

Felt [O. Eng. *felt* : Germ. *Filz*. Cf. Lat. *pilus*, hair, and Gr. *πίλος*, felt, fez] : a stuff composed of wool, fur, or hair, of which the fibers are so entangled and interlaced that they can not readily be separated. Felt is an article which has long been known. Homer and Hesiod distinctly mention it. It was a common material for caps, hosiery, floor-cloths, tents, and cloaks. It has long been known in the East, and the nomads of the desert largely occupy tents of felt. There is, however, a tradition that St. Clement discovered felt while on a pilgrimage. Having put a bat of carded wool into each shoe to save his feet from blistering, he found at his journey's end that moisture and friction had converted the wool into felt.

Waste wool is largely employed for felting. It is first deprived of its oil, then carded and placed in a machine, where it is kept wet with hot water and subjected to a process of beating, by which the fibers are made to move upon each other until the interlocking of their serrations and the curling of the fiber itself unite the whole into a compact sheet of felt. The *fulling* of cloth is but a partial felting of wool already woven. Felted wool is used for carpets (often beautifully printed), carpet-covers, coarse hats, carriage-linings, and even for cloaks and other garments. The cheapest woolen rags, etc., are worked into felt for covering steam-boilers. This is an excellent non-conductor, and greatly diminishes the waste of heat. Roofing felt is a coarse kind, usually coated and filled with coal-tar and sometimes with tar and powdered slate. Felt is also used for sheathing walls, and is useful as a non-conductor of heat. Felt for hats is made of the fur of nutria, raccoons, beavers, conies (rabbits), etc., and is generally mixed with some Saxony or other felting wool. The heap of fur is struck with a bowstring until it falls into an even layer, and it is felted by working it with the hands in a soapy liquid. Machinery is also sometimes used in this process.