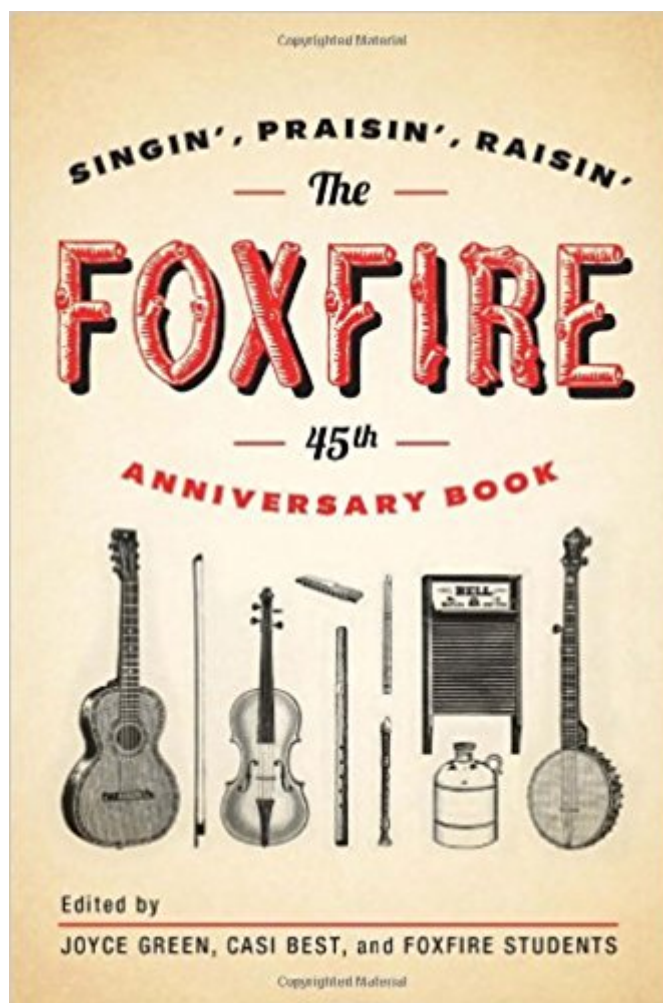


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The Foxfire 45th Anniversary Book: Singin', Praisin', Raisin'



Synopsis

For almost half a century, Foxfire has brought the philosophy of simple living to hundreds of thousands of readers, teaching creative self-sufficiency and preserving the stories, crafts, and customs of Appalachia. Inspiring and practical, this classic series has become an American institution. The Foxfire 45th Anniversary Book continues the beloved tradition of celebrating a simpler life, this time with a focus on Appalachian music, folk legends, and a history full of outsized personalities. We hear the encouraging life stories of banjo players, gospel singers, and bluegrass musicians who reminisce about their first time playing at the Grand Ole Opry; we shiver at the spine-tingling collection of tall tales, from ghosts born of long-ago crimes to rumors of giant catfish that lurk at the bottom of lakes and quarries; we recollect the Farm Family Program that sustained and educated Appalachian families for almost fifty years, through the Depression and beyond; and we learn the time-honored skills of those who came before, from building a sled to planting azaleas and braiding a leather bull-whip. Full of spirited narrative accounts and enduring knowledge, The Foxfire 45th Anniversary Book is a piece of living history from a fascinating American culture.

Book Information

Series: Foxfire

Paperback: 528 pages

Publisher: Anchor; 45 Anv edition (August 30, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0307742598

ISBN-13: 978-0307742599

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 37 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #210,205 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Crafts & Hobbies > Folkcrafts #66 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Crafts & Hobbies > Nature Crafts #86 in Books > Reference > Encyclopedias & Subject Guides > Mythology & Folklore

Customer Reviews

The Foxfire Fund is a non-profit organization that has preserved and fostered Appalachian culture through their bestselling series of anthologies, starting with The Foxfire Book in the early 1970s. The Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center is located in Mountain City, Georgia.

Banjo Ringing Loud and Clear, Mountain Music in the Air

When Ann Moore, Foxfire's president, approached me about being coeditor of The Foxfire 45th Anniversary Book, I knew immediately that I wanted our readers to be engulfed in the Appalachian mountain music that is near and dear to my heart. The mellow sounds of the guitar, the whining of the fiddle, the high pitch of the banjo, and the lapping notes of the big standing doghouse bass are the pure sounds of traditional music that draw in the audience like a moth to a flame. Once you have been captured by its rich and pure melodies, you will never be free. Music has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. From the time I was three years old, I traveled with my daddy, an old-fashioned Baptist preacher, to churches all over northern Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina to attend their monthly singings. The pews were always full, with people spilling out to the porch and yard and even huddled outside the church's open windows. Many drove long distances to savor the sounds of the pure Appalachian music. There was no air-conditioning, only the paper fans provided by the local funeral homes and an occasional breeze drifting through the tall windows. Sometimes our travels took us to tent revivals, where folding chairs were placed in straight rows on the fresh wood shavings covering the ground. The smell of recently cut grass, which had been trimmed with a sling blade around the perimeter of the newly erected tent, mingled with the smell of the new shavings from the local sawmill. If it rained, sometimes water would begin to drip on your head from holes worn in the tent from many years of use. The roughly hand-painted sign, which read REVIVAL, was visible from its strategically placed anchor near the roadside. The music was mostly bluegrass gospel with the groups playing strictly acoustic instruments. Usually this included a guitar, banjo, mandolin, and possibly a fiddle. The sound was mellow and the harmony tight. Occasionally, these singings featured southern gospel groups accompanied by a piano. I longed to play the piano, but my parents could not afford to buy one, much less pay for lessons, so I would sit at the kitchen table, carefully press the wrinkles from my dress with the palms of my hands, and pump away at the make-believe pedal on the floor. It was about this time in my life when my uncle Eddie bought me a guitar. It would be the second one from him. The first had been a small plastic version when I was three years old. That toy guitar had brought me many hours of enjoyment as I sat on a swing made by my dad from an old board with the words JESUS SAVES painted on the seat. This one was a real wooden guitar. I was so proud of that old used guitar. I still own it after fifty-some years. He, along with my mom and dad, taught me a few chords, and I learned to play rhythm well enough to get by. I love the guitar, but to this day I still dream about playing the piano. As the years have passed, etching their ever-lingering reminders in my face, my love for bluegrass has continued to

become more ingrained in my being. I grew up listening to the music of the Carter Family, Bill and Charlie Monroe, the Blue Sky Boys, the Stanley Brothers, Jimmie Rodgers, and the Delmore Brothers, just to name a few. Wayne Raney of WCKY, in Cincinnati, Ohio, and the Grand Ole Opry could be heard above the static on the old cracked red radio we owned. Mr. Raney, the DJ, would announce and play music for a while, play his harmonica, sing a few songs himself, and then sell baby dominicker and red leghorn chickens to his listening audience. He also sold and shipped hundreds of harmonicas across the country through the years. The slow, fast, happy, and sad ballads told stories that bounced off the cardboard-ceiled walls of our little country home. The aroma of Mama's homemade cake, baking in the old woodstove, would fill each room while the sound of Daddy's chopping ax was daily splitting wood for the heater that kept us warm during the cold winter months. There was no running water in the house; an aluminum dipper floated on top of the spring water that had to be carried to the house in a two-gallon aluminum bucket. Beside the bucket was a matching aluminum wash pan placed beneath the hand towel hanging from a nail driven in the wall. We all drank from the same dipper, washed our hands in the same water, and dried on the same towel. The station from Greenville, South Carolina was the only one we could pick up on our old black-and-white television. I often strained to watch The Roy Rogers Show, The Lone Ranger, Sky King, and Sergeant Preston of the Yukon through the snow and interference that were ever present on the screen. Although these programs were entertaining, my favorites were always the music shows. I tried to never miss The Porter Wagon Show, Flatt and Scruggs, and The Wilburn Brothers Show. These were not only music to my ears, but I could actually see the entertainers. I loved the sound and admired the fancy "show" clothes that they all wore. The wagon wheels adorned with rhinestones and jewels distinguished Porter Wagoner's clothes from all the others. The ladies' full-skirted ballroom gowns were often clenched with both hands and raised to knee length as they broke out into a buck-dancing routine. So many talented groups rise out of the hills of Appalachia. Deciding who would be included in this edition was a very tough decision. The groups you will learn about throughout these pages, whom you can also listen to on a companion CD available directly from Foxfire, are just a sampling of the talent that enriches our area. You will experience the music of well-known, well-traveled, award-winning groups like The Primitive Quartet, The Gary Waldrep Band, Curtis Blackwell and The Dixie Bluegrass Boys, and David Holt; multitalented miracles like Johnathan Bond and Young Harmony; talented songwriters and performers like Dale Tilley and Morris and Greg Stancil; and true diamonds in the rough like LV and Mary Mathis, who had never recorded any of their music until now. Whether it be from the stage of the Grand Ole Opry, the Stompin' Ground in Maggie Valley, or Old Mater Farm in Sylva, North Carolina, the voices of the

Crowe Brothers and Mountain Faith will awaken your senses to the true sibling harmony experienced only in family music. George Reynolds and The Foxfire Boys are the true soul of the Foxfire music program. From the classrooms of Rabun County High School to the World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee, to the Olympics in Norway, The Foxfire Boys cut their teeth on bluegrass music under the direction of their mentor and teacher, George Reynolds. Each of these groups submitted one song to be featured on the CD (see www.foxfire.org). Information on how you can obtain more of their music is listed at the end of each article. While music was a dominating factor in the social gatherings of my childhood, I also vividly recall the stories shared by family and friends while sitting on the front-porch swing listening to the rain beat against the rusty old tin roof or stretched out on a patchwork quilt around the woodstove as the poplar logs popped and cracked on a cold wintry night. The stories of crime, murders, ghosts, legends, and "haints" would often bring chills to your spine and sometimes keep you awake for hours just listening to the strange noises of the night. We have shared a few of these in the "Knoxville Girl" section of this book. The older generation often refers to yesteryear as the good ol' days, but the days were not always good. People often suffered heartache and pain, but the love of God, country and family is so evident in all the stories printed within these covers. From the farm families to the family farms to just stories about life, these people shared a love for one another and a moral obligation to society that we have lost somewhere along the way. It has been an honor and a privilege to be a part of The Foxfire 45th Anniversary Book: Singin', Praisin', Raisin'. I will always treasure the memories and be thankful for times spent with contacts; my coeditor, Casi Best, who was and is the "best

This was a gift, but all Foxfire Books are awesome!

great reading material...love it

Gift, been around a long time.

I bought this book for my 79-year-young grandmother... she has the collection of Foxfire books, but had not seen this one. She told me last night it's a great addition to the collection, and she was going through the stories with me. I'm hopeful that I can read these books one day!

Fantastic reading. Very useful information all through this book and the info just might be very to have knowledge of in case the need ever arises. Entertaining for quiet reading. The FoxFire books

all relate to the era of mountain life then and even today. I would recommend everyone get to know the history of such regions. I own several Foxfire books and cherish the collection. There are many illustrations and photos too! Sit back in a comfortable position with a warm beverage on a cold Winters day or enjoy reading while sipping a cold drink on a warming Spring day. Regardless, these books offer pleasant reading anytime. The series have a way of reminding me just how much technology and the haste in society has nearly forgotten just how we got here as a nation. Enjoy!

I purchased this book for my son's birthday and I knew he would enjoy it since he has been collecting the Foxfire books for several years. He loves the out doors and a simple way of life we have lost but the books are almost a step back into that time. This particular issue is also a celebration of the popularity of these books for all these years. I read them as a young mother and I'm happy my son wants them in his library. They are timeless so if you enjoy knowing the old ways of living you will love the Foxfire series.

I am hooked on these books and this one meets my expectations just as it's predecessors have done. This book continues the tradition of preserving the history, culture, and folkways of southern Appalachia. Over the years, the production costs have caused the books to be a little less sturdy but that is the only negative I found. If you have read and enjoyed any other Foxfire publications then you will probably enjoy this one too, especially if you love gospel and mountain music and the instruments peculiar to the region.

Complements the originals well. Gave it to my dad for Christmas. He had already read it by the time I saw him again right after New Years. He always loved the older books and he loved this one too.

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