

EDITOR'S PREFACE

This volume is a first attempt at establishing a new tradition for the Rural Sociology Section of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists. In the past, we have compiled and published papers presented at the annual meeting of the Section. This is the first edition of what we hope will be a continuing scholarly journal devoted to the concerns of southern rural sociologists, their research, and the southern community-at-large.

Instead of simply presenting, as we have in the past, the largely unedited papers presented at the annual meetings, we herein present revisions of papers presented at the 1983 annual meeting of the Section in Atlanta, Georgia, which were submitted by their authors for peer review and editing. I believe this indicates great confidence on the part of the authors in this fledgling effort to establish a new professional journal, confidence which I believe this volume has met.

These seven articles cover a broad range of topics and issues currently under investigation by the professionals in our discipline. Nearly all have the regional orientation you would expect to find in a publication entitled Southern Rural Sociology. We would hope, however, that these are not merely parochial interests. If this publication is to survive for many years to come, it should continue to reflect this regional orientation but, as with this volume, have applicability to larger societal concerns.

I would like to thank several people without whose help this first volume would not be possible. First, thanks are due the host of reviewers who spent many hours of their precious time poring over the manuscripts that I sent to them. Without their gracious help, none of this could have happened. A list of these sterling individuals follows this preface.

I would also like to thank the entire membership of the Rural Sociology Section for the confidence they placed in me to tackle the task of putting this project together. I hope this and future issues meet with approval. Any kudos earned by the journal must ultimately be placed with the Section membership for its desire to have a truly distinguished Section-sponsored publication. John Dunkelberger and his publications committee deserve much of this credit.

Finally, I would like to thank the rest of the Editorial Board: Ron Wimberly, Howard Ladewig, and Bo Beaulieu. These people were islands of stability in the chaos from which this publication emerged.