AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Talya Shuler Abel for the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology presented on May 21, 2008.
Title: Making Ends Meet: Hunger Survival Strategies in Two Rural Oregon Communities

Abstract approved:

Joan E. Gross

Food insecurity and hunger have become persistent problems resulting from an increase in impoverished segments of populations worldwide. For those not affected, the problem seems unnoticeable – it is happening somewhere else far away from them. However, in the United States, the number of people living below the poverty level has risen dramatically for the last twenty-five years and continues to rise. The purpose of this research is: 1) to report on how low-income families in two rural communities describe their food security, and 2) consider the coping strategies rural poor develop to survive and provide for their families. Through the use of ethnographic qualitative data collected from low-income families in two rural Oregon communities – Salmonville and Hidden Cove, and additional quantitative data from Hidden Cove collected as part of a national study of low-income rural families, my results demonstrate that people's lives are impacted and effected by the places where they live in both basic and often un-recognized ways. Furthermore, this research shows how communities with highly developed social capital are able to foster the development of human capital in the lives of low-income families, and subsequently, how people with more human capital are able to create more coping strategies and make better decisions. Poverty, food insecurity and hunger are not inevitable – they are preventable.

Making Ends Meet: Hunger Survival Strategies in Two Rural Oregon Communities

by
Talya Shuler Abel

A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the
degree of

Master of Arts

Presented May 21, 2008
Commencement June 2008

Master of Arts thesis of Talya Shuler Abel presented on May 21, 2008.

APPROVED:

Major Professor, representing Applied Anthropology

Chair of the Department of Anthropology

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Talya Shuler Abel, Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author expresses sincere thanks and appreciation to my professors, friends and family for their support and encouragement during this process, which has lasted for several years due to my part-time graduate student status. I would like to convey my gratitude to the following: to my family for their understanding and support during my years in graduate school; to Joan Gross and Nancy Rosenberger for their advice and guidance during fieldwork and the fundamentals of the process; to Leslie Richards for her insight, constructive advice and support during classes, research and the thesis process; to Bruce Weber for his advice, support and encouragement from the very beginning of my graduate studies; to Mark Edwards for his ongoing support and encouragement; to Alex Sanchez for his continued encouragement and support during my graduate studies; to Emerson Ong, Data Coordinator in the Oregon Office of Rural Health at Oregon Health & Science University for his continued supply of demographic and socioeconomic data for my research; to Suzanne Fluharty for her combined help and encouragement over the years; to my bosses and co-workers for their flexibility, patience and understanding during my time in graduate school; and to the many individuals who participated in this project who gave so willingly of their time, shared their stories and thoughts as well as their ideas on how to help others.

To the Rural Families Speak Project: This research was supported in part by USDA/CSREES/NRICGP Grants 2001-35401-10215, 2002-35401-11591, and 2004-35401-14938. Data were collected in conjunction with the cooperative multi state research project NC-223/NC-1011 Rural Low-income families: Tracking Their Well-being and Functioning in the Context of Welfare Reform. Cooperating states are California, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Making Ends Meet: Hunger Survival Strategies in Two Rural Oregon Communities

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

For years governments, society, and researchers have been faced with the continually increasing problem of hunger. It is not sufficient just to say that there are people, families with children and the elderly in particular, not able to obtain sufficient good quality food to survive. Paramount to coping with the problem is being able to determine just who is hungry, what causes them to be food insecure, and determining what can be done to alleviate their problems.

During 2002, I began attending the monthly meetings of the Salal County Food Security Task Force and continued until the Task Force broke up two years later. The Task Force was comprised of representatives from the Commission on Children and Families, Youth Commission, Adult and Family Services, and various churches, Salal County Food Share, USDA Farm Service Agency, professors and graduate students from Oregon State University and the OSU Extension Service, and local farmers. These meetings brought to my attention the consuming issues of hunger and food insecurity facing families in Salal County and made me realize that I wanted to focus my research on rural communities to determine how community members were coping. Attending these meetings provided me also with another important perspective on local issues and the people trying to solve them. It was at the request of the Salal County Food Security Task Force that this research project to collect qualitative data in Salmonville was initiated.

I became fascinated with rural poverty and its effects in one particular rural community in Salal County. During the winter of 2002, I conducted brief ethnographic research in a small seemingly isolated rural village located in the Apple Valley in Oregon. This experience provided me with a view of the value of the small town way of life that previously I had only read about. With a population of a little over one thousand, this village had been thriving prior to the decline of the timber industry and an overall downturn in the economy of the Northwest and the nation. Prior to the economic downturn that began in the 1980s, it was a vibrant community with several small businesses lining the main street, and many locals employed in various aspects of the forest industry. There was a small local health care clinic situated in a mobile trailer, a very small library in the old bank building, a couple of small convenience stores and a gas station. Now, there remains a grade school and high school producing graduates that continue on to study at universities, a rural health care clinic, a library that includes a community center, a convenience store, a gas station, and an excavating company. Community members struggle to find new ways and means of sustaining a way of life they treasure. Community leaders try to piece together grant funding for the local health clinic, the library, the school, and children's programs, including hot lunches at school, after school care, and summer recreation programs. Residents band together to find ways to look out for their growing elderly population, and to find food, clothing and shelter for less-fortunate neighbors hit hard by economic changes. These same people strive to welcome newcomers (including a group of Hispanic families) to their small community.

From my original interview and observation it was clear that, despite economic hard times, the residents of this rural community remained committed to supporting the well-being of all community members, in particular the children. What I learned about this small community in Oregon's Apple Valley led me to begin examining poor rural areas in general and to wonder how life in such places affects families.

Later during my course of studies, I was fortunate to be invited to work with data gathered at another rural Oregon community, Hidden Cove. These data were part of the large Rural Families Speak project, a multi-state, longitudinal research study conducted with rural low-income families. This study carried out research in rural communities in multiple states, and has provided valuable up-to-date information. However, for the purposes of this thesis, I will be using data collected only in Oregon. Working with these data presented me with the experience of a larger perspective on poor rural communities of various sizes scattered across the United States. Not only did this opportunity give me a broader perspective but also it enabled me to view and study other research data collection methods, coding and analysis of research, and theories. It also showed me the value of longitudinal studies in viewing changes in families' situations over the three years data were collected. Another important asset to working with these data was being able to view and compare the qualitative and quantitative methods and results from these data, and the value of using quantitative data to support data gained from qualitative ethnographic interviews.

This thesis will study food insecurity and hunger resulting from poverty in two small rural communities in Oregon--Salmonville and Hidden Cove.

To protect the confidentiality of the people involved in both study populations, the names of the two study sites and the counties in which they are located have been changed. I have also used pseudonyms for organizations, people and places. However, the research did take place in the State of Oregon.

Why does this research matter?

Poverty, food insecurity and hunger have been increasing since the 1980s in rural communities nationwide as a result of continuing and increasing declines in agriculture, energy, forestry, manufacturing, and mining industries (Rural Sociological Society Task Force on Persistent Rural Poverty (Rural Sociological Society Task Force) (1993:2). At the same time, there was an increase in both federal and state fiscal disasters, leading to an increase in unemployment in most states and the nation as a whole (Rural Sociological Society Task Force 1993:1-2). During these times (1980 through 1990), we have seen various forms of social insurance and welfare programs to help those less fortunate. Some have succeeded more than others; however none have been as successful as had been projected in alleviating poverty, food insecurity and hunger (Schiller 2004). Many people living in urban areas are not even aware of the dire straits faced by the impoverished in rural communities. In numerous instances, these once vibrant communities had productive natural resource industries, such as forestry, mining and agriculture in which many residents were employed – in some families multiple generations worked together passing knowledge down to their children.

This research matters because Oregon has experienced very high rates of food insecurity and hunger, and because Oregon has seen a decline in natural resource-based industries. From1998 through 2000, Oregon had the highest percentage of households (6.2% = 79,000 households) that were food insecure with hunger, the highest occurrence of hunger in the nation (Sullivan & Choi 2002: Tables 1 & 2). During this same time period Sullivan and Choi reported that there were 510,000 adults and children who were food insecure (2002: Table 3). This trend of Oregon having high levels of hunger and food insecurity continued for several more years.

Researchers have found that poverty in rural communities tends to be deeper, more persistent and severe than found in urban areas. Once dynamic rural communities have become stagnant and declined over time. As the stagnation process continues, local businesses fail and more people become food insecure and hungry. It has been observed that due to a lack of local employment opportunities, low wages, the cutback in assistance programs, and sluggish state and national economies, residents in the two rural Oregon communities studied for this thesis continue their uphill struggle to survive. This struggle is harder for those who are elderly, disabled, or unemployed; or have acute health problems and limited or no health insurance, lack access to services, and/or have no personal means of transportation. Those who are affected the most over time are those who have the least ability to change their situations.

Portions of data collected at both research sites will be used for this thesis. Both Salmonville and Hidden Cove are small rural communities located in the same geographical region of the State of Oregon. At the time data were collected, portions of the populations of both towns experienced food insecurity and hunger.

In Salmonville, where there is no local industry and no public transportation, people must commute to work in other locations. At times, their commute over a narrow, hilly, and curvy road to work or to look for work can present challenges. Even those people who do have cars can find the commute difficult, during the rainy cold winter months when the road could be blocked by flooding and/or mud slides. Over time, due to the high cost of gasoline, their commutes have become expensive, taking an even larger portion of their salary away from food, medical expenses, rent, utilities, etc.

In Hidden Cove, there is some local industry but these businesses can supply only a limited number of jobs. Hidden Cove has limited public transportation. It is about forty miles from the next-largest city and about seventy-five miles from the closest major city. Hidden Cove is located on the Pacific Coast and consequently life is affected by inclement weather conditions.

General knowledge: Poverty, Hunger and food security

Poverty, hunger and food insecurity have existed and affected people for many years, and over time there have been various social insurance and welfare programs to provide for the impoverished and hungry. However, during the late 1990s monumental changes occurred to programs that had previously existed. As Schiller pointed out, the welfare reforms of 1996 (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act - PRWORA) punished people who were dependent upon welfare by enforcing time limits and work requirements (the flawed character view), at the same time it tried to create more opportunities for self sufficiency by providing more assistance for childcare and medical help (the restricted opportunity view) (Schiller 2004).

The welfare reforms instituted in 1996 have not solved the “welfare problem.” Schiller states that the 2003 reauthorization delegated the responsibility for dealing with most of the problems to administrators of individual states' welfare programs (2004:235). Based on research of the seven-year period since the implementation of the welfare reforms of 1996, many people are in worse shape than they were seven years ago (Edwards and Weber 2003; Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy 2003; Schiller 2004). The high rates of unemployment, rising numbers of food insecure and hungry households, and increasing number of homeless in urban and rural communities are evidence of this. All of this is not due solely to welfare reform but also to a downturn in the economy that much of the United States has been experiencing in recent years. This decline in the national economy has been felt even more strongly in rural communities. Schiller concluded, that "big" solutions to welfare would most probably result from the dynamics of larger socioeconomic changes rather than changes to the welfare system itself, and that there was no reform to the welfare system possible that would resolve all its inadequacies (2004:235).

When assistance programs are cut, as they have been in the last few years, it causes problems for the impoverished, making their lives even more difficult than they were previously. Similar findings in other parts of Oregon have been reported:

> Many of our employed respondents found themselves in financial trouble as they lost eligibility for critical assistance programs. The welfare system regards Food Stamps, childcare subsidies, the Oregon Health Plan, and other programs as temporary safety nets for people in transition to the work force. However, many families continue to rely on such programs because low wages alone cannot meet their most essential needs. As a result, losing eligibility becomes a serious blow. (Acker, Morgen, Gonzales, et al. 2002:17)

<u>Poverty and Hunger in rural communities</u>

There have always been poor rural places in the United States, yet as a result of macroeconomic changes, combined with a faltering economy that began in the early 1980s and continued through the 1990s, there followed a decline in many industries that brought on the emergence of newly impoverished rural communities (Rural Sociological Society Task Force 1993; Hibbard and Elias

1993). Lyson and Falk related that in regions all over the United States, rural areas have become poor (1993). Often this occurs when corporate owners shut down industries and move production to countries in the periphery in search of cheaper labor costs (Lyson and Falk 1993). In the East and Northeast, a collapse of the coal and steel markets, followed by a decrease in mine employment and mine closures in the mid 1980s and early 1990s, left workers in close-by rural communities jobless (Rural Sociological Society Task Force 1993; Schwarzweller and Lean 1993). During the 1980s, the “Great Farm Crisis” shattered rural farming communities in the Midwest (Davidson 1996; Salamon 2003). This resulted in continuing and emerging rural poor places.

To put these trends in a community context, the early 1980s saw the beginning of large-scale cutbacks in the timber industry in the Pacific Northwest that left many rural communities economically devastated as timber mills closed and people were left without jobs (Hibbard and Elias 1993). In the latter part of the 1970s there were 534 timber mills that provided employment for almost 200,000 workers, but by 1988 there remained only 453 mills that employed less than 160,000 workers (Hibbard and Elias1993:195-196). The trend of mill closures, employee layoffs, lower wages and a fear of being laid off for remaining timber industry employees continued and has led to what Hibbard and Elias describe as the “two Northwests.” That is, economies in urban areas thrive while rural areas dependent upon the timber industry have continued to steadily decline since the 1970s (Hibbard and Elias 1993:207-211). The effects of the timber cut-backs on the people and their communities can be seen in both Salmonville and Hidden Cove.

When researching hunger, Mark Edwards and Bruce Weber found, in comparison to other states, the following results related to hunger rates among households comprised of various workforce, income, and demographic characteristics in Oregon:

1. Significantly higher hunger rates among households with no unemployed adults.

2. Significantly higher hunger rates among households with at least one full-year, full-time worker.
3. Significantly higher hunger rates among households with either male blue-collar workers or female blue-collar/administrative support/sales workers.
4. Significantly higher hunger rates among two-parent families with children. (2003:1)

What Edwards and Weber found most remarkable were that the high rates of hunger in the household types listed above, as compared to similar households in other states in the nation that have below average rates of hunger – Oregon's comparable households experience hunger rates of "2 to 3 percentage points higher." They further state that elevated rates of hunger seem to be due to elevated rates of hunger for all demographic groups (2003:1). The results of this research in Oregon are important because they are so different from previous research. Edwards and Weber found that, in comparison to the rest of the nation, the amount of food insecurity and hunger was significantly higher in Oregon households with employed adults (2003:11). They indicate that there is a problem relating to the level of wages paid to Oregonians in relation to the cost of living, which adds to problems faced by already poor Oregonians.

As was found in the research by Edwards and Weber (2003) in Oregon, the Rural Sociological Society Task Force (1993) also discovered that one of the more difficult aspects of rural poverty is that many of the impoverished in rural areas are the "working poor." This led them to believe that the "nature of work structures" in rural communities might help explain various aspects of the persistence of poverty in rural areas (1993:68). They also determined that, even if rural workers possessed corresponding levels of education, they suffered from under-employment and higher rates of unemployment than those experienced by urban workers (1993:41-64). They attribute this to low wages and insufficient employment opportunities found in rural America, particularly for young adults, minorities, women, and those with less education. This situation of low income and low human capital (the education, skills and abilities acquired by individuals enabling them to perform new jobs or behave in new ways) are therefore related, exacerbating and prolonging unemployment in rural communities.

Research Sites and Data

The qualitative and quantitative data used in this thesis come from research done in two small rural communities in Oregon—Salmonville and Hidden Cove. At each research site, data were collected by different researchers using protocols designed specifically for each location. However, the two topics of research that were common to both sites were food insecurity and hunger. Pseudonyms will be used for the research sites as well as for the people who gave so freely of their time to share their stories. This is done to ensure confidentiality of the data collected and privacy to the people living in Salmonville and Hidden Cove.

Hidden Cove is a small rural community found on the central coast of Oregon. Hidden Cove is located on a bay that opens into the Pacific Ocean. Mixed-method data were collected during 2000 and 2001 by local researchers as part of a large national study of rural communities. In 2000 the population of Hidden Cove was 4,352. The Hidden Cove sample involved thirty-one mothers with children.

Salmonville is a very small rural community located in a valley on the west side of the Pacific Coast Range. It is situated near the base of a high mountain. Data were collected during winter and spring of 2004. At that time the population of Salmonville was 1,029. Qualitative interviews in Salmonville were conducted by three other researchers and me. This was a very small research project and involved only eight mothers with children, one adult married couple and three single adult households with no children living at home.

Theoretical Perspective

This thesis will show how “places,” social support from family and friends, and social support from agencies within each local community affect the everyday lives of the low-income families residing in both research sites. I will be guided by the work and writing of Urie Bronfenbrenner in his seminal book on ecological theory (1979). Bronfenbrenner illustrates his theory by describing how the differing and interconnected levels of systems (micro, meso, eco, and macro) influence and shape the lives of people. By portraying the interactions of people with others and with the various local and governmental systems within their environments, a better understanding will be gained of the participants' lives and the challenges they face on a daily basis.

Research questions

Given the high rates of food insecurity associated with rural residence, I looked at how people managed to feed their families and the functional strategies they employed. In these study populations reports of food insecurity were high; however, this is because people were selected because they were known to be impoverished and food insecure. Background literature used for this research focuses in general on the impoverished in rural communities in the United States and Oregon, and specifically on two rural communities in Oregon – the low-income, food insecure and hungry people in the small rural natural resource-dependent communities of Salmonville and Hidden Cove.

The research question and sub-question that I will examine in this thesis are: How do low-income residents in Salmonville and Hidden Cove describe their food security? Secondarily, what strategies do they use to cope? Then, as recommended by Bernard (2002), I compared my coded field notes with coded transcribed interviews in which I found rich descriptions of interviewees' strategies. By answering these questions, it will be shown how these low-income people managed to provide for their families.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspective

The more my research progressed, as the number of transcribed interviews increased and were coded, the more I realized how much peoples' lives were influenced not only by their own personal circumstances but also by the communities where they resided, as well as by many factors beyond their control. Therefore, I decided to approach my data from the perspective of Uri Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory, considering the multitude of factors affecting these low-income families' lives in relation to social capital in the creation of human capital as discussed by Coleman (1988) and Putnam (2000).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is best described by stating that it is like a figure of concentric circles connected by people's interactions between the different levels of circles. According to Bronfenbrenner, there are four levels that comprise a family's or an individual's ecological environment (1979:16-42). At the center of the innermost circle, called the microsystem, is the individual or family. Bronfenbrenner describes the microsystem as a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations in a particular setting with specific physical and material characteristics (1979:22). A microsystem could be considered an immediate environment like a home, a classroom, a place of work -- whichever is the context for the individual. The types of interactions in the microsystem would occur between all members of a household, between family members and neighbors and/or friends, between children and their peers and teachers at school, and between children and their childcare provider.

The next innermost system Bronfenbrenner labels the mesosystem, which includes a system of interrelationships/connections among two or more settings in which a person is involved (1979:25). A mesosystem is a relationship between microsystems and is created when a person moves into a new context. Examples of mesosystems are the relationship of a child's family experiences to her school experiences, an individual to their church or work environments, a family to peers in their community.

The third concentric circle is described by Bronfenbrenner as the exosystem and includes actions that occur that the individual is not directly involved in but which affect them (1979:25). For example, decisions/events at a mother's place of employment will have an effect on her which could also affect her family (amount of pay, required travel, stress at work etc.). A further example would be when a new park, library or healthcare plan is funded and creates many positive opportunities and experiences for families. Likewise, decisions by the local school board will have an effect on children and their families.

The fourth concentric circle is characterized by Bronfenbrenner as the macrosystem and includes the much larger context of global, national, regional political, cultural, and subcultural systems that can influence or affect a person (1979:26). An example would be a change in governmental policies; for instance, when the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was passed in 1996, it directly impacted the lives of low-income families. Another example would be the creation of the Food Stamp Program that has impacted in a beneficial way the lives of low-income families.

According to ecological systems theory, when a change occurs in any one of the systems, its effects will filter into and influence environments in the other systems by altering, eradicating, or increasing components and interrelationships. As Bronfenbrenner states, "In ecological research, the principal main effects are likely to be the interactions" (1997:38).

Along with Ecological Systems Theory, I will also be approaching my data from the perspective of Human Capital Theory and Social Capital Theory as written about by Bourdieu and Coleman (1991), Coleman (1988), and Putnam (2000). Coleman describes social capital as constituting particular kinds of resources available to individuals enabling them to achieve goals that would otherwise not be possible (1988:S98). Putnam states that the main idea of social capital theory is that "social networks have value" (2000:18-19). Social capital, as described by Coleman, is seen by changes in the relationships and interactions between community leaders and organizations that make possible the creation of resources (1988). One of the most important aspects of social capital is in the creation of human capital (Coleman 1988). Coleman states that human capital is produced when changes occur in individuals that allow them to learn more skills and capabilities enabling them to behave in new ways (Coleman 1988). Putnam describes the value of human capital as permitting individuals to raise their productivity -- education and re-training are examples of this.

Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and Coleman's and Putnam's concepts of social capital and human capital theories to view data have allowed me to analyze participants' descriptions of the challenges they face in their daily lives and the strategies that they developed to survive. To gain another perspective when analyzing the data, I returned to my coded field notes and interviews to become more grounded in the data, which Bernard describes as an iterative process (2002). Using all these processes allowed me to become familiar with the rich descriptions interviewees provided during their interviews.

Background

Most research surrounding poverty has been conducted in urban areas. In contrast, this thesis uses data collected in Salal County and Manzanita County in the hope that it will supplement existing information on poverty because of their more rural nature. In particular, this ethnographic research should provide a more comprehensive and realistic picture of the lives of rural low-income families.

In this section the following issues will be addressed: historical perspective on persistent rural poverty; emergence of rural poor places, and poverty in rural communities; community characteristics shared by rural poor places; welfare and social assistance program changes; and food insecurity and hunger.

Historical Perspective on Persistent Rural Poverty

According to the Rural Sociological Society Task Force (1993), since the end of World War II, there have been three general periods of time when major changes occurred in rural communities within the United States: 1945 to the 1960s, the 1960s through the 1970s, and the 1980s through the early 1990s.

During the time from 1945 -1960s, rural communities were experiencing great changes in their primary industries such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining. These changes were a result of a transformation of the overall economic and production strategies within the United States and resulted in enormous changes in the farming, fishing, forestry, and mining industries. This time also included a massive restructuring and transference of many of what had once been considered rural industries out of rural areas to urban and other areas. As a consequence, a few rural residents, who were able, moved to other areas for better paying jobs. Those that remained no longer had the means to support themselves and their families, thereby creating small areas of people we have seen remain impoverished due to lack of skills, education, and/or financial resources (Rural Sociological Society Task Force 1993).

From the latter part of the 1960s through the 1970s, there was immense growth and revival occurring in many rural communities, encouraging and giving hope to many. This led to people moving to rural communities for jobs in manufacturing and service industries, thereby compensating for a continuing decline in other natural resource industries (Rural Sociological Society Task Force (1993). The causes shaping this revitalization are not understood at this time.

From the 1980s through the early 1990s, the tide turned again in rural communities as a result of continuing and increasing declines in the agriculture, energy, forestry, manufacturing, and mining industries. Also there was an increase in both federal and state fiscal disasters, leading to an increase in unemployment in most states and the nation as a whole (Rural Sociological Society Task Force 1993).

The Rural Sociological Society Task Force (1993) was comprised of nine working groups whose areas related to characteristics of poor rural people in poor rural places. Each group of the task force evaluated how well persistent rural poverty could be explained by the culture of poverty theory, human capital theory, and economic organization theories. Chapters on uneven development, work structures, and human capital focus on labor issues in rural communities. Also addressed are the impediments to improved well-being that are experienced by women, children, and the elderly residing in rural communities. Chapters on natural resources and minorities focus on intractable pockets of rural poverty, looking at the Black Belt of the South, Appalachia, the Colonias along the Mexican border, and Native American reservations. The final chapter discusses how little has been achieved by national and local governments to eliminate the causes of persistent rural poverty and their failure to handle the vast array of needs of poor rural communities. They conclude that rural poverty is a present-day socioeconomic problem that must be dealt with by changing present-day institutions.

The Rural Families Speak Project (RFS) (2004) is a large scale study of low-income rural families in multiple states over the same period of time. The project began in October 1998 and will conclude in September 2008. The purpose was to study and track over time the well-being and functioning of rural families within the framework of welfare reform. The data from the RFS project is valuable because they pinpoint common problems while highlighting differences that are experienced by low-income rural families in relation to many geographical locations as well as varying welfare policies within their states. This project also identifies the effects of living in rural communities upon inhabitants—what it means to live in rural towns across the United States. However, what is found is that even though these low-income families live in vastly different geographical regions, many experience similar problems.

Lyson and Falk (1993) see the continued impoverishment of rural areas as resulting from "uneven development," which creates what they term "forgotten places." Lyson and Falk refer back to the 1960s, to programs and policies instituted by the Federal Government during the presidencies of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson to battle poverty and lack of development in rural areas. These programs have long since been taken apart and done away with by later administrations. Lyson and Falk see current impoverished conditions in rural areas as a result of an "historical process of uneven development" as a consequence of the United States not having an industrial policy but rather the policy of "laissez-faire capitalism." In fact, they state that "all other industrialized countries actually have a coherent industrial policy" (1993:262).

The consequences of the macroeconomic changes have affected all regions of the United States in similar ways: loss of jobs for both primary and secondary wage earners in families, shifts in land ownership, out-migration from rural areas by those that are able, and, finally, an emergence of a persistently poor population by those that remain trapped in rural areas (Davidson 1996; Rural Sociological Society Task Force 1993; Whitener, Weber and Duncan 2002). Wilson has also documented the same process of out-migration by the most qualified and the continuing entrapment of those less capable occurring in urban areas (1987).

There appear to be many trends associated with rural poverty and the impoverished people who reside in out-of-the-way-places. The fact that many rural communities are isolated and their population dispersed creates problems in how best to serve them in a cost-effective way. First, as many authors have stated, not only have rural communities and their residents been forgotten, but an awareness of the problems facing these communities and their residents have not, for the most part, been perceived accurately (Hibbard and Elias 1993; Lyson and Falk 1993; Rural Sociological Society Task Force 1993; Schiller 2004).

Some of the major national trends in poverty include: improvements made in reducing poverty during the 1960s and 1970s were reversed for the most part during the 1980s, the poverty rate has remained constantly high in non-metropolitan areas, the gap between urban and rural areas increased between 1978 and 1993; and poor people in rural locales were more susceptible to unemployment than those in urban areas (Rural Sociological Society Task Force 1993:7). In addition, at least half the impoverished consist of children below the age of 18 and/or elderly over the age of 65, and approximately 40 percent of all impoverished families with children include married couples. The persistently impoverished suffer greater depths of poverty and its consequences. A little less than 90 percent of all impoverished people reside outside urban ghettos, with a large number living in rural communities. A majority of impoverished families have at least one working member; and the number of destitute single mothers is increasing, and comprises the most impoverished group in society (Blank 1997:14-47).

It can be seen that many of the same factors work in concert as once vibrant rural communities decrease in size and become stagnant.

Emergence of Rural Poor Places

Wilson (1987) writes that urban poor places have emerged due to a change in the macroeconomic structure from a focus on production and transportation service industries to information and technology service industries. Comprehensive technological and economic shifts in industries made old ways of manufacturing and production obsolete, thereby doing away with vast numbers of low-paying jobs in many inner cities. The ensuing large-scale unemployment for blue-collar workers resulted in a deterioration of social and economic conditions in urban areas. This continuing impoverishment of many sectors in the United States has changed not only the social structures of inner cities, but also increased the “high- and extreme-poverty areas” in a “social transformation of the inner city” (Wilson 1987:55). I would argue that this same process has been occurring in rural towns as well, changing their socioeconomic class structure. Similar as well as different problems have resulted in poor rural places, and they have been exacerbated simply because they occur in already impoverished rural towns.

For instance, in rural Oregon there has been a vast reduction of jobs in natural resource-based industries such as forestry and fishing. This has led to service industry jobs located in larger urban areas becoming more important. However, this has been a double-edged sword for many because of the large number of low-wage jobs available for those without the job skills, training and/or education necessary. On the other hand, there has been an increase in seasonal tourism for some rural areas, due to the natural scenic beauty of many areas. This has led to an increase in service sector low-wage jobs that do not pay workers enough to provide for their families. Combined with these changes is an increase in the cost of housing in both urban and rural areas relative to wages. People in rural Oregon communities are affected greatly, but those living and working in the coastal areas are impacted to a greater degree.

The effects of all-encompassing economic changes can be overwhelming to rural communities in much the same way as in urban areas. The socioeconomic structures are irrevocably changed, resulting in high unemployment, an increase in people receiving welfare, and a significant decrease in available community services, much the same as what Wilson describes happening in urban centers.

Some rural towns are negatively influenced not only by a one-dimensional economy but also by other problems that occur due to their remoteness from urban centers that might offer rural residents other forms of employment. This remoteness might be further complicated by a lack of transportation and exacerbated by a difficult geographic terrain during inclement weather conditions, making commuting difficult. This could constrain rural residents' abilities to move beyond unemployment (Lyson and Falk 1993; Whitener, Weber and Duncan 2002).

Without diverse economies, many rural people have been trained and are familiar with only one type of work and are therefore stranded with no means of employment. Along with having no marketable job skills, other factors such as land ownership, home ownership, and extended relations make it difficult for people to move to another location for employment. In other cases, such as farming, families have been working the same land for several generations, passing down knowledge and skills, as well as the land, from generation to generation. When businesses such as the timber industry decline, a farm crisis occurs, or mines are shut down, people are left not only without jobs but also with very little financial security and much emotional stress (Davidson 1996; Duncan 1999; Hibbard and Elias 1993; Lyson and Falk 1993; Whitener, Weber and Duncan 2002).

In the Midwest, where family farming was a major industry, rural towns were vibrant communities with entire families involved in all aspects of community life. From the perspective of Davidson, a result of the collapsing, then languishing economy is that these once vital community centers have become impoverished shells where once-successful farmers and their families came together. Davidson states that, at that time, 54 to 60 million Americans living in rural areas were affected by the moribund economy and that more than 9 million of those same people were living in impoverished conditions. In Iowa, the most affected of all Midwest states, “one out of six people fell below the federal poverty line” (1996:9). An additional result of the decline in farming, manufacturing, and other industries is that people leave rural towns in search of employment in urban areas and cities all over the nation; which continues a chain reaction seen in the failure and eventual closure of local businesses in rural communities (Hibbard and Elias 1993).

Comprehensive economic changes have created a secondary effect of a change in land ownership (Davidson 1996; Salamon 2003). Five percent of American landowners own seventy-five percent of the land, and the bottom seventy-eight percent of the American population owns just three percent of the land (Davidson 1996:35). This transfer of land expanded the gap between those that have and those that do not.

The emergence of rural poor places continues as national and some regional economies remain stagnant, federal and state assistance programs are cut, and rural towns struggle for survival. Meanwhile, already impoverished rural towns continue their uphill battles to preserve a treasured way of life and provide for all members of their small communities.

<u>Poverty in Rural Communities</u>

There is much literature available about poverty and its effects on communities and their low-income inhabitants. More is known about urban poverty than rural poverty, and even less on the poor rural places in the Northwest. Rather, the majority of rural communities studied have been located in the North, East, and Midwest.

There have been several longitudinal case studies of impoverished rural communities, three well-known, one on specific communities in the east, south, and midwest by Fitchen (1981), Duncan (1999), and Nelson and Smith (1999). Examination of these cases should help demonstrate the causes, effects and ramifications of poverty in rural communities, and the effect of “place” on people’s lives.

Janet Fitchen (1981) conducted a case study over a period of ten years in northern Appalachia. She surveyed thirty households during 1969 to 1970 that became the baseline for her longitudinal study. Fitchen concluded her book with her perspective on the fundamental causes of poverty in rural areas and changes necessary: changing economic circumstances, rectifying inadequacies of the social structure, discovering and eliminating barriers to upward mobility, fighting caustic stereotypes, decreasing the weight of too many problems, changing the balance between goals and achievements, conquering the failure syndrome, forestalling psychosocial deficits, and expanding horizons. She thought these changes were necessary because it was no longer a case of pulling oneself up by one's boot straps, working harder, and making do—too many changes had occurred in our society economically, socially, and politically for this to work. Fitchen felt that, whatever changes were to be made, it would be important to build upon the strengths that rural people already possess and to include society as a whole.

Other case studies involved research over five years in three areas: Appalachia's coalfields, the Yazoo Delta of Mississippi, and a remote rural community in northern New England. Duncan (1999) discovered equality between races, well-developed social institutions, local members involved in community organizations and activities, people caring about each other, and people working for the benefit of all and their community. She concluded that, for impoverished people in all three communities, achieving a good education provided them with potential social mobility, ways to accomplish enduring social change in the communities, and the means of escaping their impoverished lifestyles.

Other research was conducted to determine how working-class families survived. This focused on the effects of the then recent forms of economic restructuring on families in a rural county, in the context of the loss of benefits families had come to rely upon from their employment (Nelson and Smith 1999). During their research in Vermont they found survival for many families meant more than one wage earner, and one wage earner sometimes having more than one job. Nelson and Smith concluded that work matters and that the quality of family members' jobs impact their families' ability to survive during good and bad economic times. It is extremely difficult for people in rural communities to improve their employment status. These results were corroborated by many others. They suggested that politicians need to change their thinking, so that it will lead to a new economic view and policies that would permit low-income workers to provide a better life for their families. The results of this research agree with research conducted in Oregon by others (Acker et al. 2002; Edwards and Weber 2003).

A particularly useful publication dealing specifically with families in Oregon was written by Acker et al. (2002). They discussed the economic well-being of Oregon families who had left or were redirected from the cash assistance program Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and/or the Food Stamp program during the first quarter of 1998. Their research focused on whether poverty and economic hardship increased or declined as a result of families being routed away from receiving public assistance. They found the following conditions greatly impacted and determined the circumstances of poor families' lives: conditions of low-wage work, insufficient amount of living-wage jobs, amassing of debt, persistent problems locating and paying for acceptable childcare, adequate housing, and health care. To combat these problems, they recommended the following be done: advocate for living-wage jobs, increase the safety net for low-income families, expand options for childcare, generate more affordable housing, create a healthcare system that covers everyone, and encourage education and training.

Miller (1990) compared economic conditions between rural and urban communities in Oregon in a report prepared for the Joint Legislative Committee on Trade and Economic Development. In highlighting the increasing differences between rural and urban Oregon communities, Miller brought attention to the plight facing many rural communities in their struggle for survival. Miller found that two events endangered the ability of many rural communities to recover from the recession of the early 1980s; reduced timber harvests and new environmental protection policies. Also, most economists in 1990 agreed that the United States was hovering at the brink of a national recession which would severely impact the economy in 1991. The report drew attention to the grave needs of rural communities in comparison to their urban counterparts. Miller concluded that not only does Oregon seem to be a state of the "haves," residing in urban communities, and the "have nots," residing in many rural communities, but also that the gap between the two is continuing to increase.

Miller's findings were corroborated by research conducted in rural areas by Lyson and Falk (1993), Hibbard and Elias (1993), and the Rural Sociological Society Task Force (1993). Miller, in her research comparing rural and urban areas in Oregon, found the following to be true for rural areas. Not only were greater numbers of seniors deciding to reside in rural areas because it was less expensive, but also it was less likely for rural young people to graduate from college or university. Miller also determined that unemployment rates were much higher in rural communities than in urban communities, and that members of rural communities received lower wages. This led to rural residents having reduced earning power. She also determined that there were fewer jobs available in rural communities than in urban communities (1990:26).

Lyson and Falk (1993) were contributing editors to a book researching how uneven development has created a lack of opportunities for inhabitants of rural America. Authors examined the dismal economic circumstances of the inhabitants in particular rural areas as a result of the lack of or complete stagnation of economic development. Most authors based their work on the premise that these impoverished unemployed and underemployed rural families were unable to enhance and expand their situation in life as a result of structural factors beyond their control. The authors featured in this book brought to light the ever widening gap between urban and rural America. Contributing authors described exceptional and inventive programs operating in their regions to improve the living conditions of families, as well as evaluating what their prognosis would be for the future. Of particular interest to me was the case study conducted by Michal Hibbard and James Elias in the timber belt of the Pacific Northwest. They focused on Oregon, which they felt had a dismal economic future if people continued to rely solely on the timber industry, which for all intents and purposes was dying.

Community characteristics shared by rural poor places

Macro-level forces are clearly reshaping rural places across the United States. Such reshaping has in some cases resulted in an emergence of new rural poor places. Despite differences in physical location, these newly poor communities share the following characteristics: a shift in residential composition demographics, continual impoverishment, erosion of basic community services, a decrease in property values, and exploitation of the impoverished; all resulting in a decline in the quality of rural lifestyle.

As more middle-aged and young people leave impoverished rural communities for urban and metropolitan areas, where they can find gainful employment, a "graying process" in rural areas begins. According to Davidson, more than one quarter of the people living in rural areas are over sixty years old (1996:63). Another consequence of the graying process is the loss of the social capital available to the community and its members, further depleting the ingredients of community influences that are described as being an integral part of Stephen Small's and Andrew Supple's Heuristic Model of Community Effects (2000). Sonya Salamon, during her research in the Midwest, found the same graying process occurring in the twenty-one small agrarian towns where she conducted her research (2003). With the graying process, rural communities also experienced the loss of overlapping social network connections that Salamon describes as producing social capital (2003:18). Not only is the base for creating social capital reduced, but also the loss of a multigenerational culture takes away another of the positive reasons people had chosen to move to, or decided to remain living, in rural communities.

Continuing and increasing impoverishment for many residents is another characteristic of poor rural towns that leads to a greater division of social worlds among community members. As Fitchen mentioned, the disconnection of social worlds results in a lack of a unified mixed group of people who participate in activities and feel a sense of "shared membership" in their community (1981:55).

If there are great differences in economic status, this also can affect the separation of people and lead to a stigmatization of the most impoverished, causing them to be less likely to feel like participating in community activities and creating enduring tensions. Duncan, in her research in the Appalachian coalfields and the Mississippi Delta, found that vast differences between the “haves” and the “have-nots” not only created separate social groups but also produced constant and unending problems that she graphically described. Duncan found that the differences were exacerbated when racial segregation was added to the mix and divided two of the communities that she studied, Blackwell and Dahlia (1999).

A further consequence of income-earning people leaving rural areas is that the number of people that could and would pay taxes, support local businesses, or participate energetically in community activities diminishes. The people who leave are usually the most capable and productive, creating a void in a town’s social as well as economic structures. This leads to not only a downturn in revenue for the community and all its members but also erosion in basic services due to a lack of funds (Davidson 1996; Elder and Conger 2000; Salamon 2003). Elder and Conger, from their research in Midwest farming communities, state that one of the most expensive costs to communities resulting from the Great Farm Crisis was the “The historic movement of Midwest families off the land…and its severe economic cost to communities…is multiplied many times over by the ‘social loss’ of these families since they are the foundation of community institutions” (2000:248).

As local funds decrease, the breadth and depth of community services are cut also. Almost all of a community’s members require health care at one time or another, and for the impoverished the loss of basic health services creates another in an ever-increasing list of catastrophes. Davidson described rural America as a “health disaster area” due to rural hospitals experiencing problems as a result of a lack of funding from the federal government (1996:65). He continues that rural hospitals rely far more upon Medicare payments as a source of income than their urban correlates. At the same time rural hospitals are funded at forty percent below the rates for urban hospitals (1996:63-65). The lack of adequate health care facilities, and in turn local health care, creates even more problems for the disadvantaged, who, in many cases, lack personal vehicles and/or funds for other modes of transportation.

The lack of transportation is a unique problem for impoverished people of rural areas, that makes an already difficult and challenging life that much more so as local services are closed, i.e. hospital, school, library, grocery stores, drugstores etc. The rural communities are then left with small convenience stores with smaller selections of more expensive merchandise impacting their already meager finances. As businesses close, their former structures are either boarded up or left to decay, thereby creating a shabby feeling to a once vital town and making it almost impossible to attract new people who are needed to revitalize the area (Hibbard and Elias 1993). Another predicament created by lack of reliable public transportation is the ability to travel to jobs in nearby larger communities or even within the community due to the greater distances involved (Whitener, Duncan and Weber 2002). For many low-income families, dependable transportation is nonexistent, as money is needed for food and rent, and then childcare, should they be able to find jobs.

Exploitation of poor people can have not only social but also economic ramifications for small rural communities (Duncan 1999; Salamon 2003). One form of exploitation suffered by many economically depressed communities is the decimation of the cohesiveness of the social community and the destruction of property values due to the high rate of absentee slum landlords. This would be true of impoverished areas in both urban as well as rural areas. These absentee entrepreneurs create a whole new set of problems for rural communities by buying up rundown houses and buildings at very low prices and performing the most minimal of improvements. Then they either rent them out or sell them at inflated prices but still low enough to attract unsuspecting impoverished people from outside the area (many times with questionable backgrounds), or desperately poor residents looking for what they thought would be a better place to live. When this occurs in urban areas, only the poor area and those adjacent to it would be affected; however, when it happens in small rural towns, the whole town is detrimentally affected. As Salamon states, it is very difficult to put local “social pressure or financial burden” on the absentee slum landlord since they do not reside locally (2003:53).

Salamon described similar circumstances resulting when three of the towns she researched experienced a population influx. This decimated the sense of community when common structures and land were “exploited to create financial gain for a few” (2003:50).

Another example of the exploitation of poor people occurs in situations where there are extreme differences in social and economic class, and the wealthy control all aspects of a town’s life. For instance, in some of the mining and farming towns in the eastern region, a way of life that began in the early 1900s, in which mine managers/bosses controlled all aspects of their employees’ lives, continues today. Duncan, describes two situations where the wealthy few remain in power in an almost feudal-like system. For example, the mine owners controlled all facets of life because they were their employer and landlord; they also controlled all local businesses, and had control of the police. In some instances they were also the benefactor of the workers’ doctor, reverend, and school teacher (1999). This type of all-encompassing control was present also in one of the towns (Splitville) studied by Salamon, that a wealthy family established as an agricultural trading center. This family owned vast amounts of land as well as being in command of the local bank, not to mention owning the city’s water system and many businesses, from which they removed all profits for their own benefit (2003).

In the Midwest, Salamon found that agrarian towns shared the following unswerving “set of demographic and economic traits since World War II: a declining population resulting in ‘aging in place,’” decreasing or sluggish property values, and a fading local economy (2003:41). Also during the 1980s, Midwestern rural farming communities were further devastated by a large economic force that came in the form of the “Great Farm crises.” The Great Farm Crisis resulted in completely changing the economic and social structure of many small towns as well as altering peoples’ lives irrevocably (Davidson 1996, Salamon 2003).

Likewise, obstacles to children’s life chances result from the graying process. One of the many consequences of the graying process in rural poor communities is that there is a loss of social capital in the sense that there are no longer the overlapping networks and closure of the social structure. Coleman describes these as being beneficial in restricting harmful external effects while supporting and promoting helpful ones (1988). The graying process also leads to a loss in the development of human capital in younger people as a result of the lack of diverse resources and role models (Coleman1988).

Poor families living in poor rural areas are potentially susceptible to numerous pressures from outside sources beyond their control. These factors not only limit families’ and children’s participation in experiences, but also their becoming aware of and taking advantage of opportunities available in the greater world beyond their rural community. Fitchen expressed precisely what it means to be poor in a poor rural place: “They are people whose lives are fraught with problems and who cling to a precarious balance between hope and despair” (1981:27).

Many of the above-mentioned characteristics shared by poor rural communities help not only to generate impoverished circumstances but they also help to create an environment that leads to a decline in the quality of a rural lifestyle affecting the lives of families and their children.

Welfare and Social Assistance Program Changes

Although this research is not being discussed in terms of welfare and social assistance programs, the lives and well-being of low-income families in rural communities have been affected more deeply than urban communities and the consequences have lasted longer as a result of changes to policies and welfare reform.

During the past several years, many reforms to the welfare system occurred (Acker, et al. 2002; Anderson and Swanson 2002; Bauer 2002; Blank 1997; Schiller 2004; Whitener, Duncan and Weber 2002). The momentous welfare reforms of 1996 (PRWORA) both penalized welfare dependency, by imposing time limits and work requirements, and endeavored to create greater opportunities for self sufficiency and increasing support for childcare and medical care. Another significant change that occurred was "devolution," giving individual states, rather than the Federal Government, the responsibility for administration, allocation, and control of various welfare programs. As a result, the aid available and the prerequisites for receiving aid differ among states.

The emergence of rural poor places continues as national and some regional economies remain stagnant, federal and state assistance programs are cut, and rural communities struggle for survival (Hibbard and Elias 1993; Lyson and Falk 1993; Miller 1990). As Fitchen states, "Poverty is more than an income below the federal guideline, it is an economic situation, an economic niche, and, often, an economic forecast. And poverty has social, psychological, and cultural concomitants as well." (1981:61). Not the least of which, as evidenced by the analysis of our data, are increases: a) in food insecurity and hunger, b) homelessness, c) health-related issues including lack of sufficient health insurance benefits and/or health insurance. Also included are the lack of access to services and a diminishing health care system whose costs continually escalate.

Food Insecurity and Hunger

People in rural communities have been experiencing varying degrees of hunger for many years; however, since the PRWORA the number of people affected and the degree of their hunger have increased. As with information on poverty, much more research and writing has been concentrated on metropolitan areas rather than rural areas, but with the advent of PRWORA several researchers began focusing on rural communities. Although many authors, when writing about poverty, include in their work information about hunger in rural areas, it has not been one of the major focuses of their research, and therefore the information is more general than specific.

Henry, et al. (2002), looked at whether or not a reduction in cash assistance (the old Aid to Families with Dependent Children [AFDC]) which was replaced by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and participation in the Food Stamp Program would affect case loads in rural and urban areas. Even though their research took place in the south (Mississippi and South Carolina), some of their findings are applicable to other rural and urban areas in the United States. One of their main points is that case loads, the number of people participating in TANF and the Food Stamp Program, will depend upon a particular state's economy and how the state implements welfare reforms. The results of their research suggest that, regardless of the location or economic base, rural communities would have a more difficult time than urban communities in reducing participation in cash assistance and food stamp programs. However, they did not arrive at a definitive conclusion as to why rural areas would have a more difficult time.

Other authors in the same volume, *Rural Dimensions of Welfare Reform* (2002), addressed the issue of hunger in the context of welfare reform. The various issues focused on hunger as one of the short-term impacts of welfare reform in rural areas and how a family's income or lack thereof affects its survival and the strategies its members employ. Another was about hunger in relation to the Food Stamp Program and contrasted problems faced by urban and rural areas, and another topic concerned the decline of food stamp use by rural low-income families.

To explain the high rate of hunger experienced by many Oregonians, information on hunger in Idaho, Oregon and Washington, was compared nationally by Tapogna, et al. (2004). The comparison addressed variations in hunger rates from the perspective of state levels of hunger and demographic characteristics in relation to the occurrence in particular states. The state-level variations in food insecurity and food insecurity with hunger in Oregon were compared with those in West Virginia. It was concluded that it was important to correlate State hunger rates to significant social and economic conditions at the State level. For instance, the broad network of food banks may be more important in Oregon than in those states with more stable populations. However, in contradiction, it is noted that good economic conditions often result in high levels of mobility. An economic development policy could combat two problems if the correlation is made between hunger rates and unemployment rates, (Tapogna, et al. 2004).

Further information on hunger in Oregon, which had the highest or second highest rate of hunger in the United States from 1998 to 2002, was provided by research that focused on the variables of workforce, income, and demographic characteristics for clusters of households (Edwards and Weber 2003). They compared data for both Oregon and Washington to “other states” using data from the Current Population Survey (1999 and 2001). Edwards and Weber looked at how hunger rates fluctuate in relation to demographic groups. They determined that the major difference between Oregon’s and other states’ rates of hunger seemed to result from higher rates of hunger for nearly all demographic groups. Edwards and Weber determined that, compared to food insecurity and hunger rates for the remainder of the United States, households in Oregon with all adults employed had appreciably higher rates of hunger, particularly in households that had two wage earners.

The Oregon Food Bank (2000 and 2004) publishes reports entitled Profiles of Poverty and Hunger in Oregon. For this thesis I will use data from these reports for 2000 and 2004, the years that data were gathered in both research sites. Both reports focus on the need for emergency assistance and what people feel would help, and they include sections on demographic profiles and poverty/hunger factors. They base their information on surveys of emergency food box clients conducted during the month of April in the years each report was published.

Additional literature on food insecurity and hunger in Oregon was provided by data collected by the RFS project in Oregon. One of the facets of this research project focused on determining the amount of hunger experienced by the families in their study. I will be using both qualitative and quantitative data from the first year collected in Hidden Cove (2000). It will be shown, by participants in their own words, the breadth and depth of hunger they experienced. Selected quotes by participants will describe the various strategies they use to keep their families fed and survive, as their safety nets are slowly eroded by changes in public policy that result in cancellation and/or changes to the services and support that they receive.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND SETTING

General Methodological framework

This chapter will include the general methodological framework used in two studies, information on the USDA Food Security Core Module (FSCM), descriptions of both sites where research was conducted, the demographics of both study populations, and the data analysis process. The two study sites are referred to as Salmonville located in Salal County and Hidden Cove situated in Manzanita County, all pseudonyms. Data from both study populations will provide a picture, during specific slices of time, of what occurred in the lives of impoverished families in two small natural resource-dependent rural towns. This data has been coded following standard ethnographic methodology as described by Bernard (2002).

For the purposes of this thesis and to understand the context of what the terms metropolitan/urban, nonmetropolitan, and rural mean, I will use the following definitions, defined by the Rural-Urban Continuum Codes (RUCC) (Butler, 1990). The Rural-Urban Continuum Codes for Metro and Nonmetro Counties assigns both study counties with an urban population adjacent to metro areas (Butler 1990). The difference in their code assignments is due to the sizes of the urban populations within each county. Salal County is assigned Code 4, which denotes an urban population of 20,000 or more. And Manzanita County is assigned Code 6, which denotes an urban population of 2,500 or more (Butler 1990). Therefore Code 4 applies to Salmonville and Code 6 applies to Hidden Cove due to their respective locations.

Data from research conducted in these two communities will be used because they are both rural, and located in the same relative geographical area of the state, have been dependent on natural resources, have overall populations of comparable size, and share similar problems and challenges. The studies, although conducted independently by different researchers, share analogous data collection techniques, analysis processes, and one protocol. Both studies administered the eighteen–item USDA FSCM and conducted in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews that were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed. Throughout the research process, reliability and accuracy of data collected were primary goals (Berg 2004; Bernard 2002) in order to assure validity of the findings.

However, there were basic differences between the two research studies that resulted in variations in topics and quantity of interview data gathered. Besides the FSCM, which was administered to both study populations, Salmonville used the Household Questionnaire included in Appendix A and focused on food insecurity and hunger. The Hidden Cove research study used the additional Parent Interview Protocol included in Appendix C and focused on family well-being across time. The resulting data gathered in the Hidden Cove Study was broader and included: household composition, community life, employment, work history, transportation, childcare, family origin characteristics, family well-being, education, income, parenting skills and social support. This data set of Hidden Cove did not have as much specific information relating to food insecurity and hunger as Salmonville because of the differing goals.

The portion of interview data I will focus on in this thesis will be used to address my research questions:

1. How do low-income residents in Salmonville and Hidden Cove describe their food security?
2. What strategies do they use to cope?

In looking at the data, I will assess the extent that people say they are food secure or insecure based on their responses to questions on the FSCM compared to information shared during their in-depth semi-structured interviews.

One of the goals of both studies was to have people tell their stories in their own words, thereby providing a pictorial description of their lives. In order to do this, the qualitative research method of semi-structured open-ended interviews was used that allowed people the freedom to tell us their stories. As described by Berg, qualitative research methods refer to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things (2004:3). As researchers, we wanted to discover how low-income families managed to keep their families fed and the strategies they used that worked for them. It was important to learn how they viewed their lives and interactions with others in their community. According to Berg (2004), qualitative research methods permit researchers to observe how people learn about and understand themselves and their relationships to others. The results of the interviews were revealed using quotes from interviewees and looked at from the perspectives of Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner 1979) and from Human Capital Theory and Social Capital Theory (Coleman1988; Putnam 2000).

Although different interview protocols were used in each study site, each protocol followed a list of open-ended questions that covered multiple topics and allowed interviewees freedom to respond according to their situations as described by Bernard (2002). Only data related to food insecurity and hunger and the strategies that helped them provide food for their families will be used for this thesis. All interviewees, at each site, were asked the same set of questions to guarantee reliability and validity of information.

All interviews were conducted in person, face-to-face, in locations that were most convenient for the interviewees. In many cases the interviews took place in a neutral site within their community that allowed for privacy. In other cases people chose to be interviewed at their homes. The objective was to have an atmosphere in which the interviewee would feel comfortable to allow researchers to obtain thick rich descriptions of their lives. All interviewees in both studies signed informed consent forms and were assured of anonymity for themselves and confidentiality of the information they shared. The significance of anonymity and confidentially is discussed in detail by both Berg (2004) and Bernard (2002).

Salmonville

The study in Salmonville took place during the winter and spring of 2004, and was conducted by three other researchers and me to determine the nature and degree of hunger and food insecurity in Salmonville and its surrounding area. This research project was initiated by a request from the Salal County Food Security Task Force. Three of the researchers had previously attended regular monthly meetings of the Task Force. During the beginning phase of the research, the technique of snowball sampling (Bernard 2002) was used, as this is a very small community with a population dispersed over a large geographical area. Bernard describes snowball sampling as the identification of a key person and asking him or her to name others who would be probable candidates for a research study (Bernard 2002). This method of snowball sampling was applicable because we were dealing with a small population, that even though dispersed, experienced close contact with one another.

In 2003, I had conducted an in-depth face-to-face interview with a key informant. Due to this established contact, we began our study by interviewing her and one other key informant. Both had not only lived and worked in Salmonville for many years but also were very involved in the day-to-day life of their community and the lives of its members. Therefore, they were knowledgeable about community leaders and members of their community. They could describe members of the community who were successful and had few problems; those that though not overly successful, were making good lives for themselves and their families; and the impoverished members that needed frequent assistance. These two interviews provided us with the necessary information to begin contacting community leaders and arranging the interviews with low-income families.

At the onset, we devised a protocol of fourteen questions to be used when interviewing community leaders, in order to learn more about the community from their perspective. This protocol focused on their general knowledge of the area, the community, and its members, as well as specific questions related to any knowledge they might have regarding vicinities where food insecurity might exist, and why people in these locales found it difficult to obtain food. We also asked them about other aspects of poverty in the area that were problematic and if they thought these contributed to the food insecurity people were experiencing.

This group of leaders included: 1) pastors of the three local churches; 2) local business owners; 3) the staff assistant and nurse practitioner from the health clinic; 4) heads of community organizations; 5) administrators, staff, members of the parent teacher association of the local public school; 6) the librarian; 7) the social worker assigned to the area; and 8) the head of the local gleaning group. These people were able to provide us with additional perspectives on the community and its members. However, when interviewing several community leaders, they were not willing to admit that there existed a problem with food insecurity and hunger in Salmonville, because it meant that they were not "*taking care of their* own, " which they prided themselves on doing. This led to researchers being given diametrically opposed opinions. Community leaders are not part of the actual study group; therefore, their interviews and protocol will not be included as part of this thesis.

A protocol of fifty-five questions which is attached in Appendix A was created for our in-depth face-to-face interviews to collect qualitative data from the study population of low-income families. These interview questions covered a wide range of topics focused primarily on food and their level of food security, but also included questions regarding their finances, health and health insurance, education, employment or lack thereof, social life, and view of Salmonville and the people that they were aware of that were food insecure.

Upon the completion of several interviews with the study population, we created a survey based on interviewee's ideas for increasing people's access to food and asked the interviewees to rank them according to which they thought was the most important. Interviewees' suggestions included the following topics: food pantry, weekly transportation to stores in Hazelton for disabled and people over sixty, Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program at the public school, community garden, school garden, Meals on Wheels, and others.

As research progressed, our knowledge of Salmonville and the impoverished members of the community increased. We became more responsive to situations we encountered and made our research fit the site, as recommended by Glaser and Strauss (1967). We found alternative ways of phrasing our questions, setting up varied meeting sites and times to facilitate the process for our interviewees.

As suggested by Bernard (2002), our use of semi-structured interviews permitted us to cover a large range of questions. Our interviews were open-ended and allowed participants to express their thoughts and feelings while telling us about their lives. Our goal was to learn about people's lives from their perspective.

All interviews used in this thesis were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Many interviews were transcribed by me, several by one of the other researchers, and the remainder by a person familiar with the process of transcribing interviews verbatim and listening closely and carefully to the interviewee. For me, the process of transcribing interviews was lengthy but it was like having "a second visit" with the individual. Also, I heard many interesting comments that I had forgotten, which were elucidating and allowed me to add to the notes that I had made during the interview. Notes taken during each interview were reviewed during the transcription process. For those interviews that were not transcribed by me, I compared my notes to the transcription. In both cases, I made additional notes on the transcribed interviews. The tapes, transcribed interviews, and notes of all interviews are stored in a secure location.

Salmonville had a very small Hispanic community that had been slowly developing in recent years. In 2004, 2.7 percent of the population of Salmonville was Hispanic. Only one of the interviews conducted with Hispanic families in Salmonville was recorded. The others were not recorded due to the reluctance of the interviewees. However, notes were taken during these interviews. The FSCM was not administered. Therefore, these interviews will not be included in the research for this thesis.

Hidden Cove

Hidden Cove was part of the national Rural Families Speak (RFS) project which began in 1998. The RFS project used a multi-state, multidisciplinary method that permitted an improved and enhanced understanding of the complex factors making up the lives of the low-income rural families within the framework of their rural communities. The purpose of the study was to track and assess the well-being and functioning of low-income mothers in the context of welfare reform. The project involved 316 families from rural communities in fourteen states (California, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oregon, and Wyoming) and researchers from sixteen Land-Grant universities. The research team included university professors, extension personnel, graduate students and in some cases undergraduate students assisting professors and investigators.

It was decided by the RFS team of investigators and researchers that it was important to take into account not only the ethnic diversity of rural families but also the resource diversity of regions and states. Designing the study in this manner allowed data to expose the broad ranges of individual and family characteristics across ethnic groups and geographic borders while at the same time revealing common situations and strategies employed by low-income rural families. The goal of the investigators and researchers was to frame this information within the context of welfare reform changes taking place at national, state and local levels.

Families in the RFS project had to have at least one child less than thirteen years of age, and be eligible to receive Food Stamps, although they did not have to be receiving the stamps or assistance from the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program at the time. First choice was given to families with a minimum of one child of preschool age, in order to examine their provisions for childcare. If none of the previous benefit conditions were met, a family could be admitted based on the fact that they were at 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

Researchers used face-to-face interviews to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Interviews were carried out with the adult woman of the family and lasted about two hours and usually took place in their home or a public meeting space such as the conference room at the local extension office. The same semi-structured interview protocol attached in Appendix C was used for all interviews. The interview protocol included several documents that included questions relating to: Feelings About How Things are Going, Life Skills Assessment, Knowledge of Community Resources, Adult Health Survey, Child Health Survey, and the FSCM. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, according to a previously agreed upon format, within the state where they took place. For the purposes of this thesis, only data from the initial interviews conducted during the first year (1999 - 2000) will be used.

<u>USDA Food Security Core Module</u>

In 2000 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) published a revised “Guide to Measuring Household Food Security” (Bickel et al. 2000). The authors assure us that the changes in this 2000 revision do not modify the basic method used to classify households by food security status level (iii). Bickel et al. describe the three levels of food security, food insecurity, and hunger as follows:

> Food Security: “Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum: (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and (2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (e.g. without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).”
>
> Food insecurity: “Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.”

> Hunger: "The uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food. The recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food. Hunger may produce malnutrition over time…Hunger…is a potential, although not necessary, consequence of food insecurity" (2000:6).

Bickel et al. (2000:6-7) go on to define and describe the use of the above three terms, as a consequence of insufficient financial resources. They further clarify that the measurement procedures are related only to hunger and food insecurity that come about as a result of the household not having adequate food or money to purchase food. They describe hunger that results from food insecurity as an acute level of food insecurity. They agree that hunger is frequently related to poverty but state that it is separate and apart from a "general income inadequacy" (Bickel et al. 2000:7). The term hunger, as used in the FSCM, is a condition of deprivation in this one area of basic need (Bickel et al. 2000:7).

The basis for determining an individual family's level of food insecurity was the eighteen-item USDA FSCM (Appendix B). Interviewees' responses to the eighteen questions are used to group households into the three categories of food secure, food insecure, and food insecure with hunger.

<u>The Setting/Research Sites in Rural Oregon</u>

I have used percentages to highlight the differences and similarities between the two communities and the two study populations. This emphasizes the relationships within each and facilitates comparisons between them. A discussion and interpretation of the data ratios begins prior to each table.

Study I: Salmonville

Salmonville (elevation 294 feet) is a very small community nestled in a valley at the foot of a mountain in the Pacific Coast Range with the Salmonville River flowing through town. It is about twenty-four miles from a university town with a population of just over 50,000 where the nearest hospital and major shopping stores are located. Special transportation barriers exist as a result of mountains, heavy rain and wind, fog and ice (during the winter months) and frequent storms that can close the only highway in and out of town. There is no public transportation except for Dial-a-Ride which is limited to seniors and the disabled. It is considered to be in the Coastal Range climate zone with the average temperature during winter of 39 degrees and summer of 66 degrees Fahrenheit (Oregon Office of Rural Health 2005: Statistics). It has a public school that includes kindergarten through twelfth grades.

Demography of Salmonville

The following statistics are taken from data provided by the Oregon Office of Rural Health: 2005 Statistics. The population of Salmonville in 2004 was 1,029.which was a decrease of 11.4% from 1990. A breakdown of the demographic changes in Salmonville between the years of 1990 to 2004 can be seen in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Population of Salmonville and Salal County ([1]Claritas 2004; [2]U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000)

Year	**Population [1] Salmonville**	**Percentage of Change[1]**	**Population Salal County[2]**
1990	1,201	n/a	70,811
2000	1,161	- 3.3%	78,153
2004	1,029	-11.4%	79,357

The population has been declining since 1990 and the amount of the decline has accelerated as time has passed. This decrease in the overall population of Salmonville has created changes in the demography which are further explained when viewed in relation to the age of the residents as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Salmonville Population According to Ages and Percent of Change (Claritas 2004)

Age	1990 Population	2004 Population	Percentage of Change
0 -14	286	184	-35.7%
15 – 44	509	379	-25.5%
45 – 64	244	330	35.2%
65+	162	136	-16.0%
Total	1,201	1,029	-14.3%

Table 3.2 shows the number of younger children and young adults has decreased significantly (ages 0 to 44) as opposed to an increase in the number of middle-aged adults (ages 45 to 64). There was also a small decline in the number of adults over age 65. The overall decline, calculated between the years of 1990 to 2004, is 14.3 percent. This reflects a trend in an increase of middle-age residents. The mean age of interviewees was 49 and the average number of children was one.

When Salmonville is viewed within the larger context of Salal County and Oregon, we see the following socioeconomic statistics. Table 3.3 shows that Salmonville is comparable to the statistics for Salal County in the area of the number of single mothers with children as a percentage of the population. An interesting statistic shows that Salmonville has a higher percentage of its population between the ages of 16-64 with disabilities.

Table 3.3: Socioeconomics of Salmonville, Salal County and Oregon (U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000)

	Salmonville	**Salal County**	**Oregon**
Percent of population below poverty level ($14,675/year for family for 3 in 2003)	11.9%	14.6%	11.6%
Percent of population below 200% of poverty level	38.4%	30.4%	29.6%
Single moms w/children as percent of families	7.2%%	7.6%	25.9%
Percent renter-occupied units	26.9%	42.7%	35.7%
Percent of population 16-64 with disability	19.3%	11.2%	17.4%
and unable to work	39.7%	44.8%	42.7%
Percent of households receiving public assistance	3.8%	2.0%	3.6%
Percent of population 25 & over without high school diploma	14.0%	6.9%	9.9%
Percent population over 5 who speak English less than "very well"	1.4%	4.0%	5.9%
Median household income in 1999	$33,594	$41,897	$40,916

A revealing statistic shows that Salmonville has more than double the percentage of their population 25 years and older without high school diplomas compared to Salal County. At the same time, Salmonville is 4.1 percent higher than the general population of Oregon in the percentage of the population 25 and over without high school diplomas. It is interesting to note that the median household income for Salmonville is $8,303 less than that for Salal County and only $4,285 less than that for the State of Oregon in 2000.

The percentages reported in Table 3.3 are taken from the 2000 Census and are reflective of population totals. However, when study populations are discussed, it is important to remember the small size of the two study populations; 12 in Salmonville and 31 in Hidden Cove. The sampling size, in both cases, was too small to draw valid statistical inferences for this thesis. The percentages that are discussed for the study populations are used for the ease of representing the relationships both within and between groups.

Table 3.4 lists selected demographic characteristics of the Salmonville study population. During the interviews, data on marital status was collected that differentiated single, divorced, married, and those with a partner. However, in the reality of living with food insecurity, the marital status of both single and divorced represented only one adult trying to cope for their household. Likewise, being married or living with a partner, offered resources and support of two adults. In Salmonville, the combined results of interviewees, who reported being single or divorced, accounted for 50 percent of the study population. Almost 40 percent have two adults, either married or living with a partner.

Interestingly, approximately 60 percent of respondents' families have working members. Forty percent of the study population has annual incomes of $8,000 or less. An additional thirty-three and one-third percent only earn incomes in the range of $8,000 to $16,000 annually. There seems a counter intuitive forty percent of the same low-income population who reported having some college education. For these people, their incomes do not reflect the rhetoric that increased education equates with better earning potential.

Table 3.4: 2004 Demographic Characteristics of Salmonville Study Populaton

Category	Salmonville	
	n=	%
Marital Status		
Single	3	25.0
Married	4	33.3
Living with Partner	1	8.3
Divorced	3	25.0
Separated	0	
Widowed	1	8.3
Work Status		
Working	7	58.3
Not Working	5	41.7
Levels of Income		
$0 to $8,000	5	41.7
$8,000 to $16,000	4	33.3
$16,000 to $21,000	1	8.3
$21,000 to $30,000	2	16.7
$30,000 to $48,000	0	
$48,000 to $76,000	0	
Educational Level		
8th Grade or Less	1	8.3
Some High School	1	8.3
High School or GED	3	25.0
Specialized Technical, Business or Vocational Training after High School	2	16.7
Some College, could Include Associates Degree	5	41.7
College or University	0	
One or More years beyond College	0	
Graduate Degree	0	
Don't Know	0	

Study II: Hidden Cove

Hidden Cove (elevation 22 feet) is a little larger community than Salmonville. It is located on the central Oregon coast, with the population dispersed around and out from Hidden Cove Bay. Hidden Cove is considered to be in the Coastal Range climate zone with the hottest month being September and the coldest month January. The annual precipitation is 88.650 inches. Traditionally, the driest month is July and the wettest month is December.

(Oregon Economic & Community Development Department 2000: Statistics.) It is about forty miles from the next largest town and about eighty miles from the nearest major city. There is very limited public transportation and Dial-a-Ride for seniors and the disabled. It also has a small general aviation airport and railroad service for freight only. It has a public school system that includes kindergarten through twelfth grades as well as a small two-year community college.

Demography

The population of Hidden Cove in 2000 was 4,352, which was an increase of 351 from 1990. The increase has changed the demography between age groups in the residents of Hidden Cove. As can be seen in Table 3.5, the overall populations of Hidden Cove and Manzanita County increased from 1990 to 2000.

Table 3.5: Population of Hidden Cove and Manzanita County (U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990, 2000)

Year	**Population Hidden Cove**	**Population Manzanita County**
1990	4,001	21,570
2000	4,352	24,262

From Table 3.6, we see that from 1990 to 2000, there was a decrease in only two age groups, that of 25 to 34 and 65 and older. The group with the largest decrease of 114 people was 65 and older. All other age groups increased. However, the group with the largest increase was that of people between the ages of 45 to 64 that saw an increase of 210 people. The group with the smallest increase was children from birth to 14 years of age. The mean age in 2000, at the time data were collected, was 30 years. The average number of children per family was two and one-half.

Table 3.6: Hidden Cove Population According to Ages (U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990, 2000)

Age	**1990 Population**	**2000 Population**
0 - 14	1001	1,051
15 - 19	263	330
20 - 24	212	300
25 - 34	596	580
35 – 44	577	643
45 - 64	644	854
65+	708	594
Total	4,001	4,352

In 2000, 11.1 percent of the population of Manzanita County was Hispanic/Latino. This was the reason for the over-sampling of the Hispanic/Latino community for the study population. The average family size was three people.

When Hidden Cove is viewed within the larger context of Manzanita County and Oregon, we see the following socioeconomic statistics in Table 3.7. The percentage of the population with disability in Hidden Cove (23.4%) and Manzanita County (24.4%), is greater than that for the State of Oregon (18.0%) It is interesting to note that Hidden Cove's percentage of people with disabilities and unable to work is 8.3 percent less than that of Manzanita County and 9.7 percent less than that of the State of Oregon. However, it is worth noting that Hidden Cove has a higher percentage of people below the poverty level (4.0%) than Manzanita County and of the State of Oregon (3.8%).

Table 3.7: Socioeconomics of Hidden Cove, Manzanita County and Oregon (U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000)

Category	Hidden Cove	Manzanita County	Oregon
Percent of Population below Poverty Level in 1999 (2000, $8,794/individual)	15.4%	11.4%	11.6%
Percent of Renter-occupied Units	49.3%	28.2%	35.7%
Population 21 – 64 with disability,	23.4%	24.4%	18.0%
and unable to work	32.4%	40.7%	42.1%
Percent of population 25 & over without high school diploma	9.5%	12.2%	9.9%
Percent population Over 5 who Speak English Less than "very well"	4.2%	2.7%	5.9%
Median Household Income in 1999	$29,875	$34,269	$40,916

The percentage of renter-occupied units for Hidden Cove is higher than that for Manzanita County by 21.1 percent, and much lower than that for the State by 13.6 percent. In comparison, Hidden Cove has a 1.5 percent higher percentage of its population over five who speak English less than "very well" compared to Manzanita County but 1.7 percent less than that of the State of Oregon. On the other hand, there is a difference between the median household incomes for Hidden Cove which is $4,394 less than that for Manzanita County and $11,041 less than that for the State of Oregon.

Table 3.8 shows that in Hidden Cove's study population 83 percent of the food insecure families had two adults sharing the responsibility for support and resources. Approximately 60 percent of interviewees were employed. Almost 40 percent reported annual incomes below $16,000. Sixty percent of the interviewees reported annual incomes within a range of $16,000 to $48,000.

Associated with annual incomes, thirty-nine percent of interviewees reported having an eighth grade level or lower of education and 25 percent had obtained high school or GED levels. Nearly 55 percent of the women were Hispanic/Latino, due to a purposeful over-sampling of their ethnic group, who account for only eleven percent of the total population of Manzanita County.

Table 3.8: 2000 Demographics Characteristics of Hidden Cove Study Population

Category	**Hidden Cove** n=	%
Marital Status		
Single	1	3.2
Married	21	67.7
Living with Partner	5	16.1
Divorced	3	9.1
Separated	1	3.2
Widowed	0	
Work Status		
Working	13	41.9
Not Working	18	58.1
Levels of Income		
$0 to $8,000	4	13.79
$8,000 to $16,000	7	24.14
$16,000 to $21,000	3	10.34
$21,000 to $30,000	11	37.93
$30,000 to $48,000	4	13.79
$48,000 to $76,000	0	
Educational Level		
8^{th} Grade or Less	12	38.7
Some High School	4	12.9
High School or GED	8	25.8
Specialized Technical, Business or Vocational Training after High School	4	12.9
Some College, could Include Associates Degree		
College or University	3	9.7
One or More years beyond College	0	
Graduate Degree	0	
Don't Know	0	

As seen in Table 3.9, showing community level comparisons, there was a difference in the size of the populations between Salmonville and Hidden Cove—Hidden Cove is a little larger than Salmonville—but even so there are several similarities and differences between the percentages of each population. In the 1990’s the population of Hidden Cove increased (US Census) while Salmonville’s population declined. (Claritas 2004).

Within the population by age group category, the percentages of various age groups are similar with the exception of one age group. The greatest difference is in the percentage of people between the ages of 45 to 64, with Salmonville having 12.5 percent more of its population in that age group than Hidden Cove. On the other hand, the percentage of people 65 and older is almost the same for both Salmonville and Hidden Cove. In Salmonville almost 40 percent of the working-age population between the ages of 16 to 64 have disabilities and are unable to work. The percentage of single mothers with children as a percentage of total families in Hidden Cove is 5.3 percent more than the percentage of single mothers with children in Salmonville. Four and one-half percent more of Salmonville’s population than Hidden Cove’s had an educational level “without a high school diploma.” The median household income in 1999 for Salmonville was $33,594, as contrasted with that in Hidden Cove which was $29,875. This could perhaps be explained because there are more people in Salmonville between the ages of 45 to 64 who are probably producing income.

Table 3.9 Community Level Comparisons Between Salmonville and Hidden Cove (U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000)

Description	Salmonville	Hidden Cove
Total population Salmonville 2004 Hidden Cove 2000	1,029	4,352
Population by age group: (Salmonville 2004 and Hidden Cove 2000)		
0 – 14	17.9% = 184	24.2% = 1,051
15 – 44	36.8% = 379	42.6% = 1,853
45 – 64	32.1% = 330	19.6% = 854
65 +	13.2% = 136	13.6% = 594
Percent of population below poverty Level ($14,675 per year for a family of 3 in 2003)	11.9%	15.4%
Percent of population below 200% of Poverty Level	38.4%	36.0%
Single mothers with children as a percent of families	7.2%	12.5%
Percent of population ages 16-64 with disability ,	19.3%	23.4%
and unable to work:	39.7%	32.4%
Percent of households receiving public assistance	3.8%	4.0%
Percent of population 25 & over without high school diplomas	14%	9.5%
Percent of population over 5 who speak English Less than "very well"	1.4%	4.2%
Percent of renter-occupied housing units	26.9%	49.3%
Median household Income (1999 for Salmonville and Hidden Cove)	$33,594	$29,875

Table 3.10 shows the demographic characteristics of the two study populations in Salmonville and Hidden Cove. When comparing these demographic characteristics, it may be noted that 84 percent of Hidden Cove's low-income interviewees had two adults sharing their household. This is contrasted to Salmonville, where only half that amount, or approximately 42 percent of the study population, had two adults sharing their household. In an inverse relationship with each other, both study populations have a forty/sixty split between those working and not working. In Salmonville the working percentage dominates while in Hidden Cove the non-working interviewees' percentage is greater.

Those with income levels below $16,000 in Salmonville account for 75 percent of the study population as contrasted with Hidden Cove where approximately only 38 percent reported incomes below $16,000. Within the $16,000 to $30,000 annual income range, Salmonville reported 25 percent while Hidden Cove's interviewees' incomes in the same bracket were 48 percent of the study population. Additionally, Hidden Cove's interviewee's income levels continued into the higher income bracket of $30,000 to $48,000. Salmonville's highest income bracket was $21,000 to $30,000.

Regarding education levels attained between the two study populations, approximately 8 percent of Salmonville's interviewees reported an eighth grade level or less. This is contrasted with Hidden Cove's interviewees who reported nearly 39 percent with an eighth grade level or less. Interviewees with high school or GED level of education were equivalent between the two study populations. A major difference in levels of education reappears with those who had some college or an Associates Degree. In Salmonville almost 42 percent had some college or an Associates Degree. This is a four-fold increase over Hidden Cove's study population who reported only 10 percent with some college or an Associates Degree. This high level of Hidden Cove interviewees who reported less than an eighth grade level of education is probably due to the purposeful oversampling of the Latino population and may not be reflective of the general population.

Table 3.10: Comparison of Demographic Characteristics of Study Populations

Category	**Salmonville**		**Hidden Cove**	
	n=	**%**	**n=**	**%**
Marital Status				
Single	3	25.0	1	3.2
Married	4	33.3	21	67.7
Living with Partner	1	8.3	5	16.1
Divorced	3	25.0	3	9.1
Separated	0		1	3.2
Widowed	1	8.3	0	
Work Status				
Working	7	58.3	13	41.9
Not Working	5	41.7	18	58.1
Levels of Income				
$0 to $8,000	5	41.7	4	13.79
$8,000 to $16,000	4	33.3	7	24.14
$16,000 to $21,000	1	8.3	3	10.34
$21,000 to $30,000	2	16.7	11	37.93
$30,000 to $48,000	0		4	13.79
$48,000 to $76,000	0		0	
Educational Level				
8th Grade or Less	1	8.3	12	38.7
Some High School	1	8.3	4	12.9
High School or GED	3	25.0	8	25.8
Specialized Technical, Business or Vocational Training after High School	2	16.7	4	12.9
Some College, could Include Associates Degree	5	41.7	3	9.7
College or University	0			
One or More years beyond	0			
College	0			
Graduate Degree	0			
Don't Know				

Data Analysis Process

Analysis of data involves looking for the patterns and themes in data and the reasons they emerge (Bernard 2002; Glazer and Strauss 1967; Lofland and

Lofland 1995). My analysis of data was guided by the overall arching theoretical perspective of Ecological Systems Theory as described by Bronfenbrenner (1979). This perspective allowed me to frame the interactions of people with their environments on several levels and see the effects and influences of many complex factors on low-income families, some of which they had no control over.

My analysis primarily focuses on the interactions between the levels of the microsystem and the mesosystem and somewhat on the effects of decisions/policies implemented in the exosystem. This analysis flows from the emic perspective of individuals described during their ethnographic interviews.

A modified grounded theory (Bernard 2002; Glaser and Strauss 1967) approach was used in the analysis of qualitative data, as we let the categories and themes emerge from the interviews (Glaser and Strauss1967:76). This is also described by Bronfenbrenner as being aware of and noticing the interactions between individuals and their environments on several levels and how individuals are affected (1979:3-15). As described by Bernard, a system of open coding was used (2002:464-465). In Salmonville, hard copies of all interviews were printed and read in order to identify categories and concepts which would emerge into potential themes. After reading several of the interviews I found common themes emerging. I made a list of the common themes and coded the remainder of the interviews according to these codes. Then I re-read the interviews focusing on the main themes of food insecurity and hunger and interviewee's coping strategies. Within these two categories, many sub-themes emerged in each interviewee's telling of his or her story. I compared these sub-themes with the Food Security Sub-codes attached in Appendix D prepared by the researchers involved with the RFS project and found that they were almost the same. One sub code that emerged in Salmonville was the wide use of and participation in the local gleaning group. This was added to the list of Food Security Sub-codes that has been used in coding all interviews for this thesis.

In the RFS project, after transcription, the research team at one university coded all interviews for common themes using the tenets of grounded theory

(Bernard 2002; Glaser and Strauss 1967) and qualitative analysis techniques (Berg 1997; Gilgun, Daly, and Handel 1992; Kvale 1996; Strauss & Corbin 1988). The team coded interviews using previously agreed upon themes, rules, principles, and factors. The data were sub-coded for many specific areas, but I will be using the coding scheme for food security. All interviews were further coded for themes relating specifically to food insecurity and hunger. A new set of Sub-codes attached in Appendix D was prepared by the researchers analyzing the qualitative data.

The low-income families of both studies will be the primary unit of analysis for data. The answers to specific questions about level of income asked during the in-depth interviews will be used to determine whether a family is considered low-income. The family's level of income will be compared to the official Federal Poverty Line in the years within which data was collected. To establish if a family is food insecure and/or hungry, answers to the USDA FSCM attached in Appendix B were scored.

<u>Limitations</u>

I will discuss the limitations of the data used to look at the populations of the two study sites. In writing this thesis I have looked at research conducted in two small rural Oregon communities focusing on food insecurity and hunger in each. Within that category, I included strategies that low-income families devised to keep their families fed. The strategies are viewed from the perspective of social support received from family and friends and the social support received from agencies.

In Salmonville, results from interviews of all low-income families are included. However, in order to compare the scored results of the FSCM, I included only those in Salmonville's study population who had completed answering all questions in the FSCM attached in Appendix B, so there could be a valid comparison between study populations. I made this decision because the basis for each study was quite different, and the FSCM is the only measure that both studies have in common. The protocols of interview questions attached in Appendix A for Salmonville and Appendix C for Hidden Cove, are quite different, although both cover some of the same areas with the interview protocol for Hidden Cove being much more in-depth and covering a wider range of topics.

I decided to restrict my research focus to the sub-set of data which covered only food insecurity and hunger. I further limited data used in order to make the study populations of Salmonville and Hidden Cove comparable. The end result was that much of the ethnographic richness contained in the interviews was lost. This affected the data producing an under-representation of the social support systems in the Hidden Cove study population. The importance of family and friends was often included as background context in responses to questions relating to topics other than food insecurity and hunger. As such it was not included in my analysis.

On the other hand, my narrowed research focus highlighted the shared values and problems of two different locations and diverse study populations. This in turn directed attention to the core issues of living with food insecurity and hunger in rural communities. Despite their differences, the study populations experienced comparable problems and developed similar coping strategies to deal with their food insecurity and hunger.

There are some limitations to the research conducted in Salmonville and the data used from this research. First, the study population was a limited non-random purposeful sample targeting low-income food insecure people and is not reflective of the site's population. The study population was comprised of a small number of cases. There could be a sample bias because most of the individuals were referred to the research team as a result of their connections within the community, although a few were referred by other interviewees.

Another difference exists between data collected at the two study sites. My knowledge of Salmonville is more extensive because I spent some time in the community as a participant observer as well as having conducted ethnographic interviews. Furthermore, I have maintained an on-going relationship with the community. This may have resulted in my data on Salmonville having a researcher bias and a more expanded perspective than what is reported for Hidden Cove. The data I am using from Hidden Cove was part of the national RFS project, and interviews were conducted by other researchers.

A further limitation is that not all interviews were conducted in a private atmosphere with only the interviewee and the interviewer(s) present. This, of course, possibly could have limited the responses of these interviewees to several questions, as well as their comfort level in sharing precise personal information.

When interviews were conducted, they did not necessarily all begin in the same manner due to conversations that developed between the interviewees and the interviewer(s). This may have led to differing answers to questions, both on the FSCM and the open-ended interview protocol. However, there is no way to determine this.

When using the FSCM questionnaire, not all questions were asked. In some cases, the interviewer stopped after the first question. Therefore, not full information was received from these individuals. Also, in a few cases, the FSCM was not administered to interviewees. In both these cases, I have not included these individuals as part of the analysis of the FSCM protocol. In spite of this, I have used information shared by interviewees during their in-depth interviews in the qualitative data when analyzing results of the study populations in Chapter four.

Not all interviews were recorded and transcribed. In a few instances, the interviewers took notes and wrote those up afterwards. Therefore information from those interviews was not used in this thesis.

There were interviews conducted with a few Hispanic families, some were in Spanish using a dissimilar questionnaire protocol from the English version that included fifty–five questions. Some of these interviews were recorded and transcribed, while others were not recorded but the interviewer(s) took notes and later transcribed these. In some cases the FSCM was not administered. Due to the inconsistencies in the interview methods with the Hispanic families, I have not included them in the study population. This resulted in a loss of data from the Salmonville study population that would have provided a more realistic representation of the richness and diversity found there. The inclusion would also have made it more comparable to Hidden Cove's study population in which 18 out of 31 respondent families were Hispanic.

There are some limitations to the research conducted in Hidden Cove and the data used for this thesis. The study population was a limited non-random sample targeting low-income mothers with children and therefore is not reflective of the overall site's population. Also, there was a purposeful over sampling of Latino families. In addition, this study population was comprised of a small number of cases and interviewees were paid a stipend in exchange for their time.

Another limitation was that there were several researchers conducting the interviews and each had differing levels of interview skills. Protocols were set at the national level to ensure conformity throughout multiple states. This resulted in less regard to specific local conditions. Data were collected by an unbiased research team including several graduate students and a member of the community who was bi-lingual and bi-cultural. The less personal approach became apparent when reading the transcriptions and, in some cases, seemed to determine the amount of in-depth information that was shared by interviewees. This is a contrast from Salmonville, where local interviewers were concerned about fellow community members and had a desire for the research outcomes to help build solutions.

When discussing the differences and similarities of the results of research between Salmonville and Hidden Cove, I would like to note that due to the different criteria for being included in each of the study populations, the people in each are quite different. The study in Salmonville includes men and women of all ages, some with children, and some whose children are already grown and are not living at home any more. The Salmonville study population was not asked a direct question about ethnicity, but it was observed that all were non-Hispanic white. Many were also long time residents which may have contributed to the closeness of the interconnections of their social networks.

In contrast, the study population in Hidden Cove includes only mothers eighteen years of age and older with at least one child twelve years or younger, and eighteen of these mothers were Hispanic immigrants from Mexico. Many of the more recent Hispanic immigrants had formed close relationships with fellow immigrants who had lived in Hidden Cove for some time. These social networks were made in their home villages in Mexico prior to arriving in Hidden Cove. Having already established connections helped these new immigrants decide upon Hidden Cove as their destination in the United States because they knew friends and they knew that job opportunities would be available upon their arrival. Hidden Cove does not have the close community interconnected social network like Salmonville. Although, there are groups of people, such as the Hispanic community that described during interviews the value of the connections with fellow Latinos who showed them around Hidden Cove and provided support for them while they were learning about their new community in a strange country. Hidden Cove is a larger community with looser connections, but there are more social services available. However, for the Hispanic immigrants not being able to speak English well made it harder for them to access these services as not all agencies employed bi-lingual staff. These varying demographics reflect the different perspectives and needs of each resulting from their diversity.

There was evidence of social capital and human capital in the Hidden Cove study. Even so, the national focus and diverse research interests created a large amount of information that did not pertain solely to food insecurity and hunger. In contrast, the Salmonville study provided not only abundant rich information about both social capital and human capital, but also more pertinent information on local coping strategies. This resulted because the primary focus of the Salmonville research was food insecurity and hunger.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In this chapter I correlate data from both Salmonville and Hidden Cove in-depth interviews and scored responses to the USDA Food Security Core Module (FSCM). Forty-three interviewees self-reported their level of food security, the strategies they employed to keep their families fed, and how well these strategies worked. During the interviews more in-depth information was shared that revealed a more personal and sometimes different story than their answers to the FSCM questions. It was during the face-to-face in-depth interviews that we discovered not only that they were experiencing food insecurity, but also the extent of the impacts on them and their families.

The FSCM required only brief answers with no background context. It required participants to rank their subjective experiences of whether or not they "felt" hungry, but not until the in-depth interviews was the degree of their difficulties apparent. For instance, question one on the FSCM asks people to describe their food situations and further in question 1a, select whether their answers were due to a shortage of money. Interviewees were not prompted to discuss the reasons for not having enough money. By way of illustration, in the series that asks the respondent about this, one replied: "Often because it's not…I mean, I don't think that they ever really had not enough to eat, but with those three options, I mean, it's not never, never been an issue…" The issue for her was if she had more money she would have been able to feed them something else besides Top Ramen. In this case, the FSCM was inadequate to meet the real life experiences that this interviewee needed to verbalize.

Furthermore, in the FSCM, people who said that sometimes they did not have enough food to eat, later stated that the main reason for this was lack of money. In the interviews we learned that, in some cases, this wasn't simply a lack of money for food but other obstacles impacted their food procurement. They reported problems including difficulty getting to the store due to lack of transportation, or no money to put gasoline in the car, and, in some cases, not having a fully functional kitchen. The frustrations and challenges that interviewees faced on a daily basis in their struggles to survive became apparent. One interviewee explained his frustration with a very small kitchen as follows:

> (We would also like to) have a refrigerator too where it's not going to rot, and have the room. Yeah, my refrigerator is about two-foot by two-foot. Even if I go to town and get groceries right now I can't fit them in the fridge.

This demonstrates how a lack of money impacts the lives of low-income families in more ways than the simple procurement of food. One mother described a time when she did not have enough money to buy food in this way:

> Well, for us the most important thing is food, the most indispensable. Yes, it has happened a few times that, even though I tell you right, that we are better off together, but the car breaks down and there goes a pay check or something like that. Sometimes (things are) difficult.

Questions in the FSCM related to interviewees' eating habits, amounts eaten and skipped meals. Again, during the in-depth interviews questions about skipped meals led to discussion about the times of the year that they ate the best. Many people responded that they ate best during the summer when there was an abundance of fresh locally available food, during the winter holidays, and whenever there was community or church potlucks: "Eat best when the gardens are up." "Nothing replaces fresh vegetables and fruits." This supplementary information gave interviewers the context in which to view food insecurity more fully. This results supports research reported about eating habits and strategies by Gross and Rosenberger (2005).

Additional difficulties were reported when a member of the family had health problems that required eating specific types of food. Many interviewees stated that they had enough, but not always the kinds of food that they wanted to eat, and only sometimes that they did not have enough food to eat. For people who suffered from diabetes it was hard to obtain quality proteins if they relied on the gleaners as their main source of food. A few people said that during the past year they had concerns about getting enough protein.

Some people were not able to eat the types of food they preferred or to eat them as often as they would have liked, and several found their diets monotonous. However, others still retained a sense of humor, as illustrated by the following quote: “I’m a gourmet chef; the boxes I open tell me so.” Another mentioned, “I eat tons of rice,” while others remarked, “We always have food but there are times when we have to eat too many carbohydrates.” This is further corroborated by others who complained about receiving too many carbohydrates and starches in their boxes from the gleaners. Another interviewee complained,

> (We get) too much of white carbs (in our boxes from the gleaners, and they) make us sick cause (we) don’t digest (them) well. (We) don’t prefer (the white carbohydrates) and (they are) not good for us.

One interviewee summed up many people’s sentiments when he said, “You get hungry enough, you will eat anything.”

The interviews highlighted not only difficulties with getting food to eat but also additional ones involved in living with food insecurity. In coding the interviews it became apparent that there were six common coping strategies:

1. Relying on friends and family, characterized by borrowing, gifting, and sharing.
2. Using community social supports: food banks, gleaners, churches
3. Depending upon government programs: WIC, Food Stamps, TANF
4. Shopping wisely and monetary options: discount food stores, coupons and credit cards
5. Making do by stretching existing food supplies, reducing the size of meals or skipping meals.
6. Supplementing with subsistence activities: fishing, hunting, and gardening.

How these strategies are incorporated into the lives of low-income families to help them cope with food insecurity is best revealed in their own words and discussed below.

Relying on family and friends: borrowing, gifting, and sharing

Several interviewees mentioned the help and support they received from family, friends and fellow workers. One woman mentioned, “If something happens, like my car is broken down or my tires are flat or something, my boss will actually come and pick me up, take me back to work and bring me home…It’s very nice.” Another affirmed, “Friends rally around to ‘be there’ in all ways when people are in need.” For others, it is family members who live close by that give them a feeling of security. “I don’t know what people do without families?!” “Salmonville is blessed. Families tend to look out for each other. I don’t think anybody goes without totally.”

As an example, one family was particularly fortunate to have a relative who made deals for large amounts of tuna and shared it with them: “Every year my father-in-law brings me a hundred pounds of tuna and I can it so we have our own tuna…I can usually make it last the whole year.”

Another interviewee received help from her mother, even though she lived a fair distance away. When her mother came north to visit, “she brought us many things from California…many things that you eat …that you can’t afford to buy.” It can been seen from what these interviewees shared that along with the benefits they receive from government programs, it is their strong relationships with friends, neighbors, and extended family in the area, as well as with family far away, that help them provide for their families.

One family recalled the last time when they were hungry and did not have anything to eat and their family helped. It was just before they came to Hidden Cove:

> We looked for a solution with my family members or her family members…they supported us, even gave us food. (This happened when the husband’s business failed.) It was my poor business

> administration. I used to be a goldsmith making necklaces, bracelets, rings. But with my bad administration I went down…with the bad economic crises that was going on at the time.

Another woman said that she and her family had never been without food to eat because her husband "has more brothers and they have a place to stay at most of the time and (we) stay at their place..."

One woman talked about when her mother helped her: "My mom comes and picks me up once a month when I have to do groceries, and takes me into town (to) do my grocery shopping and (then) takes me home."

In another case an aunt helps out with non-food item purchases that the interviewee's Food Stamps cannot cover. Almost every month, when the interviewee runs short of money, the families agree to exchange with each other as described:

> Well, I have a telephone, I have a TV, I have other needs. I have shampoo for my kids I have to buy every month. I trade with my aunt. I trade her food, I buy her food and she buys (personal care items)….So it works out sometimes to where I'll buy my aunt's groceries and she'll pay for the paper products. And sometimes I have to do that cause you can't make it otherwise.

This same woman describes her worry about when her husband can't work during the winter as:

> Winter months come, there's not going to be any work for Sam. So it's gonna be really hard as far as… I'm getting kind of worried about how the food stamps yeah, but what about the other stuff? And his mom helps us out, but she's helped us out more ways than she ever should of. She's willing to do it again, when the first rolls around and she gets her money back.

Another interviewee's mother helped her with loans: "I borrowed, I think it was like $300 to help pay for rent but she didn't want it paid back (so it was a gift, not a loan). Another woman stated that she had always been able to pay back loans, but had to borrow money for survival, "…I usually borrow money from my sister, once every other month probably. I usually borrow' $20 to $50 depending if we need a little bit of groceries or that's about it, usually for groceries."

Another example of families helping is depicted when a daughter describes the help she gets from her mother. In turn, she relieves her mother at work in the coffee shop to help her:

> Yeah, she doesn't want my phone to get shut off, (so) she'll pay my phone bill (that is like) $50 a month. (And), if I go up to the coffee shop she'll give me gas money for going up and saying hi. If she wants a couple hours off, I'll work there for her for a couple hours and I get something in return and she gets something in return. So, it's just (that) I don't tell my case worker.

A similar exchange of work for money arrangement between a daughter and mother was described.

> It's, well it's borrowed, but my mom says, 'You'll never pay me back, you just work it off.' If she wants me (to) go up there and defrost her freezer, so I guess it's not a borrow, she just gave me money. She gives me money when I need it. (In the last year) she has probably given me a few hundred to pay bills.

The borrowing and exchanges occur between friends as well as family members. One family talked about when they found it necessary to ask a friend for loans several times, "Well sometimes we have borrowed $100, other times $50. Like that. A little bit. To make a payment, to sometimes buy more food, or…for the baby too." When asked about paying the loan back, they responded:

> Well already in the next two week pay period. (when) they paid my husband, and we pay them. And another time, even though we were already without money, but we paid.

This same family also loaned money to friends when asked if they could "lend me $20, or a little bit….Well, yes, when one can, you give a loan." A different woman, when asked if she had needed to borrow money, explained:

> (I ask friends) if they can give me a loan until the first of the month comes, and I will give it back to them. …and my mother-in-law she gives us food for the kids to eat. …When they pay him (her husband), well, I then (repay) everything.

Another interviewee responded that she had borrowed money several times from family and friends during the previous year:

> …Well, I borrowed quite a bit from Jean (a friend), you know just in the not paying by the month. I haven't been able to pay all. I would say maybe $1000…(I also borrowed money from my mother) but I still owe my mom like $50 and Jean quite a bit.

There are other means of help besides receiving direct cash from friends such as when another woman mentioned the help she received from a friend who bought things for her when she had no money. "Yes, she helped me a lot, sometimes she would lend me $20, or she bought things, when I couldn't pay her, and she didn't take this money from me."

Sharing meals is also described as another strategy. One woman says about friends that they have been seeing on a regular basis since meeting four years previously:

> We've had a very good friendship and have shared a lot of things…(We get together) regularly every week to talk, to go out to the river, to make meals (and eat together), and (for our children) to play with their four children.

A single father, who lived a few miles outside Salmonville, mentioned what good neighbors he had and how they helped each other: "Well, my neighbors, if I haven't cooked yet, they offer me dinner. We kind of share around here…He helped another neighbor getting "a load of wood and she made me a pie and brought me some tobacco. Another neighbor is going to help me get my car running."

One mother's strategy that helps her survive was making use of the food her friends share with her. As she relates:

> At times, the money doesn't stretch far enough, and, well, we fell under a lot of pressure. But we aren't lacking people that I know will give us something. We don't comment on it, right? But they come to the house and, well, they see that I don't have juice. For example, their kids ask for juice, and, well, I (go though that) every day. Well, nothing. I don't have any right now, so my husband can take today off, I tell them. And, well, they go to their houses and bring me, like, juice, and that kind of thing they give us, or cereal, something like that…

This information reveals that people experiencing food insecurity who had close relationships with families and friends were able to access this network to ameliorate their food shortages. Besides the support from family or friends, another strategy was often reported as making use of community social services.

Using community social supports: churches, gleaners and food banks

For many, the strategy of using community social supports provided an extended safety net beyond family and friends. And for those with no family nearby these were significant resources. One interviewee who relied on the Salvation Army describes, "…they're wonderful. (They are) very, very caring. (A) very caring family that's there. And everybody else has been pretty nice." For another woman who experienced severe health problems and was unable to work for some time, it was the church and the Boy Scouts who helped her:

> Well, people from the church…and the Boy Scouts were helping me with my wood, the church donated some and Jed donated a whole bunch. And then the Boy Scouts would come and stack it right up against the house so I could get to it, instead of going out to the wood shed.

Some churches sponsored meals/potlucks and everyone was invited to attend. During interviews in Salmonville, we also found that local pastors were in touch with members of their congregations as well as other community members who might be in need of assistance. The pastors were sometimes able to arrange financial aid and/or food for congregation members as well as others in need within the community.

One person described the support she received during a difficult time with no family nearby as:

> The church, when he was in jail and I was out here alone with all three of my kids and didn't have a car or anything, the church helped me. They brought me out food and stuff. I didn't know what I was going to do…That was when we had no electricity and everything, and I was cooking (on) the wood stove…The electricity was cut off because we couldn't afford to make payments…I don't have any family here; my mom is dead and my dad lives in Lamont and that is the only family I got…I can't count on my dad (for help)

> because I'm too far away from him, and he has ten kids of his own—he married into another family. So he doesn't help me, he helps his (current) family.

Besides churches, interviewees also relied on other community services such as the local health centers, food banks, and gleaning organizations. In Salmonville, several interviewees participated in and found the local gleaner group to be useful. The gleaners have been a long-established organization and very active within the community. Gleaning organizations do expect people to participate in some way if they are able, but it is not required. People's participation takes many forms. Some people go out with the group to glean in fields, others participate in food packing sessions (repacking large quantities of food in smaller packages for distribution), others use their trucks to pick up food donated by stores in Meridian and Hazelton, and some help make up boxes of food for families to pick up. For many, participation with the gleaners provided a means of socializing with fellow community members and a time to share ideas and develop friendships that helped them through difficult times. The gleaners contributed substantial quantities of food over time for its members as well as sharing excesses with others in the community.

Those people unable to physically to take part in gleaning activities may become adoptees. People who are housebound, seniors and otherwise unable to participate but who still receive food boxes are considered adoptees. Others, regardless of their age or heath status want to participate in some way, such as the woman below who was in her mid 70s. She supplements her food by participating in a unique way with the Salmonville Gleaners. She is not able to collect food, go out and glean in the fields, or help pack food boxes as she explained:

> Basically I don't do that anymore because after I retired I fell twice and each time I broke a wrist so now we have the arthritis bit in the hands and fingers. That's not to say if I didn't want enough wild blackberries for a pie I couldn't go out, but I don't go out and glean with the group at all. I keep the checkbook balanced instead and

> don't fill boxes. So, I feel like I'm doing my share even though I'm not actually gleaning.

Another family, in which the husband retired a few years previously, had been working with the gleaners for a couple of years. His wife described his work, "Well, there was a time when he was going out three times a week (to drive his truck) to pick up food."

Further, one family explained how they used the boxes of food from the gleaners as:

> Well, for instance, like with the gleaners, they'll bring me a box (of food), well we're not going to eat all of it, so I share it…And bread and stuff, like pastry—we have to give that away and they don't give us much pastry any more…No, cause they know we're diabetic. It don't go to waste. Like I was saying, I'm from back in the twenties and so I don't believe in wasting food.

There was no mention by interviewees in Hidden Cove of a gleaning organization. However, in Hidden Cove the Food Bank was an important resource described by many, and the last community resource to be discussed in this section. Although interviewees in both communities utilized Food Banks, there is no Food Bank in Salmonville. For those that have transportation to make the almost twenty mile drive to Meridian, they found the closest Food Bank very helpful and the people most accommodating. One woman expressed her thoughts as, "(the) Food Bank is a godsend, it is very wonderful and they have been pretty generous." She appreciates them, but:

> They were always short but that's not necessarily their problem…it's kind of like they do it by the number of people in the household. Sometimes when you have, like she doesn't eat hardly anything (the baby) but John eats tons (her 17-year-old son who also plays football). So it kind of works out in the wash for us but I wonder if for other families…if it works the same?

One recent immigrant related that until she was able to finish paying off her coyote (the person who is paid to take immigrants across the United States of America/Mexico border), she used the Food Bank. She doesn't use the Food Bank any more as she relates:

> “Right now I don’t have needs, thanks to the help that those that I ask provide’, thank God. This helps me a lot. First I buy with my own money…and then next, like on that date, they give me the stamps…And well, yes, it was more difficult, but (where there’s a will there’s a way]) Thank God.”

When asked, about food banks, one interviewee replied, “Well, here there is a place that is a food bank. And when at times, that, one sees hard times, they can go there and they help with the food.”

Another woman described the time when she relied upon the Food Bank. When she first began working full-time their Food Stamps were cut and her family was close to being hungry:

> And so the money situation, it’s with having a $600 apartment and getting paid once a month you really don’t have the money to go out and get food. (The Food Stamps stopped immediately when she was hired). …just kept going to the food bank. The only thing we could do…The food was edible and it satisfied (us). I was mainly concerned about her. I wasn’t too worried about me and Archer, but as long as she got food in her stomach, I didn’t, you know, it didn’t matter to me.

One interviewee, who had an addiction problem, described the six-month waiting time before she could go for treatment when she lost her job and her apartment. Her solution to not have this happen again is to “stay clean and sober so I can keep my head on my shoulders.” She said that since that February she had been using the Food Bank once a month. When she goes in they give her food items like five pound bags of flour and sugar. “I probably wouldn’t make it through the month without it.” As we have seen, the strategies of depending both upon family and friends and upon community social supports provide means for low-income families to fill in the gaps in their food supplies. Another strategy for food insecure people is to access government programs. This ability is a critical skill in attaining assistance that provides much of the needed support for impoverished families.

<u>Depending upon government programs: WIC, Food Stamps, TANF</u>

Although community social support services appeared to be vital for low-income families to survive, they were still not sufficient to eliminate fears and insecurities about food and hunger. Government aid was essential for many low-income interviewees' survival. One example is a family in which the husband had an accident and was forced to go on disability for several months. They found it necessary to apply for Food Stamps. His wife describes her experience:

> I would have to say since Sam got hurt and he wasn't able to work, we have been able to get Food Stamps…And we can actually go to the store. (The first time) it was like what we do need to get because we hadn't been to the store in so long we didn't know what to buy. You know it's really been kind of different the last couple of months because we can actually go to the store and get things. Where before we were just eating gleaner foods because that's all we had…

A mother related how there was never enough money to purchase the quantities of milk her children liked. She describes her problem as follows:

> They give me six gallons…per month…But I regularly have to spend each month enough for some thirty-something gallons of milk because they drink too much milk, the little girl and the boy….Every once in a while they drink, like, water, or something like that. But they like milk a lot and I have to buy it for them, and I see that a gallon of milk is three and change.

This same problem was solved by one family who received assistance from WIC, and the interviewee explained her experiences as follows:

> They give me three gallons… they give me a two pound cheese block, and they give me a pound of beans, lentils but (she does not take rice because one of her children does not eat rice) and, so, it is a sin to grab things that nobody eats. (Which leaves me) either lentils or beans, a little bit of a pound, and…they give me two boxes of cereal of 18-ounce corn flakes…and a gallon of milk, a dozen eggs, and juice. This is what I get with a large coupon. Two coupons for each child…of these big ones…

Besides WIC, Food Stamps are also critical for most families who experience food insecurity, but government aid does not alleviate the problem completely. An interviewee explained that what she needed the most to prevent the problem of not having enough food would be for her husband to have “steady work.” When her husband is making money, they do not get Food Stamps. “I mean personally I’d like to get off the Food Stamps. Personally I’d like to have a life other than having to depend on that.” Interviewees repeatedly remarked about problems they had while receiving aid; amounts fluctuating, insufficient amounts, timing of receipt of stamps, and dealing with unpleasant agency staff.

One mother explained about her experience when she first began receiving government aid in the form of cash assistance. She described how the amounts fluctuated over time. Life was difficult when the amounts decreased, but when the amount increased she was able to better meet the needs of her children. As she explains:

> They are giving me $149 (per month)…Because if they give me less, you feel it…And at first they gave me $47…next they raised it to $60, then to $67 and later still they gave me $120. And then, again, $67. But they sent a paper to me saying they were going to lower it, so that, because, or in other words, in the hot season, because the children drink a lot of liquid. But, soon afterward, they say that they are going to give me $67 once again, the same amount as before.

A recently hired interviewee related her difficulties with “the system” while transitioning from receiving welfare to becoming a wage earner. Her overall resources were reduced, “It was, I think it was after I’d gone back to work and it was to the point where if you were working you actually got less.” When the interviewer asked her what needed to be done to prevent this situation happening again she replied:

> I think they need to give you guys, give people lead (lee) way. Like not immediately stop your Food Stamps because you’re making money. Um, cause your first two checks are gonna be small anyway. They’re not gonna be your biggest, and there’s no way. Even with minimum wage, you can’t survive on minimum wage. It doesn’t matter. With rent being as high as it is, you just can’t afford all your stuff.

Another woman spoke about the time before her Food Stamps were due to arrive as well as her shopping strategies. She described times when one month's Food Stamps were gone, and it was the day before Stamps were to arrive for the new month. Then she did not have the kinds of things that everyone wanted to eat in their cupboards. It was a difficult time, but not a time of hunger with no food.

In the same manner, a mother described when she and her family almost went hungry as a result of their reliance on government programs: "They cut off our Food Stamps and (we were short of money to buy the food we needed)." They had been expecting to receive more Food Stamps and had not been able to stock up on groceries. Also there was the case when insufficient Food Stamps were reported and caused a family to have been close to going hungry:

> We have enough food in the house for Allison (their daughter) to eat. And then we'll charge food at Preston's work for us…The Food Stamps. And I don't understand why. Cause our neighbor makes just as much money as Preston does, and she's got less people in her household, and she gets probably three times the amount we do. And we're supposed to make $100 to feed three people and that's not even enough to feed Allison for the month.

When the woman spoke with her case worker, she was told that it was the overtime her husband made that was counted and that not all of their bills could be figured into the equation. Frustrations often occurred for several families as a result of complex regulations and the inability of agency staff to explain to them in a comprehensible manner.

One woman described what happened when she bought another car, "(I was)…getting Food Stamps until I got the car. They said that because the car was a 98 model, then I didn't qualify for Food Stamps anymore." She assumed that if she had bought an older car, then she would have still been able to receive Food Stamps.

Even more confusing was the case of a family who, while on Food Stamps, received more Food Stamps than they should have. This eventually compounded their food insecurity and created financial problems. They were not able to pay the Food Stamp program back the $200 that the agency said the government was owed. This problem resulted in their Food Stamp allotment being reduced to practically nothing: “The amount of Food Stamps that we qualify for is like minuscule. Like $10.” This is for a family of two adults and three children (growing boys between twelve and seventeen).

Not only were the regulations often difficult to understand, but some people felt uncomfortable or had unpleasant experiences with agency staff. One mother related a time when she felt she was not treated well:

> (When she went to apply for Food Stamps, there was) a woman that one asks you about, about everything. She wants to know why, what I eat, and I didn’t like it, right? Because I think that if one is going to ask for help, it is because they need it. Not because one doesn’t want to work anymore, right? And, well, I saw that there were all these questions and one feels uncomfortable.

Another interviewee also had an unpleasant experience when she went to Adult and Family Services:

> AFS, I mean, I don’t know. Sometimes they treat you like you’re a nobody. I don’t know if it’s because they work with so many people. I don’t really know why they would treat you like that…(It made us feel) really bad., like I was nothing…(It was just her) attitude toward us. She (was) just really mean, like we didn’t exist. When we asked her a question, they’d be snobby with us. And I just, to me nobody should treat anybody like that. Especially, if you work at a State office. You should just treat everybody equal(ly). We called the representative of the State and told her how they were treating us and she called them and everything was fine after that.

Perhaps “mixed experiences” better describes the relationships people have with agencies:

> It depends. At the welfare office here, or Adult Family Services, they treat you very wonderful. Very, very wonderful. (At) the Care Office, sometime(s) you can be kind of degraded…Just the Adult and Family Services, I mean, everybody knows you by your first name. I mean, you know everybody. I know my case worker. Two of my caseworkers have been on welfare so they understand, you

> know, where you're coming and (are) not too judgmental. They're pretty good. They're really nice and kind and the receptionists will let you vent on them, if you want.
>
> I've been to the Care Office before and that's where the energy assistance is and they're really, you know, just kind of, (I feel) kind of snubbed a little bit, maybe sometimes when you go in there.

As related above, regardless of the types of aid received, interviewees still found it necessary to employ multiple strategies to make ends meet. For some families, a standard coping strategy was to develop money management strategies such as shopping at discount stores, and using coupons and credit cards. These were the norm, but in other cases interviewees became quite inventive, developing unique strategies suited to their specific situations.

<u>Shopping wisely and monetary options: discount food stores, coupons, and credit cards</u>

For many people, shopping for food or clothing at discount stores allowed them more flexibility with their purchases as well as buying more for less money. Several families in Salmonville drove to Hazelton to purchase their food at Winco and found that helped them, as one interviewee explained:

> Well, we just started going to Winco. We didn't realize that it was such a cheap place to buy groceries…We were shopping at Safeway, and everything and then by the time we got to the middle of the month we were almost out of food, you know?...And after we shopped at Winco we realized that we're getting a lot more food (without having) to fork out so much (money).

Budgeting is another way of stretching income. One couple explained, "No, it's just that we're on a fixed income, so we have to plan. We know exactly what we can do." They expressed how they used coupons and in-store bargains as a strategy:

> No, we don't mess with them (store coupons). Well, once in a while if like cheese. Well, actually with the (Safeway) card like on milk you get one (when) you buy one, you get one and all that kind of stuff…We try to watch out for those kinds of bargains…That saves you money.

Another woman manages to save money for food by budgeting. She used to have a dish for her TV but that got too expensive. She says, “Now I do long-stitch needle point, I crochet, and I do crosswords. So I stay out of the bars. If we had one near, I’d stay out of it.” When asked if she could remember having trouble paying for something, she recounted:

> No. I somehow just make do. Pinch pennies and I know what few dollars I’ve got and where it has to go. So I cannot tell you the last time I bought a new pair of shoes or a new dress. I don’t need them. I don’t go anywhere, you know…

One of the more inventive monetary strategies devised by one family allowed them to increase their monthly food budget and thereby prevented them from going hungry. When traveling from Salmonville to Hazelton to run errands, do grocery shopping, or travel to visit family and friends:

> We pick up cans (along the side of the roads). I mean we pick up a lot of cans, I mean, I’m (saying) that it pays for our gas (to drive over and back – about 90 miles). Last time we didn’t make it ten miles out of town and we had (already picked up) like $8 worth of cans…We had to stop (picking up cans) or we never would have got there.

The last coping strategy that involves monetary options is the use of credit cards for many low-income families. For example, several interviewees used these to charge the cost of unexpected bills. Others told of charging their daily living expenses when the going got really tough. This practice solved their problems in the short term, but exacerbated their financial woes over the long term because at some point they could not afford payments due on their monthly credit card bills, and they were being charged interest and late payment fees.

One family’s solution was to mortgage their property, which previously had been free and clear from the time that they had inherited it. However, this solution became a vicious cycle. As the wife recounted:

> Well, my husband inherited the place. But he had so many bills and he would get the bill and then he’d go and do the work to pay for it. But by then they were adding interest and whatever and late fees. So, we mortgaged the house and paid off everything. And

> we have done it, I think three times now, because we get so many bills. Different things happen or whatever and so we were trying to get a lower payment by refinancing and then we owe more but our payment was less. And, so now it's just, I told him we're not going to do this again, we're going to have to figure out something else…When we paid our taxes last year it was with my credit card…And for gas for the cars we both use credit cards…

There is another type of credit card that provides for those with health care needs. One woman went online and discovered this when her children needed an extraordinary amount of dental work ($3,000.00). Her ability to do this research is an example of her level of human capital. She explained her experience in using this:

> Well, they have this deal, it (has) a credit card. It's called care credit and you can apply over the phone or you can go online and you click on what you want it for. Like I wanted it for dental and then you have to put in how much money income you have a year. Then they come back and tell you whether or not you qualify. And so they gave me $4,000.00 credit…So I took both kids and they had their teeth cleaned and checked. Her son needed a lot of fillings and the enamel was coming off one front tooth…So, (the dentist) scraped and sealed them…So, (with the care credit card) if your bill is over $300.00 they don't charge you any interest…They broke the payments down into twenty-four months at $125.00 a month.

As with the family above, many other low-income families in our study had problems when unexpected expenses arose. It was even more difficult for those who did not have any nearby family to whom they could turn for help. The only option left for them was to add it to their credit card debt even if it was for food supplies.

A mother explained that she used to keep her family fed by charging groceries on her credit card when she ran out of money. She went on to describe this:, "…November would have been difficult with food because, yeah, I have a balance on my credit card now cause I put it on credit." This same mother, after being asked if she or any members of her household had ever gone hungry or been close to going hungry replied, "Well, when Eddy was little there was a couple of times, but it's been years ago. I think fifteen years ago." This occurred when she was single and working but still didn't have enough money to last to the end of the month. Many interviewees expressed end of the month shortages as a recurring problem. In the next section I discuss coping strategies employed to stretch their existing food supplies to cover their monthly shortages.

Making do: stretching food supplies, reducing the size of meals, or skipping meals

Most everyone had always been able to provide food for their children by increasing the amounts of less expensive food. The adults in a number of families had found it necessary to reduce the size of their meals, and sometimes they had needed to skip entire meals—almost on a monthly basis. One interviewee reported that they had never gone hungry, "We always (have something) even if it is beans, but we have this."

Another woman described a time when their family almost went hungry because they were isolated due to a flood, and her husband was not able to get to a store, to cash his check and shop:

> Like for two or three days he couldn't pass from here to there (the next closest town)...We had a lot of expenses piled up and we paid, and so it left us very…we didn't have much anymore. But the main thing was that the cars had gas, and so my husband could go work and my brother also.(a brother had recently arrived)…And, then with the food, well, we made quesadillas, or whatever simple things we could.

Further evidence of this was reported: "I don't have a problem because I'll stock up. I'll buy, you know, $200 worth of meat. And then $100 of canned food and boxed food…If I buy $100 worth of other stuff, then I have no problem making $300 last for four people." One respondent did not have enough money to buy a variety of food to feed her family balanced meals and stated that "almost always, even if it is only beans, we have enough to fill our stomachs." An additional woman described her strategy for stretching her supplies when she told the interviewer:

> It's just Warner and I…and that we don't eat a lot. And we just (eat) macaroni and cheese and hot dogs and vegetables. He likes vegetables. But, it's just really simple with us cause we don't eat anything gourmet, we're just really simple…

A different mother, after being asked about her reliance on low-cost food because she was running out of money, responded:

> It's sometime true (that we eat low-cost food). It's usually like right now, the last week of the month. Right now, I've got a package of hamburger in my fridge or my freezer, I got one thing of bacon, I have probably one chicken meal, and that's what I got. In my pantry I've got some green beans, some corn, and some Ramen noodles, and cereal, and I got a little bit of milk. But, I've got $50 sitting right there….I mean and usually something does work itself out to where the end of the month it's really tight, but you figure it out.

Then, being asked if she could afford to eat balanced meals, the same mother responded:

> I don't think it's…It doesn't happen all the time and its not 'never happens.' I mean, I don't know. We have French toast. I don't know if that's not a balanced meal. You've got eggs, you've got bread. And even if it's cheap, you usually got your eggs and bread, so. And we put peanut butter on it, so we have protein too.

For most, the reduction in meal size and skipping meals usually had not resulted in any loss of weight, but the adults' overall health had suffered. When one mother was nursing her baby daughter, she found it necessary to cut down or skip entire meals occasionally. She commented that it had been tough: "It put a strain (on me) because I lost a lot of weight and ended up having a post partum depression, which I hadn't experienced with my first two (children)."

Not only did adult family members need to skip meals, but when they ate, they were not always balanced meals. Nevertheless, one mother admitted the only reason that her children were not able to eat balanced meals was that "they (the children) did not like the food that they were served." In some cases, parents reported that their children had been hungry because the parents had not had sufficient money to buy more food; however, they reported that neither they nor their children ever had to go without food for an entire day.

Lack of money caused some families, to cut the size of their meals and/or to skip entire meals. For some, the timing of when they received their government aid checks and Food Stamps created problems. Often at the end or the beginning of a month, there were times when interviewees had no money, no Food Stamps, and very little food. As one interviewee expressed:

> "We get our money on one day and our stamps on another day…It's that stretch, that woman was talking about the same thing. Cause she got her food on the 9th. That little stretch between the first and the ninth. In other words, instead of having more money or more food stamps, if they both mailed on the same day it could work well…You have to use that cash that you would normally use for toilet paper, tooth paste for a week until you get your stamps…Well, we always, pretty much, like the last week of the month we're running pretty thin and then we use our cash for the next week."

One mother described times when she was not able to eat as much as she would have liked: "When things got tight, like well okay, we have only so much bread for sandwiches, well, I guess Mom (is) going without lunch today."

Several interviewees skipped meals: "No breakfast, in a hurry." "Most of the time we don't have food to take for lunch so we don't eat." This was validated further by one of the high school dependents whom we interviewed, who lived alone with his father. He admitted that he ate only one meal a day regularly and that was in the evening at home. One single woman admitted,:

> I never eat right because I live alone. You know, I'm not gong to have meat, a hot vegetable, potatoes and gravy, a salad and dessert. Excuse me, I'm not going to dirty all those dishes for me…It's just that living alone now, I cook a lot different than I did when my husband was alive or when my kids were home.

Another said, "Sometimes I eat lunch, or not, if we don't have food." One woman described a difficult time in her life when she went without food on a daily basis for about two months to ensure that her children would have food:

> I did not eat much at all cause I wanted to save all the food for the kids…I did not eat much at all…And…I lost weight and everything, that was cool, because I did a lot of walking…since I didn't have a car…I just did without, you know, so my kids could do with…I didn't starve myself, I just saved food for them (the children).

Another family commented: "Clark (their son) eats very well. We make sure that he has even if we don't. We've both gone hungry to make sure that he eats okay." When asked how often they cut their portion size or skipped meals, they responded, "almost every month." This demonstrates the severity and frequency that food insecure people are faced with the problem of how to feed their children until the end of the month and their willingness to achieve a level of food security for their children at their own sacrifice.

When interviewees discussed the problems of sufficient food to feed their families, there appeared to be a basic worry. From their replies to several questions the possibility emerged that they were filtering their responses through the lenses of social acceptability. Interviewees' comments about skipped meals or stretched food supplies could have been down-playing their hunger, any resulting problems, and the real extent of their food insecurity. This seemed to be a face-saving strategy to protect their self esteem, underlying ability to care for their families, and parental custody rights.

For instance, some of those who lived alone refused to admit that they were hungry, instead said they skipped meals or didn't eat right. Others with families, maintained that they were merely in a hurry and had no time to eat. Comments by others argued that if the children were hungry, it was by their choice and not parental neglect. The children simply did not like the type of food in the cupboard. This may stem from fears of inadequacy and the possibility of having their children removed from their care. This would be particularly true for single parents or those involved in child custody cases. In mainstream society in the United States, being hungry is generally considered a stigma and shameful. Many low-income families expressed feelings of being judged by those more fortunate or those in positions of authority in agencies. Furthermore, despite the reported high levels of food insecurity, interviewees exhibited a fierce pride in their ability to make do. This same problem of making food resources stretch is the last coping strategy to be discussed in this section, but takes the angle of increasing families' food supplies by involvement in subsistence activities.

Supplementing with subsistence activities: fishing, hunting, and gardening.

For families who had sufficient land available, planting gardens and/or raising livestock was a coping strategy to deal with their food insecurities. Others fished or hunted. A plan employed by one family had been to cultivate a fair-sized annual garden, plus every year they planted a few more fruit trees and every other year they raised pigs. They kept chickens on a continual basis, and combined all this with fishing and hunting when possible. "Right at the moment we have some greens, radishes, (and we are) busy preparing the soil…Making sure the pig pen is ready and up for when we get the pigs; every year we get better but every year they find a way to get out."

In a like fashion, one interviewee confided that her family always planted a garden because, as the husband admitted," You know, no matter how you look at it, frozen vegetables are real nice, but nothing will replace fresh vegetables, I don't care what you say!" His wife commented that:

> I've always done a lot of canning, although the last two years I haven't…But we usually have our garden for our green beans and then we'll have fresh stuff to eat. He loves to get out and mess in the garden, so we have cucumbers, tomatoes, table queen squash, radishes, green peppers, broccoli, and zucchini.

Similarly, another family planted a large vegetable garden every year that included zucchini, tomatoes, cucumbers, and strawberry popcorn. Their home-grown produce enhanced their food boxes from the gleaners. In this same family the wife supplemented her husband's salary and their food supply by raising chickens, ducks, and turkeys, and selling their eggs:

> Every other day I get five and a half dozen one day, and the next day I get six and a half dozen eggs (from the chickens). So I've got twelve hens that are laying every other day and the rest of them are

laying every day. And so when you go out there it's like an Easter egg hunt every day because you have to look everywhere…I get five duck eggs a day and then every other day I've been getting two goose eggs. They are just starting to lay and before much longer I should be getting some turkey eggs.

Yet another family had begun planting a garden in the summer and the mother was going to learn how to can. Over three summers they had planted a variety of crops corn, green beans, onions, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, radishes, and strawberries. "It's a variety every year…but our onions didn't do good last year." This same family also hunts and has a large freezer:

(We hunt) deer mainly and once in a while grouse, and fish, and sometimes do mushrooms…The chanterelles grow up on the hillsides in the rainy season…If we could grow mushrooms we would but it's not very easy to grow mushrooms…(the freezer) is completely full with fish and venison right now… We like to trout fish; my husband fishes in the Salmonville River right here and we go to the creek where they plant the trout but usually they are just little tiny ones. We have a neighbor that likes to bring us smelt, they go up to the Columbia and bring back a bucket for us.

Another family also supplemented their food supply with fishing and hunting, but even using this strategy, they reported that it was often true that they did not have enough food to eat, because their food did not last and they did not have money to buy more. As she said:

"I like to fish. One of my sons like to crawdad. Tom likes to fish for steelhead, he hunts but prefers deer and elk…Whatever is in season (is) what we're going after. Um, first crawdads are year round. You can do whatever you want to, you can take and dip crawdads in some batter and then throw them in the fryer…We have an extra freezer (but have) gone through (everything) now."

Finally, this strategy is summed up by one interviewee who asserted that neither she nor any member of her household had ever gone hungry.

There's always been stuff to eat. If we're raising a cow, we butcher a cow once every three or four years and stuff, so it's not. I've never been starving. There's been some times when I had some Mother Hubbard cupboards, but there's always been something.

Conclusion

In summary, many interviewees had developed strategies to help them cope with their food insecurity. Many used Food Stamps, did their grocery shopping at discount stores, relied on weekly food sales, participated with the Salmonville Gleaners, and/or shopped at the nearest Food Bank. Others joined in events that offered free meals, as well as accepting free food baskets given out during the holiday season, and some hunted and fished. Those with young children received assistance from the WIC program. Interviews revealed that even though most said they had enough food, it was not due to having sufficient money to shop for groceries, but rather from the use of effective coping strategies. It was necessary for them to employ several of the above-mentioned strategies to achieve a level of food security. Gross and Rosenberger discussed similar strategies and the importance of access services and discount stores when reporting on their research in two rural Oregon communities (2005).

There remain a few respondents who said that it was sometimes true that they were not able to eat balanced meals because they could not afford to. In addition they sometimes relied on low-cost foods to feed their children; however, they did not elaborate on what the low-cost food was. They also stated that it was never true that their children were not eating enough because they could not afford to purchase sufficient food. Although they did answer that almost every month it was necessary for them to reduce the size of the adults' meals or to completely skip meals due to a lack of food and/or money, they were adamant that their children never had to skip meals. This may be questionable data, but since the FSCM and the interview questions were not directed to any children, this should be taken at face value. It was, however, noted during one of the interviews when a young child was present, her facial expressions revealed scorn at one of her father's assurances. I am not confident that any parents would have willingly admitted that they were unable to provide adequately for their children. I think it was hard enough for the interviewees to admit their poverty and food insecurity without having to face the reality that their children might have been hungry.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

In this chapter I review research conducted at the two study sites, Salmonville and Hidden Cove, where research for this thesis took place, and focus on information learned about food insecurity and hunger in these communities. This will be done by discussing and analyzing the results of the qualitative data collected at both locations using two perspectives. I view the data first from Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner 1979) and second from the perspectives of social capital and human capital (Bourdieu and Coleman 1991; Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000). I will also view data in relation to the socioeconomic characteristics of each site. Lastly, I offer my conclusions.

First it is important to consider the greater context of the times in which these studies were conducted, 1999 to 2000 in Hidden Cove and 2004 in Salmonville. Macroeconomic changes occurred that affected all regions of the United States, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Persistently poor populations were created as a result of loss of jobs for primary and secondary wage earners in families (Sociological Society Task Force 1993; Whitener, Weber and Duncan 2002). Many areas of the nation were experiencing high food insecurity at the turn of the twenty-first century and Oregon was leading the nation in the number of hungry people (Edwards and Weber 2003). From 2000 to the present, the number of impoverished increased while there was a decrease in the number of low-paying jobs for less-skilled workers (Edwards and Weber 2003; Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy 2003; Schiller 2004). As discussed by the Rural Sociological Society Task Force, rural workers suffered from under-employment and higher rates of unemployment (1993:41-64). In fact, data from the two follow-up years of Oregon families in the RFS project showed that Oregon remained among the top four states in food insecurity in the larger national study (Bauer 2002; Olson 2006; Olson et al. 2004). Low-income families in Oregon were persistently food insecure and high levels of food insecurity persisted throughout the three years of the study (Bauer 2002; Olson et al. 2004). Salmonville and Hidden Cove reflect these state and national trends.

There are some important differences and similarities between Salmonville and Hidden Cove. From the larger perspective, they are similar in that both are small rural communities, some of whose residents have experienced deep and persistent poverty. Salmonville and Hidden Cove are in the same geographical region in the State of Oregon. Both are located in large counties with a predominant agricultural base. However, there is a large difference in the total populations of their counties during the years that research was conducted. The population of Salal County, in 2004, was 79,357, compared to 24,262 for Manzanita County in 2000. The implications of this difference for my research would probably have the most to do with the amount, availability, and accessibility of support services available for low-income families. More research at the county level is needed to fully determine if a correlation exists between population base and services. This was not the focus of my research or thesis.

It is interesting to note that the populations of the two counties, Salal and Manzanita, are inversely related to the populations of each study site. As mentioned above, the population of Salal County was much larger than Manzanita County. Salmonville, the smallest study site, is located in Salal County, the larger county, and Hidden Cove, the larger study site, is located in Manzanita County with the smaller population.

Another difference is that Hidden Cove is the county seat for Manzanita County. As such, it is probably part of the reason for the larger population and why there are many social service agencies located there. For instance there are Food Banks, a Care office, the Adult and Family Services office, and a Food Stamps office. In contrast, Salmonville is an unincorporated town, has no social service agencies, and only the gleaner organization to provide food locally to low-income residents. Salmonville low-income families must travel to reach the closest Food Bank and for access to social service agencies.

Both Salmonville and Hidden Cove have public school systems including kindergarten through twelfth grade, although Hidden Cove has a small community college as well. A major difference for children and their families is that the Hidden Cove public schools participate in the national Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program, in contrast to the Salmonville public school system, which does not. There are many reasons for this, not the least of which is that the school and people of Salmonville do not have the funds necessary to renovate the school's kitchen to meet the required standards. Instead, two local women shop for food and bring it into the school kitchen and cook for students of all levels. They were charging $2 for lunch in 2004.

Other differences include the fact that Salmonville has a small rural health clinic staffed by a nurse practitioner and one assistant staff person. In contrast, Hidden Cove has a small hospital, a public health office, and several doctors, dentists, chiropractors, school guidance counselors, and social workers. Evidently the abundance of medical resources results from the larger population of Hidden Cove's economic base, which might also be linked to the fact that Hidden Cove is the county seat for Manzanita County. Hidden Cove has a limited public transportation system, some industry, and seasonal tourism, as opposed to Salmonville, which does not have any public transportation, or local industry and is not a tourist destination.

The geographic area of Hidden Cove is much larger and more densely settled than the geographic area of Salmonville. However, some people in both study sites are dispersed over a wide area. Not only is Hidden Cove's population a little larger than that of Salmonville, but its population is also increasing as Salmonville's has been declining. Changes in the demographic composition of both towns have affected each community, but they are more noticeable in Salmonviille due to its smaller size. Even considering the differences between Salmonville and Hidden Cove, there are similarities in what is occurring in the lives of low-income people in each community. It was evident in both communities that those people with more developed human capital had more survival strategies. Also individuals with more social capital in their community found more resources within their community and elsewhere to assist them in keeping their families fed.

Social Capital

As discussed in Chapter Two, social capital refers to the networks within communities that enable individuals to achieve goals that would not otherwise be possible. (Bourdieu and Coleman 1999; Coleman 1988). In Salmonville there is a high degree of social capital originating with the health clinic and the two caring women, Samantha and Florence, who have worked there for many years. As confirmed by several interviewees, and the research team's interactions with them, they were aware of residents, new and old alike, and what their needs were. They went way above and beyond in their efforts to take care of and help those in need and make their lives easier while giving them support in handling their problems, whatever they were. The location of the clinic across the highway from the public school is key to their ability to "be there" for the younger generation, too. The importance of this interconnectedness between generations for the benefit of all, as promoted by the interactions of Samantha and Florence, is an example of what Salaman (2003) describes in her research in rural communities. The clinic provides food and clothing year round for those in need, as well as food baskets during the holiday season. Samantha and Florence at the health clinic and their actions and interactions with all members of the community illustrate what Coleman describes as "examples of social relations that constitute a form of social capital that provides information that facilitates actions" (1988:S104). This is also an example of mesosystem linkages between microsystem settings as described by Bronfenbrenner (1979).

Another group that provides a high level of support is the community leaders from several community organizations. These people are tireless in their efforts to find new resources, write grants, raise money, and find ways of supporting all members of the community and making their small town a better place to live for everyone. It is this network of people working together on behalf of the community that creates indefinable resources for all (Bourdieu and Coleman 1991; Bronfenbrenner 1979; Putnam 2000; Salaman 2003; Small and Supple 2001).

The health care clinic and the community leaders exemplify Coleman's description of social capital by providing opportunities for changes in the lives of residents. Coleman describes this in more detail:

> The value of the concept of social capital lies first in the fact that it identifies certain aspects of social structure by their functions…By identifying this function of certain aspects of social structure, the concept of social capital constitutes both an aid in accounting for different outcomes at the level of the individual actors and an aid toward making the micro-to-macro transitions without elaborating the structural details through which this occurs (1988:S101).

The value of the clinic as the hub of the community was described by one interviewee:

> Samantha and Florence are on top of everybody and if they go to the clinic they find out where they're at and they look out for people. They are an incredible blessing. The nice thing about living in a small community is that people do know. They (Samantha and Florence) tell everybody about their Christmas baskets and stuff like that every year. And when people come in there, they're always asking if they have enough, 'how are you for clothes' and whatever. They are very alert and caring.

This same concept of social capital is referred to several times by Salaman when she discusses life in small towns where everybody knows everybody. As Salaman explains, they have a shared sense of place where, over time the physical setting and the social relationships together "produce a town and a community greater than the sum of its parts" (2003:6).

The interconnectedness of people within Salmonville promotes continuity for community members and their welfare. The connections and interrelations are evidence of the strong degree of social capital apparent in Salmonville and are an example of how a person's ecological system can affect their life. "The core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value (Putnam 2000:18-19). The greater value of the interconnectedness in Salmonville than Hidden Cove is reflected in the better functional strategies achieved by some of its residents. It becomes

> …an attribute of a community's social structure, as a reservoir of social resources that facilitates cooperation for shared goals and activities. These activities in turn enhance community, family, and individual well-being" (Salaman 2003:17).

The interrelations of people within different settings in Salmonville are an example of the different microsystems within a mesosystem as defined by Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Small and Supple's discussion of the importance of communities as complex systems operating at various levels is a very similar perspective to that of Bronfenbrenner, but they refer to the different levels as orders of effects (2001).

During interviews one person commented, "Salmonville comes together for different people. They pull together. But I see it getting more fragmented." Another person when talking about Salmonville stated:

> We're blessed. We have one real sour apple that I'm having to deal with now, but other than that we have a very supportive community. It's one of the reasons it's great to raise kids here…Despite it limits it's still very safe. I think even though those limits are there in some respects, that's also a challenge, I would like my kids to learn beyond those and learn how to deal with (things)…Sometimes, if they don't have to bump up against walls they don't have to expand.

Many residents of Salmonville socialized by participating in various potlucks and organizations such as Salmonville Gleaners, SAY (Salmonville Advocates for Youth), and PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association). Some of the same people are members of all organizations. There was a definite feeling expressed by some community leaders in Salmonville that "Salmonville takes care of its own," and doesn't want government help or interference. Community leaders did not state this explicitly but inferred as much by their comments. This interconnectedness of existing networks is an example of the social capital that residents of Salmonville utilize.

The level of social capital in Salmonville, as discussed above, relates to the effect of “place” on people at the level of the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1979). The interrelations between Samantha and Florence and the community are an example of the interactions between two microsystems within the mesosystem of the Salmonville community. The mesosystem encompasses the interrelations among two or more settings and thus is a system of microsystems (Bronfenbrenner 1979:25). The value of these interrelations to the health and well-being of the community cannot be stressed enough (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000; Salaman 2003; Sampson 2001; Small and Supple 2001). It is a high degree of social capital that helps community members develop human capital.

The networks of social capital in Hidden Cove are not as visible as those in Salmonville but are easily accessible once low-income families become aware of them. One family, when they first arrived in Hidden Cove, was in dire straits as the mother describes: “I tell you, when we arrived we had a lot of needs, we were eating only tortillas; hard ones, or at times nothing because there wasn’t anything.” However, they were fortunate when a local woman told her about the Food Bank and took her there a couple of months later. Another woman also explains all the guidance she has received from the local counseling center as:

> I have found since February (when) I was introduced to the Hidden Cove Family Counseling Center. And, I have found a lot of the resources that I’m now accessing through them. So I am very grateful for them…They’re the ones that put me in touch with Voc Rehab, and of course more additional counseling at the counseling center. I had a case worker and then I got a couple (of) different counselors. I got my son involved (too). I guess it would be just having more information accessible to me for financial aid and what not. And help in the job market.

These stories explain how without community networks people would not be able to achieve their goals of employment and help with their food insecurity.

According to Coleman one important effect of social capital is the creation of human capital (1988). This concept of social capital is described by a woman when she discovered all the connections for help and advice available. She made the most of her opportunities to improve her human capital:

> … I'm trying to change my life. I'm trying to be a productive member of society…I'm not looking for a free handout per se, I just want some help.

This aspect of social capital developing human capital is further described by one woman. She tells how the vocational rehabilitation officer at the Adult and Family Services office helped her go back to school so she could reach her personal goal of an "ideal" job:

> And he's helped a lot with, with a lot of things. In fact he's the one that helped me get started on going to school and the financial aid and everything…What I have found in just trying to go back to school is, and I talked to Ben at Voc Rehab right here today about it. I have a lot of fear about doing this because I don't understand a lot of it. I am computer illiterate number one. Um, I don't know where to go for the financial assistance that I'm sure I can get. So, there's a lot of emptiness, a lot of question marks. I don't know how to access them.

Human Capital

The results of interviews in Salmonville and Hidden Cove showed that people had varying degrees of human capital and those with more knowledge and skills developed more strategies in coping with their food insecurity and hunger. Human capital is created when people acquire skills and abilities that enable them to behave in new ways (Coleman 1988). This is different from social capital represented by community level resources. Human capital is a personal resource, as seen in the relationships between people. People share and teach skills that they use to better their lives and, in turn, share and pass these on to others.

An example of this is when a single person had the cooking skills and knowledge to develop an effective strategy for her particular situation. She would cook one particular recipe in a large enough quantity to solve her problem of having something readily available:

> I make either beef or chicken enchiladas. My sister sent me a recipe and it makes six long ones you know. I make a whole pot full. And then I'll scoop them up one at a time and roll them in aluminum foil and throw them in the freezer. So if all else fails and I don't feel like cooking, I drag an enchilada out.

These cooking and planning skills are socially transmitted and without them her food insecurity may have been more difficult to cope with. This is an example of an individual making use of her human capital.

In Salmonville land use laws are very strict and make it difficult for land owners to capitalize on their real estate; instead, they must turn to their human capital. In an example, a widow who owned a little less than 100 acres had no income for her needs. She had been told that she couldn't sell anything less than 40 acre parcels; it must be sold as farm land and would bring in at least $80,000. To which she said, "If I'd ever seen $80,000 in all the years my husband was alive, I think I'd have run naked up and down the highway! I mean, who are these people that think this stuff up?! You know, it's ridiculous!" To solve this dilemma, she devised a strategy to be able to keep her farm intact, even though the land had not been farmed since her husband's death. As she related,

> Two years ago, I leased my farm ground. I lease it out for Christmas trees and (the money from the lease) pays (the) fire insurance on my house and on my son's place (located on the land near her home) that they own and it pays the taxes for me. Which you know, I wouldn't be able to hang onto the place, I would have had to (sell) it if I didn't have something like that (as) back up…

Besides calling on existing human capital skills, people can also develop them in many forms through more education, technical training, on-the-job training, etc. However, few opportunities of this sort are available in Salmonville due to the small size of the community which has less social capital to pull from. There are no educational opportunities above the level of high school without travelling to Hazelton or Parson, the closest towns with community colleges and universities. Also, the local businesses are few and their need for employees so limited that only a restricted number of people can take advantage of these possibilities for work. Conversely, there is a better opportunity to get more education in town for residents of Hidden Cove who can attend the local community college. There is a seasonal tourist industry in Hidden Cove for which there is a great need for low wage service workers. This industry may also provide some training for employees. Occasionally this training can be capitalized upon in a future job, but often months of unemployment follow the end of the tourist season. Also, in Hidden Cove there are more small businesses that serve the larger population and provide more job opportunities.

What the results from this research show

One result of this research has been to show the value of qualitative data in obtaining rich descriptions of people's lives and the challenges they face on a daily basis. These data provide explanations and reasons related to the demographic and socioeconomic data for each study population. People tended to give brief answers when responding to questions contained in the FSCM, but during the open-ended in-depth interviews people shared details of their lives, thereby allowing researchers a broader, deeper understanding of the context of their lives. Similar findings were also reported by Gross and Rosenberger in their research (2005). Knowing the context puts in perspective how one views the coping strategies that each person developed to survive and combat food insecurity and hunger.

Even though this thesis focused on the struggles of low-income families it also revealed their values and goals. Many interviewees participated in the studies because they wanted their stories to be heard. Life was not easy for these people but they took pride in hard work and their achievement to provide for their families through their rough times. They wanted respect and not derision from community members. For example, even though they received and used Food Stamps, they wished others realized it was a necessity and complimented their other survival strategies. During interviews many spoke with dignity about their ability to "get by" and displayed high self esteem in devising new skills and coping strategies.

Rural low-income families in both research sites were food insecure, but only a few were hungry. Their food insecurity and hunger resulted from many of the same factors: lack of an adequate income, limited knowledge and understanding of social services available, lack of human capital, and chronic health problems and/or injuries. In Salmonville, 50 percent were food insecure with hunger, and only two of thirty-one in Hidden Cove were food insecure with hunger. It must be noted, that in the Salmonville study group, only six of twelve FSCMs were scored and therefore are not representative of the entire study population. Nonetheless, my research results corroborate previous research by others in rural communities that found many people who experienced food insecurity were not hungry (Anderson and Swanson 2002; Bauer 2002; Edwards and Weber 2003; Hibbard and Elias 1993; Lyson and Falk 1993; Olson 2006; Olson et al. 2004; Oregon Food Bank 2000 & 2004; Rural Families Speak 2004).

The lack of an adequate income was a consequence of one or more of the following factors: underemployment, unemployment, insufficient wages, inability to work due to health problems, and lack of transportation. Underemployment and/or unemployment could have been due to a lack of local employment opportunities, lack of sufficient education and\or retraining after being laid off from a previous job. For some households with at least one adult employed, the lack of a living wage intensified their food insecurity. The lack of sufficient income could also have been exacerbated by, or a result of, a deficiency of human capital evidenced by poor money management skills, little knowledge of food preparation and/or food preservation. For several people in both study populations chronic health problems and the cost of medications often diverted money that otherwise would have been spent on food.

For others in the study groups, there was a lack of understanding and knowledge of the social services that were available for them; this occurred more in Hidden Cove than in the smaller Salmonville. This is understandable because Hidden Cove is a much larger community and does not have one central point or organization that could operate like a hub of the community as in Salmonville. In contrast, Salmonville is a very small intimate community where new people are noticed quickly.

The lack of knowledge of social resources in Salmonville usually occurred only because people were 'loners," wanting to escape and not be a part of the community. Salmonville had highly developed social capital and prided itself on looking after its residents. This is not to say that there were no social services available to the low-income families of Hidden Cove – they did exist, and for the most part, there were caring people to help. The main difference is that Salmonville was a small close-knit community with many interconnected microsytems interacting in the larger mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Due to the intimacy of the environment of Salmonville, the networks were much more closely interconnected and therefore functioned at a higher level, resulting in more value to those in need. This is evidence of how the ecology of place affects people's lives (Bronfenbrenner 1979), and of the value of social networks as discussed by Putnam (2000).

On the other hand, it may have been more difficult for some people in Hidden Cove to discover the help and social services available to them, but once they discovered them, there were more opportunities locally for them than for similar people in Salmonville. Hidden Cove, for example, had several doctors, stores, small businesses, and a larger educational system. This also is confirmation of how the ecology of place affects the lives of its members (Bronfenbrenner 1979). The connections between the microsystems within the larger mesosystem were not as intertwined, but the value of the networks (Putnam 2000) was key to the survival for many low-income families, as shown in many of the comments by interviewees.

The lack of human capital was evident for several interviewees in both Salmonville and Hidden Cove, and these people had not developed high level strategies for coping with their food insecurity. For some, this resulted in food insecurity coupled with hunger for the adults only. I say for *adults only* as I am not aware that any interviewee admitted that their children were hungry, either when responding to questions in the FSCM or during the in-depth interviews. Those adults who experienced times of hunger usually sought help from family or friends to either borrow money or ask for food to tide them over. Food insecurity led to hunger for several adults due to their lack of money and food management skills. These findings are in agreement with others' research results regarding causes for food insecurity and hunger (Olson 2006; Olson et al. 2004).

Chronic health problems and injuries, although not a focus of this thesis, can exacerbate people's food insecurity and hunger because the costs of medical treatments and prescriptions may redirect money that would have otherwise been spent for food. This was also reported on by Olson (2006); Olson et al. (2004).

One important factor that helped lessen food insecurity and hunger was the amount of social support received from family, friends, and agencies. What makes up the category of family and friends is evident. However, what was included under the category of social support from agencies included the following: Food Stamp Program, TANF, WIC, Medicaid, Oregon Health Plan, Free and Reduced School Lunch Program, childcare assistance, housing assistance, energy/fuel assistance, Food Banks, gleaning organizations, churches, health care professionals, etc.

The results of research conducted in both Salmonville and Hidden Cove match and supplement what has been written previously.

Conclusion

The causes of poverty, food insecurity, hunger, and other ensuing problems in rural areas are very complex and need to be viewed and studied from many perspectives. An underlying basic question that needs to be addressed concerns what are society's and the government's responsibilities to various segments of society in non-competitive rural areas? More research is required to determine not only the origins, but any potentially realistic resolutions that will benefit all people in all sections of society and the nation. It is likely that changes that should be instituted need to occur at all levels of government and society for the benefit of all, not just a limited few. As Fitchen states:

> Poverty will not vanish of its own accord, either in the nation or in one little valley. The problem of poverty in rural areas is *self-perpetuating*, not *self-curing*. Ignored, it will become even more intractable, as its causes interact and reinforce each other. Only a conscious and purposeful attempt to eliminate the multiple causes that perpetuate poverty will break the cycle that traps people generation after generation (1981:203).

What Fitchen forecast in 1981 has, in fact, occurred in many places in our nation and the number of people affected has increased with each passing year.

The results of this research show the amount of food insecurity and hunger in two small rural Oregon communities. The rural impoverished are being affected by their distance from urban employment areas and lack of local employment opportunities, public transportation, social services, and local amenities. These rural communities also experienced a high cost associated with housing as well as declining populations. This research also describes the strategies that low-income rural people developed to survive and keep their families fed. The qualitative data describe how the lives of these low-income families are impacted and how individual family members are affected. The results of this research could provide data to augment previous and subsequent studies.

During the course of my research, I have learned that there is no easy or simplistic solution to the difficult problems of poverty, food insecurity and hunger. That the number of impoverished, food insecure and hungry people is increasing, is proof of the multifaceted nature of the problem. I have determined from my review of current literature that the problems of food insecurity and hunger resulting from poverty vary greatly depending upon the geographic location and specific causes related to each locale, as well as the people involved and resources available to them (Anderson and Swanson 2002; Bauer 2002; Duncan 1999; Edin and Lein 1997; Edwards and Weber 2003; Hibbard and Elias 1993; Lyson and Falk 1993; Olson 2006; Olson et al. 2004; Papadimitriou and Wolff 1993; Rural Sociological Society Task Force 1993).

One problem that is common to rural impoverished communities, of which Salmonville and Hidden Cove are good examples, is that the overall population is small and quite often dispersed thinly over vast areas when compared to urban areas, which tend to be more concentrated with denser populations. This alone makes serving the rural impoverished very difficult, time consuming, and more costly.

In the case of Salmonville, it would be very helpful to the low-income families if a Food Bank/Food Pantry could be established in the town. In this way people could walk to pick up their food or share a short ride with a friend who had a vehicle. This could reduce the cost of driving almost twenty miles to the Food Pantry at Meridian, which is prohibitive for many. Also, this could augment the support provided by the Salmonville Gleaners and enable people who do not have their own vehicles to obtain the food they need.

One change that would help the hungry children of Salmonville would be to institute the National/Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program at the public school. This would ensure that there would not be any children going hungry during the day and remove a tremendous burden and stress from their parents. However, unless things have changed considerably since 2004, there are some very big obstacles that will have to be conquered first. These hurdles are comprised of members of the local school board and those in the community who do not think there are any hungry children, not to mention the lack of money necessary to renovate the school kitchen. The biggest hurdle may be convincing some of the folks of Salmonville that this is a way of “taking care of their own.”

As seen in research conducted in both Salmonville and Hidden Cove, most people experienced problems finding jobs that paid sufficient wages to allow them to survive above the poverty level (this is a problem in urban communities, too). Only low-wage work was available to most people in both studies and resulted in their not earning sufficient income to survive and provide for their families. This compares with previous research by others in rural communities (Acker et al. 2002; Bauer 2002; Blank 1997; Davidson 1996; Duncan 1999; Elder and Conger 2000; Fitchen 1981; Hibbard and Elias 1993; Lyson and Falk 1993; Nelson and Smith 1999; Rural Sociological Society Task Force 1993; Schwarzweller and Lean 1993; Whitener, et al. 2002). There have always been jobs available, and always will be, but the wages that are paid are so low that people cannot survive and feed their families, even if they work at more than one full-time job for a full year. Contrary to many people's perceptions, the low income people interviewed in both studies wanted to work but were unable to find jobs that paid a living-wage.

A possible strategy that would help alleviate poverty, food insecurity and hunger would be to focus on creating and developing human capital. The basic idea would be to make as many people self-reliant as possible. By providing more opportunities for education and/or re-training for all ages, the number of people dependent upon welfare benefits could be reduced. As well as reducing welfare rolls, this would combat illiteracy and help people learn new job skills, while encouraging and helping people to have stability in their lives, thereby giving them hope for the future. Hidden Cove is well positioned to do this, if more funds could be directed to their community college for hiring more staff and offering more classes for their low-income residents.

Another idea on how to alleviate poverty is to change the ways that we subsidize low-income people. Even many of those who are working full-time for a full year are unable to make ends meet. This is commented upon by Danziger, when he wrote that people may not be aware of how to solve the problem of an economy that generates low wages, but "we certainly know how to subsidize people in a way that would not produce adverse consequences.." (1993:362). One possibility for future economic policies and the costs involved is for people to consider how great the cost would be if no changes are to be made (Papadimitriou 1993). The ideas that both these authors raise could provide new ways of looking at social insurance and welfare programs. In order to make viable changes, small rural communities must be considered. Data collected and analyzed from this research provides information to augment the more extensive data on urban areas.

I had no idea of the crises facing rural communities in the United States, and more particularly in Oregon, until I became involved in researching poverty, food insecurity and hunger. I naively knew that there were those less fortunate than I, that some people had problems with housing and finding well-paying jobs, but I had no idea that so many people were food insecure and hungry! I did not know how well-hidden and not-addressed these problems have been and continue to be. This research has taken me on an interesting, but not easy, journey and made me aware of the realities that many low-income families face on a daily basis. I keep thinking that there have to be ways to combat these problems and provide basic services for all people.

One author expressed similar thoughts about our nation, but in much better detail:

> In the worlds' richest nation there ought to be enough to pay for defense and for the educational and social programs needed to develop and maintain its human capital. But this would require a massive shift in political priorities, including increased tax enforcement…But instead the United States continues to fall behind the other western industrialized nations in education, family policy, health, housing, and employment programs; the country's competitiveness in the global economy lags and another generation of its human capital is sacrificed to greed. (Dehavenon 1996:173-4)

People need to think about issues that affect everyone for the long term and to have alternative visions when creating solutions to the issues of poverty, food insecurity and hunger. A different set of values that benefit all equally needs to be stressed. In order to create environments that are conducive to the creation of human capital, the depletion of social capital needs to be stopped. It is essential to remember that poverty, food insecurity and hunger are not inevitable – they are preventable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acker, Joan, Sandra Morgen, and Lisa Gonzales with Jill Weigt, Kate Barry and Terri Heath
2002 Welfare Restructuring, Work & Poverty, Policy Implications from Oregon. A Publication of the Center for the Study of Women in Society, University of Oregon, Eugene Oregon

Anderson, Kendra and Josephine Swanson
2002 Rural Families – Welfare Reform & Food Stamps, Policy Brief. www.ruralfamilies.umn.edu website January 2005.

Bauer, Jean W.
2002 Rural Families and Welfare Issues, Policy Brief. www.ruralfamilies.umn.edu website January 2005.

Berg, Bruce L.
2004 *Qualitative Research Methods For the Social Sciences* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

1997 *Qualitative Research Methods For the Social Sciences* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Bernard, H. Russell
2002 *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

Bickel, Gary, Mark Nord, Cristofer Price, William Hamilton, and John Cook
2000 *Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Alexandria VA.

Blank, Rebecca
1997 *It Takes a Nation: A New Agenda For Fighting Poverty*. Russell Sage Foundation, New York. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre and James S. Coleman, editors
1991 *Social Theory for a Changing Society*. Westview Press; New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Bronfenbrenner, Urie
1979 *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Butler, Margaret A.
1990 *Rural-Ruban Continuum Codes for Metro and Nonmetro Counties*.(Staff Report: No.9028), Economic Research Service. Agriculture and Rural Economy Division. Washington, DC: United States. Department of Agriculture.

Coleman, James
1988 Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 94, S95-120.

Danziger, Sheldon
1993 Policy Forum in *Poverty and Prosperity in the USA in the Late Twentieth Century*, edited by Dimitri B.Papadimitriou and Edward N. Wolff. pp.357-379. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Davidson, Osha Gray
1996 *Broken Heartland, The Rise of America's Rural Ghetto*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

Dehavenon, Anna Lou, editor
1996 *There's No Place Like Home, Anthropological Perspectives on Housing and Homelessness in the United States.* Contemporary Urban Studies, Robert V. Kemper and M. Estellie Smith Editors. Westport: Bergin & Garvey.

Duncan, Cynthia M.
1999 *Worlds Apart: Why Poverty Persists in Rural America*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Edin, Kathryn and Laura Lein
1997 *Making Ends Meet, How Single Mothers Survive Welfare and Low Wage Work*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Edwards, Mark and Bruce Weber
2003 Food Insecurity and Hunger in Oregon: A New Look. Working Paper No. AREC 03-104R in Working Papers in Agricultural and Resource Economics. Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. Corvallis: Oregon State University.

Elder, Glen H. Jr. and Rand D. Conger
2000 *Children of the Land: Adversity and Success in Rural America*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Fitchen, Janet M.
1991 *Poverty in Rural America: a Case Study*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Gilgun Jane F., Kerry Daly and Gerald Handel, editors
1992 *Qualitative Methods in Family Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss
1967 *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Gross, Joan and Nancy Rosenberger
2005 Food Insecurity in Rural Benton County: An Ethnographic Study. Rural Studies Paper 05-02. Rural Studies Paper Series. Rural Studies Program. Corvallis: Oregon State University.

Henry, Mark, Lynn Reinschmiedt, Willis Lewis, Jr. and Darren Husdon
2002 Reducing Food Stamp and Welfare Caseloads in the South, in *Rural Dimensions of Welfare Reform*, edited by Bruce A. Weber, Greg Duncan, and Leslie A. Whitener, pp.113-146. Kalamazoo: W.E. Upjohn Institute /for Employment Research.

Hibbard, Michael and James Elias
1993 The Failure of Sustained-Yield Forestry and the Decline of the Flannel-Shirt Frontier, in *Forgotten Places: Uneven Development in Rural America,* edited by Thomas A. Lyson and William W. Falk, pp.195-217. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy
2003 State and Local Taxes Hit Poor & Middle Class Far Harder Than the Wealthy. Press Release on January 7, 2003. Contact Bob McIntyre.

Kvale, Steinar
1996 *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Lofland, John and Lyn H. Lofland
1995 *Analyzing Social Settings, A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis* (3rd ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Lyson, Thomas A. and William W. Falk, editors
1993 *Forgotten Places: Uneven Development in Rural America.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Miller, Tamira E.
1990 The Two Oregons: Comparing Economic Conditions Between Rural and Urban Oregon. Report to the Joint Legislative Committee on Trade and Economic Development. Salem: The Committee, (1990).

Nelson, Margaret K. and Joan Smith
1999 *Working Hard and Making Do, Surviving in Small Town America*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Olson, Christine M.
2006 Food Insecurity in Poor Rural Families with Children: A Human Capital Perspective, Policy Brief. www.ruralfamilies.umn.edu website March 2008.

Olson, Christine M., Kendra Anderson, Elizabeth Kiss, Frances C. Lawrence and Sharon B. Seiling
2004 Factors Protecting Against and Contributing to Food Insecurity Among Rural Families in *Family Economics and Nutrition Review*, 16(1): 12-20, 2004.

Oregon Food Bank
2003 Profiles of Poverty and Hunger in Oregon. Oregon: Oregon Food Bank. www.oregonfoodbank.org website September 2007.

2000 Profiles of Poverty and Hunger in Oregon. Oregon: Oregon Food Bank. www.oregonfoodbank.org website October 2007.

Oregon Office of Rural Health
2003 Demographic and Socioeconomic data for Alsea. *Population, Race, Household Size, and Median Age.* Purchased from Claritas: “Age Building Block for All Zip Codes in Oregon, Basic Building Block Report for All Zip Codes in Oregon, and Population by Race Data for All Zip Codes in Oregon” databases.

Papadimitriou, Dimitri B. and Edward N. Wolff
1993 *Poverty and Prosperity in the USA in the Late Twentieth Century*. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

Putnam, Robert D.
2000 *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Rural Families Speak
2000 North Central Region, Multi State Project NC 223. Wave One data for Tillamook.

2004 Tracking the Well-Being and Functioning of Rural Families in the Context of Welfare Policies., Basebook Report. www.ruralfamilies.umn.edu website November 2004.

Rural Sociological Society Task Force on Persistent Rural Poverty
1993 *Persistent Poverty in Rural America*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Salamon, Sonya
2003 *Newcomers to Old Towns: Suburbanization of the Heartland*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sampson, Robert J.
2001 How do Communities Undergird or Undermine Human Development? Relevant Contexts and Social Mechanisms in *Does It Take a Village? Community Effects on Children, Adolescents, and Families*, edited by Alan Booth and Ann C. Crouter, pp.161-174. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, NewJersey.

Schiller, Bradley R.
2004 *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination* (9th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

Schwarzweller, Harry K. and Sue-Wen Lean
1993 Ontonagon: A Remote Corner of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, in *Forgotten Places: Uneven Development in Rural America,* edited By Thomas A. Lyson and William W. Falk, pp.195-217. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Small, Stephen and Andrew Supple
2001 Communities as Systems: Is a Community More Than the Sum of Its Parts?, in *Does It Take a Village? Community Effects on Children, Adolescents, and Families*, edited by Alan Booth and Ann C. Crouter, pp.161-174. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey.

Strauss, Anslem and Juliet Corbin
1988 *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Sullivan, Ashley F. and Eunyoung Choi
2002 Hunger and Food Insecurity in the Fifty States: 1998 – 2000. Food Security Institute, Center on Hunger and Poverty, Heller School for Social Policy & Management: Brandeis University.

Tapogna, John, Allison Suter, Mark Nord, and Michael Leachman
2004 Explaining Variations in State Hunger Rates, in Family Economics and Nutrition Review, Volume 16, No. 2.

U.S. Census Bureau
2000 Demographic Characteristics, Social Characteristics, Economic Characteristics, and Housing Characteristics for Tillamook City,Oregon.

____ Demographic Characteristics, Social Characteristics, Economic Characteristics, and Housing Characteristics for Tillamook County, Oregon.

____ Demographic Characteristics, Social Characteristics, Economic Characteristics, and Housing Characteristics for the State of Oregon.

____ Demographic Characteristics, Social Characteristics, Economic Characteristics, and Housing Characteristics for Benton County, Oregon.

1990 Population and Housing Characteristic for Tillamook County, Oregon.

____ Population and Housing Characteristics, Social Characteristics, for the State of Oregon.

____ Population and Housing Characteristics for Benton County, Oregon.
Weber, Bruce A., Greg J. Duncan and Leslie A. Whitener, Editors

2002 *Rural Dimensions of Welfare Reform*. Kalamazoo: W.E. Upjohn Institute.

Whitener, Leslie A., Bruce A. Weber and Greg J. Duncan
2002 *Rural Dimensions of Welfare Reform*. Kalamazoo: W.E. Upjohn Institute.

Wilson, William J.
1987 *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, The Underclass and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Household Questionnaire for Salmonville

1. Who is primarily responsible for buying food in this household? For preparing food in this household?

2. [if not clear from 1] What is your relationship with food in this household? If no relation, interviewee may be screened out on basis of this question. Return later.]

   Do USDA survey. If any food insecurity, continue:

3. How many household members do you have?

   - What are their ages and genders? [Write down.]

4. How do you get your food?

   - Where do you go to buy your food?
   - Do you share food?
   - Do you grow any of your own food?
   - Do you have access to land to grow a garden?
   - Do you hunt, fish, or gather food?
   - Are there any other ways you obtain food?

5. What other programs that help people to get food in this area are you aware of?

	Aware:	Yes	No	Use:	Yes	No
Food Stamps						
Food Bank						
Gleaning Group						
Free Meals						
WIC						
Reduced Lunch Programs						
Other						

6. What do you think about these programs? [Are they adequate, convenient…?]

7. How much additional money do you think that you need per week to adequately feed your household? (How much would you need if you didn't use any of the programs listed above?)

8. What do you think makes it hard for you or anybody that you know around here to get enough food, or the food that people want to eat?

9. During which part of the year do you eat the best?

10. During which part of the year do you eat the worst?

11. What are several of your favorite foods or foods that you enjoy?

12. Do you get to eat them often?

13. What are several of the favorite foods of others in the family, or foods that they enjoy?

14. What foods do you not care for, but find yourself eating to fill in the gaps?

15. What about other people in the household?

16. Do you think that your children get the foods that they need?

17. Have you ever not eaten as much as you wanted in order to provide food for your children?

18. Tell us about a meal that you thoroughly enjoyed—the food, the place, the people etc.

19. Tell us about a meal that you didn't enjoy very much—the food, the place,the people, etc.

20. What is a typical day for you as far as getting food, preparing it, eating it, etc? Please include what the food is and how the food is eaten—at a table, while watching TV, alone, with others, etc.

21. Do you make some dishes that your parents or grandparents make or used to make? Could you describe one of them? Are ingredients available locally?

22. Are there people in your household with special diets or special situations regarding food? [Prompts: diabetes, allergies, eating disorders…]

23. What are your main expenses every month?

24. Which of these expenses have been hard for you to pay for in the last year? (Mark Y for yes, N for No)

Expense Items	Yes	No
Medical bills and prescription drugs		
Health insurance		
Food		
Rent or mortgage		
Water/electricity		
Taxes		
Gas for car		
Car expenses (insurance, fixing)		
Childcare		
Clothing		
School supplies		
Household or personal supplies like toilet paper or Tampax		
Electronic appliances like TVs, computers, cell phone, etc.		
Other		

25. Which expenses have become harder to pay over time?

26. If you think back, can you remember a specific time when you had trouble paying for something? Can you tell us what caused it and what you did about it?

27. Which of the following income levels would you fall under?

    $0 - $8000
    $8000 - $16, 000
    $16,000 - $21,000
    $21,000 - $30,100
    $30,000 - $48, 000
    $48,000 - $76,000

28. If you had an extra $100 to $200 per month, what would you spend it on?

29. Of all the people living in your household, who are earning money?

30. What are their educational levels?

31. What kind of work does each do?

32. Are they part-time or full time?

33. Are they seasonal or full-year workers?

34. How long have they been employed at the job they have now?

35. If members are unemployed, how long has each been unemployed?

36. Have you moved in the past year?

37. If so, how often? Why?

38. Where have you moved from?

39. Do you own or rent your house?

40. About how much do you have to pay monthly for rent [or mortgage]? What percentage of your income would that be?

41. Do you ever have to pay late?

42. Are you helping to support anyone outside of your household?

43. How often do you meet with friends, neighbors or relatives? [Prompts: once a day, once every two days, once a week, twice a month…]

44. When was the last time that you met with a friend, neighbor or relative outside of your household for a talk or something?

45. 45. Do you have neighbors, friends or relatives whom you help out in getting food or other things they need? (If so, What kind of help do you give? [transportation, childcare, rent…]

46. Could you tell us about a situation where you helped someone out?

47. Do you have neighbors, friends or relatives whom you can call upon if you need help in getting food or something? How have they helped you out in the past? [Prompts: transportation, childcare, loans…]

48. [If it has not emerged] Do you have a car? Do you drive it? If not, why? If not, what do you do if you need transportation?

49. If you need medical care, where do you go? How do you get there?

50. Do you or anyone in your household have a chronic illness that requires frequent medication or frequent medical attention?

51. Do you have medical insurance? Are you able to pay your medical bills?

52. Do you have friends, neighbors or relatives in this area who live in households that you think are unable to get enough food or can't afford the kinds of food they want to eat?

53. What neighborhoods in the Alsea area do you think might be places where there are quite a few households that don't have enough to eat or can't afford the kinds of food they want to eat?

54. What kinds of households around here do you think don't have enough to eat or can't afford the kinds of food they want to eat? [Prompt: like elderly households or single mothers or people who have low paying jobs…]

55. Do you have any ideas for how to improve the situation of people in this area in relation to getting enough food or the kind of food people want? [Remind them of things they brought up before that are problems for them and how to remedy them…]

Appendix B

USDA Food Security Core Module

FOOD-SECURITY/HUNGER CORE MODULE: These next questions are about the food eaten In your hiousehold in the last 12 months, since (current month) of last year and whether you were able to afford the food you need.

1. Which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your house-hold in the last 12 months: –enough of the kinds of food (I/we) want to eat; –enough, but not always the <u>kinds</u> of food (I/we) want; –-sometimes <u>not enough</u> to eat; or, –<u>often</u> not enough to eat?

[1] Enough of the kinds of food we want to eat (SKIP 1a and 1b)
[2] Enough but not always the <u>kinds</u> of food we want (SKIP 1a)
[3] Sometimes <u>not enough</u> to eat [SKIP 1b]
[4] <u>Often</u> not enough [SKIP 1b]
[ ] DK or Refused (SKIP 1a and 1b)

1a. [IF OPTION 3 OR 4 SELECTED, ASK] Here are some reasons why people don't always have enough to eat. For each one, please tell me if that is a reason why YOU don't always have enough to eat. [READ LIST. MARK ALL THAT APPLY.]

YES	NO	DK	
[]	[]	[]	Not enough money for food
[]	[]	[]	Not enough time for shopping or cooking
[]	[]	[]	Too hard to get to the store
[]	[]	[]	On a diet
[]	[]	[]	No working stove available
[]	[]	[]	Not able to cook or eat because of health problems

1b. [IF OPTION 2 SELECTED, ASK] Here are some reasons why people don't always have the quality or variety of food they want. For each one, please tell me if that is a reason why YOU don't always have the kinds of food you want to eat. [READ LIST. MARK ALL THAT APPLY.]

YES	NO	DK	
[]	[]	[]	Not enough money for food
[]	[]	[]	Kinds of food (I/we) want not available
[]	[]	[]	Not enough time for shopping or cooking
[]	[]	[]	Too hard to get to the store
[]	[]	[]	On a special diet

<u>Stage 1: Questions 2-6</u> (asked of all households; begin scale items).

2. Now I'm going to read you several statements that people have made About their food situation. For these statements, please tell me whether the statement was <u>often</u> true, <u>sometimes</u> true, or <u>never</u> true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months, that is, since last (name of current month).

The first statement is "(I/We) worried whether (my/our) food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more." Was that <u>often</u> true, <u>sometimes</u> true, or <u>never</u> true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- [ ] Often true
- [ ] Sometimes true
- [ ] Never true
- [ ] DK or Refused

3. "The food that (I/we) bought just didn't last, and (I/we) didn't have money to get more." was that <u>often</u>, <u>sometimes</u>, or <u>never</u> true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- [ ] Often true
- [ ] Sometimes true
- [ ] Never true
- [ ] DK or Refused

4. "(I/we) couldn't afford to eat balanced meals." Was that <u>often</u>, <u>sometimes</u>, or <u>never</u> true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- [ ] Often true
- [ ] Sometimes true
- [ ] Never true
- [ ] DK or Refused

[IF CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK Q 5 - 6; OTHERWISE SKIP TO 1st-Level Screen.]

5. "(I/we) relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed (my/our) child/the children) because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food." Was that <u>often</u>, <u>sometimes</u>, or <u>never</u> true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- [ ] Often true
- [ ] Sometimes true
- [ ] Never true
- [ ] DK or Refused

6. "(I/We) couldn't feed (my/our) child/the children) a balanced meal, because (I/we) couldn't afford that." Was that <u>often</u>, <u>sometimes</u>, or <u>never</u> true for (you/your house- hold) in the last 12 months?

- [ ] Often true
- [ ] Sometimes true
- [ ] Never true
- [ ] DK or Refused

<u>1st-level Screen</u> (screener for Stage 2): If affirmative response to any one of Questions 2-6 (i.e., "often true" or "sometimes true"), OR, response [3] or [4] to Question 1 (if administered), then continue to Stage 2; otherwise, skip to end.

<u>Stage 2: Questions 7-11</u>

[IF CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK Q7; OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q8]

7. "(My/Our child was/The children were) not eating enough because (I/we) just couldn't afford enough food." Was that <u>often</u>, <u>sometimes</u>, or <u>never</u> true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

[ ] Often true
[ ] Sometimes true
[ ] Never true
[ ] DK or Refused

8 .In the last 12 months, since last (name of current month), did (you/you or Other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No (Skip 8a)
[ ] DK (Skip 8a)

8a. [IF YES ABOVE, ASK] How often did this happen--almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

[ ] Almost every month
[ ] Some months but not every month
[ ] Only 1 or 2 months
[ ] DK

9. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because There wasn't enough money to buy food?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No
[ ] DK

10. In the last 12 months, were you every hungry but didn't eat because You couldn't Afford enough food?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No
[ ] DK

11. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because you didn't have Enough money For food?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No
[ ] DK

<u>2nd-level Screen</u> (screener for Stage 3): If affirmative response to any one of Questions 7 through 11, then continue to Stage 3; otherwise, skip to end

<u>Stage 3: Questions 12-16</u>

12. In the last 12 months, did (you/you or other adults in your

household) Ever Not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No (Skip 12a)
- [ ] DK (Skip 12a)

12a. [IF YES ABOVE, ASK] How often did this happen--almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

- [ ] Almost every month
- [ ] Some months but not every month
- [ ] Only 1 or 2 months
- [ ] DK

[IF CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK 13-16; OTHERWISE SKIP TO END.]

13. The next questions are about children living in the household who re under 18 years old. In the last 12 months, since (current month) of last year, did you ever cut the size of (your child's/any of the children's) meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] DK

14. In the last 12 months, did (CHILD'S NAME/any of the children) ever Skip Meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No (Skip 14a)
- [ ] DK (Skip 14a)

14a. [IF YES ABOVE ASK] How often did this happen--almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

- [ ] Almost every month
- [ ] Some months but not every month
- [ ] Only 1 or 2 months
- [ ] DK

15. In the last 12 months, (was your child/ were the children) ever hungry but you just couldn't afford more food?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] DK

16. In the last 12 months, did (your child/any of the children) ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] DK

Appendix C

Protocol for Hidden Cove

Interviewer: ___________________________ ID: ____________________

Date: ____________________

PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

YEAR 1

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this important research on family life. As you probably know, we are part of a big study that is looking at how families living in rural parts of the country are managing on a limited income. We are talking to families living in small towns and rural areas all over the United States. Not all of the families we will talk to are currently receiving welfare. In fact, we will talk to some families who have never received cash assistance from the government, but nevertheless have trouble making ends meet each month. There are no "right" answers to any of our questions; we just want to hear what life is like for you and your family. Remember, this interview is voluntary. If you don't want to answer a question, you don't have to. All information you give us will be kept confidential. **(Do not proceed unless you have a completed informed consent document.)**

Let's begin by talking about who lives in your household. Besides you, who lives in your house?

CURRENT HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

A. Mother's 1st Name___________ DOB_________ Marital Status*____ Ethnicity** ______

B. Partner's 1st Name___________ DOB_________ Ethnicity**_______

	Child (First Name)	Sex	DOB	Relation to A ***	Relation to B ***	Contact w/ bio parent (Y, N)	Receives child support (Y.N)
1.	_____________	_________	_________	____________	___________	________	___________
2.	_____________	_________	_________	____________	___________	________	___________
3.	_____________	_________	_________	____________	___________	________	___________
4.	_____________	_________	_________	____________	___________	________	___________
5.	_____________	_________	_________	____________	___________	________	___________
6.	_____________	_________	_________	____________	___________	________	___________

* Key to codes		**Key to Codes		*** Key to codes	
S	= Single	W	=Non-Hispanic White	A	= Adopted
M	= Married	H	=Hispanic/Latino	SC	= Stepchild
LWP	= Living with partner	AA	=African American	B	= Biological child
D	= Divorced	N	=Native American	F	= Foster child
SEP	= Separated	A	=Asian	NR	= Not related
M	= Multi-racial	O	= Other	O	= Other

Do you have any children not currently living with you? (If yes) Who are they, and where are they living?

____

____

Other Household Members

Relationship to A	Length of Time in Household	Permanent or Temporary Arrangement
____________	____________	____________
____________	____________	____________
____________	____________	____________

Interviewer

Notes:______________________________

LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY

1. Tell me about how this neighborhood/area is as a place to live. Does this neighborhood/area have everything that you and your family need? If not, what sorts of things are missing? (Probe if necessary: Do you have easy access to a grocery store; a mini-mart or convenience store; other household shopping; medical care; a gas station; church; school; child care; a library?)

2. Families may need to know how to find many different services available in the community. The services needed are different for each family. I have a list of resources that are often available in communities. I'd like to know about the kinds of community services you know about. Shall I read the list to you, or would you like to fill this out yourself? ***(Administer: Knowledge of Community Resources Measure)***

NOTE: IF THE INTERVIEWEE ASKS YOU TO READ THE MEASURE, ASSUME THAT ALL FURTHER SURVEY MEASURES SHOULD BE READ ALOUD.

3. What's the best thing about living where you do? The worst?

4. Is your housing adequate for you and your family's needs? Why or why not? **(Probe: size, quality, price, landlord.)**

5. Have you moved in the past two years? If so, why? How does this place compare with where you lived before? **(If not addressed)** How has your family responded to these changes? How do you feel about this?

6. **(Optional, ask if not addressed in #5)** In the last two years was there ever a time when you and your family were homeless? For how long were you homeless? What did you do? How did you get housing again?

EMPLOYMENT/CURRENT WORK

1. Let's talk about your employment situation. Are you currently working? **(If not employed, skip to Question #2)** What do you do? How much are you paid? When did you start working there? How many hours do you generally work each week? How many weeks do you work during the year? Have you ever had a raise? When? How much? **(List only current employment; space provided for up to three jobs)**

Participant's Current Employment

	Wage/Salary	Date Started	Hours/week	Weeks/Year	Amount Raise
Job 1 ______________	___________	_______	__________	__________	________
Job 2 ______________	___________	_______	__________	__________	________
Job 3 ______________	___________	_______	__________	__________	________

2. **(Ask only if <u>not</u> currently employed)** Are you looking for a job now? **(If yes)** How are you going about it? Have you ever worked for pay? **(If answer is no, ask the appropriate questions in this section, but skip work history section)**

3. What about your partner? What does your partner do? How much is your partner paid? When did your partner start working there? How many hours does your partner generally work each week? How many weeks does your partner work during the year? Has your partner ever had a raise? When? How much?

Partner's Current Employment

	Wage/Salary	Date Started	Hours/week	Weeks/Year	Amount Raise
Job 1 _______________	____________	________	___________	___________	_________
Job 2 _______________	____________	________	___________	___________	_________
Job 3 _______________	____________	________	___________	___________	_________

4. Is there anyone else in the household who has a job? **(If yes)** Tell me about that.
5. **(Ask if currently employed)** What problems, if any, do you currently face at work?
6. **(Ask if currently employed)** Do you get any benefits from your job(s)? How about your partner? What about health insurance…

Benefit	**Provided by Mother's Job(s)**	**Provided by Partner's Job(s)**
Health insurance for self	Y Yes Y No	Y Yes Y No
Health insurance for children	Y Yes Y No	Y Yes Y No
Sick leave	Y Yes Y No	Y Yes Y No
Vacation pay	Y Yes Y No	Y Yes Y No
Overtime	Y Yes Y No	Y Yes Y No
Retirement plan	Y Yes Y No	Y Yes Y No

7. What would be your ideal job for supporting your family? What would help you to get that kind of job?

8. In the last several years welfare regulations have changed. There is now more of an emphasis on getting a job, and there are now time limits **(talk about specific state programs, if appropriate)**. What do you think about these changes? Has your family been affected by them?

WORK HISTORY

1. We also want to know about the kinds of work that people have done in the past. Tell me about your work history. How old were you when you got your first job?

2. About how many jobs do you think you've had since then? Have you been more likely to work full-time or part-time? Why?

3. What kinds of jobs have you had? What were some of the reasons you left these jobs?

4. Tell me about the job that you held the longest, not counting your current job. When did you have this job? What did you do? What did you like about it? Why did you leave?

TRANSPORTATION AND CHILDCARE

1. What about transportation? How do you usually get around? **(If not addressed: Do you own a car or have one you can borrow? How do you and your partner get to and from work?)**

    a. **(If the family has no car)** How do you get your groceries, take your children to the doctors, run errands?
    b. **(If the family has a car)** How reliable is your car? When was the last time your car broke down? What happened?

2. What do you do when you really need transportation and it's not available to you?

3. When you are working (or participating in a job training program or the state's welfare-to-work activities) who takes care of your children? Tell me how you get them there, and about how long they stay every day. Is it different if you have to work evenings or weekends?

4. **(If appropriate)** What about your older children? What do they do after school? What about school holidays and summers?

5. How many childcare arrangements do you have each week/month? Overall, how much do you pay for childcare each month?

6. How do you like your childcare provider? Why do you feel this way? Have you ever changed providers? Why?

7. Is there ever a time when you need someone to take care of your children outside your time at work? Who does that? How does it go?

8. Tell me about a situation when you needed emergency childcare. What did you do? Have you ever had to miss work or a training program because of a childcare problem? How did your supervisor react?

9. What do you do for childcare if your child gets sick? What happens if your provider is sick?

Family of Origin Characteristics

1. Tell me a little bit about your background. What was your family like when you were growing up? Who was in your family? Where did you live? What do you remember about your childhood?

2. Did your parents work? What kind of work did they do?

3. How much education did your mother have? _______ Your father? _______

   1 = 8th grade or less
   2 = some high school
   3 = high school or GED
   4 = specialized technical, business or vocational training after high school
   5 = some college, including Associate's Degree
   6 = college or university graduate
   7= one or more years beyond college
   8= graduate degree
   9 = don't know

4. Do you know if your family ever received welfare or other assistance? Y Yes Y No Y Don't Know

5. How often did your family move when you were a child? Why did you move?

6. **(Optional)** How much contact do you have with your family now? Who are you in contact with? Where do they live? What is your relationship like now?

FAMILY WELL-BEING

1. Tell me about a typical day (a working day, if appropriate). What time do you get up? When do your children get up? Then, what happens next? And then…? **(The goal here is to get through a typical weekday for the family.)**

2. What sorts of things do you do for fun with your family? How often do you get to do them?

3. Overall, how would you say things are going for your family right now? **(If not addressed)** How are things going for you personally? **(If appropriate)** How are things going between you and your partner?

4. Here is a checklist that asks about how things have been in the last week. ***(Administer: Feelings About How Things Are Going)***

5. Parents need lots of skills to help their families get by. Everyone has certain skills and abilities, but it's usually not possible for someone to have every single skill needed. We'd like to know what sorts of skills you have. ***(Administer: Life Skills Assessment)***

6. Family members often have health problems. Sometimes these problems don't have much of an impact on day-to-day life, while at other times they can be a big problem. We'd like to know about any health problems the members of your family might have. ***(Administer: Adult Health Survey; Administer: Child Health Survey; use more than one if needed to get info about all children)***

7. **(If there are other people living in the household)** Do any of the other people in your household have any health problems? **(If yes)** What kinds of health problems?

8. **(If applicable)** Do any of these health problems affect everyday life in your family? If so, how?

9. What things about your family make you proud and happy right now? What are the biggest challenges for your family as a whole?

EDUCATION AND INCOME

1. What is your current educational level? _____ (use scale below)

   1= 8th grade or less
   2 = some high school
   3 = high school or GED
   4 = specialized technical, business or vocational training after high school
   5 = some college, including Associate's Degree
   6 = college or university graduate
   7 = one or more years beyond college
   8 = graduate degree
   9 = don't know

2. How much education did you have when you first became a parent? ____ (use scale)

3. **(If no high school diploma)** Why did you leave high school before finishing?

4. **(If appropriate)** What about your spouse/partner-how much education does he have?____ (scale)

5. In the last few years have you had the opportunity to get further education or develop new job skills? What kind? How were you able to do this?

6. We'd like to know a bit about your family's sources of income. Remember, all of this information is completely confidential. From which of the following sources do you receive income?

Source of Income	**Take Home Pay**	**Weekly**	**Bi-Weekly**	**Monthly**
Wages and salaries (self)	____________	Y	Y	Y
Wages and salaries (partner)	____________	Y	Y	Y
Tips, commissions, overtime	____________	Y	Y	Y
Social Security Disability	____________	Y	Y	Y
Social Security Retirement/Pensions	____________	Y	Y	Y
SSI (Supplemental Security Income)	____________	Y	Y	Y
TANF	____________	Y	Y	Y
Unemployment Compensation	____________	Y	Y	Y
Worker's Disability Compensation	____________	Y	Y	Y
Veterans' Benefits	____________	Y	Y	Y
Child or spousal support	____________	Y	Y	Y
Children's wages	____________	Y	Y	Y
Food Stamps	____________	Y	Y	Y
Regular gifts from family/friends	____________	Y	Y	Y
Other:	____________	Y	Y	Y

7. Housing is usually the largest expense for families. Tell me about how much you pay per month and what utilities, if any, are included. Is this a rental or do you own? What utilities do you pay each month? How much? What happens if you can't pay for utilities?

8. Families sometimes receive assistance from a variety of government or private programs. Do you receive assistance from any of the following? **(Try and record cash value if possible)**

Y WIC
Y School Lunch Program
Y EIC (Earned Income Credit)
Y Child Care Assistance
Y Housing Assistance
Y Energy/Fuel Assistance
Y Transportation Assistance
Y Diversionary Assistance (only some states)
Y Educational Grants or Loans
Y Medicaid
Y Other

9. Is there any other assistance you're getting, such as help with healthcare, food, meals, clothing,
holiday gifts, furniture, baby goods, day care, or school supplies?

Type of Help	Amount	Type of Help	Amount
______________________	__________	______________________	__________
______________________	__________	______________________	__________
______________________	__________	______________________	__________

10. Compared to two years ago, would you say your family's economic situation has:

5 = Improved a lot
4 = Improved a little
3 = Remained the same
2 = Gone down a little
1 = Gone down a lot

11. **(Optional)**To what extent do you think your income is enough for you to live on?

1 = Not at all adequate
2 = Can meet necessities only
3 = Can afford some of the things we want but not all we want
4 = Can afford about everything we want
5 = Can afford about everything we want and still save money

12. In past year, has there been a time when you had a hard time making ends meet or paying for necessities? What did you have trouble paying for? Food? Clothing? Healthcare? Credit payments? Personal care or non-food items? **(If appropriate)** Diapers? What did you do?

Item	**Yes**	**No**
Food	Y	Y
Clothing	Y	Y
Medical Care	Y	Y
Dental Care	Y	Y
Medicines	Y	Y
Credit Payments	Y	Y
Personal Care Items	Y	Y
Diapers	Y	Y
School Fees or Expenses	Y	Y
Other:	Y	Y

13. Have you or members of your household ever gone hungry or been close to going hungry? Please describe the situation as fully as you can. What led to it? How did you deal with it?

14. What do you need most to prevent this situation from happening? ***(Administer Food Security Module)***

15. When you've gone for help from an agency, how were you treated? **(Probe for specific agencies.)**

16. In the past year, have you sold or pawned anything you owned?

PARENTING

1. Let's talk about being a parent. What do you enjoy most about being a parent? What are your strengths as a parent? What is the hardest part of being a parent?

2. **(If appropriate)** How does your partner help you with parenting?

   (Optional) Here's another checklist that asks you to describe how you feel about yourself as a parent. ***(Administer: Parent Ladder)*** Why do you feel that way? Why do you feel that way?

SOCIAL SUPPORT

1. Who are the people who are most important to you and your family? By this, we mean friends or relatives who are important to you for one reason or another. **For each person ask**: Who is this person? Why are they important to you? **(If appropriate)** How did you meet them? How often are you in contact with them? Is there anyone else?

2. Is there anyone who makes things harder for your family? How so? Tell me about that.

3. Do you ever get to go out with your friends? Have you been able to find the time for any outside activities? What sorts of things do you do?

SUMMARY

1. When you look back over the past few years, what do you think are the most important things that have happened to you and your family?

2. Looking ahead into the future, what are you most looking forward to in the coming year? What do you most worry about? What do you think things will be like for your family in three years?

3. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life right now? **(Use scale below)** Why do you feel that way?

   1 = very dissatisfied

   2 = dissatisfied

   3 = mixed feelings

   4 = satisfied

   5 = very satisfied

4. Is there anything else that you think we should know about how your family is doing right now? Is there anything we've missed?

ID: ___________________

Date: ___________________

CONTACT INFORMATION: TO BE REMOVED AND KEPT IN STATE FILES

As you know, we would like to visit with you again in a few months to see how your family is doing. To make it easier to contact you in case you move and forget to tell us, will you share the name and phone numbers of three people who will always know where you are? Please be sure to tell them that we may contact them.

Name	**Phone Number**
__________________________________	__________________________________
__________________________________	__________________________________
__________________________________	__________________________________

Thank you so much for your time.

NOTES

Appendix D
Food Security Sub-codes

	CODE	SUBCODE	DEFINITION
FB	FOOD BANK	Gleaners	Community supports that help the family avoid hunger; includes food banks, food pantries, church or non-profit agency support
ML	MEALS		Eating with others helps the family to avoid hunger
FM		Family	Reports of eating at homes of family members
FR		Friends	Reports of eating at homes of friends
$$	MONEY		Money received from others helps the family avoid hunger; includes loans and gift cards
FM		Family	Reports of receiving money for food from family members
FR		Friends	Reports of receiving money for food from friends
SCL	SCHOOL FOOD		Mention of school lunch/breakfast programs; includes comments about how kids dislike
GP	GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS		References to any government food programs such as food stamps, WIC
FPS	FOOD PURCHASING STRATEGIES		Identification of food purchasing strategies designed to reduce hunger; includes use of coupons, buying in bulk, selecting off-brands, etc.
HC	HUMAN CAPITAL		Mention of food security strategies that involve human capital, such as spending time canning, freezing, gardening, preparing big soups or stews, etc.
MMGT	MONEY MANAGEMENT		Money management strategies that enable the family to purchase food. Includes writing bad checks, use of credit cards, juggling bills, etc.
CONS	CONSUMPTION MANAGEMENT		Description of consumption management strategies designed to manage or reduce hunger
DIET		Dieting	Descriptions of using dieting or needing to lose weight as a strategy to manage hunger or stretch food
CURB		Curbing Appetite	Identification of strategies designed to curb appetite, including smoking, drinking coffee, ignoring
TRI		Triage	Making deliberate choices about which family members eat first, usually children, then adult males
OTR	OTHER		Any other mention of a hunger or food management strategy that is not included above