

From the Planners' Bookshelf...

America's Main Street Hotels: Transiency and Community in the Early Auto Age.

[John A. Jakle](#) and [Keith A. Sculle](#), University of Tennessee Press, 2009.

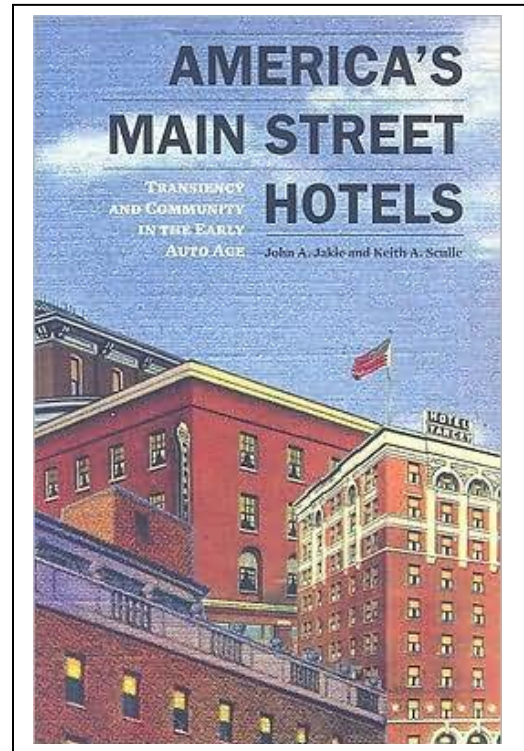
Overview.

Hotels in small cities and towns have always been popular despite a post-War decline. They are coming back; even the chains are showing interest in small cities and towns that have some unique character and authenticity that attract visitors. *America's Main Street Hotels* discusses the historic experience, but adds evidence of the resurgence. Small cities and towns are of interest to developers of new hotels. The development of a new or substantially modernized hotel on or near a traditional main street is a threshold event: a sign that the market recognizes that visitors are arriving and businesses need accommodations to support the growing globalism of local firms.

What goes around comes around. Many of the reasons for the need for hotels in small cities and towns are relevant today. Small city and town tourism is flourishing. Small cities and towns are attractive to start-up tech businesses having business visitors. Residents have friends and families wanting to enjoy their character town. National "flag" hotels are piecing these user groups together to build a market. Small versions of national "flag" hotels are coming to small towns. Hampton, Holiday Inn Express, Best Western along with "boutique" hotels and inns are investing on or near main street. The location of a national hotel chain in a small town is a threshold event; it proves the concept of small town business and tourism success.

From Barnes & Noble and Amazon:

"In small cities and towns across the United States, Main Street hotels were iconic institutions. They were usually grand, elegant buildings where families celebrated special occasions, local clubs and organizations honored achievements, and communities came together to commemorate significant events.



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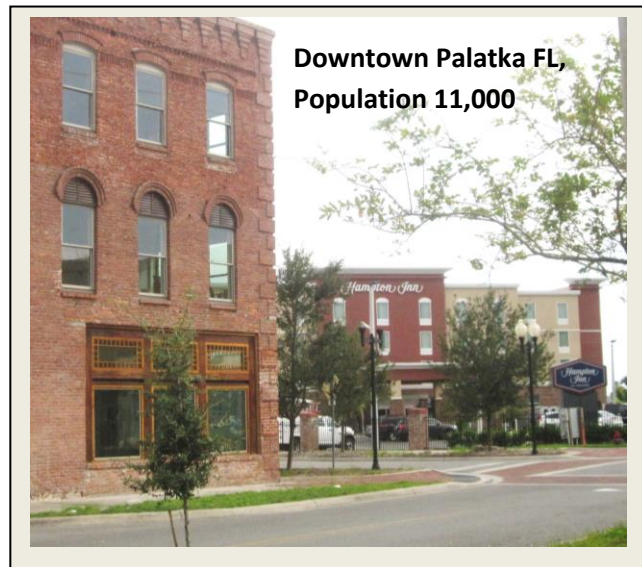
Often literally at the center of their communities, these hotels sustained and energized their regions and were centers of culture and symbols of civic pride. America's main street hotels catered not only to transients passing through a locality, but also served local residents as an important kind of community center.

"This new book [2009] by John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, two leading experts on the nation's roadside landscape, examines the crucial role that small- to mid-sized city hotels played in American life during the early decades of the twentieth century, a time when the automobile was fast becoming the primary mode of transportation. Before the advent of the interstate system, such hotels served as commercial and social anchors of developing towns across the country. America's Main Street Hotels provides a thorough survey of the impact these hotels had on their communities and cultures.

"The authors explore the hotels' origins, their traditional functions, and the many ups and downs they experienced throughout the early twentieth century, **along with their potential for reuse now and in the future.** The book details building types, layouts, and logistics; how the hotels were financed; hotel management and labor; hotel life and customers; food services; changing fads and designs; and what the hotels are like today.

"Brimming with photographs, this book looks at hotels from coast to coast. Its exploration of these important local landmarks will intrigue students, scholars, and general readers alike, offering a fascinating look back at that recent period in American history when even the smallest urban places could still look optimistically toward the future.

"John A. Jakle is emeritus professor of geography at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Keith A. Sculle is the head of research and education for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. He and Professor Jakle have coauthored *The Gas Station in America*; *Motoring: The Highway Experience in America*; *Fast Food: Roadside Restaurants in the Automobile Age*; *Signs in America's Auto Age: Signatures of Landscape and Place*; and *Lots of Parking: Land Use in a Car Culture*. With Jefferson S. Rogers, they are also coauthors of *The Motel in America*."



Sources:

- <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/americas-main-street-hotels-john-a-jakle/1112954311?ean=9781572336551>

<https://www.amazon.com/Americas-Main-Street-Hotels-Transiency/dp/1572336552>