THE HISTORY AND LEGACY OF THE FOXFIRE CULTURAL JOURNALISM PROGRAM

by

JULIE LYNN OLIVER

(Under the Direction of Roger Hill)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the history and legacy of the Foxfire program founded in Rabun County, Georgia in 1966; its contribution as a locally produced educational program and significance in the history of education in the state of Georgia and the southern Appalachian region of the United States. The following questions guided the research: (a) What ideas inspired and motivated Eliot Wigginton to create a program like Foxfire? (b) What were the features and goals of the Foxfire program during its formative years? (c) What were the qualities that made Foxfire popular with the local Rabun County community and gave Foxfire an audience outside Rabun County? (d) What was the teaching and learning environment like at Rabun Gap School during the Foxfire years? (e) What was Foxfire’s significance and impact as an educational program? (f) How does Foxfire compare to other innovative curriculum programs founded earlier and contemporaneously? And (g) How did Foxfire survive despite national and state trends toward “back to basics” and standards-based education; what were the changes that were brought to the program as a result?
The research design chosen for this project was an intrinsic case study that explored the unique and distinctive qualities of the Foxfire cultural journalism program. The chosen perspective was post-colonial due to the Foxfire Program’s focus on an internally colonized region and people of the United States southern Appalachia. The sources used featured extensive primary source documents associated with the Foxfire program.

Findings of this study retrace the historical background of the Foxfire program and that program’s founder, Eliot Wigginton’s, connections to Rabun County prior to founding Foxfire. This study also revealed the educational foundations of the school that gave birth to the Foxfire program, the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School. The Foxfire pedagogical approach was confirmed to be Dewey-like but not originally Dewey-inspired.

Among the original conclusions of this research were that Foxfire and its student participants and adult informants were contributing members of two socio-cultural movements formed contemporaneously with Foxfire - the Appalachian cultural revival and the back-to-the-land movements.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my children Sydney and Stephanie. Your presence in my life is my sole inspiration and motivation. This project took me away from you in mind and spirit and sometimes physically, but your words of encouragement and thoughtful actions helped keep me going. I thank you for being patient and supportive. I love you.
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There are numerous individuals that I would like to acknowledge as instrumental in the successful completion of this dissertation. Without their support, it would have been impossible for me to complete this research project in the way that I envisioned it. I was inspired, motivated and encouraged to explore other avenues of discovery based on their suggestions. Their insights, I believe, helped me improve the quality and relevance of my research.

First, the Foxfire Fund personnel were always prompt in addressing any questions or concerns I had about Foxfire. They provided me with the names of possible contacts and more importantly, they allowed me generous access to the Foxfire museum property and their archives.

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Wigginton regarding Foxfire at the Georgia Archives in Morrow, Georgia. The results of her tips allowed me to make connections in the history of Foxfire that were valuable to my research.

Third, I would like to thank my committee for allowing me to focus my research on the Foxfire program. From the moment I first heard of it, I had an insatiable curiosity about Foxfire’s true place in American educational history. My original committee chair, Dr. Diane Napier, encouraged me from the beginning to take on this project and let me choose a design that I favored, the case study, for the project. She provided me much needed guidance on the post-colonial perspective, an expertise of hers, and one that I agreed fit well in explaining Foxfire’s legacy. Most of all she always provided words of encouragement that allowed me to stay focused on seeing this project through. Her editing skills were crucial to the overall success of this project.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This study focused on the Foxfire curriculum and the educational program founded in 1966 in Rabun County, Georgia. There are two major features to Foxfire curriculum: first the program that produces a magazine written by students at Rabun County High School, and second, the pedagogical method, The Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning, that evolved out of the magazine class at Rabun County High School. The former remains at Rabun County High School. The latter appears in other locations such as the Isaac Dickson School, a magnet elementary school located in Asheville, North Carolina. My research interest lies in the evolution of the Foxfire program and its legacy as a locally developed program that served student and community needs.

Setting of the Study

The setting for my study was the Foxfire program that began in Rabun County, Georgia in the northeast corner of the state bordering North Carolina. The cultural heritage of the region is southern Appalachian, distinct from the southern culture that is typically found in communities throughout Georgia outside the mountains. The mountain people, for example, were largely from a common Scots-Irish, English ancestry and they remained more isolated from outside influences for a longer period of their history. In the original Foxfire home area, the border between Georgia and North Carolina is a political barrier only and not a cultural one, as many residents have relatives on both sides of the border, and have had since the first settlers arrived in the area. This fact is significant in the history of Foxfire as many of the stories featured in Foxfire
magazines are based on interviews with people in Franklin, North Carolina and its environs, just across the state line and not just with people in Rabun County, Georgia. There is a shared cultural heritage among residents.

There are three major Rabun County sites in which the Foxfire program has operated over the past forty years. First, there is the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, a private school and the original school home of Foxfire prior to the program moving to Rabun County High School. Second there is the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center, property purchased by the students' first magazine royalties and originally meant as a repository for Foxfire artifacts, and thirdly, Rabun County High School the home of the Foxfire program since 1977.

Purpose of the Study

In the history of education during the twentieth century in the United States, there were many attempts to develop innovative, progressive curricula, models or programs to better serve the needs of students and to promote transferable learning in a variety of content areas (e.g., Evans, 2004; Hertzberg, 1981). Progressive ideas were woven into many programs in several ways for a variety of purposes, including to promote student-centered learning, internal motivation and transfer of learning experiences to make content and skills relevant. The programs and approaches incorporated features such as project-based learning, experiential learning, inquiry and discovery, modeling, and multimedia approaches, to name a few. During the 1960s and 1970s federally funded projects in areas such as social studies, physics, and mathematics became prominent. Many funded and many unfunded experiments in curriculum and teaching method innovation faded away but they frequently contained ingredients that prevailed as a lasting legacy of the larger long-term movement. Massialas (2009) identified four reasons why movements ultimately failed (a) textbook publishers altered the original materials
for marketing purposes, (b) movement reformers did not base their evaluations of the program on recognized theory of learning and instruction, (c) material did not relate enough to the individual needs of teachers and students, and (d) “gender, social class, ethnicity, religion, and linguistic background” (p.249) of students was not considered in the material. In Chapter 2 I reviewed literature on the curriculum history that has relevance for this study.

Within this broad sphere of the history of American curriculum innovation of the twentieth century, the Foxfire Program was but one of a plethora of innovative programs, in this case a locally developed unfunded programs designed to be an alternative to the traditional styles of teaching and to the dominant curriculum. The purpose of this case study was to examine the history and legacy of Foxfire curriculum. But the Foxfire program played a particularly important role in the life of Rabun County. It was significant and meaningful to many people in and outside of education within Rabun County and the surrounding Appalachian communities, several of whom appear in the pages of this dissertation. Arguably, the most popular feature of Foxfire was its magazines and books created as part of the “cultural journalism” component of the program. The results of successive generations of Foxfire students’ work are still in print and available for purchase from major booksellers. For this reason the story of Foxfire in the larger context of American educational history is an important one to tell. The purpose of this case study was to examine the history and legacy of the Foxfire program, its beginning and evolution, and to clarify its role in the broader Progressive Education movement of which it was a part, as explained later in this dissertation.

In my research, I defined Foxfire as the educational program operating from 1966-1991 in Rabun County, Georgia (Figure 1.1) (the years during which Foxfire's founding teacher, Eliot Wigginton was active in the program) and to a limited degree the years 1992 to the present as
Foxfire continues to exist within high school elective classes creating the magazine and books, as a teacher training program, and a museum. I set out to identify those aspects of Foxfire that are transferable to other settings and those aspects that afforded Foxfire sustainability to continue its existence through forty-years of changing educational trends and standards.

![Map of Foxfire site locations (along state highway 441).](image)

**Figure 1.1. Map of Foxfire site locations (along state highway 441).**

Foxfire is an original grass-roots level curriculum created in Rabun County in the classroom of one teacher and his students, Foxfire was not the only such program developed at the time, but it was one of the longest operating programs of its type in the U.S.A. Foxfire is a worthy case due to its unique history, individuality, innovativeness as a public school curriculum, and its relevance to the local community. Furthermore, Foxfire was recognized by the Georgia State Board of Education as a legitimate alternative curriculum and as a result was allowed to continue to operate at Rabun County High School even after statewide content standards were introduced, although Foxfire was never made a state-wide curriculum offering.
Background of the Study

Much public understanding of Foxfire is not that it is a school curriculum, but rather a series of books (as of 2011 there were thirteen) featuring stories about Appalachian folk culture. I polled my students one day in a class I taught at the University of Georgia, “Have you ever heard of Foxfire?” One young lady replied, “Oh yes, I work at Barnes and Noble and I’ve seen those books on the shelf.”

My study begins with the fact that Foxfire is distinctive in the respect that the high school students in the Foxfire program actually created a written product that was and still is available to the general public. These writings constitute the majority of the extant literature on Foxfire. However, since its beginnings in 1966, scholarly writing also emerged on Foxfire as an example of cultural journalism stories featuring folk culture as a theme, and on Foxfire as one example of progressive student-centered pedagogy in action.

Foxfire’s founding teacher, Eliot Wigginton and a select few Foxfire students have also written about or have been interviewed about the program extensively. The vast majority of the existing literature on Foxfire was published prior to 1991. The conviction of Eliot Wigginton on criminal charges (1992) reduced interest in Foxfire as a scholarly and journalistic topic.

My study took a different approach from those of the abovementioned writers. I considered Foxfire in the historical sense, being interested in its evolution and legacy as an innovative educational program within the context of the larger movement of curriculum innovation, but I choose to consider these from the perspective of internal colonialism within the broader field of Post-Colonial Studies (see for instance Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2006). I adopted this perspective in the sense that the peoples of southern Appalachia can be considered among the peoples of the United States who were “internally colonized”, i.e. stigmatized as
“backward” and in some respects marginalized by land-grabs and resource exploitation by corporate and other outside interests. They were considered to be different from the dominant culture and population, and the post-colonial notion of “other” is a useful lens for considering the cultural context within which Foxfire emerged. I provide further argument positioning the curriculum in this sense, with support from pertinent scholarly literature, in Chapter 2.

Rationale for the Study

The primary rationale for my study was to contribute to the understanding of and literature on the Foxfire program. Placing Foxfire in the context of post-colonial studies was an approach, which to my knowledge, had not been taken in the formal writings on Foxfire curriculum and method. In chapter two I provided an analysis of existing literature on Foxfire. Foxfire also has “curious” and “intrinsic” (Creswell, 2005) qualities and unique properties that emerged in this study. For example, the fact that the original Foxfire students were a combination of private boarding students and local public school students matriculating in the same classroom was unusual and was certainly an exception to what traditionally occurs in American school settings. I situated my study of Foxfire in the broader field of curriculum history to consider Foxfire’s significance in the history of American education and specifically in the history of education in north Georgia and the southern Appalachians.

In addition, I have a personal rationale for this study. I was first drawn to the story of Foxfire because of my own experiences as a high school teacher teaching rural, southern students in the early 2000’s who were similar to the ones Eliot Wigginton described as his students at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School when he began teaching there in 1966. I read Wigginton's book, Sometimes a Shining Moment (1986) and found it to be genuinely practical and the most inspirational book on teaching adolescent students that I had read. Then I learned that in 1992
Wigginton was found guilty of child molestation against a young, male student of his. Subsequently it was learned that, apparently, since his arrival at Rabun Gap School, Wigginton had engaged in inappropriate contact with some of his students.

These developments, rather than making me want to run away from investigating the story of Foxfire instead inspired me to investigate and go beyond Wigginton’s presence in the program. Wigginton was a pivotal figure in Foxfire and I did analyze his connection, especially to the founding of Foxfire. His shadow is also long and deep in Rabun County and elsewhere where his victims still know the impact of his actions. Nevertheless, it is possible that the Foxfire curriculum and its legacy of student-created work are larger and more significant than Wigginton's efforts in shaping the program. I explored this possibility in my research.

I was interested in uncovering a possible connection between Foxfire and local or Appalachian politics, or the Civil Rights Movement because I knew that Eliot Wigginton had been a board member of the politically active Highlander Folk School. In this study, I reviewed some of the more politically motivated programs so that I might later draw parallels with Foxfire if they existed.

I also explored the concept of Foxfire being a type of “therapeutic” curriculum, meant to build the esteem of Foxfire participants and to validate the southern Appalachian culture, not as typically depicted as backward and primitive, but as a society that contributed unique traditions to the American cultural landscape. I knew some of this first hand because my family was from the region, but I actually grew up in the suburbs of Atlanta and attended one of the most affluent public schools in Georgia. Very few students in my high school were from the south - even fewer were from north Georgia. It was common for students in my school to mimic and ridicule "rednecks and hillbillies," or anyone with a southern accent (like my parents) when
many would have considered it racist to mimic those of other ethnic groups in the same way. Foxfire intrigued me as a subject not only because it included Appalachian culture as a theme, but also because it presented that culture in a more positive light, instead of mocking this non-mainstream American culture. Hence my decision to examine Foxfire through the lens of internal colonialism.

Consequently, I was drawn to study the Foxfire program and work because it seemed to be a novel attempt to represent mountain culture in a more objective, fair way, and it also seemed to identify mountain culture as acceptable and appropriate subject matter on which students could reflect. I investigated this quality of Foxfire too, and as a result my research on Foxfire is fair in its representation of mountain culture and students without either romanticizing or idealizing.

**General Goals for the Study**

I selected Foxfire as the topic for my dissertation because of its seemingly original qualities, as suggested previously. My overall goal was to develop a case of the Foxfire program. With this in mind, I selected the following as general goals for the study. I drew on multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials. For example, Yin (as cited in Creswell, 1998) listed six types of information for the case study, of which I used five; these included, documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, and physical artifacts. Another type, participant observation, I did not use in my study because it was not possible for me to be in Rabun County during the school year.

To build the case, I undertook a holistic approach or an analysis of the entire Foxfire program rather than a single aspect of the program (such as the specifics of its pedagogical method). In an organizational scheme for a case study suggested by Stake (1995), I provided
details about Foxfire and its formation, then an analysis of Foxfire themes and issues followed by an interpretation and assertions about the Foxfire case. During this process, my analysis delved deep into the context of the case and the setting in which the case emerged, as recommended by Merriam (1998). I presented the history of Foxfire in chronological fashion providing details about certain events in the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School’s and Foxfire’s history. In summary, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), I reported on lessons I learned during the course of the research.

**Specific Objectives**

In addition to my general goals of building the *case* of Foxfire, I had several objectives I wanted to meet. These included the following:

1. To analyze the purposes for the establishment of the Foxfire program. Key to understanding the origins and purposes that led to the creation of the Foxfire program, my study featured an analysis of the methods and goals of the Foxfire class as the program evolved into a full-fledged curriculum.

2. To identify key personnel and analyze their role in Foxfire to help explain the teaching environment found at the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School. (John Puckett, in *Foxfire Reconsidered*, discussed this aspect to an extent during Foxfire’s Rabun County High School years). Among my objectives were to identify and analyze the role of the key personnel, specifically, persons besides Wigginton who contributed to the formation and maintenance of Foxfire as an alternate English curriculum program at the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School and later as an English/vocational elective offered at Rabun County High School. These individuals included Foxfire alumni,
non-Foxfire teachers, Foxfire staff, Rabun County principals, community members, donors to the program, and publishers of Foxfire materials.

3. To identify qualities of Foxfire that became popular with the general public.

I also identified components of Foxfire that made it popular within and outside Rabun County. This is evidenced by the subscriptions that Foxfire sold nationwide and the publication and marketing of Foxfire books by one of the nation’s leading commercial presses. During Foxfire's heyday in the 1970s, it was popular to discover one's roots, to romanticize older times in American history, and to rediscover nature and traditional ways of doing things. I wanted to understand if Foxfire's initial popularity was due to any of these influences.

4. To situate Foxfire in curriculum history and determine its educational significance.

To accomplish this, I examined the general history of education in the mountains of north Georgia during the years following the Civil War. Then I reexamined the history of the establishment of the school at Rabun Gap in order to better understand that school’s role in the founding of Foxfire. Further, I situated Foxfire in curriculum history next to other innovative educational programs in the U.S.A. that occurred contemporaneously with Foxfire, such as the Highlander Folk School, the "civil rights" Freedom schools, aspects of the new social studies movement, and some aspects of outdoor education programs. The goal here was not to compare Foxfire directly with these other educational experiments, but rather to explore the time period, before the back-to-basics movement took hold. These years seemed to inspire the creation of novel and different educational programs separate from the often-
maligned progressive education experiments that began at the turn of the twentieth century. Therefore, I needed to investigate the features of Foxfire as part of my case.

5. To compare and contrast Foxfire with state, regional, national, and global trends in education. This objective involved identifying those aspects of Foxfire that were or were not sustainable or transferable across time and space and along the local to global continuum, and to consider how Foxfire related - if at all - to the establishment of statewide content area standards in Georgia and elsewhere.

**Research Questions**

To address the general goals and specific objectives listed previously, I developed the following research questions with a central question that helped focus this research, as recommended by Creswell (2005): What was the history and legacy of Foxfire, an alternative curriculum program, as it evolved in Rabun County? To help answer that question, I followed a list of more specific questions about Foxfire:

1. What ideas inspired and motivated Eliot Wigginton to create the program of Foxfire?
2. What were the features and goals of the Foxfire program during its formative years?
3. What were the qualities that made Foxfire popular with the local Rabun County community and that gave Foxfire an audience outside Rabun County?
4. How does Foxfire compare to other educational endeavors started in north Georgia and in the southern Appalachians such as settlement and folk schools, or to other innovative programs founded contemporaneously?
5. How did Foxfire survive despite national and state trends toward back to basics and standards - based education?
6. What was the significance and impact of Foxfire as an educational program?
Design and Theoretical Perspective

I developed my study with an emergent case study design. The research questions changed only slightly, based on what I encountered as I conducted the research. Creswell (2005) called this an *emergent design* in which the research questions studied by the researcher may change, based on the responses of participants and conditions encountered during the research. I used Creswell’s suggestions for organizing my case study as follows:

**Organization of the Case Study**

1. The period of study of the Foxfire program was from 1966 to 1992.
2. The Foxfire story is presented in chronological order taking the long-range, diachronic view as discussed by Creswell (2005). I considered that this approach made the study more readable and easier to follow.
3. In Chapter 2, the scholarly review of the literature includes discussion of literature on types of curriculum formation (spontaneous and informal; national and formal), Foxfire in a post-colonial context, Appalachian people as an internally colonized group, and the local character of Foxfire’s development (Figure 1.2).
4. In Chapter 3, I provided a breakdown of the methodology of the study to include issues regarding data sources, data types, reliability and validity of subjects and data, methods of analysis, coding of data, gaps in data and circumstances concerning fieldwork (Appendix A).
5. In Chapter 4, I presented the case, by exploring the histories of education in north Georgia and the southern Appalachians; the people and places at the center of the Foxfire story; the organization of the program, the classes, and the activities and roles of the students (Figure 1.2). To accomplish this, I developed an in-depth
understanding of details of the case by collecting multiple forms of data in documents, physical artifacts, interviews (transcribed and in-depth), scholarly literature, and field notes. I summarize my research questions, rationales for each of them, data sources, and methods of analysis in Appendix A.

6. I presented the case using the data as findings, having analyzed them for context, themes and categories, then validating the findings using triangulation by comparing the findings across multiple data sources. I checked reliability by ensuring that another researcher using the same data sources would come to the same conclusions as I did.

7. Finally in Chapter 5, I provided concluding discussion about Foxfire based on my research, to include implications for the field of curriculum studies and recommendations for future research.

Figure 1.2. Analytical Framework of the Study.
Significance of the Study

Currently there exists no extensive, critical study of Foxfire since the departure of Wigginton as Foxfire's leader. There was, however, one other academic study completed about Foxfire and published in 1989. That book, *Foxfire Reconsidered* (Puckett, 1989), is reviewed in Chapter 2, the scholarly review of literature. My research helps address the deficiency in the current literature. There is also no available literature that I know of that separates the legacy of Foxfire from Wigginton, since he served as the chief editor of much of what was published. He was, in great part, responsible for what was made public about the program. Past researchers conducted their research in Wigginton's presence with his input, therefore making any conclusions drawn by them very biased in favor of Foxfire and Wigginton. My fieldwork was not burdened by Wigginton's physical presence around the program. Puckett's (1989) work, though a more objective reflection of Foxfire than all others I have read, is still heavily influenced by Wigginton. For much of his fieldwork, Puckett took on the role of participant observer and undoubtedly Puckett's informant pool was affected by Wigginton's presence in and around Rabun County High School and the Foxfire Museum at that time.

Limitations of the Study

The Foxfire story is relatively unique. A very specific set of circumstances allowed it to form where, when, and how it did. Choosing a case study design provided an examination of Foxfire for its own intrinsic values. As expressed by Yin (1994), the subjects of the case study are not intended to establish a pattern of development that can be applied universally. However, I am interested in aspects of Foxfire that are generalizable or at least somewhat comparable to other cases of grassroots, innovative curricula.
My study was limited by the amount of data obtainable. I realized when I began this research that I might not be able to answer all of my research questions fully, but I feel I was able to answer all of them at least adequately due to the number of years that those whom I did interview had lived or worked around the Foxfire program. These individuals had vast amounts of knowledge about the program, Eliot Wigginton, each other, and their own roles in the program. Nevertheless, a considerable amount of time has passed since the heyday of Foxfire and many key figures in the program - such as the original Foxfire principal and all but one of the teachers from the Rabun-Gap Foxfire era - had already passed away. Another informant I spoke with early in 2008, the museum curator, passed away while I was conducting research for this project in 2009. I was only able to converse with him informally before the study commenced. The gap in time since the heyday of Foxfire also, invariably, impacted the memories of Foxfire alumni, staff and community members whom I interviewed about Foxfire.

I encountered other constraints on the data I was able to obtain from my informants. For example, Wigginton himself lives in Florida, and I considered the possibility or desirability of interviewing him. In the end, I chose not to, for this dissertation. The information that interviewees were willing to tell me was restricted due to legal issues, or the awareness they had about the Wigginton case. However, informants were generally very willing to share with me their own thoughts and feelings about what happened during their years connected with Foxfire and their emotions at the time of Wigginton’s exit from the program. I know some of the full story of Foxfire remains unknown to me even after my extensive research. Nevertheless, I sought to interview as many parties as was practicable and appropriate. I found archival material and physical artifacts in abundance about Foxfire, Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School and at the Foxfire
Heritage Center and Museum, yet my study was limited by the amount of time available to use these in field data collection.

**Conclusion**

In the upcoming chapters of this dissertation, I address the following. In Chapter 2, I provided the review of scholarly literature. In Chapter 3, I described my methodology. In Chapter 4, I presented the case; an account of my findings. In Chapter 5, I discussed the implications of my research and I made suggestions for future research. Finally, the dissertation includes a reference section and appendices containing supplementary information.
CHAPTER 2

Review of the Scholarly Literature

Introduction

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the literature that informs this study. First, the design of my research, a case study which focuses on the formative years of the Foxfire program (1966-1991), necessitate that I review the historical literature of curriculum reformers in the form of a historiography. The following sub-categories comprised my historiography for this overview: The schools of history known as Social Reconstructionism, Progressivism, and Consensus, and the historical perspectives of Marxist, Post-Colonial, Neo-Marxist, and Neo-Liberal traditions.

Secondly, I reviewed literature about curriculum development and innovation; literature reflecting themes of nationalizing and decentralizing curricula, testing and the deskilling of teachers, and selected curriculum development examples informed by the notion of glocalization. Finally, I provided a brief summary of the existing literature on Foxfire: magazines and books produced by Foxfire students and staff, Foxfire as an example of cultural journalism, and Foxfire as an example of progressive pedagogy featuring student-centered methodology.

Historiography of Curriculum Historians and Writers

Just as a qualitative researcher is required to complete a review of literature, so a historian must complete a historiography on the category of history in which the research falls. In the case of my study that would be curriculum history. Though my study is an education study and not an historical one, I still desired to have elements of an historical study included, among those, a
historiography of curriculum history. Through this historiography, I chronologically reviewed writings focusing on curriculum as a subject. The purpose of this historiography was to situate my study on that continuum.

**Social reconstructionists, other progressive educators, and their critics.** Curriculum history as a field emerged in the United States in the 1930s with two academics, George S. Counts and Charles A. Beard, who worked closely together as members of the progressive education movement. Beard was a historian well known and respected enough to be made the president of the American Historical Association (AHA) in 1933, while Counts, an educator, was on the faculty at Columbia’s Teachers College, and a colleague of John Dewey. Counts and Beard considered themselves social reconstructionists who wanted “large, lasting and fundamental changes in American society,” (Dennis, 1989, p.2). Both believed educational reform was the key to restructuring American political, social, and economic structures. The debate about social reconstructionism and progressive education is important to my study because much existing literature about Foxfire identified Foxfire curriculum as a progressive educational pedagogy.

Besides the social reconstructionists, there were two other types of progressive educators. One group was the pedagogical progressives whose focus was on methodological changes in the classroom. They believed in less structure, more-hands-on work by students, and more flexibility in the curriculum. These educators were associated more with experimental classrooms and schools providing, in some cases, extreme alternatives to traditional schools. Another group of education reformers were the administrative progressives who focused on making schools more efficient in order to better educate the masses. Among their reforms were the introduction of school buses and bells into schools, and ability testing that was used to track students into
specialized curricula. Teachers were also seen as needing more specialization (Dennis, 1989). The Foxfire curriculum and methodological approach, as identified by some studies analyzed later in this chapter, fits best into the category of pedagogical progressivism. However, the findings of this study as presented in Chapter 4 reveal that the Foxfire program in its entirety was part of two broader societal movements of the 1960s, the Appalachian identity movement and the back to the land movement that both had historical ties to the progressive education movement.

Charles Beard, identified as a progressive historian (Hofstadter, 1968) challenged the idea upheld by earlier generations of historians and some of his contemporaries that history could be told objectively. He argued that “the truth of historical work is not timeless or universal, but relative to the setting in which it was written,” (Dennis, 1989, p.162), and that the actions of individuals and governments could and should change the course of history. Counts’ attraction to Beard’s understanding of history was that he found it useful in promoting his educational agenda, which he outlined in his book *The Social Foundations of Education* (1934), namely the idea of shaping the United States into a collectivist democracy (as cited in Dennis, 1989).

Not all academics or progressive educators subscribed to Beard and Counts and other social reconstructionists’ ideas of using public education to change American society. Criticism, especially with reference to reshaping social studies curriculum in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, came from a host of non-education sources that included journalists, professors of business, manufacturing organizations, and civic organizations such as the American Legion (Evans, 2004).

A more traditional historian and another president of the American Historical Association (AHA), Samuel Morrison, criticized Beard’s use of history to influence future events (Dennis,
1989). The following passage illustrates Counts’ lack of faith in long-held beliefs about American education as a leveler, and as the source for meritocratic advancement.

    The aim of public education now should be, not to elevate A above B or to lift gifted individuals out of the class into which they were born and to raise then into favored positions where they may exploit their less fortunate fellows, but rather to abolish all artificial social distinctions and to organize the energies of the nation for improving the conditions of all (Counts, 1945, p.51).

    Since curriculum began as a field in the early 20th century, there have been debates about what to teach children in schools. For example, historians joined in discussions about what to include in textbooks and whether these texts should be critical of the U.S. and its policies. This point is relevant to my study as part of the understanding about how curricula are formed. Many curricula began as a result of the political agendas and national concerns mentioned in this literature review. However, in the case of Foxfire, as I explored in my study, the concerns about what to teach and what methods to employ began in the classroom of one school, with one teacher and his students.

    In 1941, in an effort to ameliorate some of the intense criticism mounted by the public against some of its more left-leaning members, the American Historical Association asked historian Arthur M. Schlesinger to review a series of social studies textbooks written by Harold Rugg of Columbia’s Teachers College. These books, said to be anti-American by many, were reviewed by Schlesinger and, though not harshly criticized by him, were identified as failing to “give both sides” as, among other things, they focused on what Rugg believed were defects in the American political and economic structure (Evans, 2004).
In 1942, another historian of that era, Allen Nevins, criticized social reconstructionists in particular, for what he called their anti-American stance, and progressive educators in general for their anti-intellectual approach to teaching history. He conducted a study after which he concluded that “U.S. history was no longer sufficiently taught” (Evans, 2004, p.85) in American schools. He laid the blame for this on the progressive-influenced inquiry-based social studies courses that were being taught in American schools. Nevins argued, how was it possible to maintain American democratic traditions in that time of crisis, if students failed to learn the “facts” of American history rather than focusing on current social problems. The impact of Nevins and others was great in controlling the spread of progressive curricula in American schools (Evans, 2004).

Nevertheless, there were interesting educational experiments started during the 1930s. An example of a community based educational program implemented during the heyday of Beard’s and Counts’ academic activism was the community and citizenship focused school, Benjamin Franklin High, established in East Harlem, New York in 1934. This school was “intended to meet the needs of boys who had found it difficult to adjust themselves adequately to the general high schools” (Johanek & Puckett, 2007, p.119). Among Benjamin Franklin’s objectives was to encourage students to actively participate in the democratic process, i.e. by voting, but also to be engaged members of their own neighborhoods through “participatory citizen action,” operating “an afternoon playground for neighborhood children and an evening community center for adults.” Another example was to organize a community “cleanup and beautification campaign” to include a “friendship garden” on a vacant lot (Johanek & Puckett, 2007, p.119). Benjamin Franklin’s founder Leonard Covello believed the school “would function as a citizen-centered community school….intended to be an integrated catalyst for constructive social change”
(Johanek & Puckett, 2007, p.119). Covello believed his school advanced academics by lessening the impact of community based social problems, such as crime, high dropout rates, and unemployment. If the students were encouraged to be agents for positive change in their neighborhood, then they were less likely to participate in negative behavior harming the community and then themselves by dropping out of school (Johanek & Puckett, 2007).

Nevins, and others critics of progressive educational methods argued that approaches such as the one used at Benjamin Franklin wasted valuable time on community projects that took away from teacher-centered instructional activities. This is a classic argument that academics have continued to make between teacher-and learner-centered pedagogies (Evans, 2004), and one that was to be leveled at the Foxfire program due to its non-traditional subject matter and student-centered pedagogical practices.

The progressive education theorists of the 1930s and 40s had strong political motivations, wanting more centralized control over the economy. Not all educators or academics shared this view, and perhaps that is why their influence waned considerably as the U.S. entered World War II and then the Cold War. Yet, progressive education did survive as its focus became less national and top-down and more a grass roots driven movement. One example of such a program, the Highlander Folk School in Grundy County Tennessee, was highlighted by Everett (1938). This program directly involved itself with the political empowerment of adult learners through literacy programs. Another school from this era, focused on empowerment through education in an economically depressed area, was the Nambe School in Nambe, New Mexico (Tierman & Watson, 1986).

The above mentioned schools are examples of educational endeavors that emerged during the Progressive Era with strong ties to their local communities. Since Foxfire was also a program
that had strong ties to the community in which it emerged, consideration of such educational approaches as reviewed by historians offer insight and historical context for my study. A strong advocate of this approach was educational philosopher John Dewey. While it is debatable how much actual influence Dewey had on changing American pedagogical practice, perhaps less so than Counts and Harold Rugg, there is no doubt of his role in shaping educational theory. Dewey believed strongly in the role community played in educational reform, and that teachers should learn about the social, economic, historical, and occupational history of the communities in which they taught (Dewey, 1938). He believed the lessons provided students should connect to their experiences outside the classroom as well as in, and that lessons should not be disconnected from each other and the communities of individual students (Dewey, 1916).

Although to some educators, Dewey was the father of progressive education, Dewey did not agree with many of the progressive educational programs established during his life and in some cases in his name. Puckett (1989) argues this in *Foxfire Reconsidered*, seeking to make connections between Foxfire and Deweyian progressivism. Today, Foxfire curriculum features Dewey’s ideas, but that formal connection, as explained in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, was made several years after the founding of the original Foxfire program.

As expressed by Dewey (1916) himself, he did not believe it necessary to sacrifice academic standards in order to make classrooms more child-centered and learning experiential. Neither did he suggest that teachers should never direct the impulsivity and creativity of children to an educational and academic purpose as many progressive educators concluded. In many ways, to this day, John Dewey remains a controversial role model for progressive education, and yet his impact on progressives is hard to deny. John Dewey and the progressive educators of the first half of the twentieth century challenged the traditional ways in which American children
were taught in school. In the latter half of the century, as Foxfire formed, Dewey’s beliefs still had meaning in educational circles, and based on my research of Foxfire, though not Dewey inspired initially, the program contained many Deweyian qualities that were later highlighted as part of Foxfire curriculum.

The connection between the *Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning*, which was created years after the founding of Foxfire in 1966, and Dewey’s experiential approach, is clear according to one of the creators of the *Foxfire Approach*, Starnes (1999), and there is little doubt that Foxfire is an example case for other innovative curriculums. Foxfire was “recognized as one of the models for the federal Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program” (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998, p.4). “Dewey (1938) expressed the belief that ‘all genuine education comes through experience’” (p.25), and Foxfire provided opportunities for students to gain experiences in unique ways that are explained as part of this case study. Dewey stressed learner-centered pedagogy, which Foxfire certainly was, finding an audience for student work beyond the classroom which Foxfire did, “continuous spiral” (1938, p.39) or linking experiences across time and space, a Foxfire specialty, educating to produce competent citizens, in Foxfire’s case of an internally colonized population group, teamwork between teachers and students and also between students and Foxfire’s democratic choice component encouraged this, and reflection and building on lessons learned, a Foxfire emphasis (Starnes, 1999).

Today, the *Foxfire Core Practices* are the cornerstone of all Foxfire teacher training and pedagogy; they include ten themes, learner choice, containing academic attributes, making connections between classroom work and the community and outside world, teacher as facilitators, active learning, entailing imagination and creativity, featuring peer teaching, small
group and team work, an audience beyond the classroom for student work, ongoing assessment and evaluation, and reflection. See Appendix F for a complete list of *Foxfire Core Practices*.

Dewey’s ideas on experiential learning, recognizing the need for education based on consideration of what learners know, how they learn, and what they need to know, generated a rich legacy of experiential learning-based programs. Many of these had similarities to the Foxfire Program in that they were undergirded by experiential learning principles and in various ways they focused on contextual relevance for learners, even though in substance and other specifics they varied considerably. Some examples of the legacy of programs include the 4-H cooperative curricula and programs that were established across the country and that are still prevalent today; the learning-by-doing life skill development approach for adolescents and adults; and action learning and Incidental Learning as new ways of learning in the workplace (for summaries of these programs, see [www.njaes.rutgers.edu/learningbydoing/weblinks/html](www.njaes.rutgers.edu/learningbydoing/weblinks/html)). The outdoor education movement that originated in the early 1800s as the nature study movement and that fed into the 1940s and beyond in the outdoor education movement pioneered by L.B. Sharp (as described by Carlson, 2008) was another example of a program in the larger movement. The more recent place based education movement also draws on the experiential education legacy. Among these pedagogies are expeditionary learning which focused on learning in natural settings and participating in community projects much like Foxfire, and contextual teaching and learning which related “subject matter to real world settings” (Knapp, 2008, p.23) a feature of Foxfire too. Foxfire was also recognized as one of the variant programs (see Gruenewald & Smith, 2008) in which Foxfire exemplifies the approach of teaching with a place-based curriculum and focusing on community contexts through exploration and writing projects, as described by Knapp (2008).
Based on my research, however, Foxfire’s connection with Dewey’s educational philosophies was originally only coincidental. The findings of this study reveal that Foxfire’s connection with Deweyian pedagogy was a retrofit made years after Foxfire’s founding. Beginning in the 1980s professional curriculum designers were hired by Foxfire to create a Dewey-type modeled program based on Foxfire’s *Core Practices* as listed in Appendix F. Then, “‘desirable’ learning experiences of hundreds of teachers were used to develop and refine the core practices of the Foxfire Approach” (Starnes, 1999, p. 2). Today, the training programs that teachers participate in either through the Foxfire Fund ([www.foxfire.org](http://www.foxfire.org)) or through Piedmont College are also based on Dewey’s ideas. For example, a required text for those classes is Dewey’s *Experience and Education* (1938). The *Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning* expanded the focus of Foxfire pedagogy beyond the secondary setting to include “all grade levels and content areas” (Starnes, 1999, p.4) and that fact is backed up by data presented in Chapter 4 as well as is the process of Foxfire’s transformation into a Dewey-inspired curriculum. But how did historians of later periods view progressive educational approaches as America changed and faced new challenges internationally and at home?

**Post-war criticisms of progressive education and consensus historians.** By the time Foxfire was created in 1966, progressive education pedagogy had been a regular feature of debates in education, at least since the nineteen thirties. Foxfire was certainly not the first, nor would it be the last, example of a progressive educational effort and the movement continued to be controversial. Moving into the post-war era, a supporter of progressive education ideologies was historian Lawrence Cremin. He, like Beard, linked the evolution of American education with the “larger industrial transformation of which it had been a part” (Cremin, 1961, p.353). In, *The Transformation of The School: Progressivism in American Education 1876-1957*, Cremin (1961)
acknowledged the important role of Progressivism in changing the American educational landscape, but he also criticized the movement’s unwieldy nature as a hindrance to its successful influence, as “the movement was marked from the beginning by pluralistic, frequently contradictory character” (Cremin, 1961, p.x).

One of the best known and most widely read critics of progressive education in the post-war era was consensus historian Arthur Bestor. In Educational Wastelands (1953), Bestor charged modern schools with being anti-intellectual, and failing to provide students with a traditional core curriculum of courses that would discipline their minds and promote intellectual skills. Like many progressive education critics of the 1930s, Bestor laid much of the blame for the so-called anti-intellectual school curriculum on inquiry-based social studies courses, heralded by progressives, but he believed these curricula cut out much of the study of traditional American history and civics.

Bestor’s influence was considerable. He and his supporters believed students should be taught by the traditional, teacher-centered methods that countered most progressive educational pedagogies. With the publication and wide acceptance of Educational Wastelands, Bestor became to some a leading spokesman on educational reform. “Bestor and others sought to advance the intellectual and moral development of youth and to champion a reform agenda calling for a restoration of traditional academic approaches to schooling” (Evans, 2004, p.99). This led to the formation of the Council for Basic Education. “A new consensus emerged based on the primacy and integrity of academic disciplines” (Evans, 2004, p.99). These philosophical disagreements about curricula and teaching methods would eventually impact Foxfire in the late 1980s as that program, for these very reasons, was not to be offered as an English core class at
Rabun County High School as it had been in its founding years at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School.

Bestor, despite his influence, was not without his critics. Those included educator William Clark Trow (1954) who argued that Bestor’s plan was so teacher proof that it did not allow students to develop their own original thoughts, which they would need to do to succeed at the college level. Trow further suggested that Bestor’s beliefs that the academic focus should remain on U.S. history were in fact reactionary, and that they would put American students behind in the new atomic age. Progressive educators believed strongly in incorporating world history and geography in the curriculum in order to give American students a broader international perspective. The Foxfire program had the opposite effect of what Bestor considered the ideal, being a curriculum that focused almost exclusively on the local culture of the region from which it emerged.

Educational theorist Leo J. Alilunas (1958) also criticized Bestor’s beliefs. He charged that Bestor had not become adequately acquainted with the diversity of social studies curriculum, and he failed to recognize the traditional emphasis on history still found in most schools. Alilunas concluded that Bestor and other traditionalist were not adequately qualified to speak out on social science education or the pedagogical practices of teachers in social studies subjects. In contrast, the Foxfire program was always an alternate or supplemental curriculum, not the only one offered to students. It seems that critics like Bestor failed to recognize that local curricula such as Foxfire offer legitimate alternatives to students who may not be as well served in traditional classroom settings and by traditionally focused content.

A scholar of the Consensus School of History critical of progressive educational ideas, and particularly those of Charles Beard, was Richard Hofstadter. The consensus school did not
support the progressive ideology that stated the U.S. would inevitably move from a capitalist, laissez-faire, democratic power structure to a socialistic democratic form. Consensus historians upheld that Americans maintained core beliefs in the right to own private property and in individual rights that had not been shaken by the Great Depression and/or the influx of more socialist ideas into the U.S. during that era as the return to conservatism in the 1950s proved (Hofstadter, 1948). An understanding of Hofstadter’s position is important to my study because it helps explain the viewpoints of those who would later support the back to basics movement, and who, in later years, possibly posed a threat to the maintenance of a program like Foxfire.

In *The Progressive Historians* (1968), Hofstadter again refuted Beard’s understanding of the Founding Fathers and the Constitution they created as the products of a privileged class seeking to prevail at the expense of the common man. “The essential question is whether Beard, by compounding one exaggeration upon another and then presenting the whole result from a skewed angle of vision, did not leave us with a major distortion, a fundamental misconception of the way in which history works and power is exercised” (Hofstadter, 1968, pp.225-226).

In another Hofstadter volume, *Anti-Intellectualism in American life* (1963), Hofstadter criticized John Dewey. He stated that Dewey’s theories were incomprehensible. “His style is suggestive of the cannonading of distant armies and one concludes that something portentous is going on at a remote and inaccessible distance, but one cannot determine just what it is” (Hofstadter, 1963, p.361).

The old charges of anti-intellectualism, as expressed by Hofstadter, still plagued many progressive educational efforts but some were actually quite intellectual and directed at the highest performing students. A new educational reform movement followed this model. As noted by Hertzberg (1981) among others, there was an awakening to the need to compete with the
Soviet Union in terms of the quality and substance of priority subjects in education, most particularly in the critical areas of science and mathematics but also in the social studies school subjects. The Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957 precipitated this new era of curriculum innovation. The “new” mathematics, science, and social studies emerged in national, high-profile, federally funded (National Science Foundation) curriculum development projects incorporating contemporary ideas on having students do “research” to learn through inquiry and discovery, rather than simply follow the traditional curriculum. Conventional teaching methods and traditional curricula were viewed as old fashioned, and unable to teach the content and skills necessary for America to regain its technological superiority (Hertzberg, 1981) and in social studies the new imperative was focused not on student activism but on encouraging inquiry and student focused research (Evans, 2004).

MACOS (Man: A Course of Study) was an experimental educational program created as a part of the “New Social Studies Movement.” In the MACOS creator’s words, the program “was selected as the vehicle for carrying out (the following) goals,” to “strengthen the professional training of teachers, to improve elementary social studies instruction, to provide for the successful implementation of new social studies curricula and to create a setting for research in problems of teacher training and curriculum innovation” (Cort, Henderson, & Jones, 1971).

The name most associated with MACOS and the key contributor to the project was Jerome Bruner. In 1965, when the project began, Bruner was at Harvard, the director of the Center for Cognitive Studies and a professor of Psychology. His connection with education was his interest in “discovery learning” and he applied his focus to his work on MACOS (Denison, 1970). One might contrast Bruner and his team of academics designing of MACOS at the
national level and with considerable funding, with Wigginton and his students founding Foxfire in one classroom in a rural, mountain county in Georgia.

However time was running out for any widespread acceptance of progressive educational reform; especially with the publication in 1983, of “A Nation at Risk,” the age of the back to the basics in education emerged. This document criticized the level of intellectual and academic achievement being mastered by American students, especially when U.S. students’ standardized test scores were compared to other students around the world.

The era of the new curriculum projects faded in the wake of the back to basics movement, the resurgence of standardized testing as the dominant vehicle for assessing quality of educational delivery as well as student performance, the establishment and entrenchment of content area specific standards and outcomes by which student learning could be assessed, and the return to more traditional - less progressive - forms of curriculum. Many of the innovative curriculum projects such as MACOS in social studies/anthropology contained controversial content, the teaching materials were perishable, difficult and expensive to replace, and there was no clear indication that student learning was enhanced. Ironically, the magazines and materials produced in the Foxfire program in north Georgia did survive, and intact as sets of materials with insights into the curriculum. Consequently, in my study, it is worth noting features of the survivability of the Foxfire materials, methods, and ideas in contrast to high profile expensive projects that faded into history.

**Alternative curricula.** During the 1950s, despite the heavy criticism of progressive educational philosophies, progressive and non-traditional schools found a new life in the rising Civil Rights Movement. For instance, “Citizenship Schools” focused on educating African-Americans to prepare them for political leadership in American society. One such school was the
Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee. As stated in the obituary of Myles Horton, the school’s founder, he “developed a literacy program that taught thousands of African-Americans to read and write” to encourage them to vote and participate in the election process (*New York Times* online, 1990).

During my research, I found evidence that the Foxfire program was directly connected to two movements that were active contemporaneously with the Civil Rights Movement, but the decidedly non-political focus of Foxfire magazines and books makes it hard to make any direct connection with that program and the Civil Rights Movement. The cultural journalism format, the main emphasis of Foxfire curriculum through the years, was however, as Appalachian-centric as the Freedom school curriculum was Afro-centric, as reviewed later in this section. Wigginton’s interest in using Foxfire’s ties in its local community to challenge the traditional power structures, a feature of the Civil Rights Movement, was an idea that John Puckett investigated as a participant observer of Foxfire in the 1980s and he discussed this in his book *Foxfire Reconsidered* (1989) also reviewed later. I do believe Foxfire magazines had an agenda to promote the southern Appalachian culture as a worthy one, instead of something to be eradicated and I watched for evidence of it in the data.

Overwhelmingly, at least at the national level, the post-war era was not kind to progressive education or its supporters. The 1960s, the years of the Civil Rights Movement, and moving into the 1970s proved a different story. During this time, American reformers, including educators, explored - as they had during the Progressive Era - ways to alleviate social problems and to elevate traditionally marginalized population groups. Progressive education pedagogy grew in popularity and new approaches to teaching and learning once again appeared in local
communities around the country. Foxfire was one example of a bevy of innovative curricula at the time, but it did not fall within the area of nationally, federally-funded projects of the 1960s.

As Marxist and social historians took over from consensus historians, American history was seen as a struggle between classes over economic resources, or as Joel Spring (2008) expressed: American history evolved out of conflicts between dominant, dominated, and immigrant groups. According to Spring these groups included Native-Americans, African-Americans, Mexican-Americans and other Latin/Hispanic populations and Asian-Americans that are viewed as marginalized in American society. A solution to this class conflict, Spring and others argued, was to level the playing field through education. Among other things, this meant introducing innovative curricula that were not Euro-centric in their focus. Thus, Beard’s example of using history as a tool to improve societal problems emerged once again during the Civil Rights Era with historians such as Spring and Karier (Spring, 2008). Extending Spring’s ideas, Foxfire can be considered an example of a curriculum focused on a marginalized group, the peoples of the southern Appalachians.

During the heyday of the Civil Rights Movement, and the re-desegregation of schools following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), established what they called Freedom Schools. These schools were actually more like summer institutes, and their purpose was to present to African-American young people alternate perspectives on the history and culture of African-Americans rather than the one presented in the traditional public school curriculum. The goal of the organizers of Freedom Schools was that these students would return to their home communities and local schools as members of the Freedom movement that supported establishing integrated schools throughout the South which would hopefully result in better educational opportunities for traditionally
marginalized groups (Adickes, 2005). Similarly, at least in its beginning years, Foxfire can be seen as a program meant to empower another marginalized population group, the peoples of the southern Appalachians.

In 1964, harking thirty years back to the citizenship school model established at Benjamin Franklin High, “SNCC workers and professional educators worked together to produce a course of study for Freedom Schools - called citizenship curriculum (Adickes, 2005, p.3). In that year, a former Benjamin Franklin teacher traveled to Hattiesburg, Mississippi to help organize that city’s Freedom School (Adickes, 2005). Adickes (2005) reflected on her time teaching at the Hattiesburg Freedom School. She recalled, how for the first time, her students, read “black authors, role played events in African-American history, produced a newsletter, and presented a play,” (Adickes, 2005, p.4). This occurred only two years before Eliot Wigginton started his Foxfire experiment in the north Georgia Mountains, so it is noteworthy that the Freedom Schools pedagogical approach was very similar to the methods Wigginton implemented at Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School. While Adickes’ book was exclusively narrative, Wigginton, in his writings and interviews about Foxfire, provided much insight into the processes he used to evaluate students learning, and he comments extensively on the slow but steady formation of Foxfire as a pedagogical approach.

Although the students reached by these two educational approaches were widely different, the learning goals at Hattiesburg and at Rabun Gap were amazingly similar. Wigginton explained his desire to try new things with his students. “It makes (students) understand what the real world connection is to what’s going on outside the classroom. Teachers can talk till they’re hoarse, and nobody will hear what they’re saying. The point is to have students themselves
identify why all this stuff exists, and why it’s in school curriculums, and what they might be able to do with it, and out of that process reorient them” (reported in Meek, 1990, p.30-35).

**Marxian perspectives.** Other educational historians who broke away from consensus ideas, beginning in the 1960s, were Michael Katz (1971) and David Tyack (1974). These scholars wrote in depth about the creation of institutions and bureaucracies in education (The Spencer Foundation, 2000) that helped maintain the dominant economic, political, and social structure. The work of these authors suggested that progressive historians like Cremin had not gone far enough in their analysis and critique of American political and social institutions that were responsible for shaping American education and that were biased in favor of the most privileged classes, if not in form certainly in function. Focusing largely on the schools’ role in socializing American students, these scholars infused the work of sociologists and other social scientists into their historical analysis reflecting a multidisciplinary outlook.

Katz, in his pivotal work on this topic *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools* (1971), concluded that schools, as they formed in the nineteenth century and later, were not institutions fostering opportunity for students, but rather their purpose was to promote the creation of a more efficient, streamlined, and professionally organized educational system that could help Americanize immigrant groups and create a more disciplined work force. Based on Tyack’s evidence, the administrative progressives were far more influential a group than pedagogical progressives, whose approach was more student-centered. The children of the working classes and immigrant groups were less infused with the language that this bureaucracy created and as a result they had less success in that system than the children of the affluent who shared cultural and linguistic knowledge with the administrative progressives. The result was that American schools implicitly gave “advantage to the affluent and their children, thereby reinforcing rather
than altering existing patterns of social structure” (p. xviii). In my study, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, I investigate the possibility that Foxfire curriculum, by featuring a marginalized population group as its source, helped traditionally disadvantaged students acquire the confidence and skills that would help them overcome an education system that was often biased against them.

David Tyack, in his work, *The One Best System* (1974), made “an attempt to interpret the broader political process and the social system of schooling that made much victimization predictable and regular – in short, systematic” (p. 3). For instance, when intelligence testing was implemented as a legitimate way to track and sort students in American schools, disproportionate numbers of Mexican-American students among others were incorrectly labeled, due to their lack of English language proficiency, as slow learners, and placed in low level classes. There they received inferior exposure to the curriculum and little pedagogical assistance from teachers. As a result of this, testing, which seemed an efficient management tool to those responsible for the bureaucratic operations of schools, in some cases was abandoned and students’ ethnic or racial background dictated what kinds of classes they were tracked into.

The work of historians looking through this more critical lens also helped explain the kinds of subjugation experienced by dominated groups such as those found in the Appalachians and they helped justify theories about the exploitation of marginalized population groups not only for economic opportunities and natural resources, but also for scarce educational resources. Within the Foxfire magazines and books no direct challenge was made against the forces of exploitation that had plagued Appalachia since the end of the Civil War, yet it can be argued that through Foxfire’s positive portrayal of southern Appalachian culture and its efforts at building literacy skills in Foxfire students, a consciousness was subtly mounted against the mainstream
perspective and its bias toward dominant power structures. This is an aspect of Foxfire that I evaluate more in depth in the findings of this dissertation.

As it once again gained credibility due to the leftist scholarship mentioned above and new involvement of the Federal government in addressing issues of equality of opportunity in education, new progressive educational experiments appeared across the American landscape in the 1960s and 70s, on Native American reservations, in African-American communities, and in the Appalachians. Foxfire was among those yet it represented a grass-roots program whose founding was inspired more by its historical legacy, Appalachian identity movement, and the spirit of the times, the back to the land movement, rather than educational theory or scholarship as discussed further in Chapter 4.

Post-colonial perspectives informing the study. Post-colonial perspectives emerged as a result of the Civil Rights Movement’s influence on academia. A post-colonial perspective serves my study well because Foxfire magazines, among other topics, featured stories of southern Appalachian folk culture told from the perspective of the people of their own region as opposed to the viewpoint of outsiders looking in. Post-colonial studies emerged as a new field of scholars drew attention to understanding the experiences of colonized peoples of the world. The field owes its inspiration to Edward Said among others (Said, 1978). Said was considered the "father" of post-colonial thought. He wrote of "images of other," in which "the colonized peoples, the others, may be placed at the center of the historical process" (Green & Troup, 1999, p.278).

Often, postcolonial histories are intended to counter histories written employing "modernization" theory that feature capitalist expansion and dominance as either a source for economic good or for exploitation (Green & Troup, 1999). Post-colonial societies, for example,
included those cultures and peoples which are “subject, in one way or another, to overt and subtle forms of…domination” often referred to as the “other” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2006, p.1), and that describes well what occurred in southern Appalachia, the home of Foxfire, as the region dealt with exploitation for land resources and issues of marginal employment.

Common themes of post-colonial scholars include issues of race, ethnicity, gender, place, resistance, and linguistics to name but a few. Upholding indigenous language rights, for example is one area in which post-colonial theorists are engaged (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, 2006). Foxfire’s use of the local, mountain dialect in its magazines was a form of upholding and preserving the indigenous language of the mountains of north Georgia. In regard to my study, the most useful of these themes are those involving ethnicity and culture, place, and linguistics as they intersect with the educational topics.

Major problems facing post-colonial scholars include the scarcity of records left by indigenous and colonized populations and the impracticality of separating the story of the "other" from the realities of their associations with the colonial power and the dominant culture or population. Another debate in post-colonial studies is whether the right to write about the history of the "other" belongs exclusively to historians and scholars from the emic or cultural insider perspectives, or also belongs to researchers who write from the etic or cultural outsider perspectives (Green & Troup, 1999). Internal colonialism perspectives fall within the broader perspective of post-colonialism, but the “other,” the dominated population group, is located within the borders of the dominant state in this perspective, as opposed to existing in a colonial territory removed from the dominant state.

In the case of American history, post-colonial histories were most often written by historians of the American west, since that region was seen, by historians employing a critical
perspective, as the one allegedly colonized by the United States. These scholars represent a myriad of genres, including Chicano history, Native American history, Asian-American history, and Women's and Feminists histories. Some of these scholars include Patricia Nelson Limerick (1987), Sarah Deutsch (1987), Emma Perez (1999), and Valerie Matsumoto and Blake Allmendinger (1999).

For example, initially, most of what has been published about Native Americans was based on written accounts by whites. More recent history written about the education of Native Americans is from a post-colonial perspective. Henrietta Whiteman (cited in Green & Troup, 1999), in her work, departed from traditional, empirical history by recounting the history of the Cheyenne people from the oral histories passed down from generation to generation of Cheyenne, offering the post-colonial perspective of the “other” much as Foxfire tells the story of the peoples of the southern Appalachians through native voices. Whiteman argued that it was through education that mainstream U.S. society attempted to eradicate Native cultures from their peoples, among them the Cheyenne. “Cheyenne’s were thrust into a multiplicity of educational systems” (Green & Troup, 1999, p.294) such as the Carlisle Indian School.

Theories utilizing basic internal colonialism principles originally surfaced in the nineteenth-century in the writings of philosophers like Marx focusing on economics but, “since the 1960s, the term has been largely reserved for regions that are simultaneously economically disadvantaged and culturally distinctive from the core regions of the host state” (Hechter, 1999, p.xiv). Britain and its “Celtic Fringe” is an example situation of a state containing an internally colonized population group as defined by such scholars as Hechter (1999), Blaustein (2003) and Hind (1984). In this study, I am making the case that the peoples of the southern Appalachians, who are the subjects of the Foxfire magazine collection and Foxfire students who collected and
wrote the stories in the magazines (many of whom were also from that population group), are an internally colonized population, invoking as precedent the argument put forward by Blaustein (2003) who compared Appalachia with the Celtic region in Britain.

In order to understand the southern Appalachians in the context of the internal colonialism concept, it is necessary to consider how the region generally and Rabun County specifically conforms to the model of internal colonies within the United States, in a way analogous to Brittany in France (Hind, 1984) and the Celtic regions in the United Kingdom as described by Blaustein in, *The Thistle and the Brier* (2003). These are not necessarily regions containing ethnic minorities as victims of racism, but citizens of a region whose distinct culture is seen, by the majority in the country, as a separate, usually inferior culture to the mainstream.

Can southern Appalachia be considered as culturally distinct from the rest of the United States? William Wallace Harney suggested this in his article first published in 1873, *A Strange Land and a Peculiar People*, “…The natives of this region are characterized by marked peculiarities” (Harney, 1873, p.46). Harney’s words printed originally in *Lippincott’s Magazine* most certainly helped establish stereotypes of mountain people in the eyes of the broader U.S. society, while William Goodell Frost, president of Berea College in Kentucky from 1892-1920, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, 1899, perhaps presented a more forgiving portrait of mountain people, and a justification for their need of education. However, his words also pinpoint distinctive cultural characteristics separating Appalachian folk (peripheral) from the mainstream (core). Furthermore according to Blaustein (2003, p.68), “Appalachian backwardness, poverty, illiteracy and feuding along with detailed descriptions of old-fashioned subsistence patterns, distinctive folkways, and speech pattern stemming from isolation…” were all reasons necessitating education in the mountains. In a different time and age, the Foxfire program would
take these so-called deficiencies of mountain culture and hail them as timeless and cherished traditions which one should value, esteem and preserve as uniquely American and uncorrupted by corporate interests, and should infuse those qualities into a program for high school students to cherish and uphold their heritage.

There is ample evidence that mountain people themselves realized that they were a people set apart from other population groups in the United States, and as formal education came to the mountains during the Progressive Era, discussed further in Chapter 4, educators native to Appalachian were among those that identified this as truth. Blaustein (2003) wrote, “William Goodell Frost (1854-1938), was the first American academic to define Appalachia as a cultural and geographic region” (p.27). Berea College curriculum since that time has featured an emphasis on preservation of the southern Appalachian culture. Andrew Ritchie, who started the school at Rabun Gap (future home of Foxfire) during the same time period, understood that he needed to establish a unique curriculum at his school that incorporated components of the culture of mountain people, so he arranged for entire families to move onto the campus of the school to live while their children received an education (Ritchie, 1948). Myles Horton, the founder of the Highlander Folk School, located in the mountains of Tennessee, established his school in the 1920s to assist the population of the southern Appalachians in fighting against their political and economic exploitation from both inside and outside the region (Bell, Gaventa & Peters, 1990). There are three main themes that emerge in the literature relative to the internal colonialism perspective: First, that linguistically, southern Appalachia was seen as a region with a distinct culture and inferior language patterns; secondly, the region was environmentally exploited for its natural resources; and thirdly that the common peoples of the region were dominated politically
by a small core of elites living inside and outside the region. In the following discussion these three themes are illustrated.

Blaustein (2003) explained how the internal colonialism concept is applicable to southern Appalachia with regard to supposed linguistic inferiority “..a region dominated and exploited by outside interests, whose regional speech patterns define national language standards of labeling their speakers as backward and inferior” (p.27). Foxfire’s adherents, with its original focus on cultural journalism were aware that they were helping to share and promote better understanding of the southern, mountain culture for those from outside the culture, and that this included language. Foxfire was part of a tradition that emerged as part of the ethnic identity movements of the 1960s (discussed further in Chapter 4) particularly that “along with folk revivalism, the creation of local, regional and national literatures voiced in indigenous languages, dialects, and accents expressed that same desire for symbolic rebirth” (Blaustein, 2003, p.71). Foxfire students did this mainly by transcribing from audio tapes the speech patterns of the subjects that they interviewed as closely as possible to the speech as they heard them without actually using phonetic symbols.

And Gran’pa said one time that he went t’make music one time fer somebody, and said he broke th,banjer string. They said, “Well, we’ll have t’quit. We ain’t got another banjer string.” One of’em said, John, you run over t’Ken Muse’s.” said, “It ain’t late and we’ll play some more.” Said he looked out. Said he wadn’t afraid, but he didn’t like th’idea of goin’fer he had a big dog that’d bite-a great big ol’dog – and said he said, It’s pretty dark out there an’ I’m afraid that dog’ll get me” (Foxfire, Volume 2, p.341).
On the other hand, there are academics who argued against the supposition that southern Appalachia fit the model for an internally colonized region linguistically or otherwise. Anthropologist Batteau, while acknowledging that Appalachia fit the profile of an internally colonized region economically nevertheless, in *The Invention of Appalachia* (1990), stated that “Appalachia is a product of the urban imagination” as part of his post-modern, deconstructionist argument against the myth of folk cultures (as cited in Blaustein, p.124). Some also argued that the southern Appalachians do not fit well into the model of the “world systems theory”, and the notion that “metropolitan cores deliberately subjugat[ing] an impoverished peripheral region; [and] underdeveloped regions are subjected to intentional “underdevelopment”” (Blaustein, 2003, p.65). True, under this model, the American West and its native inhabitants, lacking water sources and with vast land areas used for extractive purposes exclusively, fit better into the concept of internal colonialism. Sociologist Walls (1978), while focusing more on central Appalachia in his work, debated whether that region should be more appropriately labeled an “internal periphery” rather than an “internal colony.”

Nevertheless, my research was to indicate that, in the case of Rabun County, the issues of chronic underemployment and limited land ownership, not to mention the prevalence of negative stereotypes about mountain people in the mainstream media, merit that the region be classified as internally colonized. In pre-industrial America, residents of the southern Appalachians could sustain themselves on the land where they lived without the need for outside assistance or product. As industrialization and urbanization swept America, mountaineers lives were complicated by the appeal of their land to those from the outside who sought to exploit the region for its resources, timber and copper, to name two major commodities extracted from the southern Appalachians in the nineteenth century at a great expense to the environment of the
region and, as a result, to the lives of the people who called those mountains their homes. In *Modernizing the Mountaineer* (1980), Whisnant wrote extensively about the degradation and exploitation by corporate, outside interests of the peoples and land of southern Appalachia as did Walls (1977) when he references the internal colonialism model with regard to southern Appalachia:

> It has [the model] performed a valuable service by focusing attention on the acquisition of the raw materials of the region by outside corporate interests and on exploitation of the local work force and community at large resulting from the removal of the region’s natural resources for the benefit of absentee owners (p.135).

The identification of southern Appalachia as a “social problem” and economically disadvantaged (Walls, 1978), however, did little in the way of directly benefiting the population itself besides a revitalization of the “folk” culture of the region. Having completed this study, I might say that Foxfire fits directly in that category also. At least one informant with whom I spoke, believed the magazine should have used the written word to expose more of the problems of the region instead of focusing almost exclusively on folk culture.

Once a remote wilderness, southern Appalachia went through environmental changes and its people, cultural changes, as a result of the highly desirable resources that the region was home to. Davis (2000) wrote of “new waves of entrepreneurs, land speculators and timber barons, northern and foreign industrialists with an eye on transforming the southern Appalachians into a private domain of capital and wealth” (p.160).

Competition ensued for the right to own the land and resources of the region, and the average mountaineer benefitted the least from the land grab, because for generations he and the American Indian population before him had seen the upland forest of the region as communal
land that all could use to hunt, collect wild plants from and free-range graze livestock upon. The land acquisition by public and private sources resulted in their loss of access to that land (Davis, 2000).

The Weeks Act, passed in 1911, initiated the Federal government’s purchase of major land holdings in the southern Appalachians in order to protect the valuable watersheds that began in the mountains of north Georgia and other locations. The driving political influences that created the forest service acquisition of land were powerful agricultural interests downstream who wanted to protect their farmland from the detritus created by industrial logging, but because the benefit seemed to be for all Americans vast tracks of land were acquired from private hands in the southern Appalachians. Davis (2000) wrote:

With mounting evidence that healthy forests served as the principal protector of our Nation’s watershed, more and more pressure was placed on the federal government to stop the forests’ destruction by setting aside large tracts of mountain timberlands in forest reserves. After hearing considerable and heated testimony from engineers, industry spokesmen, and conservationists, Congress passed the Weeks Act on 1 March, 1911, officially authorizing the purchase of “forested, cut-over, or denuded lands within the watersheds of navigable streams….necessary to the regulation of the flow of navigable streams (p.171).

As the unrestricted logging was brought to an end in north Georgia another powerful group, the Georgia Power Company, at that time known as the Georgia Railway and Power Company, moved into Rabun County in order to secure hydropower sources for its generation of electricity primarily for the Atlanta market (Davis, 2000). The result was the creation a dam and five lakes that would permanently alter the landscape of Rabun County and cover homesteads of
long-time residents. If the mountain vistas themselves were not enough to bring in outsiders, then the beautiful lakes, along with the rivers, streams and waterfalls abounding made a vacationers and camp goers paradise of Rabun County, but the approximately six square miles of lakes (www.rabuncountygov.com, retrieved 7/22/10) are owned by the Georgia Power Company and to this day the land surrounding the lakes is owned by Georgia Power. Home owners lease the land they put their lakeside homes on.

Davis, in *Where There are Mountains* (2000), made one of the strongest arguments for the environmental and political exploitation of the Rabun County residents as described below when he writes of an historic battle waged at the beginning of the twentieth century over a stunning natural landmark located in Rabun County, the Tallulah Falls:

One of the most scenic and historically significant sites destroyed by a hydroelectric dam in northeastern Georgia. Formerly one of the highest waterfalls in the entire eastern United States, Tallulah Falls had been visited by numerous important individuals over the centuries who unanimously praised the scenic beauty of the falls and the surrounding mountain landscape. In 1914 the picturesque falls were virtually extinguished after the completion of the Tallulah Falls hydroelectric project, a 116-foot-high dam located immediately above the crest of the waterfall…a lawsuit against Georgia Railway and Power, the builder of the project. After what one local historian has called the “best prepared civil case ever tried in Georgia,” the local superior court ruled in favor of the power company, a decision upheld by the state supreme court on 13 December 1913…The most obvious social cost of dam construction was the direct removal or dislocation of mountain residents (pp.185-186).
Rabun County is a highly desirable location for people from the outside because of its natural beauty, tremendous water and forest resources and its extremely habitable climate in a relative close proximity to a major metropolitan city, yet because of this and the small population numbers and minimal financial resources of the average Rabun County resident, the mountaineer population was open to exploitation at the hands of elites and the power of the government. The following statistics help tell the story. Today, approximately 63% of the land in Rabun County is owned by the Federal government another 20% by Georgia Power (Rabun County Government, 2010; Rabun County Online 2010) and less than 20% is in private hands, a significant percentage of that being out-of-county second home owners and/or retirees. All of this lessens the political influence that the average Rabun County resident has through the power of his/her vote.

The best explanation for the political domination of southern Appalachia comes from the regional development model as Walls (1978) explained:

The …regional development model is concerned with providing economic and social overhead capital, training people for skills for new industrial and service jobs, facilitating migration, and promoting the establishment or relocation of privately-owned industries through a growth center strategy. A modernizing elite is seen as the agent of the developmental process. The major attempt to apply the model with in the United States is the work or the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and its associated programs (p. 2).

The Appalachian Regional Commission was an organization founded in 1965 (ARC, n.d.) as part of President Johnson’s massive War on Poverty agenda (Davis, 2000) (See Figure 2.3 for a map of the region as created by the ARC). According to the regional development model, there are three power cores that vie for control in southern Appalachia. “ “Ministering
professionals”—clergy, physicians, and the teachers—have the most modernistic outlook; businessmen to be intermediate; and the local administrative elite, the “gerontocracy” of bankers, lawyers, and politicians to be the most traditional…Through the dual federal – state structure of the ARC, the interests of regional and national elites are reconciled” (Walls & Billings, p.134).

Under this model, educators such as Eliot Wigginton and his work with Foxfire fit into the role of “ministering professionals” attempting to help the region and his students overcome injustices against them by the reigning power structure. A case in point was Wigginton’s choice to use an Atlanta bank to deposit Foxfire money into rather than a local Rabun County Bank that he thought was complicit with real estate developers who were seeking to take ownership of land away from average Rabun County citizens at an alarming rate (Wigginton, 1986).
Figure 2.1. Areas of states highlighted white with red dot stars represent southern Appalachia according to the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Despite efforts of intellectual elites like Wigginton, Walls & Billings (1977) write:

Actions taken by regional and national planners are defended as technical decisions, rather than political choices among alternative courses of development.

Political sociology calls attention to the possibility that the most important
decisions may be the non-decision”: the questions that are never raised and the subjects that never make public agenda. Examples include public ownership of the region’s natural resources and worker or community owned and controlled industry” (p.134).

There are criticisms of applying internal colonization theory to the southern Appalachian case. Among these are that “the objectives of the colonizers and the colonized, can be vague” (Hind, 1984, p.554) and one would have to argue that in the case of southern Appalachia, many of the residents were complicit in their own exploitation, such as, mountain people who worked for the mining and logging interests that moved into their region, mountain people who sold their property off to the government or industrial interests and later, during the arts and crafts movement of the 1920s and 30s, mountain people allowing the co-opting of aspects of their cultural heritage by outsiders (Hind, 1984). Nonetheless, for my purposes, the literature contains a far greater amount of support for employing an internal colonialism perspective.

**Neo-conservative/liberal perspectives.** Many academics, including historians, were at the forefront in support of returning the focus of education to more traditional methods and curricula. Foxfire would face this challenge when new standards in Georgia forced the program to move from being an English core offering to an elective one beginning in 1986. Among the historians influential in the back to basics movement was Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. In particular, Schlesinger criticized ethno-centric and multicultural education programs of which Foxfire might be considered one. Following consensus ideas, he upheld the idea that American society evolved from Anglo-Saxon, protestant traditions, and at the core of the American culture and value structure these traditions still held supremacy over all others. American school curricula, he believed, should reflect this concept. Teaching ethno-centric curricula, Schlesinger argued, was divisive and served to further isolate minority populations from mainstream American society.
Schlesinger also rejected the concept that the purpose of teaching history was to build self-worth in traditionally marginalized populations. He called this therapeutic education, and he believed its focus in schools took away from building the intellectual and academic skills needed by marginalized populations in order to raise their position in American society (Schlesinger, 1991). One might argue that Foxfire was a curriculum not focused on core values, but on that of an ethnic minority or a traditionally marginalized population.

An educational historian very active in the current educational reform debate over American school curriculum is Diane Ravitch. Her beliefs fall very much in line with Schlesinger’s. Ravitch proposed that it was not that the system or the teacher-centered pedagogy was inherently flawed, but that equal access to quality education was the problem. Ravitch supported the ideals of the traditional teacher-centered classroom, and core academic focus for American schools. She believed marginalized population groups could achieve educational success if they were held to the same standards as mainstream white America. It is unclear, then, what position a scholar like Ravitch would take related to Foxfire, as that program was student-centered, not oriented toward core academics or a mainstream historical understanding, but focused on the local values and culture of the community from which it emerged. I evaluate this in my study.

Another educational historian involved in current debates over educational reform is Ellen Lagemann, a former student of Lawrence Cremin. Her focus on educational research and its impact on schools employed a post modern, inter-disciplinary emphasis that has not been as common in educational history as in traditional history. Lagemann suggested that teachers in public schools could benefit from reviewing current research, yet schools gave little or no incentives for teachers to seek out such understanding. She concluded that the key to educational
change and reform must include the restructuring of teacher education programs and professional development structures within schools to allow for teachers to grow as professionals. (Lagemann, 2000). In my study, Lagemann’s positions are relevant because they help point to a reason Foxfire curriculum was not more transferable. The amount of time it takes teachers and students to coordinate a program such as Foxfire, often without compensation, made it difficult to implement such course offerings in traditional school settings. I investigated this reality in my study.

Curriculum theorists. Among the most recent works and comprehensive studies of the formation of American curriculum from a historical view was that of Herbert Kliebard’s work (2004). While Ravitch’s focus was more on the post-Sputnik era, Kliebard returned to the end of the last century to explore curriculum as the field was originally established. This is relevant to my study because it helps communicate how curricula are formed and why. Spring (1994) revealed that the majority of the American public school curricula developed at a national level and with the interest of dominant groups as a priority. Foxfire as a local curriculum does not fit this model. Kliebard posited his argument around the following thesis: “we do not find a monolithic supremacy exercised by one interest group; rather, we find different interests groups competing for dominance over the curriculum” (Kliebard, 2004, pp.7).

Kliebard identified four groups which created four different curriculum types he named as humanist, developmentalist, social efficiency, and social meliorist. He concluded that the interest in shaping American school curriculum began at the end of the nineteenth century because of the dramatic increase in the number of secondary school age students who were entering American schools at that time (Kliebard, 2004).
The first group, the humanists, was concerned that the curriculum features those subjects that would build “mental discipline” in students and consequently prepare them for admittance into universities. The humanist approach served the interests of those academics who wanted the newly formed secondary schools to help train the best and brightest students in the traditional subjects (mathematics, literature, geography and history) at the expense of other students who were not going to have an opportunity to receive a college education. At the heart of the humanists’ belief was that “any subject rigorously studied could bring about this effect” (Kliebard, 2004, pp.9-10). The President of Harvard at the time, Charles Eliot, was the leading advocate for the humanist curriculum (Kleibard, 2004). Foxfire, on the other hand, took a traditional subject, English, and taught it through non-traditional means (student-centered), focused the content locally and allowed students to use the colloquial speech patterns of its subjects.

The second group of curriculists identified by Kliebard (2004) was the developmentalists. Among the reformers in this group was G. Stanley Hall who founded the child study movement. This group organized their ideas in childhood learning on three beliefs; 1) (all) children should not be taught the same way. 2) “all subjects (taught in school) were not of equal value, and 3) college prep curriculum was not appropriate for (learning) life skills,” and in these core beliefs would lie the justification for tracking and ability grouping in American schools. Although Dewey, was not allied with the child study movement directly, his thinking fit most with the category of developmentalist. Ironically, the point at which Dewey diverged from Hall and others was on the very point that Dewey critics attacked him, anti-intellectualism. Kliebard identified this tendency of the Child Study Movement to “romanticize” youth at the expense of intellectualism, however, Dewey never argued that curriculum should be devoid of standards...
and/or academic rigor, but merely that it should be flexible and relative to the child’s
developmental stage, resulting with children developing their intellects by exploring their
interests (and ultimately that students be prepared to take their place in a democratic society)
(Kliebard, 2004). As Foxfire evolved as a curriculum, it became somewhat formalized when
Wigginton and the Foxfire board voted to have the Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning
(based on Deweyian principles) put into curriculum guides available to teachers who attended
Foxfire training seminars. When Wigginton realized the similarities between Foxfire pedagogy
and Dewey’s beliefs, years after founding Foxfire, he concurred with others who believed
Foxfire best fit Dewey’s developmentalist model (Wigginton, 1986).

Kliebard’s third group of curriculum makers helped create the “social efficiency”
curriculum. The first name Kliebard identified as associated with efficiency in American schools
was Joseph Mayer Rice, who, similar to Horace Mann in the early nineteenth century, visited
school after school and gathered data. He came to the conclusion that schools were failing and in
particular he blamed “teacher incompetence” for this. This point is relevant to my study because
I wanted to investigate how respected or recognized Wigginton was as a teacher by his
colleagues and by others. Rice published his findings and conclusion in his influential book,
Scientific Management in Education, 1912 (Kliebard, 2004).

From Rice’s core ideas emerged what would be the most powerful group of reformers in
history of American education, and from their work, “social utility became the supreme criterion
against which the value of school studies was measured” (Kliebard, 2004, p.77). Kliebard and
other critical theorists argue that it is this very point which makes social efficiency curriculum
suspect because the control and organization emphasized by the efficiency curriculum serves the
interest of the elite class of American society at the expense of those in the under classes. In my study, I looked for evidence of the significance of Foxfire as a program with social utility.

Kliebard also argued that from its original roots in the late nineteenth century and its connection with the emerging field of sociology beginning in the twentieth century, social efficiency curriculum became dominated by psychologists such as E.L. Thorndike and the “mental measurement movement.” Using standardized intelligence tests, designed to measure the reasoning of the elite, white population, Thorndike and others would be responsible for the establishment of the junior high school as a place to sort population groups by intelligence, and the organization of the comprehensive high school as the place to place students according to what jobs they would perform in society (Kliebard, 2004). This is relevant to my study because Foxfire is not a curriculum that is measurable by testing. Does this make it less relevant? This question I asked of Foxfire in my study.

The final group of curriculists who transformed American schools was the social meliorists. These reformers, led by Lester Frank Ward, believed that teachers and educational theorists could use education to improve societal ills (Kliebard, 2004). These reformers would be closely allied with social reconstructionists such as George Counts. According to Kliebard, though the impact of the meliorists was less than that of the efficiency proponents, they nevertheless were more interested in “curriculum as the vehicle by which social injustice would be redressed and the evils of curriculum corrected” (Kliebard, 2004, p.154). Foxfire’s connection to its home culture and the idea that it validated the culture from which it emerged is a component of Foxfire that I considered in my study.

Critical theorists. Finally, the ideas about curriculum, education, and power relations that fall within the critical theorist tradition offer useful insight for my study. Critical theorist
writings emerged as a tradition in the latter decades of the twentieth century, in the work of, among others Apple (1995), (2004), and (Giroux, 2001). Their attention was focused on the power relations at work in education that took forms such as the deskilling of teachers, the commodification and commercialization of curriculum, the use of education to maintain the traditional social order, and the perpetuation of domination under a capitalist system.

In their role as educational theorists, Giroux (2001) and Apple (2004) directly linked schools and the social and economic inequalities in that exist in American society. Apple (2004) argued that schools are not neutral institutions providing equal opportunity for students, but rather are infused with social and material inequalities that perpetuate the existing power structures. Giroux (2006) concluded that revolutionary, transformative change in the current education system is required in order to redress the inequities of schools, and build an educated citizenry capable of preserving democracy. Some of these writings are useful for my study in that they serve as reminders to be alert for evidence of power relations, taken-for-granted assumptions about the purposes of education, whose interests are served by education, and the nature of curriculum and its role in perpetuating or challenging the status quo. In Chapter 4, I explored the Foxfire program’s role in providing educational opportunities for its students beyond the mainstream.

In summary, since its beginnings in the 1900s, the field of curriculum formation has been a hotly contested battle ground for preeminence in the American classroom. I provided an overview of how historians and other scholars beginning in the 1930s viewed this, and I also provided an analysis of the major themes that transpired in the field of American curricula formation, design, and implementation. In the next section, I summarize educational literature that provides insights on how curriculums are formed at multiple levels, internationally,
nationally, regionally, statewide, and locally; I compare some of the international and United States models on curriculum formation, and I comment on the manner in which this literature might assisted me in my investigation of Foxfire.

A Brief Review of the Dialectic of the Global and Local, and Pertinent Literature

Literature in the field of comparative and international education is pertinent to my study regarding the global to local continuum. In the decades since *A Nation At Risk* (1983), and especially since the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), the United States has conformed to the worldwide trends in curriculum and testing standardization. Spring (2008) identified this as the high stakes testing model of education. Although in one form or another, standardized testing has been around since the beginning of the twentieth century due to the influence of curriculists like E.L. Thorndike, Spring (2008) noted that today’s testing is different because, unlike in earlier eras, it does not emphasize score reports to assess student academic needs, placements, or even student intellectual skills, but rather the results are used as a means to rate the effectiveness of school curriculum and teacher performance. In the case of my study, this phenomenon is significant because Georgia’s emphasis on standards-based education resulted in the Foxfire program modifying its status as an English core to an English elective and a vocational offering. This was a transformation that occurred even prior to Georgia’s passage of the Quality Basic Education Act (1986) (Wigginton, 1986).

This trend is very noticeable in American schools today. It is linked to international trends and obsession with administering standardized tests. As Arnove and Torres (2003) commented there is a perception that there exists “a causal relationship between the excellence of a school system as measured by national standardized examinations, and the economic success of a country in global competition” (p.4).
Foxfire and my study, fall within a multi-layered hierarchy of education systems ranging from local to state and national and global.

Baker and Wiseman identified the process of basing school and student performance on standardized tests as part of the larger global trend they called *The Worldwide Explosion of Internationalized Education Policy* wherein “schools and their outcomes are increasingly quantitatively measured, and compared on a global scale” (Baker and Wiseman, 2005, pp.1-3). For instance, students scores on the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS) and other studies, are used to judge the performance of students and the quality of education in participating countries. Score reports and rankings have evolved into a highly competitive landscape in which adequate or inadequate performance is linked to overall education quality and to national economic development (Baker & Wiseman, 2005).

According to Baker & Wiseman (2005), among the other issues identified as critical in terms of global trends are the move toward national curricula, the resilience of local curricula despite the emergence of nationalized curricula, the deskilling of teachers, the tradition of borrowing reform ideas and systems from other countries, and the assumption that student performance on standardized tests is directly connected to the human capital function of schooling, and thus accurate at predicting any nation’s ability to successfully compete in the global economy. Some aspects here relate to my study because I explored why Foxfire was sustainable in its own setting, whether it was transferable outside Rabun County, and what features were imported or “borrowed”. I also considered whether Foxfire’s local character and reliance and non teacher-centered method was seen as a positive or negative feature of the program.
Nationalizing curricula. Herbert Kliebard mentioned this “nationalizing” effect on curriculum in U.S. education from an historical perspective in, *The Hidden Consequences of a National Curriculum* (1992), illustrating that this is not a new issue. Specifically, Kliebard cited two examples where international events resulted in curriculum being manipulated at a national level in the U.S. The first was the passing of the Smith-Hughes Act (1917), which essentially federalized vocational education in locally funded and controlled schools as a response to fears ignited by the First World War. The second was the passing of the NDEA (National Defense Education Act) to strengthen mathematics and science curriculum following the launch of Sputnik. In both cases Kliebard claimed the benefits were questionable for students, the implementation distracting rather than helpful for teachers, and subsequently the programs’ purposes were meant to benefit national interests rather than school children and their individual needs (Kliebard, 1992).

There is much discussion in comparative education about the emergence of a global system of education. For instance, Arnove and Torres (2003), Baker & Wiseman (2005) and Anderson-Levitt (2003), under the model of “World Culture Theory”, noted that “rather than diverging, schools are converging” or becoming similar, and that this differentially serves the needs of any nation as it attempts to socialize and nationalize its school age population (Anderson-Levitt, 2003, pp.1-2).

Anderson-Levitt also noted the “movements toward increasing national control and standardization in many countries” (2003, p.8). Her work examined the similarities of schools throughout the world, such as schools with graded classrooms of boys and girls with one teacher. “Whole class lectures and recitation” (p.5) are still the most common method employed worldwide, and yet in many countries these is also concern with trying more learner-centered
approaches to meet student needs and to take in account local contextual needs when possible (Anderson-Levitt, 2003) (Appendix D). Foxfire is an example of a program that did just that.

Decentralizing curricula. Teacher educator Rhedding-Jones argued that within the global to local continuum in education there exist “’little habitats’ within communities, schools, and colleges” (Rhedding-Jones, 2002, p.384) that help preserve and promote the production of local curricula within the nationalizing ones. She argued that this is absolutely necessary as “a standard curriculum taught elsewhere requires localization with the acknowledgment and adjustments by teachers” (Rhedding-Jones, 2002, p.384). As a result, this flexibility in curriculum implementation counters the effect that Kliebard described of serving only national educational needs at the expense of the local communities and school children. Rhedding-Jones argued “for a non-Anglo nation, the desirability of a “universal” English (in this case), without consideration of local functions and modifications” (Rhedding-Jones, 2002, p.384) is an example of globalization in education as a hegemonic function, a form of colonization, not utilizing guns and technology, but through curriculum (Rhedding-Jones, 2002). Her point regarding English is relevant to my study because it provides a justification for Foxfire’s use of the local dialect of the mountain people in its work.

Eoyang (2007) explored the idea of globalization as a hegemonic function. He developed a scheme (see Appendix B) to illustrate the different stages of the “global to local” continuum as Arnove & Torres (2003) noted. In the stage when a nation, state, community is able to “act local, think global,” they are in the “phase of historical development [when they are] self conscious about hegemonic, ethnocentric thinking and there is a self-awareness about the concept” (Eoyang, 2007, p.82). At this point, “glocalization” can occur in education. Even within the context of a globalizing world, “curriculums tailored to “local” cultures, communities, and
students” (Eoyang, 2007, p.83) emerge for the benefit of all, but in particular individual students. Foxfire was an example, from the United States, of an evolving and locally created and focused curriculum. In my study, I explore the program’s historical and current body of work and its contributions to the preservation of southern Appalachian culture and the degree to which one might consider it a “glocalized” curriculum or were national curriculum goals forced on Foxfire.

Jungck and Kajornsins (2003), in an example from Thailand, theorized that despite the trend toward nationalizing curricula, it is desirable for schools to retain some autonomy, for example schools in rural areas (of the third world especially) where the national curriculum is relatively meaningless. They noted that “Several projects in Thailand illustrate what is involved in honoring local wisdom and developing a more locally relevant and empowering curriculum” (p.35) (see Appendix C). Among the “local” features of the Thai curriculum examined were the participation and involvement of the community in the local school business (that has also been a hallmark of education in the U.S.A.), and attempts to train local community members in artisan production in order to boost the local economy (Jungck & Kajornsin, 2003). In the case of Foxfire, this was tried in Rabun County without success, but it was tried at other schools in Appalachia with which Foxfire shared some features as explained further in Chapter 4. The creation of local curricula (such as those discussed in Thailand and also Foxfire) allow for the flexibility and diversity of local curricula despite the dilemmas of transferability of curriculums and standardized testing across countries and in light of internal regional and community contextual factors (Arnove & Torres, 2003).

How does this occur? Primarily through the process shown in Appendix D, known as creolization, where an international curriculum is adopted by a national system and modified to fit the educational structure and political climate of that country as it is implemented at various
lower levels. Napier (cited in Anderson-Levitt, 2003), in work on South Africa’s educational transformation (see Appendix D), stated it was necessary and desirable to infuse the curriculum with elements that promoted democracy and that decreased the racism in the schools new South African education system. Insights from such studies help me understand processes uncovered in my study in terms of creolization processes and the global to local context.

In the Foxfire program’s activities state level curriculum standards designated appropriate for an English literature class (from which Foxfire originally emerged) were modified greatly in order to focus on community topics. For example, current Georgia Performance Standards for 9th grade English indicate that a student “demonstrates understanding and control of the rules of the English language, realizing that usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats” (GaDOE, 2010, p.11) In the case of Foxfire, students were also allowed to use the local dialect language in writings of their interview subjects instead of standard American English (Wigginton, 1986). This would also be an example of creolization from state to local level pertinent to my study.

Conversely, as Foxfire grew, yet remained a local curriculum based in Rabun County Georgia. It was from this location that Foxfire continued to follow the path as explained in the Global-Local Model (Appendix B). Foxfire developed a network of teacher training sites from which materials, training, and support could be provided to teachers who wished to adopt the Foxfire method, but ultimately it was/is at the school level that Foxfire broke down in locations outside of Rabun County. All of this was part of the re-creolization process as expressed in Appendix D.

Foxfire was considered an alternate curriculum one taken and taught voluntarily. Since its end product was a published magazine and other publicly available products, the work load
required that teachers volunteer extra hours to make it work. Interestingly however, in Rabun County, Foxfire had a paid staff that assisted Wigginton with the program. The money to do this came from the profits that the Foxfire magazine and books generated (Wigginton, 1986). There is little doubt that this contributed to Foxfire’s longevity in Rabun County, and impeded its success in other locations where the same support was not available. My study of Foxfire helps verify this with data.

**Testing and deskilling of teachers.** With the issue of nationalizing curriculum and standards-based education, what follows is a certain amount of deskilling of teachers. Inevitably, whenever top-down curricula are adopted, teachers are expected to follow a script that tells them how to teach the new curriculum, as Hargreaves (1994) argued. Teacher work has been “defined and their [teachers’] powers of discretion delimited by the technical controls of standardized tests, “teacher-proof” curriculum packages and guidelines, and step-by-step models of teaching imposed from above” (p.26). Often, the result of such heavy-handed enforcement of curriculum is that teachers resist- or they leave teaching. On the other hand, the Foxfire curriculum gave Wigginton (and any other teachers who might adopt the approach) a great deal of flexibility and freedom. This was because Foxfire teacher training, as it evolved, was based on the *Foxfire Core Practices* (Appendix F) and as such emphasized a pedagogical method rather than a set curriculum.

In his study of nationalizing curriculum in the United States, Kliebard (1995) noted Kellaghan and Madaus’ research on the same topic in Europe. They identified the heavily bureaucratized structure that controls teachers and their classrooms in those countries that have centralized education systems. In England, France, and Germany for instance, school inspectors visit schools, and enforce implementation of the national curriculum and standards. This
example shows how a national curriculum might impact teacher professionalism and morale because it lessens their autonomy and creativity in the classroom (Kellaghan & Madaus, cited in Kliebard, 1995). In contrast, the Foxfire curriculum required that teachers work in coordination with their students to determine coursework and content although they still had to address state standards to a certain extent. As Spring (2008), Baker and Wiseman (2005) and others noted, in the U.S.A. and throughout the world, education is deeply entrenched in the high stakes testing model.

In the case of Georgia, this movement began in the 1980s with the state board of education introducing Quality Basic Education (QBE) as outlined in Georgia’s Quality Basic Education Act, 1986 (Education Commission of the States, 2010). As indicated previously, Foxfire did move from English core to English elective and vocational education. What students learned in Foxfire was not testable and therefore it was not possible to easily quantify what students learned in Foxfire. This possibly made the Foxfire approach undesirable in some educational circles. This is a reality I addressed in my study in terms of the degree to which Foxfire was a sustainable and transferable program.

In 2002, Georgia moved even further towards standard-based education when it adopted the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) in all core content areas in order to increase the “rigor and relevance” of the state’s curriculum. Georgia Performance Standards in comparison to its predecessor Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) provided more in-depth explanation of what students are expected to learn in Georgia’s public schools Today, according to the state curricula scheme, Foxfire as an elective fits more loosely into state schemes (GaDOE, 2010), and it is allowed to cite the *Foxfire Core Practices* as its curriculum.
**Local curriculum and glocalization.** The notion of glocalization (see Appendix E) is relevant to my study of Foxfire because of the program’s qualities as a locally produced curriculum that met the needs of certain Rabun County students better than did formal, state or nationally produced curricula. Robertson (1995) is credited for the term “glocalization” as a social science concept borrowed from its origins in Japanese business practices. In economic terms, glocalization is known as “micro-marketing” or tailoring a product to the specific tastes and needs of a local market. According to Robertson (1995), it makes sense that in education, we would adopt and promote local communities in curriculum design. It is possible that elements of the Foxfire curriculum were adopted and used by the state or possibly national curricula designers. I looked for this possibility in my research on Foxfire.

Robertson (1995) identified the “mythology of globalization”: the idea that globalization has become a homogenizing affect on the world’s cultures. Robertson challenged this assumption through his ideas of “heterogeneity.” He stated that in reality, globalization has contributed to the reconstruction of ‘home’ communities. Because of this effect, Robertson (1995) argued for replacing the term globalization with “glocalization” thus stressing the “interconnectedness” of local cultures arising from global interactions.

Rheding-Jones (2002) whose work was influenced by Robertson, commented on her work as an Australian teaching English in Norway, “linguistic hybridities/diasporas should be accepted in linguistic and pedagogical practice” (p.385). I see the relevance of this point in the creation and maintenance of a curriculum such as Foxfire. But the internally created, transferable curriculum remains a rarity. This is also a question I considered in my work.

**Foxfire as a glocalized curriculum.** Perhaps the best way to envision Foxfire as a glocalized curriculum is by following the convergence to divergence model (see Appendix E).
To summarize this concept, students enter with their local cultural knowledge, then the teacher and students work together to form a product, the curriculum, and what emerges is “glocalized” knowledge or applications that students and others outside the classroom can utilize and that incorporates elements of “outside” (state, national, global) knowledge. During my research, I looked for evidence that Foxfire fit into the convergence to divergence model.

**An Overview of Literature on Foxfire**

In the proceeding discussion, I reviewed selected literature on the history of curriculum formation in the United States, and reviewed themes and writings pertinent to the global to local continuum in education. In this section, I review literature specific to the Foxfire program. These studies on Foxfire range in quality and in depth, but they provide an invaluable source to my own research on Foxfire. They include first person accounts of Foxfire events, surveys conducted of former students and subjects (interviewees for the magazine), and archived transcribed interviews of Foxfire alumni, colleagues of Wigginton, and community members many of which I was not able to replicate because of the passage of time from then to now (1966-1991).

**Foxfire Reconsidered.** As stated earlier, there are three major categories into which Foxfire writings fall, but first I review the one book length study of Foxfire titled *Foxfire Reconsidered* (1989). There was significant lag time between the book’s publication after the fieldwork was completed in Rabun County between January 1982 and June 1984. I was a senior high school student in Atlanta at a public school very different from Rabun County High during that same period. I did not know of Foxfire’s existence at the time.

Puckett’s stated purposes were to “specify precisely (Foxfire’s) theoretical underpinnings” and “to attempt to link the theory and practice of Foxfire to a set of global issues and concerns in American education” (Puckett, 1989, pp.2-4). I am not sure that the author
accomplished those tasks, as he seemed to move into other concerns besides education (such as the political empowerment in the Appalachians) that caused him to lose focus on his stated research objectives. Puckett’s study did provide an excellent glimpse into what actually occurred in Foxfire classrooms, among the program’s staff, and Rabun County High politics in general during the time period of Puckett’s field observations as a witness, an aspect of his research that I was unable to duplicate.

**Writings produced by Wigginton and Foxfire students.** A category of Foxfire literature includes those works produced by the Foxfire students and/or staff including Wigginton. The two major works here are *Sometimes a Shining Moment* (1986) and the *Foxfire 25th Anniversary Book* (Wigginton & His Students, 1991). The formerly mentioned book was my first real introduction into Foxfire, and although it is primarily a narrative retelling of Foxfire’s formation by its founding teacher, it also provided a summary of Wigginton’s pedagogical beliefs and guidelines on how to implement his strategies in any classroom. This was his stated purpose for writing the book. Up to that point, many had misinterpreted Foxfire not as a complete progressive pedagogy, but as merely an example of how to organize and write a magazine about Appalachia, other ethnicities or folk culture using writing as a tool in one’s class. I concur with Puckett (1989) who considered this book semi-autobiographical, as Wigginton gives some glimpses into his private life as well as his work with Foxfire.

The other major piece of literature about Foxfire is the *Foxfire 25th Anniversary Book* (Wigginton & His Students, 1991) that consisted of transcribed interviews of Wigginton, the original Foxfire principal, Morris Brown, original Foxfire student alumni, and testimonies of more recent students. It seems that its purpose was in large measure to counter some of the criticisms made by Puckett (1989) in his book about the degree of decision-making and input
that Foxfire students truly had. Puckett, provided evidence that this was less so than Wigginton indicated in his 1986 book, but in the Anniversary book (1991) the Foxfire students interviewed seem to validate the claim that they were given tremendous amounts of responsibilities by Wigginton for their products. I investigated this possibility in my study also. Of course, Wigginton as the editor chose what testimonies appeared in the anniversary edition, making the book less than an objective source. The actual Foxfire magazines and the books that are the consolidated versions of multiple editions of the magazine also fall into this category of work. All of the above writings proved to be valuable sources for my study.

**Foxfire as an exceptional school program.** Another category of Foxfire literature tends to idealize the program and Wigginton as being exceptional. It was important for my study to scrutinize this. In these works Foxfire was most often presented as an example of cultural journalism. In Foxfire’s heyday many of these writings appeared in the popular press throughout the country. They were not academic in nature, but a good example of one of these articles that nevertheless appeared in an academic journal is the following: *On 25 Years of Foxfire: A Conversation with Eliot Wigginton*, from *Educational Leadership* (Meek, 1990). As the name implies this is an interview with Wigginton and some of his students about how the Foxfire process works.

**Foxfire as a model of cultural journalism as pedagogy.** An additional set of writings on Foxfire presents Foxfire as an example, (perhaps the ideal one), of the use of “cultural journalism” as pedagogy. One researcher, Thad Sitton, has written multiple times on Foxfire in this regard and has developed a term that I think works well to describe the Foxfire magazine pedagogy; Foxfire-Concept Publications. An example of one of Sitton’s writings is “Foxfire-Concept Publications, Cultural Journalism, and Progressive Education,” 1982.
Interestingly, two other writings citing Foxfire as a model magazine project were dissertation projects. One, Nungesser’s, “Thistledown: An Experimental Application of the Foxfire Learning Concept: An analysis of That Concept” (1977), and England’s “The Ideal Characteristics of Foxfire-Type Projects as Perceived by Teacher Advisors” (1979). I have yet to read either of these two, but Puckett (1989), in this book on Foxfire mentions them only in passing, and speaks of them both as being shallow, and short on any real analysis on Foxfire. He calls England’s content “trivial” and Nungesser he states “failed to address substantive pedagogical and sociological issues” (Puckett, 1989, p.287). I had planned on reading these writings as part of my own research, but I think, based on the dates of the dissertations, Foxfire was still in its glory years (at Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School), and it was assumed that the magazine concept was a real winner in hooking in kids and contributing to communities through cultural journalism. The thrusts of these studies were possibly to glorify the approach rather than to critique it thus their usefulness to my study would be limited and I chose not to review them. I did examine the transferability of the cultural journalism further, later in my study. It should be noted that not all the cultural journalism projects following in Foxfire’s footsteps were even located in schools or part of any teaching curriculum.

Literature on Foxfire pedagogy includes discussions of the Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning as a methodology (see the Foxfire Core Practices, Appendix F). As stated earlier, these were formally created by educational professionals hired by the Foxfire Fund in the 1980s to focus Foxfire pedagogy around core practices as established by Wigginton, with input from the staff and teachers involved in the teacher outreach program. None of these articles that I have examined are critical of Foxfire, but rather they present Foxfire as a model progressive pedagogy and/or as an example of constructivist teaching techniques. Each provides specific examples of
how to organize your classroom around the Foxfire learning approach. Examples of such articles are the following: “Foxfire: Constructivism for Teachers and Learners” by Sharon T. Teets and Bobby Ann Starnes in *Action in Teacher Education* (1996), *The Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning*, *John Dewey, Experiential Learning and the Core Practices* (1999) also by Bobby Ann Starnes, Foxfire in *Schools That Work: America’s Most Innovative Public Education Programs* by George H. Wood Jr. (1992). It should also be noted that at least two of these authors, Teets and Starnes were actually hired by Foxfire to help create curriculum material for the program.

In this chapter, I provided a historiography of curriculum historians’ work and literature relevant to my study of the Foxfire program. I reviewed pertinent literature on different perspectives including internal colonialism, dialectic of the global and local education including some of the historical beliefs about curriculum formation in the U.S. and how those have changed through time. I discussed current academic analysis about local curriculums and why they are important in the field of curriculum studies and how they relate to Foxfire. Finally, I provided a summary of existing literature on Foxfire and the internal colonialism model as it relates to Foxfire. The chapter that follows describes the methodology for my study.
CHAPTER 3

Methodology

In this chapter, I outlined my research design and my plan for research. I provided details on how I conducted the study including (a) my research design; (b) a theoretical perspective that underlies my inquiry; (c) methods for data collection and analysis; (d) questions of reliability and validity; (e) methods of analysis including possible gaps in the data and the logistics on how I conducted my fieldwork.

Research Design

It was my choice to set up this study of Foxfire as a case study. In order to develop a thorough understanding of case study design and data collection procedures, I used the design methods as outlined by Creswell (2005) and Yin (1994). My research design was an “emergent” one in which the research questions or data collection methods could change slightly, or better said, evolve based on what I learned as my investigations proceeded (Creswell, 2005, pp.134-135). In point of fact, I was able to retain and use my original research questions without change.

The case study design is one in which the researcher provides in-depth analysis of a particular program, occurrence, or activity surrounding a person or persons. The case, or cases in some instances, is bounded in time and space as researchers must limit their case study in order to make the research task more manageable, and in order to make it possible to draw conclusions for the time evaluated (Creswell, 2003, p.15). Case studies, in other words, are finite studies, while some aspects of the analyzed topics may be indefinite. In the case of my Foxfire research, I
bounded the case to focus on the years 1966-1991, with limited analysis of the time since then, and the Rabun County locations of the program.

There are also different kinds of case studies including “instrumental” case studies which focus on a particular aspect of a case, “collective” case studies that examine more than one case of the same type, and “intrinsic” case studies that delve into the interesting aspects of one particular case (Creswell, 2005, pp.134-135 cited in Stake, 1995). My case study is “intrinsic” as I explored the case of Foxfire in its entirety; its setting, methods, products, and legacy and the details of its distinctive features.

The researcher of the case must provide context for the study by placing the case in its proper geographical setting. In this situation that would be southern Appalachia and the Rabun County community. The researcher also must identify the subject’s political setting. In this case, it would be Foxfire’s emergence as an educational contributor to the Appalachian identity and the back to the land movements as I discuss in Chapter 4, and during the decades in which Foxfire survived during the educational trend toward standardization. Foxfire’s societal context would be southern Appalachian people as an internally colonized population group. Lastly, it was necessary to explore certain economic aspects of Foxfire by establishing southern Appalachia, and therefore the subjects and participants of Foxfire, as economically exploited (Creswell, 2005, pp.439-440). In Chapter 2, I discussed post-colonial literature that supported my choice of this perspective related to Foxfire.

While case study designs are excellent at getting at the how and why of their subject or subjects, there are, of course, criticisms of case study research, primarily dealing with the researcher allowing biased and/or problematic sources to unduly influence the findings of the study (Yin, 1994, p.9). In Chapter 5, I discuss ways to deal with these issues in my study. As
previously stated in Chapter 1, the following are my research questions: 1. What ideas inspired and motivated Eliot Wigginton to create the program of Foxfire? 2. What were the features and goals of the Foxfire program during its formative years? 3. What were the qualities that made Foxfire popular with the local Rabun County community and that gave Foxfire an audience outside Rabun County? 4. How does Foxfire compare to other educational endeavors started in north Georgia and in the southern Appalachians, such as settlement and folk schools or to other innovative programs founded contemporaneously? 5. How did Foxfire survive despite national and state trends toward back to basics and standards-based education? 6. What was the significance and impact of Foxfire as an educational program?

**Theoretical Perspective**

In my study, I explored the history and significance of the Foxfire program employing the theoretical perspective of post-colonialism. I considered other approaches such as critical theory and post-modernism, but because of my interest in grassroots, peoples’ history I found post-colonialism to be a better fit specifically for the lens of internal colonialism described in Chapter 2. After all, Foxfire’s magazine featured stories about the common people and traditional culture of the southern Appalachians, not that of elites, or of the dominant peoples. I believe it only right to research the case of Foxfire through this lens. As stated in Ashcroft et al. (2006), post-colonial theory, with roots originally in the field of comparative education, today is quite broad, finding influence in subjects as diverse as anthropology, politics, environmental and migration studies, and religion (Darby, 1997, Castellino, 2000 cited in Ashcroft et al., 2006, p.5). Most post-colonial theory emphasizes European imperial powers as the subjugators and the dichotomy that exists between the colonizers and the colonized between different regions and countries in the world (Ashcroft et al., 2006), but in the case of my work, that role falls to the
dominant classes of the United States, and their contributions in creating conditions of internal colonialism within the U.S.A., particularly in southern Appalachia.

As mentioned in Chapter 2 in post-colonial writings focused on dominated peoples and cultures of the U.S.A., the majority of these writers analyzed facets of the cultures of groups of the American southwest. My study diverges from this tradition and places the southern Appalachian culture in the framework of post-colonial studies, but my study is informed by their themes and emphasis. In the following sections, I explain the study context for my research, the availability of data and research sites.

**Data Collection**

The data gathered for this dissertation are of two main types, primary and secondary. The primary sources included previously conducted transcribed interviews of Foxfire subjects, community members, Foxfire staff, former and current Foxfire students and teachers; and interviews that I conducted with persons in these categories, both formally and informally; my field notes about visitations with current students, participants and facilitators in a Foxfire teacher workshop, and student training sessions conducted during the summer of 2010; and photographs I took to show the setting. Additional data came from newspapers and newspaper magazine articles written about the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School and Foxfire during the program’s heyday. Primary sources also included letters written between Eliot Wigginton and correspondents, including his publisher, about Foxfire matters. The secondary sources included the Foxfire related literature discussed in Chapter 2. I described these in more detail in the subsequent section of this chapter.
Access to the Settings and Data

The settings for this study consisted of three locations all in Rabun County, Georgia. Two of the locations are schools, the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, (the original home of the Foxfire program, see Appendix G), and Rabun County High School (R.C.H.S.), the home of Foxfire since 1977. Both of these schools are still active educational institutions. Rabun Gap-Nacoochee is a private, primarily boarding school serving out of town students, and R.C.H.S. is the local county high school. I gained access to both of these sites and I visited with the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee archivist, a former teaching colleague of Eliot Wigginton, whom I was able to use as a resource while conducting my study.

The other setting for this study, and perhaps the most valuable location available during my research was the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center, which today serves primarily as the repository for Foxfire documents and artifacts. This is a location for training workshops and there are dormitory facilities on the property. It is a place where the visitor to Rabun County curious about or interested in Foxfire can visit and learn more about the traditional life of mountaineers as presented in the Foxfire magazines. Originally, one of the buildings on this property was the home of Eliot Wigginton, a cabin he built with the help of students as described in Foxfire 25 Years (Wigginton & Students, 1991). Today that building is home to the current curator of the museum. (Figure 3.1)

The Museum welcomes visitors, who may tour the property and view many of the artifacts connected with the program (Appendix H). Several members of the Museum staff were valuable sources of information as they had been around the Foxfire program for many years; they were personally acquainted with many of the subjects and participants of Foxfire, and with Eliot Wigginton himself. Because of the willingness of those close to Foxfire to speak with
me, I had excellent advantages to my research, but invariably I encountered some problems. One was that the former curator who had worked with Foxfire for years had passed away the year I began my research. He was apparently very knowledgeable about the program and knew Eliot Wigginton, but I was unable to speak with him at that point in my research. Data availability was also an issue as I could only talk to informants who still lived in Rabun County and I found it impossible to locate informants, in the amount of time I had, who did not participate in Foxfire and/or who might reveal negative opinions about the quality of the program as either a pedagogy or cultural journalism. These issues I explored in later sections.

*Figure 3.1. Eliot Wigginton’s former residence at the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center.*
Gaining access to these sites was not difficult. All the people I encountered in Rabun County and others connected with Foxfire were very friendly and eager to talk about Foxfire or to provide me names of those they felt could help me in my study. I managed several brief visits to the county between the years 2008-2009, but it was the month I spent in the county, very close to all the sites, during the summer of 2010 that proved to be invaluable as this field season gave me the most revealing insights inside the program. Consent for the research came from the letters of request I obtained from the official sites to conduct research and the consent forms signed by those whom I formally interviewed, in keeping with IRB regulations (Appendix I).

Researcher Role

In this section, I clarified my role as the researcher of this project. I was comfortable and familiar with the culture of Rabun County due to my partial insider status. Though I was never a resident of Rabun County, my parents hailed from the area, and I grew up traveling in-and visiting relatives in the southern Appalachians. For the past twenty-two years I have lived for extended periods of time in Lumpkin County, Georgia. This is a mountain county that has many similarities to Rabun County. I believe that the informants I spoke with were comfortable with me because I was familiar with their culture. Currently I live and work in Arkansas therefore I am also a partial outsider to the region.

I bring much experiential knowledge to my role as a researcher of this project. I have taught at both the high school and college level for a total of ten years, in history and education specific courses including the curriculum and methods in social studies. Many of the pedagogical concerns that Eliot Wigginton and other Foxfire staff members expressed about teaching and learning have also been interests of mine as a teacher. These include motivating students, making curriculum more relevant to the learner, creating opportunities for students to make democratic
choices about their learning, and allowing for student-centered activities whenever possible.

Because of my experience, I was able to identify issues specific to these topics related to Foxfire in the course of my research.

In my current position as a teacher educator, I understand the impact that the introduction of state core standards has had on education. Standards and their uses are routinely taught in the curriculum courses of teacher preparation programs. Since the “back to basics” movement began during the mid-1980s, more and more American students, including those in Georgia, are required to take state mandated tests in order to prove they have or have not mastered the content as specified in the subject-specific standards, and as a consequence demonstrate if they did or did not receive competent teaching in those subjects. The Foxfire program was faced with a dilemma when it was forced to try and adapt the highly specialized Foxfire curriculum to the state English standards as discussed in Chapter 4.

**Data Types**

In his work on case study design, Yin (1994) cited six possible sources of evidence and their strengths and weaknesses. In my work, I utilized nine types of data. Appendix A reflects a research matrix that identifies what data sources were used for which analysis methods.

**Physical artifacts.** These are found at the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center. As Foxfire evolved, students not only created the magazine, but in some cases they also learned the mountain crafts and they brought the local practitioners to the museum to recreate the crafts about which they wrote. Some of the structures found at the museum are there as a result of their efforts. On the museum property there are both historic and replica structures including a chapel, blacksmith shop, mule barn, wagon shed, single-room home, grist mill, smokehouse, toys, wagons, cabin-building tools and household items (Appendix H).
The artifacts found within the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center were also excellent examples of the achievement of Foxfire students and a statement about the applied-pedagogy component of the Foxfire program. During my visits to the Foxfire museum, the structures were examined, and their role in Foxfire contemplated as part of the overall data informing this study.

**Archival documents and materials.** Although these are sources that can provide amazing insights and details into an organization, documents are often problematic due to their limited availability. In the case of Foxfire, these are sealed court records or unavailable documents that have already been processed and selected for availability by the person or persons who created them or stored them. As Yin (1994, p.80) noted, some documents might be lost due to oversight or unforeseen circumstances such as fire or flood, or they might be discarded as not being important or remain as part of a private collection. Eliot Wigginton, in fact, does have possession of some Foxfire related material. However, at the time Foxfire moved to Rabun County High School, a selection of letters sent to Wigginton by Foxfire supporters who were not officially a part of the organization were placed, by Wigginton in the Georgia Archives with a twenty-five year restriction to access on them. Fortunately for me, by the time I conducted my research the restriction had been lifted. I gained access to these documents and I found some valuable material for data in this research.

The main problem with using documentation is that I might knowingly or otherwise, show bias in what I choose to report or not report from those documents. Also, sometimes I had to make inferences about documents based on partial but not complete availability, or issues of irretrievability of data or sources such as the problems mentioned (Yin, 1994). Problematic documents in my case were anything that related to the legal case against Wigginton. Other
documents that were more easily obtained were newspaper articles referencing Foxfire that are available in archives and via electronic means.

The research for this project began and ended at the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center because of its interconnectedness with Foxfire. Housed there are some 2,000 hours of interviews on audiotape, 30,000 black and white pictures, and hundreds of hours of videotape, but this archival material is hard to access because very little of it has been put into more technologically advanced forms for easy retrieval. Beginning in 1998, with the help of University of Georgia archivists, the process of placing Foxfire documents on microfiche and in a searchable database began (Williams, 2007). This process was not completed by the time I conducted this research and so most of these records are, as of yet, not available for use, but these records proved not useful to my research, mainly because they are the products of interviews Foxfire students conducted on the subjects of the magazines and books. As such, these are historical records of Foxfire subjects, and not pertinent to this study of Foxfire.

**Interviews and key informants.** These also provide a critical source of information for the case study researcher. These incredibly valuable sources can often be problematic due to “poorly constructed questions” by the researcher, issues with the interviewees such as bias for or against a topic, “inaccuracies due to poor recall,” and “reflexivity” (Yin, 1994, p.80). This is when the interviewee provides to the interviewer what he or she thinks the interviewer wants to hear. I employed semi-structured, open-ended questions where I asked subjects to comment on certain events surrounding Foxfire and as recommended by Yin (1994, p.80), I waited for their response. I did not use a tape recorder during my interviews, but rather took extensive notes during and after the interview sessions. My typical interview format was to ask questions based
on my research questions and afterwards to allow the informants to tell me anything they wanted to about their experience with Foxfire.

Almost all of my informants were long-time Foxfire supporters and in some cases employees, so they had excellent recall about aspects of the program, although because of the time elapsed, informants’ knowledge of the specific dates when certain events happened in Foxfire history was uncertain. Many were also clearly biased in favor of the program. In other words, they all defended the program as being worthwhile and having merit. The biggest problem I had in this area was the lack of access to individuals who did not support Foxfire: either as students and/or educators, however I did ask my informants about their perceptions of those who did not become Foxfire adherents and I received amazingly consistent opinions from them on this subject. In the end, I did not have time to locate non-Foxfire supporters to inform my study.

Direct observations and photographs. These constituted another key source of information for the case study researcher. I observed the Foxfire classrooms located at the museum where training for adolescent students and adult educators is conducted. My personal field notes of the Foxfire sites are also used extensively. I recorded notes from interviewees, formal and informal, but also I recorded my general impressions of Foxfire sites and I took extensive photographs of those sites. Some of the same issues as mentioned above, such as selectivity and reflexivity are factors in observations, but there are also issues of time and money, and the availability of the researcher. I was fortunate to be on site at Foxfire when training sessions were occurring for both students and teachers (Yin, 1994). Another data type explained by Yin, but not used in this study, is participant observation. I did not participate
directly in any Foxfire classes or programs, as this technique was neither necessary nor possible due to travel distance in the case of my study.

**Foxfire magazines and books.** A most useful source for my research on the Foxfire program was the archived magazines housed at the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center in Mountain City, Georgia and at the Hargrett library at the University of Georgia. The original editions dating back to the 1960s are frail and cannot be handled, but fortunately the books are developed from articles from previous magazine editions. These were published for the mass market and are readily available in libraries and for purchase. The very first Foxfire book was entitled, *The Foxfire Book: Hog Dressing, Log Cabin Building, Mountain Crafts and Foods, Planting by the Signs, Snake Lore, hunting Tales, Faith Healing, Moonshining, and Other Affairs of Plain Living.* I used this book regularly during my research. From these sources, I analyzed the actual tasks that comprised the students’ work including choosing subjects for interview, preparing their draft copies of their topics for publication in the magazine, student editors’ tasks of proofreading selections for inclusion in the magazine, and how magazine articles were arranged in a given issue.

**Field notes.** These were critical to this research. I took notes of what I observed during visits to the Foxfire sites, and those were used to complete captions for pictures. More importantly, I took notes during interview sessions with informants, and after each interview I wrote down further insights about the session, noting the setting, the demeanor of the interviewees, and connections made to information provided by other informants.

**Journals.** I kept several journals as I conducted this research. The first was my on-site visit log in which I recorded the dates and times of visits to Foxfire or other research sites, and I briefly summarized what occurred during those visits. The second journal I made was my photo
log. The large number of photos I took, and the multiple sites visited during the course of this research required that I kept accurate journal records to keep those photos organized. The third journal made was to record and categorize the pamphlet material I collected at the various Foxfire research sites. In the fourth journal, I organized my interview field notes.

**Survey data found in the literature.** All of the Foxfire published books contain interview material, editorial comments, and timelines that I accessed to help complete my research. In his qualitative study of Foxfire, *Foxfire Reconsidered* (1989), Puckett completed surveys with former Foxfire participants, members of the Rabun County Board of Education, and other Rabun County residents. These questionnaires were invaluable sources with regard to how Foxfire was viewed by the local Rabun County public and its participants, but all were completed prior to Wigginton’s exit from the program. I used these to some extent in my research, but most of the data in my case are original to my research.

**Procedure**

In the following section, I provided an outline for the procedure I followed as I conducted my research. A first step was the identification of subjects. Fortunately, Wigginton wrote his own account of the Foxfire program’s inception and formative years as mentioned previously. His correspondence with others about Foxfire and some of his students’ testimonials about the program are available in this work. *Sometimes a Shining Moment* (1986) provided an easy list of potential interviewees and those who worked most closely with Wigginton on Foxfire. I was fortunate enough to interview several of these individuals. This valuable source was an integral part of this research project as was Puckett’s (1989) research and the advice of the Foxfire employees as to who had valuable insights they might share.
It is essential that the case study researcher design a study and follow steps that are repeatable. This requires that the researcher “document the procedures followed” allowing for another researcher to use the same steps and arrive at the same results. This helps provide the study reliability (Yin, 1994, pp.36-37). In the case of my research, I read and annotated secondary sources directly related to Foxfire and Foxfire related themes for several years prior to officially beginning the study on Foxfire. I took preliminary fact-finding trips to Foxfire related sites and from there I developed a list of potential interview subjects. I chose a methodology, an approach and a perspective for the study. I completed an extensive literature review based on my chosen perspective, and I developed a list of possible research questions. I completed an extensive historical study of Foxfire and the Foxfire settings using both primary and secondary sources. I completed a one month long stay for fieldwork in Rabun County. At that time I visited and photographed Foxfire sites, conducted several personal interviews with Foxfire related informants, and attended class and training sessions. The final step was to put it all together in this dissertation as the actual case, after analysis and interpretation of the data and findings.

I completed the majority of the field work for my study at the three Rabun County sites; Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, Rabun County High School and the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center. I also spent extensive time at both the Hargrett Library at UGA and at the Georgia State Archives in Morrow, Georgia. I completed two trips to the sites during the school year (2009-2010) and a visited for a month during the summer (2010). After I obtained IRB approval I was free to conduct formal interviews. I established an interview list and schedule based on who agreed to talk to me and when. Upon completion of interviews, I consolidated my notes and began the process of analyzing the data gathered by informants and from documents.
The following are steps I took in order to create the database. First, I maintained field notes of interviews and observations and I completed analysis of documents in handwritten, typed, and electronic forms. I created various journals for these, such as a photo journal and created an extensive filing system in order to locate data on sub-topics quickly. Second, I maintained an outline of tabular materials compiled from observations and archival data. These I kept in an electronic file form. Thirdly, I composed a narrative of Foxfire based on the open-ended research questions. I preferred to use note cards to maintain this control with book sources, notebooks for informant interviews and electronic forms for all other sources. Following my case study protocol as established during my fieldwork and through extensive note-taking efforts, I finally created the case study database (Yin, 1994, pp.94-96).

I selected interviewees using multiple forms of sampling. These included opportunistic sampling, snowball sampling, and sampling by judgment as recommended by Yin (1994). I chose subjects to interview who had direct knowledge of either the Foxfire program and/or Wigginton. These subjects included, in addition to a former Foxfire student, a non-Foxfire teacher in Rabun County, several Foxfire Fund employees, current Foxfire students, training session participants and community members. In some cases I made arrangements for interviews prior to visiting the site. In other cases, I contacted individuals after talking to another interviewee and acting on a recommendation. I decided not to interview some individuals, based on time constraints and the small amount of benefit that I believed I might gain from their insights.

I also established a protocol for my fieldwork. The first purpose of the protocol was that it helped remind me, the investigator or researcher, what the study was about at all points during the case. The second purpose was to establish clear field procedures so as to never lose focus
about the reason for conducting the research in the first place. This step was necessary because 
during a case study, unlike being in laboratory settings, the researcher is not in a controlled 
environment. As the researcher, I had to be prepared for many scenarios when doing field work 
and be prepared to adapt to changing conditions (Yin, 1994, pp.65). For example, I received an 
email at 7:00 AM on one day asking me to attend a training session scheduled for 9:00AM that 
same morning, so I quickly drove down the mountain to the site. Following any interview I 
immediately wrote down further notes to questions I asked the informants, and identified other 
information they provided about the session and about their general demeanor during the event.

**Reliability**

According to Yin (1994), questions of reliability and validity within the case study are 
handled during the data collection phase. In this section, I address the questions of reliability in 
my research. Reliability, when applied to data, addresses whether the results found when using 
one type of data source might be repeated with the same results. In the case of interviews, for 
example, does more than one source provide the same response to a particular question? In 
addition, triangulation of data sources, the gathering of facts, insights, and information on issues 
from different data sources and the comparing of one data type with at least two other types 
uphold the reliability and the validity of the study (Yin, 1994, p.33). In Chapter 4, I reflect on 
informant answers and note whether more than one person - either in source material or through 
personal interview - presented a point regarding Foxfire.

I did not use a tape recorder in my interviews. I based my conversations with informants 
around the research questions as presented in Chapter 1, took extensive notes on their replies and 
then allowed the informants to share what they wanted to say about their role in Foxfire. I 
believe that my informants responded well to me: they seemed relaxed and not in a hurry to end
the conversation. Each also offered a second interview if needed. I realize that while employing this interview method I may not have remembered all the details of what an informant stated but I believe the less formal style worked well with the kind of informants with whom I spoke. I asked the same set of questions of each of my informants and received remarkably consistent replies from them. Therefore, I think the technique I utilized minimized errors on my part, despite not tape recording interviews.

The litmus test the researcher uses to gauge whether data are reliable or credible is if another researcher used the same data collection analysis methods, would the same conclusions be determined? This would be considered researcher triangulation. If their conclusions could be different or if another data type reveals a different answer then the reliability of the data, sources, and conclusions might all be called into questions or at the very least require an explanation when included in the final research. A good method for ensuring that this problem does not occur is through member checking or returning to the informants with your interview results and having them check one’s conclusions for accuracy (Yin, 1994, p. 36). I attempted to do this in the manner described below.

For my study, I already had in my possession previously transcribed interviews from two of my sources that appeared in Foxfire 25 Years (1991). I asked similar—and in some cases identical questions to what had been asked previously in that work. I believe this suffices as providing reliability as their answers had not changed to any noticeable degree even though considerable time had passed since they were first interviewed and by other interviewers. One informant had authored several articles about Foxfire pedagogy and gave me copies of these after my interview with him because he recognized the similarities between what I had asked in interview and the content of his articles. I reviewed his articles and found that the information he
provided in written form was, almost verbatim, what he gave me verbally, again after several years had elapsed since he wrote the articles. Another informant had never been formally interviewed by a researcher, yet a critique of some of her work was presented by Puckett (1989). I asked her about some of the issues he had brought up in that work for clarification. My techniques did not prove that the informants were not biased in favor of Foxfire, but I believe provided the triangulation necessary to ensure reliability.

In order to protect my study from my own biases in favor of Foxfire, I also needed to take steps to safeguard reliability. I did this by following an interview protocol. I asked the same questions of each one of my informants based on my research questions. I did not lead interviewees on with further questions, but I waited for their responses, and I recorded their words almost verbatim. I maintained a professional demeanor during the course of interviewing and minimized any body language that might influence interviewee’s responses.

Validity

In my case study, external validity, or the degree to which my study is generalizable, is not significant. In the case of a descriptive or explanatory “intrinsic” case study such as mine, the researcher does not need to prove internal validity, or repeatability of case itself in comparison to other cases. The goal of the “intrinsic” case is to establish the uniqueness of the case (Yin, 1994, p.33).

The internal validity of the case is demonstrated through triangulation; identifying “different data sources and using it to build a coherent justification for different themes” (Creswell, 2003, p.196). In my study, two types of internal validity are audibility, or what categories other researchers identified about the case that also paralleled my findings, and credibility, the extent to which the sources are relevant to Foxfire. The data sources used for my
study included those discussed previously in this chapter and Chapter 2; secondary source material, archival documents, letters, interviews, and field notes. From those sources, the following themes emerged in my data; insider/outsider status, cultural revival, identity, local culture, community focus, relevance, Deweyian principles. Overall, my variety of data sources constituted a good fit for the research I undertook.

It is not totally possible to establish external validity in the “intrinsic” case study with regard to generalizability. This requires finding those aspects of the case, if any, that can be generalized and compared to other similar cases. However, in the case of Foxfire, there are only components of the program that are comparable to other curricula, for example, that Foxfire emerged locally and stressed the importance of local culture and language in its programs (Yin, 1994, p.33). Some of these pedagogical approaches were mentioned in Chapter 2.

Uncovered in the later stages of my research and presented in Chapter 4, were significant links between Eliot Wigginton and Foxfire and other innovative programs operating in Rabun County several years prior to Foxfire’s emergence, and the more wide-spread socio-cultural movements that had begun in educational circles in southern Appalachia and elsewhere during the Progressive Era. I believe my research shows that Foxfire was not unique but that it contained unique or distinctive features. However it was not formed in a vacuum apart from other programs in the region that were developed contemporaneously.

**Analysis Procedures**

The creation of the case study database is important because it keeps the data sources accessible and available again for the original researcher to use, but also available for other researchers who are interested in the same topic. This is an important aspect of reliability in case
study research viz. the ability to access the same data, duplicate the study, and draw the same conclusions (Yin, 1994, p.92)

As a case study researcher, I utilized an array of available data sources to build the case, to make connections and draw conclusions. By building a case study database I maintained a chain of evidence to follow. This process included citing specific documents and extracting evidence found therein as data. The analysis of documents was an integral part of my case study as described below.

**Informal Content Analysis and Coding of Data**

According to Yin (1994), the researcher should develop an analytic strategy for the study. The purpose of this step is to help establish priorities for what to analyze and why. One technique to help facilitate this process, and the one that I used for my case study, was to develop a diagram to visually represent the components in the analysis process. See Figure 1.2 analytical framework (Yin, 1994, pp.102-103).

The following are some of the goals of the analysis process I used, following Yin’s (1994) recommendations: to thoroughly exam and reexamine if necessary, all the evidence; to draw relevant conclusions based on that evidence; and to eliminate other possible interpretations of the same evidence. It is also advisable to develop a general strategy for the analysis phase of research. The general strategy for my case study was based on the theoretical perspective that I set forth previously; Foxfire as an example of curriculum formed by and for an internally colonized, relatively marginalized group located in southern Appalachia. This process helped me to focus, organize, and define the evidence from which my conclusions were drawn making it possible to eliminate alternate explanations. Answering the study’s “how” and “why” research questions are the primary means by which the researcher followed their study’s general strategy
I accomplished this mainly by answering the research questions, woven into the report of the findings in Chapter 4, in my account of the case of Foxfire.

Another component of the content analysis process of the case study is in choosing a mode of analysis. In my case study, I used the explanation-building strategy, i.e. “building an explanation about the case” (Yin, 1982, b) of Foxfire. I applied Yin’s (1994) recommendations, that the end result of this process was to develop ideas for further studies, perhaps suggesting studies of other innovative curricula. The form that this explanation takes is my narrative account of the subject, or case, that details Foxfire’s formation and maintenance from the years 1966-1992, and, Foxfire, the local features in the face of nationalizing trends, and I interpreted “causal links” in the case to trends in educational reform.

In my presentation of findings in Chapter 4, I indicated the most significant aspects of the case that Foxfire was the creation of a locally produced curriculum tied into significant socio-cultural movements that occurred in southern Appalachians during the time period of the study. Finally to complete a “high quality analysis”, I relied heavily on my own expertise in the field; my experience as high school teacher, as a teacher educator, my knowledge as a trained academic and historian, and my experiential knowledge of the Rabun County setting that afforded me an insider role (Yin, 1994, pp. 123).

I also applied techniques of coding to the analysis of my data. Most appropriate to my study was the use of factual or descriptive coding where I looked for and described patterns and issues that emerge as a result of actions, events, properties, settings and conditions as recommended by Denzen & Lincoln (1994). These are revealed primarily in my narrative account of Foxfire in a chronological fashion in Chapter 4. Examples of patterns explored were Foxfire’s connection to broader educational movements and cultural and societal movements that
occurred before Foxfire and contemporaneously, features of its pedagogy particular to Foxfire or shared with other programs, and Foxfire’s legacy in relation to the internal colonized status of its home community.

In Chapter 4, I also provided overview coding for general themes and microscopic coding for key concepts and terms. Some of the general themes that emerged as previously detailed include the insider or outsider role of Foxfire participants, teachers’, and informants, and the significance of local culture and community to Foxfire. These themes are related to Foxfire’s connection to the larger revival and identity movements of the era. Some of the key concepts and terms that emerged were folk schools, settlements schools, identity movements, cultural revivals, and cultural journalism. After gathering data and conducting analyses, I formulated “answers” to my research questions and I wrote up the case and developed a set of conclusions presented next in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

**Gaps in the Data**

Even after extensive research, and analysis of evidence, there remains much unknown in the story of Foxfire. These gaps in data were primarily due to the unavailability or inability of witnesses to be interviewed. Informants had already passed away, such as the principal at Rabun Gap during the Foxfire years, Morris Brown, and the Foxfire curator during the formative years of the program.

Pedagogically, there remain serious questions about Foxfire that are difficult if not impossible to answer definitively such as was the Foxfire magazine class and the other specialized classes that developed from the magazine class, as explained in Chapter 4, effective as teaching curriculum? As with all constructivist teaching approaches it is hard to measure the success of the program on individual student’s progress which in many cases is not supported by
evidence of experiential knowledge, but rather on the acquisition of intangibles such as confidence and self-direction. In the case of Foxfire, only the testimony of some of the former students and staff serves as a tool with which to measure Foxfire’s strengths and weaknesses as a curriculum. As an educational and community program, Foxfire’s legacy is much easier to define. The discussion of the difference is found in the presentations of conclusions in Chapter 5. For the most part, based on my research, these individuals were honest about this part of the program. However because they were the most heavily involved in Foxfire and employed by the program in many cases, they are overwhelmingly biased in favor of the program. These are the people whose lives were deeply impacted by their involvement in Foxfire. Finding those who were only tertiary players or not involved at all in Foxfire at all are harder to find and time restraints on this research did not allow for an examination of those persons, leaving one inevitable possibility of gaps in the data that undergird my case.

**Logistics of Conducting Field Work**

During the fall of 2009, I defended my prospectus and as a result I was admitted to the candidacy. I also began the process of seeking out and recording data from archival primary source materials. I had many years hence reviewed and evaluated secondary source material related to Foxfire. In seeking out primary sources, repositories I visited included the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School archive, the Hargrett Library at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, and the Georgia State Archives in Morrow, Georgia.

In February of 2010, I applied for and received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the University of Georgia to conduct human-subject based research. In my case, that consisted of oral interviews of informants related to the Foxfire program. Key field work on site in Rabun County, Georgia was conducted during June of 2010. By July of 2010, I was ready
to write up my findings and draw conclusions regarding my case. In September, I began the editing process on my dissertation draft. That process continued into the spring of 2011. A defense was scheduled and completed in April 2011.

As I now live in Arkansas, I had to travel a considerable distance to Rabun County to conduct field work and archival research. I was fortunate enough to be able to do this twice during the 2009-2010 school year as well as spending the entire month of June 2010 in Rabun County very close to all the Foxfire related sites. Some travel outside Rabun County was necessary, as outlined above.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I described my main methods for collecting data, analyzing the data, and developing conclusions about the data. The results of that work appear in the next two chapters in which I presented my findings in the case, I suggested implications, and I drew conclusions and made recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 4

Findings of the Foxfire Case

Introduction

In this chapter, I presented the findings of my study of the case of Foxfire by providing the historical background of education as it formed in southern Appalachia and in particular in northern Georgia, along with the purposes for the founding of the school where Foxfire began, the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School in 1903. Evidence for research question number four (as listed in Appendix A) appears in the first four sections of this chapter. Therefore this chapter first provides an historical explanation for the role of certain movements in Foxfire’s history. Thereafter, I present the findings of research questions undergirding the case itself. The formation of Foxfire and the various influences on Eliot Wigginton and other Foxfire participants are presented in a chronological fashion. Finally, issues pertaining to Foxfire as pedagogy are addressed. These include the strengths and weaknesses of Foxfire, issues of sustainability and transferability of Foxfire, and Foxfire as a viable curriculum outside its original setting.

Based on my research, without the context and a setting such as the school founded at Rabun Gap, Georgia, Foxfire would not have become the program that it was. There were obviously other important influences, too, which I explore thoroughly in this chapter, but more importantly, I include this information as part of my findings because the story of the school at Rabun Gap and the history of education in north Georgia’s mountains are very local histories, peculiar to the context and setting. It was only during the data collection phase of my research
that I discovered these stories, and connected them back to Foxfire. Rabun Gap-Nacoochee
School and Foxfire started within larger identity movements that impacted education during the
twentieth century; in particular, the Appalachian identity movement in Appalachia during the
Progressive Era helped shape curriculum at the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School, and cultural
revivalism and the back-to-the-land movements in the 1960s impacted Foxfire.

Historical Context of the Foxfire Program

History of mountain education. In the following discussion, I presented the results of my investigations of the historical context of Foxfire including the various educational and cultural movements that impacted southern Appalachia. Following this discussion, I provided a detailed analysis of Foxfire’s history and legacy as an educational program. In 1874 and again in 1902, former U.S. Congressman and founder of the North Georgia Agricultural College (today, North Georgia College and State University), William P. Price toured northeast Georgia to assess the general state of education in the region. Price had a history of promoting education for all peoples in the mountains following the Civil War and he connected the high poverty and illiteracy rates of the region to the inferior educational opportunities available there (Smith, 2001).

Schools in his home region, he observed, were mostly taught in isolated church settings or in ‘‘wretched-looking shacks or barns’ with leaky roofs that were unfit for ‘school purposes’’ (Smith, 2001, p.230). He also observed that almost universally, students had no money to buy books and the typical Appalachian school had no resources to provide books for students. Other issues Price found were that the rugged mountain terrain made traveling to school a challenge and the number of days that schools were in session varied greatly depending on the location. It was common in mountain regions to have three month terms taught over the summer and early
fall (Ritchie, 1948) and during the time of year when harvesting occurred this made for sporadic attendance by pupils. Schools in Lumpkin County, Georgia, Price’s home, featured two terms of twenty weeks each (Cain, 1932) while across the border in the mountains of North Carolina, only a seventy day school year total was required (Smith, 2001). The condition of school buildings, length of school terms, and access to any school, regardless of the quality, impacted educational opportunities throughout the Appalachian region.

Issues of funding were also a chronic problem for schools throughout Georgia and the south during this time period. Long held perceptions by some southern elites that education was a privilege, not a right, were slow to die in the post Civil War south. The Georgia legislature, for example, did not take steps to replace the wording in the state constitution that stated that education was the responsibility of parents until 1911 (Joiner, 1979). Furthermore, the conservatism of southern political leaders of the era restricted government funding and subsequently limited funding for schools. Among all the other issues mountain education faced, this political reality hampered the establishment of schools in the region of southern states located within the Appalachian mountain range. In the south in general, including Georgia and especially its mountain region, there was a perpetually small tax base from which to draw funds for education. That particular fact was a hindrance to the development of schools that is still evident in many parts of the south within southern Appalachia (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2003).

With regard to northeast Georgia, Price also noted the general lack of concern that the local population held about formal education. He heard comments by his fellow citizens in Lumpkin County that local politicians were elected without the ability to read and write, proving that education was hardly necessary for obtaining power and influence. Another common issue he found among the mountain population was the deferring of education due to family issues.
Once the decision was made to forego education, students seldom or never returned to school in later years (Smith, 2001).

Many mountain families did desire an education for their children, but they had no way of providing this on their own. Rudimentary public school administrative structures were slowly introduced into the region during the later part of the nineteenth-century. Andrew Jackson Ritchie, the founder of the Rabun Industrial School, described in *Sketches of Rabun County History* (1948) what it was like to pursue education in the mountains from the perspective of someone born and raised there. He attended the common school (in Georgia these were also known as “old field schools”) of Mr. W.A. Curtis who had come to the county following the Civil War, as he had heard of the great need for education there. In one year alone, 1875-76, Curtis’ school enrolled 108 students. This was before the emergence of public schools in the region (Ritchie, 1948).

When Curtis closed his school in Rabun County, presumably due to the beginnings of the public schools there, Ritchie moved on to a school in Hiawassee, Georgia in a neighboring county, still seeking an education that would provide him the necessary background to pass university level entrance exams. The distance between Hiawassee and his home necessitated that Ritchie board overnight there, a common occurrence for mountain children seeking an education (Ritchie, 1948).

From Hiawassee, Ritchie enrolled in Emory College at Oxford, Georgia, Baylor University, the University of Georgia and eventually Harvard before finishing his own educational journey in his later twenties. During that time, Ritchie’s family was supportive, but they could provide him with little in the way of financial assistance. At Harvard, Ritchie participated in a work-study program, meant to assist poorer young men attending school there.
He took roll in the classes in which he was a student as a way of paying his tuition. At other times he did odd jobs and waited on tables to support himself. Ritchie would remember his time in the work-study program at Harvard and he noted its existence as the primary reason he chose to attend that school, rather than for its quality, fame, or prestige. Drawing on these experiences, he organized the school he founded in 1903, the Rabun Gap School, and its farm family settlement program on a work-study program to provide educational opportunities to Rabun County children (Ritchie, 1948) and in 1966 it was at the school that Ritchie founded where a first year teacher, Eliot Wigginton, started the Foxfire program.

**Progressive Education Movements in the Southern Appalachians - from 1900-1914**

Progressivism was a sweeping reform movement that emerged at the turn of the 20th century focusing on solving societal problems created by the rise of corporate capitalism and the rapidly industrializing and urbanizing American landscape. At the heart of the progressive movement were reform-minded individuals who acted as agents of change. In Chapter 2, I reviewed literature on this movement. Many of these reformers were in the field of education and Andrew Ritchie fits well into the model of the progressive educational reformer.

Progressivism’s impact on education was particularly diverse and it involved philanthropic educational efforts meant to improve education opportunities for those who could not afford private education, or those who had no access to the still-developing public school system, as well as innovative pedagogical experiments meant to challenge the traditional teacher-centered school pedagogy. Ritchie’s overall design for the Rabun Industrial School, as it was first named, encompassed each of these facets of progressive education.

Ritchie was not alone in attempting to improve educational opportunities in the southern Appalachians, just as Eliot Wigginton would not be the first to try an innovative educational
approach with Foxfire. Ritchie’s efforts were among several educational reform efforts in the southern Appalachian region contemporaneous with the expansion of public schools, in order to improve the quality and nature of education available in the region. These educational experiments were diverse, often teaching adults as well as children. Some recruited students and teachers from outside the southern Appalachian culture. The curricula at these schools were often not traditionally focused on academics but on highly specialized subjects such as the creation of handicrafts. In the following section, I identify some of these programs and I explain how they related to the role of the emerging public schools.

**Southern Appalachian settlement houses.** Settlement houses, modeled after Chicago’s Hull House, were typically established by more affluent people and educated reformers to provide assistance to urban dwellers, immigrants and others of the laboring classes. The settlement house was a community school that helped primarily the urban, immigrant, working class women assimilate to American culture by teaching basic education skills, proper hygiene, and English language training as needed. These institutions also provided simple medical care and child care for working women. In some cases, such as what occurred at Hull House, a kindergarten was established. The settlement house was the domain of the women reformers of the Progressive Era, a place where women could freely gather and exhibit their organizational and educational talents and in turn help disadvantaged women and their children. The settlement school was an Appalachian version of the urban settlement house that maintained a slightly different focus from its urban counterpart in that it hoped to empower its students to seek the “economic reform of the local, cashless, agrarian market” (Denker, 2004, pp.32) that had been limited by the rise of corporate capitalism and big business. Several settlement schools were established in the region during the early part of the twentieth century. Among these were the
Hindman Settlement School and the Pine Mountain Settlement School (Forderhase, 1992). The Hindman School, established in 1902 in the Kentucky mountains, focused its attention not only on education but also on “health care and social services” (Hindman Settlement School, 2010) fitting the model of a settlement house. The Hindman School mission was never exclusively focused on the education of children in traditional academic subjects, but rather on community uplift through promoting Appalachian cultural heritage, supporting writers, music and folk artists of the region. This meant that there was a large emphasis on adult educational opportunities as much as those for adolescents (Hindman Settlement School, 2010).

I discovered during the course of my fieldwork that Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School also featured Appalachian cultural uplift courses in its curriculum, many years before Foxfire. That particular feature, adult education for empowerment, was a hallmark of the Appalachian settlement movement and later would be an emphasis at the Highlander Folk School of Tennessee founded in the 1930s as discussed later in this chapter. As Foxfire emerged in the 1960s, the community uplift aspect of that pedagogy would become a major component of Foxfire’s historical legacy. The founder of the Pine Mountain School started in 1913 was “troubled by the area’s lack of educational opportunities and the prevalence of social problems and rampant disease” (Pine Mountain Settlement School, 2010). These were also concerns Ritchie noted.

The scope and mission of the settlement schools revealed just how divergent Progressive Era educational experiments were, even within Appalachia itself. The wide range of the character and the purposes that progressive education assumed has been noted by educational historians, for instance, “the movement was marked from the beginning by a pluralistic and frequently contradictory character” (Cremin, 1961, x). Today, the former campus of the Pine
Mountain School provides facilities for environmental education specific to the southern Appalachians.

It is unclear how much benefit the settlement schools, with their emphasis on adult training, provided for the educational uplift of the region’s children, but they did establish a pattern of outsiders coming to southern Appalachia for philanthropic educational reasons and they helped begin the tradition that would be carried on by the American (Appalachian) handicrafts revival and the establishment of the arts and crafts movement artist-in-residence programs discussed later in this chapter (Dockery, 2008). One such residency program was founded in Rabun County during the 1930s and its founder had been an acquaintance of Wigginton’s since he was a boy. This program was also featured by Ritchie (1948) in his historical study of Rabun County. The connection of this arts and crafts training facility to Eliot Wigginton and Foxfire is discussed further later in this chapter. The tradition begun by all these programs included the promoting of southern Appalachia as a source of and inspiration for American and other “folk” culture that, it was believed by its supporters, should be preserved and sustained; a tradition also claimed as a benefit of the Foxfire program and the Southern Highlands Literary Fund, a non-profit organization established to support Foxfire when it first began (Wigginton, 1986). Today, that role falls to the Foxfire Fund, Inc.

While the settlement schools were somewhat unconventional approaches that brought education to the mountains, W.P. Price and other progressive-minded educational reformers in the mountains helped formalize education in more traditional ways. Lumpkin County, the home of Price and the college he founded, North Georgia Agricultural College, formed a board of education in 1898 and hired a principal trained at the prestigious Peabody Normal School in Nashville (now part of Vanderbilt University) to lead a new graded school in Dahlonega.
Between the years 1902-1932 that board oversaw the erection of 28 new school buildings across the county (Cain, 1932). Lumpkin County had the advantage of having a thriving college concerned with the education of locals in its midst, and Rabun County would benefit by the return of one of its educated local sons to form the Rabun Industrial School.

**Founding of the Rabun Industrial School.** Ritchie and his wife Addie Corn Ritchie, who was his educational partner, moved back to Rabun County from Texas in 1903. Ritchie left his professorship at Baylor University, a position he had held for three years, in order to form a secondary school focused on improving the economic, social and moral uplift of his native region (Ritchie, 1906). Ritchie’s educational goals for his school mirrored well the progressive movement’s concerns at a national level, that undereducated members of American society deserved the support and guidance from the more educated in order to improve their status in the rapidly industrializing America and in turn to become productive American citizens. Ritchie’s school featured elements found in other progressive educational experiments such as the regional uplift emphasis of the settlement schools as part of the Appalachian identity movement, and aspects of the more widespread manual labor schools that focused on training in vocational and agricultural subjects for boys, home-making for girls, and life skills for all secondary age students and also some adults.

A feature of the Rabun Industrial School, as it was originally called by Ritchie, was the method by which students were chosen for the school and how they and their families would pay the tuition. He called his design, the farm family settlement program, as the idea was to provide space on the property of the school for entire families to move in as tenant farmers. The children would receive educational instruction part of the day and help their families support themselves with their labor on the farm when not in school. The residency at the school would not be
permanent, but would continue only until the children of the family finished their schooling.

Ritchie had a method for choosing eligible families to come to Rabun Industrial School. They would “be of very limited means, of sound health, eager for education, have an aptitude to learn, willingness to work and not under 14 years of age” (Ritchie, 1948, p. 483). Families with multiple children were given priority as boarders while the school would be open for commuter students too.

As Ritchie described it, “it was to be a farm school where boys and girls situated as we had been [referring to his and his wife’s struggles to receive an education in the mountains] and where whole families who were tenant farmers could educate their children and make a living” (Ritchie, 1948, p. 466) (Figure 4.1). Interestingly, the present day Foxfire students whom I observed in 2010 were making plans to include a story line about the farm family settlement program in the Foxfire forty-fifth anniversary book being produced at that time, illustrating the interconnectedness of the school located at Rabun Gap and Foxfire to this day.
Where School is a Family Affair

In this unusual school in the Georgia mountains, both parents and children are educated for better living.
Ritchie’s ideas for his school and the novel way in which he proposed to acquire students for it were obviously a plan to which he had given much forethought. After all, before 1903, the school did not exist in reality, but was only a dream. So to plan, organize and implement a school design from scratch required an extensive effort. Ritchie had saved some funds during his tenure as a professor, but they were not enough to start a school. The state involvement in funding education, as already discussed, was in its infancy so no money was available from that source. His solution was to sell his idea to the local community and to outside donors, in order to get the school started. That is just what Ritchie did, exactly as Eliot Wigginton and the original Foxfire students did to sell their magazine. Foxfire was not the first in Rabun County to follow a fund-raising practice that was established at the Rabun Gap Industrial School.

Ritchie admitted that there were some in the community that did not appreciate the concept as he envisioned it. “In starting such a new and original kind of school, I encountered a great deal of opposition to the plan on the part of people in the county and community who did not seem to understand what I was driving at and did not agree with me”, but significantly, influential citizens from outside the county supported Ritchie’s efforts, and the majority of Rabun County residents would too, once the project began (Ritchie, 1948, p. 63) (Figure 4.2).

Among his approaches to solicit funds was writing a prospectus, as he called it, but what really amounted to a pamphlet justifying to potential benefactors the need for this school and program located in Rabun County and asking for assistance, he stated, on behalf of the “isolated and unlettered of the Southern Appalachians” (Ritchie, 1906, p.4). In this pamphlet, he identified why the region struggled without education, why the population was worthy of help, and by what method the curriculum would be taught to the students. He marketed his appeal directly toward the concerns of social, economic and moral uplift that were hallmarks of the
Progressive Era reformers and their benefactors. He presented his work on behalf of his school as educational missions meant to help people help themselves, another theme of Progressive Era reform. The pamphlet was professionally printed and bound in Atlanta, complete with photographs of typical mountain families and some scenes of isolated mountain schools and their students that were, in his words, in need of extension work (Ritchie, 1906).

This facet of Ritchie’s plan was not unlike other Appalachian educational endeavors such as settlement schools. The Rabun Industrial School was not set up to become an endowed private educational facility, but rather it was formed with the intention of merging with the public school system as it developed in the region. This result occurred at the Hindman and Pine Mountain Schools, and the school at Rabun Gap would remain semi-public until 1977. At the time of Foxfire’s founding in 1966, for example, a portion of the student population, including those that worked on Foxfire at the school, were public school students.

It was clear that Ritchie was concerned with the overall educational situation in Rabun County and not just founding his own school, as at the time his pamphlet was published in 1906, he was serving as the Rabun County school superintendent and he supervised 35 public schools in the county. He mentioned in this document that four isolated schools had recently been closed, or consolidated, and those students were now attending school at Rabun Industrial School. Such consolidation he stated would assist in the introduction of graded classrooms, a growing trend in the implementation of professionally designed curriculum in the emerging public school systems. He identified how his school would collaborate with the public school system in the portion of his pamphlet titled “Central Plan” (Ritchie, 1906, p.2). He also identified what he believed were the most critical reasons for establishing a school such as Rabun Industrial. He stated in the most vigorous terms the desperate need for education in his home region (Ritchie, 1906).
Ritchie identified as the most significant problem in the mountains the limited, and in some cases, non-existent opportunities for education. His goal was not to establish a program for students to attend from regions that already had a variety of educational options for adolescents, but to focus on the needs of his native community and its environs. He also did not want an impractical training program or abstract academic curricular offerings. In his mind, education was for providing the tools for self reliance in the industrializing American landscape and not just for preparing the most advanced students for college, but for educating all students in those skills that might benefit them the most (Ritchie, 1948). His views were not unique, as other school systems around the country implemented practical, comprehensive-style curricula during the Progressive Era. What was different was the inclusion by Ritchie and the staff at the Rabun Industrial School of curricular offerings that focused on Appalachian folk culture, the emphasis of the Foxfire program years later.

Unless one travels to Rabun County and meets with the people there, it is hard to imagine the great impact that the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School (a merger with another school in the 1920s precipitated the name change to this from Rabun Industrial School) had on the people of the community. Long before the existence of Foxfire, Andrew Ritchie’s school was providing not only practical skill training, but also the only opportunity for secondary education in the area. For example, one family that I learned of during fieldwork, sent all nine of their children to the school at Rabun Gap. One daughter of the family graduated from Rabun Gap - Nacoochee in 1947, then attended a two year college, Young Harris, before graduating from Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia. She retired years later after having taught public school in a neighboring county for many years. She was an informant in my study and she is a cousin of mine by marriage. Her mother was the subject of an article in a Foxfire magazine. She too featured in a
Foxfire book, interviewed about her knowledge of making hominy grits. She stressed to me that Rabun Gap - Nacoochee was the only high school available in those years to local families like hers (personal communication, June 10, 2010).

Remotely located, rugged, individualistic backwoodsmen and families living in the hills and hollers or valleys of Appalachia, Ritchie argued, were growing increasingly out of touch with the rest of America and as already mentioned, other educational reformers of the southern Appalachians such as W.P. Price and William Frost, also voiced this concern. According to Ritchie, among the issues facing mountaineers and exacerbating their unhappy condition were alcohol abuse, lawlessness, living from hand to mouth, extreme individualism and few opportunities for education (Ritchie, 1906, pp.12-17).

Ritchie however, a native of the region and a progressive educator, argued in his pamphlet, that during the settlement of the mountains, Appalachia was the backbone of the emerging American cultural landscape, but by the turn of the nineteenth-century subsequent isolation had led to a widening gap of moral, political, social and economic backwardness in his home region. Education, he believed, was the key to reversing this regional backwardness (Ritchie, 1906). Ironically, many years later, Foxfire books would celebrate aspects of the cultural knowledge of the southern Appalachian people, such as whiskey-making and log cabin building as being significant and worth preserving as part of the wider Appalachian identity movement of the 1960s.

Besides identifying the reasons for a school like the Rabun Industrial School, in his pamphlet Ritchie asked for and received endorsements from some of Georgia’s leading citizens concerned with education. These individuals included the governor, the state school commissioner, the chancellor of the University of Georgia, the president of the state Normal
School (teacher training college) and the secretary of the state Baptist Mission Board who all praised the worthiness of the Rabun Industrial School project (1906). It was with such recommendations that Ritchie, the leading educator of Rabun County and one of those at the forefront of education in all of southern Appalachia, his home region, would successfully solicit for funds in Rabun County, Athens, the home of the University of Georgia, in the capital city of Atlanta, and as far away as New York and Boston (1948). Remarkably, beginning sixty years later, in the school Ritchie founded, another educational pioneer named Eliot Wigginton and his students would find a way to support their program in almost the same fashion as did Ritchie, subscriptions from local residents, soliciting funds from guilds, applying for private and public grants and donations from wealthy out-of-town benefactors. This form of canvassing for subscriptions, as Ritchie called it, was a tradition at the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School long before Foxfire (Figures 4.2, 4.3), again serving to demonstrate that Foxfire was part of a larger tradition rather than being a novel program.

In fact, Ritchie who was not starting a magazine or a foundation, but an entire school, had a monumental task at hand and one in which he was prepared to succeed. His first step was to talk to persons in and out of the county and obtain promises of $100 dollar subscriptions from them. Sometimes a commitment of $50 was obtained. Payment was not always received, immediately, presenting a challenge to Ritchie’s plan to secure land and begin construction immediately, which he nevertheless managed to do. Those who could not pay were asked to support the school by donating their labor and/or building material. As Ritchie presented this effort in his pamphlet for potential benefactors, the purpose was most likely to demonstrate the community commitment to the project and its ability to meet matching fund requests as was
Figure 4.2. A flyer soliciting for will bequests to R.G.N.S., n.d.; describes the farm family settlement program and illustrates the creative ways Andrew Ritchie solicited funds for his school. (Source: Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School file, Hargrett Library, University of Georgia)
Figure 4.3. Ladies guild in Athens, Ga., representative of groups that supported R.G.N.S. & Foxfire, Athens Banner Herald, 11/10/77.

(Source: Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School file, Hargrett Library, University of Georgia, Athens)
required, when soliciting for donations from large and prestigious philanthropic organizations, and often from individual outside donors.

The Rabun Industrial School’s first significant financial contributor was Mr. Prince Hodgson of Athens who agreed to pay $1000 if the community would match that figure. Over the course of several years, Mr. Hodgson was a loyal supporter of the school and its main building would be named in his honor, but over the years Ritchie obtained money from others including wealthy Atlantans, donations from the north, fellow Harvard graduates, the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Fund (Ritchie, 1948).

Based on the numerous times that the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School, as it became known in 1926, appeared in the local Atlanta newspapers, the Atlanta Journal and Constitution newspapers and their combined Sunday magazine section, the school and its farm family settlement program were of interest to the public beyond Rabun County in the same way that Foxfire would be during its heyday. Good publicity helped secure donations for the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School and later for Foxfire (Figure 4.4) (Appendix J).
Figure 4.4. Taken from Atlanta Journal Constitution 9/6/59; demonstrates kinds of donations made to the school and the general interest level journalists had for R.G.N.S. in the years prior to Foxfire. (Source: Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School file, Hargrett Library, University of Georgia, Athens)

Appalachian Identity Movements, Specific to Education, of the 1920s-30s

Besides settlement schools, several other innovative education designs were brought to the southern Appalachians beginning during the Progressive Era. Two specific programs, the Highlander Folk School and the Hambidge Center, began in the 1930s. Technically, they were somewhat different from the progressive tradition as identified by historians, but still contemporaneous with Progressive Era reform because the larger, international movements of
which they were a part began firmly within the transformative time period brought about by the industrial revolution of the latter nineteenth-century.

Folk school movement. The concept of the folk school originated in Denmark during the 1840s. For the purposes of “preserving the languages and cultural traditions” (Glen, 1988, p.4) of Danish peasants who were emerging from feudal land ownership patterns and adapting to a rapidly urbanizing and industrializing society. American reformers of the Progressive Era traveled to Denmark to study the schools and more than one thought the concept, especially of “adult residential education,” would be a good fit for the special educational needs of southern Appalachia (Glen, 1988).

One such reformer was Myles Horton, the founder of the Highlander Folk School originally located in Monteagle, Tennessee. Horton was a lifelong political reformer and activist who organized Highlander initially to educate and train the working people of his region to fight their exploitation by capitalist business interests. Later, his school specialized in training African-Americans in the tactics of civil disobedience to help end segregation. The Highlander method typically involved attendance by students at multi-day workshops on the Highlander property. Later Highlander methods evolved into what was called extension work or the conducting of classes in off campus locations. The “citizenship” school model, as discussed in chapter two of this dissertation originally took shape at Highlander (Bell et al., 1990).

Myles Horton and Eliot Wigginton knew each other, both being supporters of various Appalachian causes such as a group focused on the region’s economic emancipation, the Appalachian Alliance Task Force, and Foxfire students attended workshops at Highlander (Puckett, 1989). During the heyday of the Foxfire program in 1971 Myles Horton visited Foxfire
for some conversation with Eliot Wigginton who was an obvious admirer of Horton as is indicated in the following quote.

Just had a great surprise today. Myles Horton stopped by today in on his way to Chattanooga and we spent the morning together mostly shooting the bull and talking about the Indian magazine (he thinks it’s great), and the possible effects of the Doubleday book on our operation. Also discussed the plans for the museum complex we’ve been working with, and he was full of good thoughts about it. Quite a guy. (Eliot Wigginton, Personal Correspondence, December 10, 1971).

Of all the educational endeavors discussed in this dissertation, the Highlander Folk School was perhaps the most controversial mainly due to its aggressive willingness to stand against conservative political positions and their powerful supporters throughout the south. Because the centers of politics, power and mainstream thought in the south were located outside southern Appalachia, the region apparently provided an excellent location to support novel, non-traditional and sometimes radical institutions, Highlander being just one of those. Wigginton was a supporter of the Civil Rights Movement cause as evidenced by his willingness to edit a book that featured Highlander, Refuse to Stand Silently By: An Oral History of Grass Roots Social Activism, 1921-1964 (1991), but civil rights topics do not appear in the pages of Foxfire magazines and books. Why Eliot Wigginton did not lead Foxfire in a direction more aligned with his own political beliefs is unclear. Perhaps because he recognized Foxfire was part of a conservative public school system that would not have supported activities in Foxfire which would have challenged existing societal norms. Wigginton (1986) did discuss concerns about prejudices that he observed in his students, and as Foxfire students had the opportunity to travel outside the county teaching others about how to start a cultural journalism project of their own,
he heralded the fact that Foxfire students had opportunities to meet a very diverse group of American young people. Such experiences allowed Foxfire students to learn about civil rights through experiential learning rather than in the traditional classroom setting.

Another folk school, the John C. Campbell folk school in Brasstown, North Carolina, focused much more on the preservation of folk traditions of the southern Appalachian culture and even though reformers such as Ritchie and Frost (Berea College, Kentucky) were concerned primarily with practical education, their schools’ curricula also featured components of traditional Appalachian culture. I interviewed a woman who attended Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School in the 1940s. She remembered studying the traditional academic subjects there, but also classes featuring supplemental offerings. Her favorite, she acknowledged, was in Appalachian folk dance. The school organized a dance club. Students traveled to locations throughout the region to perform with groups at other schools including frequent trips to the John C. Campbell School and at least once a year to Berea College (personal communication, June 10, 2010). This example provides evidence that before the well known Appalachian cultural revivals of the 1960s, which were conducted to a large extent by outsiders coming into the region (like Eliot Wigginton), the people of the southern Appalachians themselves had already formed a strong sense of their culture and they desired to preserve it within the Appalachian identity movement.

**The arts and crafts movement and the Appalachian handicrafts revival.** As one scholar stated, “The American Arts and Crafts movement was the aesthetic counterpart of its contemporary political movement, Progressivism” (Dockery, 2008, p.18) and today programs continue in southern Appalachia which were founded during the arts and crafts and handicraft revival movements. The Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg, Tennessee began as a settlement school in 1910 with all the goals and purposes of a typical settlement school, such
as economic and social training. In 1968 it converted to an artistic training institute. Another artistic program was founded in 1934, in Rabun County, by Mary Hambidge. This foundation and Mary Hambidge would have a significant impact on Foxfire’s founder Eliot Wigginton, explained later in this chapter.

**Hambidge Center.** Mary Hambidge, born in Brunswick, Georgia, was sent to school in the north, (as was Wigginton) where she met and formed a bond with an artist, Jay Hambidge who, though with her only a short time, would shape the rest of her life. The two actually never married as Jay Hambidge was already married and had children. He died in 1924 leaving Mary Crovatt Hambidge to take his name gladly and uphold his legacy until she passed away in 1973 (Hambidge Center administrator, personal communication, June 16, 2010).

The Hambidge Center still operates in Rabun County off Betty Creek’s road, very close to the North Carolina border, as a retreat for artists and writers. The gallery is open to the public and potters’ work is displayed for sale (Figure 4.5, Appendix K). During Mary Hambidge’s tenure, the specialty of the Center was weaving in the Greek style, a tradition she brought to Rabun County when she made a permanent move to Betty’s Creek road in 1934. Jay Hambidge studied and wrote extensively about an artistic principle called “dynamic symmetry” (Figure 4.6) which is the concept that symmetry is naturally occurring in nature, and that humans, as exemplified by the Greeks, can mimic this perfection and capture its beauty in art. Mary Hambidge, a devotee of Jay Hambidge’s vision, corresponded with an adolescent Eliot Wigginton and preached the dynamic symmetry gospel. Andrew Ritchie also knew of Jay Hambidge’s connection with “dynamic symmetry” and wrote of it in his *Sketches of Rabun County* (1948).
Figure 4.5. Entrance sign to the Hambidge Center.

Figure 4.6. Cover of Jay Hambidge’s book “Dynamic Symmetry”.
No doubt then, Mary Hambidge and her activities on Betty’s Creek road were fairly well known throughout Rabun County, but unlike Foxfire, later, the Center did not touch aspects of the culture and life of the majority of Rabun community members. It was mainly a setting from which Mary Hambidge could express her own passion for the arts and her disdain for modern, urban life. Historically, perhaps the best example of Mary Hambidge’s work was the “Weavers of Rabun,” a group whose work appeared in forums outside of Rabun County. These were;

Girls from the community [who] entered the program as apprentices to older women who knew the various processes from carding and spinning to weaving…under Mary Hambidge’s guidance and inspiration…(they) produced fine quality fabrics…”

(Hambidge Center Publication, n.d., p.21).
Cultural Revivalism, Back-to-the-Land Movement, Appalachian Identity Movement of the 1960s -70s

Cultural Revival Movements of the 1960s and 70s. Fueled by the spirit of the Civil Rights Movement beginning during the 1960s, a myriad of identity movements began in earnest, including the feminist, gay, Hispanic and American Indian rights movements. The cultural revival movement’s focus was less political and more concerned with the preservation of formerly traditional lifestyles that had once been common place in America. Although in southern Appalachia, this concern dated at least from the establishment of folk and settlement schools in the region during the progressive era, it was not until the 1960s that a clear and more widespread nostalgia for earlier and presumably simpler lifestyles took hold among the urban and mainstream populations of the United States and in Britain also. These movements often took the name of “folk” in their title usually referring to the pre-industrial, agrarian populations of the hinterland. Academics joined in the preservation effort forming specialized “studies” programs, such as Appalachian Studies at universities and “folklorist” became the title of a specialized career field. It became trendy to study the “folk”, and to analyze their art, music and culture, and in some cases even to adopt their perceived lifestyle (Blaustein, 2003).

A colleague of mine whom I interviewed, taught deep in the heart of the Ozarks of Arkansas in 1971 and remembered this phenomenon as the back-to-the land movement. As he described to me,

“I lived back in a cabin in Oark, Arkansas. My neighbors moved down from Chicago to adopt this lifestyle of living in natural ways. They were not reclusive. Their children attended the local public schools and they socialized with others living in the area, but it
was this simple lifestyle they were seeking. Wigginton, I believe, tapped into this movement with his work with Foxfire.” (personal communication, April 30, 2010)

In particular, this informant remembered two magazines that helped guide that movement and inspired him in that era before instant internet communications, the *Mother Earth News* (1970) and the *Whole Earth Catalog* (1968). The first journal began in 1970 and claimed as its mission to “promote more self-sufficient, financially independent and environmentally aware lifestyles” (Mother Earth News, 2010). The second journal began in 1968 with “one foot firmly in the rugged individualism and back-to-the-land movements” (Whole Earth Catalog, 2010).

My informant had a copy of the latter to show me from his bookshelf, “I am pretty sure I heard about Foxfire first from this catalog” (personal communication, April 30, 2010). Whether his memories are accurate about that point or not, these magazines were definitely known by Wigginton and his friends from his university days in New York, who also believed Foxfire was representative of the back to the land movement. Wigginton’s friend, Mike Kinney, who had just become an editor at Anchor Books, a division of Doubleday, discussed in the following letter passages sent to Wigginton Foxfire’s back to the land qualities; “The growing popularity of the Whole Earth Catalogue, the whole environmentalist thing is very encouraging. A book of survival done in the Foxfire manner – really excites me” (personal communication, December 19, 1969), and in another letter, “Given the unique folkish, outdoors flavor of Foxfire…it would be far out to do a book with you” (personal communication, January 5, 1970). Another friend Mike Senzel wrote in a letter to Wigginton, “I mean, Foxfire, etc. [sic] is not part of a Folklore “boom” it is a search for a guide to affairs of plain living” (personal communication, December 28, 1973).
**Appalachian identity movements of the 1960s and 1970s.** The following is a definition of the wider spread cultural identity movement as expressed by Blaustein (2003): “Currently diverse groups of alienated, marginal people around the world are redefining and empowering themselves through the articulation of new forms of cultural expression or the reformulation of old ones” (p.129). Though the Appalachian identity movement really began in the Progressive Era as previously explained, when people of the southern Appalachians recognized their culture was a distinct one, the movement was revitalized during the cultural revivals of the 1960s and at that time became driven primarily by “outsider” interests such as those described below.

Despite the support that many adoptees of a counterculture and alternative lifestyles had for the land and traditions of southern Appalachia and other remote environs of the United States, these persons were outsiders and they did little to elevate the long held perceptions about the backwardness of the mountains and their people. These continued to persist. Consider the example of the movie *Deliverance.*

Only a few months after the book’s publication in March 1970, a film adaptation confirmed its Georgia setting by filming on location in Rabun County and on the Chattooga [River]. Released in 1972, the film became one the most popular of the year. Both book and movie had much to do with confirming to a national audience the hillbilly stereotypes that had long plagued southern Appalachia. The film in particular, stands as the most degrading depiction of southern mountaineers ever put on film and led to strong protests both by north Georgians and by Appalachian scholars (Inscoe, 2004).

Others were angered too. Eliot Wigginton’s friend, Foxfire supporter and Southern Literary Fund board member, Mike Senzel wrote in a letter to Wigginton; “…you must know
Deliverance and what twisted and ugly story that really is and you must hate James Dickey” (personal communication, January 6, 1974). Foxfire on the other hand, encouraged the people of the region to value their culture as presented in the work completed by Foxfire students and presented in Foxfire magazines, books and the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center, all discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Critics of the Appalachian identity movement were concerned that much of its inspiration was drawn from the “core” and not the “periphery,” from outsiders and not insiders to the region. A former colleague of Wigginton, a retired Rabun Gap teacher shared with me, “mountain people [he was one] are very trusting, but if you break that trust…” Clearly this teacher considered Wigginton in that category, but he also acknowledged Wigginton as a highly motivating teacher who wanted his mountain students to learn about and be proud of their culture (personal communication, November 17, 2009). Invariably, there were benefits of talented and motivated people coming into the region from the outside.

Others critics of the cultural identity movements expressed more cynical opinions; “the folk represents the glorified, romanticized remnants of a national patrimony which is something for zealous intellectuals to celebrate” (Blaustein, 2003, p.70). They go out among the peasants and farmers, commune with nature, record the rhythms of the countryside and bring them back to the anonymous city, so that the rising urban strata may be “reborn” (Blaustein, 2003, p.71). Wigginton’s friend Mike Senzel noted to him that Foxfire and southern Appalachia also satisfied this need for many outsiders, “The mountain people have gone in five years FROM: [sic] The last group of people to catch on to what was central to culture, to the cultural avant-garde, to which smart city people look for life models” (personal communication, December 28, 1973).
Rabun County had an outsider, Mary Hambidge, who had for many years before Foxfire used the landscape of southern Appalachian to retreat back to nature. Others, like Myles Horton remembered the parade of patronizing outside reformers who had come to his home region when he was a boy to cure them of their ills. It was for this reason that he would not follow that pattern when helping the African-American cause. Highlander was established as neutral ground on which to educate: those seeking his group’s guidance were to approach Highlander rather than vice versa (Bell et al., 1990). In the following section, I present my findings on the case of Foxfire and I provide explanations as to how that program was in many parts a mixture of several of the educational endeavors discussed so far in this chapter in analysis of the historical context of Foxfire.

The Foxfire Program

In the previous section, I set the historical context for the Foxfire program that began not in a vacuum, but at a school and in a region known for educational experimentation. Foxfire, therefore, was also not the first grass-roots, community-oriented, hands-on, applied pedagogy program created in southern Appalachia, nor was Eliot Wigginton the only educational innovator to come to the region to harness the spirit of the mountain people and culture. As evidenced by the examples already provided in this chapter, the region was known for attracting such people prior to Foxfire.

Nevertheless, Foxfire is distinctive in the history of American education owing to its legacy of published student-produced work. Though Foxfire was not originally founded with the philosophies of John Dewey in mind, this facet of the program nevertheless admirably captured Dewey’s beliefs in finding an audience for student work outside the classroom. One might argue
that Foxfire did this as well as any other pedagogical program for public-school students in the history of American education.

In order to understand the story behind Foxfire’s development one must explore the motives and events associated with its founder, Eliot Wigginton, who was a first-year teacher at the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School in 1966, the beginning year of Foxfire. In the findings I present here, I extend the prior record in literature on Foxfire to build the case and the story behind and beyond Wigginton’s involvement with Foxfire. Yet still much of this story remains unknown.

“Wig” as he became known to his colleagues, proved what one dedicated, creative, connected, and talented teacher could accomplish with students if allowed flexibility by his principal, as was Wigginton at Rabun Gap, to design and implement his own educational program. Perhaps more importantly, and a component of Foxfire’s founding discussed later in this paper, Wigginton came to Rabun County with the intention of starting a museum and/or a foundation instead of remaining a typical secondary teacher following a prescribed curriculum and working in the trenches as a conventional public school teacher. Unfortunately, the task of explaining Wigginton’s role is easier said than done because all the accounts describing Foxfire’s founding in any detail were told, or at the very least edited, by Wigginton himself and as time revealed, Eliot Wigginton was far more complex a man than the documentary record shows.

The case presented here is my account of the founding features of Foxfire and the events in its history from 1966-1991 under Wigginton’s leadership, and then to a limited extent from 1992 to the present. I compiled data from a variety of sources, including accounts written by Wigginton himself, or edited by him, or accounts authored by other scholars such as Puckett
(1989) and journalists who were all eager to share Foxfire’s story prior to Wigginton’s departure from the program in 1991. My field notes, site visits and interviews during the course of my research also provided much information. Since parts of the biographical information and story of Foxfire were published by Wigginton (1986) and others, they are not unique to this dissertation. However my case does make connections in the life and work of Eliot Wigginton with regard to Foxfire that have not been put forth before in the existing literature. The findings presented as my case provide evidence for the research questions guiding my study and the conclusions and implications discussed in Chapter 5.

**Eliot Wigginton.** Brooks Eliot Wigginton was born in 1942 in West Virginia and raised in Athens, Georgia where his father was a professor of landscape architecture. He attended Athens public schools through the ninth grade after which he received a scholarship to attend a private boarding school in Pennsylvania. Although Wigginton had been an excellent student in Athens schools, he struggled upon arrival at Hill School and was made to repeat the ninth grade. As Wigginton admitted, he resented this action by school officials and reacted by showing little or no motivation in his studies. His grades dropped and he was on the verge of losing his scholarship when a teacher at the school helped him refine a piece of writing he had done for submission to that school’s literary magazine. The piece was accepted and published. The motivation provided by this teacher and his success in writing turned Wigginton’s academic career around. From then on, he would remember the teacher who had encouraged him as an excellent pedagogical role model, and the experience of having seen his work in print was cathartic (Puckett, 1989).

From Hill School, Wigginton gained admission to Cornell University where after starting as a pre-med major, he transferred majors to English with plans to be a high school English
teacher. Upon graduation, among other teaching opportunities around the country, Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School offered him a position. He stated he joined the faculty there because there were no openings at his first choice, the strictly public high school located in the county seat of Clayton (Puckett, 1989). It is important to note that Wigginton’s position at Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School was “public,” paid for by the state of Georgia (Wigginton, 1986) although since 1928 and until 1977, the school at Rabun Gap was a private institution that only received funds from the state to take community students. It was also a school with a direct affiliation with the Presbyterian Church and one quite conservative and strict in comparison to the average public Georgia high school of the time. These observations are based on information provided to me by an informant familiar with the operations at both the school at Rabun Gap and the county high school from that time period (personal communication, June 10, 2010). Rabun Gap - Nacoochee’s disciplinary policies seemed a major irritation to Wigginton (1986) based on his comments made about the school. (See Appendix L for the timeline of the history of Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School).

**The Hambidge connection.** Although Wigginton secured a job in Rabun County for the school year beginning fall of 1966, what was his knowledge of what, to many, would be considered such a remote location and region? What also inspired and motivated Eliot Wigginton to create a program like Foxfire? I identified this as my first research question. The answer lay with a lady mentioned in the previous discussion: Mary Hambidge, a Wigginton family friend who had moved to Rabun County in 1934. She had, like so many others, discovered the handicraft heritage of the Appalachians (Hambidge Center booklet, n.d., p.18) and she came to Rabun County to start the Hambidge Center “primarily to perpetuate the knowledge of hand weaving and the value of the handcrafts as a way of developing one’s inner life” (Hambidge
Center booklet, n.d., p.21). Presumably, Wigginton’s father, who was a landscape architect and writer, enjoyed the atmosphere in Rabun County, and he gained solace from his visits to her property and his friendship with her. Wigginton described frequent visitors to the Hambidge Center as Mary Hambidge’s “disciples” in his account of her life he wrote for a *Foxfire* magazine edition (1973) published shortly after her death. Using the same analogy, it would seem the Wigginton’s, father and son, were, like others who made the pilgrimage to her center, Hambidge disciples.

It was during his years in school that Eliot Wigginton maintained a rather intense correspondence with Mary Hambidge that they both seemed to enjoy. The topics discussed between them were quite intellectual and unusual, one might say, between a teenager and a more mature woman to whom he was not related. The following statement made in a letter from Mary Hambidge to Wigginton ironically mentions the very publisher that would eventually partner to publish the Foxfire books. “I am expecting a guest from Atlanta today, a very brilliant writer who has had her latest book accepted by Doubleday” (personal communication, September 2, 1961).

Their communication included philosophical discussions on Greek art and Jay Hambidge’s “dynamic symmetry” (see p.122) including ideas and suggestions for a “school” to teach this concept. Mary Hambidge apparently saw Wigginton as someone who might help her achieve her “dream”. In a letter dated February 3, 1961 she extended an offer for him to come to Rabun County to start a school of “dynamic symmetry” before beginning at Cornell University, an offer he turned down in August as he entered the University (Eliot Wigginton, personal communication, August 28, 1961). Mary Hambidge seemed to remain hopeful despite Wigginton’s rejection and continued to gently and perhaps naively suggest they were working
towards a common goal as she expressed in another letter, “We must establish a school governed by a principle of perfection which creates a love for any work one does no matter how humble” and “I will be looking forward to that time when we can plan and prepare for the School, which is my dream” and once again, “Work hard this winter, but not too hard, towards our dream and believe me always” (personal communication September 2, 1961).

Among the first sources I used to research Foxfire was Wigginton’s personal account of the founding and relevance of the Foxfire program and its pedagogy called Sometimes a Shining Moment. This book was published in 1986, at a time many years after Mary Hambidge’s passing away and at a time when the success of the Foxfire program had far out-weighed the significance of the Hambidge Center in Rabun County history. Perhaps for those reasons, or because Sometimes A Shining Moment (1986) was a book directed towards high school teachers and not just a biography of his life, the importance of Mary Hambidge in Wigginton’s opus was very minimal. He does state that Foxfire was “partially born” at the Hambidge Center, and then goes on to state, “that’s another story--another book” (Wigginton, 1986, p.9).

By the time I came to Rabun County to conduct field research in 2009-2010, I barely remembered the name of Mary Hambidge, based on Wigginton’s (1986) account. It was an archivist at the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School who mentioned Mary Hambidge to me and who informed me of the extensive correspondence that existed between her and Wigginton, and it was she who told me of the Hambidge Center property located in Rabun County. She suggested I needed to find these letters in order to complete my research and she was certainly right. Based on my exploration of this body of correspondence, the following is an account of Mary Hambidge’s role in Wigginton’s life and her influence on Wigginton in choosing Rabun County
as a location not only to teach school but also to begin his efforts to form a foundation of his own.

As a boy, Wigginton wrote, he remembered passing by the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School campus in the mountains of north Georgia and visiting Mary Hambidge’s property on Betty’s Creek road, a favorite place of his father. He wrote that the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School location and the small college-like campus appealed to him, and he decided to return to Georgia’s mountains to seek a teaching job (Wigginton, 1986). He does mention living out on the Betty’s Creek property (Mary Hambidge’s) for a time because he did not want to live on the school campus anymore, but the emphasis was that he was living there temporarily, only until the home he was building on the Foxfire property was complete. He stated, “I lived there for awhile [sic] until she died” (Wigginton, 1986, p.9). He actually resided at Hambidge’s for approximately six years and he completed and lived in the cabin on the property that now bears the name Foxfire. (Figures 4.7, 4.8) Former Foxfire students such as one I interviewed were frequent visitors to Wigginton’s cabin at Hambidge’s during those years (personal communication, June 9, 2010). Wigginton spent much time discussing the building of his cabin on the Foxfire museum property where he would eventually live while in Rabun County after moving from Hambidge’s (Figure 3.1). Foxfire students helped in that project, so Wigginton recounts the cabin building story in detail in his book (1986). Wigginton’s recollections of the latter cabin building promoted the image of himself as a talented hands-on teacher who had great rapport with his students, but his connections with Mary Hambidge and her Center and the fact that he lived on her property appeared in that work only in abbreviated form (Wigginton, 1986).
Figure 4.7. Foxfire cabin at Hambidge Center built by Wigginton and his father.
In many ways Mary Hambidge fit the profile of those who came to the mountains as part of the larger arts and crafts movement, but in other ways, she did not. There are indications that she apparently exploited her labor source, the mountain people, and she did not have much regard for them or their culture. Letters from Wigginton’s friend, Howard Senzel, who came to live as an artist in residence at the Hambidge Center while Wigginton was still finishing his degree at Cornell University stated, “weavers employed by the Foundation [sic] only paid 50 cents an hour” (personal communication, July 9, 1963). Senzel spoke in derision about this wage, regardless of whether it was low or not for a mountain resident. This New Yorker living on the
Hambidge property considered the figure unfair. A current employee of the Hambidge Center stated to me that she knew that Mary avoided paying the social security tax for her employees (personal communication, June 3, 2010).

Senzel, after leaving Rabun County, remained friends with Wigginton. He was even chosen as a member of the board of directors for the Southern Highlands Literary Fund (S.H.L.F., 1973), the forerunner of the Foxfire Fund. He appeared to have left his studies at Cornell University, as Mary Hambidge had tried unsuccessfully to convince Wigginton to do, in order to train with Mary Hambidge as an artist. Senzel’s knowledge of the Center and desire to come there to practice traditional handicraft almost assuredly came through his acquaintance with Wigginton. This further indicates the connection between Wigginton, his associates, and the wider cultural revival movements, but in this series of letters written to Wigginton, Senzel indicated his irritation with Hambidge on the issue of her relationship with her mountain-born workers.

Aside from the questions about Hambidge as an ideal employer, Wigginton stated that he believed mountain people were a breed whom Hambidge “had never really loved as a whole and never really thought deserved that much credit or attention” (Hambidge Center Booklet, n.d., p.8). Her presence in the mountains was more about communing with nature and fleeing technology rather than about any respect for mountaineers or their way of life. This fact, Wigginton stated, would eventually drive a wedge between him and Hambidge that he said weakened their relationship, especially after his connection with Foxfire began (Hambidge Center Booklet, n.d.).

Yet spiritually, Hambidge was very much part of the back to the land movement, as it was discussed previously in this chapter, and more specifically she was a supporter of those who
rejected modern life, the dependence on technology and the obsession to make money; all concepts that she believed were negative parts of modern life in America as evidenced by her many writings and musings on that subject. Those who made the pilgrimage to the Hambidge Center usually “shared her love of nature and simplicity…and they usually shared her impatience with the worship of technology” (Hambidge Center Booklet, n.d., p.7).

Hambidge, during the 1930s and 1940s, ran a shop in New York City, where she sold the weavings made by the artisans she trained and employed in Rabun County known as the “Weavers of Rabun.” She visited the city relatively often, but grew more and more disconnected with the life of the city. She wrote to Wigginton: “New York has grown so terrible (since I was last here). I can hardly stand it…Be patient Eliot. This madness cannot go on. Man is turning back to the sanity of nature” (personal communication, November 12, 1967).

Hambidge’s views help explain why she chose the remote mountain location in the Betty’s Creek region of Rabun County, but what of Wigginton’s choice? None of Wigginton’s writings indicate as extreme views against modernity as did Mary Hambidge. However he did express in letters, along with Senzel, a desire to start a museum and/or foundation, and that Rabun County seemed the ideal location. They speculated on whether collaboration with Hambidge might be possible, but eventually, from what their correspondence indicates, that idea appeared not to be a realistic prospect. Senzel wrote to Wigginton from Hambidge’s in 1963, three years before Wigginton’s arrival at Rabun Gap; “No plans for a museum have been discussed with me”, “No one is capable of changing things here”, “No reformer will ever succeed here and further more none is welcome” (personal communication, July 9, 1963). By September of 1965, Senzel, apparently not giving up on the idea of working directly with Eliot Wigginton on a foundation project, wrote, [I] “still dream of the foundation with you and Renny
and our families living there. It could all work so beautifully, who is going to get their hands on the land?” (Howard Senzel, personal communication, September 23, 1965).

Eventually, Wigginton responded to Mary’s calls to return to Rabun County, but on his schedule. He wrote, “At one point she urged me to leave Cornell and come to Georgia to work. I came instead, after graduation; but at one point, whether I would stay in college or answer her call was very much a toss up” (Hambidge Center booklet, n.d., p.9). Obviously, Wigginton did come to Rabun County, but he followed a different course entirely from the one he had been discussing with Mary for years. By the time he wrote these words in fall of 1973, and the success of his own foundation project was assured, he had had many years to reflect on Mary Hambidge and her impact on his life; “I have a suspicion, as yet unproved, that our destiny may be not so much to adopt intact someone else’s dream, but to find and give birth to our own” (Hambidge Center booklet, n.d., p.9).

That apparently is exactly what Eliot Wigginton did, as his dream came true in his vision of Foxfire. Yet as the rest of the Foxfire story shows as discussed in this research, there were many more people who helped bring Foxfire to reality than just Wigginton. After, Wigginton was convicted on molestation charges it was clear that his presence in Foxfire was in some cases negative, as he undermined some of his own and the good work of others in the program. However, he does deserve credit for having a dream to form an innovative educational program, his willingness to find talented and enthusiastic collaborators to help bring Foxfire to life, and choosing a community that appreciated collaboration with its local school. (See Appendix K for more images of the Hambidge Center site).
The Founding of the Foxfire Program

During his first year teaching, Eliot Wigginton experienced what almost all new teachers do. Students challenged his authority, some in subtle ways others in not-so-subtle ways such as the time when two students lit his lectern on fire. The latter is one of the most colorful of the Foxfire founding stories. As many teachers do, he also observed students who were bored with his classes, students who showed little interest in learning and some who had the reading levels of second graders even though they were in high school. He acknowledged that he had not been prepared sufficiently in his teacher training on how to deal with such issues (Wigginton, 1986).

Trying to find a way out of his predicament rather than resigning, Wigginton decided to go right to the source and ask his students for their opinions of English classes. He recorded what he considered the most interesting responses, a sample of which appears here; “I don’t like English because most of the time it doesn’t make any sence [sic], and sometimes the teachers that teach doesn’t express things the right way for you to learn”, “I hate to study Julius Caesar and Macbeth. Anything that’s got to do with Shakespeer [sic]. Forget it!!!!” and “To read out loud is like ordering a big fat F” (Wigginton, 1986, p.86). This simple action of inquiring after his students’ opinions was revealing. Wigginton exhibited the characteristics of good teaching in the democratic, progressive tradition though up to that point Wigginton, by his own admission had been teaching very traditionally the way he had been taught, and with little success (Wigginton, 1986).

Put in other terms, the very action of his saving such expressive comments from students illustrates Wigginton’s absolute confidence in his own ability to relate to students, to understand students’ feelings of insecurity, his willingness to try a different approach, and a sense that he would be ready to share his beliefs with the wider world when the moment arose. Among the
adjectives used to describe Wigginton’s teaching style by those I interviewed, motivating and inspiring confidence were stated the most frequently.

The comments recorded by Wigginton illustrate the insecurities that his young students felt. Teachers’ methods were not helpful, the content seemed indecipherable and remote and sometimes many years of struggles and failures in front of other students had created self-consciousness rather than confidence. To Wigginton’s credit, he decided to act on the students’ feedback and he set about to creating an educational program in which students could become more active participants in the pedagogical process. It would seem however, that Foxfire’s developmentalist approach, as defined by Kliebard (2004) was by coincidence since there is no evidence that Eliot Wigginton had in mind any specific educational theory, formal design or proven method when the process to create Foxfire began. It was confirmed to me by more than one source that Foxfire’s Dewey connection was not original to the program. More educational formality would come later in the history of Foxfire when Wigginton and others connected with Foxfire had to try and sell the benefits of Foxfire methods and curriculum to those outside Rabun County (Wigginton, 1986; Foxfire administrator, personal communication, June 29, 2010).

Wigginton admitted that he did not remember much useful in the way of pedagogy from his teacher certification program at Cornell. He was to learn in the field what teaching style would work best for him. The informal process that resulted in the development of the original Foxfire methods and curriculum was created through a collaborative effort between Wigginton and those students who were inspired and motivated by him to try something a little different in their English classroom (Wigginton, 1986, former Foxfire student, personal communication, June 9, 2010).
But from the beginning, Wigginton seemed confident that a program based on southern Appalachian culture would be successful. Probably because of his understanding of these broader social-cultural movements that were occurring at the time, as discussed previously, the Appalachian identity and back to the land movements and the spirit of the broader arts and crafts movement as he learned it from Mary Hambidge, and undoubtedly others, Wigginton believed a program featuring and upholding a folk culture would help him help students while at the same allowing him to fulfill his dream of forming a foundation. Wigginton and his students agreed from the beginning that Foxfire would feature content of cultural uplift of the Appalachian region (Wigginton, 1986).

Based on all the evidence presented about Wigginton’s presence in Rabun County and his connection with Mary Hambidge, there is not much in the record that suggests that Eliot Wigginton started his position at Rabun Gap - Nacoochee with the intention of ever being a traditional teacher and this fact also helps explains his motivation to form a program such as Foxfire. He clearly had ambitions to move out of and around the traditional secondary teaching environment before ever setting foot in his first year classroom, with dreams of forming a foundation. His passion for teaching beyond the classroom walls was evident to his students from the beginning. One former student from those years whom I interviewed commented that he had never known as driven a person as Eliot Wigginton. He spent all his time before and after hours visualizing Foxfire, so much time in fact, that his students and staff were concerned that he was unhealthily consumed by the project. “We worried about him,” the interviewee stated (personal communication, June 9, 2010).

Within one year of beginning at the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School, Eliot Wigginton had started Foxfire, and he requested and was granted a reduced teaching load to run the program
(Wigginton, 1986). This was an exceptional situation for any teacher, especially one just beginning his teaching career, suggesting some luck, but also more strategizing. However, according to my sources, and by Wigginton’s own admission, there were tensions that arose, between himself and his colleagues at Rabun Gap - Nacoochee because of what were seen by some as his “unorthodox”, meaning student-centered, teaching methods and perhaps also because of his personal beliefs about drug and alcohol use which he reveals in comments made in his book (Wigginton, 1986). Wigginton’s statements indicate that he believed he had come to the school at Rabun Gap as something of a teaching missionary and yet, to his disappointment, his work to enlighten the tired methods of traditional teachers had fallen on deaf ears. He commented in a letter to Brian Beun the assistant director of the Institutional Development and Economic Affairs Service, Inc. (IDEAS – a Foxfire collaborating organization) about the dearth of teachers willing to support experiential learning, “I’ve met thousands of them. Hell –our school is even full of them. That’s why it was hard to get this thing going in the first place” (personal communication, December 10, 1971).

Years later his views had not changed. Commenting in another letter about the move from the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School to Rabun County High School to his friend Howard Senzel, Wigginton wrote in a letter, “I have endured a certain number of frustrations in the eleven years I’ve been here…” and optimism about the better conditions that would exist at his new school, [We]“will have new facilities at the school and classes in publishing but also furniture making, environmental education” (personal communication, January, 1977).
The Activities and Roles of Foxfire Students and Staff, and Impact of Foxfire Outside of the Rabun County Community

In this section, the features and goals of the Foxfire program, aligned with research question number two are explained through the description of the activities and roles of Foxfire students and staff. Wigginton hit upon the idea of trying something different in his teaching that first year, after opening up a dialogue with the same students with whom he had been having a battle of wills. In his words, he wanted to find projects to work on with the students, “that could put negative energy to use in a positive way” (Wigginton, 1986, p. 47). He and his students brainstormed thoughts using the classroom bulletin board, but all seemed to like the idea of a student created magazine. The idea for having community articles instead of literary ones originated because of the constant comments voiced by some students. “Yea, but whose [sic] going to buy it anyway? My folks aren’t going to shell out for poetry” (Wigginton, 1986, p. 47).

The students also decided on the name for the magazine. Wigginton described the process. Each student submitted three choices. Duplicates were eliminated, a master list made, and the students voted on their first choice. The winner was Foxfire, “an organism that grows on decaying organic matter in damp, dark coves in the mountains and glows” (Wigginton, 1986, p.56) (Figure 4.9).
Figure 4.9. Bioluminescent Fungus Kit containing Foxfire-

Dubbed “foxfire” by hunters in the Appalachian Mountains, the fungus *Armillariella mellea* emits a low-level bioluminescence when observed in the dark.

The student work was divided in the following way. There was a board of editors that included the below listed categories; editors in chief, literary editors, regional editors, exchange editors, makeup editors, business editors, faculty advisor. Wigginton allowed the students to vote for their editors, thus giving the students a greater stake in the organization that they were about to bring to life. The names of the contributors to the magazine appeared in the preface. In the first edition, there were some “published” writers, but in another stroke of excellent teacher/mentorship by Wigginton the student contributors were listed as new writers. With this small, simple use of English terminology and perhaps remembering his own triumph at the Hill School, Wigginton had converted his tenth grade Foxfire students to contributing members of a literary staff (*Foxfire* vol.1, no.1, Summer 1967).

Later, in his book, John Puckett (1989) reported his findings on the role of students in Foxfire because in that case, a question from a Fund board member had come up about how much editorial say-so students actually had in the program. I asked a long time Foxfire staffer who had much of the responsibility for the day to day activities of the students her thoughts on
this topic. Her observations on this point are significant because when Wigginton was out of town, as he often was during the heyday of the program, she was responsible for the students’ activities in the Foxfire program. She told me, “We gave the students as much say so as was possible to do with teenagers” (personal communication, June 17, 2010). Another former student revealed he remembered Wigginton giving students an equal voice: “We as a staff would meet and listen to presentations by various groups or individuals wanting to work with Foxfire. Sometimes we would outright turn down the offer. On more than one occasion “Wig” was unhappy with our choice. He would say something like ‘I am disappointed that we are not ready to take on a project like this,’ and yet our decision stood” (personal communication, June 9, 2010). Ultimately, the fact that students had a controlling part in the final product was more the exception than the rule. Teachers were expected to take responsibility for the content of publicly displayed student work.

The same Foxfire employee was also critiqued in Puckett’s book (1989) for actually being the primary author of Foxfire articles that were credited to student writers, a point which would obviously bring into question the pedagogical integrity of the students’ work on Foxfire magazines and books. I asked her about this and she told me she had yet to read Puckett’s book, but remembered the almost year he spent conducting fieldwork in Rabun County, “he was always around” (personal communication, June 17, 2010). She neither confirmed nor denied to me about her work editing student written articles, which I took to mean that she did not find it a problem if she did provide extra assistance to students. Meeting editorial and publishing deadlines was part of the Foxfire milieu and it was not the students, but the adult staff of Foxfire, who were ultimately responsible for that component of the program. In the earliest years of the
Foxfire program, standards of student learning and student and teacher accountability were not pressing concerns for the program, but issues of financial viability were.

Since the magazine received no financial support from the school, the program had to support itself. It did this originally by offering subscriptions to the magazine. The first magazine’s preface section contained the following vital, practical information and a disclaimer that though the magazine required sixty cents to publish, it would sell for only fifty cents.

Foxfire is published at the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School, Rabun Gap, Georgia 30568, copies may be ordered from the English Department at this address for the price of fifty cents each. Subscription information may be found on the inside back cover of this issue. Make checks payable to “Foxfire” (Foxfire vol.1, no.1, Summer 1967).

Foxfire magazine was on its way. The first edition was funded by the students entirely. From pocket money to soliciting family and friends for donations, the Foxfire students made the initial investment on their project. From that beginning, the Foxfire curriculum, as it slowly defined itself, had already crossed over subject fields as the production of the magazine in all its facets required the students learn not only writing, but also other vocational/technical skills such as business management, photography, speech (as they were required to conduct interviews and speak to potential donors), and other practical academic skills in math. They also learned a good deal of history and science in the process, depending on the topics of their articles (The Foxfire Book, 1972). Another former student that I discussed Foxfire with found that this component of Foxfire curriculum was invaluable to the student, the opportunity to practice communication skills in all its aspects instilled tremendous confidence in him, and, he believed, in other Foxfire students (personal communication, June 9, 2010). Certainly this ranks as one of those intrinsic
qualities of curricula such as Foxfire in which it is hard to measure with empirical evidence such as with test scores.

In his book, Wigginton (1986) stated that his original purpose for his students’ involvement in producing a magazine was in fact for them to learn from the entire process; writing skills, decision-making, responsibility, how to handle money, organize data and process and analyze that information (Wigginton, 1986), all excellent pedagogical goals for students. Perhaps Wigginton’s greatest contribution to the education field, because the credit for the product that was Foxfire cannot fairly be given exclusively to him, was that he found an audience for his students’ work outside the classroom, as Dewey actually advocated, but before any direct connection existed between Foxfire and Deweyian pedagogy. Due to his publishing connections, great drive and ambition to form an organization or foundation from which to showcase his students’ talent and harnessing the interest in southern Appalachian culture Wigginton was the visionary behind Foxfire. However, credit should be given where credit is due and Eliot Wigginton would not be the one to sustain Foxfire over its over forty year history. That effort would fall on all of the Foxfire students, contacts and dedicated Foxfire staff whose work is highlighted here. After the initial Foxfire magazine was published, the real work began. The following is an explanation of some of that work.

Wigginton and his students did understand that for the project to work, it had to begin to support itself financially and that meant that the magazine had to sell. The biggest change over the years as the magazine prospered was the dropping of the literary and poetry pieces and shifting the focus of the magazine on to items of local interest exclusively since that, was what appealed to the majority of subscribers to Foxfire. In the earliest years of the magazine, the emphasis exclusively upon local folk culture was not crystallized due to the popularity of the
Luther Rickman bank robbery story that featured in the first magazine. The student editors kept their options open. Perhaps there would be other interesting local legends to uncover and stories to tell (*The Foxfire Book*, 1972).

The second magazine, dated fall of 1967, featured the same group of student editors as the first magazine, Wigginton’s original tenth grade English class. By this point, Wigginton had also agreed to allow a more active role by his ninth grade classes, as they had complained because of their relative small part in the first magazine production (Wigginton, 1986).

The theme of the second magazine was “Planting by the Signs.” Tips included; “Always set plants out in a water or earth sign,” and “Never plant anything in one of the barren signs which are good only for trimming, deadening and destroying.” (*Foxfire* vol.1, no.2, Fall 1967, p.19) This edition also included more superstitions and remedies which the “mountain folk seemed to have an endless supply of” (p.19).

The students were encouraged to think critically also as they included a section following the “Planting by the Signs,” “Those Who Doubt,” as seen in the following passage:

Mr. James T. Burden, professor of agriculture at the Rabun Gap School said...There’s no scientific proof at all. Look, if someone’s going to be careful enough to plant by the signs and watch and harvest the crop that carefully, then the chances are they will have a good crop, regardless. He plants by the weather and the season. When the soil is warm enough and the danger of frost gone, it’s time to plant, signs or not (*Foxfire* vol.1, no.2, Fall 1967, p.19).

“Two points of view” was a hallmark of Foxfire reporting. In such features, one can see that the Foxfire curriculum did teach higher-order thinking skills such as analyzing data in a much more effective way than book work and work sheets could, as it emphasized learning by
doing, which would become a feature of the *Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning* based on Deweyian pedagogy in later years.

Nevertheless, the magazine work required that an extraordinary amount of time be devoted by students, which took time away from traditional classroom activities. One student working on Foxfire projects recalled that he often felt the irritation of some of the non-Foxfire teachers because he missed class to interview subjects or to work on Foxfire tasks (personal communication, June 9, 2010), but especially in those early years, much of the work on the magazine, including interview sessions, was completed after regular school operating hours. This component of Foxfire’s production process would probably have been more difficult had it not been for the unique mixture of students attending Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School. Boarding students were available and willing to work after hours because they lived on campus and the community students’ parents allowed their children liberal access back to the school after hours, due to the school’s close proximity and community feel. A staff member from the early years of the magazine stated in an interview, “The school was a community. The community revolved around the school for many activities. Parents didn’t object to their children going over there; they felt they were safe” (Puckett, 1989, p.31). A former community student confirmed this to me. He virtually grew up on the campus of the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School as his father was a teacher and coach there. He believed also that there was a good relationship between commuter and boarding students though he did acknowledge that the boarders were gently teased as being dorm students (personal communication, June 9, 2010).

Another student attended the school at Rabun Gap - Nacoochee as a boarding student in the years before Foxfire, thus beginning her long affiliation with that school. In fact, Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School maintained close ties to its local community long before the existence of
Foxfire, but this aspect of the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School environment certainly made things easier for Foxfire to fit in than it might have done at a different school. Multiple local informants from years before Foxfire told me of the closeness and connection that they felt with the school prior to consolidation into Rabun County High School. The community students believed Rabun Gap - Nacoochee was their school just as any traditional public school might have been to its students. A former Rabun Gap - Nacoochee community student from the years before Foxfire shared with me: “In basketball, we had a rivalry with the local public high school; we wanted to beat them” (personal communication, 11/17/09).

An additional feature of the Foxfire magazines was the inclusion of responses from readers which appeared in the back of the magazine. These reader comments illustrated how the magazine had a far-reaching and appreciative audience, how it helped to connect Foxfire students to the outside world, and it gave Foxfire students a chance to interact with those from outside their somewhat insular world, another unanticipated positive result of participation in the program. Here is a letter from a reader and admirer from afar:

Particularly enjoyed your page of “Home Remedies” many of which are familiar to me via a grandmother who lived in upstate New York among the Brotherton Indians. They also used a horse chestnut in a pocket to ward off rheumatism, Spanish saffron to force out measles spots and catnip tea or chamomile tea for stomach ache. Shall also alert several poet friends and I am sure you will soon be swamped with submissions.

Best wishes for all success.

Florence B. Unangst
Editor, The Saint
Based on the response of readers such as this and the evidence presented throughout the rest of this chapter, Foxfire was clearly beginning to attract a following. These findings help answer my research question number three, on the qualities that made Foxfire popular with the local Rabun County community and that gave Foxfire an audience outside Rabun County. The simple answer seems to be that people in and outside of Rabun County liked the magazine’s content. Others certainly must have appreciated that Foxfire was student-created work and wanted to support it.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive reaction to the project inside and outside of Rabun County the program had financial and other struggles, and on many occasions the organization had virtually no operating capital as do most small, non-profit organizations, but it managed always to survive. Wigginton even left for a year to work on his Masters degree at Johns Hopkins University, but willing and able students managed the production that year without his direct presence (Wigginton, 1986).

In those early years the Foxfire Foundation received several prestigious grants and support from out-of-state non-profit organizations. Foxfire was awarded a sum of ten thousand dollars from the National Endowment for the Humanities, used to purchase new equipment, cover expenses for travel, and provide summer stipends for student workers (Wigginton, 1986, pp.137-138). Wigginton and his students also traveled around the country helping to establish Foxfire concept magazines (such as Salt in Maine and Bittersweet in Lebanon, Missouri), and as far away as Alaska, courtesy of that state’s Board of Education, to provide insights on how to teach using applied methods, encouraging students to participate in their own education through democratic choice and hands-on decision making and practice. In those first years after Foxfire’s founding, however there did not exist formally created instructional aides for Foxfire curriculum,
so what was being demonstrated by Foxfire students to others was the techniques of cultural journalism using the Foxfire method based on the students’ experiential knowledge. The creation of methodological and pedagogical support material related to Foxfire and the formation of the Foxfire Core Practices is discussed later in this chapter.

It is impressive that what was a relatively new program could garner so much attention in and out of the field of education in such a short time and in such far-reaching places. By the publication of the first Foxfire book, the magazine boasted subscribers in all fifty states and a dozen foreign countries, and had been featured in the *Saturday Review*, *New Republic* and *National Geographic School Bulletin* (*The Foxfire Book*, 1971, introduction). Foxfire clearly impressed some members of the media, based on the number of articles about Foxfire that appeared in national publications over the years, many of which were not related to pedagogy. Less understood is exactly what component of Foxfire attracted mainstream journalists, as well as those interested in experiential learning, to the program. The answer most likely lies with Foxfire’s role in the Appalachian identity and back to the land movements. Foxfire publications were readable and informative for those concerned with the affairs of plain living and the pioneer and/or Native American traditions of America. The fact that high school students, as opposed to professional writers, were behind the creation of the Foxfire material did not seem to lessen Foxfire readership in any significant way but, as Foxfire became known outside the Rabun County community, it should be noted that the Foxfire magazines and their version of cultural journalism were not without critics. Some academic folklorists judged Foxfire folklore pieces rather harshly. Criticism of Foxfire work, and the methods that Foxfire students used in the curriculum to create written folklore pieces, appeared in the *North Carolina Folklore Journal*, *Oral Association Newsletter*, and *Natural History* among others (Puckett, 1989). These reviewers
did not seem to appreciate that the Foxfire magazines were the product of a high school program and not a professional level folklore journal. Correspondence between Wigginton and some of his education collaborators outside of Rabun County indicated that they were aware of this criticism of the program and found it unfair, based on what they were trying to accomplish with adolescent students. Wigginton was concerned enough, however to “revamp the board” (Wigginton, 1986, p.162) with members holding academic folklorist credentials for the purposes of quality control of Foxfire curriculum.

While there is evidence of this nature, that Foxfire looked to outside support and help to maintain and sustain the program, my research did not reveal any evidence that Wigginton and/or other members of the Foxfire staff sought to infuse Foxfire curriculum with any international or national pedagogical methods, such as what happens during the glocalization process. Foxfire began local and remained grassroots, only hiring a small team of professional curriculists to make the direct connection between some of Dewey’s educational philosophies and Foxfire, as is described later in this chapter. One could argue then, that the students’ role in defining what Foxfire curriculum was to be, was equal to that of the adult staff that administered the program and far greater than any academy influenced or originated curriculum design that existed before, during, or after, Foxfire’s heyday. In today’s educational language, Foxfire was not, alas, a research-based approach to teaching and learning. Foxfire’s teaching method was experimentally created just as the students’ learning was experiential (Foxfire staff member, personal communication, June 13, 2010).

During the attacks on Foxfire during the early seventies, other Foxfire contacts rallied to support Wigginton and the program: Brian Beun wrote to a UCLA professor, “Eliot Wigginton joins me in extending our deep gratitude for your moral support and encouragement in the wake
of Professor Dorson’s attack on Foxfire as *Fakelore*” (personal communication, 1969). Beun’s communication to Wigginton on this topic indicates that the aforementioned professor was at the University of Indiana (Brian Beun, personal communication, 1969), and points to the competition that historically has risen between educators and academics that perhaps Foxfire students did not recognize, but Wigginton surely did.

The third magazine edition dated December, 1967 featured what Wigginton identified in the introduction as “almost a complete handbook on the Cherokee Nation.” The index read: Milestones in Cherokee History, The Trail of Tears, Cherokee Superstitions, Medicine of the Cherokees, Food Gathering, Cherokee Indian Foods, Crafts, Indian Relic Collecting, Place Name Origins. For this last item especially, this Foxfire magazine edition was an excellent source, since there are hundreds of these in the state of Georgia alone. Evidence that, as early as this third edition, Wigginton and his students were incorporating elements of other subject fields in the program, in this case the subject was history: its connection to the local community and region was significant, far more than any U.S. history survey text could provide.

The following example of Foxfire student work illustrated how this student was able to relate the Cherokee past with modern society. The ability to connect historical themes across time periods was a skill emphasized in state curricular requirements;

The prehistoric Cherokee was totally dependent on land for his survival. There were no country stores. There were no shining supermarkets – just forests and rivers. One lived off the land or one did not live. It was as simple as that…Understanding this, it is easy to see why cultivation and farming early became part of the Cherokee culture *(Foxfire*, vol.1, no.3, December, 1967, 21).
In this third magazine, for the first time, student editors featured what from the strictly public local high school as well as from the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School. Having access to contacts in the community was an on-going concern for the Foxfire program. It was believed that including more local students would help toward that end. In 1977, Wigginton and the entire Foxfire program moved to Rabun County High School, a move Wigginton hoped would result in more benefit to local students as well as improving the program (Puckett, p.50). A former student I interviewed verified Wigginton’s statements about why the move was made, and he indicated that this was another example of Wigginton’s sharing the decision making with his students and staff (personal communication, June 9, 2010).

In the meantime though, the magazine was produced out of Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School, and staff and editors turned over as the Foxfire students graduated from school. The list of Foxfire alumni grew. Some students left town, went away to college, and then returned to Rabun County to help in the teaching and running of what by then was a self supporting foundation that was increasing its staff size. One of my informants was one such Foxfire alumni who after graduating college returned to work for Foxfire at Rabun County High School. He taught the video production class as Foxfire expanded its offerings beyond the magazine class.

The idea of creating a book from the Foxfire magazines actually originated to meet patron demands for back issues. The Fund was so inundated with requests for copies of older editions it could not keep up. For the organization this was a pleasant problem, but also a time consuming and costly one since they were not in a position to order reprints of back copies without great expense (Wigginton, 1986). That is the explanation as presented by Wigginton in his 1986 book, but the record indicates that a plan for publishing a book from the Foxfire magazines was discussed by Wigginton and his friend Mike Kinney very soon after the original
magazine appeared, as Kinney informed Wigginton in a letter that he was “on the prowl for authors and potential markets for our books,” (personal communication, April 11, 1968).

One of Wigginton’s fraternity brothers, Mike Kinney, had in 1969 been made an editor at Anchor Books, Doubleday’s paperback division. He wrote the following in a letter to Wigginton, “You mentioned that you are in the process of publishing a hand book on survival and that another is in the works? Have you already signed a contract?” (Wigginton, 1986, p.122).

And thus began Foxfire’s and Wigginton’s long standing relationship with Anchor Books. To this date there have been eleven Foxfire books, two anniversary books with another on the way, and multiple special book editions. Interestingly, Anchor/Doubleday’s handling of the Foxfire book series was not focused in any way on Foxfire as an educational tool, but rather as an instruction manual on wilderness and survival skills, folk wisdom and affairs of plain living as part of the back to the land movement that was at its peak of popularity at the same time as Foxfire’s. This example, perhaps better than any others, demonstrated how Foxfire books were an active participant in the back to the land movement and it speaks to how Foxfire did exemplify that Deweyian principle of finding an audience for student work beyond the classroom. Foxfire students were by then actual participants in commercial America; while sharing their culture by supplying Americans with valuable insights as part of the back to the land movement.

Wigginton wrote that he and his students were thrilled with the prospect of allying with a publisher who would assume the printing costs and distribution responsibilities of recreating back editions, thus freeing them to move on to new Foxfire material. Originally, the books contained selected material from the magazine editions. Later, Foxfire books often featured themes. The current book that Foxfire students were working in summer 2010 to compile is the
fourteenth Foxfire book. The title at this point is undecided, but will include the words forty-fifth anniversary edition. The original book was *The Foxfire Book*, and featured hog dressing, log cabin building, mountain crafts and foods, planting by the signs, snake lore, hunting tales, faith healing and moonshining.

As of 1975, there were one million copies sold of that book. That fact alone speaks of the far-ranging popularity that Foxfire enjoyed. The books helped bring the work of the Foxfire students, and the culture of southern Appalachia to a wide audience. In the words of another journal, *The Wall Street Journal*, “High School Journal Spawns Small Empire and Host of Imitators” (1975). Foxfire was at the peak of its popularity. It was idealized as an American original by its supporters. One proof of this fact is that the Foxfire books provided inspiration to creative persons in other artistic fields far removed from Rabun County:

In 1978, celebrated actor Hume Cronyn and playwright Susan Cooper traveled to Rabun County to meet with the Foxfire students and staff. They sought and were granted the dramatic rights to Foxfire material. In 1982, the play titled *Foxfire* made its Broadway debut. Co-starring veteran actors Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy it was based on one of the most famous and beloved of all Foxfire informants, Aunt Arie (Cheek, Nix, & The Foxfire Students, 2006) (Figure 4.10). This play and later movie based on the play, presented Rabun County residents in a far different light than did *Deliverance*, with a Foxfire touch.
Figure 4.10. The Broadway production of Foxfire; The lead actors Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy also starred in the Hallmark Hall of Fame movie production filmed in Rabun County.

Other groups and individuals more interested in Foxfire’s potential as a transferable curricular program emerged quite early in Foxfire’s existence. Wigginton began working with the IDEAS (Institutional Development and Economic Affairs) organization, a non-profit agency out of Washington, D.C. relatively soon after forming Foxfire. IDEAS personnel came to Rabun County to discuss with Wigginton the formation of Foxfire type programs around the country. The group’s assistant director, Brian Beun made clear in written correspondence with Foxfire what kind of students IDEAS wanted to reach through their work and he obviously believed the Foxfire model would facilitate this: Students who would benefit from a local curriculum focused on cultural uplift of traditionally marginalized groups and/or those from non-mainstream American backgrounds. In discussing an Indian folklore and literary project with Wigginton Beun wrote, “The Foremost objective, however, is to serve the cultural pride and engage the skills of the young Indian himself - not to make him a junior partner or dependent beneficiary of yet another enterprise designed for the culturally dominant group” (Brian Beun, personal communication, 1969).
These examples help demonstrate that, despite there being no empirical evidence from Foxfire’s formative years that Foxfire pedagogy helped students learn, Foxfire was considered a success in many circles and idealized, inside education and out. An Atlanta Journal and Constitution article dated April 9, 1978 again described the Foxfire educational program as an “Empire” as did the earlier presented Wall Street Journal article, “The Foxfire Empire: Eliot Wigginton’s Complex Battle To Preserve a Simpler Way of Life” (Thomas, 1978). This article is typical of most all the journalistic representations of Foxfire, little depth, citing Wigginton as the only source with no analysis about the pedagogical quality of Foxfire, the educational program.

Even after the publication of Puckett’s (1989) more in depth and critical presentation of Foxfire pedagogy, other academics continued to present Foxfire as an idealized program. For example, Foxfire is featured in Woods, 1992, book titled, Schools That Work: America’s Most Innovative Public Education Programs. In that book, Foxfire and Wigginton in particular are presented as struggling in the Georgia educational scene, “the most overregulated in the United States” (Woods, 1992, p.57) referring to the changes forced upon Foxfire as a result of the back to basics movement that is discussed further later in this chapter.

**The Implementation of Foxfire as a Program**

Foxfire was from its beginning an evolving concern. Foxfire also has more than one component. In the broadest sense Foxfire is an educational program, focusing on the education of an audience outside Rabun County, and adult learners as well as adolescents. Through much of its heyday, the program was multi-faceted as the discussion in the following sections illustrate. The Foxfire curriculum is much smaller and revolves around the production of the Foxfire magazines and books. At earlier times in the program’s history, Foxfire curriculum in Rabun County included more course offerings, but today features only two classes, explored further in
the next section. The Foxfire method was created slowly as discussed in the upcoming sections, but today exists in written form in teacher training guides and is featured as the curriculum in Foxfire teacher training programs administered at the university level. The Foxfire teaching method is today known, after over forty years of existence, as the “Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning, From Thinking to Doing”, as expressed in the Foxfire Core Practices (Appendix F). The following discussions provide more detail on each of these components of the Foxfire educational program. Appendix M features a comprehensive timeline of key events in the history of Foxfire to include the implementation of the more formal aspects of the program.

As Foxfire was an educational program developed and sustained at the local, grassroots level, the existing literature on modifications made to the above-mentioned elements of the Foxfire program is vague. The program did not include a staff that kept precise records about the time and dates that changes, revisions or updates were made in Foxfire curriculum and pedagogical method. My informant sources did have general knowledge of these kinds of changes, but due to the amount of time passed since updates were made to the Foxfire program, they did not recall specific dates, only general time frames.

The Foxfire Core Practices evolved over the course of several years. The original version was developed by Wigginton so that he could present some Foxfire guiding principles to audiences he spoke to in IDEAS sponsored workshops between the years 1970-72. These do not exist in the literature, and over the course of these presentations it is possible that Wigginton revised them. It was also during this time period that the first connection with Foxfire pedagogy and the principles of Dewey were made. That inspiration was provided to Wigginton from a conversation that he had with an official in the U.S. Office of Education in Washington, D.C. (personal communication, October 21, 2010). It should be noted that Wigginton was in D.C.
during this time period because he had a leave of absence from his teaching duties at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School to work on his master’s degree at Johns Hopkins University. He obviously took that opportunity to promote Foxfire to various agencies in the D.C. environs. In upcoming sections, discussion of the evolving Foxfire Core Practices and Deweyian connections is made, but perhaps the most enduring questions regarding Foxfire curriculum in academic circles revolve around the twin issues of sustainability and transferability. It is within the following two sections that I deal with these topics that answer research question number five. How did Foxfire survive despite national and state trends toward back to basics? If it is possible to sum it up in a phrase it would be because Foxfire “modified” itself and adapted to the times and necessity.

**Issues of Sustainability.** The following is a discussion of Foxfire’s sustainability, or its longevity and value as a curriculum within its original setting in Rabun County. This component of Foxfire, perhaps more than any other, sets the program apart as a case in point compared to other programs. The Foxfire program in Rabun County is in its 44th year with no end in sight, and yet, based on my research, Foxfire’s heyday is well in the past. It no longer garners the kind of attention that led it to be labeled an empire as discussed in the previous discussion. Nevertheless, Foxfire’s legacy is solid. To date, its products include twelve Foxfire books and currently work is proceeding on a third anniversary edition (the 45th Anniversary edition), multiple special editions such as *A Foxfire Christmas, Aunt Arie,* and *The Foxfire Book of Appalachian Cookery,* the aforementioned Broadway play and a Hallmark Hall of Fame television movie based on the play *Foxfire.* However, the question of what part of that legacy was created and sustained by the adolescent students or the teachers and adult mentors of the Foxfire program should be addressed.
The Foxfire program is currently located at two sites. The Foxfire magazine classes primarily operate out of Rabun County High School, but students take field trips to and attend summer training sessions at the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center. Prior to 1977, the magazine class was located at the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School (Figure 1.1).

What is the students’ role in making Foxfire sustainable? I discussed this with several students during their summer training session and I spoke to one of the program’s staff. Students typically sign up to take two classes offered as part of the Foxfire magazine component of the program. The first class is an English elective in which students conduct interviews, transcribe interviews, and then write articles. The second class is a vocational class in which students produce the magazine, and manage subscriptions. “Most students participate in both courses, and they can sign up for the courses as many years as they wish” (personal communication, October 9, 2010).

This alteration to the Foxfire curricular offerings into two separate classes was originally made by Wigginton in 1978. He designed a new class, called it Foxfire I, and made this course a prerequisite for admittance into the Foxfire II class, the magazine class. The reasons for this change are not exactly clear, but it seems that it was related to several factors. One reason was that the quarter system had been recently introduced by Rabun County High, and required an adjustment in the pacing of the Foxfire classes. Second was the need for a system to determine student skill level prior to their admittance into the magazine class, and the third reason was possibly to provide remedial English grammar and composition instruction to potential Foxfire students prior to entry into the magazine class (Wigginton, 1986). Wigginton (1986) discusses the fact that the skill level of students was different at Rabun County High School from what it had been at The Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School where half of his students were private,
boarding students, but he stops short of admitting the impact this fact made to the program. From what the evidence indicates, Foxfire modified its course offerings at that time in order to accommodate more students of lesser academic skill. The non magazine related classes, which had been taught in Rabun County primarily by non-certified Foxfire staff and did not feature the same academic skill building that the magazine classes did, opened up Foxfire programs to an even wider variety of Rabun County students, but these programs never reached outside the local community nor achieved the fame the way the books and magazines had and in the end these alternate Foxfire offerings had the least sustainability.

Serious challenges to the Foxfire program began which were most likely connected with the start of the back to basics movement and the publication of the “A Nation At Risk” treatise in 1983. One of Foxfire’s strongest academic supporters stated that the state of Georgia reacted to the drive toward standard-based education, as strongly as any state in the country (Wood, 1992). At that time, Foxfire course offerings had the reputation, according to some non-Foxfire teachers and even some community members who had hired former Foxfire students, of stressing more the affective domain of learning rather than the cognitive, a criticism which followed Foxfire just as it had other progressive educational programs. The newly appointed Rabun County superintendent (a former business education teacher at the high school whose room was located across the hall from Wigginton’s), perhaps reacting to this criticism, began to enforce the county board policy that no non-certified teachers could teach at the high school (Puckett, 1989). This affected several Foxfire staffers, who were forced to either work toward certification or leave the high school. One of my informants obtained certification and stayed, and another left the high school and began working full time at the Foxfire museum property. By the time that Georgia passed the Quality Basic Education Act (QBE) in 1986 as discussed in Chapter 2, it seems that
most of the significant changes related to the back to basics movement had already been made to the Foxfire program at the high school.

As Georgia began its move toward standards-based education with the passage of the QBE Act, Foxfire sponsored classes in video production and environmental education classes offered only for vocational credit. The demise of those programs occurred in the 1990-92 time period, but it is unclear whether that fact is more related to the departure of Wigginton from the High School at the end of the school year in 1990 to teach in Athens, or the back to basics trend sweeping the nation. According to the current students I observed this summer, there is hope that in the future through a cross-enrollment with Piedmont College students may receive English college credit because of the writing component that Foxfire features. Students wishing to be editors for the coming school year must attend summer training and work sessions for which they are provided a stipend paid for by the fund (personal communication, June 25, 2010).

The most sustainable curriculum of the Foxfire educational program, and the program’s cornerstone component, has always been the classes that research, write, and produce the Foxfire magazines and books. Students’ primary role in Foxfire magazine classes was and is to act as interviewers, transcribers and authors of the articles that appear in the Foxfire magazines that are produced quarterly and/or books produced periodically. This component of the program has not changed in any significant way since the founding of Foxfire. However, students today use computers instead of typewriters, which are located at both the Foxfire room at Rabun County High School, and at the archive building on the museum property. Students also take the photos and draw the diagrams that are found in the magazine and books. There are different types of articles that make up Foxfire publications such as subject profiles, as Foxfire interviewees are known, “how to” articles and research/historical narratives. Interviews of subjects are sometimes
conducted without a specific topic in mind, such as the subject profile interviews, but usually students have a theme and a set of specific questions that they ask the interviewees. Often several visits are needed to complete an interview, a reality that has been made problematic in more recent years because it is harder to get permission to leave campus (personal communication, June 6, 2010). I was present during the summer session when students were in the process of interviewing a set of eight adult siblings in one local family about growing up in Rabun County with few economic resources during the mid-1900s (Figures 4.11, 4.12).

![Figure 4.11. Student transcribers working on site at the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center.](image)

Students also act as transcribers of the tape recorded interviews. It is important that interviews are taped and then accurately catalogued because it is often the case that the
interviews are neither transcribed, nor the articles written, by the same students, who conducted the interviews. In some cases, transcribed interviews sit on the shelf in the Foxfire rooms at Rabun County High School for several years before they are actually used by another student to write an article. Transcribing takes place during the school year at the high school and at the Foxfire archives during the summer.

Figure 4.12. These computers are located upstairs in the archives building. This work was being completed by the student editors for the upcoming school year.

Students also write the articles that appear in Foxfire. Usually the themed writings begin with an introductory paragraph composed by the student-author that describes a setting, and then the transcribed interview of the subject follows. In a summer 2010 training session I observed, students were working on their technique for writing introductory paragraphs. A former Foxfire
staff member now retired, but a veteran of eighteen years of work with Foxfire, frequently supervised writing sessions. She provided guidance to the incoming editors for Fall 2010 who asked some of the following questions about their assignment; “How should we start?” “What if the setting is not good, can we skip that part?” “Should the introduction be more about us or the subject?” She then provided some basic points for them to start their articles and gave them some suggestions to improve the quality; “Grab the reader, paint a picture, but don’t be too flowery or untruthful” (field notes, observation, June 17, 2010).

Foxfire students do write the stories and articles, but a hidden aspect of Foxfire student work, compared to the work of students on a traditional student-run newspaper, is that an adult staff does edit student work prior to publication. This has been the practice since the founding of the program and it brings into question the actual impact on student learning which is virtually impossible to track after the passage of this much time. This has been an issue since the beginning of the program as already mentioned, and does create a problem for researchers such as myself when trying to estimate Foxfire’s true pedagogical worth. The data is just not available to accurately assess how much given Foxfire students from the past benefited academically from their participation in the program.

Another concern, as already mentioned, to those on the outside evaluating Foxfire is the question; how much editorial control do Foxfire student participants and editors have in what appears and how it is presented in magazines and books? Referring to Appendix F, stated in the Foxfire Core Practices, the answer was that democratic (active) participation in decision making by students is an essential component of the program. Based on the findings of my research, as far as writing and selection of material to include or not include in any given edition, students, and particularly student editors, have considerable input. As far as any aspect of the program that
extends outside the county, working with other agencies or outside individuals and decisions involving the museum and/or publicity about the program, for many years now this is handled by the adult staff and adult board members. Students had more decision making power during the formative era when they had more time to spend in the program. For example, permission to conduct this research was granted by the President of the Foxfire Fund, a duly appointed adult representative of Foxfire, when in the past students might have been asked to voice an opinion about the contributions this work might make to Foxfire (Figures 4.13, 4.14) (See IRB letters; Appendix I).

Figure 4.13. Downstairs at the archives; Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center.
Figure 4.14. Transcribed interviews of Foxfire subjects are housed in the archives at the museum.

Foxfire’s continued presence at Rabun County High School is decided jointly by the foundation and the Rabun County School Board, while issues specific to the day to day operations and activities of Foxfire students in the high school fall under the responsibility of the principal who, legally, has a great deal of control over the content of the student produced work in a program such as Foxfire, as decided by the Hazelwood School District vs. Kulhmeier decision (1988). In addition, in a conservative school district such as Rabun County, the principal is also given broad powers to enforce discipline and regulate curriculum by the school board. Prior to 1977, Foxfire’s presence in a conservative church affiliated school also restricted
the activities and the kind of topics that Foxfire students might explore. These are facts that many supporters of Foxfire outside the education field and outside the Foxfire community culture have, in the past, not understood fully and consequently unfairly criticized the program for (Figures 4.15, 4.16, 4.17).

Figure 4.15. The front entrance of R.C.H.S.; since 1977 the home of the Foxfire magazine class.
Figure 4.16. Outside the Foxfire magazine classroom; Foxfire, an integral part of the Rabun County High School programs.
Figure 4.17. Inside the Foxfire magazine class at Rabun County High School; a collection of Foxfire books sit on the shelf as reminders of Foxfire’s legacy and as references for today’s students.

Today, only the Foxfire class facilitators, as they are now known, are located at Rabun County High School and paid by the state of Georgia. These are the teachers that during the school year supervise the in-school activities of the Foxfire students.

Other Foxfire staff members whose salaries are paid by the Foxfire Fund, Inc., are based at the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center in a separate location from the high school. It is the Foxfire staff that help coordinate the activities of the students when they work at the museum, they coordinate the day to day activities of the museum, organize the training of teachers in
Foxfire pedagogy on site and at Piedmont College its partner in education, and the staff continues to oversee the publication of Foxfire magazines and books through their publishing contracts.

The fact that Foxfire has a professional staff to help administer and organize its operations, rather than just one state paid teacher certainly speaks to its sustainability or capacity to endure in its original setting. The money to pay the staff comes from the royalties from the book and magazine sales and also from grants from outside agencies (less of those available currently). It is perhaps in these areas that Wigginton’s ambition to form a foundation and/or museum and connections to successfully make his dream a reality were best exemplified. However, without a dedicated staff and foundation members many with long-standing Foxfire connections, who believed strongly in the mission of Foxfire as an educational tool and an enduring community symbol, Foxfire perhaps, would not have survived Wigginton’s departure from the program.

The museum located on Black Rock Mountain, Rabun County, Georgia, serves as Foxfire’s public face. The Museum and Heritage Center, as it officially known, is not located on a school campus, but rather in a separate location that is accessible to the public, unlike the former and current school settings. Signs located on Highway 441 (See Figure 1.1) beckon the visitor to Rabun County and also those using the route to travel through to Western North Carolina, both popular vacation destinations, to stop by and visit its museum on Black Rock Mountain, one of the highest points in Georgia. The property was bought by the royalties of the first Foxfire book published.

The museum consists of a combination of restored and reconstructed log buildings, nineteenth and early twentieth century structures, representative of the type of buildings
commonly found throughout the southern Appalachians during that time period. Therefore, the property is reminiscent of the restoration of the Colonial Williamsburg museum with a combination of newly built and restored buildings, but with one primary difference. The workmanship was not completed by professionals hired to do a job, but formed an integral part of the Foxfire teaching program where students acted as the builders working with an adult supervisor. The student involvement in Foxfire building projects at the museum was related to the students learning southern Appalachian folk culture through the process of interviewing and observing subjects who had knowledge of these building techniques that students would later write an article about. These stories typically took the form of “how-to” articles. Students as part of that process would participate in recreating the craft as described by the Foxfire informant.

During the late seventies and most of the 1980s, Foxfire also conducted elective vocational classes separate from the magazine classes, as mentioned previously, and some of these featured construction as a topic. The feel of the museum is very rustic and helps visitors visualize what they read in Foxfire books and magazines: the folk culture and traditions of southern Appalachia and the broader themes of the Appalachian cultural revival and the back-to-the land movements.

The museum visitor center has a gift shop where one can buy Foxfire books, curriculum guides and Appalachian folk art. The foundation employs an artist in residence, a weaver, who works on site at the museum certain days of the week and again, similar to the living history museum approach of Colonial Williamsburg, the artist works in front of visitors sharing her craft and answering questions (Figures 4.18, 4.19, 4.20, 4.21, Appendix H).
Figure 4.18. The Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center property runs adjacent to the Black Rock Mountain State Park which records the highest elevation of any Georgia park.
In addition to operating the museum, since 1995, the Foxfire Fund has sponsored annual heritage festivals open to the public (Cheek et al., 2006). That event, over the years, has grown and modified to include more than one community oriented event per year. For example, several times a year, the museum plays host to Foxfire Children’s Heritage Days inviting guests to “participate in hands-on activities such as blacksmithing, weaving, candle-making, playtime with traditional toys/games and milking a goat” (Rabun County Visitors Bureau Guide, 2010). Fall 2010, they hosted the Foxfire Mountaineer Heritage Festival, including live music performances by a Foxfire mainstay since early in the program’s history, The Foxfire Boys bluegrass band.
This group of performers formed out of the Foxfire music class that was an offshoot program of the magazine class. Student musicians proudly promoted the Foxfire name and tradition through music and even performed at the Knoxville World’s Fair in 1982. Though the music component of Foxfire curriculum no longer exists, the original “The Foxfire Boys” musical group makes appearances regularly (Cheek et al., 2006) (Figure 4.20).

**Figure 4.20.** “The Foxfire Boys” were one of the featured acts at this event held June 12, 2010.
The purpose of the inclusion of the aforementioned non-magazine related activities as part of the Foxfire program evolved over multiple years, activities were added, changed, and in some cases ended over the course of Foxfire’s now forty-five year history. There seems to be two main purposes for these specialized programs’ original inclusion in Foxfire. One reason was the desire of Foxfire to reach out to the community outside the school settings who had been loyal supporters and in many cases, contributors of their folk knowledge to the program. Another reason was that after the move to Rabun County High School additional programs were added to Foxfire as alternates to the magazine class due to the inability of some students to successfully participate in the magazine classes. Foxfire magazine classes as they had evolved were not

*Figure 4.21. A restored log home serves as the museum visitor center and gift shop.*
geared toward remediation of students with below grade level reading and writing skills, as explained further next.

How do these described activities speak to Foxfire’s sustainability and legitimacy as a curriculum, since student learning in any of the aforementioned activities is hard to measure and/or quantify? To answer this question it is necessary to analyze Foxfire in the two major categories of pedagogy for Foxfire students; first, building traditional academic skills such as writing and conducting research, and second, acquiring vocational/technical skills such as typing, video and tape recording, improving verbal communication, magazine layout and business and marketing skills. In both of these categories Foxfire students do learn, but not necessarily skills that remediate academic weaknesses or those that on their own prepare students for higher-level academic work. An example of this is that Wigginton created a college preparation English class for his university-bound Foxfire students who did not receive appropriate exposure to the required English curriculum through the Foxfire classes themselves. Three of my Foxfire informants from Foxfire’s early years told me of this particularly rigorous class featuring the same freshman level English textbook used at the University of Georgia. Wigginton designed the class because he did not want his advanced students left behind due to their work on Foxfire. In other words, Foxfire participation assisted students to improve qualities such as confidence and team-building much as occurs through participation in sports, a vocational/technical club, or academically specialized elective classes, but did not ensure their exposure to traditional academic English standards. Obviously, Wigginton as an English teacher recognized this and made arrangements to help his college bound students (Figure 4.22 depicts the Foxfire archive building; today where the majority of Foxfire student activity takes place).
Across the data I collected for my study, several themes emerged regarding the impact of Foxfire on its participants which contributed to the program’s sustainability. They include the following; it promoted pride in cultural-identity; built confidence in adolescents to work with adults on an equal footing; celebrated intergenerational collaboration as worthwhile; and perhaps most important of all is that Foxfire provided an audience for student work outside the classroom and the home region, that in turn helped generate all the above qualities. I concluded this based on the published interviews of multiple former Foxfire participants who stated Foxfire’s impact on them in the *Foxfire 25th Anniversary* edition, the surveys of former Foxfire participants and community members in Puckett’s book (1989), and the interviews of community members and information gathered from current and former Foxfire students that I conducted for this research.

*Figure 4.22. This restored log structure serves as Foxfire’s archive. It is located at the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center.*
After observing the training session during the summer of 2010, where the students were under a time limit to complete certain tasks, it became obvious to me that Foxfire is a program that operates best with highly motivated and talented students rather than those needing more supervision and academic remediation. Wigginton confirmed this in his conversations with Puckett, that meeting publication deadlines and also providing remedial reading and writing instruction were difficult if not impossible. The teacher/advisor of arguably the most successful of the Foxfire spin-offs, the Bittersweet magazine in Lebanon, Missouri, confirmed to the IDEAS personnel that when she was organizing her Foxfire project, out of seventy applicants, “22 students (were) chosen to work on the project due to dependability and interest” (letter from Brian Beun, IDEAS correspondence, November 1974), thus further confirming that the Foxfire culture journalism model was not proven effective for marginally performing students regardless of whether or not the curriculum featured aspects of their native culture.

One Foxfire participant I interviewed stated that he wanted to join Foxfire because of his interest in photography and the opportunities that Foxfire would afford him in that area. He also had an interest in journalism and would go on to major in that field at the University of Georgia. Other students wanted to participate in the Foxfire string band because of their interest in traditional Appalachian folk music. Puckett (1989) did have an opportunity to observe these Foxfire spin-off classes in progress and he commented to the Foxfire staff concerning the lack of academic depth in those classes. A long-time Foxfire staffer confirmed to me that it was hard for students with below grade level reading and writing skills and little academic discipline to work successfully in the Foxfire program as writers, for example, but they could contribute with community contacts and in particular they enjoyed the applied components of the program such as the ropes course and the environmental education classes taught by her husband and the
hands-on activities such as reconstructing log structures (personal communication, June 17, 2010). Since those classes no longer exist the benefit that the Foxfire program currently has for remedial students is questionable.

In 1986, several key events occurred related to the sustainability of Foxfire in its home setting. One event already discussed was the passage of the Quality Basic Education Act. In Rabun County this action by the state was just a formality, because the county’s Board of Education had already taken steps to enforce standards in its schools as previously discussed. Wigginton, as he taught Foxfire magazine classes, had Georgia standards posted in his room. His technique was to conduct his class as normal and then over the course of several class sessions, he and his students would look at the standards and identify which they had met. For example, after students had authored an article about a subject, they would check off the standard, “the ability to write a descriptive paragraph” (Woods, 61). It is unclear whether the Foxfire classes in the public school setting, during this time period, 1986-1992, were required to address state standards (just as other classes were beyond this initial adjustment) or not. Based on comments he made, Wigginton (1986) clearly resented the interference from the state, though apparently minimal, but it was clearly not in his best interest to challenge the authority of the local Rabun County School Board and he did not do so in writing.

Foxfire’s relationship with the state of Georgia has always been a rather special one. Years before, Wigginton (1986) recounted that a state education official had shown up at Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School, appeared in the Foxfire room and just as quickly exited indicating on paper that Foxfire was meeting state standards. Even in the midst of the back to basics furor, Georgia’s then state superintendent Werner Rogers, who led Georgia education in that movement, spoke on behalf of the Foxfire program as a model of excellent teaching pedagogy.
and a tribute to education in Georgia (Foxfire Fund Campaign Video, 1988). These last two incidents speak of Foxfire’s being idealized in the ranks of Georgia’s educational professionals.

In reality, the Foxfire classes operate, producing the magazine as they always have, using the same techniques previously described. The Foxfire magazine classes in the high school follow the Core Practices as their curriculum, rather state defined standards. This is indicated in the school website which links the Foxfire page back to the Fund website citing the Core Practices (http://www.rabun.k12.ga.us/rchs/).

The Fund prefers that the Foxfire facilitator on the High School campus be trained in the Foxfire method based on the Core Practices, but they cannot mandate this (personal communication, June 12, 2010). Rabun County High School’s principal does have the authority to move teachers in and out of the Foxfire facilitator position and since Wigginton’s departure has done so (personal communication, June 20, 2010). One case in point is described later in the chapter. This is the aspect of Foxfire in which the program has changed the most since the departure of Wigginton. No other single teacher has been associated with Foxfire as Wigginton was, nor been required or asked to lessen his role in Foxfire due to school staffing needs. How did the Foxfire magazine program, with its highly specialized curriculum, survive the enforcement of state standards in Georgia schools? It adapted to the times when and where it was necessary, but apparently no major changes were enforced on it by the state board of education.

In the year 1986, Foxfire did make a significant addition to its programs that contributed to its sustainability, yet not related directly to standards. That year Foxfire was offered a substantial grant from the Bingham Foundation, as discussed further in the next section. The condition of the grant was that Foxfire become a more transferable model and alter its focus for transfer away from the cultural journalism component of the program. Wigginton and his staff
worked hard to secure that grant and as a result, the Foxfire Core Practices were updated and a Foxfire teaching method based on Deweyian principles was refined into a teachable method, The Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning. Wigginton published his book, *Sometimes a Shining Moment* (1986), to promote his methodological approach to teaching, and the Teacher Outreach Program, an official teacher training program sponsored by Foxfire, was founded. These changes would move Foxfire into a new direction, teacher education, and consequently promoted its sustainability in its original setting since Foxfire was able to secure this large grant. The teacher training program is discussed in more detail in the next section regarding transferability.

One other significant event occurred in 1986. Unknown to the general public, Foxfire staff, loyal Foxfire supporters around the country, and perhaps even to Wigginton, a report had been made to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation by a former Foxfire student claiming he had been molested by Wigginton years earlier. The statue of limitations had expired on this incident and no action was forthcoming by law enforcement as a result of this report, but Eliot Wigginton’s name was now in the police record connected to sexual misconduct with a student (Harmon, 1992).

The next major change in Foxfire’s history, and one related to Foxfire’s sustainability occurred in the 1990-91 time period when Wigginton took what is labeled in the literature “a sabbatical” from his duties with Foxfire in Rabun County (Cheek et al., 2006). During his tenure with Foxfire, Wigginton always maintained a professional life separate from the direct operations of Foxfire in Rabun County. The details of his activities appear only in abbreviated form in the written record and Foxfire staff members had only tertiary knowledge of some of his activities away from them such as serving on the boards of other organizations, traveling
extensively to attend and speak at educational and other conferences, and dabbling in teaching and promoting his methodological approach at the university level at workshops and as a guest lecturer. It was not until 1990, however, that Wigginton officially accepted a teaching position away from Foxfire and Rabun County. That was the position at the University of Georgia as a professor in teacher education, a position as a faculty member at Clarke Central High School. He also became a collaborator in an experimental curricular program in an Athens area public school featuring Foxfire pedagogy.

It was in May 1991, when he was officially working away from Foxfire that an incident occurred at Wigginton’s cabin on the Foxfire Museum property with two Athens area boys he had brought to Foxfire for a special event over a weekend. By the next Monday morning, Wigginton was arrested in Athens and charged with molesting one of the boys (Harmon, 1992). It was at that time that Wigginton’s terminal exit from the Foxfire program began. Appendix M features a comprehensive timeline of events leading to Wigginton’s arrest and exit from the Foxfire program due to his conviction for child molestation. Originally, Wigginton denied the charges, but in the end he pleaded guilty and served a one year sentence beginning in November of 1992 (The Washington Post, 1992). His teaching career with adolescents was over.

Multiple former students surfaced claiming that Wigginton had exhibited this behavior with them too. At least one former victim of Wigginton’s, from the earliest days of the program stated that when he heard the age of Wigginton’s accuser, ten, and Wigginton’s denial that the incident had occurred, he believed he had to step forward to help stop his former teacher and mentor’s predatory behavior (Harmon, 1992). An informant of mine and a former student and colleague of Wigginton’s, but one who was not a victim, described to me the difficulty of his having to hear these charges against Wigginton, and finally accept that they were true based on
the testimonial of a trusted friend and fellow Foxfire student of his who said he also was molested by Wigginton years before (personal communication, June 9, 2010).

The revelations of Foxfire’s founder victimizing some of his students would be a devastating blow to the entire Foxfire program. Recovery from this event would present the greatest challenge to date for the program. How would Foxfire survive? It is important at this point to emphasize that Foxfire, since the beginning of the program was a collaborative effort and not just Eliot Wigginton’s pet project. Wigginton was the founder and visionary, but he could not have formed Foxfire without his students and a supportive school and community environment. He had also taken steps as early as 1968 to incorporate Foxfire and establish a board of advisors. With Wigginton’s exit from the program, it was time for that board to step to the forefront and begin damage control tactics to protect Foxfire. One long-time Foxfire staff member gave the credit to the Foxfire Chief Executive Officer at the time, a former head of the Trust for Historic Preservation, as showing excellent leadership and helping Foxfire survive the Wigginton scandal. He had come to help manage Foxfire when Wigginton had moved to the University of Georgia and his presence in the program during this time of crisis proved to be fortuitous (McDermott & Smith, 2010).

A first step of the board was to officially and permanently “sever all ties” between Eliot Wigginton and Foxfire once he plead guilty to a charge of child molestation (Morris, 1992, Section C, p.4), and that with that action, Eliot Wigginton’s connection to Foxfire officially ended. He will forever be linked to Foxfire’s history and legacy, but eighteen years and hundreds of Foxfire students later, “Foxfire still glows” as the Atlanta Journal first reported in May of 1993. The Plain Dealer paper out of Cleveland, Ohio reported the day before on May 12 that “Foxfire Education Survives the Scandal” (Stainer, 1993).
More concrete changes were to come to Foxfire in the following years other than the above-mentioned more publicity related proclamations. The most notable was the hiring of Bobby Ann Starnes, an academic, in 1994 to take over as the president and director of the Foxfire Fund. During her tenure with Foxfire, 1994-1999 she would help formalize the Foxfire teaching method into a more transferable model through the creation of training guides and solidify connections between the Foxfire Core Practices and Deweyian Principles. “Her priority,” she stated, was “to restore the Foxfire Fund, Inc. to a prominent role in local schools, while continuing to expand the teaching method nationally” (Harmon, 1994, p.E8). In other words, the desire to promote Foxfire outside the Rabun County context was a priority. The following section addresses Foxfire’s legacy and current status as a transferable model.

**Issues of transferability**. Over the course of more than forty years, arguably the most original and sustainable part of the Foxfire project and what today remains the cornerstone of the program at Rabun County High School is what the Foxfire people themselves call “cultural journalism.” That is what is written by the Rabun County High School students and what appears in the Foxfire magazine. The magazine today has a semi-hard, glossy cover, it sells for $7.50, and while it looks quite different from its original appearance in texture and also differs in price, it still focuses on articles featuring community members. One recent issue featured the family of a long-time Foxfire subject, one whom Foxfire students had interviewed multiple times on various topics over the years. The student-written article that appeared in this Fall/Winter 2009 edition made numerous connections back to former Foxfire students and previous magazine editions going back to the very first! “They kept coming back to him [the informant] for other things…you know he planted by the signs” (The Foxfire Magazine, Fall/Winter 2009). This student writer demonstrated an ability to connect the significance of the past in Foxfire history...
with the present, thus illustrating the possibilities of the Foxfire project to teach multiple academic and reasoning skills within the context of working on the magazine.

In fact today, no longer does the high school feature the various Foxfire spin-off classes and the large support staff. A lone teacher advisor works with the students two periods a day as part of his or her normal teaching load. Current Foxfire students register for two classes as part of the magazine program. One class is an English elective credit focused on the interviewing of subjects, transcribing interviews, and writing articles. The other class counts as a business applications elective credit and focuses on the technical aspects of the magazine production, layout, design, and marketing and managing the magazine through subscriptions. Today’s Foxfire is not the same as during the program’s heyday, but Foxfire survives, still has educational merit in promoting the skills it emphasizes, and is still proudly supported by Rabun County High School as a special offering in its curriculum. But what of Foxfire’s transferability to other settings? This component of curricula, perhaps more than any other, concerns more educators at all levels.

Foxfire, from its inception in the 1960s made an impression with many people outside Rabun County and those not directly connected with the day to day operations of American schools, but those definitely interested in influencing American education and perhaps altering its direction especially with regards to disadvantaged youth. Beginning at that time, many initiatives feeding off the cultural identity movement that were attempting to improve education for traditionally marginalized population groups formed, and Foxfire made an impression with certain individuals working as part of these groups. As mentioned earlier, one such group was the IDEAS organization, the Institutional Development and Economic Affairs Agency, a non-profit based in Washington, D.C. In particular, IDEAS, in those early years of the Foxfire program working primarily with Wigginton, endorsed for transfer to other settings what they
referred to as the “Foxfire Learning Concept”, but what they meant was the “cultural journalism”
component of Foxfire.

The following is the rationale the agency made in hopes of securing additional grant funds;

There is underlying publication of the Foxfire magazine and books concept for youth development and learning which can be adapted widely by existing institutions serving adolescents. Demonstrations of the Foxfire Learning Concept have been successful and have occurred among a broad enough spectrum of community and youth settings to warrant objective study and evaluation. If such an evaluation confirms the assumptions of the concept, Foxfire-type projects and programs can be implemented throughout the country, principally in collaboration with public education and other youth-serving institutions, wherever there is an apparent local folk, ethnic or regional culture to be rediscovered, reported and preserved (IDEAS correspondence to Foxfire, 1969).

Keep in mind that at that point Foxfire was not a defined curriculum, but a magazine class focusing on “cultural journalism,” but IDEAS leadership, based on these comments, believed the Foxfire magazine concept was transferable to other settings, despite, at that time, Foxfire’s relatively short existence and the lack of any empirical evidence to support the program’s transferability. Foxfire, as explained in the above proposal was cited as a “demonstration model” for the forty-three Foxfire projects IDEAS which would start ranging in locations from Alaska and Hawaii to the U.S. Virgin Islands and states around the continental U.S. (See Appendix N for a complete list of these projects).
The IDEAS team did send representatives that spent some time in Rabun County learning about the program, apparently so that they could speak and write coherently about Foxfire when soliciting for grants from various agencies. The funding alliance most frequently mentioned in IDEAS correspondence with Wigginton was with the Ford Foundation. That grant extended over several years and a portion of that funding that was sent to Wigginton and provided for what was, according to the testimony of several of the Foxfire students provided in Foxfire literature and also according to one informant I spoke with, one of the most rewarding, albeit challenging opportunities that could ever be provided teenage students. It was the Foxfire students and some recently graduated alumni who traveled to locations throughout the United States to provide assistance to start-up Foxfire Concept Projects in the years from approximately 1970-73.

Since all the above mentioned happened in the earliest years of the Foxfire, as the program was evolving on a continuous and daily basis, it is important to gain some perspective. With little if any training and not much supervision apparently, these young people journeyed across the country to help implement this program, of which they had been a part of in Rabun County to locations around the United States, and for at least one of those students it was an almost life-changing experience. That former student shared with me, “We, the students and Wig, often thought, wouldn’t it be nice if other students and communities benefited from a program like Foxfire?” He recalled his summer working on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico as “the most incredible experience I have ever had. If you can imagine traveling to this remote place, so remote that they did not even have FM radio” (personal communication, June 9, 2010). As a young man, recently out of high school himself, yet knowledgeable about Foxfire methods because he had helped create them, he was charged with teaching the Navajo students and sponsors how to start their own “cultural journalism” magazine and especially the “how-
to’s”; choosing subjects and topics, conducting interviews and writing up articles. IDEAS provided the impetus and the funding, in those early years, to promote the transfer of Foxfire ideas to other settings, such as the one in which this student was involved. He and other Foxfire students provided the labor and gained many valuable experiences through working with other students and programs around the country.

IDEAS placed its faith in the Foxfire concept being transferable without any evidence that the concept would work outside the Rabun County setting. That included the traditional connections and support that Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School and the non-traditional programs of that school had always had within the Rabun County community and the greater Athens/Atlanta area philanthropic communities. Another key ingredient was the teacher/sponsor, who was from the inception of the program granted a reduced teaching load, liberal time away from campus for professional development, and who had far more connections in privileged circles than the average American high school teacher, such as Wigginton’s fraternity brother and Anchor/Doubleday publisher. Would other settings be able to support a Foxfire style program as Rabun County was able to in these ways?

The IDEAS goals that to transfer the Foxfire learning concept to other settings would work proved to be quite ambitious. Though it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to investigate the fate of all forty-three of the original Foxfire spin-off projects and the Foxfire people themselves do not even know the answers to that question, I was able to ascertain the basic facts surrounding the demise of the Bittersweet magazine. Based on its relative longevity, its quality product and its having the same teacher/sponsor throughout its existence, the Bittersweet magazine, out of Lebanon High School, Lebanon Missouri is recognized as the most successful of the Foxfire spin-off magazines. After ten years, 1973-1983, the magazine folded.
The reasons for *Bittersweet*’s end illustrate some of the most significant reasons why the “cultural journalism” component of Foxfire curriculum is problematic with regards to its transferability, as it is difficult to sustain outside the Rabun County setting. The following is an explanation of why the project was ending after ten years, provided by its last student-editor in a statement published in the Spring 1983 edition;

As I write this third editorial of the year, I can’t help but think that there will be only one left of my editorship, and in fact, in the life of the Bittersweet magazine.

As sad as it is, Bittersweet will complete its tenth and final year at the end of this school year. The decision voted on at the December 16 Bittersweet, Inc. Board meeting was unanimous. There were several reasons why we voted to cease publication. One reason is that we have accomplished what we had set out to do. We’ve published many stories on the Ozarks, the lore, the crafts, the people and the land itself. We are finding that we are repeating some of the information. And many of the new contacts are farther in distance, thus costing us more in time and mileage costs. Also, our financial situation would not allow us to continue as we have been for the past ten years. If we continued next year, we would have to cut back either on the quality, by cutting out the color photos, for example, or the number of issues published a year. I personally, would rather that Bittersweet stop as full quality magazine that we’re known for than have it to deteriorate because of a lack of funds. Mrs. Massey’s workload was another factor for stopping. She has given all effort possible for the last ten years. And this was without a vacation, even during the summer when the rest of the school was out of session. The summer staff took up to six to eight weeks, with her putting in about ten to twelve hours a day. When this was not going on, she had to come to school at least twice a week to take care of the mail and any
other business that had to be done. I feel that she accomplished something that most people would not even begin to try to work at (“The Editor’s Profile,” Spring 1983).

The practical reasons that were laid out for ending the run of *Bittersweet* are not surprising. Throughout its existence, the Foxfire Fund and all the personnel associated with it had to be good stewards of the group’s financial resources, but at least they had an income.

Practical as well as idealistic considerations are always a concern in education. On my tour of the Rabun County High School and the Foxfire magazine facilities there in the summer of 2010, the assistant principal guiding me informed me that the sponsorship of the program would be different for the upcoming school year. “Why is that?” I asked. He replied that “it was just a numbers game,” and he added that “The former sponsor has an English certification and they need him teaching all English. Next year, the drama teacher, who has time to take over the two sections of the magazine class, will be the Foxfire sponsor at Rabun County High School” (personal communication, June 24, 2010). The aforementioned reasons all address the problems that have emerged when attempting to transfer the cultural journalism component of Foxfire curriculum, teacher work-loads and financial limitations being two of the most significant.

It is this aspect of Foxfire, an experiential component and a teaching method that is the more transferable aspect of the program. This part of Foxfire was formed several years after the program’s founding, as discussed in the last section. In order to obtain money with which to sustain its self and create more opportunities for Rabun County students, The Foxfire method evolved over the course of multiple years. Beginning in earnest in the years 1984-86 and again in 1994 the Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning was formed and connected with the ideas of Dewey. This connection was formalized when teacher-training guides based on the educational ideas of John Dewey as designed by Teets and Starnes were published and formally
implemented as part of the program. Currently, Foxfire administers teacher education programs
through, Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia. The director of teacher training has been a part
of Foxfire since the late seventies, having responded to an advertisement for an editor/educator
in Rabun County, Georgia. My informant knew that meant the possibility of working with
Wigginton as part of the Foxfire team. He had previously met and been impressed by Wigginton
at a conference on alternative schools (my informant’s specialty) and felt his personal
educational philosophy and that of Foxfire fit well. He took the job and has been a loyal member
of the Foxfire staff almost continuously since then.

His role in Foxfire began as a staff member, a book editor, and as a teacher in the
program at Rabun County High School, but his job status changed when he was put in charge of
a new program which Foxfire began in response to a challenge grant requiring Foxfire to become
a more transferable model than the “cultural journalism” component of the program. That new
focus in Foxfire became the Teacher Outreach Program (personal communication, June 24,
2010). That program’s first director explained the program’s origins and goals;

Foxfire’s evolution into a full-range approach began in 1987 with a grant of $1.5 million
from the Bingham Trust of Connecticut to disseminate Foxfire practices broadly, well
beyond our experience in assisting English and journalism teachers to establish their own
version of the Foxfire magazine project. At the outset we established three givens to be
followed (Smith, 2009).

“First teachers involved in any sort of professional development about Foxfire had to
elect to do so” by their own choice rather than forced by administrators. Second, “the formation
of Foxfire teacher networks” in order to provide a support network for teachers working far away
from the home base of Rabun County was essential. “Third, the facilitators of our workshops had
to model the Foxfire approach – walk the talk – so participants would both see the approach in action and get a sense of what their own students might experience” (Smith, 2009, p.7).

Most of the teacher outreach took place in the form of “elective courses and staff development workshops provided at colleges, universities, and education agencies” (Smith, p. 5, 1991). Based on a report issued in August of 1992, 3000 teachers had participated in the program. By that time, the program had also expanded beyond its original secondary education, language arts focus to include teachers K-12 and in all subject fields (Figure 4.23).
**Table 4.23.** A selection of demographics statistics for the Foxfire Teacher Outreach program; 1987-1992 (Smith, 1991, p.13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13-Year Network Demographics as of Spring 1992*</th>
<th>No. of Females in this category</th>
<th>% Females in this category</th>
<th>No. of Males in this category</th>
<th>% Males in this category</th>
<th>Total Teachers in this category</th>
<th>% of this grade level</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>95%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>media specialists</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
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<td>44%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>95%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Elementary</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>special ed</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<td>94%</td>
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<td>6%</td>
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<td>37%</td>
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<td>97%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Cumulative Total</td>
<td>1558</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Active: usually members who attend network meetings, pay dues, respond to surveys, etc.
**Connected: generally, those who receive newsletters & ask to remain informed.
***Disconnected: generally, those who lose touch entirely after taking the course.

*Note: During summer '92, approximately 600 teachers participated in Foxfire training.
In 1991, the staff of the teacher outreach program began to take a serious look at the results, both good and bad, of their efforts. The following is an explanation of how the teacher outreach worked and what aspects of the program coordinators wanted to evaluate;

Over these past five years, wherever in the country the course has been conducted, it has spawned a networking organization for course “graduates” in that area. These networks – of which there are now thirteen, reaching from Maine to Washington State, and from Florida to Illinois – serve each group of teachers as a follow-up support system, embracing a wide range of information exchange, leadership development, research and advocacy purposes.

Spring 1991 marked the end of the grant’s five year cycle, and as Foxfire plans for the next cycle of development, some hard but essential questions must be asked: Has the program made a difference? What are the outcomes? How deeply have the teachers been affected, if at all? In what ways does this show up in their classroom teaching? Do students learn more readily and effectively as a result? How do we know? (Eddy & Smith, 1991, p.1).

Among the problems identified in the outreach program’s first five years were the following: first that the outreach staff, which for all intents and purposes also was Foxfire’s Rabun County staff, were overextended and could not effectively work both jobs simultaneously. Second, providing the staff and participants more access to and inclusion of technology in order to facilitate instruction and help disseminate information. Third was the difficulty of producing quality and practical teaching aides such as teacher handbooks, course books and videos to use during training sessions without paying for professional guidance to do so. Fourth, the costliness of travel to the extension sites scattered throughout the U.S. The original grant money issued by
the Bingham trust did not provide enough for travel by the Foxfire staff out of Rabun County to
visit as was necessary for them to provide assistance and oversight over the program (Smith,

These programs sought to transfer the substance of Foxfire via the Core Practices (see
Appendix F) and via the Foxfire teaching methods. The evaluators within the program itself
made the following statement about their attempts to quantify the success or failure of the
teacher outreach program after five years of operation; “We should point out,.., that we have
very little ‘hard evidence’ to back up our statements here - if by ‘hard’ is meant definitive
numbers of some kind: student grades, reading scores, standardized test results and the like”
(Smith, 1991, p.3) - but the following (Figure 4.24), represents some of the results of answers to
several questions posed on a survey of 114 members of three of the Foxfire networks. The
participants were asked to rate the efficacy of the Foxfire teacher outreach program training
sessions to their classroom practices. Based on the results presented here, Foxfire teacher
training students were able to implement much of what of the Foxfire Core Practices emphasized
in their classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A Lot</th>
<th>About Half</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has it been possible to build a strong</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“community-based” element into your</td>
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<tr>
<td>instructional activities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you found at this point in your teaching that state and local curriculum requirements actually can be met using Foxfire principles and strategies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you found the brainstorming process to be a useful device in arriving at decisions about classroom activities?</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been able to develop measures of student achievement (cognitive and affective) that are appropriate for this approach to instruction?</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you found it possible to move away from a general dependence on textbooks and similar ready-made instructional materials?</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have you been able to achieve “democracy in the classroom,” i.e., involving students in decisions about their own classroom activities?

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<th>35%</th>
<th>35%</th>
<th>27%</th>
<th>0%</th>
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</table>

*Figure 4.24. Demographic data related to Foxfire training sessions. Source: (Eddy & Smith, 1991)*

Since its implementation, the Foxfire Teacher Outreach Program has gone through several structural changes. The first was in 2000, after Foxfire adopted a new strategic plan. The results of this change were to refocus teacher training from the national level, back to an emphasis on Georgia and the southeast (Cheek et al., 2006). Another major change in the program occurred by the summer of 2003. Foxfire’s Teacher Outreach Network was deemed no longer effective and was in need of refocus and restructuring. It was at that time that Foxfire partnered with the closest teacher training institution to its home base in Rabun County, Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia (personal communication, October 12, 2010).

The Teacher Outreach Program, in its heyday in the late 1980s was extensive with networks across the United States. It is important to note that Wigginton’s active participation in this component of Foxfire was minimal as he continued to focus on the magazine classes. He appointed one of his staff to coordinate and operate the Teacher Outreach Program. A full analysis of that program is beyond the scope of this study, but to demonstrate Foxfire’s connectedness, even in this component of the program, with the Appalachian identity movement,
“The Eastern Kentucky Teachers’ Network, established in 1986, was the first Foxfire network” and it was located at the Hindman Settlement School. “That network served some forty-six active members, most of whom had taken the Foxfire training class at Berea College” (Eddy & Smith, 1991, p. 24) and those two institutions were mentioned earlier in this chapter as key supporters of the Appalachian identity movement in their inclusion and support of southern Appalachian culture in their curriculum.

There appears to be no evidence that Wigginton’s departure from Foxfire was the reason that the teacher extension training programs, many located far removed from the home base of Foxfire, did not last. More likely, other educational trends swept through and usurped the impact that Foxfire training initially made in locations far removed in time and space from Foxfire’s home community of Rabun County. In any case, researching the exact reasons that the teacher Outreach Program could not sustain itself is beyond the scope of this study. I did talk to those who were, nevertheless, touched by Foxfire pedagogy as part of the original Teacher Outreach Program and maintained elements of it in their teaching.

Fortunately, I had the opportunity, during the summer of 2010, to attend a Foxfire teacher training program that is part of the curriculum in teacher education at Piedmont College, the closest four-year college to the Foxfire home. A long-time Foxfire associate and current head of the Foxfire-Piedmont Partnership Programs for Teachers invited me to sit in on the wrap up session for that summer’s session. His wife and another Georgia public school teacher acted as the facilitators for the session. He explained to me that Piedmont students (either pre-or in-service teachers) could take the training as part of their degree programs or professional development, but the program was also open to other non-enrolled students who wanted to take
the training. The curriculum for this Foxfire training was based almost exclusively on Foxfire’s Core Practices as shown in Appendix F. (personal communication, June 21, 2010).

At that time, I observed students presenting their session, ending with ideas about how they would employ Foxfire practices in their classrooms. It seemed, based on my observation, that the students did appreciate the training they had received, and they did have good ideas about how to employ constructivist strategies in their classrooms based on Foxfire Core Practices, however having just completed a historical analysis of Foxfire I did not recognize any components in the training that were part of the spirit and distinctiveness of that original locally-produced curriculum that was Foxfire, other than the physical setting. The ideas of Dewey, and other constructivist pedagogies can be taught in a multitude of different settings and by educators aside from those of Foxfire. The proof of this I believe is in the very small number and local character of the trainees that I observed. From this session there was no evidence that Foxfire pedagogy was still appealing to large number of educators from regions outside the Foxfire community. That is the crux of Foxfire’s dilemma as far as transferability: the necessity of removing Foxfire from its original time and space, or in the terms more appropriate to this study, its local community. Foxfire, based on my evidence collected for this research, appears not very transferable outside the Rabun County setting.

An unexpected opportunity arose in my research, when I was fortunate enough to be present in the summer of 2010 for both Foxfire student training and Foxfire teacher training. Both of these events were held at the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center, a private foundation, and not in a formal school setting. That fact is significant, for I believe that it is symbolic of the fact that, despite global and national trends in education, Foxfire is distinctive because it has been impacted very little by those movements. Foxfire continues much as it always has, in its
home setting and free from the standards-based constraints of a more traditional curriculum. The training for both teachers and students that I observed was based on the Foxfire method that was created and sustained at the local level. Ideas of Dewey have been unabashedly incorporated into the Foxfire pedagogy, but Deweyian principles in Foxfire are derived from Dewey’s words as published in his various treatises, especially *Experience and Education* (1938), a required text in the Foxfire teaching program, and not from a separate, formally designed curriculum at either the global, national, or state level. In turn, based on the evidence gathered for this research, aspects of the Foxfire method can be transferred outside the Rabun County setting as the trainers were promoting to this group of teachers, but the Foxfire model in its entirety has only proven sustainable at the local level, while its transferability has been limited to a few locations such as the ten year run of the Bittersweet program, and the case example presented next (Figures 4.25, 4.26).

The Isaac Dickson School is a magnet elementary school in the Asheville City school system, in Asheville, North Carolina. Its stated mission is to provide students a curriculum that features experiential learning opportunities in all discipline areas. Many Dickson teachers are trained in the Foxfire method, and the school uses a modified version of the Foxfire Core Practices in its programs called on the school website, Core Practices of Experiential Learning at Dickson (2010). An analysis of this school’s programs and mission are beyond the scope of this dissertation, but its use of Foxfire pedagogy does speak to Foxfire’s transferability (see Appendix O for a copy of Dickson’s Core Practices).
Figure 4.25. Wrap-up session of the Foxfire training program summer 2010; participants presented: “how they would use the Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning in their classrooms.”
Figure 4.26. Photo of brainstorming notes from a Foxfire training session.

- Reflect often
- Keep Core Practices ALWAYS
- Purpose, Purpose, Purpose!
- Come back
- Connect with other FOXFIRE practitioners
- Ask questions
- Explore more Dewey beyond the text
- Dream big & keep hope
- Open minds create opportunities
CHAPTER 5
Conclusions and Discussion, Implications

Conclusions and Discussions

At the beginning of this study, I set out to evaluate the history and legacy of the Foxfire educational program out of Rabun County, Georgia. I set up this research as an intrinsic case study in which I sought to identify those aspects of Foxfire that were unique or, modified somewhat, distinctive about Foxfire. The following is a summary of those findings.

In this chapter I examined those factors that contributed to the success and longevity of the Foxfire program, as I have shown it to be in this dissertation, a locally produced curriculum and educational program that utilized cultural journalism as its primary method. Foxfire had weaknesses and strengths, which have been discussed throughout this paper, but this section is devoted to making conclusions and summarizing what made Foxfire’s legacy distinctive in the history of American education. Through the course of this discussion I answer my final research question: what was the significance and impact of Foxfire as an educational program? Later, I discuss the implications of this study for future research on Foxfire.

First, a discussion of what Foxfire was not. Based on the evidence collected for this research, it appears that Foxfire was not touched in any significant way by a global educational trend such as a nationalizing curriculum. The Foxfire classes were all created and sustained at the local level, with minimal if any input from other curricular programs, including those that featured place-based or experiential pedagogy similar to Foxfire. The program was more impacted by Georgia’s move toward standards-based education, but the changes that Foxfire
made were mostly cosmetic. The roles between certified and non-certified Foxfire staff members were clarified and the Foxfire magazine class was removed from being a core English offering, but the curriculum offered in those classes changed very little. The Foxfire program was most impacted by changing societal and cultural trends rather than by educational ones. As the importance of the back to the land movement and cultural identity movements waned in the 1980s so too did Foxfire’s role in broader U.S. society.

Therefore, based on my findings, the discussion of the possibility that Foxfire was a “glocalized” curricular program that started locally, but then incorporated outside elements from either state, national, or even international forces does not hold up well. In turn, Foxfire did not impact curricula formation in any major way. The Foxfire method, based on many testimonials, did touch the lives of students and teachers who were involved in its programs at various levels, but the Foxfire program in all its facets, cultural journalism as a curriculum and method, a Deweyian modeled teaching method or multi-faceted educational program, did not significantly impact curricula formation either at the local level in Rabun County, in the state of Georgia or at a national level. Nevertheless, Foxfire is still idealized as a model of applied, experiential pedagogy as evidenced by its inclusion in a newly published work, *Sourcebook of Experiential Education: Key Thinkers and Their Contributions* (Smith and Knapp, 2010).

In this discussion, I divided the role of the Foxfire program in American education into two major categories: Foxfire’s distinctive features and the history and legacy of Foxfire. The next discussion addresses what features of the Foxfire program contributed to its distinctiveness.

**Distinctive Features of Foxfire**

The first quality that contributed to Foxfire’s success and longevity was its founding location as part of the Rabun Gap – Nacoochee School, a school with a long tradition of offering
specialized and innovative programs for its students. It was a school with deep connections to its local community despite being a largely private institution and a school with excellent ties to groups and individuals in the greater north Georgia region who wanted to help mountain students. All of these factors would benefit Foxfire as its teachers and students were able to use the valuable reputation of that school to help solicit support for Foxfire from some of these same sources.

Foxfire has now been located at Rabun County High School for thirty-three years, but the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School was its home during those formative years when it was unclear whether the Foxfire program would survive financially or as an educational experiment. The Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School and Foxfire are inextricably linked. A practical example of this is the way in which newspaper and other primary documents are listed by archivists at the Hargrett Library manuscript collection at the University of Georgia. The files are categorized by the following heading: *Rabun Gap – Nacoochee/ Foxfire*. Historically, at least, the two are seen as inter-connected entities.

The second quality of the case for Foxfire’s distinctiveness was that it was a program for high school students tied to the larger Appalachian identity movement at a time when most of the programs related to that cause, such as settlement and folk schools, were directed toward adult education. In Foxfire, adolescents primarily, as opposed to adult artisans, created the product and that product was more academic in nature than was the creation of a handicraft.

A third quality is that Foxfire, as shown by the record, gained popularity in the 1960s and 70s at the same time as interest developed in the wider population about retaining knowledge of and learning traditional and pioneer ways of doing things. Foxfire students were able to tap into this theme and served as the conduit through which the knowledge of an older generation of
Americans was transmitted to a younger generation as well as to others generally interested in these topics. Foxfire students actually engaged in a program that allowed them to participate in preserving and recreating the culture of the past on an ongoing basis. They published their findings in their own magazine and thus were more easily able to reach an audience for their work beyond their classroom, their school, and their community.

The fourth distinctive quality of Foxfire relates to how the program’s founding teacher came to be inspired to start an innovative and really, what was at that time, experimental program. Foxfire would relatively quickly evolve from its founding into a foundation and museum with separate identity from the schools in which it existed. Wigginton’s ideas about this possibility were not quite as spontaneously formed as he leads one to believe in his own testimonials about Foxfire. As discussed in this dissertation, he and Mary Hambidge had been in dialogue about the possibilities of his founding and running an educational program since he was a young man, even though he had no formal experience or background in curriculum design.

A fifth distinctive quality of Foxfire that was touched on in the historical analysis of Foxfire’s home setting was that, because of the insular nature of Rabun County and its environs in the years before the founding of Foxfire, the older population retained knowledge of traditional southern Appalachian folkways thus providing a relatively large, stable and convenient subject pool from which to draw material for the Foxfire magazines. Without the knowledge and the willingness of residents to share their knowledge with students, Foxfire could not have survived. Local students, whose families had lived in the region for generations, provided the contacts for student journalists to interview and gain insights about Appalachian folk culture. This aspect of Foxfire illustrates its local character, as most curriculums are not created at the local level but outside the community and are focused on regional or national
interests or topics as opposed to local ones. Foxfire’s different perspective in this case also speaks to the reasons that it does not sustain itself well in communities that do not have the same dynamics as Rabun County.

The sixth and seventh distinctive qualities about the Foxfire program relate directly to the benefits that student participants in Foxfire received in comparison to what they might receive in any other academic or vocational programs. A first student benefit was that Foxfire provided tremendous and in some cases even extraordinary opportunities for students to build communication skills. By requiring students to conduct interviews, speak on behalf of Foxfire at various organizations mainly outside their own community, and speak to adults in some instances on national television, many Foxfire students were given opportunities that most high school students would never receive in a more conventional curriculum program.

The second student benefit and perhaps the one most highly spoken of and with the greatest passion by Foxfire alumni was that students learned, through their work with Foxfire, to appreciate and better understand the older generations and the past. Students developed a greater appreciation for their native culture and with that developed the confidence that they could carry themselves proudly as mountain people anywhere. The result was that Foxfire students became more productive citizens in our democracy, as was envisioned by Dewey (1916). These intrinsic qualities of Foxfire learning are hard to quantify and invariably not all Foxfire students received the same level of experience here, but in testimonials given by many Foxfire alumni the legacy of their work and the records of them addressing audiences outside their school both speak to the program’s ability to affectively instill confidence in its participants.

Finally, Foxfire was distinctive because of its status related to sustainability and transferability. The Foxfire program has its own unique blend of aspects with regard to these
issues, ones that might best be explained by breaking Foxfire pedagogy into three distinct components and then comparing those components’ transferability across time and space in three different programs in which Foxfire pedagogy was implemented at some level (Figure 4.27).

**The Legacy of Foxfire**

The most significant legacy of the Foxfire educational program is in its status as a major contributor to the preservation of southern Appalachian culture, folkways and history as it existed in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century as part of the Appalachian Identity movement and the back-to-the-land movements. Foxfire’s contributions were primarily in the recording, writing, and publication of articles that featured subjects and topics relevant to the southern Appalachian culture and history, then preserving them in edited magazines, books and unedited interviews which were placed in archival storage and also in the reconstruction and restoration of buildings housed at their museum. In addition to these sources where Foxfire’s legacy is upheld, the program also has a professionally written, performed and produced stage play and a made for television movie, both of which are based on southern Appalachian folk wisdom as gathered and preserved by Foxfire students and staff. Significant contributions in this process were made by adolescent students who voluntarily chose to affiliate themselves with the Foxfire program. The results of Foxfire student work is available to the general public in turn and has been since the program’s inception. Foxfire students “learned by doing”; the Foxfire public learned about the affairs of plain living and southern Appalachian culture from the students “doing.” Foxfire has significance to generations of former students who benefited from their participation in Foxfire; some gaining practical educational skills as discussed in this research, and others who received Foxfire scholarships to attend post-secondary school, a feature of the program mentioned but not addressed in this research.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENTS</th>
<th>SETTINGS</th>
<th>Foxfire</th>
<th>Bittersweet</th>
<th>Isaac Dickson School</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CULTURAL JOURNALISM as a method to teach English or vocational skills and connect with community</td>
<td><strong>sustainability</strong></td>
<td>1966-present</td>
<td>Limited – 1973-1983</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>transferability</strong></td>
<td>limited -can teach the process</td>
<td>Unknown – possible that some transfer occurred between this program and others</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning as a Deweyian modeled pedagogy.</td>
<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>Evolving – 1970-present</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Yes – approx. 1997-current. (See Appendix O)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>transferability</strong></td>
<td>Yes – but limited; not adopted at national or state level, but examples of influence at</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Limited; this magnet school is the one in the district focused on experiential learning</td>
</tr>
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</table>
school
(university and
K-12 and teacher
levels.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Foxfire Educational Program- local subjects, museum, community events, and high school setting</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
<th>Yes – administered by self-supporting Fund.</th>
<th>Magazine collection preserved.</th>
<th>Has own community oriented projects such as a garden.</th>
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</table>

|        | transferability | No | Unknown | Unknown |

**Figure 5.1. Comparison of Foxfire’s components.**

**Implications of Foxfire**

Over the years, much has been written about Foxfire though very little of that could be categorized as academic, peer-reviewed work. My work as presented in this dissertation takes a different approach from the research previously completed on Foxfire. I situated Foxfire in the tradition of locally-produced curricula and also identified it as a program tailored for adolescents that fits into two broader-based non-adolescent focused movements, the Appalachian identity and the back to the land movements. Puckett (1989) touched on the historical legacy of Foxfire, but in general his study was focused on whether Foxfire was a good model of Deweyian-progressive pedagogy or not. I found that this feature of Foxfire was created only as an afterthought when Foxfire staff needed to market Foxfire as more transferable. That component
of the program is not what made Foxfire distinctive and original as an American educational program.

What did make Foxfire more original was, I demonstrated, a program that emphasized the cultural traditions of the peoples of the southern Appalachians, an internally colonized population group exploited for land and resources. Foxfire was thus an excellent program to benefit adolescents from the region, depicting their traditions and way of life as positive and worth preserving, a primary feature of locally produced curricula rather than educating to eradicate or weaken traditional culture. The following is a summary of these ideas for future research. Despite covering these aspects of Foxfire thoroughly, I find there is still more research possible on Foxfire.

As already stated, there exist ample writings emphasizing Foxfire’s constructivist, Deweyian qualities, but my research shows that Foxfire is one model that does not transfer well and struggles to retain its strengths when taken out of its own community. Therefore, my conclusion is that more research should be completed on what Foxfire is good at; as an example of a locally produced community program that historically met the needs of an internally colonized population group. This was a useful model in the case of Foxfire because it helps support the importance of Foxfire’s legacy as a preserver of cultural features of a distinct American sub-culture. Comparisons with Foxfire and other such programs should be made including programs in other countries that also reach marginalized population groups.

I also believe there should be a closer examination of the Foxfire cultural journalism component as a tool for education for empowerment, and of its ability to teach across disciplines, such as its incorporation of historical research in Foxfire articles and its emphasis on presenting
multiple sides to a story. These are all worthy subjects for further research. Again comparing its use of these aspects to other curricula programs would be necessary.

During the course of this research, I was not able to answer all questions about the program and I fear that some questions about Foxfire will never be adequately explained or quantified. One such question is whether Wigginton’s negative actions impacted learning for some Foxfire students.

It will also be difficult to track, after so many years, how much writing and editorial help Foxfire students received over the course of the program’s history, and considering the vast number of articles credited to students, but I do believe this is a real concern when one speaks about the quality and integrity of Foxfire teaching and learning, while at the same time having to meet editorial and publishing deadlines. Perhaps in the end, because of this reality Foxfire became more of that foundation that Wigginton dreamed of forming rather than simply a superior pedagogical program for adolescents.

The greatest disappointment I had during the course of my research on Foxfire was my inability to locate or have access to any non-Foxfire students or teachers from the heyday of the program. I also wish that I had had time to gather and present the numbers of students who were participants versus those who were not. In particular, I would like to query teachers for their opinions of Wigginton and Foxfire today after Wigginton’s absence from the program for twenty years. I would also like to interview more people outside the Rabun County community about their perceptions of Foxfire during its heyday, particularly students in other states at the time of Foxfire’s prominence who were impacted by the program or by Foxfire spin-off programs. Perhaps talking to some former Bittersweet students would be helpful in this regard. I was unable to include these people during the course of my research because of the lack of time and
resources. In the future, I would also like to speak to John Puckett about his research on Foxfire and if possible also talk directly to Eliot Wigginton about any further insights he might like to give.

There were components of Foxfire that I did not touch on in this research and wish that I had been able to. For example, given the significant number of students who received scholarships for post-secondary education from Foxfire funds as previously mentioned, what was the impact of that feature on the program and on the lives of those students? The informants with whom I spoke in the course of my research were deeply committed supporters of either Foxfire and/or the school at Rabun Gap and their special programs. Invariably my research findings may be biased because of this, but I venture to speculate that very few curricula could generate such a fan base as the one that evolved on behalf of the program based in Rabun County, Georgia. In my opinion therefore, that feature alone is enough to make the case for Foxfire as an original American educational program with distinctive features and a rich legacy of preserving the culture of southern Appalachia.
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The Editor’s Profile. (Spring, 1983). *Bittersweet*, Volume X, No.3.


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Clipping located at the Hargrett Library, UGA, Georgiana Collection, File: Rabun Gap – Nacoochee School.


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<td><strong>APPENDIX A</strong></td>
<td><strong>Analysis Methods</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. What ideas inspired and motivated Eliot Wigginton to create a program like Foxfire? (Obj.#1)</td>
<td>1. Informal content analysis</td>
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<td>2. What were the feature and goals of the Foxfire program during its formative years? (Obj.#2)</td>
<td>2. Document analysis</td>
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<td>3. What were the qualities that made Foxfire popular with the local Rabun County community and gave Foxfire an audience outside Rabun County? (Obj.#3)</td>
<td>3. Transcribed interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. How does Foxfire compare to other educational endeavors started in north Georgia and in the southern Appalachians such as common, settlement, and industrial schools or to other innovative programs founded contemporaneously? (Obj.#5)</td>
<td>4. Visual content analysis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. How did Foxfire survive despite national and state trends toward “back to basics”? (Obj.#5)</td>
<td>5. Triangulation of data sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What was the significance and impact of Foxfire as an educational program? (Obj.#4)</td>
<td>6. Analyzing for context/themes/categories</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. To understand the foundations of the glocalization concept; and help apply it to curriculum formation, and to understand the kinds of conditions necessary to form curriculum glocally. Scholary literature (1)

2. To Understand components of student experiences in Foxfire and the operations of the Foxfire classroom. Physical artifacts (4).

3. To identify whether the Foxfire student’s work contributed to the program’s longevity as much as other factors. Archival documents and materials (2,5,6).

4. To understand the aspects of the program that created its sustainability. Interviews and key informants (4,5,6).

5. To analyze the legacy of the Foxfire program. Direct Observations (4,6).

6. Foxfire magazines and books (1,4,6)

7. Field notes (5,6).

8. Journals (2,6).

9. Survey data found in the literature (3,5,6).
## APPENDIX B

<table>
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<td>local</td>
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<td>horses carts carriages tools</td>
<td>labor</td>
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<td>local</td>
<td>nationalist imperialist hegemonic ethnocentric</td>
<td>steamship steam engine railroad automobile machines</td>
<td>skills</td>
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<td>global “glocal”</td>
<td>cyberspatial intraworldly synergistic humanitarian</td>
<td>internet www web (SSTs) cybernetics robotics</td>
<td>insight</td>
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### Table 1.1 Reform Projects Cited

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<tr>
<td>Project 1</td>
<td>Decentralization</td>
<td>Sıres: 2 villages in northern and northeastern Thailand (a woodcarving community and a basket-weaving community) 20-month study, 1999–2001, of rural philosophy (local wisdom) and how it can be integrated into school curriculum. Collaboration among teachers, community members, and university educators/researchers to study the local communities and develop a curriculum based on community expertise, values, and future goals. Developed community-based curricular units, curriculum for a new local economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Thongelve, 1999</td>
<td>Local curriculum development</td>
<td>Sıres: 2 villages in northern and northeastern Thailand (a woodcarving community and a basket-weaving community) 20-month study, 1999–2001, of rural philosophy (local wisdom) and how it can be integrated into school curriculum. Collaboration among teachers, community members, and university educators/researchers to study the local communities and develop a curriculum based on community expertise, values, and future goals. Developed community-based curricular units, curriculum for a new local economy.</td>
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<td>Incorporating local wisdom in school curriculum</td>
<td>Sıres: 2 villages in northern and northeastern Thailand (a woodcarving community and a basket-weaving community) 20-month study, 1999–2001, of rural philosophy (local wisdom) and how it can be integrated into school curriculum. Collaboration among teachers, community members, and university educators/researchers to study the local communities and develop a curriculum based on community expertise, values, and future goals. Developed community-based curricular units, curriculum for a new local economy.</td>
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<td>Collaboration between teachers and local community</td>
<td>Sıres: 2 villages in northern and northeastern Thailand (a woodcarving community and a basket-weaving community) 20-month study, 1999–2001, of rural philosophy (local wisdom) and how it can be integrated into school curriculum. Collaboration among teachers, community members, and university educators/researchers to study the local communities and develop a curriculum based on community expertise, values, and future goals. Developed community-based curricular units, curriculum for a new local economy.</td>
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<td>Local participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project 2</td>
<td>Decentralization</td>
<td>Sıres: 2 dairy farms in central Thailand, 2 schools, 5th grade 3½ year study, 1998–2002, to understand and develop local curriculum development processes. Collaboration among teachers and their students, local dairy farmers, provincial/district/school administrators, veterinarians and dairy extension agencies, community leaders, parents, and university educators/researchers. Developed, taught, evaluated, revised, and retaught new curricula using an action research model.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Student-centered learning</td>
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### Table 1.1 (continued)

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<th>Projects and Leaders/Reformers</th>
<th>Reform Goals Addressed</th>
<th>Project Focus</th>
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APPENDIX D

GLOBAL – LOCAL MODEL
GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL REFORM
Democratization
Decentralization
"OBE" NQF etc.

NATIONAL LEVEL:
Creolization SOUTH AFRICAN ED. Transformation
Level 1

Democratisation, Equity
Deracialisation
Devolution of Authority
Restructuring, Rationalisation
"TIRISANO" Plan
OBE: Curriculum 2003, 21, 2005...
Special Initiatives (Literacy, etc.)

SA PROVINCIAL LEVEL

Mandates, Initiatives
Guidelines, Strategic Objectives
Materials, Training/Support
Oversight

SUB-PROVINCIAL LEVEL

Training, Staff Development
Support, Oversight

COMMUNITY & SCHOOL LEVEL

Within-School Programs, Realities
Within-Class Realities (Teachers, Students)
Convergence ⟷ Divergence

Participants enter with local cultural knowledge

(Activity) Production of the Foxfire magazine
(Context) Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School - 1966
(Dialogue) Between "Wig" Foxfire students Principal (Morris Brown)
(Collaboration) Between students and community members
(Individual Reflection) The "outside" worlds' benefit to the Foxfire students' perception of Foxfire
(Shared Reflection) The "outside" worlds' benefit to the Foxfire students' perception of Foxfire

(Culture) Southern Appalachians

Program Deliverables: Interviews, magazine articles, subscriptions

(Practical Applications) Foxfire approach to teaching and learning

Participants knowledge becomes "glocalized"
APPENDIX F

Foxfire Core Practices

1. From the beginning, learner choice, design, and revision infuses the work teachers and learners do together.

2. The work teachers and learners do together clearly manifests the attributes of the academic disciplines involved, so those attributes become habits of mind.

3. The work teachers and students do together enables learners to make connections between the classroom work, the surrounding communities, and the world beyond their communities.

4. The teacher serves as facilitator and collaborator.

5. Active learning characterizes classroom activities.

6. The learning process entails imagination and creativity.

7. Classroom work includes peer teaching, small group work, and teamwork.

8. The work of the classroom serves audiences beyond the teacher, thereby evoking the best efforts by the learners and providing feedback for improving subsequent performances.

9. The work teachers and learners do together includes rigorous, ongoing assessment and evaluation.

10. Reflection, an essential activity, takes place at key points throughout the work.
Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School Sign located on Hwy 441.

Sign displaying school crest and motto; Work, Study, Worship.
Hodgson’s Hall; The classroom building where Foxfire began.

Chapel at the end of the Hodgson building.
View of Georgia, North Carolina Mountains from the front entrance of Hodgson’s Hall.

Copper statue of Robert Woodruff of Coca-Cola; generous benefactor to Rabun Gap -
Nacoochee School.
Copper Statues of Andrew and Addie Corn Ritchie the founders of the Rabun Gap Industrial School.

Barn from the *Farm Family Settlement Program* years.
Entrance to Eliot Wigginton’s former room at Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School; where Foxfire began.
Inside the original Foxfire room.
APPENDIX H

The Bungalow
Piers underneath the bungalow.
The Phillips Cabin
The Warwoman Cabin
The Gott Cabin
Ingram Mule Barn
Bell Gristmill
### APPENDIX I

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**The University of Georgia**  
Office of The Vice President for Research  
DHHS Assurance ID No.: PWA00005901

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**APPROVAL OF RENEWALS / CHANGES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Dept/Phone</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Roger B. Hill</td>
<td>PI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Julie L. Oliver</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Request Date:** 2011-01-06  
**Project Number:** 2010-10337-1

---

**Title of Study:** The Curious Case of Foxfire: The Story of A Locally Produced Curriculum

---

**45 CFR 46 Category:** Continuing Review  
**Renew:** No  
**Change(s):** Changed PI from Dr. Ni to Dr. Hill.

---

**Parameters:**  
APPROVAL OF ABOVE NOTED CHANGES.  
Approved for Institutions with Authorization Letters on File.

---

**Approved:** 2011-01-25  
**Begin date:** 2011-01-25  
**Expiration date:** 2014-11-08

**NOTE:** Any research conducted before the approval date or after the end date collection date shown above is not covered by IRB approval, and cannot be retroactively approved.

---

**Number Assigned by Sponsored Programs:**  
**Funding Agency:**

---

Your request for approval of renewal and/or changes has been approved.

You must report any adverse events or unanticipated risk to the IRB within 24 to 72 hours. Refer to the IRB Guidelines for additional information.

Use the attached Researcher Request Form for requesting renewals, changes, or closures.  
*Keep this original approval form for your records.*
CONSENT FORM

I, [Michael C.], agree to participate in a research study titled "THE ROLE OF FOXFIRE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION" conducted by Julie Oliver from the Department of Workforce Education, Leadership, and Social Foundations at the University of Georgia (706-542-7399) under the direction of Dr. Diane Napier, Department of Workforce Education, Leadership, and Social Foundations at the University of Georgia (706-542-7399). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to provide a case study and historical analysis of the Foxfire program during its emergence and formative years, 1966-1991.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:
1) Answer questions about my role as a student in the Foxfire program.
2) Answer questions about Foxfire's impact on the Rabun County community and role in preserving southern Appalachian culture.
3) Answer questions about the Foxfire program, its impact and general contributions to my school.
4) Answer questions about my role as an employee of the Foxfire program.
5) Answer questions about my role in any Foxfire "extension" work.
6) Answer questions about my working relationships with Foxfire's founder and/or other Foxfire personnel.
7) The researcher may ask me to clarify my information or ask for a follow-up discussion.

No risk is expected but if I experience some discomfort or stress during my conversations or interactions with interactions with the researcher, I can ask that the interview/conversation/interaction be ended. I understand that I am under no obligation to offer my opinions and/or recollections if this makes me feel uncomfortable in any way.

No information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission. Anything I say or offer will be kept in the strictest of confidence and my name will not be used in association with the perception or opinion I offer. I understand that the investigator is only interested in thoughts on Foxfire as they are seen by me as a member of a group at the school (teacher, administrator, etc.).

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411, Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu
CONSENT FORM

I, **Billy D. Higgins**, agree to participate in a research study titled "THE CURIOUS CASE OF FOXFIRE: THE STORY OF ONE LOCALLY CREATED CURRICULUM" conducted by Julie Oliver from the Department of Workforce Education, Leadership, and Social Foundations at the University of Georgia (706-542-7399) under the direction of Dr. Diane Napier, Department of Workforce Education, Leadership, and Social Foundations at the University of Georgia (706-542-7399). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to provide a case study and historical analysis of the Foxfire program during its emergence and formative years, 1966-1991.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

1) Answer questions about the Foxfire program, its impact and general contributions to your school.
2) Answer questions about your prior knowledge or familiarity with Foxfire.
3) Answer questions about your role in the Foxfire project at your school.
4) The researcher may ask me to clarify my information or ask for a follow-up discussion.

No risk is expected but if I experience some discomfort or stress during my conversations or interactions with interactions with the researcher, I can ask that the interview/conversation/interaction be ended. I understand that I am under no obligation to offer my opinions and/or recollections if this makes me feel uncomfortable in any way.

No information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission. Anything I say or offer will be kept in the strictest of confidence and my name will not be used in association with the perception or opinion I offer. I understand that the investigator is only interested in thoughts on Foxfire as they are seen by me as a member of a group at the school (teacher, administrator, etc.).

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CONSENT FORM

I, [signature], agree to participate in a research study titled "THE CURIOUS CASE OF FOXFIRE: THE STORY OF ONE LOCALLY PRODUCED CURRICULUM" conducted by Julie Oliver from the Department of Workforce Education, Leadership, and Social Foundations at the University of Georgia (706-542-7399) under the direction of Dr. Diane Napier, Department of Workforce Education, Leadership, and Social Foundations at the University of Georgia (706-542-7399). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to provide a case study and historical analysis of the Foxfire program during its emergence and formative years, 1966-1991.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

1) Answer questions about my role as an employee of the Foxfire program.
2) Answer questions about my knowledge and role in Foxfire's transfer from Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School to Rabun County High School.
3) Answer questions about my working relationship with Foxfire's founder Eliot Wigginton.
4) Answer questions about Rabun Gap's impact on my life and the Rabun County community.

No risk is expected but if I experience some discomfort or stress during my conversations or interactions with interactions with the researcher, I can ask that the interview/conversation/interaction be ended. I understand that I am under no obligation to offer my opinions and/or recollections if this makes me feel uncomfortable in any way.

No information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission. Anything I say or offer will be kept in the strictest of confidence and my name will not be used in association with the perception or opinion I offer. I understand that the investigator is only interested in thoughts on Foxfire as they are seen by me as a member of a group at the school (teacher, administrator, etc.).

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411, Telephone (706) 542-3190, E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu
CONSENT FORM

I, [Your Name], agree to participate in a research study titled "THE ROLE OF FOXFIRE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION" conducted by Julie Oliver from the Department of Workforce Education, Leadership, and Social Foundations at the University of Georgia (706-542-7399) under the direction of Dr. Diane Napiers, Department of Workforce Education, Leadership, and Social Foundations at the University of Georgia (706-542-7399). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to provide a case study and historical analysis of the Foxfire program during its emergence and formative years, 1966-1991.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:
1) Answer questions about my years as a student at the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School.
2) Answer questions about the kinds of subjects I studied at Rabun Gap.
3) Answer questions about Rabun Gap’s impact on my life and the Rabun County community.

No risk is expected but if I experience some discomfort or stress during my conversations or interactions with the researcher, I can ask that the interview/conversation/interaction be ended. I understand that I am under no obligation to offer my opinions and/or recollections if this makes me feel uncomfortable in any way.

No information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission. Anything I say or offer will be kept in the strictest of confidence and my name will not be used in association with the perception or opinion I offer. I understand that the investigator is only interested in thoughts on Foxfire as they are seen by me as a member of a group at the school (teacher, administrator, etc.).

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 512 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu
Ms. Julie L. Oliver

October 19, 2009

Dear Ms. Oliver,

Thank you for your interest in researching the Rabun County High School’s role in the formation of the Foxfire curriculum program. We hope what you discover here will be useful as you investigate the Foxfire curriculum program as the subject of your study tentatively titled, “The Curious Case of Foxfire: The Story of One Locally Formed Curriculum” as part of your doctoral dissertation in the Social Foundations of Education Department of the University of Georgia at Athens.

Beginning in the Fall of 2009, we will be glad, at mutually agreed upon times, to allow you access to our campus to visit the Foxfire classrooms. Please feel free to contact me at the following address or by email at mearnest@rabun.k12.ga.us.

Sincerely,

Mark Earnest
Principal
Rabun County High School
October 30, 2009

Ms. Julie L. Oliver

Dear Ms. Oliver,

Thank you for your interest in researching the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School's role in the formation of the Foxfire curriculum program. We hope what you discover here will be useful as you investigate Foxfire as the subject of your study tentatively titled, "The Curious Case of Foxfire: The Story of One Locally Formed Curriculum" as part of your doctoral dissertation in the Social Foundations of Education Department of the University of Georgia at Athens.

Beginning in the fall of 2009, we will be glad, at mutually agreed upon times, to have you visit our campus and meet with archivist Billy Joe Stiles who can assist you with any historical questions about the school and supply you with the names of teachers from the era that the Foxfire curriculum program emerged at the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School.

I look forward to meeting you on one of your campus visits. Please feel free to contact me by letter or by email at jmarshall@rabungap.org if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

John D. Marshall

Head of School
October 20, 2009

Ms. Julie L. Oliver

Dear Ms. Oliver:

Thank you for your interest in researching The Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center’s contribution to The Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning. We hope that what you discover here will be useful as you investigate Foxfire as the subject of your study tentatively titled, “The Curious Case of Foxfire: The Story of One Locally-Formed Curriculum” as part of your doctoral dissertation in the Social Foundations of Education Department of the University of Georgia at Athens.

Beginning in the Fall of 2009, we will be glad to allow you access to our Center at mutually-agreed-upon times, usually on Wednesday mornings for archival research, and at mutually-agreed-upon times between you and our Curator, Barry Stiles, for discussions about Foxfire’s Heritage Educational Programs. If you’d like, and if helpful for your research, we can also arrange for you to meet with our Partner in Education, Dr. Hilton Smith, at Piedmont College in Demorest, GA, to discuss in-depth the Foxfire Core Practices and our Approach to Education, as well as arrange a visit for you to our Foxfire Magazine class at Rabun County High School.

In return, we require one copy of your completed dissertation for our library at the archives, and we ask your permission to share that research with others, as needed. If you agree to give us permission to use your dissertation, giving appropriate credit to you, of course, we would need that permission in writing.

We look forward to having you here with us at Foxfire in the coming months. Please feel free to contact me at the address, below, or at foxfire@foxfire.org to arrange visits.

Sincerely,

Ann Moore
President and Executive Director
Whole Family Attends School In Mountains at Rabun Gap

By YOLANDE GWIN

RABUN-GAP, Ga., Sept. 5—A family plan is paying big dividends here in the Blue Ridge mountains of Georgia.

The beneficiaries are all on a community life level, those who can benefit from the opportunities we can offer them.

"Families who have children in school and those who have children of such age that they are likely to remain in school during the ten-year period are good selections. Many families are interested in livestock enterprises and also some who wish to become land owners. They are screened as are those who have a creditable reputation in the community."

What are these classes and holdings?

It's a school which has been nurtured by friends.

Among them is the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee Club of Atlanta. This group of young women headed by Mrs. Clyde Fowler has given of time and money to further the work offered to families and students.

It has given such things as a swimming pool, the home management house, the girls dormitory, aid in repairs for the boys' dormitory, help in augmenting the poultry farm and giving the cattle barn. The latter gift is paying big dividends. This year, for the first time, beef cattle

The Atlanta club will have a benefit party on the 13th. The Piedmont Driving Club will be the fashion show luncheon and at the evening party.
home economics. On both levels there is a special emphasis on Christian principles.

The Rabun Gap - Nachoochee School represents a merger of two neighboring mountain
schools—Rabun Gap Industrial School and the Nachoochee Institute. That was in 1927.

"We have 17 farm families now living on the school farms," says Karl Anderson, assistant
resident and business manager. "The farms on this school land boast 62 children. Over the
years we have had more than 100 families graduate.

"The families may remain on the land for ten years," Anderson says. "We have set up a
basis for choosing the families. They must be those who are
-seeking better opportunities. And

What are these classes and
buildings?

It's a school which has been
nurtured by friends.

Among them is the Rabun
Gap-Nachoochee Club of Atlanta. This group of young women
headed by Mrs. Clyde Fowler has given of time and money to
further the work offered to fam-
ilies and students.

It has given such things as a
swimming pool, the house man-
agement house, the girls dormi-
tory, aided on repairs for the
boys' dormitory, helped to in-
augurate the poultry farm and
gave the cattle barn. The latter
gift is paying big dividends. This
year, for the first time, beef cat-
tle has been sold as a result of
the good "living conditions" of
the herd.

Soon now, Rabun Gap-Nacho-
chee School will be on the re-
ceiving line again.

The Atlanta club will have two
Rabun Gap benefit parties Mon-
day, Sept. 13, at the Piedmont
Driving Club.

A million-dollar diamond col-
lection will be exhibited at the
fashion show luncheon and at the
evening party.
APPENDIX K

Gift shop and gallery at the Hambidge Center
Foxfire cabin on the Hambidge Center property so named because it was built by and was home to Eliot Wigginton for several years when he first started working at Rabun Gap - Nacoochee; one of several cabins on the property available for artists to rent.
Inside view of the Foxfire cabin.
Another view inside the Foxfire cabin.
Kitchen inside the Foxfire cabin.
Backporch of the Foxfire cabin.
APPENDIX L

Abbreviated History of RGNS

Nacoochee Institute

1903—School opened for the first time in the Nacoochee Valley with two teachers and one room. 1907—Charter had been obtained and Athens Presbytery was the owner; eighth rooms were available. 1910—Augusta Presbytery accepted joint ownership with the Athens Presbytery. 1917—Synod accepted Nacoochee Institute and put it in the budget for 4% of Synod's Benevolences. More classrooms and dormitories had been added. 1918—Electric lights were installed, additional land purchased including a house used for Boys' Dormitory. 1920—Boys' Dormitory burned; classroom building almost destroyed; dormitory for boys made out of dairy barn holl. 1922—Additional Girls' Dorm opened; high school accredited; fire destroyed Domestic Science Building, pump, and winter supply of wood. 1924—Expansion and strengthening of program so that graduates could be accepted by colleges without extra examinations. 1926—April, fire destroyed two main buildings including main classrooms.

Rabun Gap Industrial School

1903—With a personal note and $1.00 in cash, Mr. A.J. Ritchie purchased a lovely hilltop in the Tennessee Valley, raised $5,000 worth of subscriptions from the county and began to build a school for mountain boys and girls. 1905—Completed the three-story, $10,000 building; brought together day students from two smaller short-term schools for a nine-month program with college-trained teachers. 1911—Boarding department had expanded and additional land was purchased. 1917—Farm Family Program established—whole families brought to the school to farm and to learn; then the families moved to their own farms. Expansion of lands by purchase made possible through friends and the Carnegie Foundation. 1920—Expansion of Farm Family Program—Forty thousand was raised for its development. The program was continued until the 70's. 1926—February 18, the main building containing living quarters for teachers and girls, library, administration rooms, dairy and work rooms was totally destroyed by fire. 1927—Organization of Board of Trustees: March 1st 1928—Combined schools opened as one—Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School; Dr. Andrew Ritchie, President, Dr. John Cott, Vice President. 1929—First graduating class of RGNS. 1935-1945—Junior College 1939—Drs. Cott and Ritchie retired from active service with the school. 1939-1948—Dr. George C. Bellingrath, President RGNS. 1945—Junior college work was given up and high school work for needy, worthy boys and girls who needed a Christian school home continued. 1949—O.C. Skinner, president. 1950—Completion of dining hall building and partial change from row crops to livestock farming in the Farm Family Program. 1954—July—Dedication of new chapel and completion of new auditorium and library wings on main building. 1956—Completion of almost three decades of service since Synod's approval of the merger. 1956-1957—Dr. Karl Anderson, President; Industrial Arts Building completed; School Community Recreation Center opened (basement of old gymnasium). 1960—Summer School Program. 1961—Andrew Ritchie Gymnasium dedicated. 1967—George Woodruff Dormitory dedicated. 1967—First
Abbreviated History of RGNS

Nacoochee Institute

1903—School opened for the first time in the Nacoochee Valley with two teachers and one room. 1907—Charter had been obtained and Athens Presbytery was the owner; eighth rooms were available. 1910—Augusta Presbytery accepted joint ownership with the Athens Presbytery. 1917—Synod accepted Nacoochee Institute and put it in the budget for 4% of Synod’s Benevolences. More classrooms and dormitories had been added. 1918—Electric lights were installed, additional land purchased including a house used for Boys’ Dormitory. 1920—Boys’ Dormitory burned; classroom building almost destroyed; dormitory for boys made out of dairy barn hull. 1922—Additional Girls’ Dorm opened; high school accredited; fire destroyed Domestic Science Building, pump and winter supply of wood. 1924—Expansion and strengthening of program so that graduates could be accepted by colleges without extra examinations. 1926—April, fire destroyed two main buildings including main classrooms.

Rabun Gap Industrial School

1903—With a personal note and $1.00 in cash, Mr. A.J. Ritchie purchased a lovely hilltop in the Tennessee Valley, raised $5,000 worth of subscriptions from the county and began to build a school for mountain boys and girls. 1905—Completed the three-story, $10,000 building; brought together day students from two smaller short-term schools for a nine-month program with college-trained teachers. 1911—Boarding department had expanded and additional land was purchased. 1917—Farm Family Program established—whole families brought to the school to farm and to learn; then the families moved to their own farms. Expansion of lands by purchase made possible through friends and the Carnegie Foundation. 1920—Expansion of Farm Family Program— Forty thousand was raised for its development. The program was continued until the 70’s. 1926—February 18, the main building containing living quarters for teachers and girls, library, administration rooms, dairy and work rooms was totally destroyed by fire. 1927—Organization of Board of Trustees: March 1st 1928—Combined schools opened as one—Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School; Dr. Andrew Ritchie, President, Dr. John Coit, Vice President. 1929—First graduating class of RGNS. 1935-1945—Junior College 1939—Drs. Coit and Ritchie retired from active service with the school. 1939-1948—Dr. George C. Bellingrath, President RGNS. 1945—Junior college work was given up and high school work for needy, worthy boys and girls who needed a Christian school home continued. 1949—O.C. Skinner, president. 1950—Completion of dining hall building and partial change from row crops to livestock farming in the Farm Family Program. 1954—July—Dedication of new chapel and completion of new auditorium and library wings on main building. 1956—Completion of almost three decades of service since Synod’s approval of the merger. 1956-1957—Dr. Karl Anderson, President; Industrial Arts Building completed; School Community Recreation Center opened (basement of old gymnasium). 1960—Summer School Program. 1961—Andrew Ritchie Gymnasium dedicated. 1967—George Woodruff Dormitory dedicated. 1967—First
## APPENDIX M

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOXFIRE TIMELINE</th>
<th>Key events in the program’s history</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eliot Wigginton and students create The Foxfire Magazine</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students publish the first issue of The Foxfire Magazine</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxfire incorporates and establishes “The Southern Highlands Literary Fund,” a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigginton meets with Junius Eddy of the U.S Office of Education; Eddy suggests to Wigginton the similarities of Foxfire pedagogy and Dewey’s ideas. Note: Wigginton is studying for the year at Johns Hopkins University.</td>
<td>1968-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigginton’s and Foxfire’s collaboration with IDEAS begins</td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigginton presents original version of the Foxfire Core Practices as part of workshops he conducted as part of his collaboration with IDEAS</td>
<td>1970-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students publish, <em>The Foxfire Book</em></td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students publish <em>Foxfire 2</em>. Foxfire establishes the Foxfire Community Board, and the</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization’s name is changed from the Southern Highlands Literary Fund to the Foxfire Fund, Inc. Foxfire purchases 110 acres of property, now known as the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center, and moves and reconstructs the first historic log building at the center.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bittersweet</em> magazine, a Foxfire spin-off is founded in Lebanon, Missouri</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Foxfire Fund, Inc. establishes a national advisory board, and the board holds its first meeting in Rabun County</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students publish <em>Foxfire 3</em>. Foxfire holds first Annual Celebration of Community and honors its “contacts” and creates the Foxfire Student Summer Jobs Programs. The Foxfire Book passes 1 million in sales.</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxfire establishes the Foxfire scholarship Program, as well as the Video and Music programs at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School.</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxfire moves its programs from Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School to Rabun County High School and starts environmental classes. Foxfire</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Year</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By consensus vote of students, Foxfire agrees to sign contract with Hume Cronyn and playwright Susan Cooper for dramatic rights to the book series material for the play Foxfire. Foxfire music students create the Foxfire string band which becomes “The Foxfire Boys”.</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Foxfire I class designed – Grammar and Composition Class</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The play <em>Foxfire</em> opens on Broadway, and Jessica Tandy wins a Toney for her performance.</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The <em>Bittersweet</em> magazine folds due to issues of funding, teachers work and redundancy.</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Rabun County Superintendent begins enforcing Rabun County Board of Education policy that non-certified Foxfire teachers cannot teach at the high school.</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia passes the Georgia Quality Basic Education Act</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organization receives the Bingham Grant and begins networks and national teacher-training programs.</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated version of Core Practices created as a</td>
<td>1986-87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
collaborative effort among Foxfire staffers. Coincides with the teacher outreach program development. Efforts to develop a formal teaching approach, The Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning begins.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Hallmark Hall of Fame movie, <em>Foxfire</em>, based on the play and filmed in Rabun County airs on national television.</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigginton takes a sabbatical from the organization to teach at the University of Georgia. Creation of the Foxfire Museum.</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In May of 1991, Wigginton brings two 10 year old Athens boys to his cabin on the museum property for an overnight stay. Police officers confront Wigginton back in Athens on Monday who denies the allegations of molestation.</td>
<td>May 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigginton pleads guilty rather than face a jury trial. Surrenders to authorities, begins one year sentence.</td>
<td>November 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxfire funds severs all ties with Wigginton</td>
<td>November 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first “annual” picnic after the Wigginton scandal.</td>
<td>May 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigginton freed, 19 years of probation to serve, barred from contact with children younger than 18 years of age for that duration.</td>
<td>November 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobby Ann Starnes takes over as president and executive director of the Foxfire Fund, Inc. Helps create Foxfire teacher training guides and through those solidifies Foxfire’s pedagogy with Dewey.</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>From Thinking to Doing, Considering Assessment and Evaluation: A Foxfire Teacher Reader</em> and <em>Considering Reflection</em> published. President Starnes resigns.</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxfire completes its strategic plan and refocuses its efforts in teacher training on Georgia and the Southeast.</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishes a artist-in-residence program at the museum</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Teacher Training Program reactivated in a partnership formed between Foxfire and Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia under</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the name Foxfire-Piedmont Partnership for Programs for Teachers.

Sources:

(“Chastened Foxfire Fights for a Future,” 1992)

(Cheek et al., 2006)

(“Foxfire Founder Guilty”, 1992)

(Harmon, 1992)

(Harmon, 1994)

(Morris, 1992)

(Osinki, 1992)

(personal communication, June 24, 2010)

(Puckett, 1989)

(Smathers, 1992)

(Stainer, 1993)

(Wigginton, 1986)
APPENDIX N

FOXFIRE PROJECTS

ADOBE
Zack Bernal
Centennial High School
P.O. Box 347
San Luis, Colorado 81152
(school 303-672-3341)
(home 303-672-3344)

ALL-AH-WEE
Ed Towle
Island Resources Foundation, Inc.
P.O. box 4187
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00801
(809-775-3225)

ANGEL OAK
Charles Brown
Communications Center
153 King St.
Charleston, S.C. 29401
(803-722-2839)

BITTERSWEET
Ellen Massey
Lebanon High School
777 Brice Street
Lebanon, Missouri 65536
(417-532-9144)

BLACK GOLD
Ieta Pac Arnold
Panola Jr. College
Cartaghen, Texas 75633
FURROWS
Kim Puls
Mount View High School
Thorndike, Maine 04986
(207-568-3255)

GOLDEN HINDESIGHT
Jim Martin
Isabel Cook School
1000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
San Anselmo, Calif. 94960

GUARIQUEN
John Westbrook
Elvira de Mendoza #19
Santo Domingo ZP7
Dominican Republic

KIL-KAAS-GIT
Tamara Smid
Prince of Wales High School
Craig, Alaska 99921
(907-826-3223)

KIN' LIN'
Mary Mintz
Hallsboro High School
Hallsboro, N.C. 28442

KO KAKOU
Ron Fujiwara
Kailua High School
451 Ulumanu Drive
Kailua, Hawaii 96734
(808-262-8151)

LAULIMA
Leslie Lauro
P.O. Box 667
Pahala, Hawaii 96777
(808-928-8918)

LOBLOLLY
Lincoln King
Gary High School
P.O. Box 88
Gary, Texas 75643
(214-668-2403)

MOUNTAIN TRACE
Susan Beckett/Kenneth Gilbert
Parkersburg High School
2101 Dudley Avenue
Parkersburg, W. Va. 26101
(304-485-7941)

NANIH WAIYA
Charles Plaisance
Choctaw Central High School
Rt. #7
Box 72
Philadelphia, Miss. 39350
(601-656-4962)
(601-656-2925)

NORTHERN WATERS
Larry Diamond
Bellows Falls Middle School
Bellows Falls, Vt. 05101

OLD TIMER
Winifred Waller
C/o Albany News
Albany, Texas 76430
PATCHWORK
Bill Nye/Jerry Cromer
New City Schools
400 Sibley Street
St. Paul, Minn. 55101
(612-224-3351)

PTARMIGAN
Marge Morgenstern
Montrose High School
600 South Townsend
Montrose, Colorado 81401
(school 303-249-3416)
(home 303-325-4749)

ROwen
Howard Shapiro
School for International
Training
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
(802-257-7751)

SALT
Pam Wood
P.O. Box 302A
Kennebunkport, Maine 04046
(school 207-985-3534)
(home 207-967-5900)

SCATTERED SEEDS
Steve Trimble
Minnesota Memories Class
C/O New City Schools
400 Sibley Avenue
St. Paul, Minn. 55101
(612-827-5055)

SEA CHEST
Richard Lebovitz
Cape Hatteras High School
Buxton, N.C. 27936
(919-995-3021)

SHATTERACK
Tim Kipp
5 Tyler Street
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

SHENANGO
Jim Siar
Edinboro State College
Shenango Valley Campus
Farrell, Pa. 16121
(412-346-4139)

SKIPJACK
Diane Romesburg
South Dorchester High School
Church Creek, Md. 21622
(301-397-3434)

SPARROWHAWK
Bob England
Bibb County Jr. High
335 Walnut St.
Centerville, Alabama 35042
(school 205-926-7751)
(home 205-665-1066)

SPILE
Dave Cawley/Audrey Northway
Hollis Area High School
Hollis, New Hampshire 03049
(603-465-2269)
THISTLEDOWN
David Nungesser
Memorial High School
Pataskala, Ohio 43062
(614-927-3846)

THREE WIRE WINTER
Bill McKelvie
P.O. Box 5295
Steamboat Village
Colorado 80499
(school 303-879-1562)
(home 303-879-2854)

TIMBERLINE
Nancy Bowers
Ashe Central High School
Jefferson, N.C. 28640

TREE TAP
Amy David
Montpelier Public School
170 Main Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

TSA' ASZI
Bill Rada
Ramah Navajo High School
Box 35
Ramah, New Mexico 87321
(505-783-5801)

WINDFALL
Dwight Childers
North Buncombe High School
Weaverville, N.C. 28787

NO NAME
Pam Beer/Marcia Luce
Sterling High School
West Broadway
Sterling, Colorado 80751
(school 303-522-2944)
(Pam home 303-522-4516)
(Marcia home 303-522-2558)

NO NAME
Bob Palmateer
Kappa High School
4695 Mailihuma Road
Kapaa, Kauai
Hawaii 96746
(school 808-822-4651)
(home 808-822-3526)

NO NAME
Kathe Webster
Kauai High School
R.R. #1
P.O. Box 215
Lihue, Kauai
Hawaii 96766
(school 808-245-2501)
(home 808-335-3678)
APPENDIX O

Core Practices of Experiential Learning at Dickson
Adapted from the original 11 and 2009 adapted Foxfire Core Practices.

1. **The work of teachers and learners is characterized by learner choice, design, and revision.** The central focus of the work grows out of learners’ interests and concerns. Most problems that arise are solved in collaboration with learners as learners develop their ability to solve problems and accept responsibility.

2. **The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and collaborator.** Teachers are responsible for assessing and attending to learners’ developmental needs, providing guidance, identifying academic givens, monitoring each learners’ academic and social growth.

3. **The academic integrity of the work teachers and learners do together is clear.** Mandated learning expectations are identified. Through collaborative planning and implementation, students engage in and master the mandates. Activities assist learners in discovering the value and potential of the curricula and its connections to other disciplines and the world.

4. **Work is characterized by active learning.** Learners are thoughtfully engaged in the learning process, posing and solving problems, making meaning, producing products, and building understanding. The classroom provides an atmosphere of trust where the consequence of a mistake is an opportunity to learn.

5. **New activities spiral out of the old, incorporating prior knowledge and building on skills and understandings that can be amplified.** Rather than a completion of a study as a conclusion, it is regarded as the starting point of new learning.

6. **Peer teaching, small group work, and teamwork are consistent features of classroom activity.** Every learner is included and can identify his/her unique contribution to the work. Collaboration and cooperation are modeled and taught in preparation for an ever changing world.

7. **Connections between the classroom, the community, and the world are clear.** Course content is connected to the community and to larger issues in the community and the world.

8. **There is an audience beyond the teacher for learner work.** Individuals, small groups, or the community affirm that the work is important and worth doing.

9. **Imagination and creativity are encouraged.** The freedom to explore, observe, investigate, and discover are the basis for experiences that lead to a deeper understanding and a desire for learning.

10. **Reflection is an essential activity that takes place at key points in teaching and learning.** Teachers and learners engage in a conscious and thoughtful consideration of the work and the process. Reflection gives rise to revisions and refinements.

11. **The work teachers and learners do together includes rigorous, ongoing assessment, and evaluation.** Teachers and learners enjoy a variety of strategies to demonstrate their mastery of teaching and learning objectives.

Source: Dickson’s Core Practices. (2010).