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Linthead: Growing Up In A Carolina Cotton Mill Village



Synopsis

Book by Browning, Wilt

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I went to work in Brandon Cotton Mill in West Greenville, SC in August of 1965. I had just turned sixteen years old the previous January. When I began researching 'South Carolina Cotton Mills' for my own writing project, I discovered this book, and thought it would be about the mills, as opposed to the life of a young boy who grew up on a mill hill. Other reviewers have pointed out that the author did not relate to the reader every facet of the reader's life when he or she lived on a mill hill, and that too is true. Still, I do not think the title of the book, or the details missing from the book, detract from what the author relates to us by telling his story instead of ours. I found the book to be in sympathetic parallel with events that happened in my life, causing long buried memories to come gushing forth, becoming as clear as they were on the day my mind created them. It was very pleasant and gratifying to have a nostalgic journey into yesterday, and my heartfelt thanks go to the author. If you have firsthand experience with cotton mills and mill hills, you will find something in the book that will cause you to remember too. Five stars for the author doing his job, which is to evoke those emotions and memories in the reader that the reader had long ago forgotten.

I was very excited to be browsing the shelves of a SC Barnes and Nobles and find this book. However, two pages into the book I started to become very dissatisfied with where the author was going with the story. After living for ten years of my life on a "mill hill" of South Carolina, I felt this

book was not true to the environment and true sense of the area. It's focus was too much on painting a dreamy, all American picture instead of giving it's readers a realistic view and leaving them with a real sense of having been there themselves.

I bought this book based on some comments from a friend. My father grew up during this period and his father worked in the mill. I was hoping it would be written about the Greenville mills but most of it took place in Easley. Those people and places were not familiar to me. However, it was well written. Most all of the mill villages were pretty much the same at the time. I just wanted to read about the area my family lived in.

If you title your book "Linthead"--a truly ugly term--you suggest that you will have something to say about the stereotypes that thousands of textile workers have had to endure over the decades. But Browning's life seems to have been nothing but ball games and front porches, a sunny slice of Americana that could have happened anywhere (especially on tv--this is smalltown America as black and white tv imagined it). Browning just doesn't seem to get it: for people who were not talented ballplayers or who otherwise lacked the skills he was fortunate to have, life on a mill hill was not edenic.

I have read this book a couple of times, once again after reading Come Quittin' Time by Wilt Browning. I love this book! I know there were plenty of bad things to living in company owned houses but Wilt's family seems to have made the best of it. Wilt is lucky to have such a good family background. Liked reading the positive side of life even though it also chronicled the death of an industry. It is a life gone by and we are all lucky to have read about it.

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