

# **A Baker's Dozen Significant Books about Rural Criminology in the Twenty-First Century**

**Joseph F. Donnermeyer**

Emeritus Professor, The Ohio State University, United States

Adjunct Professor, University of New England, Australia

**Correspondence:** Joseph F. Donnermeyer; [donnermeyer.1@gmail.com](mailto:donnermeyer.1@gmail.com)



### Abstract

Most of us have heard of and likely voiced the phrase a ‘baker’s dozen’ to refer to adding an extra item to a group of twelve to make sure there are enough. This review essay will abide by this centuries-old tradition, however, out of a necessity rather than incarceration. There are now enough monographs and edited books about rural crime and criminal justice topics that selecting a trim ten, a lissome eleven or a svelte dozen is impossible. Yet, even with 13, as the reader of this review essay will discover, there are plenty more books that could easily qualify for the list. To show no disrespect for those tomes not mentioned in the main text of this highly personalized version (or perhaps, highly biased rendition is the more accurate phrase) of a baker’s dozen, the essay will conclude with a brief mention of the others.

**Keywords:** rural criminology; crime and justice studies; books; rural scholarship

Most of us have heard of and likely voiced the phrase a ‘baker’s dozen’ to refer to adding an extra item to a group of twelve to make sure there are enough. One internet site called *Taste of Home* (<https://www.tasteofhome.com/article/13-bakers-dozen/>) claims the phrase goes all the way back to thirteenth century England, when bakers used the tactic to avoid accusations of cheating and subsequent jail time by inadvertently selling a batch of bread loaves that could possibly be underweight. Hence, the criminological connection.

This review essay will abide by this centuries-old tradition, however, out of a necessity rather than incarceration. There are now enough monographs and edited books about rural crime and criminal justice topics that selecting a trim ten, a lissome eleven or a svelte dozen is impossible. Yet, even with 13, as the reader of this review essay will discover, there are plenty more books that could easily qualify for the list. To show no disrespect for those tomes not mentioned in the main text of this highly personalized version (or perhaps, highly biased rendition is the more accurate phrase) of a baker’s dozen, the essay will conclude with a brief mention of the others.

Rural crime and criminal justice studies have certainly grown in the twenty-first century. A history of this growth can be found in Donnermeyer (2019), as well as an earlier version in Donnermeyer (2016). Both histories describe rural crime scholarship as progressing from a “scattered, theory-less” collection “with little synergy” to a body of research and theorizing that is today “more theoretically diverse, more critical, more international, and more self-aware” (Donnermeyer, 2019, p. 7). Along the way, there were a number of significant events associated with various rural-focused conferences, special issues in journals, the founding of three professional networks for rural scholars and practitioners to join, and the establishment of two book series where scholarship about rural crime can be published.<sup>1</sup>

Each book in this baker’s dozen is discussed briefly in terms of the significance of its contribution to the advancement of rural criminological scholarship. Especially important in

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<sup>1</sup> **Significant rural crime conferences** include: 1980 - a conference on rural crime, sponsored by the National Rural Crime Prevention Center at The Ohio State University, U.S.; 1999 – the “Crime in Rural Communities” conference at the University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales, AU; 2006 – a second conference on “Crime in Rural Communities”, also held at the University of New England, AU; 2014 – the “Crime and Community Safety” conference, held at the Royal Institute of Stockholm, Sweden; 2017 – an “International Conference on Rural Crime”, held in Centurion, South Africa and sponsored by the University of South Africa, College of Law and various agricultural organizations in South Africa; 2018 – a conference on “Rural Crime and the Law”, held at the University of New England, AU; 2019 – “Understanding Crime and Rural Communities”, a workshop of about two dozen invited scholars held at the Gippsland campus of Federation University, Churchill, Victoria, AU; 2020 – Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe Conference, with a theme of “Perspectives of Rural Safety, Security and Rural Criminology”, held online due to the Covid pandemic; and 2023 – Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe Conference, held at the University of Maribor, Ljubljana, Slovenia, with a theme of “The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – Rural and Urban Safety and Security Perspectives”. The three **professional networks** are the International Society for the Study of Rural Crime, the Working Group on Rural Criminology (European Society of Criminology) and the Division of Rural Criminology (American Society of Criminology). The two **books series** are the Research in Rural Crime Series of Bristol University Press and the Routledge Studies in Rural Criminology.

selecting these thirteen books was their application of theory, their international focus, or their status as a “first” in some way.

### The Baker’s Dozen

Let’s begin with a brief note on methodology. First, all thirteen books listed here were published in the twenty-first century. This simple rule regrettably leaves out a number of books with historical significance for the development of rural crime and criminal justice studies, with most published toward the conclusion of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, as a single body of work those manuscripts are limited geographically to just a few countries, namely, Australia, England and the United States.<sup>2</sup> Second, after determination of the books to be included in this baker’s dozen – a collection which was based solely on the bias of the author – a random selection to establish the order of titles for discussion was made to eliminate any further personal and professional prejudices. Simply, the titles were written on separate pieces of paper, folded in half so the title could not be seen until opened, placed into a hat, followed by a drawing, one-by-one, to determine their place in line.<sup>3</sup> All thirteen are equally significant.

#### #1 – *Indigenous Criminology* by Chris Cunneen and Juan Tauri (2017, Policy Press)

This book is not rural per se, but addresses inequality, discrimination, exclusion, and a host of other issues that are directly associated with injustices against indigenous peoples. At the time of the book’s publication, the authors were from the University of New South Wales (Sydney, Australia) and the University of Waikato (Hamilton, New Zealand), and even though the book is tilted toward Australia and New Zealand, there is also a good focus on justice issues related to Canada and the United States. As well, even though the book itself is

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<sup>2</sup> Notable rural crime books from the twentieth century include: 1982 – *Rural Crime: Integrating Research and Prevention*, edited by Timothy J. Carter, G. Howard Phillips, Joseph F. Donnermeyer, and Todd N. Wurschmidt (Allenheld Osmun Publishers); 1989 – *Crime in a Rural Community*, by Michael O’Conner and David E. Gray (The Federation Press); 1993 – *Drug Use in Rural American Communities*, edited by Ruth Edwards (Routledge); 1996 – *Crime and Policing in Rural and Small-town America* (1<sup>st</sup> edition), by Ralph Weisheit, David N. Falcone and L. Edward Wells (Waveland Press), with a second edition (1999) and a third edition (2006) subsequently published by Waveland; 1997 – *Rural Substance Abuse: State of Knowledge and Issues*, edited by Elizabeth B. Robertson, Zili Sloboda, Gayle M. Boyd, Luka Beatty and Nicholas J. Kozel (National Institute on Drug Abuse, Research Monograph 168); 1997 – *Community Policing in a Rural Setting*, by Quint C. Thurman and Edmund F. McGarrell (Anderson Publishing Co.); 1998 – *Rural Women Battering and the Justice System: An Ethnography* by Neil Websdale (Sage); and 1999 – *Crime and Conflict in the Countryside*, edited by Gavin Dingwall and Susan R. Moody (University of Wales Press).

<sup>3</sup> Acknowledgement goes to the author’s wife, Diane Donnermeyer, for deftly pulling each folded piece of paper out of a hat. The hat itself was first acquired by the author during an interview with a stock theft investigator of the New South Wales Police Force near the small town of Lightning Ridge in northcentral NSW. Soon to be transferred to the Sydney area, the police officer felt he no longer needed it and thought it might make a good souvenir for the American bloke. It is a very wide brimmed navy-blue felt hat in the cowboy style (apologies for the ethnocentric phrase) for protecting the wearer from the sun on hot, sunny days while working in the field. Decorating the over-sized headpiece is a blue and white checkered band, a symbolic identifier worn by the police in many localities, such as Chicago. Wearing it to a supermarket in Columbus, Ohio elicits curious glances and bemused faces.

not exclusively rural, there is a great deal of discussion about marginalized people, many of whom live in various rural localities of these four settler societies.

The great significance of this book, therefore, is that it brings a serious and focused discussion about people whose lands were expropriated, often through violence and theft, and the resulting harms and abuses brought on the original inhabitants by colonial invaders and the imposition of their forms of governance. Sadly, exploitative forms of capitalism, especially economic activities associated with farming, ranching, timbering, fishing, and resource extraction will continue to be important justice issues related to their impacts on indigenous groups and rural peoples around the world, such as the destruction of rain forests in Brazil.

**#2 – *Water, Governance, and Crime Issues*, edited by Katja Eman, Gorazd Meško, Lorenzo Segato, and Massimo Migliorini (Springer, 2020)**

Like *Indigenous Criminology*, this edited book is not exclusively rural, but as one reads each of the chapters, it is clear that justice issues associated with water may well impact rural peoples and rural communities more so than various urban populations. The authors are from the University of Maribor, Slovenia (Eman and Meško), REACT (Research and Action), Padova, Italy (Segato), and LINKS (Leading Innovation and Knowledge for Society), Torino, Italy (Migliorini). The organizations where the latter two editors work focus on security and technology, from environmental crimes to cybersecurity.

Significantly, in this collection of contributed chapters, most of the authors frame water and its governance as environmental harms and crimes. Equally significant is the book’s international perspective, with chapters focused specifically on Slovenia, Cyprus, Spain, the Canary Islands, and South Africa. Perhaps of greatest significance is that the book is very forward-thinking, that is, examining water as a likely source for many future issues associated with human rights, conflict, war, and genocide. Hence, its rural criminological value is huge.

**#3 – *Rural Transformations and Rural Crime: International Critical Perspectives in Rural Criminology*, edited by Matt Bowden and Alistair Harkness (Bristol University Press, 2022)**

Matt Bowden (senior lecturer, Technological University Dublin, Ireland) and Alistair Harkness (senior lecturer and Co-Director of the Centre for Rural Criminology at the University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales, Australia) are the editors of the recently inaugurated series on “Research on Rural Crime” by Bristol University Press. *Rural Transformations* is the first book to be published in the series, which alone makes it significant in the twenty-first century history of rural criminological scholarship. They chose, as a primary focus of the book, an examination of rural crime and criminal justice issues from various theoretical perspectives, with a special eye on how macro change influences the safety and security of rural peoples around the world. Hence, most chapters assume a critical

stance. For example, there are chapters that discuss governance in the context of late modernity, feminist perspectives on abuse against women, a left realist view of theft of farm property in Ireland, and a critical examination of rural policing.

**#4 – *Crime and Safety in the Rural: Lessons from Research*, by Vania Ceccato and Jonatan Abraham (Springer, 2022)**

Both authors are from the Department of Urban Planning and Environment, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden. This book is remarkable in two specific ways. First, thanks to their efforts, the book is available for download, free of charge, through Springer open access (<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-98290-4>). A growing concern among many academics and practitioners, but especially rural criminologists, is the price of books and their accessibility to future generations of scholars. In this respect, Ceccato and Abraham's effort to find the resources necessary to create an open-access book ought to be acknowledged, congratulated, and emulated by other rural scholars. Second, their book offers the most comprehensive review of the rural crime and criminal justice literature since the pioneering book by Ralph Weisheit et al. (1996) – *Crime and Policing in Rural and Small Town America* – and its subsequent two editions in 1999 and 2006. *Crime and Safety in the Rural: Lessons from Research* by Ceccato and Abraham is a step up because its focus is international, which is essential both for bringing greater cohesiveness to a burgeoning network of scholars and practitioners, and for the work of future rural criminologists.

Each of the chapters in this book cites and discusses pertinent literature that address such issues as perceptions of safety, rural police, crime prevention, offenders and victims, and implications for practice. The book also includes a chapter that explores why crime and safety in rural areas is important and identifies emergent topics for rural crime research. Paralleling their book is an article published by the same authors that can be accessed in the *Journal of Rural Studies* (2020, volume 94, pages 250-273) titled "Crime and Safety in Rural Areas: A Systematic Review of the English-language literature 1980-2020." Previously, Vania Ceccato had published *Rural Crime and Community Safety* (Routledge, 2016), a book that primarily focused on Sweden but incorporated rural crime literature from many other places as well.

**#5 – *Woman Abuse in Rural Places*, by Walter S. DeKeseredy (Routledge, 2021)**

Walter DeKesereedy occupies the Anne Deane Carlson Endowed Chair and is the Director of the Research Center on Violence at West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia, U.S. *Woman Abuse in Rural Places* is the second in the *Routledge Studies in Rural Criminology series*. One of the pioneering areas in rural criminological scholarship – and one that has challenged mainstream criminological notions that so-called socially disorganized localities are associated with crime – is the work by DeKeseredy and colleagues on violence against women in rural communities. As his scholarship and other rural criminological scholarship has clearly demonstrated, it is the social organization of rural places that explains

variations in types of crimes, as well as their extent, and calls into question whether there is really any such thing as social disorganization.<sup>4</sup>

A great deal of DeKeseredy’s own research has focused on rural communities in the Appalachian region of the United States, however, this book taps into a rich international literature, synthesizing scholarship on violence against rural women in many countries around the world. Significantly, it finds the social, cultural and economic patterns to be largely similar – poverty, patriarchal norms/male peer support and negligence by the community from religious leaders to law enforcement, to take any kind of preventive or enforcement action against these types of offenses. This is not the first rural-focused book by Walter DeKeseredy. In collaboration with Martin D. Schwartz (formerly of George Washington University and a Professor Emeritus from Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, U.S.), they published *Dangerous Exits: Escaping Abusive Relationship in Rural America* (Rutgers University Press, 2009).

**#6 – *Rural Victims of Crime: Representations, Realities and Responses*, edited by Rachel Hale and Alistair Harkness (Routledge, 2022)**

As mentioned, Alistair Harkness is a senior lecturer located at the University of New England in New South Wales, and at the time of its publication, Rachel Hale was an independent researcher and research associate with the Centre for Rural Criminology at the University of New England. She is now a lecturer at Central Queensland University. Essentially, the chapter contributions are divided into three views of victimization, as the title of the edited book states. First, there are “representations” of rural victims and rural crime, such as how victimization is measured, barriers to access to justice from the point of view that the criminal justice system tends not to treat rural victims as important, and fear of crime by rural peoples. Second, are the “realities” of rural victimization, such as violence against women, interpersonal violence, farm crime, and victimizations associated with both environmental crime and climate change. Finally, there are the “responses” of both the police and the criminal justice system, addressing issues from policing styles to advocacy for rural victims.

Like most other edited books, the final chapter is reserved for the editors to speculate on future directions of rural victimization scholarship, focusing squarely on the ways place is the context in which the vulnerability of people is expressed. Rightly so, Hale and Harkness observe that not only does rurality potentially and in actuality increase the vulnerability of rural people to crime, it can also make them relatively invisible to the police, criminal justice agencies from courts to victims services, the media, political leaders, and the general public. It is precisely this invisibility and the work of Hale and Harkness to advocate for rural victims that makes this work an easy selection for my baker’s dozen list of significant rural crime books since the twenty-first century began.

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<sup>4</sup> See also Donnermeyer (2015) for a review of rural studies that utilize a social disorganization perspective and of rural crime research that call into question the assumptions behind the theory.

**#7 – *A Handbook of Food Crime: Immoral and Illegal Practices in the Food Industry and What To Do about Harm*, edited by Allison Gray and Ronald Hinch (Policy Press, 2018)**

At the time this book was produced, Allison Gray was a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, and Ron Hinch was Professor Emeritus at the Ontario Institute of Technology (now called Ontario Tech University, located in Oshawa, Ontario, Canada). There was no other book of this kind before Gray and Hinch collected a set of contributors who addressed the crimes and harms associated with food and its production. This is a book that focuses largely on state and corporate crime, but not completely. Among the 24 chapters is one on slavery and forced labor in the chocolate industry and the way school meal programs in Canada and the U.S. have changed with neo-liberal economies.

Written by Gray, the first and last chapters act as book ends well worth reading, even if the reader does not have time for the middle 22 chapters. In tandem, they define what is meant by food crime, reasons why it is difficult to study crimes and harms associated with food production, processing and retailing, and the even greater barriers that come with attempts to effectively regulate and progressively reform the food system.

Like the first two books (indigenous criminology and water theft) in this baker's dozen list, this book is focused on an issue that is neither exclusively nor uniquely rural, but much of it is certainly within the purview of interests for rural criminology theorists, researchers, and practitioners. The same can be said about a whole panoply of books centered on green crimes and harms, that is, not rural in focus per se, but still with much to say about rurality and crime. So, I ask, why be parochial when the field of rural criminology is much better off if it is flexible and inclusive?

**#8 – *The Encyclopedia of Rural Crime*, edited by Alistair Harkness, Jessica René Peterson, Matt Bowden, Cassie Pederson and Joseph F. Donnermeyer (Bristol University Press, 2023)**

The academic credentials of Harkness and Bowden are already mentioned in this review essay, as well as the author of this essay on the title page. Jessica René Peterson is an assistant professor in the criminology and criminal justice program of Southern Oregon University, Ashland, Oregon, United States. Cassie Pederson is a lecturer in Criminology and Criminal Justice at Federation University near Melbourne, in Victoria, Australia.

I never thought I would see the day when an encyclopedia about rural crime would be published, in part because I thought, especially in my early career days, that there would never be enough scholarly fodder to create such a product. Additionally, I never believed I would have the privilege and the joy of working with so many younger colleagues to create the product. Well, like so many other things, I was “wrong, wrong, wrong!” (to quote a valued colleague and co-author). This Encyclopedia, however, makes the baker's dozen list because there is no other scholarly product like it. Altogether, there are 85 entries divided



into five sections, including theories of rural crime, rural crime studies, rural criminal justice studies, rural peoples and groups, and the geographic status of rural criminological research. The final section was almost an afterthought, but when suggested, embraced by the editors with great enthusiasm because where else in the ever-expanding literature has rural crime been discussed on a continent-by-continent basis? To respond to skepticism in advance – Yes! – it includes a criminological consideration of Antarctica, especially in relation to the confined space of expeditionary communities who explore and study this vast, frozen stretch of land and ice.

All 85 entries provide short introductions to topics ranging from classic criminological theory to heritage crime to rogue farmers, and every issue in between. Each end with a short list of suggested readings for those who want to pursue the topic in a more in-depth way. In this sense, the book as a whole (or a selected set of entries) can be used like a textbook to introduce students enrolled in criminology and criminal justice courses to various topics from a rural point of view. Furthermore, it will be affordable to students and scholars working with more limited budgets with the release of a paperback edition in 2024.

**#9 – *Policing the Frontier: An Ethnography of Two Worlds in Niger*, by Mirco Göpfert (Cornell University Press, 2020)**

Mirco Göpfert is a Professor in the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University, Frankfurt, German. This book’s significance is partly based on the historical context of rural criminology and its subsequent development. For such a long time, rural criminology was marginalized and ignored by mainstream criminology, especially in the American Society of Criminology, and remains so to some extent today. For example, I participated in a review of a manuscript to *Criminology* as one of three reviewers many years ago; one of the other reviewers questioned the manuscript’s significance because the sample was drawn from “smaller” places, such as the U.S. cities of Milwaukee and Indianapolis, rather than Chicago and Los Angeles. In other words, there was no variety of place by size in his conceptual thinking, representing a kind of diminished criminological imagination.<sup>5</sup>

Without variation, how does one do any kind of science? From the early days of rural criminology’s emergence during the decade of the 1990s, an effort was made to avoid the myopic ignorance of parochial scholarship in favor of inclusiveness.<sup>6</sup> This principle certainly

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<sup>5</sup> For readers who may not know, both Milwaukee and Indianapolis are metropolitan areas with populations exceeding one million.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of what is rural criminology and who is a rural criminologist, there is a set of three essays to be found in *Rurality, Crime and Society*, the joint newsletter of the International Society for the Study of Rural Crime, the American Society of Criminology, Division of Rural Criminology, and the European Society of Criminology, European Rural Criminology Working Group. They are: “What is a Rural Criminologist”, volume 2, issue 2, by Joseph Donnermeyer and Matt Bowden (<https://ruralitycrimeandsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Rurality-Crime-and-Society-Oct-2021.pdf>), “Why We Should Care about Rural Crime!” volume 3, issue 1, by Alistair Harkness and Joseph F. Donnermeyer (<https://ruralitycrimeandsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Rurality-Crime-and-Society-V3-I1.pdf>); “What Can We Do about Rural Crime?”, volume 3, issue 2 by Joseph F. Donnermeyer, Matt Bowden and

pertains to the locations from which rural scholarship originates as well. Further, this principle was applied to the *Encyclopedia of Rural Crime* as discussed immediately above, and should be held strongly whenever possible in all future rural scholarship. Hence, this baker's dozen list includes a book by an author who apparently is not strongly linked to the growing network of rural crime and criminal justice scholars. Notwithstanding, Göpfert's book is a very valuable contribution to the literature because it is about a region of the world where rural criminological scholarship (outside of South Africa and a few countries in East Africa and West Africa) is non-existent. Even more so, it is a book focused on how the institution of rural policing, in this case the gendarmerie, conducts itself in Niger, a country in northwestern Africa with a land area of nearly 1.3 million square kilometers (much larger than the U.S. state of Texas or the country which colonized it – France), and a mostly rural population.

In this book, Göpfert examines the struggles of gendarmes who are caught between their own bureaucracy and the everyday lives of rural Nigerins. In this sense, the word “frontier” now refers not merely to geography, but to the socio-cultural spaces between a government entity, the police, and the peoples who live in a region of the world that resided there long before the imposition of colonial forms of governance. In this respect, Göpfert's ethnographic examination has great relevance to rural policing in every other part of the world.

**#10 – *Outlaw Women: Prison, Rural Violence, and Poverty in the American West* by Susan Dewey, Bonnie Zare, Catherine Connolly, Rhett Epler, and Rosemary Bratton (New York University Press, 2019)**

Susan Dewey was an Associate Professor within the School of Culture, Gender, and Social Justice at the University of Wyoming (Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.) during the production of this book, but is now in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Program of The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, U.S. Bonne Zare is an Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, Virginia, U.S. Catherine Connolly is a Professor and Director of Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Wyoming, while Rhett Epler was a Ph.D. candidate, but graduated recently and is now an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia, U.S. Finally, Rosemary Bratton is the Executive Director of the Wyoming Women's Business Center in Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.

There are two major reasons why this book is of great significance to rural scholars. First, it is focused on the incarceration of rural women, a topic nearly absent in the literature. Second, it links women's experiences to their backgrounds/biographies and what happens to them after their incarceration ends, all of which the authors refer to as the “architecture of gendered violence”. The authors artfully craft profiles of these rural women from an

extensive set of interviews with 71 subjects. However, the profiles are “composite characters”, that is, of characteristics common to a certain set of their interviewees. There are the pseudonyms of Tammi, Nedrah, Dakota, Itzel, and Janea – each of whom depict distinctive patterns in the life histories of incarcerated rural women. These empirically-based social constructions create a highly readable narrative from which it is easy to think about their implications for criminological theory and future research concerning prisons and prisoners in a rural context.

**#11 – *Jacked Up and Unjust: Pacific Islander Teens Confront Violent Legacies*, by Katherine Irwin and Karen Umemoto (University of California Press, 2016)**

Katherine Irwin is a Professor in the Department of Sociology, University of Hawai’i, Manoa and Karen Umemoto was a Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Hawai’i, Manoa. Since publication of the book, Professor Umemoto has moved to the departments of Urban Planning and Asian American Studies and is the first to occupy the Helen and Morgan Chu Endowed Director’s Chair of the Asian American Studies Center at the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA), US. Like *Outlaw Women*, this book is based on the narratives of various youth and adults, as well as observations of neighborhood conditions where they live. Like so many other books that appear on this baker’s dozen list, this book is not exclusively rural, but nonetheless, has a strong rural focus. The researchers selected two neighborhoods for their research, one of which was rural. What was common between the two localities was that the youth living in both were described as “marginalized” youth. What the authors found was a pattern of social and cultural challenges common to youth, rural or urban, and of their experiences with both verbal and physical violence.<sup>7</sup> These experiences are often contextualized around the very institutions expected to socialize and protect them, especially schools and law enforcement.

Like Göpfert’s book, the findings in *Jacked Up and Unjust* illustrate the legacy of colonialism on the contemporary context of crime and justice. This book’s significance is two-fold. First, it is rare to find a book of any kind focused on Pacific Islander youth, or for that matter, youth from the Caribbean or other localities off the “beaten path” of mainstream criminological literature. Second, the authors’ findings of similar experiences of youth from the rural and urban study sites bring an interesting point of debate; in a world where criminological scholarship can be expressed by the arrogance of a reviewer who believes that Milwaukee and Indianapolis are not significant study sites because they are too small, hence, why not also consider if the similarity of experiences with violence, discrimination and marginalization among both rural and urban youth on the island of Oahu makes rural criminology itself irrelevant and insignificant? The answer is really quite simple: the challenge itself shows a highly urban-centric stance that can be dismissed by a simple retort –

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<sup>7</sup> In a similar vein as the findings from the Irwin and Umemoto book, refer to Robin A. Robinson and Judith A. Ryder’s article in *Critical Criminology* titled “‘Constant Violence from Everywhere’: Psychodynamics of Power and Abuse amongst Rural and Small-Town Youth (2014, volume 24, page 545-560). Their scholarship was based on youth from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, a peninsular popular with Summer time tourists., but otherwise populated by “cranberry farms and fishing villages” (p 547).

perhaps the findings make an urban criminology irrelevant and insignificant, and instead, everyone should consider themselves rural criminologists. There are few crimes, other than some types of farm crime, that are exclusively rural. All other crimes occur in both urban and rural places. It is the place-based context that creates distinctive lines of inquiry from which networks of rural criminology scholars have now emerged. One of those place-based characteristics is population size, or alternately, population density.

**#12 – *Research Methods for Rural Criminologists*, by edited by Ralph A. Weisheit, Jessica René Peterson and Artur Pytlarz (2022, Routledge)**

This edited book, like two others on the baker's dozen list, is part of the "Routledge Studies in Rural Criminology" series. Ralph Weisheit is a Distinguished Professor of Criminal Justice at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, U.S., and a name well-known in rural criminology circles because he is considered one of its pioneers. In fact, the first award developed by the Division of Rural Criminology, American Society of Criminology, is named for him —the Ralph Weisheit Lifetime Achievement Award. Jessica Peterson was described above as one of the five editors for the *Encyclopedia of Rural Crime*. At the time of its publication, Artur Pytlarz was a Ph.D. student in the Technological University Dublin, Ireland, working under the supervision of Matt Bowden.

One of the special things in regard to this book is that the idea for it emerged from a Roundtable discussion about the future of rural criminology at the 2019 annual meeting of the American Criminological Society, held in San Francisco. The discussion centered on how to help a future generation of rural crime scholars get involved with and more easily solve the problems of conducting research among rural peoples and within rural communities. From this discussion, one senior scholar and two junior scholars who attended the roundtable combined to solicit, review and organize the chapters, each of which centered on some aspect of the challenges of conducting research on various methods-related topics. The topics themselves ranged from accessing rural groups – such as police officers working in small towns and remote locations – to conducting surveys, ethnographic interviews, focus groups and other data collection methods among rural peoples, to the use of geographic information systems (GIS) for rural research. Especially unique is a chapter on the ethics of photographing "marginalized" people in a rural context.

**#13 – *Oil, Gas, & Crime: The Dark Side of the Boomtown*, by Rick Ruddell (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017)**

It seems that fate intervened in a way that allowed this book to be the final one randomly selected from the list of my baker's dozen for this review essay. This is why: the idea for this review essay occurred sometime during early 2022, but the actual writing did not begin until early January 2023. It was during the early phase of writing and after random selection of the order of discussion of each book that news of the death of the author on 2 January 2023 was circulated.

Rick Ruddell was the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Chair in Police Studies, Department of Justice Studies, University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. His drift into rural criminology was a case of focusing on topics related to rural studies more generally, and then to criminology, specifically. His path to rural criminological scholarship is similar to that of many of us who have neither a rural background nor majored in criminology for our graduate degrees. I myself grew up where I could see the skyline of downtown Cincinnati and enrolled in only one criminology course during my undergraduate and graduate days, hence I am not burdened by creaky old theoretical traditions that dominate mainstream criminology today. Ruddell is best known in rural criminological scholarly networks for this boomtown book and also one on rural policing in Canada.

This boomtown book is particularly significant because it explores the kinds of crimes and harms that come from rapid economic development in rural communities. Social change and a rise in crimes of all kinds in rural settings is, in actuality, a well-recognized phenomenon, but rarely is it systematically studied in the context of rapid economic development of any kind. Funds for boomtown research are far more likely to be awarded to economists who tout the imagined revenue benefits of extractive industries, while blithely ignoring extraneous costs (i.e., externalities), both economic and social, associated with higher rates of violence, drug use and prostitution. It is this “Pollyanna” view that Ruddell dispels in his boomtown book. He was not the first criminologist to examine these costs, but his book may be the first to cover the issue on an in-depth basis, examining especially an area in the Great Plains regions of the U.S. known as the Bakken Formation, plus additional research on energy development activities in Pennsylvania and other U.S. states.

### **Beyond the Baker’s Dozen: Other Books published in the twenty-first century**

It would be quite easy to engage in sincere second-guessing of my own judgements and substitute any of the books in the list below with those in the baker’s dozen list above. But, this essay would never be finished if a look back caused doubts, with doubts leading to a lack of confidence that in turn results in an endless shuffling of books back and forth from one list to the other. Yet, the books discussed here deserve recognition for their contributions to the advance of rural criminological scholarship in the twenty-first century. And, like the previous list, it contains books that both are explicitly rural-focused and some that are not but have significant rural dimensions.

**Barclay, Elaine, Joseph F. Donnermeyer, John Scott and Russell Hogg (Eds.). (2007). *Crime in Rural Australia*. (Federation Press).**

Since rural criminology’s emergence in the 1990s and early twenty-first century, work by various Australian academics has proven significant in moving rural crime scholarship forward. This book of contributed chapters is one such example. Like the work of Harkness (see both the baker’s dozen list and his books below), it includes a mix of contributions from academics and those who can speak to application, such as a chapter titled “The Stock Squad” (which, by the way, is about animals, not financial securities).

**Blagg, Harry. (2016, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition). *Crime, Aboriginality and the Decolonisation of Justice.* (The Federation Press).**

This book can be considered a companion piece to the Cunneen and Tauri book described in the baker's dozen list. Even though focused on Australia, it can be read in a more general way that shows how marginalized peoples, no matter what defines how they are marginalized, experience the inequities of society through their experiences with crime and the criminal justice system.

**Ceccato, Vania. (2016). *Rural Crime and Community Safety.* Routledge.**

This is comprehensive examination of various crimes and harms, mostly focused on rural Sweden. As well, it includes a thorough examination of policing and crime prevention as applied to the rural regions of Sweden.

**Chakraborti, Neil and Jon Garland (Eds.). (2004). *Rural Racism.* (Willan Publishing).**

This is a one-of-a-kind book because there are so few criminological treatments of prejudice and discrimination against minorities in rural settings (other than with a focus on Indigenous populations). Why is this the case? The answer is difficult to pinpoint, but it is time for a greater focus on this subject, and on hate crimes in a rural context. If a new book emerges over the next several years, it will do so from the firm foundation of this book.

**DeKeseredy, Walter S. and Martin D. Schwartz. (2009). *Dangerous Exits: Escaping Abusive Relationships in Rural America.* (Rutgers University Press).**

This book is an account of the lived experiences of rural women in Appalachian America as victims of violence from their intimate partners. It interprets the interviews based on male-peer-support theory, another example of the relationship of social organization (not disorganization) to crime.

**Donnermeyer, Joseph F. (Ed.). (2016). *The Routledge International Handbook of Rural Criminology.* (Routledge).**

This collection of 42 chapters was an attempt, as the title of the Handbook states, to be international in scope for both its subject matter and its authors. It partially succeeded, but also failed to include very much from Africa and Asia. However, it did lead to the idea of the "Routledge Studies in Rural Criminology" book series.

**Donnermeyer, Joseph F. and Walter S. DeKeseredy. (2014). *Rural Criminology*. (Routledge).**

This monograph was published in the Routledge Series on New Directions in Critical Criminology. It was a specific attempt to develop a critical perspective, specifically the square of crime, for the analysis of rural crime and criminal justice issues from a left realist perspective. As such, it pioneered the application of criminological theory to the study of rural crime and criminal justice issues.

**Eason, John M. (2017). *Big House on the Prairie: Rise of the Rural Ghetto and Prison Proliferation*. (University of Chicago Press).**

Eason's book is focused on both the reasons why some rural communities want prisons, and the impact of prison siting on a rural community in a southern state of the U.S. It's style is an interesting combination of journalism and criminology.

**Fulkerson, Gregory M. and Alexander R. Thomas. (Eds.) (2016). *Reimagining Rural: Urbanormative Portrayals of Rural Life*. (Lexington Books).**

This book is part of a series titled "Studies in Urban-Rural Dynamics" Even though it is U.S. focused, it is certainly the case that rural regions the world over are stereotyped by a media that panders to an urban viewership. Those stereotypes include images about the ways rural areas are places of danger and crime in exaggerated and fictional forms.

**Garriott, William. (2011). *Policing Methamphetamine: Narcopolitics in Rural America*. (New York University Press).**

Like most other rural ethnographies about rural crime, this book is rich in narrative and deep in its description of the context in which drug use, trafficking and production has re-organized the social structure and culture of many rural regions. Its study site location, using pseudonyms, is in West Virginia.

**Hall, Matthew, Jennifer Maher, Angus Nurse, Gary Potter, Nigel South, and Tanya Wyatt. (Eds.) (2017). *Greening Criminology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Contemporary Debates and Future Directions in the Study of Environmental Harm*. (Routledge).**

This book is part of the "Routledge Green Criminology" series, addressing a number of issues with implications for crimes and harms among rural peoples and communities, from violation of environmental regulations by farmers to the violations of wildlife protections and hunting regulations. Every book in this Green Criminology series could potentially be placed on this list, demonstrating the intersectionality of Green and Rural Criminologies.

**Harkness, Alistair (Ed.). (2020). *Rural Crime Prevention: Theory, Tactics and Techniques*. (Routledge).**

This book of contributed chapters was the first book to be published in the Routledge Studies in Rural Criminology series. It continues the theme of attempting to integrate the academic side of rural criminology with the practitioner side of rural criminology, recognizing that criminological research and theorizing is worthless if not applied to considerations of the real-life safety and security of rural peoples and rural communities.

**Harkness, Alistair, Bridget Harris, and David Baker (Eds.). (2016). *Locating Crime in Context and Place: Perspectives on Regional, Rural and Remote Australia*. (Federation Press).**

This edited book is distinctive because it not only covers specific issues of crime and fear of crime in rural Australia, but includes a section of contributed chapters from a practitioner point of view.

**Harkness, Alistair and Rob White (Eds.). (2021). *Crossroads of Rural Crime*. (Emerald).**

This book is one of two products that emerged from the Understanding Crime and Rural Communities workshop held at the Gippsland campus of Federation University (Churchill, Victoria) in 2019 (see footnote 1 above). Edited by the two primary organizers of the conference, it collects in one place a series of chapters focused on rural crime and crime prevention that were presented at the workshop. The second product from this conference was a special issue in *the International Journal of Rural Criminology*, volume 5, issue 1.

**Hayden, Karen E. (2021). *The Rural Primitive in American Popular Culture*. (Lexington Books).**

Like the Fulkerson and Thomas (Eds.) book mentioned on this same list, the Hayden book is part of Lexington Books' series on Studies in Urban-Rural Dynamics. And, like the other book, it may be rural-focused but is not exclusively a criminological-focused book. Yet, it deals substantially with stereotypes of the rural through portrayals of crime.

**Mawby, Rob I. and Richard Yarwood (Eds.). (2011). *Rural Policing and Policing the Rural: A Constable Countryside?* (Ashgate).**

The strength of this book is the diverse rural settings in which the challenges of rural policing are discussed, including Australia, Canada, France, Great Britain, and New Zealand, among others. Plus, there are a number of chapters that address specific issues associated with rural policing, from the poaching of elephants to agricultural crime to rural protests. It compliments nicely the book by Göpfert (2020) on policing in rural Niger.



**Moats, Jason B. (2007). *Agroterrorism: A Guide for First Responders*. (Texas A&M University Press).**

This book is clearly practitioner-based, and was written from the author’s background in emergency management. It summarizes/simplifies research on terrorist groups and their potential to disrupt food production through acts of sabotage to various actions that can be taken to prevent their occurrence.

**Qi, Zewei, April N. Terry and Tamara J. Lynn (Eds.) (2023). *Gender-based violence and rurality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. (Bristol University Press).**

This recently published book in the “Research in Rural Crime” series by Bristol University Press addresses an issue that will need continuous scrutiny by scholars. Gender-based violence, how the criminal justice system, especially the police, address it, and its prevention will remain one of the most important rural criminological issues throughout the twenty-first century. The co-editors are professors in the criminal justice program at Fort Hays University in Kansas and represent one of the few examples where there is a critical mass, if three can be called that, of rural scholars at the same location. Most rural criminologists are connected through strong networks of electronic communication but do not share the same institutional space. Together, they have edited a book that addresses gender-based violence not only in a rural context, but in the context of family abuse, school bullying and other situations in which violence can occur, whether it is verbal, physical or cyber-based.

**Ruddell, Rick. (2017). *Policing Rural Canada*. (de Sitter Publications).**

This is the second book for which the late Rick Ruddell is known in rural criminological circles. One strength of this book is that it places law enforcement in the context of rural Canada, including policing and Indigenous people, the country’s natural resources, boomtowns, and its long border with the United States.

**Saunders, Skye. (2015). *Whispers from the Bush: The Sexual Harassment of Australian Rural Women*. (The Federation Press).**

Even though this book is focused on the experiences of rural women in Australia, its narrative is generalizable to many other countries of the world with factories, farms and other kinds of businesses located in rural communities where women may work, often supervised by patriarchal males who think they can do what they want without consequence.

**Shukla, Rashi, K. (2016). *Methamphetamine: A Love Story*. (University of California Press).**

This book includes hundreds of quotes from both meth dealers and users in Oklahoma, illustrating the social networks in which this drug becomes central to their

lifestyles. It is the perfect complement to Garriott's (2011) book, with both showing, along with DeKeserdy's (2021) book, the logical fallacies of social disorganization theory, although none of them were written explicitly to refute the theory. Yet, all three display nothing but social organization and the relationship of social organization to crime.

**Thomas, Mary E., and Bruce Baun (eds). (2023). *Settling the Boom: The Sites and Subjects of Bakken Oil*. (University of Minnesota Press).**

This book is a critique of the unfulfilled promises of economic prosperity in the Bakken Oil region, with a focus on community life in Willston, North Dakota. Often mentioned in the book is prostitution, drug use, and violence, which is why it is included on this list.

**Wendt, Sarah. (2009). *Domestic Violence in Rural Australia*. (The Federation Press).**

Even though there is a modicum of attention given to violence against rural women in the rural criminological literature, there is relatively little scholarship devoted to domestic violence in general, including both child and elder abuse. This book is one of the few that does, hence, it is quite valuable in its own right for scholars around the world, even if the focus is on rural regions of southern Australia.

**White, Rob. (2011). *Transnational Environmental Crime: Toward an Eco-Global Criminology*. (Routledge).**

Without a doubt, this book would be part of the "Routledge series on Green Criminology" if had been published more recently. It is a broad book in its scope, that is, not specifically rural in its focus, but with obvious implications for the safety and security of rural populations.

**Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing, and Ille, Meredith L. (2023). *Criminal careers and communities in the United States: An Identity Network Perspective*. (Lexington Books).**

This book is about the identity of people with prison experience, how they developed a criminal identity, and if that identity is maintained after release from prison. As the title states, it is essential to understand the networks in which they participate. The book uses a rural-urban comparative perspective to consider identity networks.

### Conclusion

When I started to write this essay, I was unaware of the number of monographs and edited books that have both criminological and rural significance published since the twenty-first century began and when we worried needlessly about our computers shutting down due to the Y2K bug. I was more than pleasantly surprised by the number of books I discovered. In

fact, I was astounded. Yet, I am sure that I have missed some that deserve to be part of this essay.<sup>8</sup>

The volume of scholarship encapsulated in these books shows the growth of rural criminological scholarship, as well as major gaps in the scholarship itself. By and large, the content of the books are focused on issues in countries where English is the first language, such as Australia, Great Britain, and the United States, with notable exceptions, such as the book about Sweden by Vania Ceccato (which is published in English). In addition, the authors are mostly from these same countries. Hopefully a problem that will eventually be diminished if not solved outright, is the participation of scholars from African, Asian and South American countries, who in the future will advance rural crime and criminal justice studies. In other words, rural criminology has come a long way, but has an equally long way to go.

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<sup>8</sup> If there a book I have failed to mention, send to me an email with the author(s)’ name, title and why it should be considered for a future edition of a similar review essay. ([donnermeyer.1@gmail.com](mailto:donnermeyer.1@gmail.com))

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