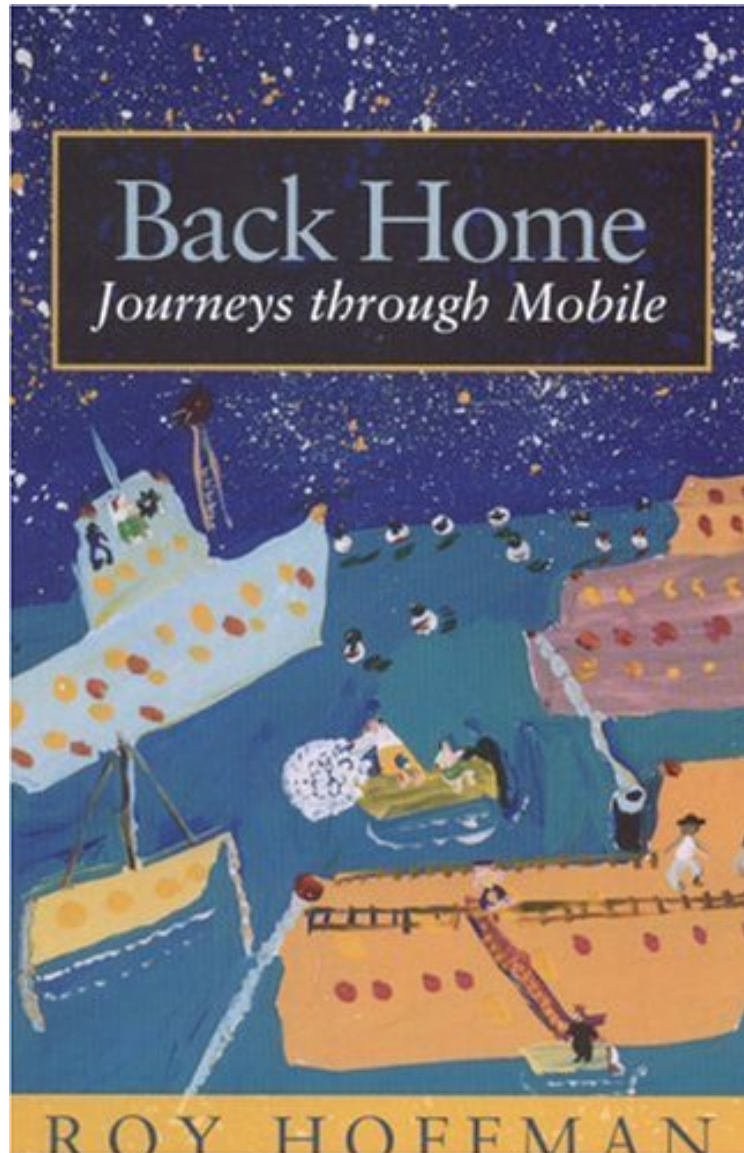


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## Back Home: Journeys through Mobile

*Roy Hoffman*

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#2913315 in Books University Alabama Press 2001-02Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 1.34 x 6.32 x 9.321, 1.80 #File Name: 0817310452400 pages | File size: 18.Mb

**Roy Hoffman : Back Home: Journeys through Mobile** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Back Home: Journeys through Mobile:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy nancy herringRoy Hoffman writes great books. We both love Mobile!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Back HomeBy A. A. TaitThis seemed to be a lovely book. I purchased as a gift, and looked through it reading a few passages. It is for one who has moved away and I think she will relate to some of the sentiments expressed, as well as have endearing memories rekindled. At least

that's my goal. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Refreshing vignettes By Mobile Bay Girl I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. I was surprised at the various vignettes that took us from the docks of Mobile Bay to a Nazi WWII death camp and back. Mobile has been known for its colorful residents, but now we get to hear their stories!

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."

From *Publishers Weekly* After 21 years in New York City, Roy Hoffman (*Almost Family*) returned with his wife and daughter to his hometown of Mobile, Ala. *Back Home: Journeys Through Mobile* is a collection of his writings: feature stories, memoirs, essays about the town, many of which were previously published in the *Mobile Register*. Hoffman interviews many of Mobile's distinctive characters, like Joseph Langan, a longtime Mobile mayor now in his 80s, who was once vilified as a Communist by whites who thought he was too sympathetic to blacks, and a racist by blacks who didn't agree. Herbert Aaron Sr., father of the great home-run hitter Hank Aaron, tells Hoffman why so many great baseball players are Mobile sons. These stories were written to explore what Hoffman calls a "sense of place," and they eloquently answer the question that so troubles the author upon his return: "[W]hat's left to tell me where I am?" Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* Hoffman (*Almost Family*), who had left his hometown and lived in the New York metropolitan area for 20 years, returned to the South when the *Mobile Register* offered him a job as "writer-in-residence." Here he collects essays, a memoir, and feature articles originally published in the *Mobile Register*, *New York Times*, *Southern Living*, and other publications. Hoffman's work transcends region while celebrating it. He writes about what makes Mobile and its inhabitants both the descendants of the town's founders and the newcomers a rarity. The best traditions of this unhomogenized city: Mardi Gras, the bay, good food, fine storytellers, and Southern hospitality are traits that newcomers adopt rather than ignore. Hoffman, whose grandparents came to the city as immigrants, has a special affection for other newcomers, and it is impossible to miss the humanity in this collection. Belonging on the same shelf as Rick Bragg's *Somebody Told Me* (LJ 5/1/00) and Larry McMurtry's *Roads* (LJ 7/00), this is recommended for all libraries. Pam Kingsbury, Alabama Humanities Fdn., Florence Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. "A fine and illuminating portrait of a fine old interesting city."