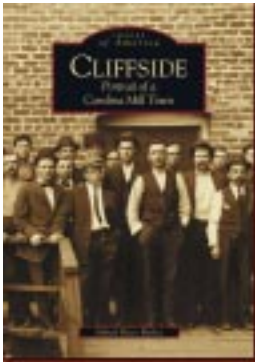




Fragments from Floyd

Images in words and pixels from a quiet place
in Floyd County, Virginia



Portrait of a Carolina Mill Town

I went searching one day a good while back—two years, maybe—for some southernisms, I think, though I don't rightly remember now. And as it happens by serendipity, I ended up in a pleasant browsing cul de sac—a place called **Remember Cliffside**. It was (and is) a site created for this all-but-disappeared textile company town in western North Carolina. Someone had spent great care and much time archiving the little town and times in images, stories and memorabilia. That someone is Reno



Bailey. And in his quest to honor his home town and those people and times, he has recently published through Arcadia Publishing *Cliffside: Portrait of a Carolina Mill Town*.

I've known the book was in the works for some time, and now have a copy on my desk. At first glance, it seems to be a photo album of sorts, well captioned, nice in the hands; but not being from Cliffside, why would a reader do more than thumb through it, you might ask.

I read it cover to cover, very, very slowly. Maybe it has something to do with the book's southernness, me being from about as far south as you can get in Dixie. But then again in another context, Cliffside isn't far as the crow flies from our more recent home in Morganton, where we lived for seven years before moving to Floyd. We traveled through Cliffside's Rutherford County frequently on our trips back to Alabama and Mississippi to visit our own homeplaces, our families. And somehow with all this distant connectedness, I find myself turning pages and traveling back into my past, our past through the memories of Cliffside—a small, closely-knit family of families living in my grandmother's time. The architecture is spare, or it is extravagant; the hairstyles, likewise. They were natty dressers back then—bowler hats, suspenders and creases in their pants, even at work. Civility and roughness show in those American times in an unusual company town. And they were just like us. You see it in their eyes.

But then, as you know, I'm a sucker for images. They tell a thousand stories. And while Reno's captions are an education, it is the words that come to me out of the gingerbread, the front porches, the starched collars and creased brows that tell the tale. Cliffside's history as a mill town cobbled from nothing by one man is unique. Even so, if you're at all like me, you'll find yourself believing this is your story, too.

Cliffside: Portrait of a Carolina Mill Town can be purchased at **Remember Cliffside's [Company Store](#)**.