



The History of the American Shopping Center

David Gwynn
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SCOPE

This annotated bibliography will present information on the history of the American shopping center through much of the twentieth century, with particular attention to the mid-century period (1940-1970). The materials are more focused on the architectural and urban planning aspects and implications of the shopping center, although some attention is also given to social factors such as consumerism and consumption, and even to the shopping center in popular culture. Even within this architectural and planning scope, there are numerous materials of a local and regional nature that, while they may be instructive and useful to the serious researcher, will generally not be included here unless they are particularly illustrative of a broader trend.

INTRODUCTION

Even in ancient times, cities were built around a central area that was more or less planned for commerce. Until the early years of the twentieth century, the keyword was “central”; in a society where transportation was dependent upon horses, transit, or feet, the downtown area acted as a hub for most activity within the city. Developments over the past century, however, have brought dramatic changes in the way people shop and live.

Early Planned Communities and Streetcar Strips



Country Club Plaza, Kansas City, MO. (J.C. Nichols Co.)

The earliest suburbs had been dependent upon the transit network, and around the beginning of the twentieth century, “streetcar strips”, or low-rise commercial developments adjacent to the streetcar routes became the site of choice for convenience shopping (groceries, sundries, etc.) among housewives in the area. These stores were often haphazardly

constructed, with little if any central planning. There was, of course, no parking, because there were no cars. The downtown shopping area still reigned supreme for most purchases; its large department stores saw no need to locate branches adjacent to grocers and butchers in outlying areas. Confident of the continuing primacy of the center city, they shunned these new commercial areas for decades.

As the automobile grew in popularity, developers like J.C. Nichols of Kansas City, feeling less restricted by the constraints of the transit network, began taking advantage of the increased mobility of the population. Nichols' concept for the Country Club District was for a planned community with its own small-scale convenience retail centers interspersed throughout, but also for a major shopping district of its own, one that might even come to compete with the downtown area. In 1923, Country Club Plaza opened for business as what is now regarded as America's first large centrally planned and managed shopping center. That its patrons would arrive by automobile was assumed; parking was an integral part of the plan. While the residential areas provided one-time profits, the retail center was a source of ongoing income; many developers took note and began building new residential areas primarily to support retail centers.

At the same time, grocers in Los Angeles were experimenting with a new format, the drive-in market. Something between a shopping center and an early version of the supermarket, these L-shaped buildings housed several independent food retailers (grocer, produce vendor, butcher, and baker) in one place, surrounding a private parking lot. Also experimenting at the time was Sears, Roebuck, and Company, which had begun to expand from its mail order base into retail stores. A surprising number of these new stores were opening not in the traditional

zone downtown, but in outlying districts and “streetcar strips”. In fact, Sears eventually opened a store at Country Club Plaza.

The Depression and World War II



Westwood Village, Los Angeles, CA (Postcard view).

The final years of the 1920s saw a dramatic increase in the number of chain stores in America, and the Great Depression sealed the fate of many independent merchants as their financial picture and ability to compete with the chains became more and more bleak. In addition, the discount supermarket made its debut in 1930, with the opening of King Kullen in Queens, New York. The 1930s also saw a tremendous increase in the number of planned shopping centers in the United States. Most of these centers were not large; most were of the “neighborhood” variety, housing one or more small grocers (often chains), a butcher, a drug store, and the like. Often, as in the case of Richmond’s Cary Court, these centers were

actually located in a streetcar strip and had a similar scale; the only differences were the coordinated design, and the parking lot separating the stores from the street.

A limited number of more elaborate centers also opened in the 1930s. Notable examples include River Oaks in Houston, Highland Park in Dallas, and the original Westwood Village complex adjacent to the University of California, Los Angeles. Except in the rapidly suburbanizing areas of Southern California, department stores other than Sears were still not willing to locate in these outlying areas, although some opened "branch" locations that were essentially nothing but small clothing stores. There is some evidence, though, that downtown retailers were beginning to take note of the growing momentum of the suburban centers. A distinct trend toward modernization, parking, and attention to aesthetics was taking hold in the center city, and there were even some calls for centralized management in downtown shopping districts.

Then came World War II, which meant the end of most commercial construction for the duration. However, shopping centers were among the few projects that were constructed during the war, mostly to serve new residential districts built to house defense workers. Many of these centers were of cheap, temporary construction and disappeared after the war, but some, such as Linda Vista in San Diego, were built to last, and were even featured in design profiles of the era.



Broadway-Crenshaw, Los Angeles, CA, shortly before demolition. (Richard Longstreth).

During the late 1940s, the shopping center came of age in many ways. Architectural historian Richard Longstreth has done numerous studies of these early postwar centers in both the Washington and Los Angeles areas. As a rule, centers were larger, had supermarkets rather than small grocers as tenants, and, very importantly, were beginning to draw full-size department stores as anchor tenants. The Broadway-Crenshaw Center in Los Angeles was one of the most noteworthy centers of the period, due both to its massive department store anchor, and to the thorough attention to detail with which it was built. Stores had dual façades, one facing the main traffic artery and the other facing a large rear parking lot. Deliveries were handled through underground tunnels. The center was so successful that a competing center with another large department store opened adjacent to it, and the two were often viewed as one unit.

The postwar years also brought planned communities on a massive scale never before seen in this country. This was the era of Levittown, Park Forest, and other suburbs built for an increasing affluent postwar population, and each of these developments had an increasingly large shopping center as part of the plan

The 1950s and 1960s: The Rise of Regional Centers



Southdale, Edina, MN. (Postcard View).

The 1950s were the golden age of American shopping centers. A rapidly suburbanizing population with unprecedented buying power combined with federal tax advantages that favored investment in commercial building, led to a construction boom. Shopping centers were springing up everywhere, it seemed, and they were becoming even larger and more regional in scope.

In 1950, Seattle's Northgate opened. The massive center featured a department store, two supermarkets, and dozens of specialty shops, plus a theatre and office building. Its distinctive pattern—stores faced each other across an open air courtyard rather than facing the street—was replicated in short order by San Francisco's Stonestown, Boston's Shopper's World, Los Angeles' Lakewood Center, and Detroit's Northland, the first regional center built by noted store designer by Victor Gruen. In suburban Minneapolis a few years later, Gruen took the arrangement to its next logical step by putting a roof over the central courtyard, creating the first enclosed regional mall; Southland Center opened in 1956. Gruen had somewhat utopian notions about shopping centers as social and civic gathering places, and had planned numerous community facilities for the complex, most of which were never built.

James Rouse was beginning his career in the Baltimore area at the same time, producing Modawmin, a regional courtyard-type center in 1956, and Harundale, his first enclosed mall, in 1957. In 1959, he developed Charlottetown Mall in Charlotte, North Carolina, the first enclosed mall in the south. Rouse also had a great interest in urban planning issues, and was active in the urban renewal program of the 1950s. In fact, urban renewal, the federal "slum clearance" program, also resulted in a new sort of shopping center during the late 1950s, the sometimes taxpayer-subsidized inner-city center.

It was during this time that downtown merchants began to take the shopping centers seriously and to recognize the threat they would become over the next two decades. Many of the new regional centers were being constructed along the very same new interstate highways that downtown interests had assumed would bring people into the downtown area. In fact, the reverse was beginning to occur, as retailers and manufacturers began *leaving* the center city.

To stem the tide, many downtown areas began considering ways to make downtown more like the suburbs. Plans often involved closing the main street to automobile traffic and creating a "pedestrian mall." In other cities, an actual enclosed mall was constructed downtown; one of the first was Victor Gruen's Midtown Plaza in Rochester, New York in 1962. Other towns (Redding, California, and Rock Hill, South Carolina, were two examples) opted for the less elegant solution of simply building a food over Main Street to create a half-hearted mall. Most of these schemes ultimately failed. Some of the grander ones, like Gruen's proposal to convert essentially all of downtown Fort Worth into a pedestrian zone, were never fully realized to begin with.



Pedestrian Mall, Kalamazoo, MI (Postcard view)

It was also during the 1950s that the terms “neighborhood”, “community”, and “regional” were first used to denote a hierarchy of shopping centers. This hierarchy can even be applied to enclosed malls, as smaller enclosed mall enclosed malls were built in the 1960s, often with only a supermarket and a discount department store as anchors; the now-defunct Woolco and Richway chains were common tenants and developers of these centers. With enclosed malls now something of an expectation, many of the original open-air centers were converted during the late 1960s and early 1970s as well, including Northgate, Lakewood, and Atlanta’s Lenox Square.



Community Shopping Center, Queens, NY (Photo by author).

Of course, neighborhood and community centers continued to be built as well. In many cities, the linear (or L-shaped) center with two supermarkets, a drug store, a variety store, and

perhaps a small branch department store facing on a giant parking lot continued to be the primary shopping center in town well into the 1970s.

The 1970s: Malls, Meltdowns, and the Center City



Lenox Square, Atlanta, GA (Postcard view).

Despite the recession, the 1970s were a period of significant retail growth, particularly among enclosed regional malls. The mall prototype had become somewhat standardized by this time; most were now two levels, with a large central court, a cross-shaped layout, and three or four department store anchors, which were more and more frequently replacing rather than supplementing their downtown counterparts. Often, a supermarket and other service outlets were found in the parking lot. In some areas, these centers were envisioned as parts of a mixed use development (MUD) containing offices, housing, and retail; MUDs were much

discussed in the 1970s, but much less frequently *completed*. Often, a sort of mixed use development did arise from these centers almost accidentally, in the form of the “edge city”, a sort of new auto-oriented “downtown” described by Joel Garreau in his 1991 book. Tyson’s Corner, outside Washington, DC, is a good example of this trend.

Unfortunately, this growth in regional malls came at the expense of center cities. Despite the pedestrian malls and other projects, retailers were leaving downtown in droves during the 1970s. The mid-sized southern city of Greensboro, North Carolina, lost all four of its downtown department stores in the four years following the 1974 opening of suburban Four Seasons Mall. In other cities, department stores were closing off upper floors and reducing hours. Specialty retailers were leaving for the malls as well. Particularly in southern cities, there was a subtle hint of race prejudice attached to the ceding of downtown to a primarily minority clientele following the civil rights turmoil of the 1960s. This was, however, only a part of the explanation for the demise of the center city as a retail destination.

The 1970s also saw the emergence of “mall culture” among teenagers who began to find much of their social lives revolving around the mall. Mall developers, through the addition of skating rinks, theatres, and other amenities, initially encouraged this trend, but many later came to regret it, as packs of roaming teenagers became somewhat off-putting to actual paying customers. Eventually, mall owners began using sometimes-controversial methods to discourage loitering teenagers.

The 1980s: Festival Marketplaces and Outlet Malls

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, even some suburban shopping centers were in trouble. Years of recession, changing demographics, and the tendency toward much larger stores,

particularly among supermarket chains, were causing problems for older centers in less prosperous areas and for those without the ability to expand. This would be an ongoing issue for the next three decades. Many larger centers in “better” neighborhoods were able to adapt, either by changing their tenant mix (Raleigh’s Cameron Village) or through demolition and reconstruction of all or part of the center. Broadway-Crenshaw (Los Angeles) and Stonestown (San Francisco), two of the earliest and most influential regional centers, bulldozed everything but their department store anchors in 1987 and 1988, respectively, to create enclosed malls.

Two new mutations of the shopping center in the 1980s were the so-called “power centers” and outlet malls. Comprised entirely of “big box” retailers—massive stores such as Toys R Us, that applied the supermarket model to forms of retailing that had previously been the province of small shops—the controversial power center became the dominant form of American shopping center construction for the next twenty years. Outlet malls purported to provide low-cost alternatives to chain stores, but could more accurately be described as a means of allowing manufacturers to enter retailing as well, through their own branded outlet stores.

In 1976, another new kind of shopping center opened in downtown Boston. An 18th century marketplace called Fanueil Hall had been remade by none other than James Rouse into an urban shopping center focused on food, entertainment, and specialty retailers. Soon, nearly every city in America seemed to want one of these new “festival marketplaces” built in whatever large, derelict building happened to be sitting vacant downtown. Rouse duplicated the concept in many cities with varying degrees of success; Harborplace in Baltimore was generally regarded as a winner, while Charlotte’s Cityfair and Richmond’s Sixth Street

Marketplace were big losers and became burdens to their taxpayer financiers. The verdict on Underground Atlanta, one of the biggest projects, was mixed. Critics said the centers were elitist and led to commercial gentrification; either way, they clearly were not the saviors of downtown their supporters initially expected. Few of these centers have survived in their original form.

The 1990s and Beyond: Dead Malls, Lifestyle Centers, and a Return to the City

By the 1990s, the traditional regional mall was presumed by many to be dead or dying in the face of competition from power centers and outlet malls. The groundbreaking Shopper's World outside Boston was replaced by a power center. Fashion Island, outside San Francisco, was replaced after only fifteen years of operation. A string of department store mergers in the late 1990s (and again a few years later) also resulted in numerous empty anchor spaces. In many cases, these too were filled by "big box" stores that had generally steered clear of malls, such as Target and Best Buy. Wal-Mart took over the former department that was the only remaining original trace of Broadway-Crenshaw in Los Angeles, and has used vacant anchor spots in other centers as a means of penetrating urban markets it had previously avoided, much to the dismay of some locals, who resent the implications of a discount store replacing more upscale tenants.

Other malls around the country lingered for quite some time before eventually being demolished and replaced (again, often by Wal-Mart and other big box stores), and became such a common sight that something of a fan club was created in the form of a website called DeadMalls.com, where users submitted pictures and stories about their city's abandoned centers. Despite the predictions, though, malls were still opening in the 1990s, led by the

Mall of America, the largest mall in the country, located just a few miles from Southdale, America's first enclosed shopping center.



The Metropolitan, Charlotte NC (Photo by author).

Two trends that emerged in the late 1990s and the 2000s were both related to a much-publicized return to the city by young professionals. First was a move toward “lifestyle centers” in urban areas. These new centers, often on the site of older centers that had been torn down, brought big box retailers such as Target and Best Buy closer to the center city than ever before, often as part of a development that featured housing, entertainment, and restaurants, almost all chains. If suburban centers had damaged the integrity of center city retailers decades before, these new centers threatened to rebuild downtown at the expense of smaller niche and ethnic retailers who had moved in as downtown locations became more

affordable. Commercial gentrification concerns also tempered excitement over the trend toward redeveloping older and more urban shopping centers and streetcar strips of the 1920s and 1930s. Examples included Washington's Park & Shop, Richmond's Cary Court, and Raleigh's Cameron Village. These centers, located in prosperous neighborhoods that had been rehabilitated (or never faced significant decline to begin with) proved that older centers that are well-located, well-built, and adaptable can be successful over the long term.

Unfortunately, location may not be enough to save some historically significant centers; in 2007, a large portion of the National Register-nominated River Oaks center in Houston was torn down for an office building and a Barnes & Noble bookstore.

The second major trend of the past decade has been toward centers influenced by the so-called "new urbanist" movement. Many would argue that these centers, which attempt to mimic a traditional urban streetscape by placing high-income housing and office space retailing directly above mostly chain retailers, are neither new nor particularly urban, as they often lack any sort of connection to the rest of the city and are generally located in suburban or exurban locations where they are necessarily surrounded by huge parking lots. They have also been used in an attempt to revitalize aging regional malls (Fresno's Fashion Fair, for example) and are even being constructed on the periphery of newer traditional malls.

It will be interesting to see what the coming years of energy crises and "green" development will bring.

SUBJECT HEADINGS

Not surprisingly, the most useful information is found through subject heading searches on some variant of the terms “shopping centers” or “shopping malls.” However, searches on the various aspects of retail and commercial architecture, and particularly city planning also provide useful materials, albeit with somewhat less precision.

Shopping centers

- Design and construction
- Management
- Planning
- History
- Pictorial works
- Social aspects

Shopping malls

- Social aspects
- History
- Planning

Additional Categories

- Chain stores -- United States.
- City planning
- City planning -- United States
- City planning -- United States - History -- 20th century.
- Commercial buildings
- Commercial buildings -- United States -- History -- 20th century
- Consumption (Economics) -- United States -- History -- 20th century.
- Popular culture -- United States -- History.
- Real estate developers -- United States -- Biography.
- Retail trade -- United States -- History
- Stores, Retail -- United States -- History -- 20th century
- Urban renewal -- United States -- History -- 20th century

CLASSIFICATION

The vast majority of titles on shopping center history are found in the Commerce sub-classification of Social Sciences, specifically within the various retailing areas. However, searches in the areas of Urban Sociology, Architectural History, and City Planning are also worthwhile, as the history of the shopping center has been studied within all these disciplines and perspectives.

Library of Congress Classification

- HF Social Sciences - Commerce**
HF5428-5429.6 Retail trade
HF5429.7-5430.6 Shopping centers. Shopping malls.
HF5460-5469.5 Department stores. Mail order businesses. Supermarkets.
Convenience stores.
- HT Social Sciences - Communities. Classes. Races.**
HT101-395 Urban groups. The city. Urban sociology.
- NA Fine Arts - Architecture**
NA190-1555.5 History
NA4170-7020 Public buildings
NA9000-9428 Aesthetics of cities. City planning and beautifying.

Dewey Classification

- 307 Communities**
307.76 Urban communities
307.121 6 Planning
- 381 Commerce**
381.1 Marketing channels
381.11 Shopping centers
381.141 Department stores
- 658 General management**
658.87 Marketing channels
- 711 Area planning**
711.552 2 Commercial areas
- 725 Architecture**
725.21 Retail trade buildings

GENERAL INFORMATION

The following sources provide general information about the history of American shopping centers, and are recommended as starting points.

General Encyclopedias

***The New Encyclopaedia Britannica.* Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2007.**

The sort article "Shopping Center" discusses the types of centers, and offers a one paragraph history overview.

***The World Book Encyclopedia.* Chicago: World Book, 2008.**

A short article entitled "Shopping Center" focuses on the management of centers, with half a paragraph on history, and minimal coverage of center types.

Subject Encyclopedias

Clausen, Meredith L. "Shopping Centers." In *Encyclopedia of Architecture: Design, Engineering, and Construction*, ed. Joseph A. Wilkes and Robert T. Packard, 406-421. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1988.

A 16-page study of shopping centers begins with a historical overview of retail centers dating back to ancient times, continues with a surprisingly detailed look at twentieth century developments (including information on several innovative centers and on the urban planning implications of centers over time), and concludes with discussion of new and ongoing trends. A 32-item bibliography is included, as are several historical photographs and illustrations.

Packard, Robert T. *Encyclopedia of American Architecture.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995.

This three-page article concentrates mostly on current operations, designs, and management, and also contains a one-paragraph summary of history, and one large, contemporary illustration.

White, Jerry. "Shopping Centers." In *Encyclopedia of 20th-Century Architecture*, ed. R. Stephen Sennott, 1204-1206. New York : Fitzroy Dearborn, 2004.

The very early (prewar) history of shopping centers comprises the bulk of this two-par article, while the previous fifty years are summed up in two paragraphs. The article includes a small bibliography and no illustrations.

Bibliographies

Holmes, Jack David. *Selected and Annotated Bibliography of the Planned Suburban Shopping Center*. Austin, TX: Bureau of Business Research University of Texas, 1957.

_____. *Selected and Annotated Bibliography of the Planned Suburban Shopping Center*. Austin, TX: Bureau of Business Research University of Texas, 1960.

Part of a series produced at the University of Texas, these extensive bibliographies present hundreds of sources organized along such topics as history, design and operation, location, and architectural viewpoint. The 1960 edition includes 300 entries culled from over 2000 examined titles, most of them books and articles from popular periodicals and trade journals.

Longstreth, Richard. *A Historical Bibliography of Commercial Architecture in the United States*. The Author, 2008.

<http://www.preservenet.cornell.edu/publications/Longstreth%20Comm%20Arch%20Bib.pdf> (accessed October 23, 2008)

Compiled by one of the most prolific researchers on shopping center and retail history, this bibliography contains several pages specifically devoted to retail buildings. Most entries are somewhat scholarly in nature.

Pocock, Emil. *Shopping Center Bibliography*. Willimantic, CT: Eastern Connecticut State University, 2006. <http://www.easternct.edu/depts/amerst/MallsBibl.htm> (Accessed October 16, 2008)

This extensive online bibliography, compiled by a professor of American Studies at Eastern Connecticut State University, is particularly noteworthy because it includes fiction (both adult and juvenile) among the standard entries from journals, nonfiction books, etc.

Popular Magazines and Trade Journals

The following magazines and journals are likely to have articles relevant to a study of the history of shopping centers. Specific articles from some of these publications are included later in this bibliography.

The American City & County. Pittsfield, MA: Morgan-Grampian Pub. Co.

Originally titled simply *American City*, this magazine is aimed at urban planners and officials as well as laypersons with a general interest in urban issues. Early articles on the development of the shopping center are particularly useful and well-illustrated, and many are penned by practitioners in the field such as J.C. Nichols.

The Architectural Forum. New York, etc: Billboard Publications, etc.

Architectural Record. New York City: The Record and Guide.

***Progressive Architecture*. New York: Reinhold.**

These three magazines feature contemporary profiles of architecturally significant shopping centers, and other commercial projects, and therefore, older issues will provide more historical perspective.

***Chain Store Age*. New York, NY: Lebhar-Friedman Inc.**

Chain Store Age and its related addenda, including *Shopping Center Age*, provide a significant record of developments in the industry over time. Older issues provide numerous photographs of specific projects, and also include a list of projects in progress. Unfortunately, it is somewhat difficult to find older (pre-1975) issues. This publication is also frequently only available as microfilm, which tends to offer poor photo quality.

Scholarly and Academic Journals

These journals provide historical insight and analysis from perspectives of urban planning, history and architecture. Specific articles from some of these publications are included later in this bibliography.

***Journal of Planning History*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2002.**

***Journal of the American Planning Association*. Washington: American Planning Association], 1979.**

***Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. Urbana, Ill: The Society, 1946.**

***Journal of Urban History*. [Thousand Oaks, Calif.]: Sage Publications, 1974.**

CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

It has been said that newspapers are the first drafts of history. Contemporary accounts in magazines, trade journals, and books can be viewed in the same way. The following monographs and articles on the development of shopping centers were created as those developments were happening, and provide insight into ongoing trends and problems, as well as into the reasons why development happened as it did. The majority of the periodicals in this category tend to be popular magazines, newspapers, and trade journals, while most of the monographs are technical or professional in nature.

Architectural Profiles and Case Studies

Baker, Geoffrey and Bruno Funaro. *Shopping Centers: Design and Operation*. New York: Reinhold Publishing Company, 1951.

Cited in almost every major contemporary or historical study of shopping centers, this richly illustrated guidebook features general information on shopping center planning and operation and numerous case studies on centers from all regions of the United States. Photographs and site plans are plentiful and such noted centers as Stonestown (San Francisco), Southgate (Seattle), Parkchester (New York), Cameron Village (Raleigh), and Broadway-Crenshaw (Los Angeles) are profiled.

Dowling, R. W. "Neighborhood Shopping Centers." *Architectural Forum* 79 (October 1943): 76-80.

This is a guide to neighborhood shopping center development, including a list of recommended tenant types and a case study of Parkchester, an insurance company-financed project in New York City.

Gosling, David and Barry Maitland. *Design and Planning of Retail Systems*. New York: Whitey Library of Design, 1976.

An architectural guide to worldwide shopping center and store design, this book features case studies, numerous photos, and a historical overview, and compares the often more dense European model to the American system. There is also considerable attention given to the mixed-use complexes that were becoming more common at the time.

Gruen, Victor and Larry Smith. *Shopping Towns USA: The Planning of Shopping Centers*. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1960.

A handbook covering all aspects of shopping center planning, development, and construction, this title focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on the works of its celebrated author. There are case studies with numerous photographs, site plans, and sections on site selection and tenant mix. Some of Gruen's most famous centers, including Southland (Minneapolis) and Eastland (Detroit), are featured prominently.

Hornbeck, James S., Ed. *Design for Modern Merchandising: Stores, Shopping Centers, Showrooms*. New York: F.W. Dodge Corporation, 1954.

_____. *Stores and Shopping Centers*. New York: Mc-Graw Hill, 1962.

Both of these titles are collections of reprints from *Architectural Record* and are primarily case studies of shopping center and store design, with many photographs. Noteworthy centers profiled include Cherry Hill (New Jersey), Lloyd Center (Portland), Stonestown (San Francisco), and Shoppers World (Boston). One of the reprinted articles is a condensed pre-publication version of the Baker and Funaro book mentioned above.

Morrow, C. Earl. "Community Shopping Centers." *Architectural Record* 87 (June 1940): 99-120.

One of *Architectural Record's* "Building Types" features, this article presents case studies of neighborhood shopping center design, including River Oaks (Houston), which has been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places.

Redstone, Louis G. *New Dimensions in Shopping Centers and Stores*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973.

Like Gosling and Maitland above, this is a collection of early 1970s case studies following a large section on design, construction, and management of shopping centers and stores. However, it is exclusively focused primarily on American centers, including noteworthy new centers like Four Seasons (Greensboro), Serramonte (San Francisco), Tyson's Corner (Washington), and Galleria Post Oak (Houston).

Rouse, James W. "Must Shopping Centers Be Inhuman?" *Architectural Forum* 128 (June 1962): 105-118.

Written by one of the most successful shopping center developers of the twentieth century, this article is a call for more comfortable, amenity-laden and people-friendly centers, and includes case studies of two Rouse projects, Mondawmin (Baltimore) and Midtown Plaza (Rochester).

Schwanke, Dean, Terry Jill Lassar, and Michael Beyard. *Remaking the Shopping Center*. Washington, DC: The Urban Land Institute, 1994.

Realizing that after four decades, the first generation of regional centers were aging, some of them not very gracefully, real estate and land use planning "think tank" The Urban Land Institute published this guidebook to redevelopment of older centers, featuring suggestions and case studies for giving new life to old centers. Among those featured is Victor Gruen's Southland, the first enclosed regional mall in the world, which had just undergone a \$28 million facelift. Tyson's Corner (Washington) is also profiled.

Barmash, Isadore. "Lean Times for Shopping Centers." *New York Times* (16 March 1975), F1.

This article discusses the problems that some older, first generation centers were having in light of the mid-1970s recession, as well as projected changes in new centers to cut costs.

DeBoer, S.R. *Shopping Districts*. Washington, DC: American Planning and Civic Association, 1937.

This design handbook offers hints on redesigning mostly center-city shopping areas. It largely ignores outlying shopping centers, but proposes what might be viewed as a centralized design scheme that seems very much influenced by the first generation of suburban centers. It features numerous hand-drawn illustrations.

Fisher, Howard T. "Can Main Street Compete?" *The American City* 65, no. 10 (October 1950): 100-101.

This article discusses the potential implications of suburban shopping centers for center city shopping areas, and the strategies some downtown merchants are using to compete and become more like the suburban centers.

Garreau, Joel. *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*. New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1991.

One of the most cited works in urban geography in the 1990s, *Edge City* presents case studies of several American suburbs, all of them centered around large regional shopping centers. These suburbs, which Garreau calls "edge cities", have grown into employment and residential centers that do most of the things cities used to do, albeit in a more car-dependent and sprawling manner. Garreau suggests that these mall-centered areas are the new American downtowns and will grow into a new and distinct urban form in coming years.

Kelley, Eugene J. *Shopping Centers*. Saugatuck, CT: The Eno Foundation for Highway Traffic Control, 1956.

This study of regional shopping centers from an urban planning and geography perspective also features case studies of trailblazing centers including Shoppers World (Framingham), Cross Country (Yonkers), and Northland (Detroit). It is particularly noteworthy in its relatively early recognition that suburban retail problems may constitute a "problem" with respect to urban development and traffic patterns.

Kowinski, William Severini. *The Mallings of America: An Inside Look at the Great Consumer Paradise*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1985.

By the 1980s, many of the problems caused by large shopping centers were well-known. This book examines consumer culture and the social and geographic implications of the suburban shopping mall, and also provides some historical context.

Lillibridge, Robert M. "Shopping Centers in Urban Redevelopment." *Land Economics* 24, no. 2 (May, 1948) : 137-160.

Lillibridge's article is one of the first to study the trend of using shopping centers as a key element in the controversial urban renewal programs of the 1950s and 1960s. In this article, he provides a model for determining the potential success of centers to be located on marginal properties seized (often from minority tenants) through eminent domain and then resold to developers.

Lowry, James R. "The Life Cycle of Shopping Centers." *Business Horizons* 40, no. 1 (January-February 1997): 77-86.

By the 1990s, obsolete shopping centers had become an increasing problem in many urban areas. This article stresses the necessity of understanding the "life cycle" of retail centers and advance planning to minimize its impact.

Nichols, J.C. "Developing Outlying Shopping Centers." *The American City* 44, no. 7 (June 1929): 98-101.

Written by the developer of the groundbreaking Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, this case study of his creation serves as a model for other developers planning similar centers.

"Realtors Move Tenants Around to Fit Their Balanced Shopping Center." *Business Week*, 21 January 1939, 18.

This is another article on the trend of centralized management in center city retail districts, focusing on Knoxville, Tennessee, where enough of the downtown area was under one ownership that it was able to be managed like a planned suburban center, with merchants being relocated as needed to maximize traffic and sales for all stores.

Rogers, David. "America's Shopping Centres - A Mid-life Crisis?" *Retail & Distribution Management* (November/December 1987): 21-25.

This article discusses changes in American shopping centers, including the decline of the regional mall, the increasing number of small "strip" centers and outlet malls, and the rise of "power centers" comprised exclusively of "big box" retailers.

Smiley, David J. *Sprawl and Public Space Redressing the Mall. NEA Series on Design*. Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, 2002.
<<http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS96627>>.

An NEA publication with contributions from multiple architects and planners, this is a guide for reinventing shopping centers and other public spaces within a modern urban design and planning framework.

Southworth, Michael. "Reinventing Main Street: From Mall to Townscape Mall." *Journal of Urban Design* 10, no. 2 (June 2005): 151-170.

This article by a professor of urban planning traces the historical impact of shopping centers on city center retail districts and vice versa as a prelude to a discussion of the current trend toward urban-themed “streetscape” shopping centers and how actual urban downtown areas can perhaps learn lessons from these centers.

“Stores Set Back for Parking Space.” *The Washington Post* (14 September 1930), R2.

Swisher, Kara. “Hoping for a Comeback on Connecticut Ave.” *The Washington Post* (10 September 1991), D1-D3.

These two articles, taken together, provide an excellent example of the history of an early shopping center, Washington’s Park & Shop. The first discusses its grand opening in 1930, while the second chronicles its subsequent decline and then restoration, and also the gentrification fears associated with that restoration.

HISTORICAL AND RETROSPECTIVE ACCOUNTS

The following titles provide more of a historical context and a longer view than contemporary accounts, and tend to be primarily from more scholarly sources, particularly academic journals. As such, they tend to include much more bibliographic information.

General History

Cohen, Nancy E. *America's Marketplace: The History of Shopping Centers*. Lyme, CT: Greenwich Publishing Group, 2002.

More of a "pop culture" history than a serious study, this book, produced by the International Council of Shopping Centers, nevertheless provides a good overview of the history of the shopping center. The illustrations seem to be primarily stock photography, and the focus is more on recent history.

Gillette Jr., Howard. "The Evolution of the Planned Shopping Center in Suburb and City." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 51 (1985) : 449-160.

This history of the development of shopping center focuses largely on the work of Victor Gruen and James Rouse, and culminates in a discussion of the "festival marketplace" trend of the 1980s, in which Rouse was a major player. This paper provides a useful overview of shopping centers from an urban planning perspective.

Biographies

Hardwick, M. Jeffrey. *Mall maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

This biography of one of the most prominent retail architect/designers in the United States in the mid-twentieth century discusses both his commercial architectural and design vision and his contributions to the field of urban planning and design. Gruen, who designed Southdale Center outside Minneapolis, the world's first enclosed regional mall, and whose name is closely associated with suburban-style American retailing, was a European who professed to dislike sprawling American cities and spent his later years concentrating on center-city redevelopment projects.

Olsen, Joshua. *Better Places, Better Lives: A Biography of James Rouse*. Washington, DC: The Urban Land Institute, 2003.

Like Gruen, James Rouse was one of the most recognized innovators of suburban shopping centers in the 1950s, and like Gruen, he too turned his attention to more urban type development in his later years, including the "festival marketplace" which brought specialty retailing to urban settings, often in old factory or public market buildings. Rouse also worked with planned communities, such as Columbia, Maryland.

Worley, William S. *J.C. Nichols and the Shaping of Kansas City*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1990.

Kansas City's Country Club Plaza is widely regarded as America's first planned regional shopping center. This book discusses the development of the center, the planned neighborhood it was designed to serve, and the smaller planned centers that complimented it within the neighborhood.

Specific Studies

Clausen, Meredith L. "Northgate Regional Shopping Center-Paradigm from the Provinces." *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 43, no. 2 (May 1984) : 144-161.

This study of the history of Seattle's influential Northgate Center, which influenced Victor Gruen among others, includes numerous photos as well as a history of similar centers that opened during the same time period. Northgate was one of the first "open air" regional malls, with all stores facing a central courtyard, a plan that was popular in the 1950s and was a precursor to the enclosed mall.

Cohen, Elizabeth. "From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America." *The American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 1505-1081.

This article traces the social and political implications of the move from city centers to suburban shopping centers, with a focus on the New Jersey suburbs of New York City.

Davis, Timothy. "The Miracle Mile Revisited: Recycling, Renovation, and Simulation along the Commercial Strip." *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 7 (1997): 93-114.

Reuse, renovation, and sometimes preservation of the first wave of "strip" shopping centers, dating from the 1930s to the 1950s, is the subject of this study, which suggests that "nostalgia is not a terribly important reason to value a landscape" (p. 95) and results in gentrification or stagnation, but that viable commercial reuse may succeed where nostalgia fails.

Esperdy, Gabrielle. *Modernizing Main Street: Architecture and Consumer Culture in the New Deal*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

While not shopping centers in the strictest sense, center city shopping districts were very much influenced by central planning and modernization schemes in the 1930s, many of which were arguably a result of the earliest suburban centers. This book discusses the trend of adding new, streamlined (and often prefabricated) façades to older buildings as a means of revitalizing Depression-era storefronts and increasing their competitive advantage.

Gitchco, Gregory William. *Benefits of Redevelopment of Outdated Retail Centers*. Thesis (S.M.)--Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dept. of Urban Studies and Planning, 2005.

This thesis argues for the redevelopment of centers cast aside for newer ones and considers strategies to help cities avoid the proliferation of abandoned and decaying shopping centers.

Hutchins, Nan. *Cameron Village: A History, 1949-1999*. Raleigh, NC: Spirit Press, 2001.

This history of an early regional center in a mid-sized southern city covers fifty years in the life of one of the new centers profiled in Baker and Funaro's 1951 book mentioned above. The history traces the evolution of this adaptable and successful property from a regional center to an upscale niche center.

Leventhal, Alexis. *Landover Regional Shopping Center: The Perceptions and Realities that Caused a Mall to Fall*. A Senior Thesis Submitted to the Growth and Structure of Cities Department of Bryn Mawr College, December, 2006.

Landover Mall outside Washington, DC, was a victim of the "dead malls" phenomenon of the 1990s, one whose location and management were such that it outlived its usefulness and was demolished for redevelopment after only a few decades. This thesis analyzes the social and economic factors that led its demise.

Longstreth, Richard. *City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture, the Automobile, and Retailing in Los Angeles, 1920-1950*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997.

_____. *The Drive-in, the Supermarket, and the Transformation of Commercial Space in Los Angeles, 1914-1941*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999.

George Washington University professor Richard Longstreth is perhaps America's most prolific and most often cited researcher on the history of commercial architecture, specifically retail and shopping center development. These two scholarly works on the history of retail centers in Los Angeles include vintage and present day photographs, and offer a detailed history of both the architectural and business developments of centers in Southern California and elsewhere. *City Center to Regional Mall* draws heavily on Baker and Funaro, and covers development from the peak of the center city's popularity through the development of semi-urban centers along Wilshire Boulevard and in Hollywood, to the early postwar period and its planned shopping centers. There are detailed studies of Westwood Village, Broadway-Crenshaw, Westchester, Panorama City, and Valley Plaza. The latter work is more concerned with food and grocery marketing as a precursor to the shopping center. Longstreth's books are heavily footnoted and include extensive bibliographies.

_____. "The Neighborhood Shopping Center in Washington, D. C., 1930-1941." *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 51, no. 1. (March 1992): 5-34.

As the title suggests, this is a study of Depression-era neighborhood centers in Washington, but there are also comparisons and contrasts with other cities, and

discussion of how these centers contributed to those that followed. Like all of Longstreth's work, there are numerous photographs and an extensive bibliography.

_____. "The Diffusion of the Community Shopping Center Concept During the Interwar Decades." *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 56, no. 3. (September 1997): 268-293.

As he traces the development of several important centers constructed during the 1920s and 1930s, Longstreth suggests that superior placement and design has allowed many of these early centers to survive and remain vital even longer than some of their newer competition, and also notes that many developers now look to these older centers as a model for the future.

Mennel, Timothy. "Victor Gruen and the Construction of Cold War Utopias." *Journal of Planning History* 3, no. 3 (May 2004): 116-150.

A detailed analysis of Victor Gruen's work with early regional centers in Detroit and Minneapolis places this work in the context of a utopian urban planning experiment, and a harbinger of his later work.

Randall, Gregory C. *America's Original GI Town: Park Forest, Illinois*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

This boom chronicles the history of a planned postwar suburb, and discusses extensively its orientation around the central shopping center that grew from a neighborhood center to a quasi-regional one before faltering and being redeveloped in a "new urbanist" motif.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Archival Collection

Papers of Victor Gruen

Library of Congress; Manuscript Division; Washington, D.C.

The collection contains correspondence, project files, speeches, writings, biographical material, and scrapbooks documenting Gruen's career in architectural design, city planning, and environmental counseling.

Directories

City Directories, Miscellaneous Publishers

For the researcher who is seeking specific location information about shopping centers over time, the city directories (published by such regional companies as Polk, Donnelly, and Hill) are an invaluable resource. These directories tend to be more accurate with regard to retail locations than telephone directories (which in past years often gave only a central address phone number for chain store locations) and also feature the ability to look up properties by address, so that occupants can be tracked over time.

National Research Bureau, Inc. *Directory of Shopping Centers in the United States.* Chicago: National Research Bureau, 1964.

An annual guide to shopping centers throughout the US and Canada, this directory provides such information as center locations, size, opening dates, and tenant lists. The directory was compiled via voluntary return post cards, and there are omissions and errors, sometimes glaring ones, but this is probably the best source for this material on a nationwide basis and over time. Most libraries, unfortunately, do not have a complete set.

Government Documents

Government documents relevant to the subject of shopping center history generally tend to include primarily materials related to urban planning, particularly comprehensive plans, transportation plans, and traffic studies. These tend to be very local/regional in nature, but can be indicative of broader trends.

Organizations

Professional Organizations:

International Council of Shopping Centers

1221 Avenue of the Americas, 41st fl.
New York, NY 10020-1099
<http://www.icsc.org/>

Urban Land Institute

1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Suite 500 West
Washington, D.C. 20007
<http://www.uli.org/>

Preservation-related:

L.A. Conservancy

523 W. Sixth Street
Los Angeles, CA 90014
<http://www.laconservancy.org/>

Society for Commercial Archaeology

P.O. Box 45828
Madison, WI 53744-5828
<http://www.sca-roadside.org/>

The Recent Past Presevation Network

P.O. Box 3072
Burlington, VT 05408
<http://recentpast.org/>

Publishers:

There are few if any publishers who concentrate specifically on the history of commercial architecture. The organizations noted above have published some titles on the subject of shopping center history and redevelopment. Most contemporary materials, however, seem to be occasional titles that happen to be published by the various academic and university presses.

Vertical Files

Almost all public libraries, as well as many academic ones, have some sort of local history collection that includes a vertical or clipping file. Usually there is a folder for either "Retail Stores", "Shopping Centers" or both, containing old newspaper clippings on such aspects as construction and grand openings. Often, there are pamphlets, marketing materials, and other ephemera as well. The Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (NC) has a particularly large collection of such items covering local shopping centers. Vertical files are not entirely user-friendly as they are often not indexed or catalogued in any meaningful way,

and clippings tend to become lost or disorganized, but much of this material cannot be found in any other place.

Videos

Immergut, Reba, and Dennis Boni. *Horton Plaza Downtown Super Regional Shopping Center Development, 1974-1985*. New York, NY: Insight Media, 1990.

An 18-minute video discusses Horton Plaza, a hybrid “festival marketplace” and regional shopping center in downtown San Diego.

Kaw Valley Films. *The Country Club Plaza*. Shawnee, KS: Kaw Valley Films & Video, 1999.

This is a 40-minute history and guide to the groundbreaking Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, regarded by most as the first large regional shopping center in America.

Kelly, George H. *Shopping Can Be Fun: A New Concept in Merchandising*. San Mateo, CA: Hillsdale Shopping Center, 1957. (Accessed 31 October 2008 from The Internet Archive, Prelinger Collection: <http://www.archive.org/details/Shopping1957>)

This promotional film produced for Hillsdale Shopping Center in the San Francisco suburb of San Mateo, California, provides an interesting and sometimes unintentionally humorous look at the aesthetics of a mid-century regional shopping center, and also offers insight into marketing and merchandising trends of the time.

Websites

The websites listed below offer a more “pop culture” approach to the subject, often rely on user contributions, and are not strictly edited. They do, however, provide interesting reads and often include significant visual material.

DeadMalls.com

<http://www.deadmalls.com/>

DeadMalls.com profiles malls and shopping centers that are past their primes, are in various states of decay, are abandoned, and may even have been demolished. Each entry generally features a user-submitted history of the center, and most also have contemporary or vintage photographs.

Groceteria: Did You Bring Bottles?

<http://www.groceteria.com/>

This site is dedicated to the history and architecture of the American supermarket, and includes chain histories and numerous photographs of stores and shopping centers, as well as histories of certain cities. It is written and maintained by one individual, but also has an active message board with a section on old shopping centers. Sources could be more consistently cited, but there is a small bibliography.

Lableskar: the Retail History Blog
<http://www.labelsscar.com/>

The term "labelscaar" refers to the imprint left when an old sign is removed from a building. This is a blog dedicated to the history of stores and shopping centers, maintained by a team of individuals. In general, it seems to focus more on centers dating from the 1960s and later.

Pleasant family Shopping
<http://pleasantfamilyshopping.blogspot.com/>

Another retail history blog, this site includes a very large number of historical photographs and history posts. Unfortunately, no sources are cited, which leaves many users wondering where this stash of high quality photos and info come from. The site is frequently updated.