

**Final Report**

**“Research, Curricula Development, & Grant-Writing Support for  
ROOTS WITH WINGS:  
Floyd County, Virginia, Place-based Education Oral History Project:  
A Youth Resiliency Effort”**

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August 2014 – June 30, 2015**

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## Final Report Narrative

**Title of Project:** “Research, Curricula Development, & Grant-Writing Support for ROOTS WITH WINGS: Floyd County, Virginia, Place-based Education Oral History Project: A Youth Resiliency Effort”

**Grant Period:** February 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

**Grantee Name:** Radford University

**Project Director:** Theresa L. Burriss

### **Description of Project:**

Students involved in the fall 2014 Appalachian Teaching Project provided support for the ROOTS WITH WINGS: Floyd County Place-based Education Oral History Project. In collaboration with community partners from the Old Church Gallery/Floyd Story Center and Floyd County High School, ATP students created a workbook of exercises to accompany the existing Project Manual. The hands-on exercises were shared with the high school students in spring 2015 to increase their understanding of and appreciation for oral history, its social importance, and effective ways of collecting it. The curricula also included instruction on current technology and digital recording/editing to capture the oral history interviews. Importantly, ATP students identified potential grantors for the community partners to increase funding for their work.

In the process of obtaining oral histories from elders in the community, students document and preserve their rural heritage and come to understand what it means to be a rural resident in Appalachia. Moreover, the project fosters civic pride in these young people as they listen to and record the lived stories of their place.

The fall 2014 ATP students’ work directly supported the spring 2015 students’ mentoring of the Floyd County High School students, as well as contributed to the community partners’ preservation and digitization of Floyd County’s rural heritage.

### **Activities:**

- Activities with community partners (include partner name(s), dates and locations of meetings, topics of focus-group discussions, etc.): ATP students met with our community partners several times over the course of the semester, with the introductory meeting taking place on Thursday, September 4, at the Old Church Gallery in Floyd, VA. During this initial meeting, the partners provided a tour of the Gallery so students would understand and appreciate the scope of their community work. The students also made the trip to Floyd on Thursday, October 2 to discuss their work-to-date on the project, presenting their findings from reviewing previous Floyd County High School students’ reflection logs. Additionally, they shared the knowledge they were acquiring through the

assigned readings and how they related to the oral history project. One of the community members, Kathleen Pauley, came to RU to meet with the students on Thursday, October 16, where she was given information about potential grantors and she communicated with students about video equipment instructional needs. Over the next several weeks, we communicated virtually with our partners by sending them drafts of the Workbook. Then the students gave the final presentation to the community partners on Thursday, November 20, in a classroom at Floyd County High School.

- Required presentations of student research to community groups other than the primary partner (include the name of the group(s), the date of the presentation(s), and document publicity surrounding the presentation in the attachment section below): The Radford University ATP students presented at the Appalachian Teaching Project Conference on Saturday, December 6, where they also displayed their poster. On Wednesday, February 11, the students presented before fourteen Appalachian Arts & Studies in the Schools participating teachers at their spring meeting on RU's campus. During the Appalachian Studies Association Conference, the students presented to a packed room (it was quite exciting!) on Saturday, March 28. They displayed their poster during the poster session on Friday, March 27, as well. And lastly, the students presented during the RU Student Engagement Forum on Wednesday, April 22.
- Links to any videos or social media that show the students interacting with their community partner(s): The first link below is a photo I posted on our Appalachian Regional & Rural Studies Facebook page with the ATP students meeting with our community partners. The second URL is a photo of my ATP students presenting at the Radford University Student Engagement Forum in April 2015.  
<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10203250800658921&set=o.275342579152901&type=3&theater>,  
<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10204609512865877&set=o.275342579152901&type=3&theater> ,  
<http://www.radford.edu/content/radfordcore/home/news/releases/2015/february/roots-with-wings.html>

### **Project Outcomes:**

Students developed leadership skills through several interactions with our community partners, primarily by discussing their class reading assignments, research methods and methodologies, and presenting their final product, the Workbook. If they weren't already familiar with the community's assets, the students, who were engaged active learners, became aware of particular Floyd County strengths, such as the Old Church Gallery/Floyd Story Center,

Floyd County High School, and elder community members who have stories of resilience, perseverance, and bravery to share with the youth.

Additionally, all the students participated in the community-driven project through primary and secondary research. Primary research included analysis of Floyd County High School students' reflective writings from previous years to guide the RU students' creation of the Workbook. Regular conversations with community members also informed the students' work, while secondary research/reading on various authors, including Michel Foucault and Herbert Reid & Betsy Taylor, provided the students theoretical issues to consider in the overall interviewing process.

The Workbook, which was created to provide hands-on experiences for the high school students before they actually interview WWII veterans, was a tangible project outcome, as was the project poster documenting the students' work and that was displayed at the ATP Conference in December 2014 and the ASA Conference in March 2015.

### **Problems Encountered:**

Coding the Floyd County HS students' logs proved a bit challenging, but once the students overcame the initial hurdle of winnowing down the themes, they were able to capture important information to guide the Workbook creation.

### **Program Continuation and Sustainability:**

Due to the community partners' commitment to the "Roots with Wing" project, and their desire to continue to work with Radford University students, we foresee strong collaborations into the future. The interviewee demographics will change by necessity, simply because of the age of WWII vets. Based on the preliminary search for granting agencies that would find interest in "Roots with Wings," we are hopeful that RU and our community partners will secure additional external funding in the near future.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

We believe the "Roots with Wings" project directly addresses one of the ARC's missions, namely, strengthening the capacity of Appalachian people. This is accomplished through the intergenerational dialogues and mentoring, which builds deeper, more resilient community relations. Moreover, we build capacity through the RU students teaching the Floyd County HS students technology and interviewing skills that will provide them an advantage when pursuing postsecondary education and/or seeking employment.

At this time, we have no recommendations because we view the project as successful.