

APPENDIX 9.1
COMMON TEXTILE TERMS
(Margan Allyn Grover)

A GLOSSARY OF COMMON TEXTILE TERMS

Margan Allyn Grover

- Albert cloth** – an overcoating of double cloth construction, all wool and reversible, each side a different color and requiring no lining.
- Alnage** – equivalent of one ell, or 45in. The former measurement of cloth now little used. Of varying measure in different countries.
- American cloth** – the name given by the British to American oilcloth, used occasionally for water proofing caps, jackets and travelling cases.
- American cotton** – cotton grown in the US, constitutes a bulk of world's cotton, length 5/8 to 1 ¼ in.
- American-Egyptian cotton** – grown in California and Arizona. Has long staple, 1-½ inches or more (Pima cotton).
- Armozeen/armozine** – a heavy corded silk, usually black, formerly used for waistcoats, but now for scholastic and clerical robes.
- Astrakhan** – formerly a general name for broad tail or Karakul lambs from Astrakhan in Russia. A type of lambskin now called *caracul*.
- Astrakhan cloth** – a manufactured cloth made to resemble Astrakhan fur.
- Balbriggan** – first made in Balbriggan, Ireland, an unbleached cotton fabric with fleeced back. Manufactured in variations of tan and grey, used especially for men's winter underwear.
- Balmoral cloth** – British fabric of a twill weave, striped in red, grey, blue or black.
- Bandle** – in Scottish and English dialect, a word meaning two feet wide. Also Irish linen, coarse, handmade and two feet wide.
- Bannockburn** – a cloth made in Bannockburn, Scotland, a tweed center. A typical British tweed and one of the best used for suitings and topcoatings.
- Basket weave** – plain woven fabric with two or more warp and filling yarns used as one.
- Batiste** – a sheer finely woven cloth of linen and wool. Soft, plain woven cotton of combed mercerized yarns; sheer wool is often called batiste. Corset fabric called batiste is of cotton broadcloth type.
- Beaver cloth** – thick woolen napped fabric originally made in England to resemble beaver fur. Used for coats. Also, a pile fabric with a cotton back, for hats.
- Beetling** – a flattening process on cotton, linen damask or other fabrics. Surface pounded for luster.
- Bengal** – a cotton gingham cloth originally from Bengal, India woven in colored stripes. This cloth was the origin of the multicolored striped silks popular in men's scarves.
- Bengaline** – a general term applied to silk and wool fabrics with a corded or rep effect. The heavy, soft spun, woolen weft is covered closely in the weaving with silk or wool. Used in coats, dresses and draperies. Resembles poplin with heavier filling yarns. Plain weave is used for dresses and coats.
- Berlin/German wool** – yarn made from wool of Merino sheep. Generally dyed very bright, strong colors.
- Blankets** – may be either plain or twill, of single or double construction, and are usually napped.
- Bleaching** – process of destroying natural coloring matter in fibers.
- Boiled off silk** – silk with sericin removed. Meaning is same as *degummed*.
- Bolt** – length of cloth from loom, rolled or folded. Called piece or cut of cloth. Vary in length.
- Bombast/bombace** – a type of cotton stuffing and padding, originally French.
- Bombazine** – a twilled English fabric made of cotton or cotton and wool blends.
- Bonded** – nonwoven. Various fibers in a web arranged in parallel or random form, then bound together by mechanical means with moisture and heat, or chemical means.
- Book linen** – a firm, sized linen used in men's wear to stiffen collars and belts.
- Braid** – differs from weaving or knitting. Several yarns cross diagonally.
- Broadcloth** – formerly, cloth made wider than 29 inches. A high-grade woolen cloth used especially for men's wear, a lighter fabric being made for women's wear. Woven of the finest felting wool, usually dyed in the raw, but always made in a wide width. A plain, close weave of single or two ply yarn and usually mercerized. May be plain or printed. When manufactured of woolen or blends, it has a lustrous nap.
- Broadsilk** – silk made wider than 18 inches.
- Brushed wool** – a knit or woven cloth made of long fibers, which have been brushed. Fabrics appropriate for sweaters, scarves and trimmings.

Bunting – plain weave colored fabric, used for flags and decoration, a low grade dyed cheesecloth.

Burlap – coarse yute, plain weave, natural brown or tan, used for gunnysacks and furniture wrapping.

Caffa/Kaffa – a rich silk made in the Arabic town of Al Kufa in the 16th to 18th centuries.
Also the name of a painted cotton made in India during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Calamanco/Calimanco – a European woolen cloth of satin weave in an imitation of camel's hair. Used for coats popular until the late 18th century. Also a glazed, shiny woolen used for garments as well as quilts.

Calico – a cotton textile printed on one side. It came from Calicut, India, where printed cottons originated in the mid-19th century. It is closely woven, but varies in fineness and weight.

cambric – white cotton fabric, plain, with a close weave, and firmer than nainsook. Also may be of fine, closely woven linen.

Camlet/chamlet – a closely woven fabric made in Turkey of camels hair and later imitated in Europe. Made mostly of Angora wool with silk, linen, or cotton. Used in the 17th and 18th centuries by the American colonists for petticoats, cloaks and hoods.

Canton flannel – heavy cotton fabric with a twill weave and one side heavily napped.

Canvas – coarse fabrics with square mesh, plain woven and strong, with soft finish or sized. Of linen, cotton, flax, tow or yute, bleached or unbleached. Used for sailcloth, awnings. Lining canvas of linen or cotton is often used for tailoring.

Carding – mechanical process of separating raw fibers of wool, cotton or waste silk fiber.

Cavalry, twill, tricotine – a stout twill weave with a decided diagonal cord of wool, cotton, or rayon. Used for sportswear and uniforms. Traditionally, a fine wool worsted fabric, or combination of worsted warp and woolen weft.

Challis, challie – formerly a wool and silk fabric, lightweight, now made of fine wool, or wool with rayon or cotton. Usually printed with a delicate floral pattern. Used for negligees, dresses infant's clothes and nightgowns.

Chambray - a fine quality gingham with a colored warp and white filling with a linen finish.

Cheesecloth – unsized cotton of plain weave, thin, soft, bleached or unbleached. Used for garment interlining, covering of padding and in many other ways.

Cheviot – a woolen or worsted fabric used for suits and overcoats. Twill woven from the coarse shaggy wool of the sheep from the Cheviot Hills between England and Scotland. This is also the name of a shirting that is a plain or twilled heavy cotton with a soft finish. Resembles serge but is heavier and slightly napped. Also made in blends of wool and other fibers.

Cheviot shirting – coarse plain weave cotton in checks or stripes. May be twill weave or dobby pattern.

Chiffon – sheer silk, rayon, or nylon plain weave fabric.

China silk – originally a pure silk fabric made in China. Now a plain woven, lightweight, lustrous fabric of silk or rayon, used for slips and dress linings.

Coating – woven or knitted fabrics for outer wear which comes in various weights, compositions, and finishes.

Combed yarn – cotton or wool having long staple, parallel fibers. Superior to carded yarn.

Compound fabric – woven of two or more sets of warp or filling or both.

Cord – surface rib effect in fabrics. Also is two or more ply yarns twisted together to form cord.

Corduroy – a weft-pile fabric, traditionally made from cotton, featuring pile cords produced by a special structure combined with a cutting process.

Cotton broadcloth – a fine mercerized durable fabric put out in white, dyed or printed patterns. Used for men's and women's garments.

Cotton satin – characterized by warp face weave, superior to sateen, may be solid print or color. Highly mercerized to give added permanent luster.

Cottonade – heavy cotton twill, usually having blue and white stripes.

Crash – meaning "coarse". A coarse linen or a coarse woolen suiting in homespun effect obtained by weaving thick uneven cotton, linen or rayon yarns. Used for mens sportswear.

Damask – a rich fabric, known in England in the 13th century and in use ever since. Woven of silk or linen and made originally in Damascus. The flat woven pattern combines the satiny and flat surfaces for light and shade effects. Table damask is made of linen, cotton, rayon and cotton. Linen may be single or double damask, having 5 or 7 float yarns. Cotton is always mercerized.

Damask, Chinese – a reversible fabric of linen, silk, wool or rayon. One side is of satin on a twill woven ground and the other a twill woven motif on a satin ground.

Denim – hard-wearing twill fabric, traditionally made from cotton. Weave is usually 3/1 twill and a steep twill.

Donegal tweed – see “*tweed, Donegal*”

Double cloth – woven, reversible, and having two sets of warp yarns and two of filling. May combine two different weaves.

Drill, drilling – a stout, twilled cotton or linen used for men’s shirts, middie blouses, linings, summer trousers and uniforms. Similar to denim, but better quality it is made in warp faced twill, such as 3/1 and 2/1, but also in the satin weave.

Duck – a fabric rather like canvas or tightly woven cotton or linen, with plain or rib weaves. Of varying weights and possessing great washability, it is used for work clothes.

Egyptian cotton – a long staple, fine strong fiber having a brownish color. Used in knit goods.

Ell – old European measurement of cloth that is different in different countries. The English ell was 45 inches, but today 36 inches is more generally accepted.

End – warp yarns are referred to as ends, wefts as picks.

End on end – a fine check formed by a weave of alternate warp yarns of white and color. Used in cotton broadcloth, chambray and Oxford cloth for shirts, pajamas and sportswear.

Facing – a false hem sewn to the underside of edges of collars, cuffs, or edge of skirt. Provides a better finish than the turned up edge alone.

Felt cloth – Wool, fur or combinations of matted fibers are felted by the use of moisture, heat, steam, pressure and hammering into a compact piece. Used for hats, sportswear, trim, etc. The fur of animals caught in the winter makes better felt. May also be first woven and then shrunk to a felt.

Flannel - Plain or twill wool fabric slightly napped. Made in various weights and finishes. Nap is normally nondirectional. In 1796, a demand for English flannels for scarves and shawls developed with the weaving of muslin dresses in all seasons.

Flannel, Canton- first made in China, a heavy, warm cotton cloth widely used.

Flannelette – Raised cotton fabric made to imitate true flannel, made in either plain weave or in simple twill, napped on one side, usually striped or printed.

Fleece – entire coat of wool as sheered from the animal. Fleece wool means clipped, not pulled.

Fleece fabric – characterized by soft woolen twill with deep nap, may be knitted.

Frieze, frise – a stout woolen cloth with a shaggy or “friezed” pile used since the 14th century. Heavy woolen twill overcoating that is napped. Frise typically refers to pile fabric for upholstery.

Gabardine – fine quality wool worsted fabric showing a clear prominent steep twill on face and back.

Gingham – a popular cotton fabric of pre-dyed yarn in a plain weave, but of several colors in checks, stripes and plaids. Better grades are made from combed yarns, lower grades from carded yarn.

Glazing – a process of applying a smooth, glossy surface to a fabric.

Hank – a commercial length of yarn; as worsted yarn, 560 yards: silk, 120 yards: cotton 840 yards: linen, 10 leas in England, 12 leas in Ireland and Scotland.

Herringbone weave – an irregular twill weave in zigzag repetition of short diagonal lines resembling a fishbone pattern. Similar to chevron weave.

Holland linen – a plain-woven stout linen cloth of many muslin types made in Holland. Usually unbleached. Also known as shade cloth. Usually has a smooth brilliant finish.

Homespun – a fabric loosely woven originally by hand in a plain weave in wool, linen, or cotton. Now made by machine of wool, cotton or rayon with coarse yarns in a plain tweed pattern to simulate the early homemade look.

Hound’s tooth check – a brilliant broken check, the design simulating canine teeth. May be woven in wool, worsted, cotton or rayon.

Irish linen – fine plain woven full-bleached linen cloth of Irish flax.

jacquard – a knitting stitch in which the motif is raised in bas-relief. May exhibit elaborate woven patterns, as in brocade and damask.

Jean – cotton fabric similar to denim, woven in 2/1 twill with a warp face and showing a fairly steep twill.

Jersey – an elastic cloth in tricot or stockinette stitch. Usually wool. Knitted for sailors and fishermen in a plain knit, not ribbed, circular knit. Made from yarns of any fiber or blends. Wool jersey is usually tubular.

- *Single jersey* – knitted fabric from machine with one set of needles.
- *Double jersey* – knitted fabric from machine with two sets of needles.

Jute – a glossy fiber of two East Indian plants used chiefly for sacking, burlap, cheap twine, and wrapping paper. Sometimes combined with silk or wool and made into fabric.

Kalmack, kalmuk – a cloth made of wool or shaggy cotton, resembling bearskin.

Karakul – a hardy breed of sheep originating from the Karakul Valley in Russia near Caspian Sea.

Kashha – fine soft napped wool dress goods.

Kelt – a kind of rough woolen frieze cloth usually white and rough on one side. Made in Scotland and Northern England. Used for skirts, suits and coats.

Kersey – thick woolen twilled cloth related to Melton or heavy broadcloth but having a shorter nap.

Knit goods – fabric constructed by interlooping of yarns in continuous mesh.

Linen cambric – plain weave linen, sheer or coarse. Used for handkerchiefs and dress goods.

Linen textured – cotton, silk, or rayon woven of rough yarns which suggest the surface of crash. Resembles texture of linen.

Long cloth – a closely woven plain weave cotton cloth made of fine combed yarns. It was one of the first fabrics to be woven in a long piece, hence the name. Lightweight, plain woven, unfinished, bleached muslin used for underwear and linings.

Mackinaw – heavy woolen twill, napped; may have plaid back.

Mercerized – A physical and chemical process which renders cotton fibers permanently more lustrous, stronger, more absorbent, and more susceptible to dye. Treated under caustic soda under tension.

Merino – a breed of fine woolled sheep. Considered the best for worsted and woolen knitting. The woven fabric resembles cashmere and is used in suits and coats.

Monk's cloth – rough canvas-like cotton in basket weave 2-2 and 4-4.

Mousseline – a fabric of cotton, wool or silk, that is very fine and soft. Also in heavier weights for use in linings and trial patterns.

Mull – old fashioned fabrics in a plain woven, very lightweight silk or cotton. Formerly popular for women's blouses and children's frocks. Popular in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Muslin – Firm plain woven cotton, stronger and heavier than long cloth, coarser than cambric.

Nail – a cloth measurement; one sixteenth of a yard or 2 ½ inches.

Nankeen, nankin – a strong, buff colored Chinese cotton woven of fibrous tissue of a tree or shrub grown in East Indies and China. Introduced in America in 1828. Also a fabric made with tussah silk in plain or twill weaves and in natural or ecru colors. Weight and texture vary with quality.

nap – hairy fibers of uniform lengths and texture, lying smoothly in one direction and forming a soft surface - not a pile.

Napping – Finishing process as for wool, broadcloth, cotton, outing flannel, or knit goods. Ends of the fibers are raised to the surface by metal teeth or burrs to produce a soft, fuzzy surface.

Oilcloth – cotton fabric which has been painted and varnished. Has a wide variety of uses. Known in Great Britain as American cloth.

Oilskin – a heavy cotton cloth made waterproof by being impregnated with oil and gum. Used for sailors apparel – called oilskins or slickers.

Osnabruk – a coarse linen imported from Prussia, used for men's shirts, jackets and breeches.

Oxford cloth – also called Cambridge mixture. Woolen cloth woven combining black, white, and grey. Group of cotton fabrics; made of combed yarn, having modified basket weave, used chiefly for shirtings. Sailcloth is also a modified basket weave.

Oxford shirting – a stout cotton fabric in plain or fancy basket weaves or with narrow colored stripes.

Pashm, pashim, pashimina – Persian word for wool.

Peasant cloth – a brightly dyed or printed stout muslin popular for play clothes.

Penistone – a coarse woolen cloth made from the 16th to 19th centuries in England. Used for cloaks and dresses.

Percale – similar to cambric; plain woven cotton fabric with a firm smooth finish. Printed in white, solid color, or various patterns.

Pilot cloth – a dark blue woolen cloth, coarse, strong and thick, twilled with a nap on one side. Used for sailors jackets and overcoats.

Pima cotton – originally, long staple cotton fibers, used in combed yarns for fine dress goods.

Pique – cotton fabric with warp-wise cord effect; lighter in weight than Bedford. May have a small neat embossed type design. Originally from cotton.

Plaid – fabrics using warp and filling of colors to weave design. May be wool, cotton, etc.

May be copied in print as percale.

Plain knit – characterized by a distinct right and wrong side.

Plain weave – the simplest form of weave with the threads interlacing alternately at right angles.
Also called 1-1 or tabby, variations are the rib and the basket.

Polished cotton – describes cotton goods having a smooth finish. Usually has satin weave. The finish may be permanent or the result of high calendering process.

Poplin – a lightweight ribbed fabric woven like grosgrain. Of linen or cotton warp with wool or nylon filling, usually plain dyed.

Rep, repp – a cloth of silk or wool or both with a crosswise ribbed or corded surface. A prominently ribbed fabric. True repp was a plain weave made with two warps, one fine and one coarse.. Resembles poplin but has a heavier cord or filling, and is usually a wider fabric.

Rib – variation of plain weave, having a vertical or horizontal cord of heavier yarns usually in the filling, as in poplin.

Rib knit – more elastic and durable than plain knit. Lengthwise ribs formed by single wales alternating on right and wrong sides. Called 1-1 rib. Two wales alternating called 2-2 rib.

Sackcloth or sacking – coarse, heavy linen, cotton or muslin used for sportsuits. Has rough texture.

Sailcloth – heavy duck or canvas used for sails, tents and such. Once popular for stiffening coat fronts. Heavy, plain weave cotton, having ply yarns which vary. May be white or colored, striped or printed. Usually in 2-1 variation of basket weave.

Sateen – an imitation of satin made of cotton warp and cotton or wool filling, with the face of the cloth, silk or rayon. Not a straight forward reversing of satin weave because the weft yarns are more numerous and more closely set than the warp yarns. Plain or printed.

Satin – a silk or rayon fabric of thick, close texture with smooth, glossy surface and dull back. Weave uses long floats of warp over weft.

Seersucker – cotton, silk or rayon with or without a crinkled stripe made by alternating plain and puckered stripes achieved in weaving. Normally plain weave.

Selvedge, selvedge – the webbed edge of a woven fabric which prevents its unraveling. Finished warpwise.

Serge – a fabric of worsted yarn with diagonal twill on both sides. Now made in wool, cotton, and blends. 2/2 and 3/3 twills are most commonly used.

Serge, silk – a twilled silk fabric of a heavy grade of surah especially used in men's coat linings.

Serge, wide wale – a cloth with a definite diagonal weave, sometimes called cheviot serge.

Sheeting – cotton, plain weave fabric made in two types - muslin and cambric.

Shetland cloth – a shaggy cloth made from the wool of sheep raised in the Shetland Isles off Scotland. Informal suit and overcoat cloth, lightweight and warm.

Sizing – Finishing process in which yarns or cloth are treated with a stiffening substance to give strength and smoothness.

Square weave – plain woven fabric with equal number of warp and filling yarns.

Stamin, stammel - a coarse woollen cloth usually dyed red; formerly used for underwear.

Suede cloth – a knitted or woven cloth with the surface napped and shorn to simulate leather. Suede finish is also applied to some wool and cotton fabrics.

Suiting – general term for large class of woolens, worsteds, and various blends in different weaves.

Taffeta – A luxurious silk fabric of plain weave and several finishes in the 18th C.; later plain dyed, brocaded in beautiful colors. Originally closely woven fine plain weave.

Tattersall – a general name for heavy woollen fancy vestings of small plaids and checks in bright colors. Specifically, a check of narrow lines crossing at less than one-inch intervals usually in two colors on white.

Thread – distinguished from yarn used in weaving and knitting. Sewing cotton is usually six-cord (3-ply) thread, each ply is double and mercerized or glazed. Linen and silk also made into sewing thread.

Ticking – a closely woven, heavy cotton or linen fabric of which mattress, pillow and bolster coverings are made. Usually striped. Used mid-19th C. Damask - Jacquard woven design, often in two colors. Bohemian – fine, close, plain weave, stripe of white with colored filling.

Tweed, Donegal – a handscoured, homespun tweed originally made by Donegal peasants on hand looms. Also loosely woven tweeds of Yorkshire yarns dyed and finished in Donegal. May be plain, herringbone or twill weave, or have district checks such as hound's tooth.

Tweed, Scot – a coarse or soft woolen fabric, usually rough surfaced, in plain or twill weave. Made in plaids, checks and mixtures.

Twill or diagonal weave – the strongest of all weaves, having a distinct diagonal line from selvedge to selvedge. Wool twills include serge and gabardine; cotton twills, denim and ticking. fabric. Most common is 2/2 twill (serge).

Uniform cloth – for military services, etc. Serge and melton are examples.

Unfinished worsted – worsted with a slight nap, which obscures the weave. Typically has little finish.

Venetian cloth – woolen cloth of fine texture woven either with a nap or diagonal twill.

Verona serge – a cotton and wool worsted, thin and woven with a twill.

Widths of cloths – varies with uses. There is a tendency to weave wider cloths for advantage of cutting garments. In general, cottons are woven 36”-39”-45” wide. Wools range 54”-60” wide. Some silk imports 36” wide.

Wool batiste – all wool fabric, fine and lightweight, thinner than challis. Used for dresses.

Woolens – woolen fabrics are made of shorter fibers than worsteds. The yarns are made from short, soft fibers mixed loosely before spinning and usually have a slightly fuzzy texture as in tweeds and coatings. Cloth made of woolen yarn may be fulled after weaving and finished by napping, as in wool broadcloth.

Worsted – a woolen fabric made of yarn that is smooth and compact and has been evenly combed, producing a long-wearing cloth such as serge or gabardine. The yarn is made from relatively long wool fibers, laid parallel before spinning. Smooth fabrics such as gabardine are made from worsted yarns.

Yarn – made by twisting together fibers. Used for weaving and knitting.

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