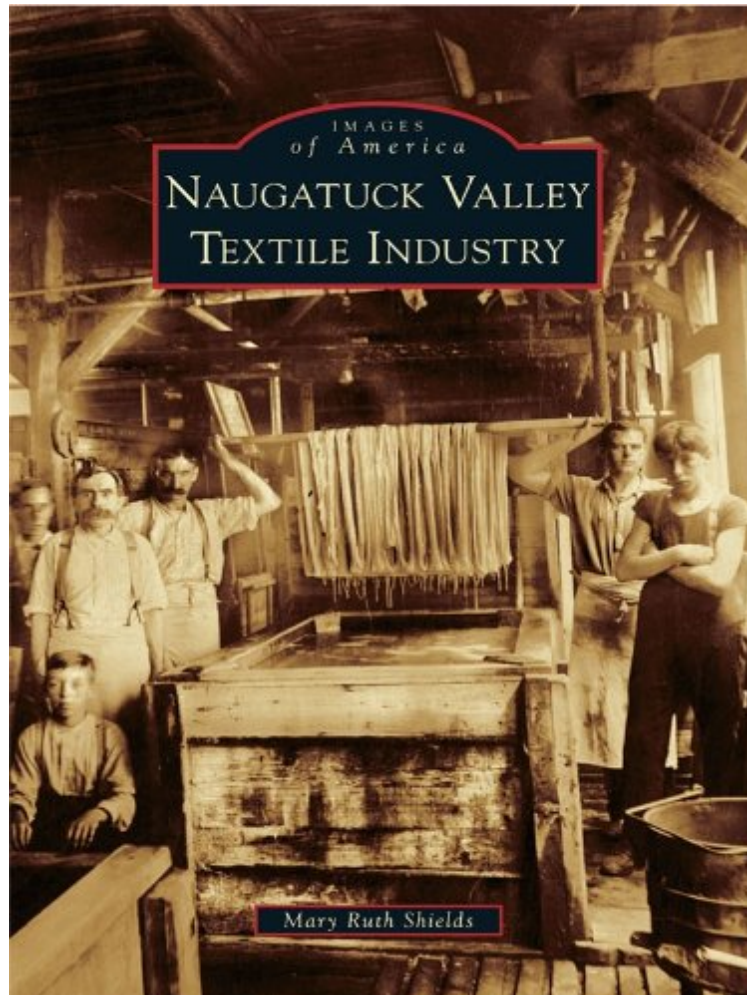


[FREE] Naugatuck Valley Textile Industry (Images of America)

## Naugatuck Valley Textile Industry (Images of America)

*Mary Ruth Shields*

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**Mary Ruth Shields : Naugatuck Valley Textile Industry (Images of America)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Naugatuck Valley Textile Industry (Images of America):

The textile industry found its roots in Connecticut along the banks of the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers between Waterbury and Bridgeport. From the early 1800s, when David Humphries, former aide-de-camp to Gen. George Washington, brought the woolen industry to America, to the 1950s, when the vast Sidney Blumenthal Mills moved to the South, the textile industry shaped life in the Naugatuck Valley. The industry witnessed labor actions, inspired cultural expression, and experienced the growth of shipping by road, water, and rail. Workers produced felted wool, cotton, and silk fabrics, velvet, fake fur, wool hosiery, buttons, ribbons, and various other goods, laying the foundation

for the prosperity enjoyed by the valley today.

Title: Book illustrates Valley's textile heritage  
Author: Michelle Tuccitto Sullo  
Publisher: New Haven Register  
Date: 1/15/2011  
Wool, buttons, rubber-soled shoes, hoop skirts and corsets were among the goods manufactured in the Naugatuck Valley for decades. Author Mary Ruth Shields has chronicled that part of the Valley's history in her new book, "Naugatuck Valley Textile Industry," part of the Images of America series, which spotlights the history of communities across the country. "I am interested in history in general, and I knew there was textile industry in the Valley," Shields said, when asked what prompted her to write the book. "I love investigating things and finding out about the history. I thought it is something people in the Valley should know about." Shields, a Shelton resident since 2002, said she especially hopes the book will help area children learn more about the manufacturing in the region. "The concept of Yankee ingenuity is something the entire Valley shares," she said. The region didn't have a lot of crop land, but it did have rivers, so mills and factories along the rivers helped people support their families, she said. If you have ancestors who lived in the Valley, there is a good chance they worked in the textile industry, according to Shields. Shields is the chairwoman of the fashion merchandising and the marketing departments at Lincoln College of New England in Southington, where she teaches. She also is on the board of the Valley Arts Council. She designs apparel and accessories for her own label at a studio at the Valley Center for the Arts in Derby. The book highlights important local historic figures such as Gen. David Humphreys, who served during the Revolutionary War and "founded the first woolen mill in the United States on the Naugatuck River," in what is now Seymour, according to the book. According to Shields, Humphreys originated the "mill villager" concept, in which a mill would have a nearby store, school and housing for the mill workers and their families. The concept gained popularity elsewhere, she said. The book includes rare vintage photographs from public and private collections, and includes images of the ancestors of many Valley residents still in the area, according to Arcadia Publishing, which published the book. The book also has photographs of many buildings that no longer exist. Shields said she will be happy to discuss history with interested residents who come to her upcoming book-signing events. Many photographs in the book were from local historical societies and libraries, and if residents have old photographs, she encourages them to bring them. "I also want to generate interest in donating photographs and historical items to these groups," Shields said. A book signing will be held at 2 p.m. Feb. 13 at the Written Words Bookstore, 194 Leavenworth Road, Shelton. Call the store at 203-944-0400 for more information. Another will be at 1 p.m. Feb. 26 at the John Bale Book Co., 158 Grand St., Waterbury. Call 203-757-2279 for more information. A portion of the profits from the sale of the book will be donated to Valley history centers. The book costs \$21.99, and is on sale at local retailers, online bookstores, or through Arcadia Publishing at [www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com) or 888-313-2665. About the Author  
Author Mary Ruth Shields has previously written *Industry Clothing Construction Methods* and numerous articles related to the textiles industry. The historical societies and citizens of the valley towns of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Naugatuck, Oxford, Seymour, and Shelton also contributed generously to this book.