



**Winter 2017**

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## Felt: *FYI* Special Issue

folklore • fiber • finest wool



### Ancient Felt History: *The Yurt*

Felt has been a vital part of civilization since the earliest of times. Around 10,000 BC nomadic life began in Central Asia when animals, including sheep, were domesticated and required shelter. The nomads built large round felt-covered portable structures called yurts to protect from predators. The yurts housed both families and livestock as nomads migrated across the countryside of Mongolia, Siberia, and Turkey. Traditional and modern yurts are still widely used today.

This special issue features information from some of our most popular *Educational Series* newsletter articles. You may remember these from about five years ago. The series focused on different felt topics including various fibers, types of wool, nonwoven terminology, and the history of felt. In this issue, we include all the favorites in one, easily referenced newsletter. We hope you find this information useful and fun. Please share with your friends and customers!

## Felt: *FYI* folklore

Felt making is an ancient tradition and the oldest form of fabric known to humankind, predating weaving and knitting. In Turkey, the remains of felt have been found dating back at least to 6,500 B.C.E. Although the exact origin of felting is unknown, different cultures have their own folklores. The felt legends all tell a story of wool fibers exposed to friction and moisture. Here are several popular legends of the discovery of this basic "wet-felting" technique:



*Felt is a nonwoven material produced by matting, condensing, and pressing fibers together.*

- **Story of Saint Clement.** St. Clement was a monk who became the fourth bishop of Rome. Legend has it that he placed wool in his sandals and discovered that the fibers became matted together to produce felt. According to Anglican *Church of St Clements* in the Archdiocese of York (England), felt makers and hatters have St. Clement as their patron saint for perfecting the process and manufacturing of felt.



- **Noah's Ark legend.** This is a favorite with children. Sheep, goats, camels and other animals herded together in the Ark and shed their fleece during the voyage. The "moisture" from the animals combined with their fleece and it became compressed when trampled underfoot. After the animals left the Ark, Noah discovered the floor carpeted in felt.
- **Sumerian legend.** This legend claims that Urnamman of Lagash discovered the secret of felt making. Sumer was one of the early civilizations of the Ancient Near East.

