

A Russ Hat

Lady Cellach Dhonn inghean Mhic an Mhadaidh

(Norah Grégoire)

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Introduction

Felting is an ancient process. Felted fabric is thought to predate woven or spun fabric. Among the oldest examples of felt are 3500 year old hats found in Scandinavia. (White) The Countries of Scandinavia and of Russia have a long history of felt making. While Asian peoples are known for their large pieces of felt rolled with mother felt. The Northern Europeans have a tradition of making three-dimensional clothing shaped to fit the body.

Thick felted boots, hats, and mittens provide protection against long and cold winter.

Felted hat

Russian peasants considered head dress as an important part of an outfit. All members of the community had to cover their heads when they went outside their home. (Novgorod museum). As a whole the head piece was a kind of passport for village people. They would know the wearer's health, wealth, family situation, marital status.... They could change hats during the year if their situation changes.

Among the poor population of felted Kolpak or chepkah was used. It's was a domed cap with narrow trimming with or without fur for winter time. (figure 1)



Figure 1 Head dress for men

I choose to felt the basic Novgorod peasant hat that men used in the 12th century to the 15th century. It was made with Romanov sheep wool. The Romanov sheep has grey and black fleece. A picture of the hat in Novgorod is shown in annexe 1.

Wool

The Russ hat was made with Romanov sheep wool. The Romanov sheep has grey and black fleece. (20 to 30 microns.) Undyed wool was used to do the hats. (white) In the picture they used black fleece on the inside the hat and grey fleece for the outside. Since my local store doesn't carry Romanov sheep wool, I have chosen similar fleece so I took a grey Icelandic wool of 25 microns and black Gotland fleece of 25 microns.

Felting the hat

Generally wool is sheared from sheep in the spring or fall. The fiber as to be prepare for felting. At a minimum the fibers must be fluffed or combed. (White) In Russia, about every peasant had a sheep or two at home. The sheep was versatile for clothing, and food. The used sticks of wood to fluffed the fleece and used combs.

Felt is made when animal hair fibers, usually sheep's wool are caused to permanently forming a dense fabric. Usually this is achieved by layering combed wool in a desired shape, wetting with olive soap and water. Then agitating by rubbing or rolling or pounding. Many objects are done using a combination of method. The rolling method is by far the most efficient method. The Northern European used birch bark to rolled their fleece.

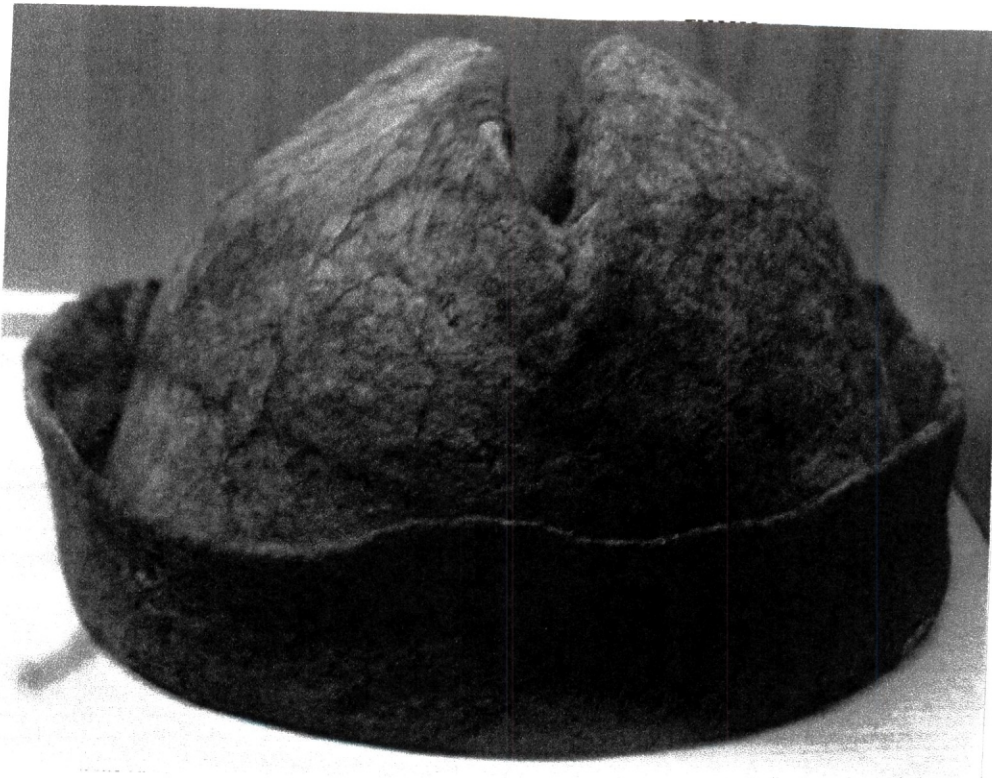
I used bubble wrap to layer my wool fiber , 3 layers on the bubble wrap side. Then I put a resist (plastic floor covering.) and add 3 layers of fleece on the resist side.. Sprinkle water and soap on the fleece, gently rub. Then rolled it around a pool noodle and rolled it for one hour. Method of fleece making is shown in annexe 2.

Considerations for future project

I'm pleased with the result and will try to make other felted hats from different period and culture.

I need to perfect the rim so it will be more even.

Annexe 1



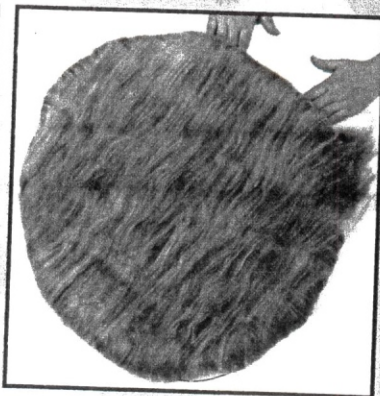
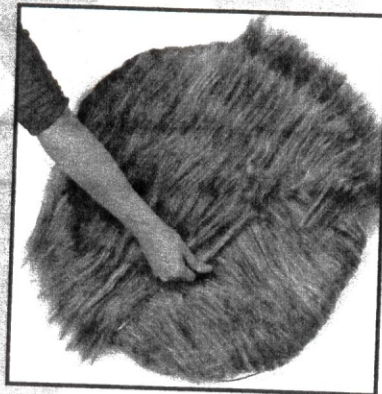
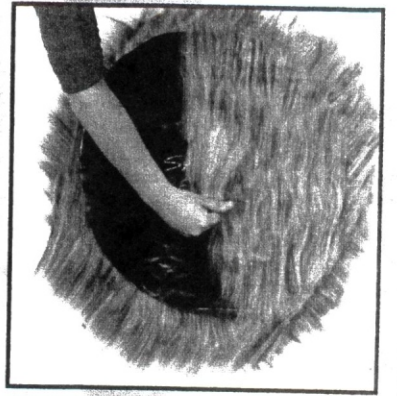
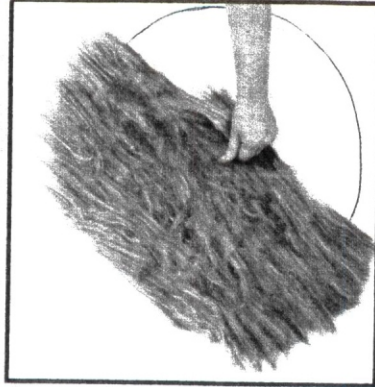
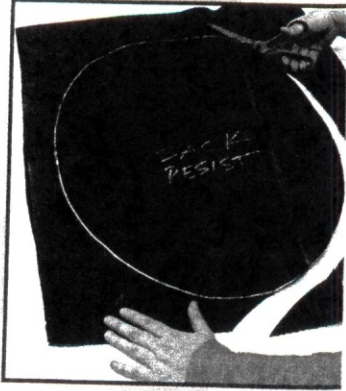
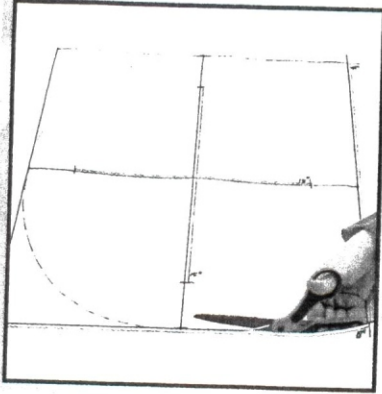
Russ Felted Hat

12th -15th century, Novgorod, Russia

Novgorod Textile Museum

Annexe 2

Making Felt



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