Foxfire 8 Study Guide

Foxfire 8 by Eliot Wigginton

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Plot Summary

The novel "Firefox 8" is the eighth book in the Firefox series, which seeks to bring the lifestyle of Appalachian mountain residents to the rest of the world. This particular novel, dealing with the lives of black residents, pottery, cock fighting, and mules, is a highly detailed account that not only instructs readers, but entertains them as well. The characters interviewed are lively, charismatic, and devoted to their crafts, and the interviewers never fail to bring the full story to the readers.

The novel begins with a short introduction, describing the purpose of Foxfire and the mission of the Mountain City Project. This is followed by an account of blacks living in the Appalachian mountain area. Several individuals are interviewed, and they discuss much about their lives. Many first discuss times of slavery in terms of their grandparents, and then tell of their own experiences with discrimination and segregation. While some have lived very difficult lives, others have been helped immensely by the white population. The next section deals with Appalachian pottery. The section begins with an introduction by John Burrison that pays tribute to the old ways of pottery. Following that, there are several interviews with potters whose style is still that of 100 years ago. These individuals discuss their glazes, tools, family businesses, and kilns in great length. In addition, different styles of pottery are discussed, and there are several images to help explain how some items, such as clay roosters, are completed. Those interviewed discuss not only their current business but also how they started in pottery, and their pasts. This section stresses the tie that binds these potters together, as well as the firm family commitment to the craft. The next section of the book deals with cockfighting. In the first chapter, interviewees discuss rooster breeds, selling roosters, raising cocks, combs, conditioning, and fighting. In the next chapter, Paul B. Stamey discusses his own experiences as a cock fighter. This is followed by Rex Duvall's discussion of the same. In the final portion of the book, "Po Bo" Jenkins discusses his life as a mule trader and his experiences with mules. This novel, like other Foxfire novels, is a testament to simple living. Those interviewed are likable, honest, and good-natured, as well as full of useful information. Their stories, told faithfully by the Foxfire staff, serve both to enlighten and entertain readers who otherwise would never encounter such experiences.

Introduction

Introduction Summary and Analysis

The Foxfire series is a collection of novels about life in the Appalachian mountains. This collection covers topics ranging from pottery to cockfighting, and includes interviews with local residents as well as pictures and how-to collections.

In the Introduction, by Eliot Wigginton, founder of the Foxfire project, begins by explaining the charm of small town life. Wigginton and his Foxfire staff set out to teach high school students the simple ways of self-sufficiency in the Appalachian Mountains by putting together a student-run newspaper filled with stories of local residents. As it grew, the group purchased land for future endeavors. The plan includes buildings for Foxfire staff as well as community centers, statues, archives, blacksmith shops, and other local establishments. Wigginton sees how Foxfire has worked with the community in planning, has seen their relationship grow and change over time, and hopes Foxfire can continue to grow. This Introduction serves both to introduce the basis of the book, that of the simple life and ways of the Appalachian mountain people but also to introduce the community surrounding the characters of the book to bring a better understanding of their lives and their ways of thinking in terms of growth and the preservation of tradition.

Blacks in Appalachia

Blacks in Appalachia Summary and Analysis

This section begins by introducing the concept that blacks are a minority in the Appalachian area, and the author, Lynn Butler, admits very little space has been given to them in past Foxfire books. The first interviewed is Anna Tutt, an excitable, generous, and happy senior citizen whose simple life charms Lynn. Anna has never married and is highly independent. She grew up on a farm and worked the fields with her family and recalls occasional whippings as well as watching a black man being hung. Anna laments that families were closer then because of the work on the farm. Anna admits winters were more difficult and that they would not have been well off if it had not been for nice white families who gave them clothing. Her grandmother cooked, canned, raised farm animals, and generally provided a home. She was strict, but loving. She was also a midwife but rarely gave the children medicine. Anna believes children were more afraid of their parents and of authorities than current children. Anna also doesn't understand why religions have stopped allowing other denominations into their churches. Anna was baptized at age nine, but she admits that at the time she didn't understand religion. She enjoyed school and was one of the few who graduated. She recalls dance competitions and working for white families, cleaning houses and cooking. Anna notes the blacks were grateful for their jobs and were treated well. In the end, she notes blacks have far more now than in her time.

The second person interviewed is Bruce Mosley. Bruce is another older black individual who grew up in the area. Bruce was born in 1908 and never knew his father. His mother had inflammatory rheumatism so could not care for Bruce. As a result, he was raised by his grandmother, Polly, who told Bruce stories of his grandfather Pank's life as a slave. Pank and the other slaves were beaten, not allowed to pray, and treated badly, but Polly notes the Yankees were kind to them after they were freed. Polly, too, had been a slave, and she explained to Bruce that the Yankees freed her at age seven. They rode into the town, stopped at the home Polly worked in, and took it over from the whites. The whites cooked food for the blacks, and the soldiers made sure the blacks were safe, but Polly noted to Bruce that their white masters were far nicer than some. Bruce states that when Polly spoke of her experiences, she was often emotional. Bruce now tells Lynn that the black race has grown and become strong. He believes they will continue to prosper as long as the children are taught that races are equal. He gives credit to the younger generation for fighting discrimination and to Martin Luther King. He closes by noting that someday, there will even be a black president.

The third interview is with Harley Penland. Harley is an eighty-three-year-old black man with high energy despite his failing eyesight and difficulty moving around. Harley's father was a slave who was freed when he was very young. He built a home in Black Branch and built several more as they wore out. Harvey notes his education lasted only three months of the year, and as a result, Harley did not make it very far in the educational system. Harley himself worked in a lumberyard and had to walk past the homes of

whites to get to work. He notes that these white youths would often torment blacks, but such actions were normal back then. The government even took land from the blacks, Harley notes, and even the justice system was against blacks. He blames this for the movement of blacks from the area. Harley was thus amazed when he fought World War I where whites and blacks were treated the same. He returned and worked in a rug factory and a rock quarry before returning to Clayton to raise and sell vegetables. Harley has built much of his house by hand over the years, but has slowed recently due to diabetes and age. He believes the world is better for blacks in modern times.

The fourth interview is with Carrie Stewart, a hearing-impaired black woman with a warm and energetic personality. Carrie recalls her grandmother weaving and notes that her grandmother taught her how to sew, knit, weave, and crochet. She recalls walking to church barefoot due to muddy conditions and then washing her feet and putting on her shoes right before service. She notes they had to work back then, and that she attended sewing school. She discusses her days in grammar school, noting that her teacher was strict. She admits she taught her own children in the same manner, and they were all successful. Carrie also notes she is one hundred and three years old, and her children, grand children, and so on all still respect her. As a child, she ate grits and bacon for breakfast, a large lunch, and light suppers. Sundays were reserved for religion, and Carrie notes the children behaved better and were taught to love God. Carrie, too, was a midwife for many years, and discusses the tools needed, including belts and cottons for menstruation. She was given an award for her service but had to quit following the death of her husband.

The fifth interview is with Viola Lenoir. Viola is the neighbor of Carrie, and is a good friend. Viola tells the interviewers that her grandmother was an African with little education, and her other grandmother was Indian who also could not read or write. Her mother, however, was a wonderful cook and a practical nurse with an eighth grade education. When Viola was in third grade, she was taken in by Miss Kelly, a white woman, who in turn provided food for the entire family. Kelly was a schoolteacher and taught Viola through seventh grade. Viola knows some speak badly of whites, but says that in her case, whites saved her life and the lives of her family. She recalls being treated as a white person. She worked as a chef, a nurse, and a nanny, and has been married twice. She favors herself a good Christian, as well, and tells of a time where she was humbled by God for judging others. She notes that God doesn't care if one is white or black. She believes the church is her home, and that conventions to bring together different religions are vital. She has never missed a conference at the local church in fifteen years. She is thankful for her life.

Southern Folk Pottery: An Appriciation - The Meaders Pottery

Southern Folk Pottery: An Appriciation - The Meaders Pottery Summary and Analysis

John Burrison introduces the pottery of the Appalachian area. Burrison notes folk potters, or those who use limited industrial equipment, are few and far between, and that folk pottery is not a mountain craft by nature. He also points out the craft is not recreational, but a business activity for most. He notes that traditions were spread westward, including alkaline glazes and certain pottery styles such as the two handled syrup jug, pottery grave markers, and the face jugs, which are containers with large, stylized faces protruding from them. Some equipment is also unique to the region, such as the rectangular kiln, which, when surrounded by earth, were called groundhog kilns. He finishes by noting one can see such pottery in the Smithsonian, private museums, certain public museums, and traveling museum exhibits. The section ends with a selected bibliography.

The opening of "The Meaders Pottery" discusses Eliot Wigginton's own experiences with southern pottery. Wigginton then explains that the Meaders settled in White County and began their own pottery operations in the mid 1800s. Generation after generation was born, with at least one in each family learning to turn. Lanier, the last son, however, has begun to have failing health, and the future of the business is questionable. Arie was born in 1897 in North Carolina. She discusses her history, including her grandfather's ancestry from Ireland and her father's settling in North Carolina with her mother. Her father built onto the house, and Arie describes how her mother cooked pies, beans, and coffee. The children often had thrush, which was cured using garden sage. Mutton tallow was used for cuts and scrapes, as well as for soap made with sal soda, lard, and lye. Arie recalls they used lye to scrub the floors, wash clothes, and wash the body. They raised most of their own food and originally used stoneware jars but moved to glass containers over time. They made sure to save seeds from the best of their goods for replanting, and protected their gardens from animals such as groundhogs. Her mother also wove cloth from sheep's wool. Arie attended school through the seventh grade. When she was fourteen, her father moved the family to White County to raise cotton, believing this would made them wealthy. The family worked to clear the land, but it was rocky and nearly impossible to plant on. She notes Cheever, her husband, was raised in White County, and she met him in church. Cheever's father built the children a shop for pottery. Over time, Cheever learned to turn pottery, as his brothers did. When the Depression came, Arie believes they were as well off as anyone. Arie swears the Roosevelt's came by and purchased pottery, although she is unsure. Arie helped around the shop as well as took care of the fields. Arie decorated the pottery and eventually began to make pottery herself, including vases and bowls. Arie notes that Lanier was the only child interested in pottery. She also notes that the

popularity of Cheever's pottery was a blessing, in that it allowed the family to sell more, but also a curse, in that Cheever was often interrupted when trying to work. Arie is sorry Cheever never got to see the film about pottery, as he died prior to its release. Arie worked for a few years with Lanier but retired to quilting. She believes Cheever had a full life and knows he died doing what he loved.

In the next section, "Cheever and Lanier Meaders," the interviewers speak with Arie about her husband and son and their pottery. Cheever preferred to make large six gallon churns and seven gallon jars for his customers. In a day, he could turn seventy-five to one hundred gallons worth of large ware, along with smaller wares used for syrups, and what he called "fruit cans," which were straight with a lid and used to can fruit. He preferred to make larger pieces because he could earn more from them. He used clay from a nearby property, paying fifteen dollars per load. It was originally ground in a mud mill, which was a tool run often by mules that broke apart the lumps of clay and mixed it to make a smooth, even consistency. There are several images of a mud mill to explain its design. In the shop, Lanier now uses the tools of his father, including the treadle wheel and iron lifters to transfer finished pieces to the drying shelf. Cheever, in his time, used a "Shanghai" glaze made of settlings or silt ashes, and sand or powdered glass and water. Later, different sands were used for different coloration, and the commercially-produced glaze Albany slip was also used. There are several images that show Lanier glazing wares. In addition, he, like his father, built a number of kilns using various methods. The objective of the kiln is to contain enough heat from a fire to dry the pottery and dry the glaze. This "firing" process takes from ten to twelve hours and can vary greatly with the type of wood used to create heat and the weather conditions. There are several images of Lanier building a kiln and diagrams of kilns.

In the next section, the interviewers speak with Edwin Meaders, another relative folk potter. Edwin notes Cheever worked in pottery while his family tended to the fields, but that this was mostly because the shop was too cold in winter to house pottery. He tells several stories of pottery freezing in the shop in the winter. Edwin and the other boys would go assist Cheever, from helping mold clay to making the glaze. Soon, the young boys were turning as well. Edwin was schooled through the tenth grade and assisted his father through his adulthood. He notes he uses many of the same techniques as his father and is far behind in his rooster creations, in terms of demand. He has no phone, so takes orders from Arie's home. There are several images of the tools used by Edwin, followed by images and descriptions of the process used by Edwin to make pottery roosters. The interviewers note Edwin's kiln is tight, neat, and highly effective and discuss how it is built. Edwin explains that he loads the kiln about every three weeks and uses pine for firing, generally because pine is simpler to find. To fire, he closes the four flu holes at the breast of the kiln until the bed of coals is hot. He then opens two of the flues and feeds the firing into the loading doors throughout the burn. When the process is complete, he allows the fire to die, and leaves the pottery to cool.

Southern Folk Pottery: Burlon and Irene Craig - Norman and Irene Smith

Southern Folk Pottery: Burlon and Irene Craig - Norman and Irene Smith Summary and Analysis

Burlon and Irene Craig are potters who reside in the Catawba Valley in North Carolina. They are interviewed primarily because Burlon uses a water powered glass mill to pulverize glass for his glazes. Burlon has turned pottery since his boyhood. He says he assisted in pottery operations as a child, and at age fourteen, James Lynn, an owner, offered him a share in his business. After Lynn's death, Burlon worked for a number of potters. He joined the Navy, and when he returned, he bought out Harvey Reinhardt's business. Originally, Burlon made only pottery that was used in every day life, but now, his work is mostly customized for customers. His wares over the years have included storage jars, buggy jars for hauling alcohol in vehicles without detection, face jugs, and snake jugs. He admits he himself has a small collection of pottery, including some of the Reinhardt swirl pottery. He tells of several experiences where shop owners have attempted to sell him "very old pottery" or "antiques" when he himself recognizes the pottery as his own. He and his wife often attend folklife festivals to show others how to turn. Burlon admits he gains satisfaction from his pottery but also admits there is some risk to health, due to the dust. Irene, his wife, paints his pottery with flowers and other decorations, as well as assists him with other areas of the shop. She is also the accountant and admits she is unsure of the future of the business but hopes her children will take it up. Burlon notes he uses terminology different from other potters. He mixes clay from the side of the deposit with clay from the center to make a firmer clay. His mills have been wooden, metal, and powered by mules, horses, and tractors, and there are several images of his current mill. Burlon is most known for his monkey jugs. In addition, he is known for his face jugs, which are time consuming, but worthwhile. There are several photographs that step out how Burlon creates a face jug. Burlon also uses pulverized glass in his glazes and a water powered glass mill to break down the bottles. The mill is a wooden box with a metal bar on one end. Water power forces the bar down twice a minute, slowly smashing the glass into powder. In addition to glass, Burlon uses oak ashes and on occasion flint, which helps to keep the glaze from running. He also uses a clear glaze for his swirl pottery that contains ash, glass, and kaolin. He uses Epsom salts in place of ash on occasion for a clearer glaze. His experiments with glaze have helped him develop his style over the years. After glazing both the inside and outside of the pots, he loads his kiln. His kiln is in the ground and built with brick, with a slight rise to the floor. It is loaded through a door at the chimney end and fed with pine slabs for burning. There are several photos of his glass mill, as well as his kiln.

The next interview is with Norman and Irene Smith. Norman uses a pug mill that was originally horse-drawn and is one of the few to still do so. He struggled growing up to

feed himself and his family and received little education due to a difficult walk to school and his jobs on the farm. He began his own pottery operation at age twenty-four with his wife, and continues his business today, although his customers now simply request keepsakes rather than functional wares. Much of his pottery is unglazed. Norman has severe emphysema and no apprentices, so may not be turning pottery for much longer. Norman learned pottery through his own experimentation, and he and his father hired potters Charlie Brown and Ralph Phillips to work in their shop. Oscar, his brother, and he turned pottery while his father assisted with the shop. Norman alone did the glazing. When Norman married, he and his wife opened their own shop after Norman vainly attempted to farm his land. He admits his emphysema is likely due to his many attempts to build a perfect kiln. Norman tells many tales of his attempts to sell his pottery, which include being taken to city hall due to a lack of a selling permit, a broken down truck, many nights without food, and many unfair buyers. However, he claims he and his wife had fun.

Irene Smith went through the sixth grade and believes she and her sisters worked harder than other girls. She tells of her courtship with Norman and of their happy life together. She began to assist him in the shop as he got older but admits she cannot use the pottery wheel with any skill. She also discusses their many kilns over the years and where they go to dig their clay, which is nearby. She admits the once horse drawn mill now runs via a tractor, and she is afraid it will break. She tells of their trips to Birmingham to sell pottery and of Norman's use of Octagon soap to plug a leaking radiator. She also tells of a man who attempted to talk down her price for pottery, and of her refusal, noting how hard she and her husband work. She would like her daughters to continue pottery, but notes only only one knows how. There are several images of their mill, their tools, and their workspace, as well as diagrams of their shop.

Southern Folk Pottery: The Wilson, Hewell, and Brown Potteries (through page 384)

Southern Folk Pottery: The Wilson, Hewell, and Brown Potteries (through page 384) Summary and Analysis

The interviewer begins by noting the potters in this section are production potters and not studio potters. He then describes each briefly. The first interview is with Monteen Wilson, who learned pottery from her father, Loy Skelton. When she married Hallie Wilson, they started a pottery. All their children helped in the business, although only the boys learned to turn. Both boys are now equals in the business. The next interview with Hallie reveals he learned pottery from M. Hewell who had a pottery and who invited him to come learn the trade. Hallie notes he tended to the glazing and the burning. Soon, he went to work for Holcomb Pottery, where he learned to turn. He then took over a pottery in White Country from W.P Ferguson. Hallie sold that business within a few years and moved to Flowery Branch. Shortly, he sold that business, as well, and began working for Carolina Provision, a grocery wholesaler. He would sell their goods but sell his own pottery as well as he traveled. He then purchased land and ran Perdue Pottery for five years before setting up his own pottery. He hired several throwers, including Javan Brown, Caleb Hewell, Marcus Hewell, Arlin Hewell, and Billy, Arlin's son. They use a power mill and a power wheel, but everything else is "old timer." Hallie buys, sells, and drives the pottery, and his boys turn the pottery. They don't glaze much, since it is more costly and there is less demand. They generally purchase churns and other goods from other potters to resell. Jimmy Wilson, his son credits Javan Brown for his desire to turn, and notes he is teaching his own son, Brian. He claims they do not put their names on pottery since it would increase business beyond what they can do. They have invented a drying system, where the heat from the kiln is drawn through piping to the pottery drying room following a burn to help dry the pots faster. They use four clays for varying purposes. He notes the business is much different than it used to be. Michael Crocker works the wholesale side of Wilson Pottery. He doesn't turn but instead is involved in the selling of the pottery and the resale of other items such as wooden bowls, bamboo baskets, and other items that are imported. His main customers are floral shops and greenhouses. He discusses a typical import from its arrival at the port to loading and unloading to trucking to delivery. There are several images of the pottery and the shop.

Ada Hewell is interviewed next and discuses her life with Bud Maryland, whose father, Eli, was a potter. Bud worked for several potters, many of which were family members. He then purchased a pottery of his own and worked it for thirty-six years. She laments it was harder back then, as the winters were too cold to make pottery in and kick wheels were hard to operate. She believes Bud had the first power wheel in the area. Bud also made his own powdered glass glaze. Her sons are still involved in the business, as are

their wives who also turn, and her grandchildren. Ada is happy to know her family has kept the tradition. Henry Hewell, her son, recalls when they used a mule to mill the clay as well as the grinding of glass to create glaze. Henry is now a turner, following his military career. He recalls using a kick wheel but admits he likes the electric wheel much better. The clay he uses is alluvial clay, and much of his work is unglazed, since flowers grow more quickly in an unglazed pot. He notes that everyone involved in the business brings a piece of themselves to the work. Grace Hewell, the wife of Bud's son, Harold, also works at the pottery. Grace learned the pottery business by jumping in and trying to help whenever she could. Chester, her son, was originally uninterested, but since his marriage, has become involved in the business as well. The family also imports items to sell, since their pottery line is production. They have two more boys learning to turn, are hoping to build another kiln, and are teaching their grandsons to turn. Grace is proud that her family is so involved in the business. Chester, Grace's son, can turn any pottery except the birdhouses. He notes pottery is far different for him than for his grandparents, since he can remember wood fired kilns and kick wheels, but has never had to work with them. He also notes the hammer mill is useful to beat the clay instead of by hand. However, Chester also believes these changes are what have made the business successful, since they are able to turn quality pottery in less time for less cost. He explains why pottery turns red during firing by noting that clay has iron, and when the oxygen in the kiln is heated, oxygenation occurs in the clay. Chester hopes the family business will continue and notes he loves his work. There are several images of the family in the shop.

Louis Brown is interviewed next. He has been involved in the business since his early childhood, and he recalls that, through the 1920's and 1930's, things began to change as the highway was built. He notes they used to have just a shed-type building and a well, along with a groundhog kiln. They built a new shop and kiln in the 40's, and replaced the kiln recently with an indoor kiln. He explains the new kiln in detail, noting its increased insulation, firebrick lining, and expansion bands. There are several images of the kiln. He discusses te process of firing the kiln, and notes it is similar regardless of the pottery, but also that it requires skill, or the entire burn will be wasted. He closes by noting pottery is a dying business, since individuals do not have the time to learn the trade. Charlie Brown notes he, too, learned pottery from an early age, as his grandfather and Javan, who are mentioned previously, were potters. At that time, they made utilitarian pottery, as that was what the customers wanted. He tells a story of a woman who had purchased a casserole in 1926 from Davis, Charlie's grandfather. She wanted to know if they could fix it, as it was the best she had. This, Charlie believes, shows the quality of their work. He believes the only change in product came during the Depression when the family began to make French-style cookware. He recalls when his grandmother would cook meals for the whole staff, and that Javan ate hot peppers and dressed in a suit every day. He turned pottery until his death, as did his grandfather. The pottery makes much of its goods by molds, and each person has his or her own style and function. He discusses their clay and how and where they dig for it. He notes the clay is so good, they only have to add water. There are several images of their clay mill, and he discusses the variations needed for different potteries. They work the air out of the clay, weigh it, and then turn the pot. They then set it to dry, put on handles, and finish the bottom. The name is then stamped, and the pots are dried. They are then

glazed, and fired. The family uses molds for chicken roasters and other odd shaped pots or wares, and use only iron oxide glazes. There are several images of molds, the jigger wheel, jigger knives, and of the family.

Cockfighting: Breeds through the Law (through page 445)

Cockfighting: Breeds through the Law (through page 445) Summary and Analysis

This section begins by noting that Kelli Allred, a student, began her inquest into cockfighting expecting a gruesome tale. On the contrary, what she found was a practice based in history that is dignified, honorable, and with a cast of characters gentle and kind, and proud of their animals. Cockfighting has been in existence since before Jesus and has been practiced by even the regal of society all over the world. Allred notes cockfighting came to the Appalachians through immigration, much like the individuals living in the area, but that it was much more low key than in larger cities until later. In terms of breeds of chicken, there are many. Through many interviews, the writers learn of the Arkansas Traveler, Roundheads, Lacy Roundheads, Earl of Derby's, Morgan Whitehackles, Old Brown Reds, Red Wheels, Ferris Ford Reds, and many many others. They are generally named after the individual who originally bred them, and they vary in size, color, comb, head size, and spur. Breeding generally begins with two hens and a rooster. The breeder knows which breeds to use and keeps track of the results. When the hen sets after mating, the rooster is removed and the eggs are hatched out. Each breeder has his or her favorite characteristics in cocks. Many interviewed advise choosing hens and cocks for their "spring" (the amount of bend in the knee), their proven abilities as a breed, their speed, height, and ability to cut. One mix blended the southern shuffle cock and the northern riffing-stroke cock to make a better, faster fighter. Some breed only along a single line to preserve the species; whereas, others crossbreed to gain aspects from both cocks. Those interviewed caution about inbreeding, noting that such a practice makes for smaller, weaker cocks. They also note the importance of record keeping. Jake Plott tells the interviews about selling chickens, as well, and notes that the business is lucrative, but also highly honest. Others note the necessity of keeping good chickens, since to sell them often means to have other begin to breed the same type. To raise the chickens, Joe Farmer notes he really just allows them to grow naturally. Joe raises fighting cocks for other individuals, as his location is in a prime area. Joe takes the eggs, hatches them, and then raises the chicks until they are a year old. He notes the only difficulty is keeping the roosters apart as they are growing, and states his dogs help him to break up fights. At age one, the rooster is taken, and tied to a pen with a nine foot tether, so he and the other cocks cannot fight. They are often fed only fresh grass, wormed, given their shots, and are overall well taken care of. During molting season, they do not fight, and if ill, are given penicillin. Even with care, however, some are still killed by foxes and other predators. The combs of the cocks are trimmed before the first birthday, although the method varies. Feed for these animals includes proteins, grains, and greens. Many variations exist, but in most cases, feed is of the highest quality. Conditioning for the animals also varies. Some like to remove the animals from their normal routine, alter their foods, train them harder for

two weeks, allow them to fight other cocks with muffs on their spurs to avoid injury, clean them regularly, and clean their digestive systems. Jack Plott, an owner, states some believe cutting the comb and gills and then feeding them to the animal brings additional benefits. Fighting occurs between November and June, and chickens between twelve months and four years are fought. Those fighting one another are paired to nearest weight and fight in a pit, or a hole in the floor, surrounded by spectators and a referee. The pits range from large sporting event areas with food and drink to holes in the forest floor, and fights range from local good-natured sparring to tournaments and derbys. In a derby, each entrant has a number of chickens and pays a fee to enter. The person with the chicken who wins the most fights wins all the money. In a tournament, roosters fight one another until there is only one left. For each fight, the roosters are fitted with gaffs, or sharp objects attached to the area the spur is normally connected. With these gaffs, the roosters cut one another until the end of the fight. There are a variety of gaffs, including the bayonet, half bayonet, slasher, razor blades, or other gaffs. Some are homemade, and some are manufactured. When the fight begins, the chickens are weighed, and gaffs are checked. They are then allowed to peck at one another while still in the arms of the handler, to get them angry. Then, both handlers let the chickens go, and they fight until one's gaff is stuck in the other. They are split apart, and after thirty seconds, fight again. This continues until one dies, or simply stops fighting. The referee has full control over the fight. Drugs are taboo, and those roosters who lose but are not killed are cared for and healed. Some say chickens are unable to feel the pain, but this is unproven. Money is bet, and there are seldom arguments about payments. Many owners are wealthy individuals who pay others to train their roosters, and many are now organized into clubs, although in other countries the fighting is less formal. Fighters ship their chickens in plywood boxes, although they are often stopped and detained in customs. There are several images of cock fights and the pits. Next, there are several articles relating to the arrests of those involved in cockfighting, and the writer mentions that in most states, cock fights are illegal, although a misdemeanor, under cruelty to animal laws. In addition, the gambling associated is also often illegal. Many handlers disagree, and believe the practice should be legal, and many law enforcement agencies ignore cockfights as long as no one lodges a complaint. Clyde Gibson tells a story of his own arrest by Georgia Bureau of Investigations men who were undercover in a cockfight. Gibson blames politics and notes that it is always up to the local sheriff if a fight can occur. Those who participate note, in closing, that those involved in fights are "some of the finest" and point out that money is often raised for ill individuals or families in need.

Cockfighting - Paul B. Stamey - Let Me Tell You About This Mule

Cockfighting - Paul B. Stamey - Let Me Tell You About This Mule Summary and Analysis

In "Paul B. Stamey, Chicken Fighter," Paul Stamey tells Chet Welch about his life as a chicken fighter. He began his career working for McIntosh, a nearby fighter. He reiterates the decency of most in the chicken fighting crowd and the tameness of the sport. He believes this is necessary due to the illegal nature of cockfighting. He explains that chickens at a fight are weighed, and the weight is recorded on a card along with the owner's own symbol. The chickens are then matched by weight, and only then does one know which chicken one is fighting. They then call you to fight, and you place the gaff on the chicken. Bets are made, and each handler places his rooster in one end of the pit. The referee starts the fight, and when one rooster pierces the other, handlers are called to break them apart and tend to the wounds. This process continues until one chicken is unable to fight or dies. Handling is dangerous to the handler and Stamey tells a story of his own injuries. He also proudly tells of his own roosters' fights and their tendency to win. There are different styles of fighting, and Paul explains several, noting toughness and power are the primary components. Their conditioning for chickens includes medication, regulated light and heating, scratch pens, handling, diets, and workouts. Chickens are obtained through trading, as Paul explains, telling his own story of handling for a man in return for free chickens and money. They are also purchased through local sellers or advertisements, although he cautions that advertisements can be false. He tells one story of a young boy who purchases lesser cocks at a derby, fights them, and wins $22,000, but he notes this is mostly due to luck. Some individuals who fight are millionaires. He tells the start of one man, Billy Ruble, who quit school to be educated in fighting by Percy Flowers, a legend. He also tells of fighting in other countries, which is more violent with higher earning potential. Paul also cautions against becoming too confident in a rooster. He tells of one rooster he purposefully chose to fight in order to beat a well known rooster whose owners believed he could not be beaten. He tells another story where the fighters lost three-hundred dollars on a rooster not well conditioned, as they believed it couldn't be beaten. Paul reminds readers never to bet more than they can lose.

In "Rex Duvall", Rex begins by telling Ronnie Welch of his own cross breeding of roosters and notes the importance of breeding well proven roosters from the beginning. He tells of the trio of roosters he began breeding with and notes the steps he had to take to complete the breeding, again reminding that inbreeding is problematic. He talks of raising the chickens and discusses trimming them in an effort to reduce the amount of feather and beak another rooster can grab onto during a fight. They are handled to become used to touch, fed well, watered, and conditioned, using a variety of methods including rubber blankets for bouncing, slow rolling motors, and weights attached to the

legs of the animal. On the day of the fight, the roosters are not fed or watered. Immediately before the fight, the rooster's spur is removed; the gaff is attached, and the animals beak is shoved into an orange to make it crave even more water, thereby making it more angry. Rex again describes the fight, much like others in the book. Rex tells of individuals who suck the blood from their chickens' mouths following a hit to the chest, since the animal cannot breathe with blood in the lungs. If the animals are near death, the referee will place them closer to one another. Rex notes the power and determination of the rooster, and reminds readers that dogs, hawks, and foxes have all been killed by roosters. He tells of shakes, or heavier cocks with heavier steel gaffs, and notes chickens need to be conditioned to fight. He asserts that individuals involved in cock fighting are good people, that reputation is important, that one will never win all the time, and that paying the debt after a fight is vital to the sport.

In "Let Me Tell You About This Mule" and "Po' Boy," Jenkins tells interviewers about his previous profession as a mule trader. He begins by discussing his childhood on a farm and his health problems that prevented him from buying his father's land. He was educated but quit college. He received his nickname from his bargaining prices with an auctioneer and cattle. He then sold trailers, owned a store and was robbed several times, and then purchased a nice home for him and his wife, who is now deceased. He then tells of mule trading, noting he bean in 1930 and ended in 1950. He says in the beginning the business was booming, as everyone needed a mule, and when the government began the Agricultural Adjustment Act, it was even better. He says that there is only one breed of mule, which is a cross between a horse and a jackass. Most breed from a jack because it results in a better mule than a stud and a jenny. Colors of mules vary, but are generally black, red sorrel, or gray. When looking at a mule, one should look for size, color, teeth health and age, eyes, and good wind. The worst mule diseases are irregularity, which can occur from overeating or over watering. Jenkins believes if you care for a mule well, it will not be ill. He also believes bleeding mules is beneficiary but has never filed a mule's teeth. Mules can be worked hard, are better with more muscle, and can live to be twenty or more. He did not raise mules from colts, as he purchased them, and he discusses his life buying and selling mules all over the world, preferring those four to six years of age. He states that selling a bad mule would ruin your business, that it was done, although rarely, and that he, on many attempts, tried to talk buyers out of buying a bad mule. He believes mules are smart, and admits that trading them was a good job.

Characters

Elliot Wigginton

Elliot Wigginton is the editor of the Foxfire series and one of the primary individuals in the Mountain City project. Elliot's importance in the novel is not so much that of an interviewer or an interviewee, but rather, as the reason the book and its content exists at all. Elliot and his team dreamed of teaching high school students the ways of simple life, and it is through this dream that the Foxfire books, including this one, were born. It was Elliot's determination to show youths there was a different way of life that resulted in the collections of such vital and important pieces of information as are contained within Foxfire. In addition, it is Elliot's opening comments about small town life that introduce the characters of the novel, who are all of a small town, and have the values of a small, yet independent, community.

Anna Tutt

Anna Tutt is an older black woman who was interviewed for the Foxfire 8 section on the lives of blacks in the Appalachians. Anna is a warm, lovable, highly energetic character whose stories about her life on a farm and over the last several decades help to show readers how far the black race has come since Anna was a child. Anna is a positive person, in that while she has lived a hard life, she prefers to enjoy her existence and look upon hardships as challenges rather than a burden. Anna's early life on a farm was hard, but after her father's death, her life became even more difficult as she was passed from family to family. Her grandmother proves to be a strong influence on her life. Anna's faith is strong, although she admits it is a learned faith. Overall, Anna's interview shows her to be a kind, generous woman whose difficult life has only served to make her stronger.

Bruce Mosley

Bruce Mosley, born in 1908, is a black interviewed about his life as a minority in the Appalachian mountain area. Bruce did not know his father, but knows of his ancestry. His mother was too sick to raise him, and as a result, Bruce was raised by his grandmother. Bruce talks much of his grandmother, Polly, who told him stories of slavery. Bruce clearly cherished his grandmother, and his telling of slavery stories serves both to increase the reader's knowledge of slavery in the area, but also to show his love for his grandmother. Slavery was clearly influential in the life of Polly and thus, in the life of Bruce. His clear discussion of equality and racial discrimination show he is passionate about teaching the children to be accepting of all races, and show his pride in being a part of the black race. His comments about a black president are ironic, as well, considering the United States has now elected one. One hopes Bruce is alive to see such a monumental event, as his passions were so strong.

Harley Penland

Harley Penland is another black individual interviewed for the section on black life in the Appalachians. Harley is eighty-three years old with failing eyesight and difficulty moving freely. Harley's life was difficult, in that his father believed little in education due to his life in slavery. Harley, therefore, is barely educated. However, it is quickly apparent that Harley is by no means ignorant. What Harley lacks in "book smarts" he more than makes up for both in charisma and in his knowledge about the working world. His experiences with the whites of the area have not been negative, although he admits he knows of many situations that, in the past, showed racism against blacks. He does blame the whites for the movement of blacks from the area, however, as he points to their loss of land to the whites and their loss of freedom. Harley points out life is far better for the blacks in modern times.

Carrie Stewart

Carrie Stewart is a hearing impaired black woman with a warm and energetic personality that is interviewed for the Foxfire 8 series. Carrie's personality is warm and highly energetic, despite her age. She is one hundred-and-three years old but appears much younger. She can recall her grandmothers' abilities to sew and gives information about the make-up of the road system as well as the religious habits of those in the area. She points out that while her own life has been hard, she is appreciative for what she has and believes the world needs more religion and more respect. She is kind and shows readers the life of a black woman in the Appalachian area.

Viola Lenoir

Viola Lenior is the last black woman interviewed for the Foxfire 8 series. Viola is a happy, go lucky, highly energetic older woman whose story differs from many blacks in the area. In her case, her family was nearly starving when they were saved by a white woman who took in Viola. Viola admits she is aware of the persecutions of blacks but states she never experienced those situations. As the daughter of a white, prosperous woman, the town accepted her as a white person. She has been independent for her whole life, married several times, and shows a strong belief in God. She notes her thankfulness about the end of segregation and for her life.

Arie Meaders

Arie Meaders was born in 1897 in North Carolina. She is a strong, independent woman whose life in pottery did not begin until after her marriage to Cheever Meaders. Her life prior to marriage was hard, and Arie recalls many aspects of old-time life for the readers. Arie is not well educated, but is highly knowledgeable in how to work on a farm. As Cheever worked in pottery, Arie was left to tend the children and the fields, showing her strong abilities as a woman. It was not until later that Arie began to work with the

pottery also. Arie shows a high amount of pride in the pottery business and is grateful she is able to share it with the rest of her family. Her devotion to Cheever is clear throughout her conversation, and her belief Cheever had a happy life shows again her love for her husband.

Edwin Meaders

Edwin Meaders is also interviewed for the pottery section of the novel. Edwin is the son of Cheever and Arie and works in the family pottery. Edwin tells many stories of learning pottery from his father and other turners in the shop, and shows a clear love for his work, as well as for his family. Edwin takes pride in his work and in carrying on traditions in tools and glazes first set forth by his father. His kiln is more modern, but his style is much like that of his father.

Burlon Craig

Burlon Craig is another turner interviewed for the book. He has turned pottery since his boyhood and has owned a part of his own business since the age of fourteen. He is a collector of pottery as well as a turner and takes great pride in his work. His comments regarding individuals who try to sell pottery as antiques shows a large amount of pride in what he does and in the business in general. Burlon gains much satisfaction from a properly made pot or jug, and has developed his own equipment, including a water powered glass mill.

Norman Smith

Norman Smith is another turner, and is one of the few to still use a pug mill to grind his clay. Norman is not well educated but did not begin pottery until he was twenty-four. He and his wife began the business which continues today. Norman is sensible, in that he has stopped production of most glazed items in favor for those most desired by customers. He is ill as a result of pottery dust but does not seem down by his disease. Only one of Norman's daughters knows how to turn, but he and his wife hope she will continue the business.

The Wilsons

There are several interviews with members of the Wilson family. Monteen Wilson began pottery when she was married to Hallie Wilson, and she and her husband taught their children the trade. Hallie is a delightful man with a sense of humor who admits to using other positions to further his own pottery. He takes pride in his adherence to old ways of turning and in his sons' involvement in the business. Jimmy Wilson, his son, shows a clear respect for his father, both as a salesman and as a father. As a family, they clearly take pride in what they do, and seek to keep the business going throughout the generations.

The Hewletts

The Hewletts are another family interviewed. Ada Hewell discuses her life with Bud Maryland, whose father, Eli, was a potter. She is a strong woman, and admits her life was harder in the past, but seems very proud of her husband and sons for their pottery. In this family, all are involved, as her sons, grandchildren, and daughter-in-laws are all involved. Henry, her son, admits to enjoying the simpler life of a modern potter but also takes pride in his following of his father's ways in many respects. He enjoys bringing a piece of himself to his pottery. Grace, the wife of another of Ada's sons, also takes pride in being a part of such a close family business, and her son, Chester, believes it is modern technology blended with pride and talent that make the business so successful. Chester wants nothing more than for the business to continue.

Paul B. Stamey

Paul B. Stamey is a chicken fighter who is interviewed. Paul is a proud man who defends cock fighting often, noting the quality of persons involved in the sport and the beauty of the animals. It is clear Paul is not an angry individual, nor a fighting individual, but is a calm, gentle man who cares very much for his prize animals, as well as for other individuals in general. On several occasions, Paul discusses helping others. His tone is one of humility and dignity, and he appears to be a genuinely nice man.

Rex Duvall

Rex Duvall is another cock fighter interviewed for the book. Rex is a man who prefers to be alone and therefore lives in the woods. He is highly energetic when discussing cock fighting and clearly enjoys the work involved in the sport. He tells of his beginnings and shows a clear respect for other handlers as well as for those who raise good chickens. He is kind, although seemingly reclusiv, and shows a true pride in his birds. He is also honest and abhors those who are dishonest.

Po Boy Jenkins

"Po Boy" Jenkins is an older man who lives in Madison County, Ga in a large home. He is a widower with no children who spent much of his life as a mule trader. Jenkins is a kind man with a strong sense of humor. He is slightly overweight but is working out to lose some and has slight diabetes. He tells of his time as a mule trader and shows a high level of respect for mules in general. He is highly knowledgeable about the animals. He is also an honest individual and tells of his attempts to keep other mule traders honest, as well.

Objects/Places

Segreation

The concept of segregation is the idea that blacks and whites should be separated in all things, due to the supposed inferior status of the black race.

Alkaline glaze

Glazes for pottery made of high fire ash, such as lye ash, clay, water, and sometimes lime.

Face Jug

A form of pottery which is a vase upon which a grotesque or highly-stylized face is shaped. These were often used for religious purposes and burials but now serve as highly-prized sculptures.

Rectangular Kiln

Kilns that are rectangular in shape rather than circular such as those used in the north. When enclosed in earth to improve insulation, these are known as groundhog kilns.

Pug Mill

A mill also known as a mud mill in which potters place their clay to be ground up and smoothed.

Iron Lifter

A tool often made of iron or wood that is used to transfer finished pieces from the potters wheel to the drying shelf.

Albany Slip

This is the first commercially produced glaze used by the Meaders family potters.

Monkey Jug

A monkey jug is a large jug with two separate compartments and two handles. The jug was originally used to keep both whiskey and a mixer in the same container.

Charm Split

A charm split is a crack in the mouth of a stoneware jug or container.

Expansion Bands

Expansion bands are cables placed around a kiln that expand as more heat is generated inside the kiln. These bands pull tightly to help reinforce the kiln sides.

Gaff

A gaff is a sharp object attached to a fighting cock where the spur was originally attached. These are used to stab the opposing cock.

Muff

A muff is a covering for the spur of the fighting cock that allows the animal to spar another without injury.

Drag Pits

Drag pits are fighting pits for cocks on the sides of the main pit. These are also called satellite pits and are used to move already fighting, but wounded, roosters away from the main pit so fresh roosters can be used.

Themes

History of Minorities in Appalachia

One of the themes used in the beginning of the book is the history of minorities in the Appalachia area and the differences between their treatment in the past versus the present. Over the course of several interviews, it is clear that blacks in the area had a wide variety of experiences, from being cared for by white families and freed by Yankees to being harassed and hung by whites. In addition, even governmental authority seemed varied in their responses to blacks, as the military treated blacks with respect; whereas, the law steals land and improperly punishes black minorities. They were rarely educated and often left to do menial work. Through the stories of older generation minorities, it is clear the blacks of this area were treated as a lesser class.

At the same time, however, it is equally clear that these individuals take a strong pride in their histories and that in some cases, these individuals were actually treated well by whites. Many of those interviewed discuss a sense of familial pride growing up and a sense of duty to the family that is lacking in today's modern society. They speak of church as a strong influence and note how this influence, although a prime part of their lives, is missing from many lives today. They also speak of a strong extended family and a strong sense of community that is also lacking today. These individuals point out in several areas the great strides blacks have taken in the United States as a race, and the wonderful future they see for minorities in general.

Pottery as a Family Bond

Another theme discussed in the book is that of the art of pottery as a bond in many Southern families. There are several interviews of pottery families that often include parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, all of whom are highly involved in the family business of pottery. While each has their own style and niche, all share several key components. These individuals take pride in keeping their family traditions alive, and as a result, use the tools their fathers and grandfathers have used for decades in the past. In some cases, kilns have been used for decades, or have been rebuilt using designs originating over 60 years ago. Tools are handed down through the generations, as are recipes for glazes and clay mixtures.

However, this family bond also shows some signs of wearing thin. As money becomes more scarce and as business drives individuals closer to larger cities, there are fewer and fewer individuals in the pottery business. Several of the families interviewed expressed concern about their business, noting that their children show little interest in the art. Thus, although pottery is a thriving business in some areas, it is threatened just the same by industry and rising costs. Unless the younger generations of families continue to learn and practice the art, it is likely this tradition will fade.

Cockfighting as a Sport

Another theme discussed in the novel is cockfighting and its role as a sport in today's society. First, those interviewed stress the honesty and integrity of those participating in cock fighting. The handlers, fighters, and breeders all have considerable investment in the roosters they raise and in their physical conditioning. They take pride in their animals and spends thousands on their food, lodging, and conditioning. In addition, there are those who bet on cock fights that have made millions off the sport. When bets are made, these individuals point out, bets are kept, and there is little need to track down those who owe others money. Those interviewed also point out the features of a cock fighting pit, which often include many features found at other sporting events. There is honesty in choosing the fighting partners, in weighing in, and during the fights themselves. There are establishments for food and drink, as well as bouncers to ensure everyone's safety. In addition, those interviewed discuss the massive industry that surrounds cock fighting. There are breeders who spend countless hours and much money researching the best breeds; there are magazines, advertisements, salesmen, and those running the pits, as well as handlers, owners, and spectators. There is specialty equipment, such as gaffs, conditioning tools, and special feed. The owners take pride in their breeds and their handlers, and the handlers take pride in their conditioning of the cocks; thus, although the sport is still deemed illegal, it is clearly a sport that will remain a popular one in some areas.

Style

Perspective

The book is written as a series of interviews, so is told primarily in the first person view. With a book such as this, which attempts to tell small snippets of stories from a large number of individuals, such a perspective is vital to understanding each individual person's own experiences. Without this perspective, it would be impossible to tell such a vast amount of information in such a short space. In addition, each individuals brings his or her own personality to the work, showing the vast differences in personalities associated with the various topics presented, which also helps show the diversity of the area.

In addition, using each person's own perspective allows the reader first-hand insight into many experiences that would otherwise be biased if written in third person. Emotions presented are raw and honest, since those telling the tales are often the ones experiencing the emotions. Even stories told in the third person carry with them different styles and different perspectives in life based on the individuals retelling the tale. The first person perspective allows the biases and opinions of the interviewees to come through clearly, which is vital to the point of the novel. Finally, using a first person perspective throughout the novel lends to the authenticity of the stories told. Since the Foxfire series is really the presentation of a simple way of life in a specific area, allowing the residents of the area to tell their own stories creates a believable atmosphere that would be difficult to mimic with any other perspective.

Tone

The tone of the novel is very light and easy to read. Both those doing the interviews and those being interviewed have a simple style and mannerism that make the entire book highly enjoyable. In the Introduction, the tone is one of respect and pride, as Elliot Wigginton discusses small towns and his own experiences in them. In the piece on the lives of blacks in the Appalachians, the tone is often upbeat and full of hope, as these individuals have seen the world around them change for minorities.

In the piece on Southern folk pottery, the tone is often upbeat with a hint of pride as these individuals discuss their art and their livelihood. It is clear from their stories that these individuals work hard and are proud of what they do. In the piece on cockfighting, the tone is often defensive. These individuals firmly believe that the practice of cock fighting is not improper, but simply a sport, and they defend their actions and the actions of others involved. They, too, speak with a sense of pride and accomplishment about their roosters. These tones help to convey emotions about these topics that would otherwise be lost.

Structure

The novel is broken into six individual sections, with several smaller sections within each. The novel is 511 pages in length. The first section is the Introduction. This is followed by a section on the lives of blacks in the Appalachians, which includes five individual interviews with minorities in the area, along with a brief introduction to the topic. The next section makes up much of the book and pertains to the making of pottery in the area. In this section, there are interviews with several individuals, which are broken into five subsections, with several interviews per subsection. A presentation of information regarding cockfighting is next, which contains three sections. The first is basic information about the sport, and the following two are personal interviews with individuals involved in cock fighting. The final portion of the book is an interview with an individual who traded mules. Lastly, there is an index of people.

The novel is written as a series of interviews and thus is easy to read. The language used is simple, although written at times phonetically, which can be slightly difficult to comprehend. However, as one progresses through the book, such deviations from proper grammar become simple to follow and add a sense of depth and reality to the interviews that would otherwise be lost.

Quotes

"Suffice it to say that the best of such towns, in my opinion, have a stable year-round population that is reasonably compatible, a healthy, well-diversified economic life not dominated by one single industry, abundant recreational opportunities ranging from a decent library and movie theater to softball fields and a public pool, a community school in which parents and grandparents take a more than passing interest, a diversity of religions from which to select, and some mechanism by which the people at large can come together regularly for political and planning purposes." - Introduction, page 8.

"Because of the railroad, they saw themselves whole and complete once in the morning as the train went north and once in the afternoon as the same train headed back south, every day: and the fact that the train stopped at all simply reinforced the subconscious but vital psychological notion that they, as a group, were important enough to stop for." -Introduction, page 10.

"Now I'm telling you how bad it used to be for them then. You've got a heart and I do, and it make you feel pretty sad to hear how folks was treated. It's good to see how far God has brought us along to change things." - Blacks in Appalachia, page 45.

"You folks don't know how proud I am that I can grab your hand. You don't know what it is to go in a church with only five or six people there. You just think you've been so dirty to God that He ain't gonna give you any blessings. We need all these people that move in here - white and black. We need 'em to join with us to help us. I told the bishop that the church wasn't built for colored. It was built for people, I said. "It was not built for colored!"". Blacks in Appalachia, page 68.

"A lot of it was hard work, but I got a big kick out of all that. It was all fun. I'll tell you, though, back then a person couldn't see the fun he was having. Have you thought of things in the past like that? Hate it at the time and find out you enjoyed every minute of it? It was just right. It couldn't have been better." Southern Folk Pottery, page 175.

"I call from Mother's. I haven't had a phone in six or eight years - maybe longer'n that. Them kids run the bill up about a hundred dollars one month, and I told them, I said "Now, we ain't gonna have no phone if you do that again." Well, they done it again. We ain't got no phone." - Southern Folk Pottery, page 178.

"But that's sort of funny, you know, some of the things you run into like that. Some people will lie their grannies for a buck. I can't do that. I can't see it. money's not that important. You've got to have it, but it's not that important to lie about. But a lot of people will. They'll tell you anything." - Southern Folk Pottery, page 217.

"Course, it's made me sick. I've got emphysema now. It's caused from this clay or something. It's best not to be in too much dust. Every time I clean my kiln out, I go to the house the next day and spit out all that stuff from my lungs - black stuff, ashes. It's a

wonder I've lived as long as I have. But I have. I'm thankful for that." - Southern Folk Pottery, page 267.

"...[A]s long as I've been doing this, I can stand for hours at a time and watch someone turn. You can always learn something. You can just learn the different ways of moving your hands. Everybody does it different. Everybody ties their shows different, but as long as you get your show tied, that's what is important." - Southern Folk Pottery, page 362.

"These animals are loved. They are fed, trained, and fought by men who have a great pride and love for their chickens. If they have a short life, at least it's a good one. If I've learned a lesson, it's that controversial subjects will never seem the same to a person if he can take time to look at both sides." - Cockfighting, page 388.

"...[T]he people that deal and fool with game chickens are good and honest. They wouldn't gyp you. They wouldn't take a dollar out of your pocket. They're reputable people. You ain't never got to be afraid of them taking a dollar off you. They'll bet with you and win your britches if they can, but they're not dishonest people." - Cockfighting, page 406.

Topics for Discussion

In the introduction to the novel, Elliot discusses the benefits of small town life. Discuss at least two of his ideas of benefits. Do you believe they are benefits? Why or why not?

In the section "Blacks in Appalachia" several individuals note discriminatory practices of whites in the area in history against blacks. Discuss at least three of these examples of discrimination. Do you think such activities occurred in other areas? Why do you think people behaved this way?

There are two different situations presented in the section "Blacks in Appalachia." Compare and contrast the experiences of Anna Tutt and Viola Lenoir. How were their lives similar and how were they different?

Many individuals are interviewed for the section pertaining to Southern folk pottery. Choose one of these individuals and discuss his or her life. What was their childhood like? How did they learn pottery? Were they successful? What are their hopes for the future?

There are several tools discussed in the chapters pertaining to Southern folk pottery, such as powdered glass mills, pug mills, groundhog kilns, and other kilns. Choose one type of tool that is discussed fully in the book. Explain the tool, its function, its appearance, and different variations discussed in the book.

Much information is given in the section on cockfighting. After reading this section, does cockfighting seem moral to you? Why or why not? Be sure to back your answer using information from the novel.

Many of those interviewed in the book are not well educated. However, many have also been highly successful in their businesses. Based on your readings, do you think the individuals of this area place more value on education or on common sense and practical knowledge? Why do you think this is the case? Do you agree with their emphasis? Why or why not?