GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY ON DECENTRALISM

This bibliography was begun in 1975 and has been added to each year. Although still incomplete, it seems preferable to make it available in this form including some partial listings rather than to have it unavailable. The annotations provided come from a variety of sources and are intended to be helpful but not definitive. When known, the original date of publication is given first and the most recent date of publication is given last. Works dealing mainly with technological issues, fiction, periodicals, and other bibliographies have been excluded. Personal favorites are marked with an $.

AN INTRODUCTORY PARABLE

Strolling along the shores of a lake, a development planner met a fisherman stretched out happily in the warm sun. He asked, "Why are you not out on the lake fishing?"

"I caught enough fish yesterday to last me for three days," was the sleepy reply.

"But if you fish today, you could earn extra money from selling the fish."

"True, but why should I earn extra money?"

"Because with more money you could buy a larger fishing boat with a motor."

"True, but why should I have a large boat with a motor?"

"Because with it you could catch many more fish and have much more money."

"True, but why should I catch more fish and have much more money?"

"Because with that money you could hire others to work for you so you need not go out fishing."

"True, but what would I do if I did not have to go out fishing?"

"Then you could enjoy life and lie in the sun all day."

"True, but that is what I am doing now."

Adapted from several sources
One of a trilogy on design theory. Emphasizes system levels and system needs.

Covers the community near Mobile based on the single tax principles of Henry George.


An overview and interpretation of black power movements and efforts at local control from the standpoint of municipal government and politics.


"...depopulation of rural American towns caused by the industrial revolution. Contends that large cities have captured the extreme rich and poor of rural society while the great middle class... can lead the country to social reconstruction. ... With the introduction of rural free delivery, telephone, and electric power, the rural town can easily survive the Industrial Revolution."

Andrews, Edward D. 1953 *The People Called Shakers.* (NYC: Dover, 1963)

Armit, Karl J. 1945 *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847.*


On the Bruderhof Communities.


Semi-autobiographical.


"A personal perspective on work/leisure separation."
Ballou, Adin. 1897. The Hopedale Community (Lowell, Mass: Thompson & Hill, 1897)
Mennonite practices and ideology.
Societal organization of a decentralized society compared to a potentially decentralized U.S.A. Conflict between a decentralized traditional society and modernization.
Barker, Sir Earnest. c. 1910. The Discredited State.
An early political science leader on decentralism. Stimulated later work by Cole & Lassky.
A collection of land reform readings from the U.S. Mildly radical. More rhetoric than facts.
Bean, Maurice. 1964. Cult of America (NYC: MacFadden-Bartell, 1964)
A failed commune in New England in the mid 1960's.
The former assistant to Allende on societal change and transformation for maximizing freedom and decentralism.
Berg, Peter. 1982. Figures of Regulation: Guides for Rebalancing Society with the Biosphere. (San Francisco: Planet Drum Foundation)
On Bio-regionalism. The need to find and establish cultural rules and values to support biogrelional thought and practice.
"To what extent have social and political differences around the world combined to produce different strategies of deliberate urbanization, and how effective have these strategies been? Contributors assess the ways in which counterurbanization has begun to replace urbanization as both a process and a planning goal.
A psychological analysis of Israeli Kibbutzim.
Bharatan, Kumarappa. 1940. Capitalism, Socialism or Villageism. (Madras, India: Shekt, Karalayan, 1940)

A planning and systems oriented approach. Neither centralist nor decentralist in tone.


Rather pedantic and dry with a touch of radicalism. "Argues for dissolving megalopolis into ... eco-communities."

Bookchin, Murray. Post-Scarcity Anarchism.

Borsodi, Ralph. 1933. This Ugly Civilization. (NYC: Harper, 1933)

"...lays out his basic philosophy, emphasizing the waste inherent in our tendency to concentrate production far from consumer markets."


Autobiographical coverage of his own move from NYC, the School for Living in Suffern, the Dayton Homesteading program under N.R.A., plus some good technical information. Palémique in spots.


A printed flyer on the Bayard Lane Community to encourage prospective residents.


Newsletters of the Bayard Lane Community 1935-38.


Borsodi, Ralph. 1948. Education and Living. (Suffern, N.Y.: School of Living)


A brief overview of his life and philosophy including the various Schools for Living and his new monetary system. Quiet, radical economics.


A political science approach sometimes philosophical and dry. Covers Walden Three, Koinonia, Reba Place, Bruderhof, New Harmony, Sunrise Hill, Llano, Brook Farm, etc. Authoritative. Chaps 2 & 3 especially good.


An account of a turn-of-the-century back-to-the-land movement.


A thoughtful and careful study of developing food self-sufficiency in cities. Based on experience and plans for Eugene, OR.


Rich refugees from France come back to their Ohio roots. His dogs and his movie star friends plus his earnest attempts to understand and build self-sufficient farming in a worked out Ohio valley. Pretentious but sound.


Strong arguments and information about soil, manures, self-sufficiency, etc. Polemical in spots and occasionally bigoted but enjoyable and useful. Note that his farm was partially supported by book and movie royalties.


Burton, Katherine. 1939. *Paradise Planters: the Study of Brook Farm.* (London: Longmans Green, 1939)

Calverton, Victor. 1941. *Where Angels Dared to Tread.* (NYC: Bobbs-Merrill, 1941)


Good historical and descriptive coverage.


A strong conservationist argument ascribing the fall of most civilizations to loss of topsoil. A well argued and fascinating reinterpretation of history.


Readings by Commoner, Goodman, Seymour, VanDresser, etc.

Good selection and coverage.

"Examination of the widespread cultural transformation in this country based on the movement toward local self-reliance in the areas of energy, food, shelter and other basic necessities."

Codman, John T. 1894. Brook Farm Memoire (Boston: Arena, 1894)
Cohen, Daniel. Not of this World: The Commune in America.
Cohen, Reuven. The Kibbutz Settlement (MX/65 "P15")
Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium.
Proposes guilds for working class London areas to enact "all the reforms - domestic, industrial, provident or recreational - which the social ideal demands." A response to the dislocations of industrialization and urbanization.
A compelling view of Appalachian life style and philosophy.
"... grappled ... with rural problems caused by the industrialization of agriculture. The Commission Report was influential in shaping official thinking ...."
*Commoner, Barry. The Closing Circle
"One of the most important statements yet made on the nature, the cause, and the possible solution of the impending environmental disaster created by technology and threatening to destroy society."
Seriously questions blind "progress" from a secure base of solid scientific credentials.
Conkin, Paul K. 1964. Two Paths to Utopia. (Lincoln, Neb.: U. of Nebraska, 1964)
Traces the impact of London commuters on village life in Central Surrey circa 1900.
"illustrates in countless examples that . . . people work better when they work autonomously - in unmanaged situations."
Articles on environmental issues by people such as Cousteau, Eckholm, Ehrlich, Mclnairg, Henderson, Johnson, Morris, etc. Major areas cover resources, population, pollution, theory, renewables, and philosophy.
Daly, Herman E. 1973. Toward a Steady-State Economy. (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1973)


Covers Wheeler's Ranch and Freedom Farm.


Traces the decline of agricultural employment, 1930-1960.


Congressional testimony by the director of the Small Towns Institute.


On the definition and significance of bioregional studies and movements.


"History of non-hierarchical community and workplace associations in Spain, 1936-39. What went right and what went wrong."


Argues against census definition of rural and urban showing that small towns have unique character which is neither urban nor rural.


The Tug Hill Commission, founded in 1972, was a study agency for 39 towns in the Adirondack Region. Four counties near Watertown, NY develop multitown cooperative planning boards and programs. See JAPA, Summer 1982 for reviews of 4 closely related studies.
Reprinted recently by some reprinting house like Arno or Hyperion.

Eberhard, Dee. 1975. "Toward an Awareness of Special Needs," Small Town, vol 16, no. 4, p. 4
A sensitive discussion of the special aspects of planning in small towns.

Edmonds, Walter D. 1948. The First Hundred Years (1848-1948), Oneida Community. (Oneida, N.Y.: Oneida Community, 1948)


A slightly overblown discussion of current shifts in life style, consumption, etc. Good coverage.

Ellul, Jacques. The Technological Society.
Opposes "technique" (efficiency, rationality, objectivity) in favor of spirituality, mystery, ritual.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Self-Reliance"


Personalized but good coverage of many contemporary communes.

Speculation on the emergence of a post-statist political economy.


*Farm, The. 1974. Hey Beatnik, This is the Farm Book. (Summertown, Tenn.: The Farm, 1974)
Thorough but dated description of the overall operation, philosophy, and history of the farm. Written in a hip style but very well done. Strongly evangelistic.

Development and organizational structure of a land cooperative in northern Florida including a model set of land covenants and restrictions. Many good ideas on organization and operation.


Self-growth and development, humanistic medicine, memory, learning, creativity, brain research, biofeedback, pain, and the physics of consciousness.


"surveys the intentional community movement from the bottom up. Essentially a collection of essays, commentaries, and letters by American communitarians about commune life."


An analysis of changes in the meaning and style of work as practiced in various alternative communities including: China, Twin Oaks, Europe, Grateful Union, Bruderhof, etc.

Friedmann, John. Retracking America (1973)

Friedmann, John and Clyde Weaver. 1979. Territory and Function (Univ. of California Press, 1979)

Friends of the Earth. Soft Energy Notes. (San Francisco, CA: Friends of the Earth Foundation, 1045 Sansome St.)

"... complete coverage of developments in solar energy, biomass, efficiency, cogeneration, and other renewable and benign energy systems."

Kakehashi. The One Straw Revolution.

Semi-autobiographical account of a Japanese sensei and his agricultural beliefs and practices. Several basic ideas repeated many many times.


Arguments against western style economic development. Chapters on Integrated Rural Development Programs in Colombia, Mexico, and Tanzania plus a World Bank scheme in Mexico and U.S. aid in Bangladesh. Real development requires the "liberation of peasant productivity" with power residing in the hands of the peasants.


Health planning in a decentralized society, Tanzania.


  Commentary and critique of planning plus scenarios of three major alternatives in societal and community development to match major social value choices.

  An update on Communitas bringing in environmental awareness and the energy crisis. Chap 6 gives the new scenario - much like Broadacre City. Stimulating but not deep.


  Planning the communal organization which is intrinsically low goal-oriented and non-hierarchical. 3 levels of community and 8 levels of interaction among them. Compares Levittown, N.Y., Moosehaven, and the Bruderhof."

  A discussion of New Communities, Inc. in Georgia.

  "Arguing that the doctrine of bigness is no more essential than the philosophy of human freedom, he provides a provocative critique and a proposal for social reconstruction."

  How a subsistence economy in Panama was extinguished by a large capitalistic system. Distribution and surplus in a peasant economy.


  Sociological analysis of communes in the U.S. showing they are self-proclaimed pioneers of the new age. Covers both secular and religious movements.


Essays on the nature of man, work and leisure under the three headings indicated.

Land market issues in six rural areas including: rising land costs, parcellation trends, on-site vs. absentee ownership, and public vs private interests and values in rural land. Concludes with a series of land use policies to protect rural land while encouraging investment therein: cluster development, land trusts, limits on land ownership, management techniques, and tax policies. Ignores zoning and federal tax policies. Well written, no index.

"A sensitive and astute penetration in depth of commune culture of the 1970′s. Many superb photos."

Heilbroner, Robert L. An Inquiry into the Human Prospect. (NYC: Norton, 1969)
A doomsday scenario by a noted economist. Suggests that a strong centralized state is most likely outcome.

Charming and well argued critique of traditional economics plus good update on recent counter culture trends.

Hendricks, Robert J. 1933. Bethel and Aurora: An Experiment in Communism and Practical Christianity. (NYC: Press of the Pioneers)


Hinds, William A. 1902. American Communities. (Chicago: Chas. Kerr, 1902)


A sensitive and detailed picture of the transition of a single Chinese village from pre WWII warlord capitalism to the Japanese occupation to the postwar transformations under the communists. Powerful and insightful.


A student project to propose the conversion of a small town to maximum self-sufficiency. See also the Ouroboros House in THEN No. 36.

A well written, well-documented, and sometimes irreverent review of major communal movements and settlements in the U.S.


Collection of readings from major figures including Diderot, Kropotkin, Bakunin, Tolstoy, Camus, Goldman, Thoreau, Hostetler, Sorel, Goodman, etc. etc.


Personalized and sympathetic coverage of Oz, High Ridge Farm, Twin Oaks, plus some mention of about 20 other communities. Light and autobiographical.


An early and influential appeal for small, self-sufficient communities.


Infield, Henrik F. *Cooperative Living in Palestine.* (HX/65/P15/I4)


Advocates the land trust as a basic mechanism of land reform. Modeled somewhat after the Jewish National Fund. See also their newsletter and other occasional papers.
Jacoby, John E. 1931. Two Mystic Communities in America. (Westport, Conn.: Hyperion, 1972) Covers Ephrata and Oneida.


A strong pro-agrarian argument for early U.S.


An argument for gradual transition toward a simpler and more decentralized society.


On Mill Hill - the Effort Syndrome Unit, circa 1930.


A sociological analysis of commitment mechanisms in about 20 19th century communal settlements. Low commitment means short duration.


King, F.H. 1911. _Farmers for Forty Centuries._ (Emmaus, Pa.: Rodale, 1971)

A travelogue through rural and urban China early in this century by an agricultural economist. Very heavy on small scale organic gardening techniques.


Autobiographical coverage of the early years of Twin Oaks. Light and interesting.


A short but damning critique of the attitudes and practices of western nations toward third world countries.


Polemical but enlightening. Growth of local government power in neighborhoods and resistance to "colonization" through annexation of suburbs by large cities.


"A comprehensive, balanced and practical overview"


An argument for national and regional self-sufficiency. Replace the division of labor with the "integration of labor." Heavily statistical and very dated but fascinating. Ward's editorial comments are excellent updating of ideas and examples.


Photographs and commentary on the experiences of farm migrants & tenant farmers struggling against dust storms and mortgage bankers.


Lassky, Harold. n.d. no titles.

Several of his early works supposedly deal with decentralism, building upon the earlier work of Barker and Cole.
Mostly how to do it but many well written and definitive articles including some on philosophy.

Clarence Jordan and the founding of Koinonia in Georgia. From his boyhood, up to about 1971. Mildly religious and little on the actual functioning of Koinonia, but fairly informative. Some coverage of Reba Place, Bruderhof, and Hutterites as well. Very "first-hand" in outlook and detail.

Leon, Dan. 1969. The Kibbutz: Portrait from Within. (NYC: Pergamon)

Both a how-to-do-it manual with checklists and a persuasive argument for the cooperative housing movement.

A good review of ten of Ford's decentralist plants in S.E. Michigan plus a little history of the movement.

"The story of Chiliying's struggle and growth over fifteen years is typical of the peoples communes as a whole.... Told in historic sequence, both on a community wide scale and in terms of separate villages and spheres of work."

A review of small town development throughout the U.S. over 450 years. Emphasis on the aspects of small towns which make them permanent parts of society.


Arguments for homesteading by an early colleague of Ralph Borsodi who later took over the School for Living.

A call for higher levels of self-sufficiency including private homes. Simplistic but relevant.


MacCallum, Spencer H. The Art of Community. "A scholarly appeal to libertarians showing how we are moving toward the voluntary contractual associations needed for an orderly and creative community."

McDonald, A. James. 1950. The Llano Cooperative Colony (San Antonio: Carleton Printing, 1950)

McHenry, Dean E. 1979. Tanzania's Ujamaa Villages (U. Cal, Berkeley)


A nineteenth century utopian emphasizing high quality with low technology.


"A pioneer essay in its own time, it is still much ahead of the thinking and planning being done today."

MacLean, J.F. 1905. Bibliography of Shaker Literature. (Columbus, U.: 1905)


Marcuse, Herman. One Dimension Man.


Marks, Paul J. A New Community: Format for Health, Contentment, Security. (37700 Van Fleet, Cathedral City, Cal.)


Essays and research attacking agri-business and extolling the virtues of small family, self-sufficient organic farms. Well researched, good data, good ideas. Minnesota.


Discussion of the background and actions of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance and the Adams-Morgan area of Washington, D.C.


Traces the evolution of a neighborhood government from awareness to self-control. Both theoretical and practical.

Morris, William. Notes from Nowhere


Morris, David. Self-Reliant Cities: Energy and the Transformation of Urban America (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1982)

"Captures the sincere idealism of men and women who found solace in living apart from a world they could not accept and which in turn was intolerant of their ways."


Among many many other ideas, extolls the virtues of the New England town as the ideal size and form of local government.


"How to live sanely and simply in a troubled world. Pioneering, building, organic gardening, cooperation, and vegetarian living on a self-sufficient Vermont homestead. Forced to drop out in the early 30's, the Nearings offer wisdom and practical guidance to the prospective homesteader."


Now in their eighties in Maine, the Nearings continue to inspire.


Newbauer, F.B. *Children in Collectives.* (HX/635/155)


A theoretical and philosophical treatise on the need for social integration in society. Community versus the state.


Intro by Mark Holloway. Noyes was the founder of the Oneida Community. Covers New Harmony, Yellow Springs, Nashoba, Brook Farm, Hopedale, Robert Owen, Northampton, Skaneateles, Many Fourier Phalanxes, Marlboro, Prairie Home Association, Swedenborgianism, Brookton Community, Shakers, and the Oneida Community.

The excellent and readable story of a stirpicultural son of J.H. Noyes and his early life in the Oneida Community including the break up period.

Nutting, Reclamation of Independence.


Nine essays and speeches on Tanzanian development. Especially good on decentralism are chaps. 7 and 9.

Oakshott, Robert. The Case for Worker's Co-ops. (London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 1979)

"...details the history of workers' co-operatives in the UK and places them in their European context, with special attention to the experience of France, Spain and Italy...."


Orvis, Marianne Dwight. 1928. Letters from Brook Farm: 1844-1847. (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.: Vassar College, 1928)


Reprint of the 19th century classic.


Peoples Bicentennial Commission. 1975. Common Sense II. (Bantam)

"Reexamines the 1776 ideals in terms of problems of concentrated power in a democracy."

Perkins, William Rufus. 1891. History of the Amana Society or the Community of True Inspiration. (Westport, Conn.: Hyperion, 1977)

Peters, Victor. 1965. All Things Common: The Hutterian Way of Life. (Minneapolis, Minn.: U. of Minn. 1965)


Appropriate technology and intermediate scale business development. Good examples.


A collection of 8 essays on the need for developing a new ethic and legal basis for considering land not as a commodity but as a community resource. Calls for a national policy and federal legislation comparable to NEPA to develop a state level framework on land use control.


Historical and philosophical background for the several Icarian settlements in the U.S.


An integrated collection of essays exploring the issues surrounding growth controversies and focussing on the need for economic growth based on renewable resources.


"... revival of workers' co-operatives, the new Co-determination Act in West Germany, and developments in the U.S., Scandinavia, and Yugoslavia."


Good discussion of the pros and cons of metro government. Advances federation of existing localities as the best solution. Some discussion of optimum size and decentralization.

Reich, Charles A. The Greening of America.
Quasi-documentation and argument about a national shift in the consciousness and world view of American youth in the late 60's.
Good summary and review of various planning theories.
The story of Sunrise Farm near Saginaw, 1933-37. An American Kibbutz. Was this the same as Sunrise Hill, the sister community to Llano del Rio?
Good review of a number of 19th and 20th century communal experiments.
Roberts, Ronald. 1971. The New Communities. (Prentice-Hall)
Robertson, James and Carolyn. 1977. The Small Towns Book (NYC: Anchor)
Review and commentary on group marriage.
"The singular memoir of a woman who was born and grew up in the last Icarian settlement in America at Cornning, Iowa)
Rouche, Berton. Special Places: In Search of Small Town America. (Little Brown)
Seven diverse small American towns. Points up the virtues of small town life and the rediscovery of the utility of low technology farming including mixed crops, animal power, etc.


A good summary and review of his major ideas. Shorter and better than his books.

Schon, Donald Beyond the Stable State (Random House, 1973)


History and biographies of the Harvard Shakers.


Good description of a middle class co-op in Chicago suburbs.


Senior, Clarence. 1940. Democracy Comes to a Cotton Kingdom. (NYC: League for Industrial Democracy, 1940)


On early kibbutzim?

Shamburgh, H. 1908. Amanai: The Community of True Inspiration. (Iowa City: State Historical Society, 1908)

Shaw, Albert. Iqarim. (HX/656/12/S53)


The behaviorist classic; originally fiction but not any more.


Advocates the 1919 plan of the U.S. Dept of Interior to promote small suburban farms for city workers.

Sneller, Anna Gertrude. A Vanished World.

"Eastern farming towns of the late 1800's. Captures every aspect of that life. Brings the people of Cicero, New York to life and in their lives is much to be found of our own, needing only translation into the hustle of the 70's."


Beautifully written autobiographical sketches of the decline of Michigan farm communities 1930-60.


An excellent optimistic view of a future world rising from the ashes of western civilization. A good review of current trends and their implications. Chapts. 3-5 are especially good.


A conservative and low keyed but well documented argument against agri-business.


Essays and analysis of post 1970 trends, esp the shift to the Southwest but also some urban to rural.

Stien, Barry. 2 separate titles: Size, Efficiency and Community Enterprise, and Scale in Manufacturing.


Essays, case studies and conclusions on the differences between centralist and localist approaches to planning in developing countries with some allusions to advocacy planning in the U.S.

The history of the Shinkyo Community near Osaka, Japan.


Swift, Lindsay. 1890. Brook Farm: Its Members, Scholars and Visitors. (NYC: MacMillan, 1890)


Thoreau, Henry David. 1854. Walden

"...simplify."


Redesigning urban neighborhoods for self-sufficient food production, waste disposal, energy production, etc. Good, but highly innovative.


Watershed and energy planning tools, renewable energy and bioregions.


Intermediate technological approach to housing. Self-help and aided. Especially for developing countries.


A collection of articles on owner built and self-help housing. Based on the proposition that government intervention and control tends to result in the destruction of more housing than it creates.


Short and mildly informative articles on all the technical info for homesteading. How to buy land, remodel houses, landscape, raise pigs, set up a trust, etc. down to raising earthworms. Slightly less informative than the typical Organic Gardening article.


A very early view of present day situation and an argument for decentralization of technology, industry, and population.


Excellent low powered interview of his life and philosophy.


A study in regional planning for the New Mexico highlands applying decentralist principles. The last chapter provides an excellent summary.


Evaluates five possible energy futures and compares them to four possible urban form futures. Concludes that only the decentralist future form of cities is likely.

Vanek, Jaroslav. _The Participatory Economy._


On the Gramdan movement in India.


Voltaire, Francois Marie. ca. 1750. _Candide._

"We must tend our own gardens."


Brief bio on Hess, Community Technology, and the Adams-Morgan area. High technology but low organization.


"... focuses on the role self-help housing has played ... and might play ... in urban planning ...." Theoretical critique, evaluation of impacts, contributions, two examples, and bibliography.

Washnis, George J. 1971. Little City Halls. (Washington: Center for Governmental Studies, Inc.)


An excellent collection of essays pro and anti urban and rural. Includes Jefferson, Thoreau, Wright, Mumford, and many more.

Weingarten, Murray. Life in a Kibbutz.


Welty's version of Robert's Rules for coops and consensus decision making groups.


Proposes national decentralization as a cold war defensive strategy.


Williams, Eddie N. Planning Smaller Cities (Joint Center for Political Studies, 1979)

"This original survey of 500 small cities points out the major needs and five in-depth case studies illustrate the disparate problems in implementing development strategies."


Covers the ideas of Winstanley, Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Tolstoy, and others.

Wright, Frank Lloyd. 1958. The Living City. (NYC: Horizon, 1958)

Includes his classic proposal for Broad Acre City.

Wooster, Ernest S. 1924. Communities of the Past and Present. (New Llano, La.: New Llano Community, 1924)
Young, Marguerite. 1945. Angel in the Forest. (NYC: Scribners, 1966)
Includes a comparison of the Minnesota Farm Labor Party to LaFollette in Wisconsin. Special attention to socialist currents within populism.
A very dull sociological study of a fascinating community - the Bruderhof.