THISTLEDOWN: AN EXPERIMENTAL APPLICATION OF THE FOXFIRE LEARNING CONCEPT AND AN ANALYSIS OF THAT CONCEPT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1977

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1977
To

Professor Donald Bateman, whose kind help and encouragement made this work at the university possible, and to my wife, Nancy, whose kind help and encouragement made my work at home possible.
VITA

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The Use of Mass Media in the English Curriculum. Professor Donald Bateman.
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INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF INTENT OF THIS STUDY:

Within the last ten years, an interesting and exciting educational concept has been growing within some of the public school systems in the United States. Beginning with a single project in the Appalachian hills of Georgia, it has expanded into a full-scale concept of potentially national significance, has attracted great publicity, shown significant educational success and been responsible for the publication by its students of thousands of magazines rooted in the culture of the students themselves. Now known as the Foxfire Learning Concept, it is based in the experimental, student-centered movement but differs from other such concepts in that it has proven its total adaptability to area or culture and has proven workable within, instead of without, the present traditional public school systems.

Because of its comparative newness, however, there has been no attempt as yet to bring together all of the diverse literature and analyses produced by a variety of writers concerning the Foxfire Learning Concept into a central and meaningful document, nor has there been an attempt to carefully examine, analyze, record and evaluate the establishment, and operation of any one specific project based upon the Concept as a case study of the particular Concept in action.

Because of the rapidly-increasing number of projects based on the Foxfire Concept now being established in various parts of the country, and
because it does have a significance that is potentially far greater than its current state on a national scale, I believe that such a study of the literature and bases for the Concept is both needed and appropriate, as well as the establishment, analysis and evaluation of a specific test project that will provide information toward the future use of the Concept by others.

**INTENT**

It is therefore the intention of this paper to produce a two-fold result: (1) to examine, coalesce and analyze the various works so far produced about or in connection with the Foxfire Learning Concept, thus defining what the Concept is, its bases and its goals, and (2) to report on the establishment of a completely operational Foxfire Learning Concept project within the Southwest-Licking School system at Watkins Memorial High School in Pataskala, Ohio.

The project at Watkins Memorial was established by myself as a test project and was given the name "Thistledown" by the students, after a common but beautiful weed that grows along the rural roads of the area. The project was funded by a grant initially, has been adopted by the national coordinator of the Foxfire Concept, IDEAS, Inc., of Washington, D.C., as an "official" Foxfire project, has been incorporated into the elective English curriculum of the high school and has produced five issues to date of the project publication Thistledown. It is, at the time of this writing, successfully operational, with myself as advisor-teacher.

**ORGANIZATION**

This study, then, will consist of three basic sections. In part one, the Foxfire Concept will be analyzed, examined and defined, including a factual
presentation of the original project that began it all, Foxfire in Rabun Gap, Georgia.

Part two will be a detailed report of the establishment and operation of the test project Thistledown at Watkins Memorial High School, from its beginnings to the present.

Part three's contents will then be an evaluation of the test project Thistledown in terms of the definitions and characteristics of the Foxfire Learning Concept produced in part one to determine how successfully or unsuccessfully the project met the Concept's goals.

NOTE OF TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this paper, the name Foxfire, underlined, refers specifically to the Foxfire magazine produced by students at Rabun Gap, Georgia under the direction of B. Eliot Wigginton, the Foxfire books compiled from these magazines and the Foxfire project itself in Rabun Gap-Nacoochee High School.

The term "Foxfire" or "Foxfire Concept", not underlined, refers to the broader ideas, philosophy and curriculum that have subsequently developed from the project at Rabun Gap.
PART I: THE FOXFIRE LEARNING CONCEPT

A. A FACTUAL HISTORY OF FOXFIRE AND ITS FOUNDER

Foxfire was begun by B. Eliot Wigginton. Wigginton was born in Wheeling, West Virginia and reared in Athens, Georgia, the son of a professor at the University of Georgia. His father took Eliot to Rabun Gap in the northeast corner of Georgia's Appalachian highlands for summer vacations, and it was "the childhood memory of those summer vacations"\(^1\) that eventually drew Wigginton back to Rabun Gap as a teacher.

Wigginton attended Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, taking five years of changing from "first medicine, then medical illustration, then English, then education"\(^2\) before he graduated in 1966 with an A.B. in English and an M.A. in Teaching. Drawing of those memories of Georgia summers, he contacted the school district of Rabun Gap and was given a job at the 240–student Rabun Gap-Nacoochee High School near Dillard, Georgia "teaching ninth and tenth grade English, geography and...about ten other side responsibilities"\(^3\) and feeling he was "a big deal -- a force to be reckoned with."\(^4\)

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4. Ibid.
However, things did not turn out, educationally, as he expected. "I came down with a lot of high-powered notions about teaching and really digging into literature," he relates, ". . . (but) I got hit with the Georgia curriculum which . . . had assigned textbooks and assigned grammar and literature." The assigned text for the novel was Silas Marner and after six weeks he found the students "bored, restless and upset." The students showered him with paper airplanes, spit wads and water pistols and carved every desk with graffiti. The "wreckage," as Wigginton calls it, culminated when a student named Tommy Green, who had been moved to the front of the room for misbehavior, set fire to Wigginton's lecturn with a cigarette lighter during class. At this point, Wigginton "began to ponder greener pastures," but settled instead for " . . . a punishment system: the first offense netted an X in the grade book, the second a paddling, the third a visit to the principal's office and the fourth, suspension from class for two weeks to the library." This system too, like Silas Marner, was a failure. As one of Wigginton's students, Barbara Taylor, explained:

The kids, on the brink of failure, couldn't care less about the X. The paddling was just a seat warmer for cold days. The principal's office? What a joy! They could sit and talk to the principal's secretary and catch up on all the news. Out of class for two weeks

6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., op. cit., p. 10.
and you were a real winner. Sleeping that hour in the library was more pleasure and punishment.

Wigginton soon realized his error and finally made the momentus decision. One day he walked into class and said, "This is borning you to death. It's boring me, too. How would you like to do something like a magazine for the rest of the year?" Silas Marner was put aside, a card table was set up in the back of the room, and Wigginton began trying to involve everyone in the new project. For the first time, the students seemed enthusiastic.

The project's goal at this point was far from what it has now become, for Wigginton's only intent at this time was to "print one issue put together by all of us as a class and during class time," simply to help those "ailing classes." But the big decision here-- the one issue's contents-- was to make the difference between this small project becoming just another class assignment and it becoming eventually a nationally-famous educational experiment.

Wigginton had often heard, during those summer vacations, the old-timers of the area discussing nearly lost arts, skills, lore and crafts, such as planting by the signs of the zodiac, building log cabins, moonshining and other customs and skills of self-sufficiency directly from their heritage. He knew little about these things himself, and had discovered that his students, though the grandchildren of many of the skills' practitioners, knew little about them either. He suggested to the students that they go home and ask about these things for possible use in the magazine and the students, now curious, responded eagerly and began interviewing their relatives.

9. Ibid.
A name for the publication was needed, so each student submitted three names. A master list was mimeographed, the students voted, and "Foxfire", a tiny organism that glows in the dark and is frequently found in the shaded caves of the mountains around Rabun Gap was chosen.  

The school's administration was notably unenthusiastic about the whole idea, but "even though they thought the magazine would fail, they agreed to let the class go ahead if the students would be personally responsible for all the debts." Though it seemed harsh at the time, Wigginton now sees this lack of financial support a "blessing in disguise," because it meant "the magazine had to sell and literally forced us to emphasize folklore rather than poetry," for magazines devoted to verse "almost never survive for very long on the market. It also meant the kids had to find the money for that first issue themselves," and that "made them more determined to see the magazine go" than "anything I (Wigginton) could have said," as well as giving them a psychological stake in the venture.

To raise the money, the student "went into the community --to gas stations, supermarkets and places like that-- and asked for donations." Any donor, regardless of the size of his gift, was promised that his name would be listed in the issue, and he would receive a free copy signed by all the students. Eventually, they collected $450.00, enough, according to a local printer, to print 600 copies. So when they had collected and typed their stories, the first

12. Ibid., p. 11.
issue was published.

The students began selling the first issue to friends, family and others around Rabun Gap for 50¢ each, and to their delight, all 600 were sold within a week. Another 600 copies were printed and these, too, sold rapidly. This success prompted Wigginton and his students to continue and to try to print more issues, instead of stopping with just one printed issue, as was originally planned.16

Financially and otherwise, Foxfire at this point was still very much a shoestring operation. The 50¢ selling price was a wrong one, for it did not occur to them that it was costing nearly 80¢ per copy to have the magazine printed, and so they were in continual financial difficulty even though the magazine was selling so well. There was only one tape recorder and one camera to be shared by all 60 of the student staff (two of Wigginton's English classes) and "both were secondhand and in the repair shop half of the time."17 Eventually, however, some subscribers donated more recorders and cameras. The only available typewriters in the school were in use all day, so all typing had to be done after school, as did the interviewing, since Wigginton "had a full class load and wasn't allowed to let the staff leave school to interview on their own."18

The magazine's "office" was still the cardtable in the back of Wigginton's regular English classroom.

They persisted, however, finally publishing four issues in 1966-67, the first two of which were not even copyrighted. With each issue, the

17. Taylor, op. cit., l. 178.
18. Ibid.
circulation grew, and so Wigginton began seeking funds to expand the project which he now perceived as a positive educational tool that had caught the interest of his previously apathetic students, as well as the interest and support of the community.

Slowly, through Wigginton's persistent efforts, grant money for the project began coming in. In 1968, the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines, which supplies support to non-commercial literary magazines, awarded Foxfire a small grant, followed by a donation from the Newport Folk Foundation. Added to the donations from many local people individually and the income from the rising sales of the magazine, these grants enabled Foxfire to continue, but not to expand to any great extent.

Then, in 1969, Wigginton began discussions with Herb McArthus of the educational division of the National Endowment for the Humanities. At this time, Wigginton felt he had nearly exhausted all possibilities for financial support for Foxfire, and had collected "a manilla folder...packed with letters from foundations and organizations saying, in essense, that they liked the idea but could see no way to help."19 McArthus, however, found a way to help and, after a visit to the NEH's offices in Washington, D.C., Wigginton and Foxfire were awarded two grants totaling nearly $20,000.20

This large award pulled Foxfire onto a self-sufficient basis from which its success has worked ever since. Using the NEH grants, Wigginton purchased

20. Ibid.
new tape recorders and cameras, a complete darkroom set-up and their own typewriters and video-tape equipment, with the remainder going to hire a former VISTA worker in the area as a full-time assistant who could take the students on interviews during the school day while Wigginton was teaching. At the same time, the school found a room vacant for Foxfire to turn into its office and workroom, and the cardtable in the back of Wigginton's classroom was returned at last to the student from whom it had been borrowed. 21

With this new equipment, facilities and staff, the magazine's operations quickly expanded. Publicity began increasing, some of it in national publications such as Media and Methods, The Whole Earth Catalog and Saturday Review, and the subscription list quickly reached 3000. In 1970, Wigginton again traveled to Washington, D.C., seeking more funds, and visited the Smithsonian Institution to discuss the possibility that the Smithsonian would be interested in acquiring copies of Foxfire tapes and photographs as part of the Smithsonian's archives. The Smithsonian was, at the time, unresponsive, but as he left the offices, Wigginton left a copy of Foxfire on a desk. 22

Shortly thereafter, Brian Beun, president and founder of a Washington, D.C.-based foundation, I.D.E.A.S., Inc. (Institutional Development and Economic Affairs Service, Inc.), saw the copy of Foxfire on the desk on a visit to the Smithsonian and became immediately interested in the Foxfire project. IDEAS's purpose and those of Foxfire seemed very similar, as described by Beun:

21. Thompson, loc. cit.
IDEAS represents a forum for thought and creative action. It works with a small core staff identifying a range of issues whose common mesh is a concern for making institutions more creative and popularly responsive. We take special interest in the means by which cultural minorities and a wider populace can achieve better forms of self-expression, economic independence and social justice. Our objectives are to assist the disadvantaged to find for themselves a clearer civic, social and cultural identity and to enable professionals to be better catalysts of institutional creativity.  

After finding out more about *Foxfire*, Beun was intrigued: "It had prototype characteristics. It seemed to be the kind of thing that could be multiplied to benefit other groups. We became involved."  

IDEAS, Inc. supported in turn by a $200,000 grant from the Ford Foundation, then worked out a large-scale plan of support in many areas with Wigginton that assured the success of both *Foxfire* specifically and the ideas and philosophy behind it in general. Beginning in 1971, IDEAS hired Wigginton as a $425 per month associate of the Foundation and advisor on *Foxfire* and subsidised a large portion of his salary at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee H.S. to lessen his class load. Thus, relieved of all other class duties, Wigginton officially "teaches" one class per day at the high school, a meeting of the *Foxfire* staff, and then is free to spend the rest of the day working with the project or traveling to other places to assist their projects.  

IDEAS also advised Wigginton in the process on incorporation for the project, providing legal assistance, so that *Foxfire* could continue to operate

23. Brian Beun, in Pennington, Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
within the school but be, in effect, an independent and separate organization: the Southern Highlands Literary Foundation (now the Foxfire Fund, Inc.), complete with a board of directors and its own bank account and payroll. In addition, IDEAS provided financial support for the purchase of expanded video-tape facilities and began the publication, from the IDEAS offices, of a national newsletter, called Exchange, which is described on its masthead as "A bulletin for the exchange of information among student publications based on the Foxfire Learning Concept," and is today sent free to all staff members and advisors of projects on Foxfire, trading information about ideas, techniques, successes and failures. These actions by IDEAS allowed Wigginton to devote full time to the expansion of Foxfire in Rabun Gap and launched Foxfire into the realm of an educational tool and concept that was to be refined, defined and hopefully promulgated far beyond the hills of Georgia. Progress in this latter effort was slow, however, for although Foxfire itself was booming, there was, as yet, not a real national awareness of Foxfire either as a specific project or as a concept of learning. Wigginton and IDEAS did not have long to wait, though, before this, too, became a reality.

Only a year later, in 1972, another coincidence similar to Beun's finding the copy of Foxfire on the desk in the Smithsonian occurred which propelled the project from local to national consciousness. A fraternity brother of Wigginton's at Cornell had become an editor at the publishers of Doubleday and Company in New York and, like Beun, chanced upon a copy of Foxfire at the home of a friend. Recognizing Wigginton's name, he called him and, in the ensuing discussion, the editor suggested the possibility of consolidating several of the Foxfire magazines into a book to be published by Doubleday. Wigginton
was receptive to the proposal and, after much negotiation with Doubleday, and much work by the Foxfire staff in choosing which articles were to be included, editing those into a more concise form and deciding their order and arrangement, The Foxfire Book was published in both paper and hardback and distributed nationally for sale by Doubleday in 1972. 27

To everyone's amazement and gratification, the book began to be bought all over the country in great numbers. "I couldn't get over it," said Ed Sprague, a Doubleday representative. "It was a freak thing." 28 The book's sales kept climbing until it reached the top of the New York Times Best-Seller list and by 1975 was approaching one million copies in paperback sales and a quarter million in hardback despite their $3.95 and $5.00 prices in the bookstores. In Rabun Gap, the Foxfire project, already in full swing and expanding from the impetus and help from IDEAS, now began receiving royalty checks from Doubleday averaging $140,000 each, all of which went directly and entirely to the project itself and not to the school since the book was copyrighted by the project itself under its incorporated organization, and the student who was the staff treasurer endorsed the checks and deposited them into Foxfire's bank account. 29 Seeing a good thing, Doubleday, with Wigginton's support, drew upon the large amount of material collected thus far by the Foxfire staff and quickly published Foxfire 2 in 1973, which also jumped onto the best-seller lists, and then Foxfire 3 in 1975, now nearing a quarter-million in sales. There are,

29. Ibid.
at present, a Foxfire 4 and 5 in preparation. The income from the sales of all the Foxfire books is, by now, enormous and, with the continued support of IDEAS, has assured Foxfire of permanence and independence.

The extent to which Foxfire has expanded from its small beginning by utilizing their income from the books' royalties, the now over-10,000 subscriptions and the many continual donations is truly remarkable. Some say, in fact, that it may have gone too far. With a yearly income from these sources now in the $100,000-plus range, Wigginton has turned the project into what the Wall Street Journal has called a "small empire" and, as Wigginton says, "I've had to become conscious of a lot of things I didn't know about before, like the existence of a money market." 30

There are now 17 full-time adult advisors to Foxfire at Rabun Gap, with Wigginton as the director, all of whose salaries are paid by Foxfire's corporation through its own income and not from the school system. Still operating for now at the high school, the project now has a student staff of 90 of the school's 250-member student body each year. The project functions the year round, although school may be out, with Foxfire paying the students who are on the staff in the summer $100 per week to take the place of a summer job they might otherwise have gotten. Foxfire has thus become one of the area's larger employers, with a payroll in the summer of 1973 for the students alone of $32,000. 31 The interviews, once conducted with the single borrowed recorder and camera, now are conducted with the aid of Foxfire's own personal fleet

30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p. 13.
fleet of Jeeps, a van completely equipped as a video studio and an unlimited number of professional-quality single lens reflex camera and cassette recorders.

In 1972, as the money from The Foxfire Book began coming in, Wigginton and the staff decided that space and facility arears ought to be expanded, as well as equipment and personnel. Consequently, they made a grand move which has sparked possibly the most criticism and controversy in the Foxfire project. Using $35,000 of their income, they purchased 50 acres of land near the high school. They then hired Millard Buchanan, a retired builder in Rabun Gap, to search the area for old wooden structures, purchase them, and then reconstruct them, with student help, on the 50-acre site. The goal is to construct a 32-building "Foxfire Center" which will function as a restored Appalachian village, the offices and headquarters of the Foxfire project's activities, an archive/museum for Foxfire records and artifacts, and a natural forest and wildlife preserve. Wigginton and the staff, however, decided to keep the Foxfire Center closed to tourists and other "outsiders" and to keep it open only to those in the Foxfire project. This decision, though, has caused an uproar in Rabun Gap. Though they are proud of Foxfire's accomplishments and in it having put Rabun Gap "on the map," the residents of the area think the Foxfire Center should be used to attract tourists to the restored village and should include a community center for their use as well. 32 Like many others, they do not understand how the Center can be wholly independent from the school system and be owned entirely, in effect, by the students themselves, while at the same time...

32. Ibid.
time, the students are receiving credit from the school for their work and their
teacher, Wigginton, is still employed by the school. It is, indeed, a unique
situation.

Earl Dillard, for example, a director of the largest bank in the Rabun
Gap area and a member of one of the few wealthy families in the area, views
Wigginton as "...a damn yankee who came down here and hit an ace," especi-
ally after Wigginton announced plans recently to put "$10,000 to $20,000 at a
clip into local banks" so that Foxfire could have some say in who got loans in
the area by "getting them to put one of us on the boards of their banks." Dillard,
and others, sum up their reaction by saying that Wigginton has "not the chance
of a snowball in hell" of ever getting on the board of his bank. Thus far, how-
ever, Wigginton has not altered his position and has agreed only to include in
the plans for the Foxfire Center "a place where people in the community can
meet," which is viewed by the residents as a rather vague and unpromising
commitment, especially from someone who has made his entire success from
recording their lives and using their own children to do it.

Meanwhile, the Foxfire Center is nearing completion, with 32 re-
stored structures standing, ranging from a grist mill to an old church.
Wigginton, as a sort of crowning achievement, has, with the aid of students,
constructed a complete log home on the Foxfire land overlooking the rest of the
Center and has taken up permanent (and free) residence there. The staff is
working on moving all of their facilities out of the school and into the Center's

33. Ibid.
buildings, with some of the structures serving as the Foxfire offices, some for the Foxfire photography and video tape studios, some for the archives and museum, one for a Foxfire library and some for guest facilities. In addition, one of the buildings now houses the Foxfire Press, their own student-run publishing company which has now produced its first work Memories of a Mountain Shortline, a history by two of the students of a now-defunct local railroad. 34

Another structure now houses the Foxfire Record Company which, with its two full-time advisors and a staff of students, will begin producing albums of local Appalachian storytellers, songwriters and musicians soon. 35

Wigginton has also established the Foxfire Scholarship Fund, dispensing college aid money to Foxfire staffers who want to attend college, and most do. The video tapes produced at the Foxfire Center's studio of some of their interviews will be shown in 1976-77 on a local cable tv channel as a regular series on Appalachian folklife, with hopes of later expansion into a broader market. A former Foxfire staffer who went to college and obtained a degree in forestry has been hired to supervise the construction of a greenhouse at the Center and run environmental studies of the area, eventually to be connected to the high school as part of its curriculum. In a similar effort, Wigginton is also organizing woodworking training at the school and one of the Center's buildings will contain a business, run by Foxfire students, which will make reproductions of Appalachian furniture built entirely from old lumber and using wood pegs and hand construction. 36

35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., p. 3.
Beyond this "small empire" taking shape in Rabun Gap, the ideas of Foxfire, now broadened into an educational philosophy and approach called the "Foxfire Learning Concept," is being actively promulgated by IDEAS. Working with Wigginton, IDEAS sponsors summer workshops in Rabun Gap and in other locales, bringing in entire staffs of fledgling projects from other parts of the country, some far as far as Hawaii, Alaska and Jamaica. The students are shown how a Foxfire project functions and hear a variety of speakers, including Wigginton and other Foxfire staff members, as well as professional folklorists, photographers and printers. At the end of the one or two week workshops, student Foxfire staff members are available, if asked, to return to the project's school to spend the rest of the summer with them, helping with the first issue. The only stipulation is that the expenses of the student from Foxfire be paid by the board of education of the school which is starting the new project. In this way, students from the Appalachian hills of Georgia, many of whom have never been 50 miles from Rabun Gap in their lives, have spent months living and working at projects in places like Colorado, Hawaii, Cape Hatteras, Vermont, Texas, and Missouri, certainly most interesting and educational cross-cultural trades.

IDEAS has also supervised the filming of "Foxfire," a 22-minute film by McGraw-Hill films about the project, and has in addition published two books directly related to the Foxfire Concept: Moments, by Wigginton, which outlines the educational philosophy for teachers behind the Foxfire Concept, and You and Aunt Arie by Pam Wood, which is a sort of basic skills book for other projects.

IDEAS is also working at this time on the possibility of implementing the Foxfire Concept as a curriculum that could be applied to an entire school system, the most intensive work in this area so far being done in Colorado and Pennsylvania, where the adoption of the Foxfire Concept on a statewide scale is being considered. 39

All of this is certainly a long, long way from the cardtable at the back of Wigginton's classroom and his desperate attempts to find something to engage his students' interest and keep his lecture from being set on fire. Certainly, thousands have benefitted from Foxfire's success, both as student participants and as readers, but whether its rapid and incredible expansion and the establishment of that "small empire" in Rabun Gap will ultimately lead to Foxfire's demise as a truly student-oriented educational tool remains to be seen. Wigginton's interest now in things like the "money market," record and publishing companies and the exclusivity of the Foxfire Center may take its toll, it would seem, and leave the students, originally the whole point of Foxfire's creation, as merely tools with which all these grand ventures can be made to function. The people of Rabun Gap, without whom the project could not exist, already distressed by the exclusion of tourists, and partly themselves, from the 32-building Center, and by the financial dealings of Wigginton, seem to be now also feeling overwhelmed by the spreading "empire." Some, in fact, along with a number of the teachers at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee H.S., are complaining to the school board that Foxfire has gotten out of hand, is taking up too much of

the students' time, is forcing aside other academic subjects and is exploiting the students as its size and power grows.  

Wigginton acknowledges the criticisms, but points to the many accomplishments of *Foxfire*, its vast recognition, and the varied learning in communications that a *Foxfire* staffer is exposed to, saying, "The students more about English (from *Foxfire*) than from any other curriculum I could devise. Moreover, the curriculum has built-in motivations and immediate and tangible rewards." Furthermore, Wigginton has frequently expressed a fervent faith in *Foxfire* that often borders on the extreme, for he feels that the entire project is being guided by forces beyond him that have destined it to greatness and makes criticism of it irrelevant. In a recent issue of *Foxfire* magazine, for example, he included an introduction written by himself which concludes with these words:

I said to a Palestinian friend recently, 'It's almost as though there were some sort of force bigger than all of us guiding this thing (*Foxfire*).'

He said, 'Yeah, in our country, we call it God.'

Regardless of what happens in Rabun Gap, however, it would seem that, through IDEAS and others, the Foxfire Learning Concept itself will continue and its ideals will remain intact in other projects in other places all around the U.S., including, I hope, in the Thistledown project here in Ohio.

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42. Wigginton, "Our Tenth Birthday," loc. cit.
B. AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOXFIRE LEARNING CONCEPT

This section will deal with Foxfire as an educational concept and a pedagogical tool. Its bases as a concept are rooted in the factual beginnings of the Foxfire project in Rabun Gap, detailed in Part A. As the success and viability of that Foxfire became apparent, the concepts and philosophies behind it began to be examined and articulated by its founder Eliot Wigginton. When the IDEAS organization joined their efforts with his (see Part A), further analysis and promulgation occurred, broadening Foxfire's ideas and methods fully into what is now termed the "Foxfire Learning Concept." Additional writing, critiques and analyses by a great number of people both in and out of education have also been done before, concurrent with and after Wigginton and IDEAS's work (see bibliography). There has thus far been no attempt, however, to coalesce the few central works of the Foxfire Concept with the wide range of peripheral, but important, documents about it in order to bring into focus its essential bases, ideas, goals, accomplishments and definitions. The following is an attempt to bring these works together into a coherent and systematic whole which will hopefully result in a better understanding of the Concept, what it is and what it is not.

Some General Bases for the Foxfire Concept

To anyone involved professionally in the field of education in the last ten years, it is apparent that there is and has been a wide range of experimentation and change occurring. Beginning, and perhaps spurred by, the post-Sputnik
decade and continuing into the 70's, new forms and new methods were nearly the rule rather than the exception as education tried to find better ways to cope with the demands of the electronic age, the inner city, the cold war, student activism and apathy, a changing society and the 20th century in general. Free schools, open schools, open classrooms, alternative schools, extended degrees, schools without walls, ungraded and non-graded schools, student-centered curricula and many other concepts were, and still are, being tried, some with success and some not. As we move into the latter half of the 1970's, it seems, however, that the early revolutionary fervor has somewhat cooled and is turning into a steadier and more evolutionary movement.

During this time of change, however, it seems that one particular concept has been slowly moving to the fore, cloaked in various names and methodology: the idea that learning can be stimulated, served and reinforced by structured experiential learning experiences. Traditional education seems to be discovering—or rather re-discovering, for the idea is not new— that real experience can produce learning that is both meaningful to society and exciting to the students and that the experiential approach can be adopted and adapted to meet a variety of learning goals. Broadly seen, the experiential approach is the whole general basis of the Foxfire Learning Concept.

In May of 1974, for example, at the Bemont Center in Elkridge, Maryland, a conference on The Emerging Reform Movement in Secondary Schools was held, sponsored by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Educational Development Center, Inc.

Its intent was to analyze and summarize the findings of five different national commissions on education reform convened in 1973-74. Their analyses of these commissions' findings are most useful in seeing the forces which have brought experiential educational concepts into serious consideration and demand.

The conference found repeated indications of:

1. The need to "de-juvenilize" the high schools in order to grant mature responsibility to the student earlier.

2. An understanding that the isolation of youth denies to the adult world the youths' vigor, venturous idealism and impatience with the expedient.

3. The need to recognize and to integrate the vast amount of education that goes on, or could go on, outside the bounds of the school walls.

4. The realization that in the past the young were aided in becoming responsible adults by having real work and being a needed part of society, and that some of that tradition needs to be recaptured.

With this in mind, the conference summarized the need for educational reform by calling for:

1. The school to be used as an agent by which students could become part of outside learning places and experiences.

2. A reduction in the cultural isolation of high school students.
3. Developing of closer ties between the school and the community.

4. Making comprehensive education, not the comprehensive high school, the instrumentality for youths' passage into adulthood.

The emphasis in these findings point clearly to the need for using experience and responsibility as a key for making schooling both useful to the student and to the community, as well as meaningful and exciting for him personally. In a similar move, the National Association for Secondary School Principals has been fostering among its members since 1972-73 awareness of "action" (experiential) learning for the purposes of curricular change and enrichment. There can be few organizations more representative of what we term traditional education than the NASSP, but they, too, clearly perceive the experiential concept as one both workable and necessary in today's schools.

As the need for and the importance of experiential education is seen, attempts must be made to fully define its function and concepts so that it does not become merely another quickly tried, quickly passed, part of the experimental spectrum. It is important to point out here, I think, that experiential education, as it is being used by myself and others, indicates a process—a way of doing things—that will be more specifically defined in future sections. There is, of course, no such thing as truly non-experiential education as the term is

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to be perceived in the simplest way, for even the most vicarious of activities is an experience of sorts for the learner. What we are concerned with, and especially so in the Foxfire Concept, is the quality of that experience, how it shaped, perceived and ultimately used by the learner to further his educational goals, better himself and more fully realize his place in society. Hopefully, we will provide the learner with sequential and incremental experiences, as Gager says, will "stimulate and impel one to live fruitfully and creatively in future experiences" and which will be "modified by the translation of each prior experience into analogs of broader, future considerations."45

There is, in fact, an experiential learning process flow which has been advanced before by others but is being re-introduced by Durst, Gager (q.v.) and others and which accurately reflects the basic experiential process in general terms. This process flow is as follows:

1. The Learner is placed into a-
2. Demanding Reality Context, which necessitates the mastery of-
3. New and Applied Skills, followed immediately by-
4. Responsible Challenging Action, coupled with an opportunity for-
5. Critical Analysis and Reflection, which ultimately-
6. Reorganizes the meaning and direction of the learner's life experience.

Within these six parts, there are some further considerations to be met. In part 2, the demanding reality context is critical and necessary; it is, in fact, the key to the process flow. The context in which the learner finds himself must be both demanding and real for it must impel the learner to action, a

condition immediately different from most traditional methods in which one of
the biggest problems is that the student is usually acted upon rather than being
called upon to act himself. Just as importantly, it must demand real decision-
making on his part, with real attendant responsibility placed upon him—again
quite different—and he must receive recognizable feedback that tells him
immediately if his decisions were appropriate ones or not.

The new and applied skills in part 3 are ones he must thus know to
cope with the reality context of part 2. He therefore has a practical reason
for wanting to learn these skills; they are not hypothetical, they are necessary
and immediately useful to him if the decisions, actions and the responsibilities
of the reality context are to be dealt with adequately and naturally. To do that,
the skills must be structured incrementally and sequentially so that as he pro-
gresses he can see for himself the building process of his own knowledge and
thus simultaneously satisfy his own personal needs of ego and self-esteem. He
will be able to perceive within the reality context tangible evidence of his own
change and growth if he wishes to function effectively. It is important, of
course, to be certain here that the skills he must learn and apply are within the
capability of the learner, for if they were not, the process would then become
self-defeating and detrimental to the learner.

As he finds himself, then, in the demanding reality context and, has
his new skills to apply to it, he must then be called upon—"impelled"—into
part 4, the responsible challenging action. It is here, again, that the departure
from the traditional educational realm is apparent, for the action the learner
is to perform must, if the process is to be successful, be meaningful action;
not trivial or hypothetical or only "academic." He must perceive that others are dependent upon his actions as well, so that they have real meaning and import and that the consequences of his actions will be experienced both by himself as well as others in an immediate and obvious way. These actions, ideally, should involve, in fact, planning and decision-making that involve both the learner and others and should be ones that the learner can perceive as meeting some real needs of both himself and of society.

This responsible and challenging action must be coupled with part 5, however, to become truly meaningful. In part 5, the learner is to have opportunity for critical analysis and reflection in regard to his action and decision-making in order to make the critical linkage between practice and theory. If successful, the analysis will be supportive of his choices and if not it will be the same means to reflect upon exactly why the actions/decisions were inappropriate. In either case, the objective is to aid the learner into transferring his analyses and reflection to broader considerations and thus be useful for his further actions as he moves into other reality contexts, more new skills and calls for actions. Ultimately, then, it is hoped that the flow of demanding reality context—new and applied skills—responsible, challenging action—critical analysis and reflection will lead the learner to a reorganization of his life experience in a way both beneficial to himself and to those around him.

As the need for reform and the emergence of experiential education as one key way to accomplish that reform become apparent, and as the basic tenets of experiential education are being defined, it is important and necessary now to begin more closely to hook these considerations to the particular concept
under consideration—the Foxfire Learning Concept. One of the singular aspects that Foxfire deals with are the cultural roots, heritage and folklore of the community surrounding the particular project, and it is this emphasis on the folklore that again fits well with the increasing discovery and analysis of experiential education as a way to meet the changes demanded of schools today.

In his paper on experiential education, 46 Murray Durst points out that every community served by an educational institution is culturally different in aspect, location, goals and makeup and yet each one is filled with real life, real people, real institutions, real environment, real work, real cultural roots, real history, real social structure and real interacting forces. The emphasis here on "real" is, of course, not coincidental, for the point is that reality—the demanding reality context of the process flow—is the very basis of the experiential learning idea. Since this is the case, it follows that every community, whether it be urban, rural or suburban, has within it the opportunity to build upon and use the concepts of experience-based learning. The key is to look beneath the seeming commonplace of the community to find that opportunity and to use it. David Shapiro, too, point out that "good education, like good criticism, is to dip into the community of the past and the present," 47 and Robert Griffin, in an article in producing what calls "camera culture capsules," points out that if we prescind from future, that is, if we exclude from the classroom the values and life styles of the people whose language we teach, we virtually exclude the viable dimension that makes language study more than

just a sterile linguistic exercise.

Folklore seems ideally made for the experiential concept, then, for it comes directly from the community and culture of the student himself and can, within the process flow, involve him in all the aspects of experience that the process demands. The appropriateness of folklore and its desirability is expressed by many. Hector Lee, writing about folklore in the secondary schools, points out that "to find what is good, true and beautiful in ones own backyard, in ones own neighborhood, in ones own family, can bring both understanding and appreciation" and that "to live (in an area) is one thing; to be a part of it, seeing it and ourselves in it, is another." Similarly, Van Hastings Garner, writing of an extensive oral history project in which he and a class were involved, says that "we discovered that no matter where we are...there are people who are not only fascinating but who can teach us a great deal about life, ourselves and the history and society that created us." When the Encyclopedia Brittanica Educational Corporation made a film on Aunt Arie and Foxfire called "The American Character," they found that this was "an older American speaking" that "has a message for our skeptical, self-doubting generation" but that we must listen now to hear it before it disappears.

That this rich mine of folklore is not only appropriate but possible as an element of the experiential education concept is readily shown in the

evidence of the *Foxfire* project and the others like it, including, I think, the one presented in this paper as a case study of such a project in action on a local level—*Thistledown*. The initial doubts as to whether students at the secondary level could "handle" folklore have been laid to rest with the publication of the Foxfire projects' works and their wide acceptance in libraries, institutions and by the general public. Writing about *Foxfire*, Arthur Gordon points out that youngsters can handle just about anything if somebody will trust and encourage them. Public education, he says, all too often seems to bog down in archaic rules and methods and that "somehow, we've got to show the kids that the world can be their classroom, and the classroom their world. How can we do it? By giving them worthwhile tastes and exciting goals to strive for—and then keeping our big adult paws off their enthusiasms."  

52. Summing up this point, Eliot Wigginton, in his book *Moments*, says:

> At the very heart of *Foxfire* it is the conviction that students can learn about their community and about humanity only outside the classroom. In the classroom, they can, with the help of their teachers and peers, examine, analyze, even celebrate what they've discovered, and compare their findings with those of others; but they must have the world outside the classroom as their primary motivation for learning, and at the heart and soul of what they learn.  

53. This emphatic statement seems to be as much a statement for the use of folklore as it is a personal philosophy or an integral facet of the ideals of the *Foxfire* Concept, for certainly it is only by outside pursuits that the student can find this lore. Coupled with this matching of the goals of experiential learning


and those of the Foxfire Concept, it would also seem that the major tool of the Foxfire projects—oral history—is exceedingly appropriate for this work. For example, in his book *Oral History in the Classroom*, Daniel Place, one of the many who are realizing the obvious and valuable connection between folklore and the educational system, says that oral history is "not only a fine method of teaching historical research, fact analysis, organizational skills and data compilation" but is, as well, a "valuable project in its own right and is appreciated by the community."  

54. Unlike traditional folklore techniques, the oral history tradition is not nearly as rigid and thus is more suitable for the use of the student; indeed, the extensive use of the oral history method may result in defining more closely some of its techniques and principles. Ronald Grele, for example, points out that the literature of oral history has "not begun to coalesce around a set of definitive works across disciplinary lines" which would thus point to new directions with the same certainty that now exists in such related fields as folklore and linguistics, and that "the theoretical and methodological problems of oral history are still open to debate and widely varying theses and practices; it is still a field in its formative years."  

55. The reason for this comparative newness is not really very esoteric, but is rather a simple result of technology: the field of oral history coincides rather obviously with the development of the audio tape recorder, in particular its portable cassette form, while the collecting of folklore, per se, dates back much beyond the tape recorder and


deals with what can, or could, be written, collected, or drawn.

Thus, we have a happy coincidence of events—the emergence of oral history just at the particular time when education is seeking a way of making one experiential concept, folklore, immediately useful and viable as a pedagogical tool. Place points out that "oral history...adds to our knowledge of the past and greatly expands our understanding of it" and that listening to an oral history interview can be a "highly motivating, thought-provoking lesson,"56 which, I believe, would find agreement in those students involved in Foxfire Concept projects. More specifically, oral history offers the student a unique opportunity in learning in the experiential process, and some of those attributes have begun to emerge in the analyses of various writers. Carol Soloman, for example, writing in the Maryland English Journal, says that a folklore unit provides a unique opportunity to:

1. Renew students' connections with their nation's past, their ethnic heritages, and their parents.

2. Develop increased respect for their own folkways, and

3. Draw upon concepts and skills acquired in a variety of subjects.57

Lee also draws a similar list, finding that oral history and folklore in the classroom can:

1. Provide material for a better understanding of society and of the student himself.

2. Provide a ready means of motivation for a number of studies.

56. Place, op. cit., p. 1.
3. Help to develop a more wholesome respect for others.

4. Enable the teacher, in an interesting way, to contribute to relevant and satisfying social, intellectual and philosophical attitudes, and

5. Provide a means for the teacher and students to collect local history, legends and items of material culture which will help the school and community preserve for future use the elements of local significance both past and present. 58

There can be little doubt, then, of the efficacy of the fields of folklore and in particular oral history for the educational medium of experiential methods, nor for the usefulness and desirability of folklore and its appropriateness for the secondary student in and of itself. Likewise, we can see that the oral history methodology, in its comparative newness, fits well into the experiential spectrum and the fact that it serves the experiential movement well can be easily attested to in the evidence and existence of the Foxfire projects themselves around the country.

Oral history, in essence, deals with the real world and with the facts of it, as told by the people who lived with and, in part, are responsible for those facts. It is here, again, that we see the emphasis on dealing with reality and with the real world, as opposed to the usually artificial, hypothetical world created within the classroom walls. This, again, is the central problem to be overcome, and the one which those who call for reform, like the NASSP and the Maryland conference spoken of earlier, recognize fully and which has thus

58. Lee, loc. cit.
caused experiential education, with its roots in reality, to be propelled to the mainstream of change in education today. Writing about Foxfire in Saturday Review, David Shapiro stresses this attribute of the Foxfire concept above all when he states:

The inaccuracy of much contemporary pedagogy and the inaccuracy of thought among our children come from our inability to permit them to bump up against the stubborn irreducible facts of the community... Having to deal with the capricious world of facts is one of the marks of civilization, and the works of Foxfire... are well within the tradition of Orwellian authenticity...

Writing of the same problem, Eliot Wigginton, in an article on Foxfire for Media and Methods, says that:

There are far too many students today who see English as a subject that is hopelessly obscure--one that functions in some ethereal kingdom where the atmosphere is incapable of supporting ordinary life. Too many see it as a field where their ability to participate actively and meaningfully is directly proportional to their ability to stammer out an oral report on a book they haven't read or relate an experience they never had. All this is too bad, for exactly the opposite should be the truth. English, far from being obscure, is in reality the most basic kind of communication. In its most simplest definition, it is merely reaching out and touching people with words and ideas, and being touched by them. In this, everyone can participate.

Indeed, everyone can participate, at least within the experiential concept, for that is precisely one of the major differences in basic goals between experiential and so-called traditional education. It is the participation, actively and with responsibility in the real world with real decisions and real consequences,

59. Shapiro, loc. cit.
as outlined in the process flow earlier, that make experiential education, and thus the Foxfire Concept, so useful and important to today's student and today's schools. Peter Kleinbard of the National Commission on Resources for Youth, a New York based organization that is involved wholly in the experiential, youth participation mode of education, says that:

The restoration of a sense of interdependence and social responsibility are a central result of youth participation programs...By promoting responsible decision-making among young people, by encouraging cooperation between the generations, by reminding everyone that young people have a valuable contribution to make, youth participation produces responsible, compassionate adults...

Kleinbard continues to say that because youth participation allows young people to "make real decisions for which they are accountable," it therefore provides them with training in the key area of decision-making—that is, real decision-making with reality as the base—that he sees as a much-neglected facet of today's educational process, and one that needs to be returned to the educational scene. Practice in real decision-making is lacking almost entirely in the present traditional system, in his view, and I must agree, for nearly all decisionions the secondary student is called upon to make in most systems are either trivial, without consequences, or artificially created and lend nothing to the student's experience or to his sense of worth so that he arrives at adulthood having seldom had to make a real decision and, when suddenly faced with the great number of immediate and important decisions to be made upon graduation, he often cannot. Kleinbard sees this area of experiential learning as so

important, in fact that he says that, "the opportunity to make decisions is more important than the outcome of the project."\textsuperscript{62}

Similarly, Dan Conrad of the Center for Youth Development and Research, describes benefits that accrue from being involved in an experientially-based program that reaches out of the school into the community:\textsuperscript{63}

--opportunity, either in school or elsewhere, for a young person to be a contributor; to experience the satisfaction of undertaking a needed task and completing it creditably.

--it is critical that young people have the power to define needs for themselves.

--it is finding and affirming an identity--transcending oneself.

--an experience-based learning model that requires students to pursue or apply their acquired skills through direct involvement in non-classroom settings.

--communities have very immediate needs--high school students can accomplish tasks critically needed by their communities.

Again, here, we can see the emphasis of responsibility, decision-making, non-classroom reality experiences and the contact with the community.

Finally, in a special issue of the NCRY Newsletter, appropriately titled "Kids Can Do Wonderful Things," some general bases of an experiential, youth participation concept project are summarized as follows:\textsuperscript{64}

1. A genuine need in the community that young people consider both important and just, and that they help fill.

2. Challenging work that encourages youth participants to extend themselves in thought and action.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
3. Opportunities to make decisions and design plans that the youth participants themselves act upon. Responsibility for the consequences of their actions and decisions.

4. Reflective activity to help youth participants to achieve a deeper understanding of their work.

5. A sense of community that develops when participants work interdependently to carry out important tasks for each member of the group.

6. The involvement of each young person is by his own choice.

7. Identification of community problems and needs by the young people themselves.

8. A flexible program continually changing to meet the needs and ideas of those involved, by their decisions.

9. A variety of challenging activities to accommodate young people with different interests and capabilities.

It can be seen then, I believe, that the general and philosophical bases for the Foxfire Learning Concept are a mixture of both old and new, with part of its base resting on the firm past tradition of education through experience and part of it resting on the need for reform and the receptivity to experimentation of the last few years. When the various writings presented are examined, there begins to come into focus some obvious general educational bases that root the Foxfire Concept and, hopefully, will provide it with a firm enough stance that it will endure the rapid movement through education of the various experimental ideas and philosophies. As I discern these bases as a summary of these works, they are:

1. The generally perceived need for educational reform and an alternative to the traditional educational system.

2. The perception by many of experience-based learning as a viable alternative to traditional education.
3. The recognition that important learning can occur, perhaps even should occur, outside the classroom instead of within it.

4. The realization that secondary school-age youth are capable of far more than they are usually given a chance to do in the traditional systems.

5. The recognition that the most effective learning occurs when the student is impelled to apply new knowledge and skills to a demanding reality context that is relevant to him.

6. The perception of the need for youth to be engaged in and practice real decision-making with its attendant responsibilities and attendant consequences that make a real difference to himself and others.

7. The need for youth to be engaged in activities that increase, not decrease, his own sense of worth, value and self-esteem.

8. The recognition that the fields of folklore and oral history are workable, valuable and realistic vehicles for experience-based education.

9. The perceived value of strong ties between the student and the cultural heritage of the community—his heritage, and that of these ties can be both deepened and used within the educational system for the benefit of the student.

10. Realization of the need to decrease the cultural and age isolation of the secondary-age youth from older generations and the perception of the Foxfire Concept as a way to accomplish this.

**Defining the Foxfire Learning Concept**

Having established the general and philosophical bases that lie behind or which have contributed to the Foxfire Concept, I intend now to move to examine closely the more specific definitions of the Concept itself in order to see more clearly its place in education and to bring into focus more clearly exactly what the Foxfire Concept is made up of, what can be expected from it, what it
is not and what is should be, ideally.

There are, of course, many other manifestations of the experience-based curriculum besides the one here in question—the Foxfire Concept. Many have existed and been abandoned for a variety of reasons, others still successfully function on a small scale, and a few have burgeoned into large-scale efforts that are commanding national attention, either for their particular attributes or for their underlying principles, as outlined in the preceding section. Overall, however, experiential programs seem to have reached one of three ends.

By far the most numerous are those which have been devised, through small grants, special school programs or innovative teachers as small short-term demonstration projects. These are usually very successful and exciting for a small number of students in a limited area for a short time. They are, unfortunately, almost always isolated from the educational mainstream and do not get the support, either independently or from the traditional system, with which to continue. There are literally hundreds of these, far too many to give any one as an example, but there has, in the last few years, been a significant improvement in the recording, documentation and dissemination of material about these projects. This improvement has been brought about primarily by the National Commission of Resources for Youth in New York, cited several times in this work, which is dedicated wholly to experiential or "youth participation" educational ventures. The NCRY gathers and catalogs data on experiential projects both small and large and presently has on file over 1500 of these with the information organized, accessible and spread through their newsletter and their
various publications which outline selected projects they consider exemplary or particularly adaptable.

Fewer in number but larger in fame and acceptance are the few experiential projects which have become independent non-traditional institutions in their own right. Accepting individual applications, they have garnered sufficient independent support to continue on their own, offering themselves not so much as whole alternatives but rather as complementary--usually summer--activities that add to the learning derived from the traditional systems. The two most prominent examples of this type of project are the Outward Bound, or adventure-based projects, and the Apprenticeships, or craft-based projects, both centered at the present time primarily in New England.

The third end for experientially-based projects is the rarest and, to me, certainly the most important. This is the project that is described by Durst as "successfully based in and made integral to traditional educational systems on a broad enough scale to be significant nationally." The most obvious example of this type of project is Foxfire and the other Foxfire Learning Concept projects, such as the Thisledown project here in Ohio, which I organized.

From the start, then, there is this basic and important difference between Foxfire and the other experiential projects, both large and small. While the others are localized and/or independent, Foxfire is spreading nationally and is operated typically within and adjunctive to the traditional educational systems. This presents Foxfire with a double advantage in that it can and is being perceived by many as useful without the constraints of geographical or

cultural bounds, while still being based inside the already-existing traditional school, thus increasing its accessibility to nearly all students, giving an established and accepted base from which to grow and decreasing the amount of additional funds necessary for its operation, either from institutions or individual applicants.

Further general framework of the Foxfire Concept has been outlined in Murry Durst's "Working Paper..." for IDEAS. Writing of what he terms some underlying notions about experiential learning, Durst lists the following very useful assumptions which he feels to be true of all experiential projects and thus true of Foxfire:

1. Underlying most successful experience-based learning programs is an identifiable common process whereby students perceive themselves to be involved with something real and relevant to their own sense of whole selves.

2. The particular vehicle used by a given experiential learning program is important only to the degree that it serves effectively the achievement of process for participating students.

3. Effective experiential learning vehicles abound in the context of the real world in which every educational institution is located and are limited only by the presence of imagination to make them work for learning purposes.

4. Experience for the purpose of learning need not--some can argue should not--be exotic to the student's immediate community of reference nor need it be in itself held discrete
from traditional learning methodologists.

5. The more closely related experience-based learning is to
the attainment of cognitive goal achievement for which tradi-
tional educational systems are held accountable by their
supporting constituencies, the more apt it is to be operation-
ally integrated within those systems.

6. Ultimately, for experiential learning to become a significant
strategy for teaching and to have meaningful impact on
education nationally, it must be closely related to the
goals for which this society holds its main body of educational
institutions accountable. 67

Summarizing this list, we can see some more characteristics of the
Foxfire Concept in addition to the one previously derived. It is, like other
experiential projects, rooted in reality and relevance to the student; the process
(as in the process flow) is more important than the vehicle, or the product; it
can be initiated anywhere since all institutions are surrounded by a real environ-
ment from which to draw, and it offers achievements and accomplishments to
its participants that coincide with those at many points for which the traditional
systems are held accountable by the community which supports them.

Let us examine more closely some of these general aspects to further
Foxfire's meaning. We know, for example, that the particular direction taken
by Foxfire in reaching out into the realness of its surrounding community and

67. Ibid., pp. 3-4.
environment is that of folklore and oral history, and thus the name "cultural journalism" which is sometimes alternately applied to the Foxfire Concept. David Shapiro sees this union of experience, education and oral history as appropriate and useful, and says, "Margaret Mead's classic techniques of contact, cooperation and analysis are particularly suitable and inspiring tools for us in and out of the classroom, (and) the anthropological field trip which salvages life stories, catalogues details, analyzes speech is a fine form for reaching out and touching today's student." Similarly, Ellen Massey, the advisor to the Foxfire project, Bittersweet, says that "Our purpose in Bittersweet is to share with the reader what we have learned about the Ozarks, the feel, the flavor and the oral cultural history of the region." Writing of Foxfire in Saturday Review, the need for and use of oral history is expressed in these words: "The crafts, recipes, remedies, tales and superstitions handed down orally were in danger of being lost forever. Only the students' grandparents knew, and the lore was dying with them because no one seemed to care about it anymore," and Thompson, writing of the same problem says that, "It became the students' challenge, using words and pictures, to communicate the eloquence they were finding before it vanished." And Daniel Place probes into the benefits of using oral history in the classroom and concludes with a list of concepts, skills and attitudes which he feels can be developed

68. Shapiro, op. cit., p. 37.
through the use of oral history: 72

Concepts

1. Fact versus opinion
2. Cause and effect
3. Action-reaction
4. Abstractions versus realities
5. Subjectivity versus objectivity
6. Experience as a factor in attitudes and opinions

Skills

1. Research techniques
2. Data analysis
3. Listening techniques
4. Finding the main point
5. Establishing relationships

Attitudes

1. Relationships between the past and present
2. Awareness of the impact of historic events on daily lives
3. Empathy
4. Acceptance of differing lifestyles
5. Tolerance
6. History as the study of people as well as 'mankind'

It is apparent, then, that this distinctive aspect of the Foxfire Concept, its utilization of oral history and the gathering of folklore as one of the vehicles for reaching out into the real world, is not only entirely appropriate to the concept of experiential learning in general but fit as well into the mainstream of traditional education with relative ease, as well as providing a body of knowledge and a service to the community as well. It is a feature of experience-based education not found elsewhere in the experiential spectrum and so becomes a way of further defining the Foxfire Concept, for it is this emphasis on the students' own cultural heritage that again singles out the Foxfire Concept, oral

72. Place, loc. cit.
history being part of the methodology to reach and deal with that heritage.

In the introduction to Wigginton's *Moments*, Brian Beun points out that "The central thrust of Foxfire programs lies in a focus on cultural heritage as a motivational force for learning. This positive effort is reinforced by the initiative and collaboration of students working together in the planning and production of a marketable publication," and a *Senior Scholastic* says that, in the process of working with Foxfire, students "learn to see themselves and their heritage in a new light." The film made through the sponsorship of IDEAS about Foxfire explains that "...they set out to record the richness of hill culture...a culture that was their unrealized inheritance. The result was...a newly awakened sense of purpose and interest in its young creators and their whole community." Wigginton himself, quoted in Thompson's article, says that Foxfire is "about school and about community and about people and about the great adventure life can be when students and teachers choose to live it intensely." The Foxfire Concept, then, deals very strongly with the students' cultural heritage as a distinguishing feature, using oral history and folklore as a means to that end, and this feature adds to our more specific definition of the Concept both as separate from the other experiential projects and from traditional education itself.

The emphasis on the students here is beginning to emerge, i.e., the emphasis on the effect on the student participants as opposed to the accomplishing of an end product—a test, a paper, or, in our case, a magazine. In an

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73. Brian Beun, *Moments*, op. cit., p. VII.
76. Wigginton, in Thompson, loc. cit.
IDEAS report on *Foxfire*, the writer points this out strongly by saying that "In addition to demonstrating the capacity to produce a most significant body of folklore, it is a way of breaking the stagnation... from which much of America's education suffers. It offers new subject matter and incentive... it requires the direct involvement of the learner, it creates new cultural and psychological horizons for the entire community and gives greater cohesion to the life experience of the particular cultural group. It opens new potential and demonstrates that learning and practical activity can be reinforcing rather than antagonistic activities." 77 In his book on oral history, Garner writes that "the talents of the people in the class and the environment... make for individual experiences, and thus individual lessons. To me, this is the most important part of the concept, for the uniqueness is a very cohesive and exciting part of this sort of undertaking." 78 It is the learner, then again, that comes to the fore here, and not so much the vehicle of the project itself, and this is certainly an important and distinguishing feature of the Concept, for if it is literally and ideally applied, it means both that the process flow of experiential education previously presented is operating as it should and that we have an educational concept that is as it ought to be, in my opinion; this is, one that is directed at the student and his learning and his self-improvement instead of at the justification and continuation of traditional programs, the gratification of the teacher, the passing of tests, the getting of grades and all the rest of the reasons we have so often substituted for the raison d'etre for education and school in many places.

What sort of things, then, can the learner expect to derive, in terms of the "new and applied skills" of the process flow, or what IDEAS often terms "marketable skills"? In an analysis by Kleinbard of the NCRY, some of the accomplishments of Foxfire are summarized as follows:

Through training, the students improve their knowledge and skills of the technical aspects of publication—interviewing, writing, layout, bookkeeping, etc. But more important is the one quality they must already possess: the valuing of their community which makes it a unique culture with a sense of its own past and its own way of doing things. 79

We see here the twin goals of a Foxfire Concept project which tie ideally with the list of attributes of an experiential project given by Durst. The students are learning marketable skills, or what were termed skills that the traditional systems were held accountable for by their constituencies while, at the same time, learning valuable attitudes about both themselves and their place in the community. These twin goals so obvious in the Foxfire projects around the country are, I believe, another of the truly distinctive facets of the Foxfire Concept, for they are not ones found either in the other experiential concepts which have gained national prominence or in the traditional system as a whole. Donald Johnson, in the New York Times, perceives this same dichotomy in the Foxfire projects and says, "Beyond improving their talents for communicating, the students learn how to find information, to interview, to organize and to prepare all kinds of material. They learn to use videotape and audio recorders, and they learn about themselves as well," 80 and Wigginton, too, emphasizes the practical side of the Concept that goes with its philosophical

side by saying in a brochure for the Foxfire project that, "these twelve to sixteen year olds learn not only how to write and edit and proofread full, rich articles, but also how to lay them out, design the issues, run the circulation and distribution systems, handle all the correspondence and all the funds—in short, run a very real business in a very real world." Durst, as well, sees this attribute of the Foxfire Concept in being able to satisfy both the humanistic and the "marketable skills" or perhaps the "accountability" demands of the community, certainly a rare combination of any program, and just as distinctive in the experiential field. Certainly, we must agree that given the weight of accountability being placed on education, especially those institutions in the public domain, an effective and accepted experiential program must be one that is closely related to the achievement of basic education and skill-learning goals. Since Foxfire fulfills these goals admirably, it provides great opportunity for this particular aspect of experiential learning to more easily accepted into and to work adjunctive to the existing traditional system, unlike the other experiential programs which by their nature must work entirely outside the traditional system because they do not fulfill objectives which that system and those who support it find desireable.

I will conclude this clarification of the Foxfire Concept with the definition of the concept as given by IDEAS's Brian Beun, which comes as close to anything, I think, to being an all-inclusive definition:

82. Durst, op. cit., p. 9.
Foxfire is a learning process possessing a demonstrated capability to use creatively the talents of high school aged youth within a reality structure. It can serve a subject matter purpose while simultaneously providing opportunity by which young people may better sense and develop their own identities. The concept involves students in the establishment of new or renewed relationships by conducting intensive interviews with members of a fast-vanishing older generation. Out of those relationships, the participating youth document the wisdom and capture the essence of their own, immediate cultural heritage while developing a wide range of academic and practical skills. The result is that schoolwork becomes applicable to the everyday life of their community. 83

Drawing, then, upon these various statements of what the Foxfire Concept entails, and from my own experience with the Thistledown project as well, I believe the following list of characteristics might serve as a guide in defining the Concept, so far as its differences both from traditional education and from the other experiential projects. They are organized as much as possible into order from general attributes to more specific ones and should apply to any project that intends to base itself upon the Foxfire Learning Concept:

1. It is based within traditional educational systems, and serves as an adjunct to them.

2. It has the capability of being significant on a national scale by working through traditional systems.

3. It can be made accessible to nearly all students through the traditional systems and the public schools.

4. It is involved wholly with relevance and reality for the student; it makes schoolwork applicable to real life.

5. The process in which the students participate is more important than the product which they produce as a result.

6. It is extremely adaptable to any geographical or cultural locale.

83. Beun, loc. cit.
7. It creates bridges: between school and community; between the student and older generations; between schoolwork and real life, and between past and present.

8. It provides marketable, practical skills for the student balanced with humanistic development.

9. It is widely accepted by the community because it is based there, is really about it and provides the practical skills for which most communities hold schools accountable.

10. It utilizes oral history and folklore as the tools to reach outside of the school bounds.

11. It places great emphasis on the cultural heritage of the learner himself and the need for him to find his place in that heritage.

12. It is directed at the students' welfare; not at the school’s reputation, achievement tests, grade lists, etc.

13. It provides students with the opportunity to produce all aspects of a professionally-published, copyrighted magazine which is sold in the real world.

14. It provides the students with the opportunity to run and handle all aspects of a "very real business in a very real world."

15. The student learns a wide range of communication skills which center on English and journalism but which cut across many other subject areas as well.

16. It provides the student with opportunity to practice important decision-making and to deal with the consequences of his decisions.

Using this list as reasonably definitive summary of the characteristics of the Foxfire Learning Concept, I wish now to examine three of these characteristics in greater detail, for they seem particularly important aspects of the Concept and ones that need greater clarification, much as I dealt with earlier some of the other characteristics, such as the Concept's base in traditional
education, its use of oral history and its emphasis on the student's cultural history. The three I will deal with here are the emphasis on process and not product, the adaptability of the Concept, and the effect on the student involved in a Concept project.

Process; Not Product

Speaking from personal experience, it is certainly very easy for those involved in a Foxfire Concept project to lose sight of the importance of the process in which the students are participating in favor of the end result—the magazine, and its publication, attendant business and publicity. After all, the magazine is there, and it is real and, at least to the other students, faculty members and many of the community, it appears to be the reason for the project's existence, since that is what they see and hear about as a result of it. It is this problem which must be dealt with continually within a project, both on the part of the teacher and the students. Fortunately, the very nature of the project's activities places emphasis on the project's process for those within it and not on the product, no matter how it may appear to those outside the project.

In his "Working Paper," Durst points out this problem as a very clear one, and states that "we have tended to put the vehicle of various successful experience-based programs at the forefront of operational and descriptive emphasis," thus causing the field of experiential learning to appear to the not well informed to be composed of "a hodge-podge of 'enthusiasts' who have found a marvelous panacea for serving at one and the same time their vocational and avocational pursuits."84

84. Durst, op. cit., p. 6.
The result of this misplaced emphasis on product—or "vehicle"—is that it tends, for one thing, to prevent experiential learning from being taken seriously by many of those in the academic community. Furthermore, it seems to set up a sort of tone of self-serving exclusiveness, so that many have come to believe that only those whose specialty lies in a given field can successfully deal with a particular aspect of experiential learning, i.e., that only a folklorist can "do Foxfire" or only an outdoor person can "do Outward Bound." This, of course, is wholly incorrect, but it certainly tends to discourage teachers in other areas from attempting most experiential programs.

It is not the case, however, that experiential education, and particularly the Foxfire Concept can be "done" successfully by only those well versed in specific areas; there is no state certification for Foxfire. Once the process and not the product is understood and emphasized, this becomes immediately clear, and a teacher in nearly any area who would organize activities according to the learning process flow previously outlined or who would put together a program with the characteristics I have presented of the Foxfire Concept, could produce a successful experience-based program regardless of subject area or of his own expertise. Wigginton, in Hacker's article, says that "Foxfire exists primarily for the education of the students; not for the preservation of culture, and Garner, in his book on oral history, says that "the book is not the most important product of the class. We are like a family that has gone through something unique to us."  This necessary emphasis on the process is also recognized by Featherstone, who, writing in the New Republic about Foxfire, says

86. Garner, op. cit., p. 5.
It is important in discussions of students' writing to keep emphasizing that the main point is not the finished work... but rather how the experience helps the student. The same holds true for a venture like Foxfire, which is not mainly a literary magazine, and which relies heavily on the tape recorder and camera. It is the experience of putting it all together that counts. Reading Foxfire, you sense that some students in Rabun Gap are learning something.

Again, the emphasis is on the process of doing the project, of experiencing the realities and demands of the outside world and the decisions and skills necessary to cope with it and of working together to produce that final real but, in a way, incidental product.

In his book on the philosophies he sees underlying the Foxfire Concept, Wigginton, too stresses the process over product point several times, as when he says:

A trap teachers involved in Foxfire projects can fall prey to is that of focusing on the end product so intensely that the process is forgotten. An end product is a valuable conclusion to kid's activities because it forces them into the discipline of working their material into communicable form. Knowing that some-\textsuperscript{88} thing is going to happen to their work is powerful motivation.

He continues then to explain that the emphasis on product instead of process is extremely dangerous to the Concept for it corrupts it into a form that is no longer experientially based and no longer is really for the benefit of the student but, instead, for the benefit of the product. He points out some schools that he has visited in which what was called a "Foxfire project" had begun only to find that a selected small group of honor students were producing a magazine, with no thought or emphasis being placed on the process, but


\textsuperscript{88} Wigginton, Moments, op. cit., p. 9.
rather entirely upon the product which, while often very well done, had little
effect upon the student or the community. Similarly, Garner, writing of oral
history projects such as Foxfire, says that "the question of whether or not the
final work is an enduring piece of literature is not an essential point of the
concept" because it is the process and "the lessons learned during the process"
that are a project's "most valuable rewards--lessons about cooperation, organi-
ization and about the people around us. If the project yields such lessons, it is
a success as a teaching exercise." 89 If the emphasis of a project can thus be
placed on that process, the project will not only be successful as a teaching
exercise, but more importantly will be successful in educating the student,
both humanistically and practically. Finally, Thompson, in an article on Fox-
fire for American Education, points out that "The product itself is of secondary
importance to the process the young people have gone through in producing it.
(Foxfire) is primarily an educational tool for teaching communications skills
and for imbuing young people with a sense of history and of identity." 90

It is clear, then, why I have singled this characteristic from the list
for further elaboration, for it is certainly one of the keys to the Concept and
one without which it can hardly exist or, at least, exist as an effective means
of helping students in the experiential mode. It is obviously possible, fortunately,
or unfortunately, for a group of students within a school setting to produce a
publication that does not have within its process many, or even any, aspects of

experiential education, and thus not of the Foxfire Concept. Even one dealing with culture and involving the outside of school activities connected with Foxfire and its relationships with the community and the outside world could, and has been, turned into just "another class" with tests, grades and all the other traditional non-experiential trappings of a publication such as, say, the school's yearbook or school newspaper. It is extremely important, even critical, then, that those involved in the Foxfire Concept understand the basic philosophies underlying it, the experiential process flow, the characteristics of the Concept and be able to function within these concepts so that it is the process and the effects of the process upon the students involved that is the emphasis and reason for the project and not the product that will be ultimately produced.

The Concept's Adaptability

Another characteristic of the Foxfire Concept that needs further study is that of its adaptability. It is an important characteristic for it illustrates the possibilities that the Foxfire Concept has for use in many different areas, many different cultures and by teachers in many subject areas. It thus makes the Concept that, as has been pointed out earlier, one that, unlike many other experiential vehicles, has the true capability of national use without subject matter, geographical or cultural isolation.

There are a number of reasons why the Concept is adaptable; some of which have already been examined. It has its emphasis on process, for example, and that experiential process can be adapted to many places and many subjects, as explained earlier. It exists in institutions that, as shown by Durst
earlier, are inevitable surrounded by real people and real communities and, since the people are the source from which Foxfire draws its material, it can thus fit into any existing tradtional educational system regardless of area or culture. In addition to these reasons, there are others as well. Since the tool for the Concept is folklore, this too, tends to increase the adaptability of the Concept. Hector Lee points out that "...in using folklore, the teacher must adapt the plans to the material, and both method and material must be accommodated to the situation. No ready-made plans or mail-order material will work, since both must grow generically from the community."\(^{91}\) Thus, the very use of the medium of folklore and oral history within the Foxfire Concept project nearly guarantees its flexibility and adaptability, for the material that is the "subject matter" is, itself, changeable, varying and unpredictable, making pre-printed "texts" almost an absurdity for use. The teacher may improvise and invent the materials and methods to meet the demands of the area and the culture, thus making his project "fit" the area and the people and students involved without in any way changing the principles of the Concept itself.

Brian Beun of IDEAS points out in the introduction to \textit{Moments} that:

Our intent has been to assist teachers, administrators and curriculum planners to tailor the Concept to meet existing educational needs as determined by their particular schools, districts, and state systems. As a consequence, definitions of the Concept and their interpretations are multiple and have to do with Foxfire as a flexible learning vehicle.\(^{92}\)

Thus, each Foxfire Concept project can assume its own shape and method,

\(^{91}\) Lee, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 994.
\(^{92}\) Beun, \textit{Moments}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. VII.
responding to the particular demands upon it made by the area in which it exists, while still, by working through the basic ideas of the Concept here previously presented, still maintain its identity as a "Foxfire Learning Concept Project."

Thompson, in her article about the projects that have grown as Foxfire Concept projects, writes that, "Each spin-off from Foxfire assumes its own shape and glows with the generous human response of a young generation discovering the old and discovering also, as it records its own history, the strengths of a culture that differs from mainstream society." 93

The Concept is adaptable, too, because it can also cut across subject matter lines and thus be utilized by teachers in many areas. Most projects, at this time, are centered in the English and journalism areas of their respective secondary schools, but as the Concept expands, it will broaden into other areas as well, assuming that the processes and ideas of the Concept are perceived. Senior Scholastic, for example, points out that a Foxfire Concept project can "cut across the whole curriculum: sociology, anthropology, biology, botany, arts and crafts, music, communications and English, business administration, typing, filing, the works..." 94 and Bean explains that, "the process underlying Foxfire is applicable to and adaptable to a wide range of subject matter teaching goals, including: English, journalism, local history, social studies, environmental studies, vocational skills development, and the humanities." 95

Thus, it should be clear that the Foxfire Learning Concept, unlike most traditional systems and most experiential systems is almost infinitely adaptable.
adaptable to the student, the teacher, the subject matter, the teaching goals, the area of the school, the cultural environment and the demands of the community. This makes it the ideal vehicle for the experiential mode of education to become established within the traditional systems (another of its characteristics) and hopefully will insure what IDEAS perceives as the Foxfire Concept's possibilities for national significance and adoption. Already, this is being demonstrated in existing projects that are as diverse as the areas and people with whom they are associated. There is, for example, Foxfire, itself, in the deep hills of Appalachia; Cityscape and the Fourth Street in the inner city ghettos of Washington, D. C. and New York, respectively; Laulima exploring the culture of tropical Hawaii; Sea Chest on the islands of Cape Hatteras; Tsa Aszi by the Navajo Indians of New Mexico, and Thistledown here in central Ohio. Certainly, a Concept that can be built upon and successfully thrive for the benefit of students in areas as diverse as these mentioned can readily be adapted to meet nearly any existing educational need in nearly any area.

The Effect on Student Participants

Another area about which more can be said is one of paramount importance for it deals with the whole purpose of having the Foxfire Learning Concept exist: the students who participate within it. The effects, or lack of effects, that the Foxfire Concept, or any learning method, has upon the students in it ought to be the main point of any discussion of a methodology, and indeed it has been the central focus in one way or another throughout this paper. In this section, however, I wish to briefly examine some very specific effects that the Foxfire Concept has been perceived as having upon students, including some
examples of statements by students themselves.

The first and most obvious of the effects relates to the focus of the Foxfire Concept on experiential learning and thus its emphasis on relevance for the student and his relationships with the real world outside the classroom walls. "Kids that have long been led to feel that the workaday world out there bears no relation to their school suddenly find something that refutes that, and they blossom," says Wigginton, the founder of Foxfire, and his words as are echoed by students like Fred Gonzalez, the editor of the New York inner city's Fourth Street, who says, "We have something loud, something for real, not fake." It is accurate in both cases, of course, precisely because of the nature of the project based experientially and because, at the same time, the subject matter as well lies outside the school and is the very environment, people and culture of the students themselves. Both of these factors that make up the basic character of a Foxfire Learning Concept project make it immediately relevant to the students, though either would certainly go a long way toward relevance by itself. In the Ohio Education Associations' ARIS bibliography of folklore, the editor speaks of Foxfire as being "run by high school students--students who have gained an invaluable, unique knowledge about their own roots, heritage and culture," and it is this factor that makes the experience of the experience-based curriculum so doubly relevant to the students.

96. Wigginton, in Thompson, "Foxfire Kindles a Thousand Sparks," op. cit., p. 29.
For those within the Foxfire projects, this relevance is very apparent, as the process flow described earlier is moved through by the students and they deal with a variety of demanding reality contexts outside the school within the bounds of their cultural heritage. Equally impressive to those involved in these projects is that it also works out the other way, that is, the outside world reaches into the classroom to the student, something which seldom, if ever, happens in traditional contexts at all. This happens in several forms, but the most obvious is the receiving of letters addressed to the project and to the individual staff members of the project. This is nearly daily occurrence, increasing, of course, as the project grows, but even a small beginning project can expect eight to ten letters a week from people ordering subscriptions, asking questions, writing in praise of an article or the project in general, sending donations and, occasionally, making a complaint. These letters are very important, not only to the project economically, but important in another way for the students. They are, as Wigginton explains in *Moments*, "evidence that illustrates forcefully to the student that there is another world out there, and that some of the people that live in it was watching and delighting in the project he's a part of."\(^{99}\) The letters are the community reaching into the school and telling the student that they are aware of him, often specifically by name, and they think what he's doing is interesting, important and useful. The effect of receiving, opening and answering these letters upon the students is enormous and gratifying and is evidence for all to see that the experiential idea and specifically the Foxfire Concept is working. Imagine, for example, the effect upon

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the students it might have if those involved in a traditional English class
suddenly began receiving ten or fifteen letters a week from all over the area
telling them what a fine thing it was that they were doing, asking them about
their reading, etc! Certainly, I would expect them to have a new perspective
on what they were doing and change their attitudes and efforts dramatically.

Of course, it is not just the letters that make the Foxfire Concept
relevant, but all the factors of the experience-based system at work that have
been discussed. The product, too, produces relevance and interest for the
students; in this case, the magazine. In "Doing Real English," Wigginton says,
"For the kids involved in Foxfire, English has come alive. They are not
simply turning out a magazine which will be passed around among their class-
mates and then forgotten. They are producing a magazine that has ready become
well-respected in universities and libraries alike, and they have the letters to
prove it."\textsuperscript{100} Furthermore, the magazine, as well as the business of circula-
ting and distributing it, really does belong to them and really is produced by
them, from the initial contact, through the interviews, the transcribing, the
writing, the photographs and the final layout. "I can perhaps help guide—and
I do," says Wigginton, "But I have no right to meddle. If the students really
didn't believe that the publication was their publication, and really was their
responsibility, they'd be half as responsive, half as excited, half as committed
to it."\textsuperscript{101}

These words, "responsive," "excited," and "committed," are ones
that would apply to few students within the traditional class system and point

\textsuperscript{100} Wigginton, "Doing Real English," \textit{op. cit.}, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{101} Wigginton, in Hacker, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 20.
out another effect the Foxfire Concept has on most students. It turns them on
to school, perhaps for the first time, and makes them want to work on "school-
work." This change in attitude is described by advisors and those working with
many of the Foxfire projects around the country and is far from being the
exception. Thompson, after observing the Foxfire students at work, said:

These young people have been engaged in high adventure, seeing
out their subjects down rutted woods trails, winning their trust
through unhurried visits, learning from them the philosophy,
the skills, the survival tricks by which they've lived, encouraging
them to stretch their minds, to remember, to rummage about for
old tools, old recipes, hill-folk remedies. They've also been en-
aged in highly demanding work—in taping and photography, trans-
cription, diagraming, editing. Oftentimes, bleary-eyed and exhil-
erated, they've watched the sun rise as they sent their prose to
press.  

This sort of almost unprecedented work and dedication is nearly commonplace
among the Foxfire Concept projects and the reason, I think, is not difficult to
discern: it is, of course, the relevance, the working together on something
which is truly theirs while they're learning that makes all the difference.

Johnston, in his Times articles, appropriately titled, "They Learned and They
Loved It," reports that "Many of the students are so engrossed in the project
that they work after school, at night, even on weekends." 103 and this sort of
student response is very common in the reports of other projects around the
country.

Summarizing many of these effects that the Concept has on its
student participants, Brian Beun of IDEAS, writing in the Introduction to
Wigginton's Moments lists these "observable achievements" of students who

102. Thompson, "In the Footsteps of Foxfire," op. cit., p. 6.
participate in a Foxfire Concept project:

1. Acquisition of vocational skills which are transferable, marketable, and useful, i.e., editing and writing, photography, marketing, darkroom, bookkeeping, printing, typing, filing, transcribing, design, organizational management, circulation, advertising, public relations, public speaking, museum curation, community leadership and banking.

2. Acquisition of a discipline for learning, demanding of both individual initiative and communal responsibility.

3. Acquisition of respect for and pride in their communities, their elders, and the human values which sustain them; and the development of a sense of place and belonging among their own people.

4. Acquisition of an interdisciplinary perspective toward learning and the interrelationship of subject studies.

5. Acquisition of any awareness and appreciation for the visual and literary arts as they are applied to enhance the process of communication.

6. Acquisition of an inquiring sense of direction from which to explore new subjects, develop new relationships and enter new experiences.

Within this list of achievements, there are two areas that seem to offer need for greater examination: that of the students' relationships with others and that of the students' changing self-perception as a result of being a participant in a Foxfire Concept project.

Viewing the relationships with others that are engendered by the Foxfire Concept, we can see that they can be viewed as bridges—specifically, bridges between the student and the older generations, bridges between the student and his culture and heritage and bridges between the student and his community. The Foxfire Concept seems to be ideally suited for filling the

104. Beun, Moments, op. cit., p. VIII.
role of bridging these gaps, for by its basic ideas and its basic work it brings
the student into contact with all these areas in a way that encourages the bridges
to be crossed. Whittemore feels that the generation gap is successfully bridged
by the Foxfire participants because both the young and the old have "been led,
for their own reasons, to feel contempt for our plastic industrialism. This is
their common bond," \(^{105}\) and this sentiment is found as well in the words of a
Foxfire staff student who says, "These old people have lived and learned the
hard way; what you learn by living is the best education you can have." \(^{106}\)
They form, then, a sort of mutual respect through Foxfire which was not there
before when the most common attitude of youth toward the older generation was
to simply ignore them. Brought into contact with them, however, by the work
of Foxfire, listening and organizing what they say, the students gain insight into
the older peoples' thinking and philosophies that they did not have before and
probably never would have had otherwise. Folksinger Pete Seeger, commenting
on this aspect of the Foxfire work, says that Foxfire:

\[
\ldots\text{proves that old folks and kids can be great allies.}
\text{May it show young people in thousands of communities}
\text{how they too can link up the oldest and youngest generations and be proud of our country, not for its power}
\text{and production, but for its many different ways of living,}
\text{and how to make do with what we have.}^{107}\]

The bridging of the generations gaps through Foxfire leads, in turn, to the
connecting of the student almost inevitable to his culture within which the
people he interviews live and exist, and so another very important bridge is
formed. This connection through the older people is described by Wigginton

\(^{105}\) Whittemore, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 28.
\(^{106}\) Foxfire staff member, in "Spreading Foxfire," \textit{Time}, Vol. 100, August 14,
1972, p. 43.
\(^{107}\) Pete Seeger, in Hacker, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 20.
in Gordon's article on Foxfire:

The kids knew they were onto something. Before they hadn't seen anything in their background or environment to be proud of. But making contact with the old-timers changed all that. They began to realize how colorful and brave and wise their own ancestors were, and to be concerned because a magnificent heritage—which depended solely upon oral tradition—was slipping away. 

Even more revealing is this statement about the awakening of concern for the older generation and the bridging of that generation gap by a student member of the Foxfire staff:

It wasn't until I had worked on Foxfire for five months that an inexplicable void between myself and the old people of our region disappeared. The void was mysterious but it still existed. Maybe it was instilled hostilities toward older generations. Maybe it was the fact that I just couldn't see their importance or the relevance of what they had to say to the way I live today.

This statement is most interesting, I believe, because it seems to be a statement that could have been said or written by any one of thousands of secondary students anywhere in the United States. Its attitudes and feeling are those held, I think, by nearly all young people and its interesting to see the gap, or "void," described as "mysterious" and to see the reasons for the gap that the student speculates upon. Whatever the reason, it is certainly there and it certainly does exist, and, without some means such as Foxfire, it remains unchanged as the student becomes an adult. This aspect of the Foxfire Concept, while seemingly minor, can assume major significance if the consequences of it are contemplated, for if the Foxfire Concept does indeed become widespread,

108. Wigginton, in Gordon, op. cit., p. 68.
the attitudes of the majority of students toward the older people might well be changed and, carrying this attitude into adulthood, might result in great changes in the treatment and consideration of the elderly in the country.

At any rate, there is ample evidence that the Foxfire Concept participants do indeed experience this change in attitude and this is certainly a step forward that has hitherto not be approached by the traditional systems at all. Thompson, for example, reports that:

...these young people have come to cherish their subjects for their hardiness and ingenuity, their eloquence and humor. Rangy six-foot boys speak unabashedly of their love for one octogenarian and another. And they've come to cherish a heritage that belongs to them, though they had been growing up unmindful and careless of it. 110

And Wigginton says that, "suddenly, they discover their families--previously, people to be ignored in the face of the 70's, ... as individuals who endured and survived...and came out of it all with a perspective on ourselves as a country that we are not likely to see again." 111 This bridging, then, is an effect on the students involved in Foxfire Concept projects which happens over and over and is well documented by other projects, and I think that it may, in the end, turn out to be one of the most important and exciting aspects of the Concept, especially if it does, indeed, gain the national prominence of which is capable within the traditional systems. The long-range effects of such generation gap bridging may become tremendously important as the years pass.

Similarly, and perhaps in the long run just as important, is the bridge established by the Foxfire Concept participants between cultures and between peoples. As the movement grows, ideas and meetings have been

111. Wigginton, in Hacker, op. cit., p. 20.
exchanged between the staff members of the various projects, mostly through the efforts of IDEAS which has held workshops in various parts of the country for both old and new Foxfire project staff members. The meeting of these cultures has often been revealing and interesting, as well as educational for the students. One of the most dramatic, for example, occurred when IDEAS brought the staff of the New York Puerto Rican ghetto's Fourth Street i to the Appalachian highlands of the Foxfire project and followed with a return visit of the Foxfire students to New York. It is difficult to imagine two more contrasting cultural groups, and yet, after some initial hesitation, they became friends. When the i students visited Foxfire, a concern some expressed was for the treatment the i students might receive because they were "black," for as one Foxfire student explained it, "down here, anything not white, including Puerto Ricans, is black." The concern was not justified, however, for the Foxfire students reported that, "...it was funny, but we didn't know how to act. But now that we've met, it's different. They're people, that's all."112 Certainly, this dramatic change in feeling and perception of attitude was worth whatever effort the workshop trip entailed, and it is the kind of attitude change I'm sure we would all like to see occur. In a similar way, the i students found things quite different in the rural Georgia hills, and in two of the most interesting, and perhaps sad, quotations I have seen, these differences were expressed by students from the staff of the Fourth Street i. Said one student:

"At night, you wouldn't believe the stars. I've never seen so many. And the water tasted so good. We drank it like soda."113 And later, an i staff

113. Fourth Street i staff member, Ibid.
member, talking about the old people in Rabun Gap, said she thought they looked younger than the old people in New York, and said, "It's really weird. It bothered us. Because old people in New York are so unhappy. They're scared to go out. It seems like when there are no more blue skies, it can kill a person. I feel so old and I'm only 16." A perceptive and insightful statement, indeed, from a secondary-age youth, and one that could hardly have come about without this sort of cultural bridging that was provided by Foxfire. Of course, it is not merely workshops that provide this sort of cross-culture bridge, for if it were limited only to that, only a few would experience this kind of bridge. Within any Foxfire Concept project lies the possibilities on a local level for reaching into other cultures that exist in an area and utilizing them as part of the contacts for interviewing and writing. This has, in fact, occurred in nearly all the existing Foxfire projects, whether by design or by chance, and in Moments, Wigginton speaks often of the chance produced by interviewing people of cultures other than those of the students. Students who he describes as "racists" were sent to interview an old black woman of the area, for example, and after several interviews with her, the students came away with an entirely different perspective on blacks and had altered their racist stance greatly; in fact, they insisted on including in the final published article a photo of themselves standing arm-in-arm with the black contact. Similar experiences have been often reported by other Foxfire Concept projects as well, and its importance is certainly a great one, just as the crossing of generational bridges is

114. Fourth Street staff member, in Thompson, "In the Footsteps of Foxfire," op. cit., p. 8.
within the Concept.

It is this "bridging," then, that I see as both an integral and exceptionally important part of the effect upon students involved in work within a Foxfire Concept project. It is an essential component, in fact, of the whole Concept, as previously indicated, and is one of the distinguishing characteristics that marks the Foxfire Concept. Certainly a teaching methodology that gets students out of their cultural isolation of age and peer group and brings them into direct and demanding contact with adults will reap benefits, for it is these relationships with adults that allows them to be exposed to and deal with habits, opinions, and lifestyles different from those of their primary adult models, their own parents. Such exposure, in my opinion, and in the experience of others working on Foxfire projects, will result in tolerance of others and to self-exploration as well.

This self-exploration and self-perception is the final point concerning the effect upon the students involved with Foxfire, and it is, perhaps, the most important point of all. As Wigginton explains:

You must move a kid out of himself and into the world of man. Until his own ego is satisfied, and until he knows he has worth as an individual an has been recognized by others as having worth, he cannot move beyond himself to an unselfish caring about others. He cannot become whole, able to make choices and exercise those options that are open to him in a positive way.115

To do this, to bring the student "out of himself and into the world of man," there must be a learning vehicle which in some way encourages and fosters

115. Wigginton, Moments, op. cit., p. 15.
exactly that sort of self-perception and attitudes, and, as has been already
partially shown, the Foxfire Concept is one such vehicle. The participation in
the process flow explained earlier has built into it ample opportunity for the
student to prove both to himself and to others that he does have worth and is
capable of making wise and useful decisions. Furthermore, the other rein-
forcers, such as the letters that come into him from the outside world, build
upon this process flow and increase the students' sense of worth and confidence.

This profound effect on the self-perception of the students involved
in Foxfire projects has been noticed and commented on by many observers.
In the article "Spreading Foxfire," the writer sees one reason for it in that
"Here is a project that is a refuge for kids where adults take them seriously,"116
and Wigginton says that in the Foxfire project, "every one of them was needed
if it were to succeed, and if it failed, all would share the blame."117 It is this
sort of real responsibility and real consequences that bring the student to the
realization that what he's doing has real meaning and that he has real worth
within that meaning:

The most exciting thing in the world is to watch what happens
to a kid when he first realizes that he can really do something
on his own...you can just see his evaluation of himself go up.
And behind that comes the dawning awareness that if he has
value, then other people have value; that if his culture is worth
preserving, then other cultures must be worth preserving.118

The Concept, through, it experiential process flow, then, brings the student
"out of himself" in exactly this way, by giving him this real responsibility and

118. Wigginton, in Gordon, op. cit. , p. 70.
by proving to him that he can "do things on his own," things that are important to himself and to others. Relating it directly to the experiential process flow, Beun says that through active participation in a Foxfire Concept project, "young people are afforded a reality learning experience which can help them discover themselves to be worthy, self-reliant, compassionate and contributing members of their communities."¹¹⁹ I think this is an effect whose importance would be denied by none for any educational tool, and yet, at the same time, I think that it would be difficult to find within the typical traditional system or, more simply, within the typical English class, any such effect, and seldom any effort to produce such an effect.

Important as well to the student's self-perception is how he perceives himself within the context of his own culture and place. In her article on the Foxfire Concept, Pat Peterson says that, "A student (working in the Concept) can begin to come to grips with the place and heritage that has haped him and the forces, old and new, which continue to play a part in what he will become,"¹²⁰ and NCRY's Keonbard feels that a project such as Foxfire helps the teenager "attain a stronger sense of his own past, and of how his culture is different from the many cultures which make up America."¹²¹ Through these sorts of effects, the student can really find out who he is and identify strongly with his own roots and heritage and the people who make up that heritage, an effect that is largely ignored or, in some schools and some cultures, purposefully suppressed for various reasons, as has been the case in some inner city

¹¹⁹. Beun, Moments, Introduction, op. cit., p. X.
schools. This finding of oneself in one's own culture is often an unexpected
benefit for the students and is often expressed in what they say about what they
are doing and the changes in attitudes they are undergoing. Claude Rickman,
a *Foxfire* staff member, said for example:

> Even thought you don't believe some of their ideas, you
> still respect their opinions because you come to love them
> and you understand and respect them the way they live. I
> know I can't live just like them, but in some ways, I can
> try to be like them.122

Buried not too deeply in this statement is the obvious awareness this student
has come to that he is part of the people and the heritage that has has been
dealing with and that there is much that is good and worthwhile there that is
worth emulating instead of ignoring and deriding. His words are repeated but
in a different way by another *Foxfire* staff member named Karen who said:

> A lot of the other stuff we have to study is just brain knowledge.
> I don't think it's all that useful. But after you see what the old
> people have done, you start to think, "Well, there are ways to
> live with the land and be self-reliant."123

The effect, the, of bringing the student in closer contact and respect for his
own roots and culture is another of the distinguishing features of the effect
upon students participating in *Foxfire* projects and the importance of that
effect, both to the student and to the culture itself, is not hard to discern.

**Finally**, another effect upon the student's self-perception is an
effect upon his perception of his ability to do things that are worthwhile and
his feeling of being capable of achievement. One of the most common tenents
of education is that a student must be shown that he is not a "loser" and that he

does not have to resign himself to failure. Many have emphasized this aspect of education, whether traditional or otherwise, for some time. It is, however, not an easy task for the teacher to accomplish, and yet it is with precisely the sort of student who needs this sort of change in self-image that the Foxfire Concept works best, for many of the reasons previously explained. There is ample testimony of this effect at work from many of the projects and much said by the students themselves to that effect. For example, a student named Eddy, previously a "failure" in nearly all of his classes, became a positive achiever after working in Foxfire and stated simply, "I don't know, but I probably wouldn't be in school if it weren't for the magazine." 124 Another, Barbar Taylor, documented her story in an article written and published in Seventeen, and it is typical of the sort of experience encountered in other of the Foxfire projects around the country:

By the time I reached high school, I was fed up with school learning and had decided to quit as soon as I turned sixteen. I began to skip classes a lot looking for a job. My grades suffered and I didn't find one. In eleventh grade, I chose elective journalism, and began poking around in the Foxfire rooms. Soon, I found myself so involved that I couldn't break away. Then I started interviewing an independent old lady named Maude Shope, and I worked late into the night for the first time in my life transcribing tapes and organizing material into a portrait of Maude. In a few months the article appeared in Foxfire with my name on it and the thrill improved my outlook on school. My enthusiasm started spilling over into other classes. 125

Eventually, Taylor became a regular part of the Foxfire staff and wrote many articles for the publication, became actively involved in traveling engagements

124. Eddy, Foxfire staff member, in "Foxfire," Senior Scholastic, op. cit., p. 16.
speaking for the project and ended up writing the article for \textit{Seventeen} for which she was paid $500. This success story is important because it is not unique; it has happened at other projects besides \textit{Foxfire} and it is happening now, and it is also important because she points out that her enthusiasm for her work in the project "spilled over into other classes." Once she had found that she could achieve, could succeed, her self-image changed and she perceived herself, apparemptly for the first time, as a winner instead of a perennial loser.

There are, undoubtedly, other educational concepts that can report equally good success stories of a student who has been "saved" from the dropout ranks, but there is no one that I know of that reports it happening so often or so commonly as the \textit{Foxfire} Concept projects around the U.S. Beyond this, is the almost incredible result that has appeared in \textit{Foxfire} and other projects of a large increase in the number of students who opt for college after graduation of those who work in \textit{Foxfire} projects, as compared to the student populations as a whole within the schools in which the projects are located. \textit{Saturday Review} reports, for example, that "the original tenth-graders who started \textit{Foxfire} graduated and... all of them are going to college--no common event in an Appalachian town."\textsuperscript{126} This effect is certainly not because those who are involved in \textit{Foxfire} Concept projects are usually college-bound or academically inclined students in the first place, though this may be true in some isolated projects, for the opposite is usually true. It is the average and below-average student in "regular" classes that most often elects or is recruited into the project staffs, simply because they are the ones for whom the "practical" side of such a project holds appeal and because, as was often the case in

\textsuperscript{126} "Culture Begins at Home," \textit{Saturday Review}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 59.
Thistledown, the college-bound students are too easy and committed to academic or "college-prep" tracks to have the room for a project in their schedules. It is ironic that the typical Foxfire project is usually not perceived by students, teachers or guidance counselors as "academically demanding" enough to be included or recommended to the college-bound student when it is, in my opinion, the very sort of course that would benefit him the most as he moves on to the college classroom. In a general way, as well, the Foxfire projects provide a background upon which the student can rely and fall back upon as he meets increasingly demanding situations, whether in college or out, for as Wigginton notes, "The students will, at the very least, into life with a reservoir of good, solid, positive experiences behind them--touchstones they will come back to again and again--to bolster them through the hard times." 127

It is reasonable to conclude, then, that the effect upon the students involved as active participants in a Foxfire Concept Learning is profound, desirable and, in many ways, unique to the Concept as pedagogical tool. In the students' finding of a truly relevant study in the schools, their feelings of commitment and excitement about their work, their acquisition of a wide variety of communication skills, their bridging of generational and cultural gaps, and their changes in self-perception, self-image and subsequent change in achievement, we have ample evidence that the Foxfire Concept is an educational and experiential idea that, if carried through on a wider scale, would greatly benefit the students in the public schools of this country and, ultimately,

127. Wigginton, Moments, op. cit., p. 16.
greatly benefit society and the community as well.

Summary

I believe, then, that we have reached a reasonably complete and thorough explanation and understanding of the Foxfire Learning Concept in all of its facets. By coalescing the thoughts of many others with mine on the general bases of the Concept, its more specific definitions and internal components, and drawing summary lists of these, as well as examining three particularly important aspects of the characteristics—the emphasis on process and not product, the adaptability of the Concept, and the effect upon the students involved with the Concept—we have a clear and complete picture of the Foxfire Learning Concept which was previously lacking. Given the importance and potential spread of the Concept within our public schools, it would seem that such a picture would be most useful and informative to those seeking to know more about the Concept in the future. In terms of this particular work, this examination of the Foxfire Learning Concept will provide the basis for the evaluation of the particular Foxfire Learning Concept project designed and undertaken as an experimental case study of the Concept in action, the Thistle-
down project at Watkins Memorial High School, Pataskala, Ohio, of which I am the originator and advisor. The following section, Part Two, is a detailed description of that project from its inception to the present, showing the aspects of the production and functioning of a Foxfire Learning Concept project based on the ideas, concepts and definitions given in Part One just completed. Having described that aspect of the Thistledown project, Part Three which follows it will then seek to determine if the sample project did meet the definitions and
goals of the Foxfire Concept I have outlined, where it did not meet them, and will conclude with some recommendations involving the establishment and operation of such a project, as well as some statements about the implications for education that the Concept holds.
PART TWO: THE THISTLEDOWN PROJECT, AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE FOXFIRE LEARNING CONCEPT.

This section is a detailed report on the establishment and operation of a project begun by myself within the public and traditional school system at Watkins Memorial High School in Pataskala, Ohio, part of the Southwest-Licking Schools in Licking County.

The project was begun as an experimental venture into the Foxfire Learning Concept and has, at the time of this writing, been operational for three years, 1974-1977. It is anticipated that the project will continue indefinitely at Watkins, as it has been quite successful and well-received by the community there. The project's name, and so the name of the magazine produced by it, is Thistledown.

As the establishment and operation of such a project has not been recorder and documented previously, every attempt was made to accurately report upon all aspects of the project, through careful record-keeping and a journal kept daily by myself. Following the account of each part of the project is a series of recommendations stemming from the experience that will hopefully be useful to others who wish to establish a project based on the Foxfire Learning Concept.
FUNDING AND FINANCES OF THISTLEDOWN

One of the most vital considerations I was concerned within THISTLEDOWN's inception was the source of funding for the program. This concern was the product of two particular conditions that surrounded the project's creation.

First, the Southwest-Licking School District; indeed, the entire Licking County Schools, is by no means a wealthy school area, if such a thing exists anywhere. The District is very rural, with nearly all the school's income coming from property taxes from the farmers in the area and, of course, State aid. The people of the area have always been engaged almost entirely in agriculture and have shunned industry and commerce as a "city" way of life that they wish to avoid. In the last five years, for example, twelve industries have attempted to locate in the Pataskala area, but each time the zoning board has yielded to the protestations of the local residents and has refused to rezone the desired area from residential to industrial, thus thwarting the encroachment of the industries and their "city" ways.

In 1974, for example, the Holiday Inn chain of motor hotels wanted to locate a large Holiday Inn facility at the Pataskala exit of Interstate 70 which would have served travelers as sort of a half-way point between Columbus and Zanesville or Columbus and Newark. The Inn would have been literally in the middle of nowhere, for there are no other structures near the exit except for two gas stations (Sohio and Sunoco) whose owners were, of course, all for the construction. In due course, the zoning board met and held open hearings on the rezoning of the appropriate site to allow purchase and construction to
proceed. At the hearing, however, a large group of local residents appeared and voiced strong objection to the rezoning on two bases: first, that having a motel in that area would cause "undesirable" people to visit the area and stay at the motel as they traveled, and therefore the crime rate would surely go up and they would be endangered; secondly, a side effect of the rezoning would be that the small area of the motel would have to be given a piquor permit for the motel's restaurant and lounge (a stipulation of the Holiday chain) which would simply be unthinkable since the area is, and always has been, determinidly "dry." Area ministers spoke vehemently about the moral dangers of having a place so close to them serving alcoholic beverages and warned that the granting of such a rezoning variance could only lead to the moral ruin and decay of the entire community, especially the youth. The zoning board, despite reassurance from the Holiday Inn representatives and pleas by a few citizens pointing out the income the Inn would bring the community, decided to grant the rezoning to industrial, but not grant the variance that would have given the Inn a liquor permit, thereby half-satisfying both sides of the controversy and leaving it in the laps of the Holiday chain. Holiday Inn, as might be expected, declined to continue their plans and purchased property at a site only three miles outside the area where a large Inn is now flourishing—and giving their large taxes to some other school district. I offer this example, not because it is unusual, but rather because it is typical of the attitude of the area residents toward "city" and toward industry and big business.

As a result of this attitude, the area is facing, and has been facing for some years, a growing financial problem concerning their schools. There
is virtually no industry at all in the area, obviously, and yet the area’s population continues to grow at an alarming rate. It is the perfect example of what is often termed a "bedroom community." Being situated only a short twenty-five minute drive on the Interstate 70 freeway from Columbus and approximately the same time the other way from Newark, the area is becoming a haven for many people who work in the city but wish to reside in a more quiet and peaceful rural area. In the last two years alone, two subdivisions have been erected on the outskirts of Pataskala containing some 150 homes, along with 120 units of apartment buildings. Directly across from Watkins Memorial High School on what has always been a cornfield, a builder is, at the present time preparing to construct 200 new homes which are being advertised as the "ideal place to bring up your children in safety" in order to attract more families. Eight years ago, the total enrollment in grades seven through twelve at Watkins Memorial was 550, with a graduating class of 90. Two years ago, as the school became more and more crowded, the seventh grade was retained in the five elementary schools that feed the high school, and yet the enrollment eight through twelve rose to nearly 1000. In 1974, the voters approved an issue on the ballot that allowed the school to shift some of its millage into constructing a new middle school for grades six through eight, and that school opened in the fall of 1975. This relieved the drastic overcrowding at both elementaries and high school, but since the bond issue did not raise any new revenue but merely moved from one place to another, the financial condition is now worse than ever. The area residents have been fairly consistent in their approval of money for the schools, but only because the schools have not asked for a great deal, simply
because it is understood that the farmers, few of whom are very prosperous anyway, would not approve any more than what they are now assessed. What the answer is to the school's financial difficulties is certainly problematical, and is a difficulty faced by many similar rural systems around the state. It does not, however, lie within the scope of this paper.

The second condition surrounding the project's creation that shaped the financial arrangements and funding of the program was more theoretical in nature than the school's sorry financial state; this was the desire on my part, to, in some way, make the program reasonably independent of the school in funding. That is, I did not wish to make THISTLEDOWN simply another English course whose materials and funds derived solely from the English Department's budget and which had to be supported financially by the school to remain in continued existence, as does the usual course in a school's curriculum.

This independence is already established in most of the other Foxfire Concept projects, since they continue by virtue of their own sales, donations from private individuals and grants from various agencies. This independence from the school is vital, both in a psychological and a real sense, for it establishes more firmly the basic idea that the process is a "real" and viable production and not just another English course dependent on the school for its existence and life. I wanted the students to feel that, if necessary, the entire program could be moved, equipment and all, to some other location and, by working outside of school, could continue just as before. By establishing this feeling, the students feel they are truly involved in something real and meaningful and, at the same time, they are freer to try new ideas and establish new patterns that
they might have repressed within the confines of a program that exists only within and because of the school walls. This independence is most true, at this point, for the Foxfire project itself in Rabun Gap, which has incorporated itself as the Southern Highlands Literary Fund, Inc. and has a board of directors wholly independent from The Rabun Gap-Nagcochee High School within which the project is housed. This has allowed Foxfire to handle its own funds entirely and even purchase land upon which it is building its own offices and archives near the school. I have detailed the Foxfire project and this facet of independence in chapter one to some extent, so I will not continue in great measure at this point. However, I feel that this feeling and sense of independence is necessary to a successful Foxfire Concept project, and so it was my desire to establish this independence in some way and in some degree right from the start. Thus, it was, in a way, fortunate that the school did not have the funds available to finance the THISTLEDOWN project, even in part, for by thus being forced to seek funds elsewhere, I managed to establish some measure of financial independence for the project at its inception. I was hopeful that once we began we could continue independently as the sales of one issue paid for the printing of the next, donations from subscribers came in, and possibly even other grants could be obtained; and in this I was correct. I did hope, however, that the school might help out to some small extent at the outset, as I felt it might be desirable to get them involved in the project’s creation so that they might feel more responsive towards it later. I therefore did go to the principal and the Board to request some initial funds to get things started.

With this sort of financial situation existing, however, the problem of finding funds for a new, unusual and somewhat expensive (initially) program
such as THISTLEDOWN became a large one. In other, more wealthy systems, such programs might be easily financed by a simply request to the department chairmain for departmental funds or a request to the principal for a formal meeting with the Board to ask for funds. As the Department of English Chairman for Watkins, I already knew the first course was impossible, for our departmental budget of $1,200 for six teachers and their courses was a cut from the $2,000 originally requested. I, therefore, approached the principal and, in turn, the Board to explain the proposed program and to request funds. Most of the Board, as well as the principal, were favorably impressed with the idea, though dubious about whether "high school kids" could "really do all that stuff" that they would have to do to produce a publication such as this one. Though favorable, they made it clear that there were simply no funds available to allocate for such a project, but that if the money could be obtained from other sources, which they doubted, I could go ahead.

At this point, I contacted Mr. Robert Mentzer, the Assistant Superintendent of the Licking County Schools, whose office is in Newark. Mr. Mentzer is also the English supervisor for the County and is familiar with various funding sources, having worked closely with the government Title programs and other agencies. He recommended that I apply to the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio, a non-profit foundation engaged specifically in awarding grants to teachers for educational experiments within their school systems. He cautioned that the grants were difficult to obtain and that there were very few organizations that could and would grant money to public high schools, especially to a specific teacher or program, though he had been
successful in obtaining one grant from the Jennings Foundation for the Lost Arts Program directed by our school librarian, Russell Roush, and thus a link between the Foundation and the schools had, in some measure, been established which might increase our chances of receiving the grant.

In March of 1974, I, therefore, wrote a proposal for the grant, detailing the program as I foresaw it at that time and estimating the money necessary at $1,595.50, a conservative estimate, but one which I thought might be more easily obtainable than a larger request. We heard nothing from the Foundation for the remainder of the year until shortly before the end of school: on May 30, 1974, just nine days before the end of the school year, a letter from the Foundation arrived informing us of the award of a grant for $1,596 for "THISTLEDOWN, an effort to move beyond the school walls and enter the community of life experiences."

Mr. Roush, who had been named in the proposal as co-advisor, and I, then met immediately with the principal and district superintendent, informing them of the grant. The information was conveyed to the Board, who were quite amazed, and the program was adopted as an official part of the curriculum in English in order to give me a part of the school day to advise/teach it and so that we might use school facilities, as well as give the students academic credit for their efforts. There was some confusion as to how to handle the funds, as there was no precedent for a teacher receiving such a grant, and so the Board consulted with the State Auditor who finally ruled that the funds must be deposited in a Board account, as opposed to a school activity account, and that all disbursements and deposits must be made through the Board in my name and the
name of the project.

This money proved barely adequate for the project's first year, but it did provide the large sum necessary for the purchase of equipment vital to getting the program started, i.e., cameras, tape recorders, tapes, film, supplies, and enough to pay for the printing cost of the first issue. The largest initial expenditure was for the hardware used in the interviews, the key part of the project; the details of this equipment are covered under "Equipment" in this chapter. It is obviously necessary to purchase this equipment immediately as the program commences, for nothing else can really happen until the interviews begin, so this necessitates having a large working sum of money available right from the start. In this case, a total of $547.70 was spent on equipment before the staff met at the beginning of the school year, 1974. The following is an outline of our expenditures for the first year; it is fairly typical of the expenditures of other Foxfire Concept projects in their initial stages in terms of proportions for each area. As the project grows and circulation increases, of course, expenditures in various areas will go up and additional equipment that may be desirable would be purchased.

Amount of original grant from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation—$1596.00

I. Equipment

3 CTR-19B Realistic cassette tape recorders----------$159.85
2 Ricoh single lens reflex camera---------------------309.00
2 Vivitar 102 electronic flash units------------------43.85
1 Paper cutter for layout work-----------------------35.00

Total expenditures for equipment----------------------$547.70
II. Supplies

30 C-60 cassette tapes ------------------------------- 25.78

32 Rolls Tri-X B&W 35mm. film ---------------------- 16.67

1 Address, letterhead and check ID stamp ---------- 7.55

6 Carbon ribbons for typing final layouts ---------- 6.75

Layout paper, Letraset transfer letters, mailing
envelopes, rubber cement, triangles, layout
pencils, drafting tape, file cards ------------------ 76.31

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Total expenditures for supplies $183.06

III. Contract Services

500 Printing cost for first issue at Licking County Joint
copies-- Vocational School ------------------------ $531.66

800 Printing cost for second issue at Hartco Printing
copies-- Company, including copy printing ---------- $921.38

Printing cost for advertising/promotional brochures
printed at cost by Licking County Schools office---
1,000 brochures ------------------------------- 32.93

Photo processing---approx. 900 photos, incl.
20 enlargements ------------------------------- 85.00

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Total expenditures for contract services $1,570.97

IV. Copyright fees

Fee paid to Register of Copyrights, Library of
Congreee to register copyrights to first two
issues of THISTLEDOWN, @ $6.00 per issue ------- $12.00

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Total expenditures for copyright fees $12.00
Summary of Expenditures

Equipment------------------- $ 547.70
Supplies--------------------- $ 183.06
Contract Services----------- $1,570.97
Copyright fees------------- $  12.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURES FOR FIRST YEAR-----$2,313.73

During this same period, our income outside the initial grant from the Jennings Foundation consisted of two sources. The first was the sale of the first and the second issues through several retail outlets and through orders for issues which came in through the mail. The mail-in orders were the most profitable since those ordering paid the full price of $1.50 per issue, while the retail sales were made on consignment with us selling the magazine to the stores at a discount of $1.10 for their resale at $1.50. By the end of the first school year in June, our income from these two sales sources was $655.00.

Our second source of income was in outright donations from private individuals around the area. Following the Foxfire pattern, we made an appeal for such contributions in each issue as well as in promotional brochures, pointing out the need for them, dividing them into categories and pointing out that they were tax-deductible as a donation to a public non-profit institution. The categories and amounts decided upon by the students are: "Patron Donor"---$5.00; "Supporting Donor"---$10.00; and "Sustaining Donor"---$25.00. These amounts are considerably lower than some of the other Foxfire Concept project's
such as Foxfire's, which asks for $10.00 for Patrons, $25.00 for Supporting, $100.00 for Sustaining, $500 for Retaining and $1,000 for a Lifetime Subscriber.

Though Foxfire seems to be reasonably successful in obtaining such gifts, the students felt that THISTLEDOWN was not yet well enough known and that the people in the area not affluent enough to justify such high amounts. Perhaps future staffs will decide to raise amounts in our categories. At any rate, during the first year we received donations in these categories as follows:

Patron Donors ------------ nine ------ $ 45.00
Supporting Donors -------- none
Sustaining Donors ------- four ------- 100.00

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Total donations ------- $ 145.00

Though this was not a substantial sum, still it was very helpful since the money was 100% usable funds that were immediately available to pay for current expenses of photo processing and postage, our two largest running costs. In addition to these "official" donations, we also received several small, but helpful, contributions of materials during the year, such as ten rolls of film, a hundred mailing envelopes, two hundred file cards and file card boxes, some loose-leaf notebooks and several old books for resource material. All of these donations came, significantly enough, from parents of students who were on the staff and were not solicited in any way, but simply volunteered as a gesture (as one parent told me) of their interest and approval of the THISTLEDOWN program.

Between the sales and the outright donations, then, our income was $700.00--enough, at least, for the next issue, considering the sales that hope-
fully would be made by the time that issue was ready to go to the printers. We, thus, had become reasonably self-sustaining, since all the expensive equipment—cameras and tape recorders—had been purchased with the Jennings Foundation grant and were, of course, a one-time expense unless we wish to add additional equipment later. However, at the end of the school, an additional source of funds appeared to allow us to expand and become solidly self-sustaining.

In April, 1975, as the school year was drawing to a close, the staff became interested in finding out if THISTLEDOWN could, in some way, become associated with the U.S. Bicentennial, news of which was becoming more frequent in the mass media. We were unsure how one became recognized as a Bicentennial project, so one of the staff called the Bicentennial headquarters office in Columbus to find out. They urged us to apply for federal funds for Bicentennial projects available through the local office and sent us materials explaining how to go about doing so. They warned us, however, that the funds available were extremely limited and that there were many applicants for them. The students decided, however, to give it a try, and so, with my occasional help, they filled out the lengthy application forms and sent it, with a copy of the first issue which had just come out, to the Ohio American Revolution Bicentennial Advisory Commission in Columbus, Ohio. We heard nothing more from them until June 12, one week after school had dismissed for the year. On that date, we received notification by letter and by phone that THISTLEDOWN had received a grant for $1,500 from the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA) to be administered by the OARBAC to which we had applied.

This grant was doubly good news, for besides providing funds for more equipment and the insurance of future issues in the school year 1975–6, it also
carried with it the honor of being named an official Ohio Bicentennial Project and permitting us to use the national Bicentennial logo in and on the magazine. Both of these latter "side effects" to the monetary grant, I am sure, increased THISTLEDOWN's visibility and appeal in the retail outlets and attracted enough attention to allow us to receive grants and donations from other sources such as local service organizations, historical societies, and other granting institutions. We were also informed by the OARBAC that they had only $79,000 in available funds to grant to applicants and that they had received applications for well over $600,000 in application requests, thus giving some idea of their great approval of the THISTLEDOWN project. In addition, since the Director of the Ohio Historical Center in Columbus, Mr. Tom Smith, was involved in the selection of the grantees, the Center would sell THISTLEDOWN at its gift shop, a much-patronized selling point for the thousands who visit the Center every year. The grant is a federal matching one, so that we were reimbursed one-half of any invoice we submitted, up to $1,500, thus allowing us to make expenditures of $3,000 during the year, in effect, for half that much.

Summary

It therefore seems clear, based on our experience and the experiences of the other Foxfire concept projects that funding is available for the projects from several sources beyond the school's own financial help. Nearly every state has many such granting foundations to call upon, and state teachers' organizations, area supervisors, state departments of education and the education departments of any nearby colleges or universities should be able to supply the names and addresses of these. It is possible, of course, that some
school systems may be wealthy enough and enthusiastic enough to finance the projects themselves without recourse to outside help, and this would be the easiest and most direct approach. However, if this the case, the project immediately loses the feeling of independence and special distinction that comes from being funded from outside grants and donations, for this ties the project from its outset to the community and the "outside world" instead of to the school's umbilical cord of budget and department financing. If school funds must be used, I would suggest making it an immediate goal to use only those funds as a starting point to take care of immediate equipment expense and then set as the project's first-year goal the establishing of a self-sustaining condition that will allow the project to free itself from further dependence on the school for monetary support. The ultimate expression of this, I suppose, is when the project becomes financially solvent enough that it can begin giving money to the school: *Foxfire*, for example, now provides some $20,000 per year from the profits from its books and magazines to students at Rabun Gap who served on the *Foxfire* staff and need assistance to attend colleges or universities. They also pay out nearly this much each summer to students to work on the *Foxfire* staff in lieu of getting a summer job. They receive $100 per week to work with the project, about the same amount a summer job--if they could find one--would have paid them. Most save this money to use for college when they graduate, so it is really another form of financial assistance to the students. Most projects, of course, including THISTLEDOWN, have not reached, and may never reach, this sort of financial affluence, but the possibility always exists, depending on the acceptance of the project in a given area, and I offer the
example to demonstrate the extreme that Foxfire has reached in financial independence.

Another possibility for funds exists in the IDEAS organization of Washington, D.C., whose function was explained in chapter one. In some cases, IDEAS has provided funds for the purchase of the initial equipment for the establishment of several of the Foxfire concept projects that involved IDEAS in their establishment right from the start. In addition, they have also provided assistance in the form of workshops for the new staffs, which were conducted by members of the IDEAS staff and members and advisors of already-established projects, including Foxfire. These workshops are paid for partly by IDEAS funds, partly with a special fund from Foxfire itself and partly by the school boards of the schools in which the project is to be formed. IDEAS also agrees to purchase 50 copies of every issue the project produces, at their actual cost plus postage, to provide a sort of continuing and stable financial base. I would, therefore, suggest that IDEAS be contacted right from the start and inquiries made as to the possibility of such assistance being available for a new project. However, IDEAS itself has limited funds and must depend upon grants--mostly federal--and other donations to continue, and so they may not be able to provide the necessary assistance for the equipment. In the case of THISTLEDOWN, we did not establish close ties with IDEAS early in the planning stages and were unaware of its function, simply because the information was not generally available, except to those already involved in projects. Thus, IDEAS lists the THISTLEDOWN as an "independently begun" project in the Foxfire concept, but has accepted us nonetheless into their "Foxfire family" and is purchasing the 50 copies of each of our issues. Perhaps at some future date,
THISTLEDOWN can participate in, either as a learner or a teacher, one of the IDEAS workshops for other projects.

Besides granting organizations and IDEAS, other possibilities for funding are the local service organizations, such as Kiwanis, Rotary and Lions clubs, local historical societies, and even church service groups. All of these are usually very interested in providing some donation to any project that is "good", is connected with the community, and involves youth participation. Though their donations may be small compared to the larger granting institutions, a $50 or $100 sum can pay for a substantial amount of film, tapes or postage and can be very helpful. The primary difficulty in obtaining contributions from organizations such as these is that they almost invariably want to see the actual product itself before contributing, which is understandable, but which makes it almost impossible to depend on them for help at the critical onset of the project when a substantial sum is needed for equipment purchase.

Another possibility to investigate is the Arts Councils that most states have. Most states' Arts Councils are most interested in the Foxfire concept inasmuch as it involves both educational and crafts endeavors. The Georgia Commission on the Arts, for example, has given Foxfire $1,600 to foster its program of "locating and encouraging local craftsmen," an approach which could be followed and emphasized in applying to any such Arts Council. In another case, the Arts Council in Missouri has helped that state's Foxfire project magazine called BITTERSWEET, enormously by subscribing to the magazine on behalf of some 300 Missouri libraries, thus providing BITTER-SWEET with a solid financial base they can rely upon. In addition to providing outright grants and funds such as above, the Arts Councils invariably have
members in substantial numbers statewide who are interested and involved in
the arts and humanities and who therefore make excellent possibilities for sub-
scribers to a project's magazine. Most Councils also maintain contacts through-
out the state with mass media which could be of great assistance in publicizing a
new project in any area.

Some further possibilities to explore, according to the area in which a
project is to be begun, are the Neighborhood Youth Corps and the Emergency
School Assistance Act. The NYC, a manpower program of the U.S. Department
of Labor, has thus far provided financial stipends for the youngs involved on the
staffs of five of the Foxfire projects, all of which have been urban in their scope
instead of rural, since the urban areas are the main target of the NYC programs.
The NYC has three main components--in school, out of school, and summer
programs. The NYC provides part time jobs for those involved in in-school
programs during the school year. For the out of school, i.e., those who have
dropped out of school altogether, the program can provide full time programs
of training and work, and for those who are enrolled in the in-school projects,
the NYC can provide summer jobs. For those interested in the possibility of
obtaining some NYC funds to apply to a Foxfire project, either during the
summer or during the school year, information on how to apply and the eligi-
bility requirements may be obtained by contacting the nearest local office of the
state employment service, which is listed in the phone book, or by getting in
touch with the Regional Manpower Administrator for a particular state. Un-
fortunately, the funds from the federal government for the manpower programs
have recently been drastically reduced, and the decision about how any particu-
lar area is affected by the reduction is made regionally; not nationally.
The Emergency School Assistance Act (ESAA) is funded by the U.S. Office of Education, which has released guidelines on the new ESAA with funds to be available for new basic LEA (Local Education Agency) grants, pilot projects, non-profit group projects and bilingual projects. The goals of the program are "to meet the needs incident to the elimination of minority group segregation and discrimination among students and faculty in elementary and secondary schools; to encourage the elimination, reduction and prevention of minority group isolation in schools with substantial proportions of minority group students; and to aid school children in overcoming the educational disadvantages of minority group isolation." In these programs, heavy emphasis will be placed on projects with basic compensatory reading and math programs and projects for overcoming racial tension and conflict. ESAA funds may be used for remedial services beyond those offered by the regular school program; for the addition of staff members or teacher aides; for the development and use of new curricula and instructional methods, practices and techniques; for projects involving the joint participation of minority group children and other children, and for programs using shared facilities for career education and other specialized activities. * Applications for the funds are being handled by the Office of Education regional offices, and groups desiring to qualify for ESAA funds must first complete a "needs assessment" defining the conditions they seek to remedy through the use of the ESAA funding. Staffs applying through school districts must provide evidence that a "district wide advisory board"

has been established and at least one public hearing has been held on the LEA’s application by such a board or committee.

The Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines is another possible resource for funds for a new or existing project. The CCLM was founded in 1967 by a group of writers and editors who felt that the various sources of American philanthropy had largely neglected literature as worthy of support and that small literary magazines (such as those in Foxfire projects) were becoming endangered by lack of available funding. They saw the small literary magazine as a sort of natural forum for young writers and felt that this forum should be kept open and intact.

In general, the CCLM has provided general support grants to needy non-commercial literary magazines, and the funds from the grants may be spent in a number of ways: 1) printing and publishing costs, which includes the cost of mailing; 2) office equipment, which includes stipends, insurance and leasing of equipment, and 3) travel involved in the production of the magazine’s program. Some special issues of magazines have also received grants, such as those involving experiments in graphics and printing, and programs aimed at increasing creative writing by city or ethnic children.

The CCLM receives its funds from the National Endowment for the Arts (another possible funding source in itself), private foundations and from the New York Council for the Arts. To apply for CCLM funds, a magazine must have been published for at least one year and have put out three issues. The usual grants range from $100 to $5,000 and in the past five years, the CCLM has made grants to 215 magazines, one of which is Foxfire in Rabun Gap. To
obtain more information about application for funding, contact Gail Kong, Co-
ordinating Council of Literary Magazines, 80 Eighth Avenue, New York, New 
York, 10011.

Most areas, particularly those near or in a larger city, also contain 
a resource called the National Alliance of Businessmen (NAB). This organization 
was begun in 1968 primarily as a cooperative program among industry, govern-
ment and labor to locate jobs in private businesses for the nation's unemployed. 
The group now includes more than 20,000 businesses with 160 city offices and 
programs around the country, and is still rapidly growing. The offices are 
usually staffed by executives who are on loan from member companies. Al-
though the NAB is mostly concerned with job training and placement, it does 
have a Youth Employment section which supports projects which encourage 
youth to remain in school, and has provided assistance to youth programs in 
the form of foundation grants and business grants, which are termed "youth 
entrepreneurial programs." To investigate these latter programs as a 
possibility for funding or to see if a project might qualify as one, contact the 
regional or local NAB office, which is listed in the phone book.

These are but a few of the possible existing sources for funding. 
Nearly every area has sources particular to it, and investigation through local 
government, educational and community offices will usually prove fruitful. 
Most are interested in the Foxfire program, for a variety of reasons, and 
applications can be geared to correspond to the demands of the agency or fund-
ing organization.
COPYRIGHTS AND TRADEMARKS

One of the characteristics of the magazines produced in the Foxfire projects is that they are fully "professional" in their publication, including the copyright, instead of being the sort of high school production that people in a community usually expect--and usually see--from "just a bunch of kids." The fact that a Foxfire concept project is both professionally published and is copyrighted never fails to amaze those outside, and inside, the school, and the comment that the magazine is "so professional" and "so much better than we expected" invariably follows the publication of the first issue. This "professionalism," of course, has a twin purpose and effect: first, it immediately increases the project and the magazine's acceptance and approval by the community, and secondly, it further emphasizes to the students the "realness" of the effort with which they are involved. The reaction that the magazine is "better than we expected" is common from the student staff themselves, as well as from the community, when that very first issue returns from the printer.

Since the magazine is to be sold in retail outlets, as well as by subscriptions, the copyright is really a necessary part of the project, for if it is successful, the copyright will provide protection for the project from others who may wish to "cash in" on the efforts of the students by using the material gathered, printing it for their own profit, or by in many ways, exploiting the contacts interviewed in the magazines.

The process of copyrighting a magazine such as those in the Foxfire concept projects is not very difficult, but, like most actions that deal with government red tape, must be done precisely correct from the very start in
order to prevent getting bogged down in endless forms and correspondance. In THISTLEDOWN's case, we began by one of the staff phoning the federal government information number in Columbus to find out where we could write for the appropriate forms and information. Once that address in Washington, D.C., was obtained, another member of the staff wrote to them requesting information and including a brief outline of the project and what we intended to do. Within two weeks, a packet of brochures, forms and circulars arrived, and from then on, it was simply a matter of following instructions and doing the paperwork. Two members of the staff became the "copyrighters," and were responsible for making sure that all the necessary things were done in the printing of the first two issues to make them eligible for copyrights, as well as being responsible for filling out the appropriate forms, making out the money order that must accompany the application, and sending everything in to the government at the right time.

They enjoyed doing this business enormously and usually had more help than they really needed from the rest of the staff when the time came to send in the actual application forms, for they seemed to regard this copyrighting business as one of the really definitive symbols of the reality of their efforts; one of the things that made the project special and distinctive from "just a high school sort of things," as one of the staff put it. There is something about those very official documents with their government seals and letterheads that catches the kids' imaginations and seems to immediately extend them beyond the school's walls into the real adult world beyond. I overheard one of the staff who was working on the application for issue two explain
to another student—a non-staff member—that these were "the exact same forms used by Newsweek, the New York Times and Rolling Stone" to make their copyright applications and that what he was doing "right here in this room" would "protect our magazine for 28 years." In all this, he was correct, and perhaps it explains the appeal of this part of the project's business. This student, used to working in school with artificial exercises and hypothetical situations, was at last doing something truly real; not an imitation or copy, but things exactly as the items from the real world that he mentioned (Newsweek, etc.) did. Furthermore, what he was doing truly made a difference to somebody—it did something, and it did something that would last for 28 years, a situation that few adults can emulate, let alone the average high school student.

To obtain information and application forms for copyrighting, the address for correspondence is: Register of Copyrights, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 20559. However, if specific information is desired concerning some technicality in the publication, printing or application for periodical copywriting—the department Foxfire concept magazines fall into—the appropriate address is: Mr. Noel Gillespie, Senior Examiner, Arts Section, Examining Division, Office of the Register of Copyrights, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 20559.

When writing to the former address, it is important that the particular informational publications and forms desired be specified to avoid delays. Like most governmental agencies, the copyright office has a large number of official publications available, but only a few are relevant to the copyrighting of a Foxfire concept magazine. Those that should be requested (all free) are the
following: (1) Circular 1, "General Information on Copyright," (2) Circular 3, "The Copyright Notice," (3) Circular 42, "Copyright for Periodicals," and as many copies as you wish of "Application Form B," the appropriate form for periodicals. They sent us 25 copies of this latter form, although we only asked for ten. The first booklet, Circular 1, is the basic informational booklet, and explains all the basic rules and regulations for copyrighting anything, including mailing instructions and a list of all the other available forms for copyrighting everything from maps to motion pictures. Circulars 3 and 42 are single sheet explanations, most of which is already contained in the information booklet, but which make excellent teaching or sample materials, as they are easily reproduced for distribution.

The most important facts concerning a magazine's copyright are that the copyright symbol, date of publication and name of copyright owner must appear on the title page of the magazine when it is printed, and not placed there at some later time. The copyright symbol is preferred over just the word "copyright," as the symbol is internationally recognized, while the word may not be; both, however, can be used. The "date of publication" is not, as is often assumed, the date of the printing of the work, but rather "the earliest date when copies of the first authorized edition were placed on sale, sold, or publically distributed by the proprieter of the copyright or under his authority..."

(Circular 1). Thus, a notice such as: "Copyright c THISTLEDOWN 1976" must appear on the title page when that first issue is sold or sent out. Include this line in the title page layout, usually, but not necessarily, at the bottom of the page. If the copyright notice does not appear when the magazine
is printed, regardless of when the actual copyright is applied for, the "rights in a work will be permanently lost and... it falls into the public domain and becomes public property. After this happens, it serves no purpose to add the notice to copies of the work, and doing so may be illegal." (Circular 1) The matter of who will be the "proprietor of the copyright" is of some concern here also. For copyright purposes, the publisher of a periodical is usually considered to be the author of the periodical, which in this case, would be the magazine's staff itself. IDEAS therefore recommends that the copyright claimant be the name of the magazine, i.e., the staff, as opposed to the name of the adult advisor or the school. If the advisor or even the school should change at some time, this could cause problems. It is possible, if necessary, to transfer or assign a copyright from one name to another by particular forms available from the office of transfers of copyright at the previously-given address of the Copyright Office, but this involves a great deal of red tape and is really unnecessary if the correct procedure is followed from the start.

Another very important consideration here is that there is simply no such thing as a blanket copyright. That is, it will be necessary to apply for an individual copyright for each separate issue that is printed. Circular 42, for example, makes this clear when it states: "Registration of a claim to copyright in one issue of a periodical does not protect later issues or the general idea or format of the publication. The copyright owner must deposit copies and register claims in each issue published with notice of copyright." In the case of a quarterly magazine such as THISTLEDOWN, or most of the other Foxfire projects, this is not difficult, but it does become rather interesting if
it is considered that a publication such as Newsweek must apply every week for a copyright, and the New York Times must apply daily!

There is no set time limit for actual application after the magazine is published, as the bulletins say only that application should be made "promptly after publication of each issue." The forms, of course, can be filled out in advance, and the fee of $6.00 for each application, which must be in the form of a money order or check, gotten ready for mailing. When the issue returns from the printer, it is then ready to be submitted for copyright application by sending two complete copies of the issue, the fee, and application form B together to Register of Copyrights, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 20559. After that, it is simply a matter of waiting, as the actual paper granting copyright, which will simply be the second page of the form B that was sent in with a government seal impressed upon it, is returned. When the form for issue one of THISTLEDOWN was returned, the staff thought it would be better framed than filed, similar to the framed "first dollar" that some businesses have hanging in some prominent place, so a staff member produced a suitable frame in his woodworking class, bought the necessary glass, and proudly hung it in our small office, where it is invariably pointed out to visitors.

One further consideration is in order here. The registration of the copyright does, indeed, protect the contents of the periodical from unauthorized use for a period of 28 years (upon which time it can be renewed for 28 more!), but it does not in any way protect the name of the periodical itself. The protection of the periodical's name falls into the trademark section of the Patent Office, and suitable forms and information for registering the name of the
magazine as a trademark may be obtained from them. Few of the Foxfire con-
cept magazines have found it worth the time and expense to do so, however, so
this is entirely optional. Furthermore, even if the name of the magazine is
registered as a trademark, it does not prevent someone from using the name
in a way that is technically not related to the publication of a magazine. There
are at present, for example, at least five apartment complexes or subdivisions
in the Rabun Gap area which have named themselves "Foxfire" in hopes of
cashing in on the magazine's fame in the area. Since these businesses are not
engaged in producing or promoting a magazine, however, there is nothing that
Foxfire can do about it in any legal way. On the other hand, an entrepreneur in
Rabun Gap recently announced his intention to open a restaurant there to be
called "Foxfire" which would use reproductions of the Foxfire magazine for
placemats and menus, and that the Foxfire magazines and books would be
marketed at the cash register. In this case, Foxfire threatened to sue, and the
restaurant did not open, for there was, in this case, an obvious attempt to de-
lude the public into believing that there was some direct connection between the
magazine and the restaurant, a violation of the trademark law. Situations
such as this one rarely arise, of course, unless a project's periodical becomes
so famous that association with it would be worth money and profit, and I am
not so sure that this sort of fame is even desirable; Foxfire is at present the
only one to be faced with such difficulties. The application for trademark is
also considerably more lengthy and complex than the one for copyright, is
written in difficult legal terminology that necessitates a lawyer's aid to
correctly decipher, and the fee for filing the application is $35.00, a fairly
large sum for protection that probably will not be really needed and is vague, at best, even when obtained.

The address for information or inquiries concerning trademark is: Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C., 20231.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES FOR THISTLEDOWN

The equipment necessary to produce and publish a magazine such as THISTLEDOWN, or any of the Foxfire concept magazines can be extremely elaborate and expensive if a budget permits, but it is not really necessary to try to duplicate the National Geographic's photographic facilities in order to produce a very professional-looking publication. The equipment is, of course, vital to the magazine right from the very beginning and poor hardware at an interview or back in the office can result in poor-appearing work regardless of how much care and enthusiasm are put into the effort.

For this reason, careful attention and some wise shopping should go into the initial equipment purchases, and careful consideration should be made in terms of exactly what will be expected of the equipment, who will be using it, and how it will be used in the magazine's operation. Like all such hardware, there is an enormous array of available products on the market at a wide range of prices, but what needs to be thought out is what particular and specific demands will a Foxfire concept magazine and its staff need to make on this equipment that will differ from the demands of other publications.

Although the grant from the Jennings Foundation (see Finances and
Funding came at an awkward time in the school year to recruit staff and make scheduling arrangements (the last week of school!), it proved to be advantageous in another way, for it thus allowed me to spend the summer months researching and shopping for our equipment instead of buying it hurriedly, which would probably have been the case had the grant come near the beginning of the school year or, worse yet, after it has begun. I was, therefore, able to make carefully-considered purchases, and these have proved to be good ones, for we had absolutely no problems with our equipment throughout the entire year and have had very little since. I feel confident, therefore, in recommending the following equipment and in presenting the considerations that went into their purchase.

The most immediately necessary equipment, since the interviews can hardly take place without them, are the cameras and the tape recorders, with their attendant supplies, of course, of tapes and film. I shall deal with these two items separately, as both deserve the most careful consideration and their selection is most critical.

**Cameras**

In the purchase of the camera for THISTLEDOWN, I had a slight "edge" on the totally inexperienced buyer, for photography has been one of my avocations since my father loaned me an old 35mm rangefinder camera he had bought in England during World War II. This was in my high school days, and I have been making pictures ever since, encouraged by photography courses at Ohio State and some success in exhibitions and contests. I was, therefore, familiar with the basic photographic skills and so was more easily able to
consider what the best equipment might be for totally inexperienced photographers such as those on the THISTLEDOWN staff. Before purchasing the cameras for THISTLEDOWN, I, therefore, devised the following criteria for the equipment before I began to think in terms of brand names. These criteria are, I think, ones that should be considered by any Foxfire concept project before purchasing its cameras:

1. The cameras must be of professional quality in order to produce images that are clear, clean and precise. This is critical since the photographs that are taken will be reproduced for publication, probably by the offset process, and the better the picture image is in the actual photo, the better it will reproduce in the final publication. It should be remembered that the image quality of a photograph always decreases in the printing reproduction process, so that in order to produce excellent reproductions, the original must be truly excellent to begin with, and an image that is blurred or imprecise in the original will have all its faults magnified greatly in the final publication. This condition rules out most of the inexpensive cameras that are available everywhere, such as the Kodak Instamatics, for they simply do not have the lenses and workmanship necessary to produce photographs whose images will stand reproducing or enlarging.

2. The cameras must be of the type known as single lens reflex, as opposed to the rangefinder type. In a rangefinder camera, which is the system used by all the inexpensive Instamatic and
other snapshot cameras, the photographer observes his subject through a viewfinder lens that is totally separate from the lens through which the actual photograph is taken. What the photographer sees in this viewfinder is therefore not the actual image at all, but rather one which is only approximately the same size and shape as the one the picture-taking lens is "seeing." Furthermore, the viewfinder lens is always, of necessity, in a different place on the camera than the picture-taking lens is, which results in a problem called "parallax" causing a picture which was perfectly centered in the viewfinder to have one side or the other cut off in the actual photo, a problem which gets worse and more extreme the closer the photographer gets to his subject. Since many of the photographs in a Foxfire concept magazine are close-ups, either portraits or of steps in a craft demonstration, that would be a continual and potentially disastrous problem, for an entire set of photos from an interview involving a craft or skill demonstration could end up unusable because the subject was cut off at a side or at the top or bottom. A skillful professional, of course, can through experience, successfully compensate for this difference and produce a photograph that looks the way he wants it to, but we are not dealing with experienced professionals and the trouble it would take to learn to overcome the parallax problem is simply not worth the time and expense in wasted film. A single lens reflex camera, however,
which is the type used by professionals, allows the photographer
to see exactly what the final photograph will look like, for he is
viewing the image in the viewfinder through the same lens that
takes the actual picture; what you see is exactly what you get.
This is of enormous advantage, obviously, for it allows the
photographer to compose and crop the photo as he takes it,
easily eliminating all but the exact image he wishes to record.
He can see as well if the photo is precisely focused, since the
focusing is done through the same lens, and he also easily can
see the results of opening the lens wider to blur the background
or the effect any sort of filter may make if it is put over the
lens; all things which simply cannot be done on a rangefinder
type camera. Furthermore, if the camera has a built-in light
meter (see next section), he can see immediately if the exposure
is correct. With a single lens reflex, also, he can easily focus
the camera for extreme close ups, usually as close as 18 inches,
which very few rangefinder cameras will do without the addition
of special add-on lenses, an additional expense. Single lens
reflex cameras also have the advantage of adaptability, for
there is a wide range of special lenses available for them, such
as telephoto and wide angle, that could be purchased when the
budget permits and which would make some interviews a great
deal easier, though they are not really a necessity. They are,
however, only available for single lens reflex; it is not possible
to put a real telephoto or wide angle lens on a rangefinder camera since the viewfinder would no longer match the picture the camera would be taking at all, and the photographer would be "shooting blind."

3. The camera must not be overly complicated or difficult to operate, since it will be in the hands of a student who has had little, if any, experience in photography except for snapshots of the family with a Brownie or Instamatic. For many years, professional cameras were very difficult things to manipulate, and even today most people seem to have a sort of fear of them as being "too complicated." This feeling was, at one time, certainly justified, for most professional cameras required a number of skillful settings and adjustments before the taking of every photograph.

In order to take a picture, the most important considerations are the shutter speed, the lens opening (aperture) and the focus; only a proper combination of these elements based on the light and the subject will produce a good photograph. The typical family snapshot camera is non-adjustable, with the aperture, shutter speed and focus being permanent and pre-set for the "average" subject and light conditions, usually about one-sixtieth of a second shutter speed with an aperture of f. 8 or so. This combination will work very well as long as the subject does not move very much, the light is bright and sunny, and the subject
is more than about three feet away. Unfortunately, these conditions do not always exist; light is often dim, subjects may be in motion, as in a skill demonstration, and the important things may require close ups. So, a professional camera has a lens, shutter speed and focus which are adjustable to an almost infinite variety of combinations so that a correctly exposed photograph may be taken under almost any condition imaginable and as close as is necessary. Until recently, then, the problem was to determine exactly what that correct combination was and then to set the camera accordingly. In order to do this, the photographer needed a light meter with which he could measure the light being reflected from the subject, adjust his camera accordingly, focus, and then take the photograph. This was, and still is, a complicated process, and though it produces beautiful, perfectly exposed photos, it is simply too much bother and is too complicated for the casual snapshot photographer. This made professional cameras almost solely the property and domain of the advanced amateur or true professional photographer and left the rest to their Instamatics.

Fortunately, this problem was recognized by the camera industry a number of years ago, and so they began to "uncomplicate" the high-quality professional camera by building in the light meters and making the cameras in some way "automatic" in the sense that they read the light and performed some part of the
adjustments for shutter speed or aperture themselves, so that the photographer today needs only focus and shoot, with the camera doing most of the "complicated" things for him. Currently, by the way, cameras that will even focus themselves are being developed and should appear on the market in a short time! We then have several kinds of high-quality, single lens reflex cameras available today that are, in one way or another, partially automatic and thus much less complicated than before, but which still produce the excellent images that made them the choice of professionals in the first place. These fall into three basic subdivisions, depending on how their metering system works.

The first, and usually the most inexpensive, type is the "match needle." With this system, the photographer first sets the shutter speed for an appropriate setting for his particular subject, i.e., a high speed in the 125th. of a second to 1000th. a second range for fast-moving subject or to produce a blurred background, or a slow speed of a 60th. of a second down to a 30th. or even 15th. of a second for very low light (less than a 15th. usually requires a tripod). He then looks through the viewfinder, focuses, and then turns an exposure ring on the front side of the camera until a needle he sees in the viewfinder matches another, movable, needle also seen in the viewfinder. When the needles match, he is at the correct exposure
for the particular subject and light as determined by the light meter built into the camera, and he is ready to shoot. It's a simple process that can be mastered with only a brief practice and has the advantage that the internal metering system may, if the photographer wishes, be ignored and he may set the camera any way he pleases for special effects. The other two systems are more "automatic" than the match-needle system in that in both of them either the shutter speed or the aperture is set by the camera without any action on the photographer's part. These are usually much more expensive than the match-needle system, due to increased complexity of the circuitry inside, which approach, in some, the state of minicomputers. In the one type, the photographer sets whatever aperture he wishes and then the camera reads the light condition and sets an appropriate shutter speed for a correct exposure. This system has the advantage of having an almost infinite range of possible shutter speeds available to the photographer, but it also has a great disadvantage: in the hands of an inexperienced, or even an experienced one who guesses incorrectly and uses a lens opening that is too small, the camera will set itself for a very slow shutter speed in order to maintain the correct exposure, thus resulting in pictures which are perfectly exposed blurs.

However, in the other type, the photographer first sets the shutter speed to correspond to his subject, a very easy thing
for the most inexperienced to do, and then the camera chooses an appropriate lens opening for him. Of the two, then, this second type is much preferable and will result in consistently better pictures. Both of these systems can also, like the match-needle, be obtained with "manual override," an imposing term which simply means again that the photographer, if he wishes, simply switches off the automatic feature (usually called "EE" or electronic exposure) and is free to set the camera any way he wishes, although the meter in the camera will continue to function and tell him, by his looking in the viewfinder, what exposure it suggests for the particular subject.

In this criteria, then, since we will be dealing with totally inexperienced photographers, it seems clear that we do not want the totally manual types of single lens reflexes that require a separate hand-held light meter and all settings performed by the photographer after readings with the meter have been taken. This is an unnecessary complicated procedure that only professional photographers, and not so many of those, bother with.

Even if the student could learn to make pictures this way, the process is slow, which could cause many problems in an interview, especially a demonstration that moves quickly from step to step, and many people are annoyed or even intimidated by a photographer who must continually wave a light meter in front of them to take readings and then wait for him to translate the
meter readings and make camera adjustments. The idea expressed by some purists that the student will be "missing something" if he does not use a light meter and avoid automatic type cameras is, in my opinion, absurd: there is so much more to the art and science of taking excellent photographs than meter readings and camera settings, that to bog a young person down with now unnecessary chores may turn him off of photography and make him miss out on the real fun and satisfaction that comes from taking good pictures. Furthermore, the semi-automatic cameras I have discussed still involve the photographer in active participation and choice in what he is doing and also make him continually aware of the setting that the camera has made for him by readouts in the viewfinder, so that the "feel" for shutter speed or aperture is developed in their use just the same as with a totally manual camera, but with less frustration.

It also seems clear that of the three types--match-needle, shutter set, and aperture set--the most desirable from the expense standpoint is the match-needle, which the shutter speed set, the second choice if the budget permits. Although the camera in which the shutter speed is set and the camera chooses the aperture seems to be the ideal for our purposes, it is, unfortunately, a rather expensive piece of equipment. Depending on a project's financial state, then, I would definitely recommend this latter type, but if a project's budget is typical
of most at the outset, the match-needle will make a most efficient, fairly low-cost, easy to operate, and high quality camera to use.

4. The camera should be easily portable and fairly light weight with as much of it being self-contained as possible so that a minimum of baggage and extra items need be carried around on interviews. Most of the inexpensive snapshot cameras would fit this criteria, of course, especially the "pocket" cameras available everywhere. However, their unsuitability in quality and adaptability has already been dealt with. On the other extreme, there are large "view" cameras that some professionals use that require cases of equipment, tripods, and a litter-bearer to carry everything: these are equally unsuitable. The ideal choice again, then, is the 35mm. single lens reflex. Its small size and weight, extreme adaptability and flexibility, and very high professional quality are exactly what has made it the most popular camera in the world with professional, and which makes it again ideal for a Foxfire Concept interview team.

5. The camera should be reasonably inexpensive. Again, of course, the snapshot cameras certainly fill the requirement here, as most of them sell for between $20 and $60, but the quality matches the low price, besides their inflexibility. Careful shopping, then, is needed to find the best price for the single lens reflexes in a given area, and the best one of those for the
price. The prices for single lens reflexes range enormously, from about $130 to $2,000 or more for the most expensive Hasselblad, Nikon or Leica. It does not always follow, however, that a high priced single lens reflex is necessarily of much greater quality than a lower priced one: much of the price is keyed, in some cases, to import costs or simply the camera's reputation. A low-priced choice, if carefully chosen and researched, can be a very high-quality camera that will produce excellent photos and be quite satisfactory for any but the most demanding professional; certainly satisfactory for the purposes of the Foxfire concept magazine.

5. The camera should be fairly "tough," i.e., it should be able to hold up under use by inexperienced students who may be somewhat careless in its handling. It will also be "traveling" camera and will spend most of its time slung over someone's shoulder or bouncing around in the back seat of a car, instead of carefully perched on a tripod somewhere in a studio. It should have, therefore, besides good strong workmanship, a carefully fitted and strong traveling case that should come with the camera and be equipped with shoulder straps that are adjustable. To determine a camera's "toughness" and frequency of repair, the best sources are camera magazines such as Popular Photography which periodically test cameras and report on them, or better yet, an independent testing group such as Consumer's Union,
which publishes the magazine *Consumer Reports* and *Consumer Reports Buying Guide* books, or the *Consumer Guide* magazines. These latter magazines and books are invaluable guides when purchasing almost any piece of equipment, as they do thorough testing of a number of products side by side and then present their report and conclusions. In particular, the *Consumer Reports* of August, 1972, and the *Consumer Reports Buying Guide* of 1973 did a very complete testing of nearly all the 35mm single lens reflex cameras on the market and are excellent references. Other, more current, consumer guides and tests can be found at most newstands in the magazine section or at bookstores. Unless a company introduces a new camera, of course, it is not necessary to obtain brand-new test results, for cameras do not change every year like automobiles. These various tests are especially valuable in that they test each feature of the cameras and report on it separately. This allows the buyer to see clearly which cameras would be most suitable for his purposes, e.g., a camera with an extraordinary lens but which is difficult to handle or adjust might be fine for a professional, but a student would be vastly better off with a camera that is easy to operate but which has only an excellent lens. Furthermore, most of these tests, especially those in *Consumer Reports*, include a section on frequency of repair and workmanship, which will inform the buyer how well the camera will hold up under
usage over a period of time. It is a waste of the magazine's money to purchase a superb camera that will take superb photos but which spends half the year in the repair shop because someone turned a dial a bit too far or jostled it around walking to an interview.

In summary, then, these are the six basic criteria that I developed for the cameras to be used the following school year for THISTLEDOWN:

1. Professional quality.
2. Single lens reflex, 35mm.
3. Easy to operate.
4. Easily portable, light-weight, self-contained.
5. Not too expensive.
6. Fairly durable under use.

The goal, then, was to find cameras available that fit all, or at least most, of these criteria, and so I began shopping all over Columbus and the metropolitan area to see what was available. I also included nearby smaller cities, such as Newark, and investigated the possibilities of mail-order camera shops, such as those listed in profusion in the advertising sections of most camera magazines. I also researched the various consumer magazines and reports mentioned previously to determine what brands to concentrate my searches on. By using these consumer test reports, I saved a great deal of time and unnecessary looking by immediately eliminating some brands from consideration:

Miranda brand cameras, for example, were consistently highly rated
in performance by the various testers, but just as consistently was very low rated—the lowest, in some—in the area of frequency of repair, so they were eliminated. Some were highly rated in all areas, such as Nikon, Canon, Leica and Konica, and would undoubtedly have made excellent choices, but they are among the most highly priced, with prices of $250 up to $1,000 or more. If the budget had permitted, perhaps they might have been purchased, but this was not the case. Also, it should be considered that most schools do not carry much insurance, and what they do carry has many technical aspects to satisfy before collecting, so a very expensive camera that is stolen from a student's car in the school parking lot, say, may or may not be covered. Things like that do happen, though it has not happened to us as yet, so it might be better to have to replace a $200 camera from your budget than one costing hundreds more. All things considered, then, the brands that, according to the various tests, most nearly satisfied the criteria I had developed were the following: Ricoh, Mamiya/Sekor, Minolta and Yashica. These, then, were the brands I began shopping for at numerous sources.

I quickly found that, of these four, the Minolta and Yashica were much more expensive than the other two, though they did not offer a great deal more in features. Both were, however, in the semi-automatic class, which accounted for their higher price, while the Ricoh and Mamiya/Sekor cameras were of the match-needle type. It was a basic decision, then between the two systems in terms of the small grant money we had to spend, and I decided that, given our budget, the match-needle varieties would be the logical choices. The field was thus narrowed to the two—Ricoh and Mamiya/Sekor—and it was
simply a matter of finding the best prices on them from a variety of sources.

I found the following to be true in my shopping, and I believe this would apply regardless of the area one is shopping in for project equipment: regular retail camera stores are good places to go first, as they are invariably staffed by long-time camera buffs who can give a wealth of information and advice on any given brand or photographic problem. They will point out all the features of the brands under consideration and explain the details. Do this first, get the information, and write down the prices they have on their cameras; however, do not buy there. Their prices are strictly retail and are always the highest for any given brand of equipment. Then, armed with the information and retail prices given you, shopping can be done at the various discount stores in the area that offer photographic equipment. It is the same equipment, but cameras are a "hot" item in today's market and wide ranges can be found in the prices of them between the retail stores and the discount stores. For example, a Mamiya/Sekor that sold for $275 to $320 in every retail camera store in and around Columbus was available at discount stores, such as Woolco, Service Merchandise and Schottenstein's for $215 to $235, a considerable savings. I would advise here against buying from mail order services, however, for though their prices are often quite low, at least as low as the discount stores, it is a gamble in some ways. The companies are nearly always out of state, so if you send off a check for several hundred dollars and receive faulty merchandise, merchandise different from that which you ordered, or even nothing at all, there isn't too much that can be done about it without extensive legal action. Some of them, of course, are reputable companies whose
word and prices are good, so if it is a sure thing, then, of course, go ahead. In this case, however, the best source was the mentioned discount stores.

After considerable shopping and comparison, I found that the best deal was to be had on Ricoh brand at the Schottenstein's Department Store, where they were selling, with case and strap, for only $150. Ricoh had all the features in the set of criteria I had developed; in fact, ranked at the very top in the consumer tests in durability. I, therefore, purchased two of them for our use, at a total cost of $300, about the price of one of the more expensive, and not so highly rated, brands. During this first year, the students, none of whom has had any prior experience with single lens reflex cameras, all learned to use them very quickly. They took nearly 1,000 photographs with the two for the two issues, and we have had absolutely no difficulty with them and no repair of any sort has been necessary. I would certainly recommend them, if they can be obtained at a comparable price, for any project looking for cameras.

Two special cases concerning cameras should be mentioned here. The first in the brand called Hanimex Praktica. This brand is widely advertised and can be obtained in many discount stores as well as in catalogs such as those from Sears and Penney's stores. They look like any other single lens reflex cameras and are always featured at an amazingly low price—usually under $100, which makes them seem like a great bargain. However, if the fine print is examined in their description, it will be found that they have some drawbacks that account for their low price: they will not accept any other lens than the one which comes with the camera, which makes them very inflexible;
they do not have a flash connector, so flash pictures are impossible, a great disadvantage, and they are rated in the very lowest rating in workmanship and frequency of repair. Therefore, they are simply unacceptable for a project's use; indeed for nearly anyone's use.

The second case is that of the "house brands" of cameras available at many department stores. Most large chain stores, such as Sears and Penney's have a variety of merchandise produced by well-known companies but which have the Sears or Penney's name on it. Sears, for example, has men's electric shavers with the Sears brand on them and which sell for considerably less than the regular names, even though the shavers are made by Shick and Norelco and are identical to these brand's products. So it is with cameras. Both stores sell single lens reflex cameras of high quality which are exactly Mamiya/Sekor or Pentax or Canon brands with the store's name on them. These are usually priced quite a bit lower than the brand itself and are certainly worth checking into when shopping. At the time I was doing the buying for THISTLE-DOWN, the prices were still not as low as the ones for the Ricoh's I found, but that may not be the case in another area, particularly if there is an "outlet store" of one of these two chains—a discount operation—such as the one in Columbus, where a Penney's brand single lens reflex with automatic aperture is on sale for $218; actually a $300 model of a new automatic version of the Mamiya/Sekor in disguise!

**FILTERS**

There are a wide variety of filters which can be purchased to attach to single lens reflex cameras. They are inexpensive—usually about $3 to $4—
and can produce a variety of special effects, especially if color film is used. However, most of them are only useful if rather advanced work is being done, and few of the Foxfire concept magazines as yet can afford color photos, an extremely expensive process. For standard black and white photography, however, these are two filters I would definitely recommend purchasing at the time the cameras themselves are purchased for use and availability right from the start.

The first, and most recommended is the "Skylight" filter, also often called the "1-A" filter, or the "UV" filter. Both of these perform nearly identical functions, so it doesn't really matter which is purchased. Both the 1-A and the UV are readily available at nearly any store that sells cameras, including the discount stores, and cost only about $3.50. They are small and will simply screw onto the front of the camera's lens which is always threaded to accept any filter. The skylight 1-A and UV filters will make very little difference in the photos produced, as their primary function is to screen out a portion of the ultraviolet light, thus permitting clearer pictures in haze or cutting down the "blueness" that sometimes appears in color pictures of snow. No special adjustments of any sort are necessary for them and they do not affect the operation of the camera in the slightest. The reason for purchasing this filter is that it will provide protection for the most valuable and irreplaceable part of the camera: the lens itself. Most professional photographers purchase a 1-A filter at the time they buy their camera, screw it on over the lens and forget it. It becomes a shield that catches the dust, rain, bumps and scratches that otherwise would fall upon the lens itself and make the camera
unsuitable. The lens of a camera is a highly-polished and rather delicate thing, and handling by inexperienced photographers as well as travel and weather can take their toll on it quickly. The 1-A or UV filter, while also a finely-ground optical glass, is not nearly as delicate, and if it should become badly scratched or marred, its replacement is simple and inexpensive. If a lens becomes scratched, however, the replacement, if one can be obtained will often be half or more of the price of the entire camera. Thus, this small $3.50 purchase at the time the camera is bought is very inexpensive insurance that will greatly increase the camera's life and durability.

The second recommended filter is the "polarizing" filter. This is one that is not essential as the 1-A, but is merely a nice tool to have around. Therefore, its purchase can be delayed until the budget permits or the need arises. The polarizing filter is more expensive than the 1-A, usually costing about $15 and somewhat larger. Screwed on the lens (actually on top of the 1-A), it can be turned to adjust and will allow the photographer to take photos through glass or over water without a glare. It is simple to use, as the photographer can see through his viewfinder, with a single lens reflex, exactly what the effect the filter is producing, and the camera's built-in light meter will take care of the change in exposure automatically. It is useful if an interview team wants to photograph old photos which are framed behind glass, or objects enclosed in a glass case, or through a window glass. It is also very useful in any photography done around water, since sun glare from water can turn any photo into nothing but a bright white picture with no image.

There are, as I mentioned, many other available filters for various
special effects, all fairly inexpensive, and they will be listed and explained on a small sheet that is always contained in the box that the 1-A filter is purchased in, so that at the time these can be purased can be considered for purchase for particular purposes and needs. I do, however, strongly urge anyone buying a high-quality camera to also buy the 1-A filter at the same time, attach it, and regard it from the onset as a permanent part of the camera; it will pay for itself many times over in the protection it affords. THISTLEDOWN has purchased both these filters and has used them constantly from the first interview; in fact, I put the 1-A filters on the lenses before the camera even left the camera store where they were purchased, so that our delicate lenses are as clean and perfect after much use as the day they were purchased.

**FILM**

THISTLEDOWN made the decision early, as have nearly all the other Foxfire concept projects, to take all photos in black and white. The primary reason is simply that color photography in the printing process is extremely expensive and much beyond the budget of most projects. For example, our total bill for the printing of issue two with 122 black and white photos, including a large one on the cover, was $921. If we had had a color photo on the cover, the cover alone would have cost nearly $400! A second reason is that if all photos are taken in black and white, the project can then have any of them enlarged by newspapers or other media in articles on the project or in other publicity, all of whom invariably ask for 8x10 black and white glossy prints to use. A third reason is that the processing of black and white film is a fairly simple process, while processing color film is quite complex and difficult;
therefore, color processing is two or three times as expensive as black and white if done commercially and, for those projects that do their own processing, simply out of the range of a school's photo lab equipment and expertise.

Assuming black and white film is to be used, then, there are a number of possibilities available, all dependent on the film's ASA (American Standards Association) rating. This ASA rating will be found on the box that all film comes in, and is simply a measure of the film's "speed," i.e., the higher the ASA rating, the "faster" the film is, the more sensitive, so the less light it takes to produce a photograph with it. The black and white films with very low ASA ratings of 25 or 100 are usually used only by studio photographers who can provide as much light as they wish artificially and whose main concern is producing photos with extremely fine "grain" capable of extreme enlargement or reproduction for exhibition or advertising purposes. These "slow" films are hardly the choice for an interview team who must make pictures indoors or of moving subjects or in unpredictable light situations.

Fortunately, Kodak produces a film which has become the world standard for available light photography such as that encountered by interviewers, newsmen, and sports photographers--Tri-X. Tri-X film is rated at 400 ASA, a very fast film that will allow the photographer to take pictures almost anywhere at any time without resorting to the use of a flash. It is a very high quality film which will yield photos of a quality quite suitable for offset reproduction and is not expensive; about 80¢ per roll for 20 exposures. It is also available in 36 exposure rolls at slightly more. We, at THISTLEDOWN, use Tri-X exclusively, as do most of the other projects, and it is obviously the
ideal choice of film for the purposes an interview team will require. Again, however, I advise shopping around for its purchase. The price varies considerably, and the most expensive place to buy it will probably, again, be the retail photo store, although they may give a substantial discount if the film is purchased in quantity, say 30 rolls at a time. In the case of THISTLEDOWN, I found that Tri-X was selling for $1.25 per roll at the retail photo stores, and from 80¢ to $1.00 per roll at the discount stores, with the low of 80¢ being at the Gold Circle discount department stores, from which we purchase our film.

PROCESSING

We did not have space or money available during the first year of THISTLEDOWN to set up and operate a darkroom to process our own film, and the high school does not have a photography class with a darkroom that could do the work for us. We, therefore, had to rely upon commercial processors to do the work for us, and this, at first, caused some difficulties. I would recommend, if possible, that a project do its own photo processing, as the time and money saved will be considerable, not to mention the satisfaction a student will receive from seeing his own photo gradually take form in the darkroom.

In our case, however, we began by canvassing all the photo processing dealers in the area in order to find the lowest possible commercial price. We had hardly completed this survey when we were offered what seemed at the time to be a heaven-sent bargain, but which turned out to be one of our greatest mistakes.

Since Granville, Ohio, is near Pataskala, the students in education at
Dennison University there commonly do their student teaching at Watkins High School. At the time THISTLEDOWN was just getting underway, in September, a student teacher from Dennison in the art classes expressed interest in the project, and said she had a friend at Dennison who was doing graduate work in photography and who would be most happy to develop and print all our photos for free, even supplying all the materials, as she needed the practice. This certainly seemed like an unbeatable deal and we eagerly took her up on it. Starting with the first interview, then, we gave the rolls of film, usually two per interview, to the student teacher, who took them back to Dennison to her friend. We were all very eager, of course, to see our photos as soon as possible. After two weeks, however, none had appeared, and the student teacher apologized, explaining that her friend had been ill with the flu, but was going to get "right to them" and return all our photos. Weeks passed, and still nothing appeared from the friend, who was "taking exams" or "involved in a project" or even, at one point, "too tired to do any work because she was on the volunteer fire department and had been responding to late night alarms"! Finally, after six weeks with nothing produced and all the staff upset at the delay and anxious to see their photos, I gave her an ultimatum: produce the promised pictures in two days or give us back all our film so we could get on with our work. The next day, the student teacher arrived with a paper bag containing all our film—about 15 rolls—and, again, apologized, saying her friend had decided she was just "too busy" to do the work. It was a great disappointment and a bad delay for us, and certainly said little for the student at Dennison, but there was little we could do about it except accept it philosophically as an example of what happens when one expects "something for nothing."
We, therefore, resumed our search for a commercial processor. The most inexpensive area processor said they could do the job for $2.25 per roll. However, we found, in an issue of Popular Photography magazine, a mail processor who advertised 35mm. 20 exposure black and white development and printing at only $1.25 per roll plus 25¢ handling and postage, for a total of $1.50 per roll, by far the most inexpensive price we had found anywhere. We, therefore, boxed up all 15 rolls and mailed them off with a check, crossed our fingers and waited. To our delight, in less than a week, all the photos were returned, developed and printed, and in a very good quality manner. Since then, we have used this processor for all our work and have always received fast, high quality and inexpensive service from them. The company is Holiday Photo, and a mailer with rates and instructions for mailing may be obtained by writing to Holiday Photo, P.O. Box 9665, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15226. We have since learned that it would cost nearly that much or more to have the photos processed in a darkroom we would operate ourselves, besides the expense of the purchase of the necessary equipment, so THISTLEDOWN will probably continue having its work processed by Holiday even if a darkroom would become a financial possibility. We have also found another mail processor who does very good quality black and white enlargements for a price that is lower by far than any local processor or even, we have been told, lower then it would cost us to do it ourselves if we had the facilities. This company is Custom Quality Studio, P.O. Box 4838, Dept. DM., Chicago, Illinois, 60680, from whom a mailer and instructions may also be obtained by writing. This processor will make 8x10 black and white enlargements--the kind necessary
for offset printing—for only 60¢ each, or 11x14 size for only $1.00, a very low rate indeed, and they pay all postage besides. Custom Quality also does very good color enlarging, if that need should ever arise, and will do color 8x10 gloss enlargements for only $1.00 each, an amazingly low price.

The only real difficulty in using a mail processor instead of a local one is that it does take longer to obtain the results than might be the case if it were done locally or if the project had its own darkroom and did it themselves. The usual turn-around time for mail order is one week, although ten days or two weeks is not unusual if it is a busy time of the year--around a holiday, for example. This delay is not a big problem, of course, if it is planned upon and accounted for in the project's timetable or deadlines. However, as it happened in both our first two issues, we found that we needed another two or three enlargements for an article at the last minute and did not have time to wait for a week or two to send them in and wait for a return. We, therefore, had to call upon a local processor to do these for us in two or three days, but at a considerably higher cost than the mail processor's rates. Had everything worked out perfectly, of course, this last-minute rush job would not have been necessary and we would have saved ourselves the money. Another problem in using mail processing is that they are rather inflexible in their work, i.e., the processing and enlarging is largely automated for standard sizes and formats, and any cropping or unusual needs in processing or enlarging will cost a great deal extra. This was not a problem in the case of THISTLEDOWN, however, due to the nature of the procedure of our printer: our prints are sent to him and he halftones them immediately and returns the originals and the actual halftones
that will be used in the offset process to us, complete with pre-waxed backs, so that all we have to do is physically cut the halftones to the exact size and shape we desire, peel off a paper backing, and stick them on the layout paper where we want them. Our cropping and shaping, therefore, are done with a paper cutter and pair of scissors instead of photographically and eliminates the need for special darkroom work.

**FLASH UNITS**

Although the single lens reflex camera loaded with Tri-X film is one of the most flexible cameras there is available for taking pictures nearly any imaginable condition or light, there will be times in many interviews in which there will be enough light for the camera to function, even with the lens at its widest aperture (usually f. 1.8) and the shutter speed set at its lowest setting that is still practical for hand-held work (usually a 15th. of a second). It would be possible, of course, to mount the camera on a tripod and take the picture with a very slow exposure of one fifth of a second or less. Most single lens reflexes can be set for several shutter speeds below a 15th. of a second, with some having settings for a full one second or less. Below that is the "B" setting, with which the shutter will remain open for as long as the photographer holds his finger down on the shutter release button, and the "T" setting for time exposures, with which the shutter remains open after the shutter release button is pushed again. Therefore, if the subject were absolutely immobile, and a good steady tripod were used, a photo could be taken in almost complete darkness if the shutter were left open long enough.

This is, of course, hardly practical for an interview situation, for
subject will be very mobile and a tripod immediately makes the camera inflexible and immovable. The obvious answer, therefore, is to create the necessary light for the photograph by the use of a flash. Unless the subject is outdoors, a flash will be a necessity in many interviews and should be purchased for each camera at the very beginning when the camera themselves are purchased.

When purchasing flash attachments, there are two basic choices: flash bulbs and cubes, or electronic flash units. In choosing flash attachments for THISTLEDOWN, I considered the advantages and disadvantages of both.

With a flash bulb or cube, there is the great disadvantage that, once used, the photographer is stuck with a piece of very hot plastic which he must somehow dispose of and stow away while continuing to take pictures. This can be a problem, for unless the photographer has big pockets or a nearby bag or trashcan, he must either lay them down on a contact's furniture or pile them up on the carpet, neither of which is likely to endear him to the contact. Secondly, once the cube or bulb is used, it is gone forever, and so a continual supply must be purchased and toted around every time an interview team goes out. Lastly, the flash from a flashbulb or cube is of much longer duration than that of an electronic flash and so always catches everyone's attention and distracts the contact. The only single advantage to the cubes I can find is in the recent development of so-called "magicubes" which need no batteries to activate the flash, thereby assuring the photographer that he will always have a flash when he wants one and eliminating the expense of batteries. This is, however, a minor consideration, I believe, given the major disadvantages that cubes and bulbs have, for a little care with an electronic unit will assure the
photographer of a flash equally as well.

The electronic flash unit, on the other hand, has many advantages. It leaves behind no debris of any sort, it can be used ad infinitum with only replacement of batteries every few hundred flashes, and it has a flash of incredibly brief duration—usually about one ten-thousandth of a second—so that it attracts little attention and causes no disruption of the interviews. It does cost more initially than a simple cube or bulb attachment, but this cost is overcome very quickly since no cubes or bulbs need be bought continually. The electronic flash unit is, then, the obvious choice for use by an interview team.

When purchasing electronic flash units, the same shopping procedure as was performed for buying the cameras is recommended: check consumer test listings in photography magazines and consumer guides and shop around discount stores for the best price. Again, do not overlook the "house brands" available at major department stores, as they may prove to be the best bargains. The major considerations besides brand and price when looking for electronic units are its power source and its "computer" capability.

Power sources for electronic flash units are of two sorts: battery and rechargeable. The battery-powered units are more inexpensive to begin with, but in the long-run will be the more expensive as the batteries will need replacement two or three times during a typical year, while the rechargeable type has no batteries to replace; the regargable types are simply plugged into an outlet overnight and, in the morning, are ready to another 40 to 100 flashes before recharging again. Depending on the budget of a project, the "computer"
flashes are also a consideration. These units are quite a bit more expensive than units without the built-in electronic eye, but are easier to use and will almost guarantee accurate exposures. With a non-computer flash unit, the photographer must compute the aperture at which the camera must be set for the distance he is away from the subject by the use of the flash guide on the back of the unit. This is not a difficult process, however, and is well within the capability of any student. With a computer flash, the electronic eye measures the light being reflected from the subject and adjusts the length of the flash accordingly, thus requiring no computation on the part of the photographer.

For THISTLEDOWN, I purchased two Viviter units at $21 each for our Ricoh cameras. These units are battery-powered and non-computer types, hence their low price, which was the primary consideration given our small initial budget. They have proved quite satisfactory, and beyond battery replacement, have given us no difficulty in their use. I would, however, recommend the regargable type for those whose budget can afford it, as they will save money eventually if it is available to spend at the beginning. I considered the great cost difference of the computer flashes to be an unnecessary luxury not worth the cost difference, in our case.

The procedure for using electronic units is quite simple and can be learned, I have found, by an inexperienced student very quickly. The instruction booklet that will come with every camera will tell, in detail, how to utilize the flash with that particular brand, and the instructions with the flash unit itself will be helpful as well. However, the basic process is the same for nearly
all cameras and all units. The unit is mounted atop the camera in an accessory
shoes that all cameras are equipped with; it need only be mounted there when the
need for a flash is anticipated. The accessory shoe may be a "hot" shoe, in
which case the small plug-in cord that comes with the flash is not necessary.
If, like most cameras, the shoe is not "hot", that is connected directly to the
camera's interior mechanism, then the small plug-in cord should be plugged
into the camera in the small hole marked "X" which will synchronize the flash
unit so it will go off when the camera's shutter is tripped. The "M" hole that
is usually there is for use only with bulb type flash units, so just ignore it.
Once connected, the flash unit is turned on with the switch on the unit. There
will be a short delay of 10 seconds or so, and then an indicator light on the
unit will come on, indicating that the unit is ready to be used. If the light
does not come on, it shows that the batteries are too weak to use or that the
unit needs recharging, depending on what type of unit is in use. The camera's
shutter speed dial should be set at whatever shutter speed the camera's instruct-
ion manual says is the speed at which the camera will synchronize with electronic
flash; on nearly all cameras, that is one-sixtieth of a second. Once set, the
shutter speed is never changed while the flash is being used. The photographer
then estimates the distance from the subject to the camera and reads that dis-
tance on the little rotary dial on the back of the flash unit, which will tell him
what aperture to set the camera's lens. Once set, the photographer then need
only focus and shoot, and as long as the distance does not change between him
and the subject, no other adjustments need be done. If the camera to subject
distance changes, he must reset the aperture, using the dial on the flash unit
again. After each shot, the indicator light will go off while the unit is recycling itself and building up enough power in its capacitors for the next shot, so the photographer must wait until the light comes on again each time to take his next picture; usually, this time lapse will be only a matter of about three to five seconds.

The photographer may switch to existing light photos at any time simply by turning the unit off with its switch and then using the camera as usual without a flash. For this reason, we often mount the flash unit on top of the camera before going in to an interview, as the photographer is then prepared to shoot either flash or existing light pictures and does not have to distract anyone in the middle of an interview by getting out and mounting the flash until if the light dims or the subject decides to go indoors or to a darker part of the house. Of course, if the interview is to be entirely outside, the need for a flash would be rare, so this precaution would not be necessary.

**Tape Recorders**

Certainly the next most important tool for the interviewer after the photographic equipment is the tape recorder which which he captures every word and sound of the interview in toto instead of just trying to get things down in sketchy note form and hoping he will remember all the in-between things. The sound and rhythm of the speech of many contacts will be as fascinating and important as the information they give the interviewers, and sometimes an entire point or step in a demonstration will hinge on hearing again the exact word the contact used in his description. Furthermore, there is simply no other way to faithfully preserve these speech patterns and sounds for later use as resource
material. The sounds themselves augment and reinforce the information gathered and make the tape a valuable thing to save and savor in later times. It would be sad, for example, to interview someone who constructs an ancient folk instrument like the dulcimer without bringing back on tape some sounds of that dulcimer being played by its creator. The Foxfire magazine *Bittersweet* in Lebanon, Missouri, has brought this concept to its ultimate end by including in one issue a tear-out plastic record of dulcimer music to accompany an article on the instrument and those who still make and play them!

Like the cameras, the use and needs of the interviewers for a Foxfire concept project must be considered before purchasing the tape recorders; and so I again drew up a list of criteria for the recorders before buying the ones for THISTLEDOWN:

1. The recorders should be light and easily portable. This is an obvious must if they are to be carried around to all sorts of places for interviews, and be held and carried during many interviews in which the contact is moving from place to place, as in a demonstration.

2. They should be easy to operate by non-experienced students. This rules out the high-quality professional type recorders with their multitude of indicators, meters and settings that aren't really needed anyway, except by professional sound technicians that are recording, say, a soundtrack for a film.

3. They must have self-contained power sources so they can be used in all sorts of situations both inside and outside without
having to run around trying to find an electrical outlet to plug into, assuming there is even one around, which there often is not. At the same time, they must also have an AC adaptor cord that can be hooked up easily to the recorder so that it can be plugged into the wall during transcribing, or any other time the internal power source is not needed. This saves tremendously on batteries and will prevent the problem of having the batteries run down in the middle of an interview because they have been used too much back at the school.

4. They should be fairly inexpensive, both because of the budget and because if one gets lost, the loss will not be as great as if it were a $500 professional model.

5. They should be cassette tape types, as opposed to reel-to-reel types. A reel-to-reel machine is usually of higher quality so far as sound reproduction goes, and indeed are the kind used when the sound quality is a prime consideration, as in film soundtracks, but that is not a great concern here. The reel-to-reel is also larger in size and greater in weight than a cassette because of its more complex internal mechanism, and this makes it less portable, more difficult to handle, and more likely to intimidate the contacts. A cassette tape is self-contained and requires no treading to load or unload from the machine, while a reel-to-reel type would necessitate a pause for threading up a new reel if one ran
out in the middle of an interview. Furthermore, since the cassette tape is entirely contained within its protective case and no one has any need to ever touch the actual tape, the cassette is fairly immune to damage and breaking, a continual problem with the entirely-exposed reel type. The tape cassette is small and easy to store and file after use, while the reel tape is bulkier and more difficult to handle and store, and tends to turn into a tangled mass if dropped or unroller, like a film reel.

6. The recorder should have an extension microphone with an on-off switch built into it, as opposed to the very popular condenser mikes that are built right into the recorder's body. These built-in mikes have advantages in some situations, but their disadvantages are too many for use by an interview team. The built-in mike is omnidirectional; that is, it picks up sound from a wide radius in front of the recorder and around it. This is necessary because, since the mike is a part of the recorder itself, the entire recorder would have to be aimed and turned to catch a moving sound of any kind if the mike were directional. To avoid this problem, the built-in types pick up virtually all the sound surrounding the recorder, which would, hopefully, include the actual sound the recording person wanted. This omnidirectionality is an obvious problem to an interview team who wishes to concentrate on the contact's words without all sorts of distracting sounds being recorded along with it, including, by the way, the
sound of the recorder's motor itself, which always comes through on an omnidirectional mike. Furthermore, with a built-in mike, the recorder itself must always be evident and continually being held and shoved down the throat of the contact, which scares some and distracts all.

An extension mike, on the other hand, is directional; that is, it records pretty much only what it is aimed at and eliminates noise around it. This is an obvious advantage to the interviewer and results in consistently easier to listen to and easier to transcribe tapes. The extension mike is small and easy to make unobtrusive, so that the recorder itself can be put down behind the interviewer or slung over his shoulder on a strap and the contact scarcely notices the apparatus at all. If the extension mike then has an on-off switch on it, the interviewer doesn't even need to manipulate the recorder at all; simply turn it on at the beginning, put it back out of the way, and do all the controlling with an unobtrusive little switch that's under the interviewer's thumb right on the mike.

7. The recorder must have a digital counter meter for the purpose of transcribing. This little gadget is a necessity during the transcribing process, for it allows the transcriber to put down on his transcription form an exact number at which a given fact, figure or quotation may be found. The meter is set at "0" at the beginning of the tape simply by pushing the small button
next to it on the recorder; it then turns slowly at a constant rate whenever the tape is in motion, thus providing a reference point for an index to the tape. A particularly vital set of figures or interesting quotation might be shown on the transcription sheet, for example, as occurring at "265" on a 30 minute tape. A person who wished to hear that portion of the tape again, then, need only put the cassette in the recorder, push the reset button to bring the meter back to "0", and then push the fast forward button and let the tape run until the meter indicated "265." By then switching the recorder to "Play," he would be able to hear the desired portion of the tape without sitting through many minutes of the tape and randomly hunting around for the section he needed. This is obviously necessary and desirable for the students' use as they work on their stories and find need to re-check some facts or quotes, or for the many times they are unable to complete the transcribing of a tape during a class period and must stop and return to it on succeeding days, picking up their work where they left off the day before. It is also the only way to make the tape truly useful to others in terms of archival processing for research or resource in the future. The two small tabs on the back edge of the cassette are broken out after the recording is made, thus making it impossible to record on or erase the tape. This makes it a permanent record for filing and, along with the transcription, therefore, becomes as complete and
permanent as a set of photographs.

In summary then, the features that I believe desirable for recorders in a Foxfire concept project are these:

a. Light and portable.
b. Easy to operate.
c. Two-way power, i.e., self-contained and AC.
d. Inexpensive.
e. Cassette type.
f. Extension mike with built-in on-off switch.
g. Built-in digital counter.

I began shopping the area stores for recorders to fit these qualifications and soon found that, like cameras, prices of tape recorders vary enormously and are often discounted to a great extent. Prices on identical recorders between retail stores and discount chains were often as much as 50% difference, for example, and when the discount stores had sales on recorders, the amount might be even more. Since recorders are guaranteed by their manufacturer and not by the store that sells them and it is the manufacturer that repairs or replaces defective units, it seems almost absurd that someone would buy a recorder at a retail store at full price when by going across the street to Gold Circle or Woolco he could get the same item for 20% to 50% less.

The biggest problem, then, was not price for there were a wide range of stores in the area offering dozens of brands and models at prices well below $100, a figure that is usually the starting point for most "professional" tape recorders. The greatest difficult in meeting the necessary criteria I had
devised turned out to be finding recorders with extension mikes and built-in
digital counters, especially the latter. Most portable cassette recorders on
the market, I soon found, were built with only the built-in condensor microphone and no extension mike. As one salesman explained, this was "what
people seemed to want these days" because that way they "didn't have to mess
with a mike" when they were recording. It was, in other words, a "fad" like
the ill-fated "running lights" everyone stuck on their car grills a few years ago. Furthermore, very few recorders had a digital counter, for it is obvious
that the majority of people buying a small portable recorder have little intention
of ever transcribing the resulting tapes. The challenge then became to find a
recorder with both an extension mike and a digital counter in one unit, and this
limited my choices very drastically. I found that General Electric made such
a recorder, available at a local electronics store, but the GE name brought the
price up to $89.95, still comparatively inexpensive, but above the prices of the
other recorders available by a considerable amount. A similar unit at a local
discount chain sold for $59.95, but it had the disadvantage of having no carrying
case and no handle, which would make its portability very awkward. At this
time, a chain which specializes in electronic equipment of all sorts made under
their own name--Radio Shack--announced a sale on a recorder of its own, and
it turned out to be one which would fit all the desired criteria exactly. It is
model CTR-19B, sold by Radio Shack nationally under their own brand name of
"Ralistic". The sale price was $49.95, but its normal price is only ten dollars
more, which places it within reach of nearly any budget, and after working with
them and seeing them used by students in the field and in the classroom for literally hundreds of hours of trouble-free time, I would freely recommend them to
any project. They have a built-in digital counter on the front, an extension mike
with on-off control on the mike's handle, all necessary controls, a battery pow-
ered supply (included) and a plug-in AC cord, a complete case with shoulder
strap and pouch for the mike and a small plug-in earphone that cuts the audio
from the speaker when in use so that a student can transcribe silently, a most
handy feature when several students are trying to work, transcribe and write at
the same time. A further advantage is that Radio Shack, which is a division of
the Tandy Corporation, maintains its own repair facilities, so that should some-
thing go wrong and need repair, it can be done quickly, usually within a week.
Radio Shack is also most cooperative in dealing with schools, I have found, and
are quite willing to charge items and not add sales tax for a school item as they
consider them tax exempt. I purchased two of the Realistic recorders at the
beginning and have since purchased a third when it became obvious it was need-
ed, and should it become necessary to buy another, I am sure that this brand
would again be our choice, for I have as yet not found another that offers all the
desired features for a comparable price and service.

The greatest problems we have found with cassette recorders so far
concern low batteries, incorrect operation of the machine or mike, and the
tapes themselves. I will deal with the tapes in a separate section. It is most
important that the staff member be familiar with the recorder's operation be-
fore he takes to someone's house for an interview. Read the manufacturer's
instruction sheet carefully before the recorder is to be used to be sure the
operation is understood. We always have a staff member who is an inexperienced
interviewer going out on his first interview take a recorder to one of the "veteran"
staffers and demonstrate to him exactly how the recorder is used. Only after
he has satisfied the student/teacher that he is ready can he proceed. Even so, we have had to repeat several interviews because the person operating the recorder forgot to push down two buttons—"record" and "play" on ours—when he was interviewing. All recorders require that two buttons be pushed simultaneously to engage the recording heads of the machine, so check the instruction sheet carefully to avoid this error.

Inevitably, low batteries will also cause difficulty when interviewing in the field using the self-contained power source. Most recorders have some sort of battery checking device built in that indicates loss of power in the batteries, and it is obvious this should be checked every time the recorder is taken out for use. Also, it is desirable to always purchase alkaline-type batteries for use in recorders and other similar electronic devices. Although more expensive than the conventional carbon or mercury batteries, they will last much longer and end up costing less in the long run. Even with all these precautions, however, it will happen sooner or later that the batteries in a recorder will "die" halfway through an interview, even though they checked as satisfactory before leaving the school for the interview. One possible preventative, of course, is to carry a set of new batteries to every interview just in case, but this is cumbersome, easily forgotten and the chore of changing batteries in the middle of someone's living room is messy and awkward. If possible, a recorder can be plugged in with the AC cord at the interview site, of course, but this is often impossible. The best suggestion was have found is that if it happens, transcribe the tape when you return to the school on low batteries just as it was recorded. If the recorder is plugged in with the AC cord, as is standard procedure when transcribing, the tape will run at the normal speed instead of slow and the person's
voice will sound high-pitched and may be too fast to understand. We now keep a set of batteries that are low in power and marked as such in the equipment cabinet for use in transcribing such tapes and this has saved several tapes that seemed hopeless.

We have also lost an interview or two to staff members who overestimated the ability of the mike to pick up the contact's voice. Since the extension mike is directional, it must be aimed at the person speaking and not off to one side, at the floor or over his head. Further, it should be reasonably close to the speaker and not on the other side of a noisy room. We have found that six feet is about the maximum distance that is possible for good sound reproduction, with about three feet being ideal. Of course, the background must always be kept mild, for noise of machinery or other sounds can interfere with the person speaking and compete with his voice on the tape so that his words may end up being unintelligible. If much background noise exists, aim the mike away from it and move as close as possible to the speaker. We, once, lost an entire interview on flax spinning and had to go back a repeat it because the interviewer was sitting on the opposite side of the spinning wheel from the craftsman, with the wheel between the speaker and the microphone. Although only about four feet from the speaker, the mike picked up the whine and drone of the wheel as it spun almost directly in front of the mike and nearly obliterated the voice of the spinner.

Another small but common error in using the recorder is moving your finers on the mike handle during the interview. It is easy to do, for most students are nervous about the interviewing process until they become accustomed to it and so make unconscious movements with their fingers as they hold the
mike. Though completely silent at the time, these movements are picked up internally by the microphone and end up incredibly loud on the tape, often sounding very much like ominous thunder.

**CASSETTE TAPES**

Cassette tapes come in various time lengths, from 15 minutes to an hour per side and in several degrees of quality and price.

The actual size of the cassette case itself must remain the same regardless of the length of the tape inside, so that any cassette will fit into any cassette recorder. This means that the tape itself must therefore become thinner as its length becomes longer in order to fit into the same space. Thus, a one-hour per side tape is going to have to be much thinner and thus more delicate than a thirty-minute per side tape or a fifteen minute tape. For this reason, it is advisable to avoid using the one-hour per side size, for the slightest snag or catch can result in a broken tape which is extremely difficult to repair. On the other hand, a fifteen minute per side tape is very sturdy, but stopping to flip a cassette over every fifteen minutes during an interview is very awkward indeed and very distracting to the contact. We have found, therefore, that the ideal size for nearly all interviews is the thirty-minute per side tape. It is thick enough to withstand most breakage and yet long enough to be no problem during the interview; in fact, most contacts welcome a little break after a half hour anyway.

As the quality of the tape increases, so does the price, and so cassettes will be found that vary in price from the professional recording tape at $5 to $6 per cassette to ones made strictly for testing and experimenting with
at three cassettes for a dollar. Unless a team is recording some very special music for recording purposes, the professional tapes are not necessary, of course, as voice reproduction is all that is required on most interviews. However, the extremely cheap tapes are usually likely to break easily and are always housed in very low quality cassette cases that often stick and warp, causing tape breakage and erratic sound reproduction. The best choice, then, is the medium quality tape, usually costing about $1.00 to $1.50 each. These will give all the sound quality needed and will usually provide trouble-free operation. The ones used by THISTLEDOWN are made by Radio Shack and sell for $1.49 each, but buying in quantity of 20 or 30 at a time brings the price down to $1.00, a considerable savings.

THE REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

This particular piece of equipment is small and very inexpensive, but it is of such importance that I feel it should be listed as a major part of the equipment inventory along with the cameras and recorders. The interview teams' photographers and interviewer/recorders are one who get the subject and the person down on tape and in pictures for later use and it may seem that between the two, all of what is necessary for a good article later would be captured--and sometimes it is. However, the third essential member of the team--the reporter--sometimes turns out to be the one who can really make the article back at the school.

The notebook for the reporter can be anything for the reporter to take notes on during the course of the interview. Some students just use their own school notebooks and take notes on paper between their geometry homework and
their history notes. However, we found that the small spiral-ring steno note-
books that are usually available in the school's bookstore are ideal for this use.
Their small size makes them easy to carry and handle during an interview; they
have a firm back and cover so they can be written on anywhere, and the small
size of the paper goes well in file drawers and folders when it is time to put
things away and store them for archiving. We always keep six or eight in the
equipment cupboard next to the cameras and recorders so they are ready to be
picked up when a team is assembling its equipment for an interview.

The importance of the notebook is great. During an interview, especially
one involving the demonstration of a craft or process, the reporter takes notes
on the general topics covered as the interview progresses. They also draw dia-
grams of how particular parts of an apparatus fit together if that is an important
point the contact covers, writes down special terms or words used by the contact
with their correct spelling and notes things like addresses and the exact route to
the contact's home. The items above may seem superfluous, but back in the
classroom, they are often invaluable.

If there is a problem with the tape or if the batteries on the recorder
have run low during the interviews, the reporter's notes on the interview may
turn out to be the primary source that enables the transcriber to make sense
of the tape and to get the information from it to write an article without having to
go back and repeat the oral part of the interview. In craft interviews especially,
the contacts, not used to working with a tape, often refer to "this" or "that" dur-
ing the course of the demonstration. It is clear at the time, of course, what
they are referring to, since the interviewer is standing right there, but back at
school, the instruction on the tape to "out the flax right up here" is meaningless without the reporter's notes that "the flax was put onto a clock reel." These sort of notes of the specific steps in a process are often the only thing again that allows the article to be written without going back to the contact. Most crafts, also, have particular sets of terms for parts of the process or the equipment used which are totally unfamiliar to the students and these terms are often very hard to figure out by simply hearing them on the tape later. If the reporter has written them down, however, and has even asked for a spelling if they are unsure, it again makes the tape more useful and more understandable. Lastly, it is important to obtain such things as the contact's exact address in order to communicate with them later, as well as their phone number, and a map or description of how to get to the contact's home. We found that very often we would be able to obtain a phone number but not address, or visa-versa, and so needed to complete our record after the interview was made. Knowing how to get someone's to someone's house is not the same as knowing their mailing address; a fact that did not occur to many of the staff until the first issue came out and we could only mail copies to half our contacts immediately as we did not have the other's actual addresses. Furthermore, when an appointment is set up by phone, the contact often gives directions to their house such as, "Go down the creek road two miles till you see a big oak tree and it's the third house on the right." That gets you there, but doesn't do much for the postal service. On the other hand, we have sometimes been taken to a contact's home by a friend or relative or by a staff member who has graduated and we simply followed them. Later, when we wanted to go back to see the contact again, we discovered to
our chagrin that no one could remember the route. Therefore, the little maps
and route descriptions in the reporter's notebook become quite important and
valuable for later use.

The notebook, then, while seemingly a minor thing next to whirring
recorders and clicking cameras, can often turn out to be the one thing that can
really "save" an interview and give the article's writer the information he needs
to do a good job, as well as recording for future use the necessary data to give
access to the contact both for us and for others who may wish to get in touch
with the contact after they appear in an article in an issue.

LAYOUT SUPPLIES AND FINDING A PRINTER

The equipment I have described to this point--cameras, filters, film,
flash units, tape recorders, cassette tapes and reporter's notebook--have been
the real essentials; the basic tool without which it would be difficult to attempt
a Foxfire concept project. Layout supplies are also essential, of course, in the
sense that if a magazine is going to be printed you are going to have to do the
layouts for it, unless you have the printer do it for you, but that is not only very
expensive, it is also a loss of involvement and interest to the students so great
that I doubt that it could be justified. However, while cameras and recorders
are constants in the sense that there are some kinds and types especially and
obviously suited to Foxfire projects, layout materials will vary so greatly that
it is not possible to recommend any ones in particular to be used by all in gen-
eral. The materials used in layout, with the possible exception of transfer
lettering, will be entirely dependent upon the demands, methods and style of the
particular printer that prints the actual magazine and on the size, style, quality
and decisions of each individual project staff. Each printer will require different sorts of layout styles, paper, titling, photo requirements, cropping indicators, paste-up techniques and deadlines, depending upon what sort of equipment they have. They may be using letterpress instead of offset, for example, which will result in two totally different layout procedures. Or, if using offset, their equipment may be old or it may be new and computerized, which will again cause different sorts of demands to be made. It is necessary, therefore, to discuss the project with the printer selected in great detail and find out exactly what it is that he needs and requires in layout.

For THISTLEDOWN, we began searching for a printer as soon as the money for the project became available in the Spring of 1974, concurrent with looking for cameras, recorders and other equipment. My first decision was that we should find a printer who used the offset method as opposed to the older letterpress system. I based this decision on the recommendation of Eliot Wigginton, originator of Foxfire, who in the firm guide to the film "Foxfire", by McGraw-Hill, says that, at the beginning of Foxfire, they:

...didn't fully appreciate the flexibility of photo-offset. We never realized completely how many different things we could do with that process--and how many photos we could use, and how much artwork we could effectively employ. As a result, the first issues were drab and colorless. We didn't understand that we could use transfer lettering for titles, use borders around pages, use colored paper in strategic locations instead of white, use bleeding off of photographs, and so on.

In the offset process, the copy submitted to the printer is photographed as is, a page at a time, and then reproduced on an aluminum plate that is used in the press to print the page on paper. It is a quiet, clean process compared
to the old letterpress system still used by some printers which requires the
casting of each letter in the copy in molds with molten lead. The offset process
has given the students almost unlimited flexibility, for virtually anything that
is black can be put on the page and be printed; thus making the use of photos,
drawings, diagrams, artwork and transfer letters simple and easy.

I contacted and talked with a number of printers in the Columbus area
and in the area of the school at Pataskala and nearby Newark. The nearest of all
to the school, and thus the most convenient, would have been the printer of the
local Pataskala weekly newspaper, the Pataskala Standard. The owner of the
paper was most interested in the project. However, the Standard still used an
antiquated letterpress press and was, frankly, not known for its quality, either
of printing or of journalism. As I anticipated, the printer said that he thought
he could do the work, but the price quoted as quite high--$1,500--and the process
the kids would have had to go through to accommodate the demands of the old
letterpress machine would have been most difficult for a professional, let alone
amateurs such as ourselves. I regretfully removed the Standard from consider-
ation, therefore. It would have been desireable, of course, to have the work
done locally to heighten the community involvement, and the Standard has been
talking about converting to offset someday, so perhaps we may yet be able to bring
the printing end of the process back home.

The next nearest printer was in Newark, a large town quite near Patask-
ala. There, I contacted Ryan's Newark-Leader Printing Company, which also
prints one of the city's newspapers and does most of the contract printing of
ads, cards, brochures, and so on for the businesses of Newark. I knew that
they, unlike the Standard, were well known for the high quality of their work, and that they utilized the offset process. I found, however, that they were unaccustomed to dealing with schools or anyone, for that matter, not in a professional business capacity, and so they were somewhat dubious about the entire project. They, frankly, did not believe that "just kids" could do the work, take the photos, and do the layouts that would be required, and even when I showed them copies of Foxfire as proof that kids could indeed do the job, they refused to believe it and said that it was simply impossible and that they kids at Foxfire may have taken some pictures and written some stories, but there was obviously an adult crew somewhere behind the scenes who did the layouts and ran the business! I think perhaps they viewed the whole things as a threat to their professional standing, for this doubting stance has never changed even to this day. When our first issue was printed by another printer, I sent them a copy as proof that our kids could do the job, and to my amazement, they sent it back with a note saying, "Your teachers do good layout over there." This attitude was hardly one, of course, that we wanted in a printer, and they capped it off by quoting a price for their services of $2,600, an absurdly high figure that I am sure was simply given to insure that we would not bother them further. So, I left them to their business cards and moved to the next nearest printers: those in the Columbus area.

In Columbus, of course, there are a wide variety of printing firms of all sizes and capabilities. I had by now, however, through talking to the printers thus far, evolved some criteria for the choices of our printer: (1) He must be one who used the offset process, as this would offer the most flexibility
to the kids as well as result in the fastest and best-looking printing; (2) He must be able to do the work at a price within our scope. Since we were to be non-profit and accept no advertising, the funds to run the project (see "Finance and Funding") must come mostly from sale of the magazine itself. In order for the price of the magazine to not be prohibitively high, therefore, the cost of the printing could not be much above $1,000 for an equal number of copies, thus allowing us to sell the magazine for $1.50 or $2.00 a copy; (3) He must be sympathetic to the problems of working with students who were totally inexperienced and ought to be at least, interested, if not enthusiastic and supportive of the project as a whole.

These criteria seemed to me at the time entirely reasonable in our choice of a printer and still do at this time, and I am sure every project, including Foxfire, has arrived at the same conclusions in their respective choices, for without any one of these three criteria of offset, price and interest, dealing with the printer would simply not be feasible, anymore than trying to get by with an Instamatic camera for the photos or trying to take down an interview in shorthand instead of using a tape recorder.

In Columbus, printers, then, while numerous, were narrowed down in choice by these factors. Some, I found, used only letterpress, and so they were stricken from consideration. The remaining offset printers then seemed to fall into two groups: those that seemed interested in the project, but whose prices were very high, and those who seemed affordable, but were indifferent to what we were trying to accomplish and who offered no help or support for the kids—if we could do it, fine, bring it in and they'd print it as soon as they had the time, but if we ran into problems or had trouble, they were not to be bothered.
While I was, thus, beginning to despair at ever finding "our" printer, a fortunate accident occurred which provided the answer. A promotional brochure addressed to the advisor to the school's yearbook, but put mistakenly into my mailbox (which is right below hers) from the Hartco Printing Company promised quality offset printing for reasonable rates by a firm which dealt "exclusively with schools" and which "had long experience in the problems of high school journalists." They were located in West Jefferson, Ohio, a small town a short distance from Columbus and so not out of reach by being too far away. I contacted them immediately by phone and was given an appointment with Mr. Carleton Hartley, the president of the company whose local offices, I found were in West Jefferson, "though they have plants in three other states.

Mr. Hartley was most interested in the project and had read the Foxfire books, so he was already acquainted with the Foxfire concept in general and knew what we were about. He was most enthusiastic about doing the work, although they had never printed a magazine before, most of their work being either high school yearbooks or newspapers. Hartco prints the school papers for Bexley and Upper Arlington High Schools, two suburbs of Columbus, and the samples of the papers printed for these schools were of very high quality and appearance. He was confident, however, that they could produce a magazine and conducted me on a complete tour of their facilities, which are very modern and employed the very lastest in offset computerized equipment. He estimated that a 40 to 50 page magazine could be printed for $950, a price within our range, and said that their policy was that an unlimited number of photos could be used at no extra charge, as opposed to the charge-per-photo that most other
printers used; this was certainly a prime consideration in a magazine such as THISTLEDOWN which was to use many photos in every issue. He, then, produced the piece de resistance: a student layout "kit" that they produced themselves specifically designed to make it easier for the beginning student to produce layouts from the start that looked very professional—the kits to be provided at no charge to student staffs doing layouts for publications printed by Hartco! In addition, they provided free layout boards in unlimited quantities, free clip-art, an unlimited choice of type styles and sizes from which to choose, a wide variety of paper types to select, a complete instruction book to answer any problems the kids might have, and a 25% discount on transfer lettering and other printing supplies. A complete system of pre-addressed copy folders would be provided to send copy and photos to them, so everything could be done by mail, and they sent all mail first-class special delivery so that it arrived at its Ohio destination the same day it was sent from Hartco. Finally, they had also developed a system for the photos that made the complicated and difficult proportional cropping used by other printers obsolete, as well as the messy and expensive use of waxing machines to paste photos onto the layout boards: Hartco simply takes the original photos, prints halftone copies of them, and sends the school the halftones. Cropping is then down by physically cutting the actual halftones with a paper cutter, Exacto knife or even scissors any conceivable way desired to fit columns or other layout areas—it couldn't be more sensible, simpler or effective.

Normally, to make a halftone, the photo man at the printers takes the original photo sent him and photographs it through a special screen, breaking
the image up into thousands of dots that vary in size and distance from each other. The large dots that have little white spaces among them produce, in the final photo, a dark area, while the smaller dots with more white spaces among them will produce lighter areas, thus giving the illusion of a printed picture with shades of grey. The halftones thus produced are then printed and sent to us for our use to crop and put on the layout board. Most printers, however, still use the most difficult (for the student) system of requiring "windows" to be placed on the layout board where photos are to go, instead of the actual photos as we do. These windows are pieces of black paper, or sometimes red paper, that must be cut precisely to the final size and shape of the photo that is to go there, and it "reserves" that space when the layout is photographed at the printers for the photo itself. The photos must be cropped only by indicated crop marks placed after careful calculation with a proportion wheel or scaleograph to determine the percentage of enlargement, reduction or cropping necessary to fit the desired "hole" on the layout board indicated by the window. Assuming that the photo's proportions are calculated and marked correctly and the window is precisely cut and affixed, the printer then "stips in" the photo in the print shop onto the appropriate layout page when the printing takes place. Rather obviously, this older system has numerous disadvantages over the simpler system employed by Hartco. The calculating of the photo's proportions is a complicated job in itself and allows little flexibility in the photo's actual cropping, whereas the Hartco system allows unlimited freedom in the choice of how the final photo will look. The cutting of the "windows" is a meticulous and laborious job that must be absolutely precise, and each window must be rubber cemented
down, adding to the potential messiness of the layout itself. Furthermore, the actual matching of the photo to the window is done by the printer at the printers, so the student has no control over the final product once it is sent in. The potential for mismatching a photo with a window is always there, and this could quickly ruin an otherwise well done article through no fault of the student’s. Also, the quality of the halftone is all up to the printer, with no corrections or alterations possible on the student’s part, whereas in the Hartco system, the student can see the actual, final photo as it will appear in the magazine on the printed page and can, if necessary, switch photos, alter them, border them, strengthen weak lines or change the cropping or size at will with no problem at all and with no inconvenience on his or the printer’s part.

Furthermore, each halftone is pre-waxed on the back so at once the cropping of the photo is completed by cutting it to shape, the student need only peel off a thin paper backing on the photo and then lay it down on the layout board where he wants it. If he makes an error, the photo will peel up again an unlimited number of times to be replaced correctly. This system of employing actual printed halftone to be cropped with scissors and being pre-waxed is so completely logical and convenient that I am sure it will spread and soon be offered by other printers as well.

the entire operation at Hartco, then, was as nearly perfect for our project—or anyone else’s, I would think—as we could hope for. We agreed to give them a try and they have produced high quality results both quickly and inexpensively in every issue.
Layout supplies:

THISTLEDOWN's layout materials, then, based on our requirements for the Hartco Printing Company, are as follows. Others, again, will vary as the demands and requirements of the different printers and their methods vary:

1. Layout Paper. Often called layout "boards" or "paste-up boards", it is supplied free by our printers. Each board is of heavy paper the same size as the page of the magazine—in our case, 8-1/2 by 11 inches—and is printed with a light blue grid that makes it easy to keep everything perfectly straight that is put on it. The trim lines where the page will be cut and the margins are indicated in a slightly heavier blue so that the limits of each page can be clearly seen. At the bottom of each board is a small square for the page number. The light blue grid and margin markings do not reproduce in the offset process, so they become "invisible" in the final product.

An alternative, but more difficult and initially expensive way to do this is by the use of regular white bond paper over a plastic sheet with a grid printed on it. These are then both taped onto a light table, which has a glass or plastic surface through which light shines from the back. The grid is thus visible through the white sheet, transforming it into the same sort of layout board as those supplied by the printer. This is the method still used by many newspapers and magazines in their layout work. It has the obvious advantage of not requiring special paper of boards, and the highly visible grid makes it nearly impossible to misalign any copy or illustrations. However, its disadvantages, in my opinion, outweigh its advantages, especially for a project such as this. Since all work must be done on a light table, at least two would be required to allow students
to work, and each light table costs between $60.00 and $200.00, depending on the size of the work (lighted) surface, whether it adjusts to height and angle, and its quality. Ordinarily, there are at least three to five students working on a layout at any one time in THISTLEDOWN, so the investment in light tables alone would be quite high and would never offset the cost of gridded layout boards, even if we had to buy these ourselves, which we do not. Furthermore, this system ties the student to the light table and thus, to the classroom, while the layout boards give him the freedom to work on his layout anywhere he pleases and take it home if he wishes, which many do. This, of course, would be impossible using a light table, unless he had one at home, which is unlikely.

2. Triangles and/or small T-squares. These are fairly inexpensive and are used to check the lines of typed copy, titles, photo captions, diagrams and anything else that must be exactly straight on the final page. Each thing must be lined up exactly with the margin lines both horizontally and vertically and by laying the triangle or T-square across the grid lines, it becomes easy to see if this is so. It must always be remembered that with the offset process, the printer produces a photographic negative of the layout board exactly as it is submitted to him, so that anything that is crooked on the layout board will end up being printed that way on the page in the magazine. Similarly, any dirt or smudge will be printed just as it appears, so it is absolutely necessary to be perfectly clean and neat on every layout.

3. Paper Cutter, Exacto knife and scissors. These are used for trimming and cropping the printed halftone photos, trimming the copy strips and captions to correct column length and for cutting diagrams and artwork to exact size.
The most often used of the three for us is the paper cutter. It is the type found in nearly every high school office and art room, with the large blade on one side which is brought down to cut an item laid on its grided green surface. If these are kept sharp and clean and adjusted, they will produce a clean, perfectly straight cut in less than a second. We borrowed the office's and art rooms' cutter until it became obvious that this was to be a much-used and essential piece of equipment, at which time we purchased our own at a discount store through our printer for $25.00. Paper cutters have limits, however, for they will usually not cut accurately and truly if the piece to be cut off is 1/4 inch or less. We found that using the Exacto knife and a straight-edge for these very small cuts produced much better results.

4. Light Blue Pencils. Since light blue, like the grid on the layout board, does not reproduce photographically in the offset process, it is the only thing that can be used to mark "invisibly" on the layout board. Temporary page numbers, areas for illustrations or title sizes can be indicated by using a light blue pencil.

5. Rubber Cement. Although most of the things that go on the layout board, such as copy and photos, will be waxed on the back for placement, it may be necessary to put something on the board prepared in the classroom, such as diagrams or artwork drawn by the staff or artwork clipped from the printer’s clip-art book or other sources. Sometimes, also, a contact will loan a drawing or other material which will be included in the article and these can also be used. All these sorts of things should be attached to the board with rubber cement; never regular glue or paste. Rubber cement, long a standard in the printing and art worlds, has the advantage of cleanliness and removal. The cement is brushed
onto the back of the illustration, working from the center out, and allowed to dry for about one or two minutes. The result is a tacky, sticky surface which adheres the drawing to the board, but which can be pulled up and repositioned if necessary, an impossibility with regular glue or paste. For greater adhesion, the area on the board where the drawing is to go can also be coated and allowed to dry. If any cement is on the drawing or the board once the item is in position, it can be easily removed simply rubbing over it lightly with clean fingers or an Artgum eraser, which causes the cement to roll up and come off cleanly without a trace, again something not possible with other glue or paste.

6. Transfer Lettering. This is one of the greatest boons to the student—or professional—layout person ever invented. The letters come on sheets and are printed in an almost unlimited number of sizes and styles from the very austere to the wildly imaginative. Indeed, one of the most enjoyable activities every year for the staff is browsing through the catalog and ordering the letters to be used for titles and subtitles. To get the letter onto the layout board, the sheet of letters, which is transparent, is laid over it and the letter is aligned with the grid lines on the board. Then, the surface of the letter is simply rubbed with a burnisher or any small, blunt and smooth instrument, such as a ballpoint pen cap, and the letter is transferred onto the board. Titles done this way look absolutely professional the first time, and I have never seen a student do this for the first time who did not light up with pride over the end result. Furthermore, sheets of transfer numbers, symbols, such as the copyright symbol, arrows, dotted fill-in backgrounds and all sorts of borders for articles and photos are available as well and contribute greatly to the clean professional look of the layout, and thus, the printed page.
We obtain our transfer lettering at a discount from our printer, but they also may be purchased by mail order from the companies themselves, who often will give a discount for school orders, anyway. The sheets cost about $4.50 each and will probably last about two or three issues. The addresses of the companies are:

Letraset, 33 New Bridge Road, Bergenfield, New Jersey, 07621.


Para-Tone, P.O. Box 645, Countryside, Illinois, 60525.

Tactype, 43 West 16th., New York, New York, 10011.

All will send a free catalog and order forms.

7. Small roller or burnisher. When the layout is complete, the last step, after everything is double-checked for straightness and cleanliness, is to put a sheet of plain paper over the entire board and roll everything down so that it is absolutely flat and adheres well. The paper over the board is to prevent any possibility of smudges of dirt while rolling. The roller is the small rubber type used by print makers to apply ink to the woodcut or etching and to press the print paper to it. They are inexpensive and obtainable at any art supply store. An equally effective alternative, is to use a burnisher, which is simply a plastic tool with a broad, flat surface on each end similar to a putty knife that is rubbed over the paper to achieve the same effect as the roller. We have both, which were supplied free by our printer, and some students prefer one, while some prefer the other.
These, then, are the basic tools with which the THISTLEDOWN project does its layout:

1. Layout boards.
2. Triangles and T-squares.
3. Paper cutter, Exacto knife and scissors.
4. Light blue pencils.
5. Rubber cement.
6. Transfer lettering.
7. Roller or burnisher.

All of these are essentials in every layout by every student for THISTLEDOWN, but again, the materials that would be essential for other projects would vary according to the requirements and processes of the particular printer they work with.

This completes the list of the equipment and supplies necessary for the basic functioning of the THISTLEDOWN project and, indeed, of nearly any Foxfire concept project, along with out findings and recommendations regarding each. Obviously, the individual differences among the various projects will result in differing demands for equipment, but the items presented here are those "basic tools" without which any project could hardly function. As a project prospers, furthermore, it might well decide to update and add to these tools by purchasing items that would be more expensive than the typical Foxfire concept project's budget would allow. Foxfire, itself, for example, having more than adequate funds from its long-established sales and the sale of its books, has purchased several four-wheel drive Jeeps specifically for the kids to drive to interviews over the rough terrain of North Georgia, a complete mobile videotape unit with a van to tape interviews, 50 acres of land and 18 buildings to construct a "Foxfire Center," and all the archival, photographic, recording
and business equipment that might be expected in what is now a small corporation and major employer (14 full time adult staff members) in that area. However, these things are hardly basic tools and are far from typical of the THISTLE-DOWN project or any of the other Foxfire concept projects now existing.

There are other items of supply and equipment not really as basic to the project as those I have described thus far that become necessary to the maintenance of the business end of the project. These will vary, of course, depending upon the funding arrangements, business practices and basic functioning of each project, and so they will be described separately in the next section on business procedures of THISTLE-DOWN.

**BUSINESS PROCEDURES**

The nature of the Foxfire concept project is one of diversity in that it provides such a wide range of activities in which the student may engage. I have found that the staffs thus far on THISTLE-DOWN have of their own accord, roughly divided themselves into two groups, though these two groups always overlap at many points and the division is never a sharp or an obvious one. It seems that there are those students who are most interested and concerned with the production side of the project, i.e., the interviewing, transcribing, photographing, writing and layout of the magazine, and there are those who, while they are also involved in the production, are most interested and immersed in the business side of the project—the circulation, distribution, correspondence, publicity, phone calls, mailing, treasury and equipment maintenance. This wide range of differing activities, of course, is exactly one of the things that makes the Foxfire concept interesting and exciting to the students and draws
into the project a diverse group who are free to concentrate their efforts in whatever area of the project that most interests them and in which they discover they have the most aptitude.

The great difference between the THISTLEDOWN project and other projects that may appear similar on the surface such as the yearbook or school newspaper is that the latter products are produced wholly within the school for the use/purchase of students in the school, whereas THISTLEDOWN's base lies outside the school in the environment and community of the students and the end product is, as one of the student staff put it, "sold to real people by mail and in real stores for real money." This, as the students quickly realize, requires "real" business procedures to keep track of it all and to make sure that those people get what they ask for for the money they are sending us or spending in the stores.

Consequently, it is necessary to set up and maintain forms and procedures comparable to a small business. However, these forms and procedures should, like the rest of the project, be student-produced and as much as possible not pre-set or determined for them. It is not necessary to establish procedures for a volume of business or a type of business that the individual project has not attained. Foxfire, for example, has 8,000 subscribers at this point; THISTLEDOWN has 300, so our business practices need not be the same or on the same scale as Foxfire's. Each of the business practices and forms for THISTLEDOWN has evolved from some basic and obvious need for them and have been student invented, produced and maintained. I have found consistently that, for the students who are most interested in the business end of the project,
the production of these forms and practices has always been a tremendous and exciting experience for them, and our business is in a constant state of revision. About twice a year, one of the kids from the circulation or distribution or other business section will come to me and say, "This circulation system we have stinks. It's confusing and messy. We have an idea to revise the whole thing to make it better." If the kids involved all agree to the revision, I always say, "Go ahead," and then stand back. Still used to the attitudes of the students in mine and others' "regular" classes, their enthusiasm is amazing: they are working on their system, which they usually were responsible for inventing in the first place, and it is entirely their idea and their project. Soon we have hundreds of cards and papers strewn all over and it always seems nearly impossible that this will all ever be reassembled in some orderly way so that no subscriber gets lost. I have had students re-copy, by hand, over 250 names and addresses onto new file cards, taking them home at nights and weekends to finish, type and mimeograph hundreds of new forms and fill them out, bring from home or buy with their own money record and note books to put the forms in, and all of this with no urging and certainly no "assignment" on my part, just so they could get their system "right" and make it better for them. In the end, to their satisfaction, and my relief, it always is put back together, completely neat and in order, and always better than it was before. Of course, there are sometimes errors and there are always unforeseen "bugs" in the system, but working these out and correcting the mistakes is another learning experience and something they always accept as a challenge rather than discouragement for it simply, in their eyes, gives them the chance to perfect the
system they have invented and prove that they were right all along, at least until
the next grand revision.

All of this student involvement could, of course, be quickly circum-
vented by simply imposing rules and systems upon the organization, brining in
standard business forms from a local office supply store or even from the
business education class's textbooks, and having, perhaps, the school's busi-
ness teacher come in one day and give a lecture and demonstration on standard
business practice. They system would then be efficient, orderly and with few
errors, but it would also be dull and, most of all, it would be someone else's
and not their's. The loss of student involvement in this part of the project
would, I believe, simply be unthinkable. To my knowledge, all of the other
projects have followed similar practices in their business management and
have managed to keep it student-produced, like the rest of the project. Re-
cently, however, Foxfire has gone to a computerized distribution and mailing
service to take over that end of their business, saying that the number of sub-
scribers they now have precludes the students' being able to cope with it all,
and I am sorry to see that occur, for it simply seems that if the project has
gotten to the point that it is beyond the students' abilities, then the answer
should be to curtail part of the project to bring it back into the students' do-
main instead of continuing to expand beyond their reach. While I hope for the
continued growth and expansion of the THISTLEDOWN project, still I hope
that we do not face the sort of success that will cause it to ever be beyond
the reach of the students, for then, in my view, the project is lost.

The parts of the business management of the THISTLEDOWN project
that have evolved through need and student invention are as follows:

2. Distribution.
3. Correspondence.
4. Mailing.
5. Treasurer.
6. Publicity.
7. Equipment maintenance.
8. Copyright applications.

(Copyright applications, their forms and procedures were covered as a separate section.)

**Circulation**

One of the first and most pressing needs for the business side of the project was the circulations system, that is, some way to keep track of people who sent in orders for the magazine. Three of the students volunteered to produce a circulation system at the beginning of the first year, and we all perceived the immediate need for one, as orders and letters began arriving at the school as soon as the doors opened for the new school year from the announcement put in the local papers the previous summer saying that the school had received a grant for the production of such a project. After considerable discussion, the students decided that a circulation system needed to show the following pieces of information to those working with it:

1. Name and address of person ordering.
2. Which issue(s) they ordered.
3. Whether and how much they paid.
4. Whether and when the order was filled.
5. If a gift order, who by and who for.
6. Which staff member filled the order.

We have not, as yet, found any additions or deletions necessary to this list, although as I have indicated, the system by which they are recorded and filed
has been changed several times. We were uncertain as to the continued funding, success, and number of issues possible for us to produce during the school year, and so we specified that we take "orders" for individual issues or for advance issues as they may be produced, but do not take "subscriptions" as that would obligate us to send the subscriber three, four, or whatever number, of issues during the year. Many of the other projects have a similar "order" system, only the larger and monetarily successful ones such as Foxfire, Bittersweet and Salt committing themselves to a three or four-per-year subscription.

We began by simply putting the information on 3 by 5 inch file cards, arranged in alphabetical order by last name of the person ordering. The name and the address were given most prominence, while the information about the issue, payment, etc. was indicated below it. When the first issue was ready to send out to those who had ordered in advance, we simply went through the cards and addressed 9 by 12 manila envelopes to match, marking "sent" on each card, stuffed the envelopes with a magazine and brochure and mailed them. As orders then arrived after the initial mailing, cards were added to the file, adding only the date of mailing in order to distinguish them from initial mailing and so we would have a record if there was some problem. We kept the cards in a small file box especially designed for 3 by 5 cards divided by tabbed dividers with the letters of the alphabet on them; both of these minor pieces of equipment being available almost everywhere for about $2.00.

This system proved satisfactory for awhile, at least until the second issue was printed. At that time, the staff found themselves going on a hunt
through all the cards to determine which ones were to receive second issues, which were to receive only first issues, and which were to receive second and third issues, and so forth. It was after the second issue mailing that the need for revision became obvious, so some kinds worked out and put into effect a revised version in which there were separate files for each issue. This, of course, necessitated more cards, for if a person had ordered the first issue and then ordered the second and third in advance, he would then have three separate cards in three separate files. File cards are inexpensive, however, as are file boxes, and the circulation staff felt it worth the extra effort, for when the next issue was printed, it was then only necessary to pull out the appropriate file box, address the envelopes or address them in advance, and mail, marking all the cards in that box "sent" when the mailing was complete.

As our file of orderers expanded, however, the staff began to feel that this system, while workable, was getting a bit unwieldy, since, looking to a hopeful future, we could see dozens of file boxes piling up to overwhelm us as the number of issues increased. So, the students again tackled the system and invented a third revision, which is the one at this time in effect.

A row of boxes is drawn across the top of the file card, one box for each issue. The boxes are small, so there is room for a dozen of them, thus making the cards good for at least two more years or more, by which time I am sure they will have become obsolete anyway, having fallen victim to another revision. Beneath the row of boxes is the pertinent information of name, address, and zip code. Beneath that is a row in which is placed the name of the person filling the order, the date of its being filled, the payment information
and, if necessary, whether it is a gift and to whom. A felt-tip pen is used to fill in each box for which a person has placed an order, a different color being used to designate each issue. When the order for that issue is filled, a paper punch is used to punch a semi-circle in the top edge of the box. This system has worked well so far and has several advantages. First, the cards are now all back into one file box and each person has only one card, thus cutting down on duplication and making things much simpler and more compact. Secondly, when an issue comes out, the staff needs only to leaf through the cards and look only for those with, say, a red box marked, or whatever the color designated for that issue is. The color recognition is easy and quick and much faster than trying to read from each card whether the person is to receive the issue or not. Lastly, the punched-out box gives immediate and positive evidence that an issue has been sent as well as serving to locate the persons who received a particular issue very quickly when the cards are all together.

This is the THISTLEDOWN circulation system at this present time and it is working so far. I am sure, however, that it is not the final or perfect system, and is merely a step toward some other system as yet not invented by the staff.

One problem that may not be obvious here is the one of who, exactly, goes into the circulation file. There will be, with each issue, some people who will receive a copy of the magazine who are not regular orderers and who may not have paid. It was the decision of the staff from the beginning, for example, that every contact we interviewed should certainly receive a copy of the issue in which they appeared as a gift from us for the time they took with
us. This same decision has been reached by all the other projects as well.

In addition, we have found that nearly all the other projects are most interested in an exchange subscription, so that we send routinely a copy of every issue to each of the other projects, gratis, and they, in turn, send us one of theirs. This is an exciting and informative exchange that has given us, and hopefully them, many ideas and assistance to see what all the others are doing, and our library copies of other Foxfire concept magazines continues to grow and has become a valuable and enjoyable resource, both for us and for visitors and at displays and presentations we give. In addition to all the contacts and all the other projects, there will probably be several special people or groups each time who, in some way, have given special help, advice or monetary assistance for that issue, and so they will receive a copy as well. Finally, there are the sample copies that will be sent to prospective retailers, to libraries for potential orders, or to people not directly related to the magazine but who it is felt should see it and know about it, such as superintendents, community leaders, heads of civic groups, or even, as one project, Nanh Wyeh does, to the governor of the state. All of these are not paying customers, but yet receive a copy. The staff of THISTLEDOWN, at first did not include them in the circulation file, but simply sent these copies out as we thought of them.

When the next issue came out, however, they found they could not remember exactly who it was that had received copies the first time, who needed to be added to the list, who needed a fact sheet (see publicity) and who had already gotten one the last time, and so forth, besides having to re-search for addresses found the first time but not recorded except on the mailed envelope.
They, therefore, decided that all people and organizations who received a copy, ordered, paid or gratis, should be in the file with a card just like the others. In the space beneath the name and address, information is then put to indicate their status, such as "exchange order" or "free copy" or "send for publicity."

This was a small error, but one that caused a great deal of work to be duplicated unnecessarily until we changed the policy and got everyone into the filing system.

Another basic decision here is just who will be responsible for taking the orders, maintaining the filing system, and getting the orders filled and mailed. The organization for this seems to be evenly divided among the other projects. Some of them, such as Foxfire, have a circulation staff who are totally responsible for that job and no one else is involved. Others, such as Salt, have no particular division for circulation, but rather all the staff takes and fills orders, thus making, in the case of Salt, 76 students involved in the circulation system. In THISTLEDOWN, we talked this over at the beginning and the students decided that neither of these systems sounded ideal to them. Having an exclusive staff, on the one hand, seemed to cut out some students who might wish to work on circulation but who would not be able to if they were not "officially" in that section of the project, while having everyone do it with no sort of overseeing, organizing person or group in charge seemed to be too loose and too liable to cause errors. So, the THISTLEDOWN staff decided to use a system that encompasses both of these methods, and their decision, I feel, was a good one, for it has worked out very well thus far.

At the beginning of the year, three people are chosen, as volunteers,
to be the "circulation editors," and they are the ones who bear the primary responsibility for taking orders, maintaining the files, making sure orders are filled and mailed and making revisions in the system, if necessary. However, early in the year, within the first two weeks, they preside over a class and "teach" the rest of the staff how the circulation system functions, how to fill and record and order, and how to get it ready for mailing. This serves a dual function, of course, for it not only gets the circulation information to the rest of the staff, it also gives the three editors some experience, often their first, in public speaking, in preparing and presenting an explanation in a logical order, and insures that they, themselves, really know how it all works. After the "class," all the rest of the staff then become auxiliary circulation staff and help any or all of the three editors whenever necessary, such as when the editors are out on an interview, working on a transcription or article, doing a layout, or when there is an unusually large number of orders to be filled and when each issue comes out. In this way, we have particular people ultimately responsible for the system, but everyone and anyone who wishes to may, and always, does help them on a day-to-day basis and so get involved, also. This same system is used in regard to the other sections of the business as well, so that all the staff finds themselves, if they wish, working on circulation, distribution, mailing, publicity and so on during the year and all, since we have a small staff, will "teach" and be responsible for some particular aspect of the business at the same time that they are conducting interviews, taking pictures, taping, writing articles and doing layouts. In this way, all are included, and none are excluded, but yet there is an organizational level that
insures coherence and continuity to keep it all together and running with reasonable smoothness.

**Distribution**

The distribution staff is responsible for taking orders relating to the selling of the magazine in stores and other outlets, as opposed to individual orders in circulation. It is their responsibility to contact possible sales points, either by phone or mail, arrange for delivery to the outlet, either directly if local or by mail if distance, to keep track of all transactions and sales and check periodically with each seller to keep them supplied.

We found that the most interested and most productive sales outlets were stores and other businesses within the community. At first, the students contacted and made deliveries to several out of town places, such as the Little Professor Bookstores in Columbus, the Golden Lamp Shop in Lebanon, Ohio, and the Capital University Bookstore in Bexley, Ohio. None of these, however, turned out to be productive places to have the magazine, as they sold only six or eight of each issue and the postage and bookkeeping required proved more than the small profit was worth. Therefore, they have since been dropped from the list, and the major concentration placed on more local outlets. On the other hand, there have been several places not actually in the community that have contacted us expressing interest in selling THISTLEDOWN, and these have proven to be quite successful, both for us and for them. These places include the Ohio Historical Center in Columbus, which sells about 50 copies of each issue for us; the Alexandria (Ohio) Public Library, which sells 30 to 40 copies; the Granville (Ohio) Times Bookstore, which sells 15 to 20 copies; Martha's
Bookstore in Newark, Ohio, which sells 20 to 30 copies, and The Ark, a student book store in Newark, Ohio, which sells 20 or so as well. It is rather obvious, I think, that the attitude and effort of these stores in relation to the magazine accounts for their sales, since they are just as out-of-town as the three I mentioned earlier that we dropped, who made no effort to sell or publicize the magazine in any way.

The biggest retailers, of course, have been the local ones in the immediate Pataskala area, namely the Gene-Joan Shop, a small variety-gift shop that sells 60 to 80 copies of each issue; the Pataskala Standard office, which is the local weekly newspaper, and sells 50 to 60 copies, and the Janaan Shop, a small clothing store that sells 30 to 40 copies. All of these are on the main street of Pataskala in the small downtown area of the city, and so deliveries are made by the staff on the way home from school or during the class period of THISTLEDOWN, thus saving any postage cost.

The various other projects vary in their use and dependence upon store sales as opposed to order and subscription sales by mail. Some quick addition will show that THISTLEDOWN sells about 200 of each issue by retail sale in stores, with the remaining 600 to 800 being sold by mail, thus making about 20% of our sales in retail stores. Foxfire, on the other hand, has decided to concentrate upon its subscription sales, and so of the approximately 7,500 copies of each issue they have printed, only 500 are sold in stores, all the rest being mail subscriptions. Salt, on the other hand, in Maine, sells about 2,000 of the 3,000 copies it has printed in stores, and the proportion is similar for projects such as Sea Chest and All-ah-we.
A problem the distribution staff will face in their dealing with stores is that most of them will expect a discount for the magazine, i.e., they will want to buy the magazine in quantity from the project for 20% to 40% off the cover price and then resell it at the full price, thus making a profit from each sale. This is the normal way that all books, magazines and newspapers are sold commercially. Hopefully, other projects will find, as THISTLEDOWN did, some stores who will take no money for selling the magazine, but rather will do it as a good will effort for the school. Most, however, will not be so generous, and so the staff must decide how much discount they will allow. The discount should be thought out carefully to make sure that the sales are not less than the profit margin a project has from its mail order sales, less postage, envelopes and supplies. They may well decide that even though a store could probably sell a considerable number of copies, the loss in profit from their discount would not be worth it, unless, of course, they decide that the gain in publicity in getting those copies into people's hands will compensate for the immediate loss of revenue.

THISTLEDOWN decided they would go no lower than a 20% discount for store sales and most stores have accepted this standard. Therefore, we sell the magazines to them for $1.30 per copy and they resell it for $1.50, its standard selling price. So far, this arrangement has worked out well, but printing costs are rising and so it is beginning to make the profit margin become slimmer with each issue. The staff is, at this time, trying to think of ways to increase our profit and/or decrease our cost, such as raising the price of the magazine to $2.00, using cheaper paper or decreasing the size of
the magazine from 8-1/2" by 11" to 7" by 10", the size used by Foxfire.

After making their first contacts for retail stores in the community, the students immediately saw the need for some sort of record-keeping arrangement for it all, and so they invented a distribution form which, with little revision, has worked well so far. On this form is recorded the name of the store, its address and phone, how many copies of the magazine they took, which issue it was, the date, and whether they paid for it or were billed. We always attempt to get payment at the time of delivery, as sending bills and keeping track of which were paid and which were not is very difficult and time-consuming. We found, however, that some stores have a standardized book-keeping system that does not allow them to pay for anything without an "official" bill being first submitted which then must go through their system before a check can be issued, so sometimes it will be simply unavoidable to send a bill and record payment. There is, therefore, space on the distribution form for bill sending, amount owed, date of the bill, and then space to record payment when the check arrives, the date of payment and the amount.

The only revision the students found necessary to make in their distribution form so far has been the addition of the space marked to record re-orders. It did not occur to them that, after making the initial sale of, say 20 copies to a store, the store might sell out and want to order more of the same issue to sell. It was only after the first time when some local stores began calling the school a month after the first sale asking when they would be contacted to get more magazines that the staff realized this facet of the distribution procedure, and so the spaces to record re-orders, how many, and payment for them were added to the distribution form, and a schedule set up to contact each
store at which a sale was made at two week or one month intervals, depending on the volume of their sales, to see if they needed more.

Again, the organization of the distributing staff is like that of the circulation staff, with a core of two or three "editors" who are responsible for it all, but, after a presentation of the system to the entire staff by them, all become distribution helpers if they wish or if the load is really heavy.

A chore faced by both the distribution and the circulation staffs is dealing with the U.S. Postal Service, which in our experience, has not been easy.

**Mailing**

Unless a project relies almost entirely upon retail sales, it will have to face the ever-rising costs of postage to mail its magazines to subscribers or orderers, and this can be large; it was certainly larger than anticipated for THISTLEDOWN, and still is. Besides the magazines themselves, of course, will be much other mailing of letters and correspondence as well as occasional mailing of large packages of 20 or more magazines to out-of-town retailers who cannot be reached by hand delivery.

Most of the magazines send their copies in lightweight Manila-type envelopes for protection, and these will add to weight, and thus to the postage, as well as being an expense in themselves. This is the method that is currently used by THISTLEDOWN, but the staff is now considering alternate methods to reduce the cost and weight. Laulima, for example, sends its copies from Hawaii with no cover at all, but just a small paper tab around the outside edge of the magazine to keep it from coming open in transit. The address is written
on the back of the magazine's cover in a space provided. This is probably the ultimate in weight reduction, but does have its disadvantages: the magazine often arrives with the cover soiled or marked or torn, and removing the tab to open the magazine inevitably tears a chunk out of the cover. Bittersweet, from Missouri, encases their copies in thin transparent plastic with the edges melted together to seal it; the address being placed on a separate label affixed to the plastic. This seems an excellent way to mail, but we are uncertain about the cost of the plastic material and the tools necessary for sealing it, and are uncertain whether it is actually less expensive in the long run than standard envelopes or not. Other projects have tried wrapping their copies in plain brown paper, but this does not work well without a machine to do it very tightly, for the magazine tends to slide out if it is not done mechanically.

There are various rate classes for mailing, with first class being the most expensive. We found it very useful to obtain from the post office a rate sheet listing the various rate and weight requirements in order to see the differences. The normal rate class for magazines and other periodicals is second class, which is quite inexpensive compared to some of the other classes. The problem is that second class requires a permit and the requirements a magazine must meet to obtain that permit are long and difficult to meet for a small magazine, particularly the one that says there must be 200 items mailed simultaneously to qualify. Nevertheless, some of the larger projects such as Foxfire, Salt and Bittersweet have managed to qualify and thus reduced their rates for mailing considerably. At this time, however, we have not grown to the point where we can meet the requirements, and so must use other rate classes.
Another possibility that we are aiming towards at this time is to utilize the bulk rate permit that the school already has that it uses to mail out things like school board newsletters, announcements to parents, grade reports, and so on. The rates for bulk mail are quite low, even lower than second class in most cases, but again there must be a minimum of 200 identical items mailed at once to a single zip code number, and we have not reached that point as yet, our orders being scattered all over the state area in several zip code areas.

In the meantime, we are using the fourth class or "book rate" to mail out orders and packages of copies to some retailers. This is fairly inexpensive, at least in comparison to first class, and it costs THISTLEDOWN 21¢ at the present time to mail each copy. This cost can obviously become a considerable expense that can easily be overlooked when figuring a magazine's budget, but at $21.00 per hundred copies mailed, postage can quickly decrease profit. It is not, however, a cost that can be avoided, rather obviously, although it may be reduced in the ways indicated, by reducing weight and using, when qualified, the less expensive rate classes. Although retail sales normally do not include any postage cost if the staff can hand deliver the copies, they do include the discount lost previously discussed, so either way the magazine's profit suffers.

The only time we realize all the possible profit we might make on each copy, of course, are for those copies sold directly at the full cover price by the staff at festivals, displays, out of the school's office, to friends and family, or by the few local businesses who sell it for us gratis.

Through experience, THISTLEDOWN has learned some other tricks of the mailing game as well. Copies mailed to other non-profit institutions or
groups, such as to libraries, other schools in exchange subscriptions and foundations can be sent at the "library rate" which is the least expensive rate of all, each of our copies requiring only 8¢ to mail at this rate. The rate at which the copy is mailed must be declared in writing on the mailing envelope, so "fourth class" or "library rate" or whatever is written in the lower lefthand corner of each envelope; if this is not done, it is assumed the postal is first class and is so charged.

The only difficulty with the library rate is that postal regulations state that the material must be mailed to the non-profit institution and not to any person to qualify. Thus, when mailing to someone at a library or foundation, their name must never be included in the address; only the name of the library itself appearing there. Then, below the address, the person's name can be placed, saying "Attention, Mary Smith." If the person's name appears anywhere in the address itself, the copy cannot be mailed at the low library rate, a fact which caused a large number of readdressed envelopes to be done by the staff the first time around, and several times thereafter when they forgot and placed the name in the address.

A further problem is that all of these non-first class rates stipulate that the material being mailed must be entirely printed material, with no hand written material of any kind included. This means that if there is to be a bill or letter sent with the copy being mailed, it cannot be included in the envelope with the magazine itself, or else first class rates will again be applied. A letter or bill can, of course, be mailed separately, putting them in a standard letter envelope and paying first class postage. However, they will frequently
arrive at different times from the magazine, thus causing confusion, especially in the case of bills. By much consultation with the post office and following many errors and remailings, however, we have found the methods to solve this continual problem.

The first way is to place the bill or letter in a standard business letter envelope and tape it onto the front of the mailing envelope containing the magazine at the place where the address is usually written. The tape must go around all four sides of the envelope to hold it securely. The address is then written on the envelope containing the letter and a first class postage stamp is placed on the envelope with letter in it. The postage for the envelope containing the magazine is then the same fourth class rate (or whatever rate the project is using) and is placed on the manila envelope in the usual place. In effect, this simply amounts to sending a fourth class parcel with a postage-paid first class letter stuck to it, and the only extra charge is the postage for the single letter (13¢ presently). This will insure that the magazine and letter or bill arrive at the same time, but has obvious disadvantages in that it is a lot of trouble and work, it does cost more and the receiver has the difficult and messy job of trying to tear that letter off the magazine envelope before he can read it. Indeed, some people have never seen a letter sent in this way and do not realize there is a letter enclosed in the taped-on envelope, thinking it is simply a large mailing label. We have found it wise, therefore, when mailing in this way, to write "letter enclosed" on the envelope.

An alternative to this method, and one which is a great deal easier and cheaper, is to simply type the letter or bill entirely, including the signature of
the writer, as a hand-signed name automatically makes it first class. The post office regards anything completely typed as "machine printed" and therefore not hand written, and so the letter may be mailed with the magazine at the lower rates. Pro-printed form letters that are mimeographed or dittoed in advance with the pertinent information typed in blanks also fits the regulations. This method is cheap, fast and simple, but has the enormous disadvantage of making communications very impersonal and cold, which affronts some people who naturally expect more from their local school and from a project which stresses community involvement and interest in people. Therefore, it is not always the best method to employ. THISTLEDOWN staff members now decide each time whether the correspondence is of such a nature as to warrant the writing and signing of a personal letter, or whether it is someone or some group that would not be bothered by receiving an impersonal typed communication.

The THISTLEDOWN staff learned the regulations regarding the including of handwritten material and how firmly that rule was applied when the first issue was mailed. We initially offered to send to anyone who donated money to the project of $5.00 or more a copy of the magazine autographed by all the staff members. Accordingly, when the first issue was ready to be mailed, we had 14 copies in which the staff members all signed their names on the inside front cover. These were all mailed with the others, some 150 copies involved in the total initial mailing. Four days later, we received a form letter from the Cincinnati Post Office, where for some reason the magazines were routed, that we had violated postal regulations by including "hand written material" in
in the envelopes, some of which had been opened for postal inspection. We were informed that, therefore, all of our envelopes were being opened, and that the offending ones were being returned to have postage added. A week later, all 14 of the autographed copies came back to be remailed at first class rates, and all the others who ordered their copies in advance received them a week later, all with the venopes torn open! This seemed extreme to us, and still does, but it is the sort of service and treatment we have consistently received from the postal service. Since then, bundles of 12 or more magazines have mysteriously disappeared in the mails never to be found, and we are periodically asked to "prove" that well-known organizations such as the Columbus Public Library, the Ohio Historical Society and Ohio State University are non-profit institutions for which the library rate pertains!

**Correspondence**

There is a continuing amount of correspondence that needs care regarding orders, questions and comments from readers, requests for appearances, suggestions, and so forth. In general, the replies, if any, that are necessary are handled by the staff involved, such as circulation or distribution or by anyone who wants to do this sort of work. There have always been, in THISTLEDOWN, some students who enjoy typing and, although they are not on the "official" staff in circulation or whatever, always volunteer to type letters and stories for the others. Letters may also be hand written, of course, and some students prefer to answer in that way, feeling that it gives a more personal touch. In either case, the standard business letter form is used, and this form is one of the things that is taught to the entire staff at the
beginning by either the circulation or distribution editors. The staff also decided at the very beginning that, since we were a real business, we ought to have letterhead stationery and envelopes, as that looked more "official." However, the cost of having it printed was prohibitive, and so they decided to buy a rubber stamp with "THISTLEDOWN" in script and the address beneath it and a brown ink pad, both for $7.00, an affordable sum. With this stamp, which is in continual use, they convert ordinary typing paper or ditto paper from the school supplies and standard business envelopes into letterhead stationery quickly, and the same stamp is used on bill forms, packages, the envelopes the magazines are mailed in, and anything else connected with the project that needs an identifying mark; so, it was a wise and useful investment. Some of the other projects have had stationery and even billing forms specially printed with elaborate letterheads and insignias, and, while it looks very nice, we feel the money can be spent elsewhere better, especially when we can produce the same effect ad infinitum for our small initial cost of the stamp.

Like other projects, we found it best not to throw out correspondence that came in, but rather to file and save it for future reference, in case of problems of billing, lost letters and so forth. At first, we filed our correspondence alphabetically by name of person, but as the files grew, the staff decided there needed to be a revision, and so now the letters are filed by category: those dealing with retail sales are in one folder; those with individual orders in another; those written "to the editor" that might be printed in the magazine, itself, in another, and those suggesting stories or contacts in another, all being placed alphabetically within the particular category. If a letter falls into
more than one of these categories, the staff Xeroxes it in the school office and files a copy in both folders, writing "Xerox" on the original to indicate that there is another copy. If a reply to a letter is necessary, the staff member who makes the reply indicates in a note on the original letter itself exactly what he did and the date the reply was sent, as "Jim Smith, reply 3/20/76, sent new copy."

Similar to correspondence in need and result is the use of the telephone. Although we do not have our own phone, of course, we have permission to use the one in a nearby office of the DPPF occupational program whose director is usually out on visitations, so the phone is seldom busy and is private. Long distance calls, of course, are not used except in an emergency situation, such as if an interview must be unexpectedly cancelled on the day it is to take place because a student is ill, or if, as sometimes occurs, we must contact someone for whom we have been given the phone number and cannot obtain the address. Though seemingly a simple thing, it is surprising how few students are aware of phone etiquette or what to do when calling a business. At first, students would call a large concern such as the Ohio Historical Center and ask the answering secretary if they wanted any more copies; they would come back confused and discouraged because the person didn't know what the student was talking about and had never heard of THISTLEDOWN. Or they would call a retailer but have no pen and paper to take notes or have information ready to give them, so that after the call, they would have an order to send, but not remember the address. We found it necessary, therefore, to have some simple instructions in the use of the phone, emphasizing the need to ask for
specific departments and/or people when calling large businesses, having information and materials ready to record and give information and the need to identify oneself immediately when calling so that the person being called would know who they were talking to and about what.

The Treasury

At first, we had not treasurer, as such, but rather simply had members of the circulation or distribution staff stamp and sign checks and take them and cash to the school office for deposit, bringing back a receipt for our files. All of THISTLEDOWN's money is in a school board account, an extremely inconvenient and complicated situation, but one mandated by the Ohio State Auditor's office. It would be much simpler for our funds to be in an activity account, over which we would have control, could withdraw money at any time, and which could not be touched or used except by us. However, the Auditor's office says that THISTLEDOWN is a curricular offering and so all funds must be in the Board's control and accounts, which has led to endless red tape and delays in payment of our bills, as the district clerk must sometimes "borrow" from the money in THISTLEDOWN and other accounts to meet pressing bills for salaries, heat, and so forth. This is a perfectly legal procedure, but one which has caused bills for printing and other costs of THISTLEDOWN to go unpaid for three or more months by the district clerk who writes the checks, even though we wrote the requisition for payment immediately upon receipt of the bill and had the money in our account to cover it. We have lost much in this way, both in the confidence of the people with whom we are trying to conduct business and in efficiency and production, but
it seems a maze of red tape that cannot be overcome or worked out, even though I, my principal, several members of the staff and faculty, and even the local superintendent have appealed to the State Auditor for advice and help.

The only good part of this system, or so it at first appeared, was that the district office kept a complete and official set of books on all the incoming money, so that our bookkeeping was seemingly being done for us and we did not need to keep a separate set of books and records of our funds for ourselves, although we did keep a running total to have some idea of the status of our money. At the end of the first year, however, as we were about to print the second issue, the high school secretary, talking by phone to the district clerk's office, happened to mention that the next issue of THISTLEDOWN was about ready to go to press. The clerk expressed surprise, saying that her books showed us with only $200 in the account, an amount very far from the $1,100 shown in our own total. Chaos ensued, finally resulting in the issue being printed by the transfer of some unused funds from the English Department budget to cover the cost. The missing money was apparently "lost" somewhere in the endless juggling and "borrowing" of money the district must do to meet their bills and has never been recovered. A $900 sum, of course, while large and crucial to us, is small and easily misplaced in an office that deals routinely in hundreds of thousands of dollars and handles nearly one million in the course of the school year. Since then, we have elected an official treasurer from among the staff who has her own complete account book with receipts and expenditures carefully noted and a record of all receipts by check by name of payer and date, plus a duplicate set of deposit
receipts from the high school secretary who sends the money we give her to the
district office. Even so, we have been warned that, no matter how careful and
complete our treasurer's records are, the only "official" record is the district
clerk's, and so if she "loses" another $900 the next year, we must accept her
total for our account, regardless of any discrepancy between what we know we
have and what she says we have.

The entire situation is worrisome, absurd and intolerable to the
students, myself, and everyone concerned, but so far, there has been no way
out of it. It may prove in the end to be the undoing of the entire project, and it
would certainly be ironic if the whole thing were "red taped" out of existance
after the work and success of the students and the project in general thus far.
We greatly envy other projects in other states, such as Foxfire in Georgia and
Salt in Maine who have their own private bank accounts for their funds in local
banks totally unconnected with school funds or procedure in any way. This is
obviously the ideal situation, but one which is not now legal in the State of
Ohio because of some mishandling of some schools' funds by some administra-
rators a few years ago, according to the State Auditor's office.

**Equipment Maintenance**

All of the equipment used in the interviewing process such as cameras,
recorders and flash units, require continual checking and maintenance to insure
that they will work when they need to out in the field. We organized a double-
protection system to insure both their maintenance and to keep track of who had
what and when.
Each member of the staff is trained in the use and maintenance of each piece of equipment by another member of the staff already familiar with it. In the very beginning, there were, of course, no such veteran staff members, and so the instructor was myself. After showing them all how everything worked and how to take care of it, each staff member then had to demonstrate their knowledge to me before they could check the equipment out and take it on an interview. After this initial training, however, the staff members themselves, became instructors, teaching new members who entered the project and only giving them clearance to use the equipment after the new person had demonstrated to their satisfaction they knew how to handle everything. Each staff member was responsible for checking their equipment to make sure the batteries were function, the lenses were clean, and so forth.

It became clear after some time, however, that the system we were using needed some sort of central figure to keep track of it all, just as was the system in the circulation and other business areas in which all staff members participated but a small "editorial" group was the organizing and maintaining force. One student, therefore, who was, by that time, becoming most interested in the equipment and its maintenance, volunteered to become the equipment manager. He immediately organized the equipment into an orderly storage area, invented and mimeographed an "in–out" check sheet to keep track of where each piece of equipment was, organized a maintenance schedule whereby he would clean and inspect all pieces of equipment at regular intervals, and set up an inventory system so that we always knew what we had, its serial numbers and condition—all this from an "average" student who had never worked with equipment like this before and was certainly not known for his organi-
zational abilities! He installed a lock on the equipment cabinet for which there were but two keys, one of which he gave to me in case of emergency and the other which he put in a special key case that he carries with him at all times. To date, after a year and a half, I have never had to use my key, the equipment has remained in spotless and perfect working condition, nothing has ever been misplaced or lost, and the student, on my recommendation, has become the head of the student staff that cares for and operates all the schools’ audio-visual equipment. He is now aiming at a career in an audio-visual connected field, as yet precisely undetermined, after graduation.

From the beginning, it was my hope that the staff would consider the equipment their’s, and so their use of it has not been restricted to THISTLE-DOWN-related activities. Unless, of course, a camera or recorder was definitely going to be needed immediately for an interview, the students are free to take the equipment home with them, after properly checking out, and many have done so. None have the money to purchase a high quality camera or recorder, and so they have used them to take pictures of family parties and other events, to record their favorite rock record or television show and complete special assignments for other school classes. None have ever been damaged in this process and, since they use their own film and tapes, it is not costly, but the pride they evidence in having their own special equipment to use in this way is always obvious.

Publicity

Publicity, or "public relations," as the students on the staff prefer to call it, is a necessity for the survival of the project. Although it can be argued
educationally that the most important thing is the contact and immersion of the students in their environment and community and their involvement in a project that seems, and is, real and relevant to them in the communications curriculum, still it is an economic necessity to sell the product--the magazine--to keep the entire concern in existence. Although there are, at nearly every school, people in the community who will support the school's endeavors by volunteering for committees and purchasing anything the students are selling, the numbers of these people are too few to see 800 to 1,000 copies of each magazine to maintain enough funding to continue in operation. It is, therefore, necessary to publicize the project as widely as possible in order to attract a wide base of orderers (subscribers, eventually) and buyers at the retail outlets previously discussed.

The most obvious immediate way to get known more widely is the one chosen by both THISTLEDOWN and other projects: the press, radio and television. We found, as have other projects, that the media are most interested in news about local students who are starting a magazine about the community and its people and heritage. They are usually eager to put some information about the project into the paper, even before it begins, probably because, as a reporter from the Newark newspaper told me, "people are sick of reading only about teenagers who are arrested, on drugs or in trouble." Our initial story was in the Newark Advocate, a large paper that most people in the area subscribe to. The Advocate sent a reporter to the school who talked with us during the THISTLEDOWN "class" time and got the information that was necessary for the article. They then arranged to have one of their photographers
accompany us on an interview (one of our first) who took photos of us in the interviewing process. The resulting article and pictures was large and sympathetic and was an enormous boost to both the staff themselves and to our sales orders.

Since then, several smaller articles about our progress and the project have appeared in the Advocate, in the local weekly, the Standard, and in various other publications, including a mention the students are most proud of in an article on the Foxfire concept in the New York Times. Each of these have brought a spate of new orders that would otherwise not have be obtained.

As the publicity began, it became immediately obvious that there ought to be an organized and continuing effort to keep the project in the minds of the community and beyond to increase sales and acceptance of the project. Accordingly, several students volunteered to become the "public relations" editors, with the organization of the staff like the other areas of the business in which all participate but a few keep that particular part of it together and steered in the right direction.

This group of three now sends out information pertaining to the project to the local newspapers whenever anything special occurs, such as the publication of a new issue. In addition, they have arranged to be interviewed about THISTLEDOWN on a local radio station twice, which has helped sales each time, as well as bringing information to the community. A local television station, WGSF, also agreed to include a short segment in one of their local news reports on the project, and so a video-tape crew spent one day with us, taping our activities and interviewing the students about the project
and their involvement in it. They, and other members of the staff who assist them, have written press releases to be included in the school board's newsletter which goes out to every boxholder in the school district, have made up posters to place in local businesses and all of our retailers to accompany each new issue, and have designed and set up displays at the school's annual "Fine Arts Festival" and at the festival sponsored each summer by the Pataskala Chamber of Commerce called the "Festival of the Lost Arts."

In October, 1975, I was invited to speak at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, at the "Heritage Workshop" of the Community Learning Resources Center located there. This Center, chaired by Helen Horn of Ohio University, is dedicated to seeking ways to relate the schools to the community and of discovering ways in which the resources of the community may be tapped as material for learning. They are funded in part by the Martha Jennings Foundation, our initial funder, and it was through them that they learned initially of the THISTLEDOWN project. Since then, early in the project, they toured our facilities and talked with the students on the staff, as well as ordering the next ten issues in advance. Wishing to keep the project student-oriented at all levels, however, and taking advice on speaking for the project given by Eliot Wigginton of Foxfire in the introductions to Foxfire and Foxfire 2, I told them that I would not speak myself, alone, but would be happy to accompany and assist some students from THISTLEDOWN who would speak to the group. They accepted this alternative, and so in October, I drove to Ohio University with three students from the staff, none of whom had ever spoken in front of an audience before, except in front of the staff. All were volunteers and had
worked hard on preparing a short talk on that part of the project with which they felt most familiar. The audience consisted of teachers from all over the south-central Ohio area and, though nervous, the students spoke well and responded well to questions directed to them after their speeches. They had taken fact sheets and brochures with them to hand out, as well as the current issue to sell.

For their efforts, they received a free dinner at the student union and a $10 honorarium donated to the project, but most of all, they grew a bit and had a fine experience that otherwise might not have come their way. Only one of the three were on the "official" publicity staff, and the trip was followed up by a full report to the rest of the staff the next school day. Since then, I have maintained this policy of having the students speak for the project instead of myself whenever possible, as at the radio and television interviews, and have seen the confidence of these students grow and their understanding of the project deepen as they explained it to others.

In addition to the media articles and appearances and the speeches given, the students have written a four-page "data sheet" and produced a brochure to distribute whenever information is requested and to hand out wherever we appear. I want to emphasize that all of these publications and articles are entirely student-produced from the initial idea to the end production and are not the product of an "assignment" for class or, as sometimes occurs in school functions, a production of the teacher with a student's name on it.

The data sheet was written, typed and mimeographed by the publicity staff and outlines the basic history of the project, its organization and goals,
specifics about ordering, and a list of the recognition it has received. The students decided this would be a practical paper to have, as they felt that they found themselves answering the same questions over and over, especially to those letters that frequently come in from as far away as Oregon and Mississippi that say simply, "I've heard about you and want to know more. Who are you? What are you trying to do? How do I order?" It is always an interesting bit of speculation when such letters arrive as to how and where they heard about THISTLEDOWN, and interestingly enough, it often occurs that a copy of THISTLEDOWN has been purchased as a gift by someone in the local area who has sent it to a relative in another state who then showed it to a neighbor who then wrote to us. The students are always flattered that someone chooses THISTLEDOWN as a gift and when they discover the receiver is in another state or even, as has happened twice so far, in another country, their pride in thus "representing" the school and having their names and work being sent all over the U.S. is immediately apparent in their speech and actions. It is always a happy occasion when I see students who, like their peers, are "professionally bored," as our principal puts it, in other classes light up and become truly excited and enthusiastic in THISTLEDOWN.

The brochure was produced as a publicity device to tell briefly about the project and the magazine and provide a quick sample in photographic form of the sort of things found in it. They were made small, and letter size so that they could be included in a piece of correspondence sent out, whether letter or mailed copy. Sometimes, of course, we are sure they are thrown away, but often they are passed on or picked up by someone else and new orders
result. The number of times we have received orders on the order form included in the brochure from someone we did not send one to and never heard of is now uncountable, and so it has been one of the students' best publicity ideas. They were concerned about the cost initially, as the brochure was produced before we had settled on a printer, but we were happy to find that the Licking County Schools office in Newark has a small offset machine capable of producing something the size of our brochure and was happy to do so at cost. The students produced the design, layout, copy and photographs and the County Office printed them for $20.00 per thousand, a small investment that has paid for itself many times.

Besides the publicity described thus far, the students are now considering and working on other ideas to increase the exposure of the project to the community. They hope to organize and prepare an exhibit of photographs to be displayed in the local bank's lobby showing THISTLEDOWN at work and some of our contacts, all photographs being student work. They also hope to make presentations at more local civic meetings and possibly at the state parks to widen sales and attract donations.

Publicity is a continuing and necessary thing, we have found. It is always remarkable, both to me and to the students, how often people at booths we have or displays or in letters will say, "I am aware of Foxfire, but didn't know there was anything like that going on in this area," even though these people live in the area, read the papers in which articles about us have appeared, received the board newsletter in which we have announcements, live next door to someone who is a regular orderer, or even have children who go
to the school and are friends of students on the THISTLEDOWN staff! Perhaps this is just human nature, as one of the teachers at the school who is also manager of a realty in Pataskala, tells me that in order to let people know a particular house is for sale, he must place an ad and picture of it in the local papers for at least seven days in a row before anyone will notice it, and that nearly all the calls he receives about a house are from someone who has seen it on the fifth to seventh day of the ad, even though the person gets and reads the paper daily.

These, then, are central parts of the business side of the project, a part that is inextricably connected with the interviewing, photographing, writing, layout, recording and transcribing that go into the production of the magazine itself. for one facet of the project could not exist without the other, and in all cases, the students who are involved in producing an article will likely be the ones who end up taking orders for it in the magazine, mailing it out, selling it and publicizing it. This dual and total involvement inevitably results in higher interest for the students as what they do becomes a real entity that they, themselves, send out into the world to show off for public approval and inspection. I think this attitude was best described by one of the staff members who, when her first article and photographs appeared in an issue under her name and she took an order to mail it out, said, "I feel as if I'm sending a part of myself out there. I hope they like me."

**BASIC DECISIONS**

From the start, like any such venture, there were some basic decisions to make that would influence and determine what we did and what sort of
product we would end up with. Like all such decisions, these were made by the students in the project and are periodically reviewed by them and re-decided. They are, I think, the sort of decisions that any Foxfire concept project would have to make. They include the naming of the magazine, choosing a size and style for it, what sort of paper to use, and in terms of the magazine itself, such things as how the staff is to be organized and how the transcribing and archiving is to be accomplished.

Choosing a name for the magazine may, at first, seem an easy and almost inconsequential bit of business, but it turns out to be difficult and, in the end, quite important. First of all, it will become not only the name on the magazine when it is printed and sold, it will also be the name identifying the entire project and will be carried into the community in posters, speeches, exhibits, and so forth. Secondly, it must be a name that is significant to the particular area of the magazine and to the students who work on the project. Last, it will be one of the few irreversible decisions the entire staff will make, for after the community identifies with the name, it can hardly be changed, and besides, the staff will soon have an investment in it in the form of rubber stamps, stationery and letterheads as well as being officially and legally registered with copyrights in that name with the Copyright Office of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Suggestions for the THISTLEDOWN name came from the students who would be on the staff the following first year. We held "brainstorming" sessions, writing down all suggestions as they were given. The goal was to produce a name that was special to the Ohio area and would not "fit" as well
anywhere else and, at the same time, have something easily remembered and written. At first, many of the name sounded, as one student put it, like "tourists' shops and corny boutiques," but as the suggesting process went on, the ideas seemed to move closer to the area. Suggestions from faculty members, the students' parents, other students and just about everyone else were solicited by the staff to add to their own ideas. We finally end up with a list of 56 names and then began a process of elimination. First, all the ones the majority felt were "corny" were struck off, and then those that they felt did not identify with the area or were too difficult to remember. That brought the list down to eight names:

National Trail (for Rt. 40 that goes through the area
Mounds (for the Moundbuilders, a pre-historic culture
Thistledown (for a common weed found everywhere in this area
Flint (for the Flint Ridge Indian works nearby
Plainfolks (which they felt they were
Centralo (for Central Ohio
Beech (in the 19th. century, this area was a beech forest
Maize (the Indian name for corn, a principle crop in the area

Voting on the final list then began, with lengthy and sometimes heated arguments being presented for and against each nominee. First, "Centralo" was eliminated because it "sounded too much like some school's yearbook," and "National Trail" was struck because there was a drag strip called National
Trails not far from the school. Then "Mounds" went, sounding "too much like a magazine about candy bars," and "Plainfolks" lost as well, the staff feeling it did not apply in any direct way to our area. The task now became harder, as there were strong factions for each of the remaining four—Beech, Maize, Thistledown and Flint. Finally "Maize" was taken off when someone discovered there were several schools with maize and gold as school colors who had school papers or newsletters called "The Maize" or some similar title using that word. "Beech" was the next stricken, because of the argument that while the area was once a great beech forest, it is not so now, there being only scattered beech trees mixed with others in the area, and so someone not familiar with early history would not perceive any significance to the name today. This brought it to "Flint" and "Thistledown," with equal parts of the staff supporting each name and neither willing to yield. The debate continued for several days. Finally, I asked each faction to write up a short justification for the name they wanted, describing its significance and symbolism, such as the one presented by Foxfire for its name: a small organism peculiar to the Georgia area that glows in the dark, thus "lighting the way" and "revealing" the local area.

The next day, each description was read. The "Flint" proponents found they had a difficult time with theirs since the flint was not really common all over the area but only in Flint Ridge and, though it "sounded like a neat name" they discovered they could find little real meaning to it. Consequently, most of the Flint-faction switched their allegiance to "Thistledown," and this was capped by the presentation by the group favoring that name, which is still used
today in our brochures and whenever we are asked to explain our choices of
name. Written by student, Mary Ulrich, it says that:

Thistledown is a common weed found everywhere in the Central Ohio area, along every back road and in every
field. Though common, it is beautiful, and the downy seeds from it are swept by the wind to seed itself and
put down new roots where—ever they fall. Like thistle
donw, we are common people, but through this project,
we hope to show that we are beautiful as well and our
roots run deep, but we hope that seeds of our heritage,
carried through our work, will find new roots in the
hearts of others all over the country.

Size

The other basic decisions are not as difficult nor as unchangeable as
the choice of a name. The size of the magazine is an important one, for it
will have much to do with the cost and layout possibilities of the magazine. The
most common size is the one used by Time and Newsweek, 8-1/2 by 11 inches.
This size has the great advantage of making layout easier and more flexible,
with many more options possible in the way things can be done and arranged on
the page. They copy for this size can be placed in two columns, three narrower
columns, or even one very wide column that stretches over the whole page.
Further, its larger size seems to command attention, compared to smaller
sizes, and "looks" more like a "real magazine." On the other hand, this
larger size also costs the most to print, simply because there is more paper
involved than in any smaller size.

The smaller sizes, such as 7 by 10 inches, are less expensive to
print and seem more informal or more personal to some, in the same way that
some people prefer the tabloid size of newspaper to the normal full size one.
It works well with either a one or two column format. However, its smaller size does limit the things that are possible to do with layout and, of necessity, requires the cropping or reduction of nearly every photo taken to make them fit on the page, especially if several on a page are desired.

After looking at many magazines of all sizes, comparing costs and design possibilities, the staff of THISTLEDOWN decided to use the full 8-1/2 by 11 size, feeling that they wanted to "go all the way" with it and produce a product that they felt would match the best of the professional publications if it appeared with them in a newstand or at a bookstore.

**Paper**

The choice of paper for the interior pages is purely a matter of economic and artistic choice. Nearly every printer has a wide range of paper stocks that may be used, some thick, some thin, some flat, some glossy. In general, the glossier the surface, the higher quality of the paper and the better it will reproduce photos and copy, but, at the same time, the more expensive it is.

In the case of THISTLEDOWN, the difference between the gloss and the flat paper in monetary terms, was approximately $100 per issue (800 60-page copies) and the staff felt that since we would have a great many photographs, about 110 per issue, that the investment in the glossier paper to show them off and reproduce them as well as possible was worth it.

This decision, like most of the others except the name itself, comes under review and debate as each issue becomes ready for the printer, but the students have felt each time that, unless it becomes a matter of pure economic
survival, we should maintain the larger size and higher quality of paper now in use because of the better product they produce.

**Staff Organization**

There are many ways to organize a staff such as this one, from highly structured and tightly controlled to very loose, unstructured or not even structured at all. However, one of the things that makes a Foxfire concept project different from that of a "regular" school class is its emphasis on student control and decision making. I, therefore, began by attempting to organize in a very unstructured manner with no one officially in charge of anything, the goal being a self-motivated group of students that would perceive what needed to be done and volunteer to do it. I soon found, however, that total lack of structure simply did not work, either for the magazine or for the students, and it was only after the students themselves imposed some organization that we began to function and things began to happen.

The intent of non-structure in the beginning was twofold: first, to allow everyone on the staff to involve themselves in as many of the aspects of the overall project as they wished to, moving freely among jobs, and secondly, to avoid a typical teacher-student classroom environment which would result in a project that was mine with them as assistants instead of theirs with me advising. We, therefore, had no "editors" or "managers" or chain of command; no one was "in charge" or anything.

Since no one has had any prior experience whatever in photography, interviewing, writing, transcribing, layout or any aspect of the business part of THISTLEDOWN, it was, of course, necessary to explain these aspects of the
project. It might have been better to utilize the discovery method of learning here, but "discovering" how to use a 35mm SLR camera while standing in front of a person in their living room for an interview would not be realistic, in my opinion, as the drivers' education teacher taking a non-driving student out to the middle of a freeway, putting him in the driver's seat, and inviting him to "discover" how to drive a car -- in either case, the results would be more disastrous than educational. I did not, however, want to have actual "classes" in these skills, so instead we utilized the "each one, teach one" concept on a need to know basis. When it came time for a particular student to go on an interview, transcribe a tape or record and mail an order, I would explain it to the first one to do it on an individual basis, and then he would explain it to the next one when they needed to do it, and so forth.

After a period of three months, however, it became obvious that the totally unstructured organization simply was not working. Jobs that needed to be done were not done at all, or were done very slowly. Since there were no assignments and no deadlines, the project creaked along like a rusty wheel. The students began expressing dissatisfaction with their progress and complained that they didn't feel they were "doing anything" which, in most cases, was quite true. The basic jobs, such as circulation, distribution, mailing, maintaining equipment, writing articles and conducting interviews were confused and chaotic for, since there was no one organizing group or person, each one who worked in these areas tended to do things their own way regardless of any decisions about how things ought to happen made by the group as a whole in our weekly meeting. More and more, a small core of two or three students, more
self-motivated than the rest, began to take over all the tasks that needed doing on a day-to-day basis, which led to charges by other staff members that this group was trying to "take over," thus creating dissension in the project.

Further, the two or three who did do the work each day began to feel imposed upon, not understanding why all the others did not perceive the need for the work they saw needed doing, and so they counter-charged that they were being "stuck with all the work" while others "just laid around."

The root cause of all these problems, of course, could be argued in many ways. They were all products of many years of public schooling during which they had always been told precisely what to do and when to do it and had seldom been allowed any involvement in the decision-making process that affected them. It is, certainly, a stifling system and one that stunts initiative, motivation and imagination, but on the other hand, it is efficient from the school's point of view and after awhile, very comfortable for most students to conform to, for it is far easier to be a follower than to be a leader. By asking them to decide entirely what to do, when to do it and who was to do it, I was violating this system, making them uncomfortable and apprehensive about their role and about the project. The constant question to me was "How do you want this done?", to which my answer was always, "However you think is the best way," an answer which was never received well and often brought expressions of more dissatisfaction. The two or three students who could adapt to the non-system and function independently did so, I feel, in spite of their schooling and not because of it, for they all came from families in which the parents were highly intelligent and perceptive professionals who had
encouraged their children at every age to be curious, independent and self-motivating and had supported them in every exploration and endeavor. This is an ideal situation, but hardly one that is common and cannot be expected to be the case in many students' lives, unfortunately; it was certainly not the case for the majority of the THISTLEDOWN staff, most of which were that nearly-forgotten group, the "average" student.

Finally, it became evident that my attempts to make the project entirely student-motivated and unstructures simply would not work, except for a very small elite group who were thriving on the independent environment. It thus became a basic educational decision on my part whether to continue as it was, thereby contributing greatly to the learning and development of these few, or to change things so that all on the staff could derive some value from the project, both now and for future staffs; the answer, I think, is obvious. The few that were capable of independent work and self-motivated were also involved in projects in science and art (called "self-directed study") that would provide an outlet for their abilities, so they would not be completely stifled and, of course, even with some organizational scheme imposed upon the THISTLEDOWN project, there will always be ample opportunity for those who wish to and can do more, produce more and create more than others.

In a meeting of the entire staff, therefore, I briefly outlined our problems, explaining my desire to keep it "their" project while, at the same time, having some sort of structure what would allow everyone to participate and things to be done with some measure of efficiency, since we were committed to donors, grantors, orderers and retailers to produce a product in a reasonable amount
of time and on a reasonably regular basis. I asked for suggestions, though it was hardly necessary, for they began a spirited debate nearly before I had finished.

All, without exception, expressed a need to have definite deadlines for each phase of their work set, but they felt it should be a standard, rather than individually imposed. They decided upon three weeks between interview and article as reasonable: one week to transcribe; one week to write the article and one week to produce a layout. Secondly, they decided that every member of the staff should be required to produce at least one article each semester from beginning to end, i.e., from arranging and conducting the interview to writing and laying out the article resulting from it, each of those to be done in the prescribed three-week time limit. This system would thus produce at least 16 interviews and articles per semester, the number of students then on the staff, and thereby guarantee enough material for at least two issues per year while, at the same time, insuring that every staff member learned about and became involved in every aspect of the production of the magazine. Each student would be "in charge" of his article and would be responsible for asking others to assist him in conducting the interview and other aspects of the production, with the agreement that all students would assist, when asked, if at all possible.

On the business "end" of the project, they suggested the system which I have previously outlined under business procedures in which there would be a small group or even one staff member who would volunteer to be the "editor" or "managers" of a particular section, such as circulation and
distribution, and would be responsible for organizing it in some systematic way and explaining that system to all the rest of the staff who would all then be assistants to them whenever need arose or they were not involved in interviewing some other production job. If there was a job or section for which there was more than one volunteer who wanted to be the editor or manager, they would then be chosen by vote and serve for one semester, though they could be re-elected and thus serve for an entire school year.

All of the above suggestions for both the production and the business aspects of the project were entirely those of the students and are nearly, I believe, an ideal situation. Upon examination, it is apparent that the result of a project structured in this way is one that maintains the maximum of student motivation and independence and yet still manages to have an order and organization about it that will allow all those involved to know what is expected of them, when it is expected and of whom it is expected. All members of the staff, under this system, can involve themselves if they wish in every single aspect of the project, or if they wish, may choose to concentrate upon production or business or any aspect of those areas. While every student must ultimately learn and involve himself in all aspects of at least one article, he is free to become, at the same time, a "specialist" in photography, layout, art, or whatever his interest is by volunteering to assist the others in that particular area in the course of their required interview/article. He may, if he wishes, become responsible for one of the aspects of the business, organizing and inventing a system for it that he finds good and workable, but at the same time, all other staff members may work with him at any time and so involve themselves as well to whatever extent and for whatever time they may wish.
Since instituting this structure at the end of the first six months, the entire project has taken a dramatic turn-around, both in the attitude and involvement of the students and in the outward appearance and production of the magazine, itself. Within a few weeks of our "new" project, all the business aspects of the project had been organized, created and set up by those who became the new editors and managers, nearly all students were involved in helping them, and business was flowing smoothly. With a publicity crew, we began to appear in the media and elsewhere, thus increasing business, and the same group, with the help of the others, began decorating the room with signs and posters about the project, thus increasing pride and general esprit de corps. One girl, for example, not on the publicity "staff" but their their encouragement, created a three by five foot THISTLEDOWN sign on plywood with the word "Thistledown" spelled out on it with strips of tree bark, a beautiful piece of work that was hung from the ceiling over the work area and is inevitably pointed out with pride to all visitors, as if they could possibly miss it!

The three week standard for interview/article production proved nearly perfect, with a few students needing some extra time because of delays in photo processing, taping difficulties or other problems beyond their control. These extensions were approved, when necessary, by myself, a decision of the students and one of the few real "teacher" roles I needed to play under this system. All, however, have been able to complete an article each semester without undue strain and so nearly all the staff appears somewhere by name in some role in each issue, a great source of pride to them all. Another of their decisions, was that there should be, at the beginning of each year,
formal classes in each aspect of the production, i.e., in photography, interviewing, and so forth, to be conducted by myself, members of the staff who had mastered the particular skill, or outside speakers, instead of individual each one-teach one training as before. At intervals during the year, brief review sessions conducted by staff members would be held as well as for the staff as a whole. I was somewhat opposed to this idea at first, as it seemed to be too much like a usual class, but it has proved to be more student-oriented than it may appear.

The formal classes are brief, lasting only one or two days, and are usually conducted by other staff members who explain the rudiments of the cameras, recorders, interviewing and so forth. Specific help and instruction that occurs immediately prior to an interview, during it and after it is then nearly always given by other staff members instead of myself, for I found that when students asked me for instruction, unless it was an especially distressing situation, I needed only to say, "Why not let Jim show you--he's very good at that" to shift the situation back to the student domain. After several responses like this on my part, it quickly became a habit among the staff to ask fellow students for aid instead of going immediately to the teacher, reserving me instead as a sort of resource for information or as a last hope in the case of seemingly insoluble problems and emergency situations or when they need a go-between to communicate with the school's administration.

Another important aspect of this system which may not immediately be apparent is the simplicity of its enforcement as compared to the complex grading systems in a usual class. Significantly, I think, though the students
themselves imposed the three week standard for article completion, the one per semester requirement for articles, and the other rules, the "or else" was never discussed. It was simply assumed that once the standards were set, all would adhere to them, with no threats or apprehension from an intimidating teacher about grades and penalties. I finally asked them in a subsequent meeting what they expected to happen if a staff member did not meet the requirements they had imposed. They all replied that they did not think it would ever occur, for since the requirements were their own, they would meet them, and if someone fell behind or did not do the job, they would be pressured by the others on the staff until the job was done. They decided, however, that in an extreme case, I could talk to the staff member and decide what was to be done and give him a bad grade as a last resort. To date, they have been correct, and only once has a student just refused to do his part at all. This occurred near the end of the year when a junior decided to become a senior after discovering he had accumulated enough credits to graduate early, and so found himself with only four weeks to make college, graduation and career decisions the "regular" seniors had had all year to consider. This occupied all his time and thought, as well it might, and so we had a talk about it, for it left his work, fine to that point, now largely undone. We both perceived the problem, found another staff member to take over his article and he suggested the grade which he thought he should receive for that grading period to reflect his incomplete work, which I agreed to as fair.

Therefore, I believe that a totally student motivated and unstructured system, while perhaps an ideal philosophically, is not a reality that can be
utilized in a project such as this one or in other Foxfire concept projects. However, the system that we now work with, created wholly by the students themselves, seems to be a most reasonable and sound compromise that allows great individual freedom and independent work to the student within an organized structure that sets some simple limits and standards for his efforts and certainly satisfies the basic goal of the Foxfire concept to create a learning process possessing a demonstrative capability to use creatively and independently the talents and aptitudes of students within a reality structure.

Archiving

Another basic decision is whether to archive all those photographs, tapes, transcriptions and other material collected during interviews. The articles themselves will be automatically archived, of course, since they will be appearing in the magazine, and so all the pertinent information gained from an interview as well as all the photos that were central to the subject and turned out well will probably be in the published work as well. These will be kept by all sorts of people, carefully stored by libraries that subscribe and generally preserved for posterity by the hundreds of people who buy the final product.

But what about the actual tapes brought back from the interviews, the negatives of all the photos, whether used or not, the transcription of the tapes, and the miscellaneous material that seems to always be collected in the course of doing an article? It is a basic decision as to whether all these should be preserved and, beyond that, should then be put in a certain order, filed, indexed and stored. On the other hand, there is a basic economic question to consider: if the tapes are kept and not erased, then new tapes must be used
for every interview, a rather expensive luxury when the same tapes could be used over and over again. Further, there is the problem of space and time. If everything is to be kept, then it must all be put someplace and to make it at all useful, it must be filed in orderly fashion and indexed, and someone has to put all that together and keep track of it. At first, a few tapes and negatives laying around will take up little space, but these multiply quickly, and soon begin crowding out the work area and office space.

THISTLEDOWN debated all these concerns and finally, like most of the other projects, decided that it was worth the money, space and time to preserve what we brought in to make a working archive of our area. As in nearly all parts of the country, there is no other such resource existing, and so to erase tapes and throw out negatives would destroy forever the voices and images of the people that are a part of us. Once they are gone, and some of our contacts already are, the sound of their voice on our tapes is usually the only one ever recorded, kept and available for that person, and to destroy our negatives would be to lose the chance to provide copies of their image to others. The students on the THISTLEDOWN staff made this decision early in the project, mostly on philosophical grounds and because they had heard others were doing it, but it was not very long before the real worth of their decision became evident.

One of our first contacts was with a lady of 92 years named Emily Harris who had lived all her life in the area and was widely known in the community as "Miss Emily," a friend to all. She had a wonderful sense of humor and captivated the students with her recollections of the early days and
her childhood in the 19th. century. Within two months of our interview with her, Miss Emily died, a loss keenly felt by the community and by the students who had talked to her and who attended her funeral. Shortly thereafter, we received a request from a daughter of Miss Emily who had a granddaughter age five years who lived on the West Coast with her mother and had never met her great-grandmother, Miss Emily. They were visiting the area and asked if it would be possible to have the tape of Miss Emily played for the child, as she had never heard her great-grandmother's voice and her mother wanted her to know something of her. We gladly obliged and the little girl and her mother came to the school during the THISTLEDOWN time period. The tape was played and we all listened along with the two visitors. The effect was a moving and emotional experience, for the little girl listened in amazement to the voice she had never heard and, but for the tape, would have never heard, and her mother enjoyed it greatly, with more than one tear in her eyes—and in ours. We had dubbed a duplicate tape and a set of all the photos we had taken, and the staff presented these to them as a gift. The entire experience erased all doubts as to the value of archiving our materials, for the students saw first-hand what would have been lost had we erased those tapes and thrown away the negatives. The decision on the part of the staff became meaningful and was reaffirmed so strongly by this experience that not to archive our materials became simply unthinkable and has remained so. Since this time, we have received numerous requests from people in the community for copies of the photos and tapes connected with particular contacts, nearly always from grandchildren who want to be able to remember and have a record of their
grandparents. Each of these requests have reaffirmed the staff’s decision to archive as a good one.

The only real difficulty encountered with the archiving process has been one of cost and misuse. The students were both happy and flattered to fill requests for copies of tapes and pictures, but as the requests have mounted, the price began to become prohibitive, as they had been providing the items to those requesting them free of charge. They, therefore, decided to begin asking that those requesting such copies pay for the cost of reproduction and postage, a total fee of $4.00. We quickly found, however, that everyone requesting copies was not only happy to pay the $4.00, but often expressed great satisfaction that we could provide them with a full recorded tape and 20 to 40 photo prints for such a small amount, which they see as a great bargain for so many memories, so this problem was easily solved.

The other difficulty was somewhat more problematical, however. We found that some of those requesting copies of our photographs were craftsmen who intended to use them for their own publicity or for publications they intended to write and publish, giving no credit to THISTLEDOWN as the source of the photography. This was not only unfair, the students felt, but was actually illegal, since the photographs that appeared in the magazine were officially and legally copyrighted in the name of THISTLEDOWN and so could not be used without our express permission and without giving full credit to us for them. The students therefore drew up and reproduced a very legal-sounding form which states that all photographs and taped material is copyrighted by THISTLEDOWN, that the documents attesting to such copyright is on file in
the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., and displayed in our offices, and so may not be used without our permission, and that the person requesting copies will not use them for any publication, publicity, or article or for any purpose degrading to the contact. A copy of this form is sent first to all those requesting copies and they are asked to sign it as an agreement and return it with the $4.00 fee before we will send them the requested material. Whether this document is actually legal and binding or not is uncertain, but it has done the job of stopping any misuse of our archives thus far, for those who simply want remembrance of their relatives willingly sign it and usually praise us for seeing that the photos and tapes of their relatives are so well guarded, and those who intended some commercial use of the archives are intimidated enough by the form that we do not hear from them again.

After the decision to archive was made and strongly reinforced, the students began working on some system to keep it all straight and orderly. We knew that some of the projects filed all their material separately, that is, they had an elaborate tape file in one place, a negative file in another, a photograph file in another, and a file of transcriptions and other written material in still another. The THISTLEDOWN staff, however, decided this was unnecessarily complicated as well as taking up an enormous amount of space, which we did not have. They, therefore, devised a simply system which has worked well so far but, like all the other systems, is subject to revision in the future and may indeed be changed as the archive grows.

Each interview is kept intact and identified by assigning it a number. The number consists of the last two digits of the year, followed by the number, consecutively, of the interview for that year. Thus, an interview numbered
"76-8" would be the eighth interview conducted in 1976. This number is put on everything connected with the interview: on the tape cartridge, the backs of all the photos, the envelope of negatives, the transcription form, and so forth. Thus, if any piece of the interview material becomes separated from the rest, it is easily identified and replaced with the rest. A simple list of numbers is kept taped to the archive cupboard door, and the number taken by each interview is crossed off as it is used, so that it is easy to see what the number for the next interview should be.

A 9 by 12 manila envelope is marked in large numbers with appropriate code number for that interview, and everything is kept in it pertaining to the interview by the student responsible for the interview/article, both as he is working on it and when he is finished. These are stored upright in boxes on which is written the numbers included in that box. Therefore, when any part of an interview from the past is needed, it is only necessary to go to the appropriate box, find the envelope, which are in order numerically, and the entire archive is all there—tapes, photos, negatives, transcription, release form, final typed article, and any miscellaneous materials.

The students then set up a filing system with standard 3 x 5 index cards on which each interview is filed and indexed two ways: by number and by name of contact. So, if we want to know where a particular contact's interview is, we need only look him up alphabetically to find his number, or if we want to know what a certain number was, we can find it numerically with the contact's name and subject of interview on the file card.

So far, THISTLEDOWN's archives contain the voices and photographs of nearly 100 people, some of whom are no longer living, and so the value of
our archive is growing, both in size and resource. But the basic decision to retain all the material will not be changed, I am sure, for the students feel that the tapes and photos in the archive are living things on which a value cannot be placed and they are worth much more than any cost spent in producing and keeping them.

Transcribing

Transcribing is a chore that is necessary both to the production of a good article from the tape recorded at the interview and for the greater usefulness of the interview for others when it is put in the archive as a resource. It is simply the task of putting down on paper the words heard orally on the tape, thereby letting both the article writer and others "read" the tape. It provides a necessary index to the subjects and contents of the tape, for it is obvious that if someone, whether writer or future researcher, wants to find out what Charles Minnich said about holding down logs while they are trimmed for split rail fences, he does not want to sit through an hour or more of conversation waiting to hit the particular section of the tape where that exact subject is covered.

For transcribing, we found there to be four essentials: a standard transcription form, a digital counter on the recorder, an on-off switch on the recorder's microphone, and a plug-in earphone for the recorder that cuts off the speaker. As previously described under "Equipment and Supplies," the recorders we had purchased had the necessary accessories; the transcription form was created by the staff.

The transcription form has space and lines at the top to fully identify
the interview, including contact's name, identifying number, date, interviewer's name and a brief description of the subject of the interview, i.e., "Broomaking," or "Farming in the 1890's." The remained of the form is simply divided into two column, one to indicate the number of the digital counter and the other to describe the exact subject and/or words used at that point, as well as which side, A. or B. of the tape is being transcribed. Thus, a typical entry might be, "Side A, #235, the process of attaching the broom handle to the straw," or, "Side B, #378-420, how Christmas was spent in 1894."

The decision to transcribe itself is a necessary one if the archive is to be useful and the tapes are to be used as a source for articles. However, there are two other connected decisions just as basic that are not so predetermined: should the transcription be word-for-word or outlined, and should dialect be used, transcribed and written in the article?

The first of these was the source of much debate when we began. Most of the other projects, we knew, such as *Foxfire*, *Salt* and *Bittersweet*, transcribed all their tapes completely, word-for-word, even putting in every "Uh" and "Ah" and stutter. This is the "official" way to do things. However, this process takes an enormous amount of time and is, to say the least, a tedious chore. The students tried it, at first, but it usually took weeks to do a single tape and the student could not begin the article itself until the transcription was finished. The entire process, while correct and official, was so slow and difficult that while we began to question its value and possibility as realistic for us to attempt. We began to consider alternatives and, at the same time, began to wonder how those projects that did it could possibly find the
time and patience.

I contacted IDEAS in Washington, D.C., to find out more about how the others were accomplishing this seemingly impossible feat and found that there was, indeed, a reasonable explanation. First, the larger and older projects mentioned enough money that they had purchased expensive $300-$400 transcribers such as those used by secretaries in large businesses. These machines, which are really enhanced cassette players, have foot controls, instant stop-start capabilities, review controls and other features that make the whole job much easier and quicker. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, they also had an entirely different time schedule than we did, for they met for half a school day, or, in the case of Foxfire, for the entire school day with a continuously rotating staff of 70 to 90 students who came in all day working on various aspects of their projects! We, on the other hand, had a staff of 15 who met for only one period per day—45 minutes—and could not even get into the room used for the project during the rest of the school day as it was used for other classes in everything from American Literature to General Math. It was hardly realistic, therefore, for us to attempt to accomplish in this brief time and with our equipment what the others were accomplishing in an entire day with special machines.

We, therefore, decided to stop trying to produce word-for-word transcriptions and, instead to transcribe in a detailed outline form instead. In this system, every major point and subject covered by the contact is noted and the corresponding number on the tape recorder's counter is put down with it, so that a complete index, somewhat like a detailed table of contents of a
book, is produced that makes the tape easy to work with and its contents easy to
find for resource and writing. This system takes less than a third of the time
that a complete transcription does, and so the students are able to complete
this sort of form within two to five days with our small time limitation of 45
minutes per day and it has worked very well thus far both in providing materi-
al for the article's writer and for those who later wish to locate some specific
information given by a contact during an interview.

The decision to use dialect or not to use dialect was one of a different
order, for it was not concerned with time and money but with our feelings and
those of our contacts. On the one side, it was felt that using the dialect on the
tapes and putting it phonetically into our stories would capture the rhythms and
feeling of the speech of the people in our area, showing others a part of them
that is uniquely theirs, and bringing a truer and more genuine picture of this
community to the readers. However, there were some who thought that dia-
lect ought not to be used, for it seemed condescending to the contacts and
might look as if we were making fun of their speech, whether or not that was
out intention. It is also somewhat harder to read than standard English, and
certainly more difficult to write in any consistent manner.

The debate over dialogue was still unresolved at the time the drafts
of the first articles were completed, and most of the ones who had completed
their works had gone ahead and used dialect to some extent in the stories
when direct quotations were employed. We then took the drafts back to the
contacts themselves to ask them to read them for final approval and suggestions.
To the students' surprise, the contacts expressed concern over the use of dia-
lect in the articles, some saying, "Why, I don't talk like that!", though they
really did, and others saying, "I know I talk that way—everyone does around here—but why didn't you fix it up so it don't make me sound so funny?" The students promised they would take out the dialectal spelling, rewrote the articles and took them back to the contacts, who were greatly appreciative. The next interview we attempted to set up, a few days later, was turned down, the person saying that she had heard we wrote down exactly how people talk and she "didn't want to have people see her talking like that and go around laughing at her." It was only after much explaining that we would not do so and would "fix up" her speech that she finally consented to the interview. This experience resolved the dialect issue rather quickly for the staff, as it was quite obvious that if we stuck to the ideal of exact reproduction of speech for the sake of regional flavor and more official folklore recording, we would soon be out of business because no one would talk to us.

It should be pointed out here that the objections raised by the community contacts were not against regional expressions or the actual words used, but rather against the way those words and others were spelled. A man who described the taffy used in old-time taffy pulls as, "The lovingest stuff I ever saw" because it stuck to his hands had no objection at all to us printing it just that way instead of changing it to something like, "The stickiest material I've ever seen." He did, however, object to a sentence in which dialectal spelling was used which said, "We dint git down t'the place till 'bout seven uh'clock," which, though an accurate transcription of his speech, he thought it made him sound "stupid," and so this latter sentence was changed to a standard, "We didn't get down to the place until about seven o'clock."
Through this experience, then, we have formed THISTLEDOWN's basic policy concerning the use of dialect in stories, which is really a sort of compromise. We do not change expressions or sayings that are unique to this area and we do not correct the contact's grammar to standard English form. These things remain as they were said, to which no one has raised objection, and thus manage to capture a good deal of the flavor of the person's speech when it is unusual or especially regional. However, we do not attempt to spell phonetically any dialectal or slang words used by the contacts, and so "wuz" becomes "was," "warsh" becomes "wash," and "boosh" becomes "bush" even though these pronunciations are typical of the people in our community.

The staff has, however, come up with a rather ingenious way to include these regional pronunciations in the magazine without offending anyone. They felt that they were interesting and unique enough to warrant inclusion and would be interesting to those in other parts of the country, so they now include in each issue when space permits a special article on "Ohio's Speech." In this article, usually one or two pages long, a list of regional pronunciations they have heard are listed with the "translations" across from them with an explanation that these are some that we "have heard" but with no attribution to any one person. It is interesting that this section of the magazine is always very popular with the community, especially with the people we have interviewed, all of them pointing out how "true" the words are and how often they "hear" "other people" say them that way around here, but never admitting that they, themselves, use them, and so a typical comment we hear is, "Why, yer rat, some people do say 'boosh' instead of 'boosh' and 'feesh' instead of 'feesh'
around here, don't they!"

In general, the questions of how extensive the transcription is to be and whether to use dialect are the two most debatable problems connected with the transcribing process. The creation of the form for transcribing is an obvious necessity. The other basic rules we have developed for the transcribing are:

1. Always use the AC plug-in cord accessory when transcribing, so the batteries will be saved for use in the field.

2. Turn the recorder on and off with the switch on the microphone instead of the ones on the recorder itself. It's much easier this way, as the student can work the switch with left hand and write with his right hand and so need not to take his eyes and concentration off the paper. Also, it's easier on the recorder to do it this way.

3. Use the plug-in earphone accessory. This automatically cuts off the sound from the recorder's speaker so that no one hears the recording but the student doing the transcribing, an absolute necessity when more than one student is trying to transcribe at once, others are writing, and so forth.

4. In order to make the transcription more useful and comprehensible to others, be sure to fill the parts in explanations that are not clear on the tape. For example, if the contact says on the tape, "Put the applehead doll here to dry," it is necessary for the transcriber to write in "(on the window sill)" because others would have no way of knowing where "here" was.
5. Because of the frequent necessity to put in explanations that only someone actually there would know, as in no. 4 above, the person(s) who conducted the interview should be the ones to transcribe the tape.

These basic decisions, then, involving the project's magazine's title, the size of the product, the type and grade of paper used, the structuring and organization of the staff and questions involved in the archiving of materials and the transcribing process are ones that are central to any Foxfire concept project, some more important and more difficult than others, but all necessary to a firm start. In each of these areas, I believe the staff of THISTLEDOWN has made good decisions, but again, because of the nature of the project, all except the name, itself, are subject to review and new decisions as the project continues, and hopefully, grows.

THE CLASS AND PROCEDURES

Having covered the major points of THISTLEDOWN's finances, copyrights, business procedures and basic decisions, I am concluding this overall section on the THISTLEDOWN project with some explanation of some problems and concerns that, though of a smaller nature, are nevertheless important because each of them is in some way unique to the Foxfire concept and had to be dealt with in that context. These include the nature of the class meetings, tests, and evaluation, the meeting time, an organizational chart, release forms for interviews, students' driving and permission forms and the facilities we utilize for the project.
The Class

My attempts to make the class entirely student-oriented and student-run were described earlier in the section under staff organization, as well as the problems encountered in that attempt and the solution to those problems that was worked out by the students themselves. Without reiterating that section, I will only repeat that we now have a basic structure to the organization of the class and the project that allows what I believe to be a maximum of student initiative, participation and involvement and a very minimum of the teacher in the standard role of lecturer/authoritarian/disciplinarian/controller.

The only actual meetings for what might be seen as conventional "classes" are those held early in the year and periodically throughout the rest of the year during which some of the basics of camera handling, recording, the circulation, distribution and other business systems are explained. These classes, however, as previously explained under staff organization, were the idea of the students themselves and are almost wholly conducted by them as the "explainers." The staff also meets as a group every Friday to work out problems, discuss common concerns, make decisions, hear announcements, and general re-group before the next week comes around. Again, however, these Friday staff meetings were the suggestion of the students, who felt we needed such a regularly scheduled time every week to meet for this purpose. Besides these Friday meetings, which may be cancelled if no one has anything to say or if everyone simply has too much to do, any staff member may call a meeting to make an announcement or explain a new procedure on any day, if it seems really necessary and cannot wait until Friday. If this is to be the case, they
simply advise me beforehand, and I write, "Meeting" on the board prior to the period the project meets, so that the staff automatically looks at the board first when they come in to see if they should go immediately to work or cluster together for a meeting.

Normally, then, the classroom activity is one of complete diversity. There are no assigned seats or desks and no one is expected to be in any one particular place at any time. The students simply come in and go to work on whatever aspect of the project they are involved in at the time, moving freely from one thing to another as need arises. There are always students going in and out of the room to deliver mail to the school's office, make phone calls, get materials, and so forth. Talking, unless it in some way disturbs others, is common. The room area is divided roughly into work areas simply by the placement of the work equipment, and so those working on circulation and other business group in the area containing those files, the ones who need electrical outlets to plug in recorders to transcribe group where the outlets are, the ones doing layouts go to the table area and so forth. The general scene to a visitor is probably one of confusion and constant sound and motion, especially if the visitor was expecting a "class" with orderly rows of assigned seats, quiet students and a lecturing teacher. This is, of course, not the case, for instead the environment is not unlike a typical scene in the office of a magazine in the "real world" outside the classroom.

My function as helper and facilitator is accomplished by moving about the room from one area to another, answering questions and providing resource suggestions. As explained earlier, whenever possible I redirect questions and
and requests for aid to other staff members who are knowledgeable enough to be of assistance, thus avoiding the "teacher" role. Only when the request is one that none of the staff can fill or when, as sometimes happens, a student is in real despair over some knotty problem and seems to need comfort and encouragement more than straight information do I directly step in to help.

Tests and Evaluation

The evaluation of the students in an official manner for their work was a difficult problem at first, simply because it had to be done. The school was providing space for the project, time for me to work with it, and academic credit for the students involved (one credit per year in English) and so it was therefore a requirement of the administration that the students be assigned regular grades of A through F, have test periods equal to students in other English courses and be issued grade cards. It was my original intention to have no tests or grades at all, simply assigning "S" for satisfactory for the school's bookkeeping if it was necessary, but this proved unacceptable to the school's administration.

The assigning of grades and testing was to be avoided, I felt, simply because these are the standard marks of a "class" and seemed unnecessary in a reality structure such as that in which the THISTLEDOWN staff was operating. Furthermore, I wished to release the students from the pressure and intimidation inherent in the usual grading system and allow them for once to work for themselves and what they could accomplish instead of for the mark on the gradecard.

There was no choice, however, in this case but to assign conventional
grades, so I began working on a way to assign those grades that would come as close as possible to freeing the students from grade pressure and standard tests. I have finally devised the following system, which has worked well thus far in being a reasonable compromise between my ideal and the demands of the administration:

1. Testing. The school's requirement that the students be tested regularly and participate in the regular exam times, i.e., semester exams, final exams, nine-weeks' tests, is fulfilled in two ways. First, the regular testing is produced by simply seeing that each staff member completes the job upon which he is working in the required amount of time. This is accomplished by the wall chart, which was the invention and product of the students, themselves, and allows every member of the staff to see exactly where he and all other members are in the progress of each issue.

The chart is a six foot by three foot strip of chipboard paper taped to the wall in the room and plainly visible from any place in the room. On it, a student draws a grid, listing vertically the staff members' names and the articles they are working on, and listing horizontally the steps to the completion of the article to go to the printer: Interview conducted, Thank-you letter sent to contact, tape transcribed, Photos processed and chosen, Enlargements ordered, Article written, Article typed, Photo captions written and typed. The date of the interview is noted on the first step. Then, as each step is completed, the student glues a 2"x2" square of bright red construction paper in the block under it
opposite his name and article. In this way, it is immediately apparent
to all exactly what our status is at any time, both individually and as a
group, and the peer pressure upon a student whose squares are not up
with the others is sufficient to complete the jobs in the time require-
ments previously set up by the students. A student who completes his
work on time, and 90% do so, have passed these "tests" for all to see,
and this method, while really just an organizational device, both keeps
things going at a reasonable pace and satisfies the administration.

When the times come for the regular testing periods at the ends of the
nine weeks and semester, the students are required to meet with the
others and participate in the test schedule by means of some actual
written examination. At these times, since there is no way out of it,
I give them "test" questions upon which to write during the allotted
time periods. However, the "questions" are quite different from those
of a typical test. They are, instead, worded to provide usable infor-
mation for the project, to see what the staff's concerns are, and to
allow staff members to demonstrate their expertise. Each staff
member has a different set of questions, dependent upon what part of
the project they are especially involved with. The students who work
with circulation, for example, are asked to explain how their system
works and what suggestions they have for improving it. The staff
members who enjoy photography the most are asked what they find to
be the most difficult part of using the cameras and how they might
explain that problem to another, beginning, staff member. Students
working on an article at the time are asked what they have found most interesting about the subject of their particular article, what problems they have had and how they have solved them. Those on the staff who do not have responsibility for an article directly at the time and are not officially on the business staffs, are asked general questions, such as what part of the project they think needs improving the most and what they suggest, or what faults they see in a previous issue of the magazine or an article they have written earlier.

All these questions are, of course, "ungradable," in the sense that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to any of them, and so all receive an "A" simply for completing them. They are most helpful, however, to the students and to myself, for it gives them a chance to organize and express some of the things they know on paper, an activity which often seems to put things together for them and makes it more comprehensible. It also always produces a plethora of ideas and suggestions which are then acted upon after the test time and usually produce some changes that were needed but which we simply overlooked in the day-to-day routine. Thus, the requirement for official "tests" is fulfilled, but without the problems and pressures of the usual sort of tests and with the great advantage of producing something very useful to the project and those involved in it. The final "test" is the magazine, itself, for it is indisputable proof that the students have indeed "done" something and learned something during the allotted class periods and is evidence that satisfies all concerned.
2. Evaluation. Since each student must be assigned an academic A through F grade, complete with pluses and minuses when necessary, I had to devise some way of doing so without relying on the usual grade averaging test-quiz-homework system, since these things simply did not apply to our work and organization. I also wished to avoid the idea as much as possible that the grade was a goal or something to work for, as opposed to the work of the project and the student's own accomplishments and satisfaction.

I began by announcing that everyone would receive an "A" regardless of what they did, and so to forget about grades. To my surprise, however, this apparently simple plan met with immediate opposition from two sources: the administration and, more importantly, from the students, themselves.

The administration, acting upon a complaint from the guidance department, explained that this method could not be followed as it was unfair to all the other students enrolled in "normal" courses. They pointed out that giving each one an "A" each grading period would artificially raise their grade average above what they "really deserved" and so would give them an unfair and "unearned" advantage over the other students in terms of applying for scholarships and honors, as reflected in the grade averages and class standings on the students' transcripts sent out for such things by the guidance office. I was set to argue this point and try to maintain the system, for I felt that they would, indeed, "earn" the grade, but the students, themselves, then registered objection to the idea.
They requested a meeting of the staff and then explained their position. They were not objecting to receiving "A"s, certainly, they said, and they hoped that it might turn out that they really also did get them, but they felt it should not be automatic. They felt that in this plan there would be no incentive to do a really good job, since the worst would receive the same grade as the best, and since they, themselves, had set standards and limits which they had to follow for the project, there should be some means of "punishing" those who did not meet the standards or else the whole system would be meaningless. They equated the situation with a real magazine, which I had so often emphasized, and asked what would happen if everyone on the staff of a real magazine got paid the same, regardless of what they did or even if they did nothing at all. There was nothing I could say to change their position, and I felt that trying to force my plan on them, especially with the opposition of the administration, would cause greater harm than good at this point.

I, therefore, devised a system of grading which satisfied both the administration and the students, but which did not rely upon the conventional means of arriving at the students' grades. An evaluation sheet was drawn up upon which is a list of all the basic activities in which a student might participate in the project, including every aspect of producing an article and every aspect of the business procedures, plus a category for any project-connected activity that would not fall into one of those two classifications. At the end of each nine weeks, each staff
member is asked to list all the things he has done in each category, so that the end result is a list of his accomplishments, individually, for that particular period. Each student's, of course, will be entirely different from any other student's, as each is free to involve himself in many different activities as well as to be "in charge" of any. At the end of the list is an evaluation section, in which the student is asked to respond to this statement: "Based upon the activities for the project, I have listed above for this grading period, I feel the grade I should receive for this nine weeks is ______." Below that statement is a set of rough criteria that simply provides some frame of reference around which to base a decision. They are:

"A"---- I involved myself as fully as I could, completed everything to my and others' satisfaction, did it on time, and feel I really helped the project, more than what I just had to do.

"B"---- I did a very good job, got involved in many activities, got things done on time, and was satisfied with what I did. I didn't do anything truly outstanding this time, though.

"C"---- I did pretty much was I had to do, and that's about it. I finished what I started; I did it on time, but I could have gotten more involved than I did.

"D"---- I did not do as well as I could have done. Some things were not done when they should have been, I did not meet all my responsibilities and there's much more I could have done, but didn't.

"F"---- I just plain goofed off and didn't do anything. I didn't help the project at all this period.
Based upon these rough criteria, which were reviewed and approved by the staff before use, each student then assigns himself a grade and submits the sheet to me. I then look it over and respond in note form to the evaluation, either agreeing on the grade they have chosen, or disagreeing and telling them why. If they do not like my suggested grade, we confer and reach some compromise. In this way, while the ultimate product is the academic grade demanded by the administration and the students, it is really their own product and reflects their own feeling about what they have done during the time the grade is given. I have found that students are very critical of themselves, and seldom have students given themselves a grade much higher than one they really deserve. Nearly always, in fact, when I disagree about the grade they suggest, it is because they have given themselves a lower grade than one I think they ought to have based on my observations of their work. In any case, this system has worked out well thus far, and has satisfied both administration and students while still not making grades an end in themselves or any sort of prime consideration of the staff. Unlike other classes, I never hear THISTLEDOWN students saying, "Will we get graded for this?" and "What's my grade so far?" and certainly never, "Am I going to pass?"

Meeting Time

Most other classes are scheduled into the school day's seven periods in a way that produces a schedule without conflicts for the teacher and students taking the courses; there is little, if any, thought given to matching the subject to the time of day. Most teachers agree it makes little difference anyhow when their courses are given, for Johnny can study American Literature just as well
early in the morning as he can in the afternoon. It was not so with the THISTLE-DOWN project, however.

Before the first year began, I talked with the principal about scheduling THISTLE-DOWN at the end of the school day, the seventh period. This seemed to me to be not only desirable but really a necessity, for it would give the students time to conduct their interviews. If the classes were scheduled into an earlier period in the day, the students would have only 45 minutes to get to the interview, conduct it and return without missing some other classes, which would be detrimental to them and would undoubtedly cause great protest from other faculty members, especially if the classes were missed often. This time period of 45 minutes, however, was hardly time to even reach some of the contact's homes and was certainly not time to conduct an interview.

The principal, however, said that he did not see how it could be so arranged. At that time, the principal was still producing the master schedule on a board in his office, moving little magnetic squares around in an infinite of ways among 46 teachers and 1,200 students. He could see no way that THISTLE-DOWN could be put anywhere but sometime during the first four periods of the day, an arrangement that would have been simply impossible.

Luckily, shortly after our talk, the Board finally approved long-needed funds to computerize the school's scheduling and by the beginning of the year, the computer had found a way to place THISTLE-DOWN in the seventh, and last, period of the day. This arrangement has worked out well and seems to me a requirement for nearly any Foxfire concept project, unless the projects has the entire school day in which to work, as does Foxfire itself. The students going
on interviews leave at the beginning of the period for the interview, and so are usually there in 30 minutes or so. The interview is then conducted and the students can take their time as there is no need to return to the school for other classes. They usually return to the school about one hour after it is over and put the equipment away. Many, however, simply go directly home from the interview, taking the equipment with them, which they then bring with them to school the next day and check in with the equipment manager of the staff.

**Driving and Permission Slips**

A continuing problem is finding transportation for the interview teams to and from the interviews. It is rare that the entire staff will attend an interview, unless it is a contact that we know well, one who has the space and is willing. Many of the interviews are conducted inside the contact's homes, and most simply do not have room for 16 people to visit. Furthermore, most of them, especially the older contacts, do not wish to have a great number of students come, as it makes them nervous and apprehensive, and many specify that we send only three or four students for the interview.

It is therefore both impractical and impossible to obtain a school bus with a driver as is used in official field trips other classes take from time to time. Even if we took the entire staff each time, the frequency of our need would preclude our using the buses, and besides, the buses must be there immediately at the end of school to transport the student body home, ours being an almost totally-bused school. The only alternative to the regular buses is the small 12-passenger mini-bus the school has. It is ideal for our purpose, but it is in almost constant use by the athletic department to transport boys and girls!
teams of all sorts to other schools for athletic events.

It was therefore necessary to find some other way to take the students to and from interviews. We began by using my personal car as a means of transportation, but this has definite limits. I could only seat three in the car, so that if four or five were going, there was an immediate problem. Secondly, if I went on an interview, it left the staff remaining in the room with no sort of supervision or assistance, and when we began getting tapes to transcribe, circulation orders to fill, and so forth, it was difficult for them to make progress without some help, although this would not be the case now. Thirdly, my presence at the interview always gave the students a feeling that they were being watched and monitored by the teacher, although that was not the case, and I wanted to have them out in the community conducting interviews entirely on their own as soon as possible.

The only remaining possibility, then, was to have the students drive themselves in their own cars. About half the staff had driver's licenses and had access to a car if necessary, only one actually having a car of his own. It was, and is, a risky business, for if a student were hurt on the way to an interview, the school would be responsible. There was, however, precedent for student driving similar to this situation. The students on the sales staffs of the school's yearbook were permitted to drive to the businesses from which they were soliciting advertisements, students in the Vocational Agriculture program were often known to drive to various stock shows sponsored by the FFA, and some driving by the athletic teams was permitted as well.

I, therefore, produced a permission form which every student on the staff had to have signed by his parents and returned to me before they could
attend any interviews. The form simply says, "I understand that my son/daughter ___name___ will be involved in some after-school activity for the THISTLE-DOWN project and may be driven to such activity by other students or may be asked to drive himself, if possible." To date, all parents have signed these slips without debate or apparent concern and not one has had any problem or accident in the driving to and from interviews, which is now done entirely on their own.

**Release Forms**

A similar protective device that is necessary for a project such as this is the release form which gives official permission from the contact for the project to use his name, words and photographs in the project's publication. It is similar to the ones used by any sort of commercial company that takes photographs, such as television news and newspapers and then intends to make money by selling those pictures in printed or visual form.

It is necessary to obtain this release of the use of their words and pictures from the contact immediately before the interview and not after, for some contacts we have had have surprised us by saying when we arrived that they would be glad to talk to us and tell whatever we wanted to know, but that we could not record them, or could not take their pictures, or could not print any of it if we did. Their reasons for these demands were varied, some saying they were "too ugly" to have their photo printed or picture taken; some saying they didn't want anybody to read about them as they wanted complete privacy and some of the craftsmen saying that they intended to write a book someday and that if we printed what they showed us, it would ruin their chance to do so.
It is obviously better to know these things before the interview than after, for if the student shoots three or four rolls of film and record an hour's worth of tape and then is told that no one but him can ever see the pictures or hear the recording, it will be a great disappointment, to say the least.

We also include in the text of our form a promise that we "will not use the name, photographs or words of the interviewee for any degrading purpose" which helps to calm the fears of some contacts who are not quite sure, especially when the project is just starting, exactly what it is that the students intend to do with the recordings and photos they are getting. Similarly, once the first issue is printed, we have found it most useful to take a current copy to the interview to present to the contact so that they can see exactly what the final article will look like and what sort of magazine we are producing.

Facilities

We have found that there are some basic criteria that ought to be considered in terms of facilities that are needed to carry out a Foxfire concept project. These are:

(1) Provision for storage and filing. There needs to be someplace, preferably with a lock, in which the cameras, recorders and other equipment can be stored securely. As the project grows, there must be space for file boxes for the various business concerns and an ever-increasing area in which to store and archive tapes, film, negatives, transcripts, and so forth.

(2) A work area with tables for layout work. The writing and even the transcribing can be done on regular student desks if necessary, but
they do not have enough working area to provide adequately for layout. Layout is usually done two pages at a time, plus materials such as transfer letter sheets, so a table or two of some sort is a necessity.

(3) Adequate electrical outlets for the recorders. This may seem minor, but it is not, for many school rooms were constructed with few electrical outlets and if the transcribers cannot plug in the recorders to transcribe and must use the batteries instead, it will cause continual problems during interviews with run-down batteries as well as the expense of continual battery replacement.

(4) Some sort of "offices" or at least a space the students can call their own. This, I believe, is a psychological necessity for a project such as this, for it is hard to say that the students are producing a real magazine for real people, collecting folklore and going into the community and running a real business, but still have no actual physical place to do so but the back of the same room that they have all their other classes in and must share with hundreds of other students who pass in and out all day. If the staff does not have some definite room all their own or at least an area which is defined as "theirs" in which they can hang posters, signs and notices, it is difficult to maintain a feeling of unity and an impression of the reality structure which marks a Foxfire concept project. Most of the projects have found some sort of small room for their office in the school or have in some way partitioned off part of a larger room. The ultimate, of course, is Foxfire itself, who, with the large profits from the sale of their books, have purchased 50
acres near the school in Rabun Gap and are erecting 15 log structures
on their land which will be their offices, archives, photo labs, and a
community resource center, along with one for the home of the advisor,
Eliot Wigginton.

At first, the facilities of THISTLEDOWN did not meet these criteria
and we suffered greatly for it. In the beginning, we were given only the end of
the office of the school's librarian, a space of 8 feet by 9 feet. This space con-
tained one table and some chairs and a wall of open book shelves at the end.
There was no closed storage of any sort, and so all our files and materials were
at the mercy of the many students who wandered in and out of the office during
the day and who felt free to rummage through the THISTLEDOWN materials on
the shelves. Our cameras and other valuable equipment was stored in a small
closet at the other end of the school, a great inconvenience, but at least it could
be locked. There was only one electrical outlet in the area, so the transcribers
often took the recorders to some other vacant room during that or some other
period to do their work. There was not room for the entire staff to meet in the
area, and so when a class meeting was called for, we met in the hall or outside
in good weather. Nothing, of course, could be left out on the table, and there
was no place for any posters, signs or decoration to designate it as the THISTLE-
DOWN area, so few besides us even knew that that was what it was supposed to
be.

It was altogether an intolerable situation and one that needed immediate
change. The school was so crowded, however, that there were no spare rooms,
large or small, that could be given to the project. Finally, and luckily for us,
at the end of the first year, the new middle school which had been under con-
struction adjacent to the high school for some time was completed to house
grades six, seven and eight. Thus the junior high classes which had previously
been in the high school building moved to that building, opening up some rooms
previously filled. The enrollment in grades nine through twelve had increased
greatly in the same time, however, so there was still not a completely vacant
room available for the project. However, the junior high home economics room
was now no longer needed for home economics classes, those having moved to
the middle school, and I immediately requested the use of that room for my
classroom and for the project for the next year.

The principal granted permission as, frankly, no one else wanted the
large room full of cabinets, sinks and stoves. However, with some effort it has
worked well as both a classroom for the regular classes I teach and the offices
for the project. The stoves and refrigerators were removed, leaving over 30
kitchen-type cabinets that were built-in and non-removable. These made perfect
storage facilities for our equipment and supplies once they were locked by slid-
ing bicycle locks over the handles. These are 12 outlets built into the floor for
the sewing machines, and these have provided more than adequate electrical
sources for the transcribers. A set of large cabinets with small drawers for
the home economics girls' sewing materials provided the perfect place for the
archives, each drawer containing one interview and appropriately labeled. There
are several small tables in the room, providing plenty of space for layout work
and for the file boxes and typewriters for the buisness staff. A small set of
partitions used by the home economics classes during sewing units to change
clothes and try on dresses behind provided a division of the room and so THISTLE-
DOWN area of the room is clearly distinct from the rest of the room and has been
decorated with posters, notices, hanging plants, signs and other things that make
it clear that this area is all the domain of THISTLEDOWN and no one elses',
which has increased the spirit of the staff 100%.

The typewriters, one manual and one electric, which are now used by
the staff were obtained in a very unusual way, like the room itself. Typewriters
are a definite need for the project, both for typing correspondence and for typ-
ing the archives themselves. They are expensive, however, and beyond the
budget of most of the projects initially. Fortunately, most schools have typing
classes, and it is often the case that a spare typewriter can be borrowed from
this source or at least used sometime during the day. It is, however, most
convenient to have typewriters in the project area for the use of the business
staff, and ours get daily use for a variety of purposes.

We could not, of course, afford to purchase typewriters, and still can-
not. However, the summer between the first and second year of the project, a
group of thieves broke into the school and stole a truckload of equipment and
supplies, including several typewriters from the offices of the administration.
This occurred early in the summer, and the thieves had not been caught or the
stolen material recovered by the middle of the summer. The school board,
assuming that the stolen items would never reappear, thus authorized the use
of insurance money to purchase new typewriters for the secretaries, as the
work of the offices was piling up. Just two weeks before the beginning of
school, however, the county sheriff discovered the thieves, raided the trailer
in which they were living, and recovered most of the stolen property, including the typewriters of the secretaries, which were returned to the school. They were in bad shape, however, having been stored outside at some time, and were full of mud, twigs and rust. They appeared to be ready for the junk man. However, I asked the principal if I could get an estimate for having them reconditioned, and, he said that if we wanted to have it done and could afford it, we could have them permanently for THISTLEDOWN for the price of the reconditioning. Fortunately, the actual condition of the typewriters turned out to be better than their appearance, and the reconditioning cost only $80, a small price to pay for one Royal manual and one Royal electric typewriter!

Summary

This, then, concludes part two, the THISTLEDOWN project. I have described every major part of the project, dealing both with the equipment necessary and with the more abstract and educational decisions that have been necessary in its creation and development. All of the decisions, problems, solutions and criteria presented are ones that were unique to the establishment of this educational experiment in this particular school and area and may or may not apply to a similar experiment in another school or area. The project is far from complete and will always be so, for it is by nature entirely flexible and subject to change and modification at any time. Indeed, it is really never quite the same from week to week as the students have continual ideas for improvement and change, meet and make new decisions and take new directions. However, this change is part of the excitement and interest of the Foxfire concept, and
stands in direct contrast to the fixed, teacher-controlled environment existing in the usual sort of class bounded wholly by the classroom walls and what happens there. Eliot Wigginton, who originated the Foxfire concept, summed up this great difference between the project I have just described and other school classes by saying in his book *Moments,* that

At the very heart of Foxfire it is the conviction that a student can learn about his community and about humanity only outside the classroom. In the classroom, he can, with the help of his teachers and peers, examine, analyze, even celebrate what he's discovered, and compare those findings with these; but he must have the world outside the classroom as the heart and soul of what he learns.

(from *Exchange,* IDEAS, Inc., Summer, 1975.)
PART THREE: AN EVALUATION OF THE THISTLEDOWN PROJECT AT WATKINS MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL AS A FOXFIRE LEARNING CONCEPT PROJECT.

Having analyzed and defined the Foxfire Learning Concept in Part One and presented a thorough description of my experimental project, Thistledown, based on that Concept in Part Two, it is now my intention to evaluate the Thistledown project in terms of its success in meeting the goals and criteria for a Foxfire Learning Concept Project.

To do so, I have taken the summary list of identifiable characteristics of Foxfire Learning Concept projects I devised, found on page 49 of this paper, and modified it to produce a list of evaluative criteria, combining some of the original 16 parts of that list into eight definite considerations. The eight criteria, therefore, upon which I will evaluate Thistledown will be as follows:

1. It is based within the traditional system and serves as an adjunct to it; does it work through the traditional system, and is it made accessible to all students within this public school system?

2. Is it involved wholly with relevance and reality for the student, and does it make schoolwork applicable to real life?

3. Within the project, is the process in which the students are involved made more important than the product(s) which they produce?

4. Was the project easily adapted to the existing area and culture?

5. Did the project create bridges between the generations in the area; did it
create bridges between the school and the community, and did the area's community accept the project well?

6. Did the project provide the students involved with marketable skills, the opportunity to produce a professionally-published, copyrighted magazine, the opportunity to run a real business and a wide variety of communication skills, all within a reality context?

7. Did the project utilize oral history and folklore as a tool and did it emphasize the culture and heritage of the students involved?

8. Is the project directed to the students' welfare instead of traditional goals such as tests, grades, etc.; did it provide the students with humanistic as well as skill development, and did it give the students opportunity to practice significant decision-making affecting both themselves and others?

It is obvious from an examination of this list of evaluative criteria that a variety of differing typed of "proof" will need to be offered from point to point. Some of the criteria are quite objective and statistical in nature, while others are more subjective and theoretical. I will, therefore, present evaluations in each area that seem to be appropriate to it, consisting of materials gathered and organized during the course of the project, comments and evaluations by the students who were involved themselves in the project, observations and analyses of my own as founder/advisor/teacher of the project, and a collection of letters, articles and other works concerning the project by those in the surrounding communities and even outside it. Following the evaluation of Thistledown will be a section of summary and recommendations concerning the Foxfire Learning Concept and projects based upon it.
EVALUATIONS:

Point 1: Is it based within the traditional system and serve as an adjunct to it; does it work through the traditional system, and is it made accessible to all students within this public school system?

Point 1 Evaluation:

The Thistledown project was proposed to the principal of Watkins Memorial High School as an addition to the English elective curriculum offerings of the school by myself in my co-capacities as proposed director-teacher of the project and chairman of the Department of English of the high school. Following consideration by the principal, it was approved and then went to the school district's superintendent for consideration, and ultimate approval.

Consequently, beginning in the school year 1974-75, Thistledown became a part of the course offerings of the high school's English department, with myself having one period per school day in which to meet and work with the students who elected the project. At Watkins Memorial, all students must take ninth-grade English as a required subject in a year-long course. Having passed ninth-grade English, the students then begin in grade ten to chose from a list of course offerings both in English, all but two of which are one semester in length and one-half credit, the two exceptions being journalism and Thistledown, both of which are year-long and one credit. There are no required courses from grade ten through twelve in the English curriculum, but each student must, during that time, elect, take and pass three credits of English in order to graduate. He may take more than the three credits if he wishes by electing more than one English course in some semesters. All of the elective
courses are ungraded, that is, any student regardless of grade level, may choose any course, so that the classes themselves are a mixture of students from grades ten, eleven and twelve. The courses offered are ones decided upon based on student demand, determined by periodic surveys, perceptions of students' needs by the administration and the department faculty, available resources and talents, an attempt to provide for a wide range of student ability and interest levels, the school's budget, and, of course, the demands of an anonymous computer that constructs the schedule on endless print-out sheets that sometimes say it is "impossible" to offer a particular class. Overall, the English Department curriculum, like the curriculum in the other subject areas of the school, is slightly modified but still basically quite traditional in its approach. All of the classes within the English course offerings, with the exception of Thistledown, are quite traditional in presentation and goals, with lectures, notes, tests and semester exams the usual content, even in those that are non-literature oriented, such as journalism and mass media.

It is within, and adjunctive to, then, this very traditional school and its curriculum that the Thistledown began and continues to operate. It is available to any student who wishes to elect it in grades ten, eleven and twelve, is year-long and gives the student one credit in English for the year's work. Students who elect Thistledown at the tenth or eleventh grade levels may repeat the course the following year so that there is continuity from one year to the next, though the scheduling computer cannot deal with this and so the second or third year the student is listed on the print-out as taking "Directed Study: Thistledown," and then, "Directed Study: Thistledown II." The only limits
placed upon the accessibility to students are those of the project's own resources and the demands of the traditional schedule, i.e., because of the limited equipment and room of the project, fifteen to twenty is the maximum number that can elect Thistledown each year, and because the administration stipulates that the project always be scheduled the last (7th.) period of the school day so that students do not miss other classes when leaving for interviews, any student who wishes to be in the school marching band or other last-period classes cannot also schedule Thistledown.

Summary, Point 1 Evaluation:

It is apparent, then, that the Thistledown project has been successfully integrated into the traditional educational system at Watkins Memorial High School, operating wholly within it and yet adjunctive to it, and subject to the demands and restrictions placed upon all subjects within such systems. There has been little problem or conflict of existing within the traditional system, for though the "class" itself is different from the others the students may elect in the English Department—or any other department—its scheduling, accessibility and systematic operation within the school's curriculum has been attained at no sacrifice to the experiential goals or to the Foxfire Learning Concept which it embodies within the school.

Point 2: Is it involved wholly with relevance and reality for the student, and does it make schoolwork applicable to real life?

Point 2 Evaluation:

There are a great number of items that might be used to indicate the immediate and close connection with reality and the outside world that the
Thistledown project has attained, all of which I believe can be seen to be evidence that is unique to a Foxfire Concept project as compared to any other class existing within a traditional educational setting, and so, in this case, unique to Thistledown within the setting of Watkins High School. Among these indicators are the letters received either by the project or by members of the staff of the project, newspaper articles that have appeared concerning the project, the trips and interviews undertaken outside the school by all of the students involved, the subscription and retail sales of the project's product—the magazine, and comments from the students themselves as they perceived the difference(s) between their other classes and their work in Thistledown.

First, the letters from the outside world reaching in to the school and to the students did, indeed, arrive, as discussed in detail in part one of this paper. The letters, in fact, began to arrive at the school almost immediately upon the announcement that such a project would be undertaken, and so there was a backlog of them to be opened, read and answered when the first staff of students reported on the first day, much to their amazement and delight, especially when they saw that they were addressed to "Thistledown" and not to the school, the administration, to me or to anyone but them, and that they were unopened, awaiting their reading and subsequent decisions, replies and actions. From the very beginning, then, and continuing on nearly a daily basis in increasing numbers to the present, these letters, "from real people about real things and with real money in them," as one student put it, established an obvious and inescapable proof that the project was tied closely to the outside world and would deal with it continually and often. As time passed and actual issues of the magazine were forthcoming, the letters increased in number, asking for
subscriptions, seeking information, making comments and offering suggestions and criticism, tendering donations ranging from 50¢ to $175.00, and sometimes, complaining. The letters averaged eight to ten a week, and each was made the responsibility of a staff member to read and deal with appropriately, signing their name to the reply. At least once a week, a reply that was not found satisfactory or offered additional information to clear up a question or problem, resulted in a return letter addressed personally to the student that had dealt with the problem, and this direct personalization of the correspondence increased even more the relevance to the outside world for the students. With the cooperation of the principal, a mailbox in the school office placed with the mailboxes for the teachers and administration and labeled "Thistledown" was set up, and one of the staff went there daily to pick up the mail, bring it to the room and distribute it. This small action again emphasized the fact that the mail was truly theirs and not mine or the school's, as it might have appeared if the Thistledown mail had been placed in my mailbox.

While most of the mail initially was from the immediate area, and in the main continues so today, it was not long after the first issue appeared that the students began receiving letters from places as diverse as New York, Texas and Florida, as well as Ohio cities many miles from Pataskala, which both amazed and excited the staff. Usually it was a case of someone nearby in the community sending a copy to a relative who lived far away or of a visitor to the area buying a copy while here and then writing for a subscription upon returning home. In many cases, however, it was a mystery how they had "heard of us" so far away and this correspondence on a national scale was, and is, endlessly stimulating to the students as evidence of the relevance and important of their
efforts. It was not long before the students decided, in fact, that this ought in 
some way be documented, and so a student who worked at a gas station acquired 
a large U.S. map, another brought pins and red thread, and a permanent dis-
play was set up showing graphically all the states and cities from which we have 
received mail by sticking a pin in it and running a thread from it back to the 
large pin impaled in Pataskala--certainly a most symbolic representation of 
their ties to the outside world. The map today has the appearance of a giant 
red spider web and is invariably pointed out with pride by the students to any 
visitor to the Thistledown room.

I can hardly emphasize enough, then, the immediate importance of 
these letters to the students for they provide such obvious evidence of a major 
difference between a project like Thistledown and any other class the student 
has ever been in that they are invaluable.

The subject of the majority of the letters, of course, is subscription 
orders for the various issues of the magazine itself, and in this product lies 
further evidence of relevance. The first issue of Thistledown was 500 copies 
and the last issue, the fifth, was 1,000 copies. All of these, except for the 
most recent issue, are now completely sold out, at a subscription rate of $2.00 
per copy plus 25¢ postage, or just $2.00 at retail stores that sell for us. The 
first issue has, in fact, become a collector's item, with people writing and 
offering as much as $10.00 for a copy if we can "dig one up" for them. In all, 
since the beginning of the project, the students have thus sold 3,300 copies of 
the magazine to the "outside world" and, of course, 100% of the content of these 
issues was gathered from and directly concerned the world beyond the classroom. 
At this time, eight libraries have standing orders for copies of every issue, thus
increasing greatly the actual readership of the magazine, as well as the price of
the students, who have confessed to going to and browsing in a library just to
see their magazine, usually with an article in it with their name on it, displayed
on the shelf with the others. Because of its name, incidentally, Thistledown
usually falls alphabetically just before Time and is so displayed next to it on the
periodical shelves, a fact which never fails to impress the students and which they,
themselves, point out to others as often as possible. Attentend with these sales,
of course, been a continual influx of money, usually in checks but often in cash,
all of which is handled, counted, recorded and deposited in a special school
account by the students. This money, like the letters, is again apparent proof
to the student, even to those initially most skeptical, that what they are doing
is real and holds real value to those outside the school, for a student who re-
ceives an envelope in the mail addressed to him containing a check or hard cash
and offering to pay for a look at what he is doing in school can hardly deny the
relevance of his efforts.

In a similar way, the newspaper articles that have appeared about the
project have furnished additional contact with the outside world for the students
involved. Most articles have been preceded with interviews by reporters and
photographers who come to the school and most have then appeared in the newspa-
papers that the students and their families receive in their homes: the Columbus
Dispatch, the Newark Advocate, and the Pataskala Standard, a weekly. These
articles appear often, at least one a semester, and so the students are again
reinforced in their connections with the outside world by often going home and
reading about themselves, their project and what they say about it in the paper
in their living room. Occasionally it has also happened that other papers have
printed some item about Thistledown, the ultimate example, in the view of the
students, occurring when the New York Times called one day and asked permission
to quote from an issue of Thistledown for an article to appear in the Times about
the Foxfire projects around the country. The student who took the call still talks
about how he "talked to a guy at the Times in New York" and the subsequent arti-
cle was Xeroxed ad infinitum and is invariably handed to all visitors and sent to
anyone requesting information about the project.

Besides these many given examples of the project's connections with the
outside world, there is, of course, the most obvious and convincing evidence of
all: the interviews and gathering of information conducted by the students in the
process of ultimately producing the finished product that represents the students'
efforts to the world. All of these interviews were conducted by the students out-
side the school, either at the contact's home or place of business, depending
on the nature of the contact and the subject of the article. All involved, there-
fore, travel through the area and surrounding communities and all involved meet-
ing and talking at length to older people of every age from 30 to 103 with the
widest possible range of lifestyles, opinions, backgrounds, skills and ideas.

The Thistledown students have, to this point, conducted a total of 122
interviews outside the school, sometimes going back to see a particular con-
tact several times before they had the information they felt was needed for a
good article concerning that contact and/or his skill or craft. From these
interviews has thus come some 250 hours of taped oral history, all of which
has been transcribed and archived, and about 4,500 photographs, all of which
have been processed and the negatives filed and stored with the tapes and trans-
scriptions. Not all of these interviews resulted in a final article appearing in
the magazine, however. In some cases, the contacts were talkative but not really informative; in a few instances, the contact decided after the interview that they did not want to appear in print or photo and stipulated that we only use their material inside the project, and in some cases, the contact's "craft" turned out to be what the students call "phoney kit craft," meaning that there was no real history, culture or skill behind what they were doing but rather just a hobby coming from cheap kits to make things picked up at discount stores and hobby shops. Still, this is a rather large and significant body of work the students have done, and the important thing, of course, is that they were outside, real-world experiences for them.

During the course of the year, each member of the staff is asked to do at least one interview per semester for which he is entirely responsible, from making the initial arrangements to writing and laying out the final article. In addition, he is asked to attend a least one other interview per semester in the position as photographer, reporter or simply as an observer. All of the students meet these requirements and more, most going on five or six interviews each semester. At least once each semester, as well, the entire staff will go to see a contact that has been interviewed in the past and whom I know to be one that everyone would benefit by talking to, similar to Foxfire's Aunt Arie. All in all, then, the students spend a great deal of time outside the school traveling and conducting interviews, meeting and getting to know a wide variety of people, and this is the real classroom beyond the classroom walls, for it is where the real learning and experiential process flow takes form. The work done then in the classroom, besides conducting the business, is entirely concerned with those interviews, transcribing the tapes, choosing the photos,
and sometimes deciding that either tapes, photos or both are not adequate and need to be done again in another visit, writing the articles and ultimately doing the layouts that will appear in the magazine. There is no point, in other words, where the students revert to traditional pursuits or become not involved with the outside world, for if they are not working on their own interview/article, they are photographing or reporting or observing on someone else's interview or working with circulation, distribution or some other aspect of the business end of the project, as in dealing with the previously-described letters. As a result, the students' "schoolwork" is not really schoolwork at all, at least not in the traditional sense, for it wholly applicable to real life at all points, and meets the outside world continually, as has been described.

Many of the students involved in the Thistledown project have expressed their perceptions of their experience as staff members, some in written form that provide useful insight for evaluation. The students' grades for the course--grades were required by the administration as a condition of the project being placed into the elective course offerings--are determined wholly by the students in a self-evaluation form they fill out at the end of each semester. There are not tests during the year and the grades are really a formality, for everyone understands that their performance or non-performance will be obvious to everyone: if the business is completed, the interviews done, the articles written, the subscriptions filled, etc., all will be well, but if they are not, it will be just as apparent in the form of letters and calls of complaint, incomplete articles and a poorly-done magazine. I have never told them this, but the reality of what they are doing explains it to them immediately and they are quickly perceiving that what they do or do not do makes a great difference and so there is no need
for artificial "tests" to determine what they have learned. A student who lags in his work invariably affects the work of others in some way and so peer pressure also serves to keep things going far more effectively than the traditional pressures of tests, grades and the teacher in other classes.

The students, having completed the self-evaluation sheets and having determined their own grades for each semester, were asked by me in a final question on the sheets simply "Anything else to say? Comments, criticisms, suggestions?" Understanding that whatever they said would in no way affect their grade--having determined that themselves--they were usually very free in answering this query and the written responses are most useful for the purposes of this section. Because of the conditions described, I believe them to be honest answers and ones that accurately reflect the feelings and perceptions of the students, especially since they are in written form ideas that I heard expressed verbally, either to me, to other teachers, to reporters or as conveyed to me by the parents of the students. Some of these comments will therefore be offered in this and other sections of this evaluation as forthright and usable evaluatory evidence from those to whom the Foxfire Concept is the most important.

Student Jud Mauger:

I think Thistledown is good because it makes you ready to cope with things out of high school life. This is something for real that we're doing, it isn't like TeePee Talk (the school newspaper) or anything which is just seen by the kids. Reap people will be reading and buying our magazine and we have to do our best for them.

Student Susan McCabe:

This has been a good experience. For the first time in school,
I feel like I have made a few waves! I've done something, and what I've done has worked and is real, which is something that few educational experiences can claim.

Student Sharon Mead:

Thistledown is making our heads work. We aren't just filing in, taking notes, being tested and filing out, like other classes. We are in here to put together something that is ours and that the people out there will like. We are clearly making our own decisions and using our own judgments.

Student Julie Biefuss:

It is such a satisfaction to know that finally something I write in school will be seen out there in the real world by real people, especially those that I have interviewed and come to know and respect.

Summary, Point 2 Evaluation:

I think that it is apparent from the various aspects of the project's operation that I have presented and from the sampling of the comments of the students involved that Thistledown in large measure satisfies this point of the characteristics of the Foxfire Learning Concept. It is involved with relevance and the outside world and is meaningful in its relevance to the students involved, whether they are, in fact, working in the classroom or sitting on the front porch of an 82-year-old farmer named Elba Montgomery, taping his reminiscences of farming in the early part of this century. It is, of course, one the essential key points of the experiential ideal, for without continual exposure to experience, relevance, the real world and the "demanding reality contexts" of the process flow, the Foxfire Concept, and so Thistledown, would be just another class in the traditional sense.

Point 3: Within the project, is the process in which the students are involved
made more important than the product(s) which they produce?

Point 3, Evaluation:

Of the eight points of evaluation, this one is most difficult to examine and certainly most difficult to document. The key words when considering this point must be "Within the project..." for it only apparent in that context whether the process has, indeed, been stressed as the real reason for the students' being there, as opposed to the product which they produced: the Thistledown magazine, its business and its publication. Outside of the project, to that real world to which the project is so strongly connected, the product is, without doubt, the apparent reason for the project's existence. It is what the people see as the concrete result of the students' efforts and it is what they buy or subscribe to. People often marvel when they see the magazine that "kids could really do such a thing," but the fact that they did do it is of more obvious and immediate importance than what has happened to them in the process of doing it; as long as the magazine is forthcoming twice each year, it is enough evidence that the students must be learning something at the school.

There is, furthermore, the simple economic necessity of producing a marketable product with some regularity in order to bring in sufficient funds to continue: buy film, tapes, supplies, gas for the trips, process the photos, stamps and so forth. Donations help with this, and some projects have been fortunate enough to receive large grants to defray expenses, thus helping to de-emphasize the pressure to "publish or perish," or have become such large successes that they have thus built up a subscription list that is so great that the sale of the magazine itself is wholly sufficient to cover their costs.
intertwined with this economic necessity, however, is the simple fact that the end product is needed, and indeed is an identifying characteristic of, the Foxfire Concept, itself. It would, of course, be possible to eliminate the end product entirely, converting the project into one involving only with the gathering and not the publishing of the oral history and culture of a given area. In doing so, however, the entire spectrum of skills involved in the writing, laying out and publishing of the magazine would be lost, as well as the business end with its letters, correspondence, circulation and all the rest. It would decrease the scope and content of the project to such an extent that it would no longer be a Foxfire Concept project and though it might function experientially in other ways, it would be a project with a different set of goals, characteristics and achievements and would lie outside the considerations of this paper. Furthermore, the students, I think, need that end product as a summary, a tangible result, of what they have done. They have spent all their school life seeing their writing and other work go nowhere, except to other students, to the teacher or just filed away. The fact that what they are doing is real and is going to go outside the school and be published in an enduring and widely circulated magazine is powerful stimulant to their work, as indicated in some of the comments in Point 2 on relevance.

We, therefore, must have an end product, for all these reasons, and that product is good and desireable and as much a part of a Foxfire Concept project as the interviews themselves. Given that condition, then, what must be stiven for is an emphasis upon the processes that go into the end production and maintenance of the product that is at least equal to the product itself. This emphasis, however, is one that is almost entirely internal and the concern
primarily the advisor-teacher and the students themselves.

Perhaps the clearest way, then, to examine the process that occurred during the production of the end product is to look again at the most diagrammatic statement of the experiential process, the Process Flow that was outlined in detail in Part One. Briefly, again, it is a flow in which students are: (1) placed in a demanding reality context, (2) which necessitates mastery of new and blended skills, (3) followed immediately by responsible challenging action, (4) leading to opportunity for critical analysis and reflection, and (5) ultimately providing opportunity to synthesize the meaning of the experience in context of other learnings and life experience.

If the Thistledown students' experiences are now examined in the light of this process flow, it should be apparent whether the process was indeed emphasized, for if the students did, indeed, actively participate on a regular basis in such a unique experiential flow, then surely the process has received at least as much emphasis internally in the project as did the product, the emphasis on which is self-apparent by its very existance.

As has been pointed out, the interviews are the primary business in which the students meet reality, as well as the many other ways inherent in the project, such as the letters, newspapers and others I have presented. Within the interviews, then, I think that we can see that the Thistledown students did, indeed, regularly participate in the process flow, as well as in their work in the business and administrative end of the project. All students, as explained, participated in a least two interviews per semester, though all actually went on at least four in the same time. Utilizing the words of the process flow, these
interviews were regular and active situations in which Thistledown students were:

1. Placed into demanding reality contexts. They were outside the school, usually at the people's homes, and were entirely responsible for what occurred there, i.e., they were not being guided or led by a teacher as in a field trip; in fact, in many cases, there was no teacher present at all. They were impelled to act by the situation, for in being given complete responsibility for it, there was no one to act for them; they were, in effect, in charge. This being the case, they had a variety of decisions to make, all of which affected immediately what happened to them and to the others with them, and all of which dealt of necessity with the demanding reality before them. The consequences of their decisions each time were immediately apparent and so the feedback was continuous.

2. In each case, at the interviews, the ability to cope with and work responsibly in the demanding reality situation necessitated the mastery of new and applied skills, whether as interviewer, recorder, photographer, reporter or observer, and each student, at least once, participated in every role at an interview. Furthermore, the dealing with the results of the interviews in the transcribing, writing and layout of the articles back at school demands the application of more new skills, as does the dealing with the business end of a project. For a complete list of these skills, see Point 6.

3. Having met a variety of demanding reality contexts in the interviews and elsewhere, and applied new skills to them, the Thistledown students had to follow immediately with responsible, challenging action at those points in order to manage and maturely deal with those contexts, for they were
indeed responsible in all respects for the success or failure of their efforts. Since each interview was conducted as a team, the decisions and actions of the students affected the others, and the consequences were immediately experienced, as was also the case when dealing with the business side of the project, the others in this case being the entire staff and the project itself. The actions were challenging, real and meaningful because they were ones that dealt with immediate reality at the contact's homes and with real, i.e., "non-school" people who were assuming and expecting responsible decisions and actions.

4. These actions and decisions were coupled then with opportunity for critical analysis and reflection, usually, but not always, taking place once the interview was completed and the team had returned to the school. After each interview, the leader (interviewer) reported to the rest of the staff on how it went and told why he thought it did or did not go well and, if not, what he and the others should do, not do and watch out for in future interviews. I also talked with each member of a team after an interview, emphasizing the connection of theory with practice, that is, finding out if the skills and techniques learned prior to the interview were found to be adequate and applicable and, if not, why not and what we should do about it.

5. Lastly, and this step is, of course, most difficult to document, it was at least hoped that these encounters with the first four steps of the process flow on a regular and, in most cases, quite successful basis, would lead to opportunity for the students to synthesize the meanings of his experiences in context of other learnings and ultimately, perhaps, as Gager puts it, "to
reorganize the meaning and direction of the learner's life experience."

Whether this final step did indeed occur or not is problematical at best and can only be judged by indirect observation and interpolation of the students' activities. I did, indeed, for example, see several students grow increasingly confident and open during the course of their participation, several students whose grades in other courses improved dramatically after becoming involved in Thistledown, and several students who, having previously had few goals, had decided upon and applied to enter colleges or technical institutes in skills related to the project, such as photography, journalism and business administration. Whether these changes occurred because of their Thistledown involvement is difficult to argue, except in a few cases (see Point 8), and it would be easy to become caught in the post hoc fallacy here of assuming effect from the Thistledown cause. I can, however, point at least to the comments of students such as those in Point 2 and following in Point 8 which indicate that many of the students perceived their involvement in the project as something applicable to other areas and to their future actions and "life experience."

Summary, Point 3 Evaluation

I believe it is apparent, then, that a Foxfire Concept project such as Thistledown both must have and needs a final product, such as the magazine and that it is quite possible, with all the inevitable emphasis thus placed upon this product, to still emphasize the process through the experiential process flow in a way that satisfies both the characteristics of the Foxfire Concept and
the needs of the students. I believe this was done in the Thistledown project, as explained, and that it will continue to be so, for it is obvious that the very existence of the product necessitates the student first being involved experientially in the flow in order to achieve the product as an end result.

Point 4: Was the project easily adapted to the existing area and culture?

Point 4 Evaluation:

We found no difficulty in adapting the Concept to the particular area and culture of Pataskala and central Ohio in general, and I believe, an examination of the Thistledown magazines as evidence themselves of this will indicate that there were ample resources from which to draw our interviews and produce a publication representative of the culture in the area. There were, as we began, doubts expressed by others of those who are aware of Foxfire and the projects within the community and the school, for, using Foxfire itself as the model, they did not understand the adaptability of the Concept and did not see how we would ever be able to find "Foxfire-type" people to talk to, this area being quite removed from the deep hills and mountain people of Appalachia. Of great help in perceiving what might be done in adapting the Concept to other areas was the receiving of magazines from many of the other Foxfire projects throughout the country, even farther removed from Appalachia, which I wrote for as the project was being planned. As the students looked over these products, they began to perceive the obvious: it was not necessary to have an 80-year-old hill man as an interview in order to have a good Foxfire article. Instead, it was a matter of identifying what was culturally unique and interesting about the area of Ohio
in which we live and then finding those people to talk to. In the beginning, these often turned out to be the grandparents of the students themselves or well-known local old-timers, such as the Grace Atkinson of our first issue, or local crafts- men that the students had heard of or who were suggested to them by their par- ents. In every interview, then, the contact invariably would suggest someone else we "ought to talk to," and once the community saw what we were up to by whom we were interviewing, unsolicited suggestions began arriving by mail, phone and personal contact at an amazing rate, some people sending us lists of ten or fifteen prospects they thought worthy of talking to, all of whom, in turn would usually suggest someone else, and so on. At the present, then, without extensive research, we have obtained a continually growing file box of potential contacts throughout the area, numbering several hundred, and the supply seems nearly inexhaustable—this, in an area not widely known for its distinct old cul- ture such as is found in Appalachia, the Ozarks, or the Indian reservations!

Summary, Point 4 Evaluation:

I believe the characteristic of the adaptability of the Foxfire Concept to any area of culture was well demonstrated by the Thistledown project, as it has by other projects explained earlier in Part One, such as those in the inner cities of New York and Washington, D.C., and in Hawaii, New England, the West and others. In all cases, it has been as we at Thistledown found it: Once a beginning is made, and the exciting, interesting and uniqueness of the culture and area identified, the possibilities are self-multiplying and nearly endless in variety and fascination. It is impossible to say what or who will
appear in future issues of *Thistledown*, for though the contact file box holds many possibilities, there is the continual discovery that occurs in the project that leads the students to always unexpected people and places, and this, of course, is part of the excitement and uniqueness of the Foxfire Concept.

Point 5: Did the project create bridges between the generations in the area; did it create bridges between the school and the community, and did the area's community accept the project well?

Point 5 Evaluation:

For convenience and clarity, I shall break this point into its related but component parts and examine each separately:

A. Generational bridges.

There are many indications stemming from the project and the students involved in it that there were indeed bridges, and solid ones, established between the older generation and the younger one of the students. The students, in general, invariably held the "typical" view of the older generations, beginning with that of their parents and working on up. The students entering the *Thistledown* project were, and are, in other words, not unusual in their attitudes toward older generations, which ranged from antagonism to distrust to simple apathy. The reasons for these attitudes have been explained, debated and philosophised upon by a host of writers in all fields and will not be expounded upon here further beyond the reasons indicated in Part One, Some General Bases for the Foxfire Concept (q.v.). The important thing is that the attitudes do exist and whether the involvement of these students in the *Thistledown* project in any way altered those attitudes, as it has been shown to do in other projects such as
Foxfire, itself. That they initially held these attitudes was apparent to even superficial observation by the comments of the students, discussions of their parents, teachers and "anyone over 30," the opposition to adult ideals, causes or laws, their obvious immersion in the "youth culture" and the age isolation resulting from that immersion, their apathy toward history, heritage and folklore ("Who cares about that stuff?!") and their initial reluctance to become involved with adult figures, ("Couldn't we interview a rock group?" said one student.

The bridges that were established that altered these attitudes for some of the Thistledown students were, in every case, built by the same means—the interviews. As described previously, each student participated in many interviews during the school year, serving in various capacities and responsibilities, and there were few of these interviews which did not alter in some way the perceptions of older people by the students; there were few interviews which reinforced their previously held attitudes. These changes in the attitudes were evident in the comments of the students who reported on the interviews to the others after returning, them comments to me, the enthusiasm and respect with which they would subsequently work on the contact's article and in other situations which occurred regarding the contacts' articles.

One of our contacts, for example, was Grace Atkinson, a charming and gracious lady nearing 90 years who lived not far from the school and who had lived there all her life. The initial interviewing team was so impressed by her, they urged me to take everyone to see her. Grace was happy to comply, and so the entire staff trudged into her house a week later, and she charmed them all,
topping it off by serving them cookies and milk and kissing them all goodbye.

The effect was remarkable: they talked and talked about her, how wise she seemed, how friendly, how charming. She was the subject of two articles in two issues, but many more visits, for the students began going to see her entirely on their own, "just to talk" and still do so today. Having found her birthdate as part of the articles, the staff made up a large birthday card, signed by all of them, and presented it to her along with a cake one of the girls had baked (her first try). Recently, Grace was hospitalized, and a delegation went to visit her, on class time. Perhaps all this has occurred because Grace is a remarkable person, and in many ways she is, but I believe it is more that it was simply the first time for the students that they had really talked to and gotten to know anyone of that age, and were amazed to discover how interesting, warm and "young" they really are. At any rate, Grace has obviously changed the attitudes of many of the staff and the bridge here is very solid. A rather typical student comment about Grace Atkinson is as follows:

Student Sarah Bradbury:

I thought Grace Atkinson was fantastic. I think I could sit and listen to her all day. Many older people seem to sit around and complain about how hard their life was, but Grace talked as if every day was the best of her life.

Student Jay Mauger:

Grace has lived through so much and has experienced a lifestyle that will never be here again. But what makes her so interesting is that she can tell us about all those things. This is not just historical - it's more than that--it makes you realize what an intelligent and tough person she must have been to get through it all and makes you see older people in general in a whole different light. For the first time, I really respect them for what they did.
There are others besides Grace, of course, to bring as evidence of attitude change. Another such person was "Doc" Smart. Doc was interviewed by an entirely different group of students and his effect on them has been equally profound. He is an old-time veterinarian by trade, although he confessed to having been everything from a preacher to a horse trader in his time, and he is black, one of the few black families that has lived in the area for a length of time. The bridges established here, were racial as well as generational, for it was the case with all the students who interviewed him that it was the first time any of them had really sat down and talked, especially in their own home, to either a very old person or to a black person. After the interview, the initial effect was similar to that of Grace: expressed admiration, interest, and downright amazement that someone both old and black could be so intelligent, interesting and deserving of respect. These are bigoted views, certainly, even racist, but in the rural area of Pataskala, quite common and acceptable among the community. What is important, however, is that for these students, they were beginning to change dramatically, and I'm sure it would have been interesting to hear the exchange in the students' houses that accompanied their descriptions of the interviews and Doc to their parents. The interviews were conducted in March and just as the article was nearing completion in late April, Doc entered the hospital, seriously ill, with doubts about his ability to recover. The students were concerned about his illness and made up a card to send to him. From his bed, Doc sent word that he would like to see the photographs taken at the interview, for remarkable enough, there existed only one photo of him, taken years before. The students quickly made a duplicate sets of prints and
one took them to him in the hospital, an experience the student still cannot
mention today without visable emotion and tears, for he declared they were
wonderful pictures (she had taken them) and that he could die happy having
seen them. Within two weeks after this, he passed away. The effect upon the
students was enormous: most attended his funeral—the only whites there, and
decided to run the finished article anyway, with all the photos bordered in black.
Shortly afterwards, the value of what they had done was reinforced as a member
of Doc's family contacted us, saying that since ours were the only photos taken
of him in recent years, they would all like some, and so some 12 sets of the
photos were made up and sent to Doc's large, but far-flung family. In addition,
the tapes they had made at the interviews—the only recording it turned out ever
made of Doc's voice—were dubbed and sent to the family for which they wrote
to the staff an open letter of thanks that is kept permanently on the bulletin
board in the room. The effect of the entire experience was great, it is obvious,
with students who previously were at the least, apathetic and at the worst antag-
onistic toward both old people and blacks becoming sympathetic and interested.

Other evidence of the students' changes of attitudes are more general
in nature. There was, for most of them, the expressed apathy toward history
and "anything old," but it was frequently the case after visiting older people
whose house abounded in antiques and/or handcrafted articles from the past and
having them explained to them, that students would express interest and admir-
ation for these items. Some, in fact, began visiting antique stores and became
interested in crafts of various kinds, and though this is not really a "generational"
bridge between people, it was symptomatic of the attitude change they under-
grew. One girl, for example, who had not asked for anything but albums of
rock music for Christmas for two years—she had quite a collection—asked for a small hand loom instead after interviewing an old-time weaver, and began producing fine woven items on it in her spare time while the records gathered dust. The parents, in this case, were so astounded by the change they called the school to find out what was going on. I explained, and they subsequently sent us a large donation in gratitude.

In addition to these few examples, there were, of course, many more interviews and many more students who came away with an obvious shift in attitude after talking to and spending some time with older people. Additionally, we received many letters from older people in the community praising the magazine and the students who produced it and these, too, had effect, for it was the first time most of them had received any genuine praise and recognition from the generation they had tried so hard to ignore.

B. Community bridges, and community acceptance.

The response by the community to the project was overwhelmingly favorable in all respects, and these is ample evidence of this, as well for the many bridges into the community the project created. Part of this school-community relationship has already been documented in the section on relevance, for certainly two of the most obvious bridges that were created were those produced by the interviews themselves outside the school and, conversely, those produced by the letters that came in to the school from the community.

I would point, again, for example, to the experiences with Grace Atkinson and Doc Smart, as well as many others, as evidence in this case as well for the very solid way in which the project reached out and touched the community
and its members.

There were also the many newspaper articles that appeared concerning the project in local papers, especially the one most local to the area, the weekly Pataskala Standard. These articles were always most favorable and, if the position of the local paper can be seen as reflection of the feelings of the community at large, were a mirror therefore of the project's acceptance in the area. Additionally, there is, of course, the simple statistical matter of the sales of the magazine, itself, given previously, which in its continually rising numbers and the fact that every issue is now "sold out," is solid evidence of the warm acceptance of the project as well. In connection with this, I would add that a number of people have come directly to the school office seeking to buy the magazine, although it is on sale in various places in the community and by subscription, and we began keeping a few dozen available in the office for that purpose. What is significant here is that many of those who came in to purchase the magazine confessed that it was the first time they had ever been inside the school, football and basketball games, art festivals and open houses notwithstanding, but that they felt they wanted to come now because the school was "doing something for the town for a change, instead of the other way around," a comment which not only further indicates the project's impact on the community, but also served to increase the principal's esteem for the project as an effective—from his standpoint—public relations vehicle. One man, for example, appeared in the office, dressed in dirty farmer's clothing, bought ten copies of the issue current at the time, wrote out a check for $125 as a donation, shook the principal's hand and said "God bless you," all of which so impressed him that he reported it to the County Superintendent, who subsequently sent the staff a warm
letter of praise for the project.

Summary, Point 5 Evaluation:

From the evidence given, then, I think it is apparent that the Thistle-
down project did, indeed, create many solid bridges between both the older and
younger generations and between the school and the community, and that the
project was accepted very favorably by the community as a whole. There are,
of course, exceptions: students who remained unshaken in their apathy toward
older people, at least on the surface, and those in the community who thought
the students ought to be in class diagramming sentences instead of roaming
around the town with a tape recorder and camera, but these exceptions were by
far in the minority. Overall, I think the effect on the community and the support
it has received is genuine and lasting and is ample evidence of the positive re-
results obtained when the principles of the Foxfire Concept are utilized in a pro-
ject such as Thistledown.

Point 6: Did the project provide the students with marketable skills, the

opportunity to produce and professionally-published, copyrighted

magazine, the opportunity to run a real business and a wide variety

of communication skills, all with a reality context?

Point 6 Evaluation:

The evaluation of two of the points in this area are quite self-explana-
tory: the opportunity to produce a professionally-published, copyrighted magazine
and the opportunity to run a real business. In both cases, it is obvious that
such was the case, by the very existence of the issues of the magazine Thistle-
down itself, and the descriptions of its production and its business in previous points and earlier portions of this paper. It should be emphasized, however again, that the magazine and its business were wholly the work of the students involved. There was no outside interference or additions in their efforts, from the interviews to the finished and laid-out articles and in the handling of the circulation, distribution, correspondence and money. My role was primarily that of advisor-counselor-assistant; not as teacher or the "authority," and so everything seen in the magazines--the photos, the copy, the lay-outs, the artwork, the titles, the cover design, everything--is the work of a student or it wouldn't be there at all. The only portion of the production surrendered to someone else is the actual printing process, simply because we have no facilities or equipment to do it ourselves, though some of the larger projects, notable Foxfire, are taking this final step and purchasing equipment to publish and print their work themselves. It should also be apparent from the prior explanations in the section on relevance and the section on the community that both the magazine's production and its business did take place within a reality context and that, in fact, this was one of the most worthwhile and positive features of the project as a whole.

The remaining points, then, I will document at this point: the providing of the students with marketable skills and with a wide variety of commercial skills. This documentation can be done very objectively because of a system worked out by the students and myself to keep track of their skill achievements and accomplishments throughout the year. It became apparent shortly after we began that there was so much for each student to do and to learn in the course
of the year, that some means must be devised to keep it in order and to have
some record of his progress, not for grading purposes but, as one student said,
"just so I can keep my head straight." Furthermore, since each student was
working on different things at different times and in different places, and there
were no tests, it was all but impossible for anyone to keep track of what each
was doing and/or had already done. The class structure was very informal,
with each student simply going to work on whatever he needed to do as he came
in every day, so that on any given day, there were students scattered all over
the room, some working on an article, some transcribing a tape, some answer-
ing letters, some leaving for an interview, some filling subscriptions, etc.
Since everyone did everything, the positions were continually in rotation, with
yesterday’s transcriber becoming today’s subscription-filler, and so on. Con-
sequently, borrowing from a description in Wigginton’s Moments and revising
and adapting it to Thistledown, we devised what came, at a student’s suggestion,
to be called the "Thistledown Skills Inventory."

This "inventory" is a list of the total skills that each student in Thistle-
down would find necessary to learn in the course of the year. The list covers
all areas of the project, from the production of the magazine, the handling of
the business to the knowing of basic information about Foxfire and IDEAS. Each
student then had a correspondingly numbered "checklist" and, as he accomplish-
ed each skill, he would bring the checklist and an inventory sheet to me and
demonstrate that he had, indeed, mastered that skill. I would then check him
off on his checklist beside the appropriately numbered space, along with the
date. Once "checked off" on a skill, he could then check off others, instead of
me, so that the system was self-perpetuating and, after awhile, entirely student activated, as all the demonstrating and checking off was done to and by other students instead of me.

The remarkable thing about the inventory is its breadth and scope. It covers some 38 definite skills, within most of which there are numerous sub-skills—in photography, for example—so that for a student to complete the list, he must have learn and demonstrated the mastery of a wider range of learning than, frankly, I had previously thought possible in any one class in any one school year. Yet, every student involved in Thistledown has, within the year, completed the entire list, even though it has no bearing on his grade whatever, and it is always pointed to with pride as proof of accomplishment—which it undeniably is. The reason is, of course, the experiential process: nearly all of the skills are those "applied new skills" which the student finds he must have in order to cope with the "demanding reality contexts" in which he finds himself, and so, though the skills are many, and some not easy, he perceives the real need to learn them and the fact that he will have opportunity to really use them in a meaningful way. This list, then, in terms of this evaluation, is a definitive description of both the "marketable skills" and the "communication skills" that the students did, in fact, learn and, as such, satisfies both the evaluation and provides impressive evidence in any call for accountability.

Because of its great importance, both to this evaluation and to the project, I will reproduce the list here instead of reserving it, bearing in mind that it represents a list of actual skills learned and not a list of goals or objectives.
I. Use and Care of the Cameras

1. Loading and unloading film from camera; checking in and checking out camera; camera operation and settings.

2. Using a single lens reflex camera well; composition, framing.

3. Installing and using the electronic flash units.

4. Taking portraits for articles.

5. Framing a subject; focus; exposure; ASA settings.

II. Layout

6. Cropping photo halftones; choosing appropriate photos for articles.

7. Designing a layout page; balance; symmetry; continuity.

8. Placing text copy on layout boards; designing and transferring titles; putting on page numbers and captions.


III. Tape Recording

10. Checking out-in tape recorders; testing before use.

11. Care and cleaning of tape recorders.

12. Use of recorders at interviews; labeling of cassettes; where to hold the microphone during interview; changing tapes.

13. Storing, filing and archiving tapes after interviews.

IV. Transcribing Tapes

14. Technique of transcribing; filling out transcription forms; filing and archiving transcriptions; using the recorders' digital counters and earphones.
V. Interviewing Techniques

15. Knowing appropriate use of phone to make appointments with contacts; phone etiquette.

16. Creating favorable impression when making first approach to contact by phone or letter.

17. Staying interested during interview; not fidgeting; use of questions determined beforehand.

18. Writing, typing, mailing thank-you letter after interview.

19. Proper filing and archiving of all tapes, photos, stories from an interview.

VI. Circulation

20. Knowing current postage rates: when to use 4th. class, library rate, first class, etc.

21. Taking an order; filling a subscription; filling out subscription card; sending letter acknowledging subscription and payment.


VII. Distribution

23. Stocking bookstores, shops and other retail outlets; writing and sending bills; recording orders; mailing in bulk quantities. Finding new sales points. Making periodic phone checks for reorders.

VIII. Correspondence


IX. Treasurer

25. Recording a deposit and withdrawal in the treasury book.

26. Know check-handling procedure and depositing.
27. Filing and cross-checking receipts from high school and district offices.


29. Making receipt for donors.

X. Publicity

30. Writing, typing, sending press releases; contacting media sources.

31. Preparing, writing, laying out, having printed, of publicity papers; brochures, mailers, fact sheets, etc.

32. Organizing, designing and setting up displays and booths for festivals, speeches and shows.

33. Preparing and presenting a program for public groups, meetings, etc.

XI. The Foxfire Concept

34. Know the history of Foxfire; explain what IDEAS is; know the basic goals and ideals of Foxfire; know pages 2–10 in Aunt Arie, the introductions to the Foxfire Books, and the Thistledown fact sheet.

XII. Copyrighting

35. Know the basic copyright rules and laws; know how to fill out the copyright forms for a periodical, where and when to mail them.

XIII. Writing an Article

36. Producing typed, double-spaced copy to send to the printers; marking typed pages with appropriate type size and column width.

37. Beginning/introducing a story well; ending it well; writing in chronological style for craft story; writing human interest for personality interviews. Continuity, transition, spelling, punctuation.

38. Writing captions; choosing appropriate photos for the story from the contact sheets or prints.
I think it is apparent from this list that the students did learn both marketable skills and a wide range of communication skills in many areas.

Summary, Point 6 Evaluation:

This point—the most objective of the eight—seems, then, to be well-proven. With the existence of the various issues of Thistledown that have thus far been produced and published by the students, the description of the daily real business that engaged in to deal with it and the skills inventory list showing the range of marketable and communication skills which they mastered, I believe that the Thistledown project met this requirement for the Foxfire Concept quite well.

Point 7: Did the project utilize oral history and folklore as a tool and did it emphasize the culture and heritage of the students involved?

Point 7 Evaluation:

Again, for the sake of clarity, I will subdivide this point into two parts for consideration: the using of oral history, first, and then the emphasis on the students' culture.

The various techniques of gathering history through oral accounts was the primary tool of the project, as has been previously indicated in the descriptions of the many outside interviews from which the students drew all of the material for the articles that went into every issue. Only a very small number of pages in each issue were devoted to material not derived from direct interviewing, such as the old recipe pages and the letters to the magazine which were printed. That these interviews were oral history in their orientation and not
just random interviews is indicated by their planned approach and team concept at the interview sites, previously explained, as well as the techniques that were employed after the interviews to preserve them. All tapes were made non-erasable by breaking the recording tabs on the cassette immediately after the interview, and then each cassette, and ultimately everything connected with it—photos, negatives, transcriptions, stories, etc.—was given a "Thistledown number" consisting of the year and the number of the interview for that year, i.e., "77-12" would mean the twelfth interview of 1977. This file number was placed on every item connected with the interview and then all was filed together in filing drawers so that it would always be ready for future use. Each interview was cross-indexed by file number, contact's name and subject on file cards and placed in an archive file so that any interview could be located immediately and the archives could be used for reference and research. The transcribing of the tapes is further indication of the oral history/folklore approach, each tape being transcribed by using the recorders' digital counters as continual reference, so that the tapes could be used by others, utilizing the digital numbers as an index to the contents of the tapes. In addition, a cross-reference file of all contacts is kept, showing their subjects, addresses, locations, ages and the volume and number in which they appeared, if used, so that they could be located quickly by others. In these ways, then, the oral history is kept organized and preserved for use in research and reference both by ourselves and by others, as well as providing material for the end production of the publication.

A tangible indication of recognition for the project's use of oral history and folklore came in 1975–76 when the project received a grant from the Ohio
American Revolution Bicentennial Advisory Commission in the amount of $1,500 to "expand and continue the Thistledown project: a project devoted to the collection and preservation of the history and heritage of the central Ohio area." This grant, coming from the ARBA in Washington, D.C., was recognition of the project's use of oral history and its valuable role in the Bicentennial. It was also unique in that it made the project an official U.S. Bicentennial Project, the only one located within a public school system in Ohio, and Thistledown was listed in the BINET Master Register of Bicentennial Projects, distributed nationally. The project received a large Bicentennial flag which was flown in front of the school throughout the Bicentennial year as indication of the Bicentennial Project located within it. Additionally, the Licking County Bicentennial Committee recognized Thistledown as an official Licking County Bicentennial Project.

During this same period, the project also received the Bicentennial Festival Award from the Ohio State Board of Education for "fostering interest in the heritage and history of the State of Ohio," which may also been seen as evidence of the project's close ties with oral history/folklore, as well as with the culture of the students.

In terms of the project's emphasis on the cultural and heritage of the students, I would again mention the interviews, the articles, the archives, the Bicentennial grant and the Bicentennial Award as indications that the project was obviously oriented toward the culture of the area which, in turn, is the culture of the students. Other evidence that this is so is the fact that the high school students participating in Thistledown became, after the first issue or two was published, the local "experts" on the culture and heritage of the area,
as shown by the many letters that we began receiving asking questions about historical matters connected with the articles they had written. These letters were often addressed to the author of the article that had appeared and ought additional information, offered more facts for their use or sought help in finding historical items or places. The students always enjoyed answering these letters and spent much time doing additional research and contacting people we had interviewed to find the answers to the queries. Consider the transformation here: a group of high school students, previously typically apathetic toward and ignorant of their own heritage and culture becoming the ones to whom adults write to seek information and help in discovering more of that culture! Other indications of the students' immersion in their culture can been seen in their "discovery" of the people and places around them. Common expressions such as "Wow! I didn't know (people like him) (places like that) were around here. You ought to go see (him) (it)," were very often heard, and many of the students began taking their families to see such places as Dawes Arboretum after conducting interviews there. A last small, but significant, indication of the students' awareness of and interest in the heritage of their area that came from their Thistledown involvement can be seen in the local "Bicentennial Book."

This book was produced by the Licking County Bicentennial Committee and contained a lengthy history of the area, with many photos and articles. It cost $5.00, but when it came out at the end of the year in 1976, nearly every student in Thistledown bought one for themselves, the only students in the school, as far as I was able to ascertain, who had done so.
Summary, Point 7 Evaluation:

The project's use, then, of oral history and folklore as the central tool in its collection and organization of material for the project's publication is apparent, both in the method and the result obtained. It must be said that the emphasis was more on the oral history field than on the folklore area, though folklore was, of course, inevitably included in great extent. There was not, however, extensive training of the students in specific folklore techniques or attempts to gather the artifacts often associated with folklore, simply because we did not have the time or the money to do either. Perhaps as the project grows in size, resources and funds, the emphasis on folklore can be increased, and I believe that would be a most valuable addition to the scope of the project as it now stands. Others, such as Foxfire and Bittersweet have utilized funds for this effort and so are building valuable collections of artifacts in what amounts, in the case of Foxfire, to nearly an auxiliary project resulting in a museum collection, recording of folk music on albums, and the selling of folk crafts, but this falls outside the resources and funds of Thistledown at this time. We have produced, however, a significant body of oral history, within which some folklore is contained, and this material we have collected has been carefully prepared, transcribed, filed, archived and indexed for the use of others, and this body of research will continue to grow each year the project exists.

That we have accurately identified and dealt with the heritage and culture of the particular area and, thus, of the students involved in the project, is evident from the response of the students and from the community itself, more completely described earlier in Points 4 and 5. The most favorable response
from the people of the area is obverse evidence that we were dealing well with
the specific culture of the area at hand, for if we had erred in our choices for
contacts, interviews and subjects, the magazine's contents, no matter how well
done, would have been perceived as perhaps interesting but irrelevant to the
community and so would have elicited little response from the people of the
area.

Point 8: Is the project directed to the students' welfare instead of toward
traditional goals such as tests, grades, etc.; did it provide the
students with humanistic as well as skill development, and did
it give the students opportunity to practice significant decision-
making, affecting both themselves and others?

Point 8 Evaluation:

Since this point deals with the aspect of the Concept and of *Thistledown*
that is the most important—the students—there is more than a usual number of
items of evidence to cite in its evaluatory consideration. Some of these items
have already been described in preceding points and so will not be repeated in
detail, but they do need to be recalled:

1. The lack of tests at any time during the course.

2. The determination of grades by means of a self-evaluation sheet
   filled out by each student at the end of each semester, grades at
   that time being required by the school's administration as a con-
   dition of the project's inclusion in the English curriculum.

3. The skills inventory list indicating the nature of the applied skills
   learned by each student within the project.
4. The involvement in the experiential process flow of the students, explained in Point 2, and its resulting emphasis on decision-making that affected both the student and others.

5. The sample of students presented in Point 2 indicating their perception of the project as being real, useful and valuable to them.

Besides these previously-described indications that the project was directed toward the welfare of the student, away from the traditional goals, and promoted the practice of decision-making, there are other examples and observations that show as well that this was the case, including further comments from the students themselves.

There is, for example, the trip taken by three members of the staff to Ohio University. The Learning Resources Center there sponsored a Heritage Workshop in October of 1975, gathering teachers and others concerned with ways of including the heritage and culture of students in the students' education, specifically within the context of the present traditional systems; Thistledown was invited to present a seminar for them. Three students, none of whom had even spoken before a group before, and who had never been on a college campus, were asked by me to go and speak. All three accepted with a mixture of apprehension and excitement and subsequently spent many hours organizing what to say and who would say it. The trip was taken and, after a tour of the campus, the students presented their seminar to a group of 43 adults who gave them a standing ovation at the end. Their experience was most beneficial to them in many ways, building their confidence, knowledge, self-esteem and serving to broaden their world. Since then, other groups of students have spoken on a radio show from local station WCLT about the project, talked with reporters
from magazines both large and small, presented displays and a slide show they
made themselves about the project at several festivals, and appeared on a local
television station discussing their work in the Thistledown project. All of these
experiences were not actually necessary, of course, to the existence of the pro-
ject, but all were designed solely for the benefit and growth of the students in-
volved.

Three students who have been involved in the project might also be
pointed out as examples of the humanistic benefits of the experience: Jerry
Porter, Steve Hunt and Jeff Bakenhester. Jerry Porter joined the staff in his
junior year, bringing with him a reputation for instability and trouble. He had
two brothers, both of whom were heavily into drugs and who were failing in
school subjects, being in and out of jail with some regularity. Jerry, it appear-
ed, was heading in the same direction. Soon after joining Thistledown, however,
he "discovered" photography and took to it immediately. He went on interview
after interview, taking photos even when there was already an "official" photo-
ographer on the team, and shortly took a part-time job to buy photo equipment of
his own. Aided by his parents, he soon had a small darkroom at home and a
camera of his own and began processing all the photos for the project in his
spare time. By his senior year, his second year on the staff, Jerry was taking
photos for the yearbook and the local newspaper, as well as for Thistledown and
when he graduated, he enrolled at Ohio University in photo-journalism. His
grade during his last two years of high school improved dramatically, and it
was obvious that he was avoiding the drug scene altogether.

Similarly, Jeff Bakenhester joined Thistledown in his sophomore year,
an extremely quiet boy with lower-than-average grades, a great lack of self-confidence and, as he said, "no idea what I wanted to do." After accompanying teams on several interviews, Jeff nervously went on his own, where he did very well, dealing with the situation successfully. This interview, culminating in the appearance of his article and photos he took for another article in an issue of Thistledown, made a visible change in his confidence and attitude. He became more outgoing, his grades in other areas of school improved and other students began going to him with problems in the project, furthering his sense of worth. Jeff stayed with the project for three years, becoming an honor-roll student in his senior year and having several of his photos published in issues of Exchange, the newsletter sent to the staffs of all Foxfire Concept projects by IDEAS. When he graduated, he enrolled in a school of photography, where he is doing well.

Steve Hunt, like Jeff, joined the staff as a sophomore, and was painfully withdrawn and had little confidence in his abilities. He did not, as far as I could observe, speak to anyone at all, unless it was unavoidable, and was little known by any of the students. His grades were mediocre at best, he worked for his brother who ran a produce market, and he told me shortly after joining the project that he was considering dropping out of school when he reached 16 to work full-time. As the first year passed, however, Steve began becoming more and more involved in the work of the project, proving to be most capable in writing, business, publicity and photography. He began going on interviews and, after being on his own, began gaining in confidence. By his junior year, he was becoming much more outgoing, his grades were improving rapidly, and he would often be found still in the room after all the others had gone at the
end of the day, working on press releases, filling subscriptions and working with photos. By the end of his junior year, he was on the honor roll and was given the Award of Excellence for his work in the Thistledown project, and award given in school assemblies by the principal to students who he perceives as having done outstanding work beyond what is normally expected. In his senior year, all thoughts of dropping out obviously gone, he received a second Award of Excellence, was named to a committee formulating new school policies consisting of administration, parents and "an outstanding senior," was tapped for the National Honor Society and received a scholarship to attend a technical college in his chosen field--business administration.

Each of these three boys, it is true, might have made their respective adjustments and changes in attitude regardless of their involvement in the Thistledown project, but I believe it would have been unlikely and that there is little doubt that the Thistledown experience so contributed to their development of confidence, self-esteem and relevant skills that the major share of the credit must lie there, given the circumstances of the three.

In a similar way, but not narrowed to a specific student, is the indication of student betterment shown by the many staff members who have very proudly and completely voluntarily taken their issues of the magazine with the completed articles and photos in it directly to the homes of their contacts. Symbolically, there is much to see in this action: the students are taking "schoolwork" voluntarily out to the real world to display to the very person in that world from whom they received the information to produce the work. It is a final gesture in indication of the complete involvement with the project.
with the outside world, and at the same time, shows the pride the students have in what they are doing as well as the bridges between generations that the project has established (see Point 5).

Lastly, the comments of the students themselves on this point are most useful here. Again, these comments are ones garnered from the self-evaluation sheets, as previously explained, and were voluntarily submitted. In this particular case, they stem largely from a spontaneous discussion myself and some of the staff had fallen into the day before on what is "different" about Thistledown as compared to their other classes. All in all, I believe, they present convincing evidence from those most obviously concerned that Thistle-
down was directed toward their welfare and not toward traditional standards.

Student Jud Mauger:

Thistledown is more challenging. There is not just one thing to study or do, but instead many different things. And it is not an individual course--in other words, you must depend on others for it all to work right. It's cooperation and responsibility, like the real world out there is, and I wish more classes would give us a chance to work that way.

Student Tim Cameron:

Thistledown is better than any other class I have taken, because you not only learn all sorts of things like layout, interviewing, business letters, photography, etc., but you also learn responsibility, which is something I've never had to really use in school before. It is much more free in that you can express your ideas and opinions without being cut down and people really listen to you, for a change. This is the way I think school should be.

Student Tom Tykodi:

There is a wide variety of things to get involved in, in Thistle-
down and so you not only learn more, you are never bored. But the most important thing is that it lets the students be
ourselves for a change, making our own decisions right or wrong and going outside of the school. Because of that, we’re working toward a common goal—the project—instead of just toward a grade.

Student Sheila Cooper:

In this course, we are really learning how to communicate, and then producing something real that proves we did learn it! We are learning to communicate with the world in a different way. If all the Thistledown students didn't work but two hours the whole semester, they would still learn something that would help them the rest of their lives. We've learned to get along with each other and to communicate and cooperate with each other as well. All the knowledge in any book is not worth as much as that.

Student Deb Kerner:

I can take pride in our final product because it came from an experience I'll remember, decisions that I made, lessons I learned and was produced because I wanted to do it—not just to see what grade I could get.

Student Steve Hunt (first year):

The class lets me make my own decisions. It's not like the rest of school, and some of the people are OK. If I'm here next year, I'd like to take it again.

Student Steve Hunt (second year):

You learn a lot of things in this class and it's never boring. I enjoy working on the business stuff especially, although there is always so much to do and some of the filing systems need to be revised, I think. Most of all, Thistledown lets you make your own decisions for better or worse and makes you feel like you can really do something. I don't know, but I probably wouldn't be here if it weren't for Thistledown and I hope I can schedule it in alright in my senior year.

Student Steve Hunt (third year):

I have enjoyed being in Thistledown a great deal and believe it has taught me a lot that will be useful after I graduate, especially the business aspect, which will apply to business administration in the college I've applied to. I enjoy working
with and talking to people too and I think the interviews showed me that people are just people and will accept you for what you are if you know what you're doing. I guess if I'd sum up this course, I'd say "communication" and "responsibility," because those are the two biggest things that I have learned.

Summary, Point 8 Evaluation:

I think it can be said that the Thistledown project was, as a whole directed toward the welfare of the student and definitely not toward the usual rather dubious traditional goals. The evidence is clear in all respects, and even given students' tendency toward over (and under) statement, I believe the sampling above or how they, themselves, perceived the project's benefits shows clearly that they saw this project as something whose emphasis was on them and their welfare and not on grades, tests and other such external rewards. The personal growth apparent in statements such as those by Steve Hunt are particularly convincing and, to me, educationally exciting. Every attempt will be made in the future to maintain and increase this student-centered aspect of the project, mostly by continuing to emphasize the students' involvement in the experiential process flow from which their decision-making and real responsibility stem. Assuming the project continues to grow as it has, this will become increasingly easier to do, for the simple financial pressures to produce the final product will thus decrease and so allow even more time for the humanistic aspect of the project to be experienced and emphasized.
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

By this analysis of the definitions and characteristics of the Foxfire Learning Concept from the first portion of this paper, I believe we can conclude that the Thistledown project at Watkins Memorial High School was largely successful in meeting the demanded criteria, satisfying the evaluation and establishing itself as a fully-operational and genuine Foxfire Project.

It is clear that the project was based and worked through the traditional system prevalent at Watkins, but that, at the same time, it was both connected closely with the real and relevant world outside the school and fit well into the experiential process flow. There was little difficulty in adapting the Concept to that cultural heritage and area of Pataskala/Central Ohio, and the project was concerned and rooted in that culture, that is, the culture of the students involved, and utilized the tools of oral history and folklore to record and preserve the culture. Because of the students' involvement in the experiential process flow, the process was thus made at least as important as the product itself, the magazine, though this balance is a delicate one and conscious effort must be made by the teacher/advisor to continue it. The students did have, and do have, the opportunity to produce and publish a complete, copyrighted magazine and to run the very real business connected with it and, in the process, they did learn a wide variety of marketable, communication skills, as shown by the skills inventory list. In the process of producing the product, many bridges between the generations were established, as well as many between the school and the community in general, and the community accepted the project extremely well.
Lastly, the project was definitely aimed at the students and their growth and welfare and shunned traditional goals such as grades and tests.

Recommendations:

Of the many facets of the Foxfire Learning Concept, I found the two most central to a project's successful operation as a viable part of the Concept were the involvement of the students in the experiential process flow and the emphasis on that process, rather than on the product the project produces.

It is rather obviously quite possible to produce a finished product similar to a Foxfire project magazine without having a "real" Foxfire Concept project at all, and indeed it is being done already in some high schools and even small colleges, a fact which Wigginton, for one, complains about in Moments, and which points out further the need for some more complete statement of just what a "Foxfire Concept project" is, as was the attempt of this paper. The skills could be taught in a traditional classroom setting with tests, grades and all the rest, and oral history and folklore could be the instrument for gathering the magazine's material. The result could be a fine piece of journalism and most useful as an oral history/folklore resource. It would not, however, be a Foxfire Concept project, for the most important aspect of education would be left out: the students. Instead of being the reason for the end production of a product, they would instead be simply the tools that were used to produce it, the product itself being the reason.

To bring the students themselves then into the fore and make them and their development, learning and growth the reason and focus of the effort, the
process must be the aspect of the project that receives the emphasis and to
do this, they must be immersed in the experiential process flow. From this
process flow, the other aspects of the project that make it "Foxfire" come, for
once in the process flow they then find themselves in the demanding reality con-
texts that require real decision-making. The project, through the process flow
and the emphasis upon it, becomes rooted in relevance and reality, instead of
the classroom and the grading system, and the focus is centered on the student
and his growth rather than on the product, however polished, that results. It is
imperative, then, that a project which wishes to be a Foxfire Learning Concept
project, carefully and consciously include and emphasize the experiential pro-
cess instead of the end product, making sure that it is this process and the
students' involvement in it, and not the production of a magazine, that is the
real business of what goes on as the project progresses. This is not easily done,
unfortunately, for the pressures to produce the product to show to the community
as tangible result, proof of learning and justification for the students' activities
outside the school are great, as well as the simple economic necessity most
projects have of producing a good product quickly and regularly to start the
influx of funds that will allow the project to continue. Furthermore, the process
and its emphasis is something most evident primarily to the teacher/advisor,
for the students are typically caught up only in the short-term goals of the maga-
zine and business, and the community as well sees these as the apparent reason
for the project's existence. It is incumbent upon the teacher/advisor, then, to
make certain that the project's operation is so structured that the process is
emphasized and completed while these short-term demands are met, a balance
difficult, but absolutely necessary, to maintain. If this is done, however, the result will be not only the production of a magazine of professional quality and the acquiring of skills by the students in doing so and in dealing with the business of it, but also the personal development of the students, the excitement of seeing them grow, strong ties with the community, and the creation of bridges between the project and others that can be achieved in no other way.
IMPLICATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

Implications

It seems clear that there are several conclusions that can be drawn from this study that have broad implications for education, particularly for that education falling into the category of "public schooling" the bulk of which is decidedly traditional in scope and approach, and within which the greatest majority of our children are participants.

The kind of education discussed in this paper, i.e., that which is experientially based, has long been denied a functioning place within the vast traditional structure, though the ideas and possibilities of experiential learning are far from new. The traditional system has held objection to several facets of experiential learning that has made it, in the traditional view, unsuited for public schooling and, unfortunately, some of these objections have been, for our society, valid ones.

These objections have usually been typified by the following arguments: First, experiential learning has tended to emphasize the holistic development of the child, concentrating on his character, his feelings, his self-esteem and his progress in humanistic values and social interaction. Though almost universally perceived as important, it was usually the case that this humanistic approach was at the expense of practical skill development, so that students experientially taught were seen as well-adjusted people, but ones who couldn't
"do anything" in the traditional work-oriented society. Thus, experiential programs seemed to produce little but "happy bums," a product, of course, that many might argue is far better than an unhappy, but productive worker. I do not intend to enter that issue at this point, but what is important is that, realistically, it is obvious that the taxpayers who support the public schools prefer the practical to the humanistic, as is clearly evident by the ever-increasing calls for accountability and the demands that our schools get "back to basics" so that the mythical Johnny can "do something." That being the case, there would seem to be even less chance today than ever for experiential education to gain ready acceptance in the traditional system, unless, of course, the experiential ideas can somehow be adapted to serve both the humanistic and the practical.

Secondly, the traditional system had pointed out that experiential programs are usually devised, oriented and suited for only a particular culture, a specific geographic area or a very small, and select, group of children. Indeed, that has often and, for the most part, still is, the case. The National Commission of Resources for Youth (NCRY), for example, previously mentioned in this work, has over 1,500 experientially-based programs in their files and periodically issues a newsletter outlining four or five projects from among the group. Even a casual reading of the newsletter, however, quickly reveals obvious similarities among the projects so presented in each issue: nearly all are concerned with either an especially unique group of children, either very advantaged or very disadvantaged; they involve small numbers, usually fewer than 20 students; the results or aims of the projects are something unique to
the project's location and, hence, non-reproducible, and the projects are nearly always short-term, "one-shot," programs that are seldom continued more than a year. The benefit for the children involved is usually good, often excellent, but affects so few, for so little time and with such confining limitations, that the projects have little effect of the traditional system, which obviously perceives their transience and inability to be generalized.

Lastly, the traditional system has, in part because of the kind of projects just mentioned, always viewed experiential learning as something problematical; something interesting, but which simply doesn't comfortably fit into the traditional structure. The trappings of traditional education, such as grades, tests, class periods, class work, and the learning of marketable skills have seldom been a part of experiential methodology and, indeed, many experiential programs have excluded them completely on the dubious premise that it is impossible for them to be a part of a program that calls itself "experiential." This, of course, has only defeated the purpose, for it automatically excluded reality learning from the traditional system, which, like it or not, is the system and, I believe, is likely to remain so indefinitely. The obvious alternative, here—to ignore the traditional system and establish independent experiential systems that entirely exclude traditional methods or goals—is, I think, simply so much educational "sour grapes." It has been done, of course, and some cases notably, by such groups as the Outward Bound and the Apprenticeships, and I am sure that those children involved in such alternatives benefit greatly, but consider what is really happening, educationally, as a result: we once again have programs, however good or "right," that are for the elite
few. Frankly, I am weary of reading about which young Kennedy or Rockefeller is now enrolled for the summer in Outward Bound. I am happy they will enjoy such a worthwhile experience on daddy's money, but neither I, nor the hundreds of thousands of other public school teachers across the country are much concerned with the elite. We are, instead, vitally involved with the 90% of America's children who are not either monies or so poor that they can get there with federal funds and who are thus inevitably excluded from experiential learning by those who refuse to even talk to, let alone compromise with, the traditional system within which most children receive their educations.

Because of these reasons, then, experiential education has been, and for the most part, still is viewed by the traditional system as a good idea which is unfortunately limited and generally unsuited for inclusion of the educational mainstream. It is at this point, however, that I believe this view and, indeed, the whole field of experiential education can be re-aligned.

It is time, I think, for experiential education to come away from its exclusivity and make a conscious sustained effort to reach into the broader community of education to integrate experience-based learning into the dominate traditional system. Most of all, based on this study, I believe that the means to accomplish this is, at least, at hand: the Foxfire Learning Concept.

I do not intend to reiterate the discussions and conclusions drawn in this paper, but a reading of it, particularly of Part I, the analysis of the Foxfire Concept, and then the example of the case study of the Thistledown Project, reveals clearly that the Foxfire Concept is an answer to the objections held by the traditional system and makes it feasible to immediately begin moving ahead in
the experiential field.

As was shown in this study, the Foxfire Concept does not fall into the educational traps that so much of experience-based learning has in the past and, for the most part, still does. First, the programs based on the Foxfire Concept manage to place great emphasis on the humanistic development of the child, and have been notably successful in this respect, while still producing a significant body of skill learning, both mastered and demonstrated by the students, thus satisfying both the humanists and the practical community. Secondly, the Foxfire projects involve as participants all interested students in the secondary schools in which the projects function and are made available to students in all economic, social and achievement levels thereby. They have proven themselves adaptable to every culture from the inner city to the suburb, from Appalachia to Hawaii, have no dependency on geographic area, are already involving over 2,000 students around the country and are obviously capable of being ongoing programs on an indefinite basis; Foxfire, itself, for example is now entering its tenth year and Thistledown, its fourth.

Lastly, it is clearly the case that there is no difficulty in successfully integrating Foxfire Concept projects into existing traditional systems. Thistledown, and the 80-some other Foxfire Concept projects, all exist entirely within their respective systems and meet, without difficulty, all the demands of traditional systems, as shown in this study. At the same time, however, they are practicing and using the best experiential methodology, upholding experiential principles and, thus, neither the traditional demands nor the experiential ideals are being sacrificed.
It seems, therefore, that there is little excuse now for experiential education to remain either in the background as that good, but unworkable idea, or to chose to exist as a separate entity available to only the few. With the Foxfire Concept alive, in use, growing and available, those interested in the experiential ideals have the means at hand to begin practicing those ideals within whatever sort of traditional system they function. Conversely, the traditional system can no longer look askance or ignore experiential learning as unsuitable for the system, for it does work and it is viable, as evidenced by the many ongoing and successful projects, such as Thistledown, now under way.

Possibilities

The possibilities, then, of the integration of programs that involve Foxfire Concept methodology into our secondary schools are many. There is immediate room for thousands more projects based on heritage/folklore such as Thistledown and Foxfire itself to be established, given the large number of secondary systems in the U.S. and the incredible diversity of their respective areas and surrounding cultures. In those areas which today are being targeted for special effort, such as the inner cities and other disadvantaged environments, the Foxfire Concept has proven itself extremely effective in projects such as the Fourth Street i and Cityscape. As the numbers of projects increase, of course, there is some concern that they might be self-limiting because of the product of such projects, the magazine, a great number of which might exhaust the market. Such a program can be easily overcome, however, by simply
changing the focus of the product or by changing the product all together. The magazine might concern itself with environmental problems, for example, or local governmental issues as well as heritage and folklore without changing the Concept at all, thus producing a product with an entirely different appear and audience. The product might also be revised by making it something other than a magazine, substituting instead such things as craft fairs, recordings of local storytellers or musicians or even reproductions of artifacts such as furniture typical of an area or culture; some steps toward these are already being taken by Foxfire.

Similarly, the Foxfire Concept can be utilized by teachers in many areas with effectiveness equal to the present focus of English or journalism. The potential for use by social studies teachers, history teachers, folklore teachers, music teachers, psychology teachers, sociology teachers, foreign language teachers and others is immediately obvious, requiring only a shift in focus and subject matter to adapt.

On a broader scale, it is entirely feasible that the Concept could be adopted and integrated into entire systems on the state level, county level or district level. In each of these cases, there exists a controlling body—a board—which could work the Concept into the systems evenly instead of on a piecemeal basis. Some work, in fact, is already underway in this respect, for IDEAS, the national organization now most concerned with promulgating the Foxfire Concept, has been working closely with the state boards of Colorado and Pennsylvania for the last year, as both states are interested in the possibility of integration of the Concept into their state systems.
I think, then, that the possibilities for the future utilization of the Foxfire Learning Concept in the traditional educational systems is definite and bright and that, through this utilization, the good things inherent in the experiential learning process can at last be brought to be available to all students, an event that can only be good, both for them and for secondary education as a whole.
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