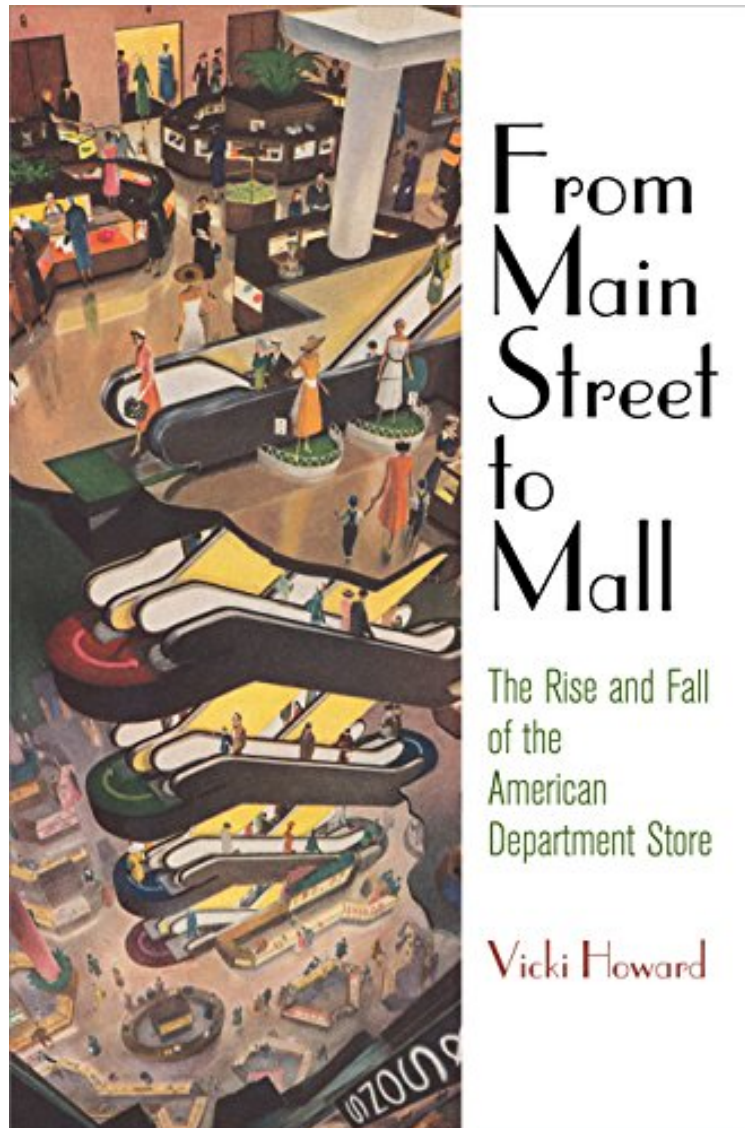


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## From Main Street to Mall: The Rise and Fall of the American Department Store (American Business, Politics, and Society)

*Vicki Howard*

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**Vicki Howard : From Main Street to Mall: The Rise and Fall of the American Department Store (American Business, Politics, and Society)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From Main Street to Mall: The Rise and Fall of the American Department Store (American Business, Politics, and Society):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. How our shopping choices mirror our society...By DavidThe history

of American shopping is a history of American society. Dr. Howard charts our changing relationship with each other by looking at our changing relationship with our department stores...6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Great researchBy David ArbogastThis is a well-researched book about the decline of the American department store. As one with fond memories of the department store during its final heyday, it is bittersweet to read this book, knowing that the great institution which served to bind Americans together will no longer be restored to its former glory now that we purchase our goods conveniently on websites such as .com.7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. WorthwhileBy Alice Horton-Kelley"From Main Stream to Mall" is a very informative book about the history of retail in the United States. While most media reports regarding the changes in shopping habits of Americans focus mostly on the eCommerce of online shopping, this book includes the significant effect of the big box store on the changes in our shopping methods. It explains and details the evolution from the mom and pop shop to the department store era, and proceeds forward to our present online/big box situation. It adds a great deal of understanding to our current shopping environment.

The geography of American retail has changed dramatically since the first luxurious department stores sprang up in nineteenth-century cities. Introducing light, color, and music to dry-goods emporia, these "palaces of consumption" transformed mere trade into occasions for pleasure and spectacle. Through the early twentieth century, department stores remained centers of social activity in local communities. But after World War II, suburban growth and the ubiquity of automobiles shifted the seat of economic prosperity to malls and shopping centers. The subsequent rise of discount big-box stores and electronic shopping accelerated the pace at which local department stores were shuttered or absorbed by national chains. But as the outpouring of nostalgia for lost downtown stores and historic shopping districts would indicate, these vibrant social institutions were intimately connected to American political, cultural, and economic identities. The first national study of the department store industry, *From Main Street to Mall* traces the changing economic and political contexts that transformed the American shopping experience in the twentieth century. With careful attention to small-town stores as well as glamorous landmarks such as Marshall Field's in Chicago and Wanamaker's in Philadelphia, historian Vicki Howard offers a comprehensive account of the uneven trajectory that brought about the loss of locally identified department store firms and the rise of national chains like Macy's and J. C. Penney. She draws on a wealth of primary source evidence to demonstrate how the decisions of consumers, government policy makers, and department store industry leaders culminated in today's Wal-Mart world. Richly illustrated with archival photographs of the nation's beloved downtown business centers, *From Main Street to Mall* shows that department stores were more than just places to shop.