the-cotswolds>

When Romans eventually left that area, the ownership of the sheep transferred to the landowners. The region became known as the Cotswolds, which basically means "sheep's hills". The wool was considered highly desirable and very valuable. The wool was shipped all over the world and was considered "an incredibly profitable European export".

The wool industry was thriving all over the United Kingdom by medieval times, and the Cotswold sheep was central as a fine wool used for production by weavers and merchants alike. The Cotswold wool merchants became wealthy and were known for their large donations to help fund construction of grand and ornate churches, a testament to the whole community's growing prosperity.

Over time the wool industry declined and evolved, particularly during the industrial revolution. Farming began to take over that area. Sheep and farms are still the landscape of that area today. Today that breed is known as the "Cotswold Lion" in that region.

The fleece we are working with is Cotswold Lamb, and was sourced from a farm in Virginia, US.