

Groceteria: Supermarket History

BY CHRIS HIGGINS

OCTOBER 8, 2007

Growing up in Florida, we had a handful of local supermarkets: Publix and Winn-Dixie were big in my town, and I always wondered who shopped at the Piggly Wiggly a few miles to the south. We even briefly had a "Florida's Choice" (operated by Kroger), which was notable for its going-out-of-business sale, which netted my family a freezer full of Indian spices for about five bucks. (It must have taken us four years to work through those, seriously.) Anyway, the supermarket continues to be one of the few stores I physically visit, now that I shop so much online. And like all things, there's an incredibly thorough online resource dedicated to the history of the supermarket: Groceteria.

Groceteria's features include a list of major stores, including history, photo galleries, architectural information, and trivia -- for example, here's a list all the Alpha Beta Stores operating in 1945. In the Places section, you'll find detailed rundowns of some major US cities' supermarket history -- this is where you'll find a decade-by-decade history

of supermarket events in Greensboro, North Carolina (where the site's author David Gwynn lives). If you can't find what you're looking for there, consult the vast message board. Here are a few words from Gwynn about his interest in supermarkets:

MORE FROM MENTAL FLOSS STUDIOS

FUN

What's Inside A Furby?

My friend Duncan used to theorize that the price of a can of tuna could be used as the basic measure of any given city's cost of living. He was right. You can learn an awful lot about a place by visiting its supermarkets

visiting its supermarkets.

Supermarkets are one of the most important and overlooked elements of American life. I'm fascinated by them, and my road trips always include visits to the local chains, from Winn-Dixie in the south to Giant in Baltimore, from Cub Foods and Rainbow in Minneapolis to Kohl's in Wisconsin. Harris Teeter, Alpha Beta, Piggly Wiggly, and the "holy trinity" of Safeway, Kroger, and A&P: I've done more than my share...

See if your childhood supermarket is [on the list](#), and read up!

(*Link via [Your Daily Awesome](#).)*