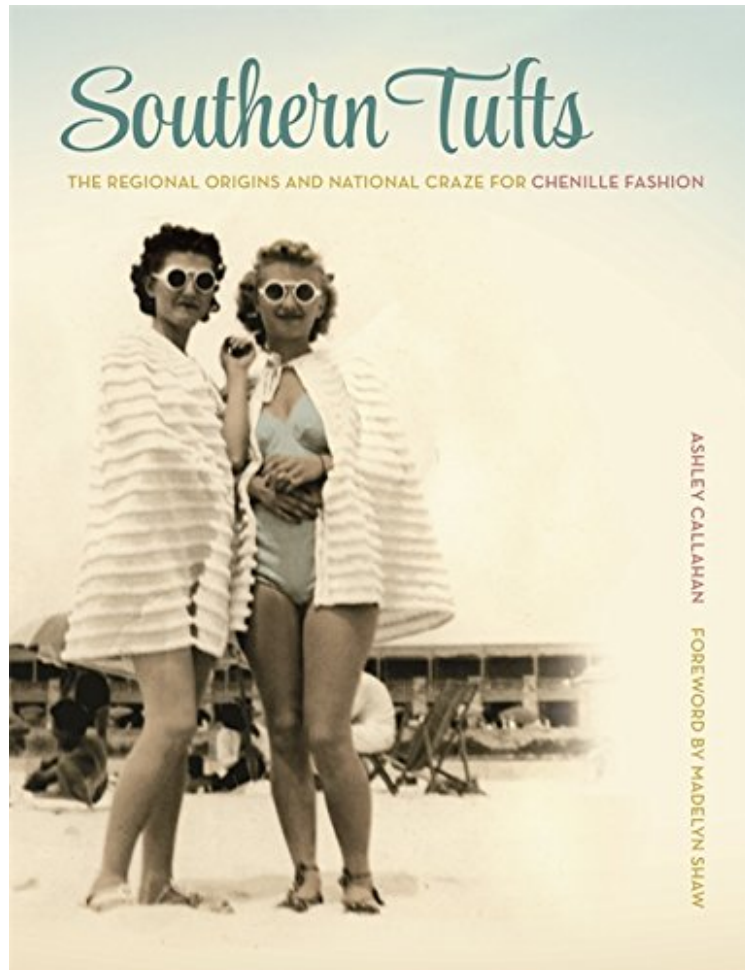


# Southern Tufts: The Regional Origins and National Craze for Chenille Fashion

Ashley Callahan

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**Ashley Callahan : Southern Tufts: The Regional Origins and National Craze for Chenille Fashion** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Southern Tufts: The Regional Origins and National Craze for Chenille Fashion:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This book had great photographs and was rich in detail about the industry By Melocoton This book had great photographs and was rich in detail about the industry. I was particularly interested in the northwest Georgia area. The author did numerous interviews and did top notch research. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Fashion and Southern History along Peacock Alley in Georgia By bookwomen37I picked up this book because I enjoy reading about fashion and southern history and this book combined the two. The

author has done a great job with her research and written a very readable book combined with wonderful photographs. The author begins with the beginning of the candlewick/chenille bedspread in Northern Georgia and ends with the revival of chenille fashion. She also provides short histories of the various companies and people involved with the business throughout the years. Although the beginning of the book is concerned with the bedspreads most of this book centers on chenille fashions, dresses, robes, beach cover ups and more. The fashion photographs are really gorgeous. There are also quite a few found photographs of women wearing chenille robes and beach fashion. Anyone interested in fashion, southern history and women's history will enjoy this wonderful book. I received a copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange for my honest review

*Southern Tufts* is the first book to highlight the garments produced by northwestern Georgia's tufted textile industry. Though best known now for its production of carpet, in the early twentieth century the region was revered for its handtufted candlewick bedspreads, products that grew out of the Southern Appalachian Craft Revival and appealed to the vogue for Colonial Revival-style household goods. Soon after the bedspreads became popular, enterprising women began creating hand-tufted garments, including candlewick kimonos in the 1920s and candlewick dresses in the early 1930s. By the late 1930s, large companies offered machine-produced chenille beach capes, jackets, and robes. In the 1940s and 1950s, chenille robes became an American fashion staple. At the end of the century, interest in chenille fashion revived, fueled by nostalgia and an interest in recycling vintage materials. Chenille bedspreads, bathrobes, and accessories hung for sale both in roadside souvenir shops, especially along the Dixie Highway, and in department stores all over the nation. Callahan tells the story of chenille fashion and its connections to stylistic trends, automobile tourism, industrial developments, and U.S. history. The well-researched and heavily illustrated text presents a broad history of tufted textiles, as well as sections highlighting individual craftspeople and manufacturers involved with the production of chenille fashion.

Callahan has brought us an engaging little known part of American textile history. Tufting grew from the candlewicking hand-production in southern Appalachia into the chenille automated commercial industry centered around Dalton, Georgia. Although the tufted industry is primarily associated with 'colonial' bed-coverings, Callahan concentrates her study on the variety of garments adorned with geometric and floral designs or the ever-favorite peacock. In the days before Interstates, vacationers headed to Florida along US 41 through the bedspread boulevard. These clothesline displays also included aprons, beach capes, and a variety of other tufted clothing. Throughout the early and mid twentieth century, newspapers and magazines advertised tufted fashions for women and children that could be bought at your city's larger department stores. This profusely illustrated book will have us all longing again for the comfort of a chenille robe. (Phillis Alvic author of *Weavers of the Southern Highlands*) Callahan's handling of this material is masterful. She braids the different threads of gender, race, class, business, and regional culture into one integrated narrative and, in the process, thoroughly contextualizes the objects and their origin and production. *Southern Tufts* emerges as the definitive study on this genre. (Dale Couch, Curator of Decorative Arts, Georgia Museum of Art) *Southern Tufts* is appealing on many levels. Callahan blends the folksy topic of chenille and roadside America with the colonial revival to create a real contribution to textile history. (Pamela A. Parmal author of *Women's Work: Embroidery in Colonial Boston*) The book is a thoroughly researched survey of the fuzzy fabric's history, beginning with Catherine Evans Whitener, credited for reviving the art form and first commercializing it in 1895, and encompassing profiles of the northwest Georgia textile companies that produced the fabric as it rose and fell in popularity over the years. Research and history aside, a highlight of the book is the scores of photos of beautifully detailed robes, capes, coats, skirts, jackets and bedspreads made from the nubby textile. (Suzanne Van Atten *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*) About the Author ASHLEY CALLAHAN has an MA in the history of American decorative arts from Parsons School of Design and the Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Institution, and a BA in art history from the University of the South. Callahan, an independent scholar and former curator of decorative arts at the Georgia Museum of Art, is the author of *Georgia Bellflowers: The Furniture of Henry Eugene Thomas*, *Modern Threads: Fashion and Art* by Mariska Karasz, and *Enchanting Modern: Ilonka Karasz*.