



Back Home: Journeys through Mobile

Mr. Roy Hoffman

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After twenty years in New York City, a prize-winning writer takes a "long look back" at his hometown of Mobile, Alabama.

In *Back Home: Journeys through Mobile*, Roy Hoffman tells stories--through essays, feature articles, and memoir--of one of the South's oldest and most colorful port cities. Many of the pieces here grew out of Hoffman's work as Writer-in-Residence for his hometown newspaper, the *Mobile Register*, a position he took after working in New York City for twenty years as a journalist, fiction writer, book critic, teacher, and speech writer. Other pieces were first published in the *New York Times*, *Southern Living*, *Preservation*, and other publications. Together, this collection comprises a long, second look at the Mobile of Hoffman's childhood and the city it has since become.

Like a photo album, *Back Home* presents close-up portraits of everyday places and ordinary people. There are meditations on downtown Mobile, where Hoffman's grandparents arrived as immigrants a century ago; the waterfront where longshoremen labor and shrimpers work their nets; the back roads leading to obscure but intriguing destinations. Hoffman records local people telling their own tales of race relations, sports, agriculture, and Mardi Gras celebrations. Fishermen, baseball players, bakers, authors, political figures--a strikingly diverse population walks across the stage of *Back Home*.

Throughout, Hoffman is concerned with stories and their enduring nature. As he writes, "When buildings are leveled, when land is developed, when money is spent, when our loved ones pass on, when we take our places a little farther back every year on the historical time-line, what we have still are stories."

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