



**WESTERN
MICHIGAN**
UNIVERSITY

The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 33
Issue 4 December

Article 22

2006

Rural Social Work Practice. Nancy Lohman and Roger A. Lohman.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>



Part of the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation

(2006) "*Rural Social Work Practice.* Nancy Lohman and Roger A. Lohman.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 33 : Iss. 4 , Article 22.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol33/iss4/22>

This Book Note is brought to you by the Western Michigan University School of Social Work. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



endeavor and the contribution of knowledge and research. It also includes an interesting chapter on professional social work education and the debates between universalists who believe that Western educational models are relevant to all countries and relativists who believe in the indigenization of the educational experience.

The author has produced an extremely valuable account of the history of social work and the many challenging issues the profession has dealt with over the years. His ability to summarize a huge amount of information in a relatively short book is astounding. In addition, the book is well written and the author's sensitivity to the complexities of the issues facing the profession is commendable. Although the book is primarily intended for social work students, it will be a useful resource for practitioners and academics alike. It deserves to be widely read.

Nancy Lohman and Roger A. Lohman, *Rural Social Work Practice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
\$ 65.00 hardcover.

The social work profession emerged in the 19th century in the context of rapid industrialization and urbanization. It was in the overcrowded and unsanitary slums of the rapidly expanding cities in of Europe and North America that the first social workers sought to meliorate the problems of poverty and deprivation either through direct casework intervention or the neighborhood-focused activities of the Settlement Houses. Since those early days, social work has been largely associated with urban needs and problems, and the majority of social workers today are employed in urban areas. This is to be expected since the majority of people in the industrial countries live in urban areas. The proportion engaged in agricultural pursuits has declined steadily over the last century.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the needs of rural people have historically been neglected by the social work profession. There is a serious shortage of social workers in the rural areas, and often highly skilled and demanding social work roles are filled by unqualified personnel. It was because of these

challenges that social workers began in the mid-1970s to promote the idea of rural social work as a specialized field of practice. They have drawn attention to the unique needs of rural communities and the importance of formulating practice interventions that specifically address these needs. Over the years, the literature on rural social work has also expanded and some schools of social work now place much more emphasis on curricula content concerned with rural issues.

This edited collection of chapters dealing with diverse aspects of rural social work makes a useful contribution to the literature on the subject. Compiled by Nancy and Roger Lohmann of the University of West Virginia, the book addresses a number of important issues affecting rural social work practice. It is divided into four parts that deal respectively with the context of rural social work practice; specific interventions that address rural social needs; key client populations and fields of practice; and finally, social work education for rural practice. Although the chapters are somewhat uneven, the book addresses many interesting issues such as welfare reform in rural communities; the role of telecommunications technologies in rural social work; the role of nonprofit organizations; community building and the unique ethical challenges posed by rural life. In addition to covering familiar fields of practice such as mental health, aging and health care, the needs of gay and lesbian people and rural minorities are also discussed.

The book makes an important contribution to the literature and should be widely consulted by anyone interested in rural social welfare. Indeed, since more urban people now live in rural areas and commute to work in the towns and cities, the need to understand the interface between the urban and rural will become more important. There is much in this book that will inform social workers everywhere and contribute to the challenge of understanding the rapidly changing social environments in which they practice.

Richard Hoefler, *Advocacy Practice for Social Justice*. Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books, 2005. \$ 29.95 papercover.

Political advocacy has been a recognized social work