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Special Issue Editors' Notes

Daniel W. Phillips III
Lindsey Wilson College

Steven F. Hundersmarck
Indiana Institute of Technology

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SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORS' NOTES

DANIEL W. PHILLIPS III

LINDSEY WILSON COLLEGE

and

STEVEN F. HUNDERSMARCK

INDIANA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A quick scan through the Uniform Crime Reports from 2005 shows that the rate of violence in urban areas was highest followed by suburban areas with rural violent crime the lowest. Property crime rates follow a similar trend. As noted by the BJS summary "Urban households have historically been and continue to be the most vulnerable to property crime, burglary, motor vehicle theft and theft in the United States." (BJS 2006). Little else is mentioned in the summary regarding rates of property crime in rural areas. Historically little time or effort has been placed in rural crime causes or response. Rural crime is distinguished in the literature as subordinate to crime in larger populated areas. As noted by Donnermeyer, Jobes, and Barclay (2006) in the 20th century rural crime was one of the least studied areas of criminology. They state that "Rural crime was rarely examined, either comparatively with urban crime or as a subject worthy of investigation in its own right." (p. 199). Donnermeyer goes on to note that rural crime is one of the most misunderstood and neglected phenomena in criminology.

We concur. What we have done is to continue the dialogue begun by Donnermeyer and colleagues. This journal is a collaboration of articles that explore just some issues that confront criminal justice practitioners in rural settings. With limited resources and an insufficient amount of data to base their actions law enforcement officers, court personnel, counselors and corrections officials must deal with divergent populations, circumstances and events in rural settings. In this original composition of articles we begin what hopes to be the beginning of a dialogue by researchers to understand the complexity and depth of rural crime in America today.

This special edition focused on rural crime is broken roughly into four sections: theory, property and drug crime, violent crimes, and special populations. The first section contains only one article but is written by two authors who combined have

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a great deal of knowledge in rural sociology and critical criminology. In “Toward a Rural Critical Criminology,” Joe Donnermeyer and Walter DeKeseredy give readers a discussion of rural criminology and reasons to develop a rural critical criminology further. We cannot say enough about the valuable contributions made by Joe Donnermeyer. Not only has he contributed an article but he has helped us find additional authors in the field who have been willing to work with us in producing this double-edition. Dan had many conversations with Joe. These conversations revealed that Joe was passionate about rural issues and rural crime issues more specifically. He has dedicated his career to these issues.

The next section (articles 2-5) reflects both property crimes and drug crimes. The first two articles examine the illegal use of land and animals in rural areas. Tunnell examines illegal dumping in rural Kentucky in “Illegal Dumping: Large and Small Scale Littering in Rural Kentucky.” Forsyth examines an old form of rural crime: poaching. In “The Game of Wardens and Poachers,” Forsyth examines both the role of law enforcement agent and criminal in this “game” of illegal hunting. Hedayati provides our only international article that focuses on car and farm vehicle theft in Australia. Finally, in this second section, Weisheit reports on his research in “Making Methamphetamine,” a growing problem in rural America.

In section three, the first two articles (“Violent and Criminal Behaviors in Rural and Non-Rural African-American Youth: A Risk-Protective Factor Approach” and “Theoretical Predictors of Delinquency In and Out of School Among a Sample of Rural Public School Youth”) are particularly quantitative in nature. Each examines factors related to violent delinquency in rural youth. Berthelot et al. focuses on the Southern subculture of Violence while Davis looks at Southern suicide patters in rural and urban areas. In the fourth section there are two special populations presented: Native American policing and Amish victimization and offending. There is scant literature on either of these groups. Also, each of these groups is a distinct subculture in the United States. Most people do not realize that Amish crime, particularly delinquency, exists and that Amish people do not generally file complaints when they are injured by others.

It has been a pleasure to edit this work. Most of the authors involved have a long history of researching in rural sociology, particularly rural crime. The newcomers who contributed to this field have produced excellent research and articles. Overall, all of the authors in this work have produced superior work quickly and have been invested in the topic of rural crime. In closing, we would like to thank the *Southern Rural Sociology* journal editor, Douglas Clayton Smith, for the opportunity to edit this work and for his advice and guidance during this project.

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We trust that the finished product will provide students and peers alike with valuable information that will further the rural crime field.

August 22, 2008

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