



Historiography in Marketing: Its Growth, Structure of Inquiry, and Disciplinary Status

Terrence H. Witkowski and D. G. Brian Jones

In this essay, we approach historiography in marketing from two perspectives: first, as a body of literature and second, as a specific model of research methods and narrative writing employed by marketing scholars. The marketing discipline emerged in the early twentieth century, strongly influenced by German historical economics. Marketing academics have published historical studies in marketing journals since the 1930s; during the past twenty-five years, associational activities have greatly stimulated the growth of the literature, although it remains less developed than history subfields in accountancy, management, business, and economics. Authors publishing historical studies in mainstream marketing journals have sometimes had to adapt to structures of intellectual inquiry that favor explicit literature reviews, data borrowing, multiple types of primary sources, and transparency in research methods. We conclude that marketing historiography is a legitimate discipline in its own right and discuss future challenges.

Marketing emerged in the early twentieth century as a branch of applied economics strongly influenced by German historical economics.¹ We can trace the earliest university teaching of marketing in North America to the 1902-1903 school year, when the universities of Illinois, Michigan, and California offered the first courses in distribution.² The term “marketing” began to appear in both course and book titles a few years later, and a handful of general marketing texts were in print by 1920.³ The first scholarly

¹ D. G. Brian Jones and David D. Monieson, “Early Development of the Philosophy of Marketing Thought,” *Journal of Marketing* 54 (Jan. 1990): 102-13.

² Robert Bartels, *The Development of Marketing Thought* (Homewood, Ill., 1962); Simon Litman, “The Beginning of Teaching Marketing in American Universities,” *Journal of Marketing* 15 (Oct. 1950): 220-23.

³ In his research on early publications of the American Economics Association, Bussière found the term “marketing” used in a manner consistent with current

Terrence H. Witkowski <witko@csulb.edu> is a professor in the Department of Marketing, California State University, Long Beach. **D. G. Brian Jones** <bjones1@quinnipiac.edu> is professor of marketing and advertising in the School of Business, Quinnipiac University, Hamden, Conn.

journals on the subject, *The American Marketing Journal* and *The National Marketing Review*, began publication in January 1934 and summer 1935, respectively (see Figure 1); in July 1936, the two quarterlies merged to form the *Journal of Marketing*. Their sponsoring organizations, the American Marketing Society and the National Association of Marketing Teachers, also united, forming the American Marketing Association on January 1, 1937.⁴ These consolidations formed both a sustainable major publication outlet and a strong academic association. Thus, after three decades of development, the standards of a true academic discipline had finally come to fruition.⁵

In this essay, we explore historiography in marketing, which has progressed as an area of research within a larger marketing discipline, strongly influenced from the outset by the quantitative social sciences, especially economics and social psychology, and, since the 1960s, slanted toward a micro managerial perspective.⁶ We briefly survey the growth of this historical literature and the key events that produced it, and we show how it compares to the related fields of management, accounting, business, and economic history. In order to adapt to the accepted strategies of intellectual inquiry favored by the parent field, the writing of marketing history has developed qualities that differentiate it from a great deal of conventional narrative and business history. We assess historiography in marketing in terms of its present disciplinary status and future prospects.

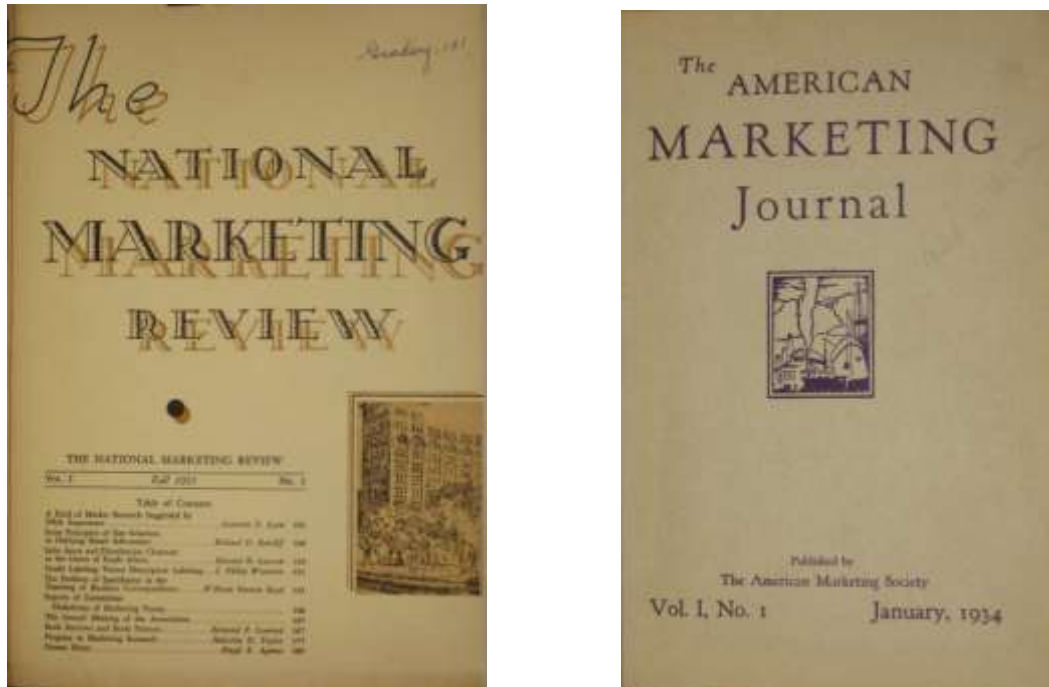
practice as early as 1897; see Dave Bussière, "Evidence of a Marketing Periodic Literature within the American Economic Association: 1895-1936," *Journal of Macromarketing* 20 (Dec. 2000): 137-43. For information on early marketing texts, see Paul D. Converse, "The First Decade of Marketing Literature," *NATMA Bulletin Supplement* (Nov. 1933), 1-4.

⁴ Hugh E. Agnew, "The History of the American Marketing Association," *Journal of Marketing* 5 (April 1941): 374-79; Paul D. Converse, "Notes on the Origin of the American Marketing Association," *Journal of Marketing* 17 (July 1952): 65-67.

⁵ We can consider the marketing subfields of advertising and retailing disciplines in their own right. Advertising teaching also began at the turn of the twentieth century, and the field got an intellectual jump on marketing with the publication of Walter Dill Scott's *The Theory of Advertising* (Boston, Mass., 1903), and *The Psychology of Advertising* (Boston, Mass., 1908). Both books are available on-line at <http://books.google.com>. The first regularly published outlet for retailing scholars, the *Journal of Retailing*, commenced in April 1925.

⁶ Many scholars perceive a definition of marketing announced by the American Marketing Association (AMA) in 2004 as biased toward management to the exclusion of topics in marketing and society. This controversy has led to special sessions at the 2005 Marketing and Public Policy Conference, the 2006 AMA Winter Educators' Conference, and the 2007 AMA Summer Educators' Conference. Passionate commentary on this definition and on the nature of marketing also has appeared in other forums, including a special section of the *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*. See Gregory T. Gundlach, "The American Marketing Association's 2004 Definition of Marketing: Perspectives on Its Implications for Scholarship and the Role and Responsibility of Marketing in Society," *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 26 (Fall 2007): 243-50.

FIGURE 1
The American Marketing Journal and The National Marketing Review



Historiography in Marketing: Growth of the Literature

Historical research in marketing is usually divided into two major areas or subtopics: “marketing history” and “history of marketing thought.” The former includes the study of the history of marketing practices, such as advertising, retailing, and consumption. In fact, advertising history and retailing history are undoubtedly the most popular topics studied within the broader area of marketing history. Marketing history is typically approached from the perspective of firms and industries, but one can also take a macro perspective or look at entire economies, as in the history of aggregate consumption patterns.

The history of marketing thought is the study of ideas about marketing practices: how these ideas develop over time through changing professional networks of marketing thinkers and within larger social and cultural contexts. Its focus is on concepts, theories, or schools of thought.⁷ Historians of

⁷ Eric H. Shaw and D. G. Brian Jones, “A History of Schools of Marketing Thought,” *Marketing Theory* 5 (Sept. 2005): 239-82; William L. Wilkie and Elizabeth S. Moore, “Scholarly Research in Marketing: Exploring the ‘4 Eras’ of Thought Development,” *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 22 (Fall 2003): 116-46.

marketing thought also study organizations, bodies of literature, and biographies of individual contributors.⁸

Origin and Growth of a Historical Literature in Marketing

Scholars now recognized as the earliest to study and teach marketing were trained as economic historians.⁹ They used history as a methodology for developing marketing principles; that is, history informed what they studied and taught, but was not the end goal of their scholarship. The conception and development of marketing thought was a scholarly concern of the *Journal of Marketing*, starting with its second issue, in 1936, which featured James E. Hagerty's "Experiences of Our Early Marketing Teachers." H. H. Maynard's "Marketing Courses Prior to 1910" and Louis D. H. Weld's "Early Experiences in Teaching Courses in Marketing" were published in 1941, and Maynard's "Early Teachers of Marketing" was published in 1942. These four articles, based on the authors' personal experiences, recounted some of the first teaching of marketing and its challenges in the early twentieth century.¹⁰

Teaching and thought development were interrelated. The introduction of new marketing classes to university curricula stimulated the codification of marketing concepts, perhaps first in lecture notes, then in pamphlets and books, and, eventually, in journal articles. Fred Mitchell Jones's "Retail Stores in the United States, 1800-1860" also appeared in the *Journal of Marketing's* second issue, indicating that the editor and review board appreciated histories of marketing institutions and practices.¹¹ In 1951, an article by Robert Bartels, "Influences on the Development of Marketing Thought," became a key part of the most significant body of work on the

⁸ Agnew, "The History of the American Marketing Association"; Harold W. Berkman, "Twenty Years of the Journal," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 20 (Fall 1992): 299-300; E. T. Grether, "The First Forty Years," *Journal of Marketing* 40 (July 1976): 63-69; Roger Kerin, "In Pursuit of an Ideal: The Editorial and Literary History of the *Journal of Marketing*," *Journal of Marketing* 60 (Jan. 1996): 1-13; James A. Muncy, "The *Journal of Advertising*: A Twenty Year Appraisal," *Journal of Advertising* 20 (Dec. 1991): 1-12; D. G. Brian Jones, "Simon Litman (1873-1965): Pioneer Marketing Scholar," *Marketing Theory* 4 (Dec. 2004): 343-61; D. G. Brian Jones, "Theodore N. Beckman (1895-1973): External Manifestations of the Man," *European Business Review* 19 (March 2007): 129-41.

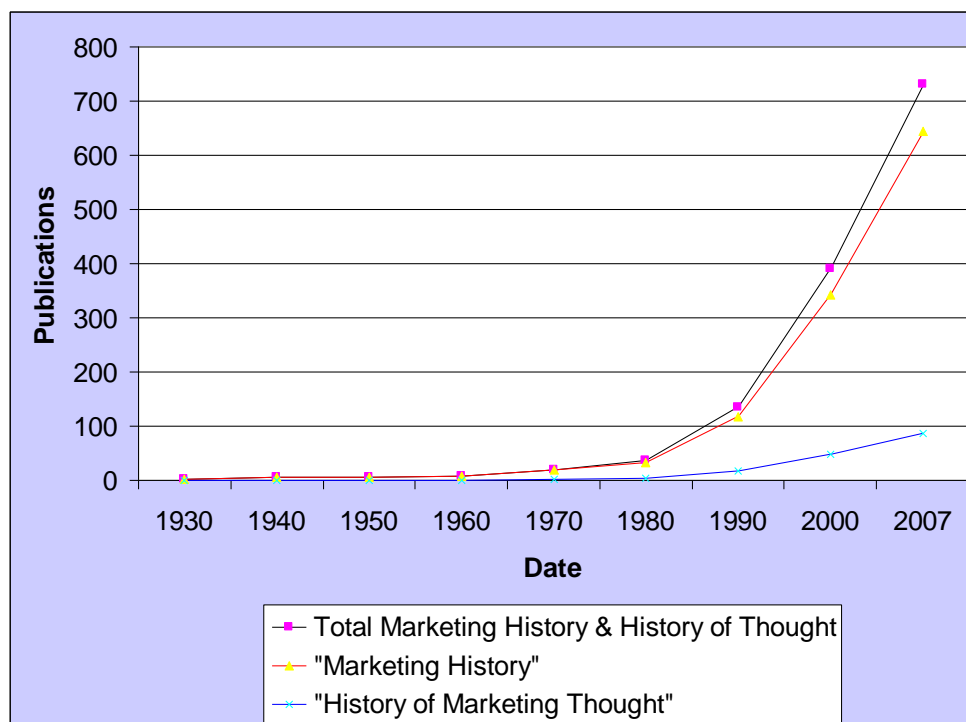
⁹ Jones and Monieson, "Early Development of the Philosophy of Marketing Thought."

¹⁰ James E. Hagerty, "Experiences of Our Early Marketing Teachers," *Journal of Marketing* 1 (July 1936): 20-27; H. H. Maynard, "Marketing Courses Prior to 1910," *Journal of Marketing* 5 (April 1941): 382-84; H. H. Maynard, "Early Teachers of Marketing," *Journal of Marketing* 7 (Oct. 1942): 158-59; Louis D. H. Weld, "Early Experiences in Teaching Courses in Marketing," *Journal of Marketing* 5 (April 1941): 380-81.

¹¹ Fred Mitchell Jones, "Retail Stores in the United States, 1800-1860," *Journal of Marketing* 1 (July 1936): 134-42.

intellectual history of marketing ever written by a single individual.¹² Drawn from Bartels’s doctoral dissertation, the article led to the classic *The Development of Marketing Thought*.¹³ Though scholars published little history of marketing or marketing thought for over twenty years after Bartels’s signal work, this stream of research began to flow much more rapidly after the early 1980s.

FIGURE 2
Cumulative Volume of “Marketing History” and “History of Marketing Thought” Publications, 1930-2007



Note: All data are end-of-decade count.
Source: Google Scholar, accessed 11 Nov. 2006.

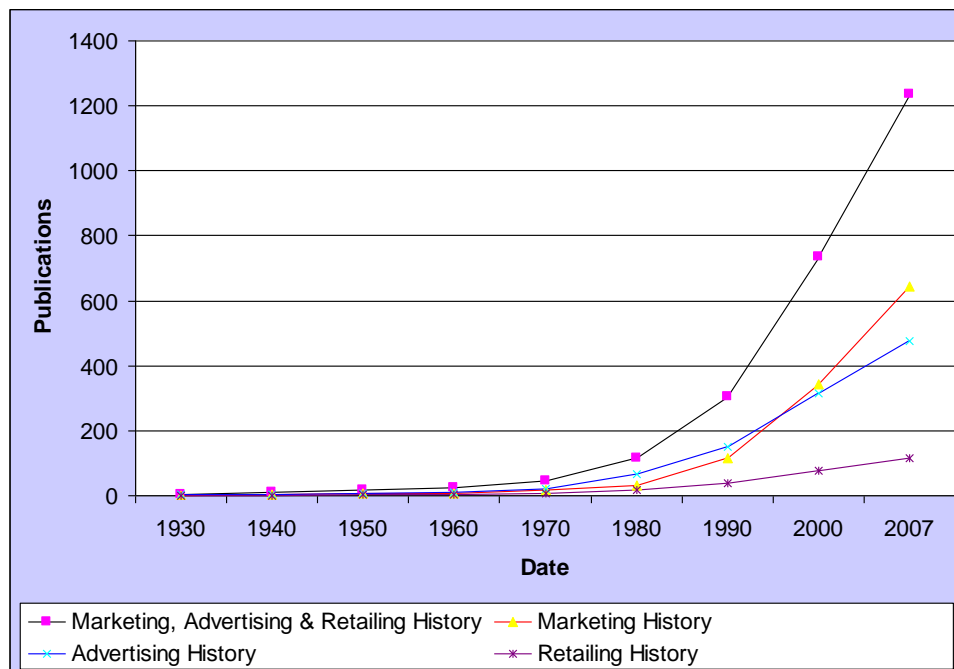
The Google Scholar database includes peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, abstracts, and articles from academic publishers, professional societies, reprint repositories, universities, and other scholarly organizations. Using the search phrases “marketing history” and “history of marketing thought” a search of the Google Scholar database yielded 730 works published between 1930 and 2007. Adding the search phrases “advertising

¹² Robert Bartels, “Influences on the Development of Marketing Thought,” *Journal of Marketing* 16 (July 1951): 1-17.

¹³ Robert Bartels, *The Development of Marketing Thought* (Homewood, Ill., 1962), and later editions.

history” and “retailing history,” with “marketing history” excluded (to avoid double counting), the combined search yielded 1,235 publications in the area of marketing/advertising/retailing history between 1930 and 2007. With “history of marketing thought” added, the total number of publications is over 1,300 (see Figures 2 and 3). We believe that these searches actually understate the amount of publishing activity in historical research in marketing, because many such works do not include those specific phrases. Figures 2 and 3 also illustrate the dramatic growth of interest since the early 1980s. A number of key events have influenced that growth.

FIGURE 3
Cumulative Volume of Marketing, Advertising and Retailing History Publications



Note: All data are end-of-decade count.

Source: Google Scholar, accessed November 11, 2006.

Key Events in the Development of the Literature

The literature of any academic field is more than the sum of the efforts of individual researchers. It is greatly influenced by professional interactions, social networks, and formal associations among scholars who form and support outlets for publication. One explanation for the slow growth of historiography until 1980 is a lack of such institutionalization. During the first eighty years of academic marketing in North America, we have found no evidence of sustained associational activities among marketing scholars interested in the history of their field and its ideas. History was important to some writers, especially members of the founding generation such as Hugh E.

Agnew, Paul D. Converse, James E. Hagerty, Fred Mitchell Jones, Simon Litman, H. H. Maynard, and Louis D. H. Weld, but they apparently did not organize around that interest in history.¹⁴ This is not unusual. Before 1970, the marketing discipline, in general, had relatively few distinctive sub-areas outside traditional advertising and retailing.¹⁵ For example, the large consumer research field did not organize its Association for Consumer Research until 1969, or launch its first major outlet, the *Journal of Consumer Research*, until 1974.

In 1983, researchers held the first North American Workshop on Historical Research in Marketing—now known as the Conference on Historical Analysis & Research in Marketing (CHARM)—at Michigan State University. Stanley C. Hollander, a well-known retailing theorist and historian, and Ronald Savitt, who had just published an important paper on historical research methods, organized the meeting.¹⁶ CHARM has met biennially ever since. At thirteen conferences over the past twenty-four years, 447 papers have been presented and published in the CHARM proceedings. In the early 1990s, CHARM became a major contributor of content to the *Journal of Macromarketing (JMM)*. Since its first special issue on marketing history in 1994, this journal has made marketing history one of its six subject “sections.” From 1994 through 2005, historical articles accounted for 61 of the 137 full articles published in *JMM*, 45 percent of that journal’s content.¹⁷ Most of these articles began as presentations at a CHARM conference.

Other initiatives include tracks on historical research in marketing at a 1985 Association for Consumer Research conference and at a 1988 American Marketing Association conference. The macromarketing group, which organized the first of its thirty-three seminars in 1976, frequently has included a history track in its annual meetings. In 1990, the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* published a special issue on the history of marketing thought. All but one of those articles was originally a paper presented at CHARM. Other journals to feature special issues on marketing history include *Psychology & Marketing* in 1998 and *Marketing Theory* in

¹⁴ See Agnew, “The History of the American Marketing Association”; Converse, “The First Decade of Marketing Literature”; Hagerty, “Experiences of Our Early Marketing Teachers”; Jones, “Retail Stores in the United States, 1800-1860”; Litman, “The Beginning of Teaching Marketing in American Universities”; Maynard, “Marketing Courses Prior to 1910”; Maynard, “Early Teachers of Marketing”; Weld, “Early Experiences in Teaching Courses in Marketing.”

¹⁵ According to Lehman, there were just eight marketing journals established before 1970, and two of those, *Journal of Travel Research* (1962) and *Journal of Food Distribution Research* (1969), are arguably peripheral to mainstream marketing; see Donald R. Lehman, “Journal Evolution and the Development of Marketing,” *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 24 (Spring 2005): 137-42.

¹⁶ Ronald Savitt, “Historical Research in Marketing,” *Journal of Marketing* 44 (Fall 1980): 52-58.

¹⁷ D. G. Brian Jones and Eric H. Shaw, “Historical Research in the *Journal of Macromarketing*,” *Journal of Macromarketing* 26 (Dec. 2006): 178-92.

2005.¹⁸ The John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History, established at Duke University in 1992, has twice hosted CHARM and has become the major repository for marketing archives in the United States. Through its fellowships, the Hartman Center has funded historical research that has found its way into marketing journals.

In the United Kingdom, the History of Advertising Trust, established in 1976, continues to be a major archive of advertising history (see Figure 4), although the *Journal of Advertising History*, founded a year later, ceased publication in 1988.¹⁹ The University of Reading hosted marketing history conferences in 1991 and again in 1993. Papers from those two meetings appeared in *The Rise and Fall of Mass Marketing*.²⁰ The strong interest in marketing history in Britain is evident from the formation, in 1998, of the Centre for the History of Retailing and Distribution (CHORD) at the University of Wolverhampton. CHORD hosts an annual conference and numerous workshops. This group, based within a school of humanities, languages, and social sciences, focuses on retailing rather than on the full breadth of marketing topics, and offers joint programs with business and economic historians.

FIGURE 4
The History of Advertising Trust Logo



Source: <http://www.hatads.org.uk/>

¹⁸ A 2009 special issue of *Marketing Theory* will explore “marketing amnesia,” the forgetting of the past and past literatures by the current marketing field.

¹⁹ Sage UK resurrected the *Journal of Advertising History* in 2002 as the *Journal of Marketing History*, but published only one issue.

²⁰ Richard S. Tedlow and Geoffrey Jones, eds., *The Rise and Fall of Mass Marketing* (London, 1993).

In 1986 Stanley Hollander started compiling a newsletter, *Retrospectives in Marketing*, which is distributed once or twice a year. Hollander, an important and deservedly honored champion of historical research in marketing, called repeatedly for more historical research and encouraged his younger colleagues to form a professional organization.²¹ In 2001, a new body was founded (although not legally incorporated) with officers, by-laws, and a small bank account. Originally called the “Association for Historical Research in Marketing,” its title became the “CHARM Association,” with a website, at www.charmassociation.org. In addition to providing information on the biennial conference, the website makes available past issues of *Retrospectives in Marketing* and free PDF copies of all papers from past proceedings.

After the 2007 CHARM meeting, a group led by D. G. Brian Jones submitted a proposal to Emerald Publishing for a new marketing history journal, and in July 2007 Emerald agreed to underwrite a *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* with Jones as the founding editor. The first issues are scheduled to be published in 2009 (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5

Cover of the Forthcoming *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*



²¹ See, for example, Stanley C. Hollander, “A Rearview Mirror Might Help Us Drive Forward—A Call for More Historical Studies in Retailing,” *Journal of Retailing* 62 (Spring 1986): 7-10.

Comparing Marketing History Literature to Related Fields

One way to understand the growth of the marketing history literature is to compare it with those of the related fields of management, accounting, business, and economic history. In Table 1 we show that marketing history has just one journal (forthcoming) compared with two for management, three each for accounting and business, and at least four for economic history. The numbers of Library of Congress, Google Scholar, and Google listings for marketing history are fewer than for other fields. Economic and business history are both broad, well-established areas, but what is particularly surprising is the development in the fields of accounting and management history. As Alan J. Richardson describes, accounting historians have been successful at making their work relevant and legitimate within their larger field through educational initiatives, standard setting, and institutional memory projects.²² Their work has generated controversy and visibility through studies of accounting heroes such as the founding icon, Renaissance Friar Luca Pacioli, and villains such as the auditors of Enron. Finally, accounting academics have diligently institutionalized their social networks and publication outlets.

The majority of historical research presented and published within the marketing field in recent decades has had one or more of the following characteristics: a) inclusion of an explicit literature review, b) an emphasis on secondary data sources and “data borrowing,” c) the use of multiple types of primary sources, and d) methodological transparency.

This particular structure of inquiry and its presentation have undoubtedly been influenced by the fact that a large majority of researchers and writers in marketing history are not trained historians, but rather academics holding doctorates in business, and a variety of other fields, including journalism, anthropology, economics, and psychology. Mainstream marketing academics generally have experience with, and may have totally converted to, a positivistic, “scientific” philosophy. Most have a strong background in quantitative methods. Those who prefer qualitative research, which has developed a considerable following in the area of consumer behavior, also pay close attention to methodological issues and rigor if they aim for top journals.²³ In addition, marketing historians have had to publish their work in mainstream marketing periodicals because there has been no journal dedicated exclusively to publishing historical research in marketing. We believe the training of academics in marketing, plus the expectations of marketing journal editors, reviewers, and other gatekeepers, has produced

²² Alan J. Richardson, “The History of Accounting History: Strategies in the Development of an Academic Discipline,” plenary address to the Conference on Historical Analysis & Research in Marketing (CHARM), Duke University, May 2007; Alan J. Richardson, “Strategies in the Development of Accounting History as an Academic Discipline,” *Accounting History* 13 (Aug. 2008): 247-280.

²³ Russell W. Belk, ed., *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing* (Cheltenham, U.K., 2006).

TABLE 1
State of Development of Marketing History vs. Related History Fields

Field	Current Journals (First Published)	Library of Congress Listings	Google Scholar Listings	Google Listings
Marketing History	<i>Journal of Historical Research in Marketing</i> (2009)	569	1,300	107,000
Management History	<i>Management & Organizational History</i> (2006) <i>Journal of Management History</i> (1995)	3,375	8,810	142,000
Accounting History	<i>The Accounting Historians Journal</i> (1973) <i>Accounting History</i> (1990) <i>Accounting Business and Financial History</i> (1996)	606	2,840	2,160,000
Business History	<i>Business History</i> (1926/1954) <i>Business History Review</i> (1926) <i>Enterprise & Society: The International Journal of Business History</i> (2000)	4,781	27,000	1,500,000
Economics History	<i>European Review of Economic History</i> (1997) <i>Explorations in Economic History</i> (1963) <i>Journal of Economic History</i> (1940) <i>Journal of the History of Economic Thought</i> (1978)	10,000	418,000	3,060,000

Notes and sources: The journals identified are limited to those in English. We conducted the search using WorldCat (<http://worldcat.org/>). The Library of Congress listings are based on English-language keywords only. All numbers are based on access on 16 Feb. 2008. In each case the search term was simply the field name (for example, “marketing history”); sub-fields were not examined.

historical writing that frequently incorporates existing models and rhetoric of marketing scholarship.

Explicit Literature Reviews

Unlike the typical article in social science publications (including publications in marketing and consumer research), papers written by professional historians often proceed without a separate section that integrates previous work on the subject into the body of the text. This is not to say that historians ignore prior findings and interpretive essays, but that their narrative structures do not always lend themselves to the kind of presentation that first “plugs into” existing literatures, theoretical perspectives, or research traditions. When they include such reviews, historians usually place the material in footnotes, a hallmark of the rhetoric of history. This lack of explicit “positioning” can be frustrating to marketing journal editors and reviewers accustomed to the social science tradition. It makes historical research seem atheoretical, which it frequently is, and, consequently, irrelevant to the accumulation of knowledge, which it is not.

History published in marketing journals usually provides a review of relevant literatures broken out into one or more sections. A few studies have tested a particular theory and may even posit explicit hypotheses.²⁴ Good examples of this positivistic stance are the theoretically-driven advertising content analyses of Russell W. Belk and Richard Pollay and of Barbara L. Gross and Jagdish N. Sheth, where finding loose theoretical ends precedes developing hypotheses.²⁵ Authors of essays and argumentative pieces also discuss relevant literature, sometimes in detail. Incorporating prior research is probably most difficult in qualitative narrative works, especially in case studies that emphasize events.

Data Borrowing

For many years, scholars in marketing, especially those specializing in consumer research, have imported theoretical ideas and empirical findings from economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and other social sciences. Thus, when investigating historical topics, they have naturally

²⁴ Ronald A. Fullerton, “How Modern is Modern Marketing? Marketing’s Evolution and the Myth of the ‘Production Era,’” *Journal of Marketing* 52 (Jan. 1988): 108-25; Stanley C. Hollander, “The Marketing Concept: A Déjà Vu,” in *Marketing Management Technology as a Social Process*, ed. George Fisk (New York, 1986), 3-29; D. G. Brian Jones and Alan J. Richardson, “The Myth of the Marketing Revolution,” *Journal of Macromarketing* 27 (March 2007): 15-24.

²⁵ Russell W. Belk and Richard Pollay, “Images of Ourselves: The Good Life in Twentieth-Century Advertising,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 11 (March 1985): 887-97; Barbara L. Gross and Jagdish N. Sheth, “Time-Oriented Advertising: A Content Analysis of United States Magazine Advertising, 1890-1988,” *Journal of Marketing* 53 (Oct. 1989): 76-83.

turned to the enormous body of existing historical research, gleaning whatever they could find relevant to marketing and consumption. Consequently, historians have based much of what they have written about marketing's past on secondary, rather than primary, sources. The particular historical era investigated influences the ratio of primary to secondary sources. The enormous amount of archival and other materials that document marketing practice and thought since the latter part of the nineteenth century has encouraged the use of primary data. For earlier periods, original evidence is often less abundant, scattered across numerous records, and sometimes quite difficult to locate. It would be redundant for marketing historians to re-analyze the same primary sources that others have combed. A great deal of historical research from fields as diverse as women's studies and material culture can be read, reinterpreted, and incorporated into the body of marketing history.²⁶

Multiple Types of Primary Sources

In their use of primary evidence, marketing scholars have been rather eclectic, drawing on data in the form of words, numbers, images, artifacts, and memories elicited through oral history methods.²⁷ A particular piece of evidence can straddle more than one category. Advertising, one of the most frequently consulted primary sources, and other ephemera often include both text and visuals.²⁸ Paintings are images, but also material objects, often with provenance: a history of sales and ownership.²⁹ The type of project determines the kind and mix of primary sources. Whereas marketing and consumer histories draw from all kinds of data, scholars base biographies and histories of marketing largely on written sources, although here, too, researchers supplement them with oral history interviews. Collecting

²⁶ See, for example, Terrence H. Witkowski, "Marketing Thought in American Decorative Arts," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 18 (Fall 1990): 365-68; Terrence H. Witkowski, "Data Sources for American Consumption History: An Introduction, Analysis, and Application," in *Research in Marketing: Explorations in the History of Marketing (Supplement 6)*, ed. Jagdish Sheth and Ronald A. Fullerton (Greenwich, Conn., 1994), 167-82.

²⁷ Terrence H. Witkowski and D. G. Brian Jones, "Qualitative Historical Research in Marketing," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing*, ed. Russell W. Belk (Cheltenham, U.K., 2006), 70-82.

²⁸ Examples of the use of advertising as a primary source include Belk and Pollay, "Images of Ourselves"; Gross and Sheth, "Time-Oriented Advertising"; Richard W. Pollay, "The Subsiding Sizzle: A Descriptive History of Print Advertising, 1900-1980," *Journal of Marketing* 50 (April 1985): 18-36. The use of ephemera can be shown in Leighann C. Neilson, "The Remains of the Day: A Critical Reflection on Using Ephemera in Historical Research," in *The Future of Marketing's Past*, ed. Leighann C. Neilson (Long Beach, Calif., 2005), 351-52.

²⁹ Terrence H. Witkowski, "Re-Gendering Consumer Agency in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America: A Visual Understanding," *Consumption, Markets, and Culture* 7 (Sept. 2004): 261-83.

different sources, both within and across categories, is highly desirable. Words, images, artifacts, and oral histories can clarify, validate, and sometimes dispute each other, leading to a deeper, more nuanced view of marketing history. Multiple methods are standard procedure in ethnography and other forms of qualitative marketing and consumer research.

Methodological Transparency

Professional historians are sometimes cavalier about explaining their data sources and analytical methods. For example, this excerpt from Roland Marchand's "The Fitful Career of Advocacy Advertising" is as close as he comes to a statement of methodology: "A historical survey of some early advocacy campaigns will reveal both the variety of experiments within this advertising mode and the ways in which earlier practitioners tried to deal with the problems that still beset the genre."³⁰ Marchand never explains what he means by the term "a historical survey." He does not describe his sample of ads, nor how he interpreted them, although his references do suggest he consulted several archival collections. Ron Savitt describes Fernand Braudel as "probably the most important economic historian of the twentieth century," but laments Braudel's failure to present a clear description of his historical reasoning and methodology.³¹ Other historians are more explicit, but often relegate their descriptions of archival sources to footnotes or bibliographic essays. Business historians, in particular, "are not usually expected to produce a methodological justification for their work."³²

Authors of historical writing for marketing journals, not to mention social science researchers in general, need to be transparent about methods.³³ They should carefully describe their data sources, how they selected them, and their plan for analysis. A good example of one such methods section can be found in Ronald A. Fullerton's "How Modern is Modern Marketing?" in which he first discusses the philosophical support for his historical approach, including the rationale for a cross-national investigation, and then describes his sample of primary and secondary sources.³⁴ Note that Fullerton was not just writing a narrative history, but was scrutinizing a marketing theory, the so-called production era concept inspired by Robert J. Keith.³⁵

³⁰ Roland Marchand, "The Fitful Career of Advocacy Advertising: Political Protection, Client Cultivation, and Corporate Morale," *California Management Review* 29 (Winter 1987): 128-56, quotation at p. 129.

³¹ Ronald Savitt, "Fernand Braudel on Historiography and Its Implications for Marketing History," *Journal of Macromarketing* 20 (June 2000): 89-93, quotation at p. 89.

³² Charles Booth and Michael Rowlinson, "Management and Organizational History: Prospects," *Management & Organizational History* 1 (Feb. 2006): 5-30, quotation at p. 9.

³³ Booth and Rowlinson, "Management and Organizational History: Prospects."

³⁴ Fullerton, "How Modern is Modern Marketing?"

³⁵ Robert J. Keith, "The Marketing Revolution," *Journal of Marketing* 24 (Jan. 1960): 35-38. Although Fullerton and others (for example, Hollander, and Jones and

Structure of Inquiry in Marketing History vs. Business History

In Table 2, we compare marketing history with business history, especially in the Anglo-American tradition. Business historians generally approach their work as an end in itself, an independent contribution to knowledge, rather than as a vehicle for building theories or making policy. The commitment is to the study of individual facts, the events, institutions, and personalities that have historical significance, rather than to the discovery of broad conceptual constructs. These historians believe that each period contains its own reasons why events occurred and that they usually cannot generalize these causes.³⁶

TABLE 2
Key Differences between Business History and Marketing History

	Business History	Marketing History
Paradigm	History as subject	History as subject and as methodology
Literature Reviews	If included, integrated throughout the narrative	Presented separately, usually as part of the introduction
Use of Secondary Sources	May be cited, but typically not re-analyzed	Often re-analyzed to form the basis of a marketing history
Use of Primary Sources	Emphasis on written data sources	Uses written sources, but also images, artifacts, and oral history memories
Methods of Analysis	Usually not very transparent	Very transparent
Implications	History is an end in itself	History is a tool for understanding marketing

Richardson) have found little evidence to support Keith's periodization, where the history of marketing is divided into "production," "sales," and "marketing" eras, it continues to be repeated in introductory marketing texts and is usually the only history that marketing students learn. See Hollander, "The Marketing Concept" and Jones and Richardson, "The Myth of the Marketing Revolution."

³⁶ Fuat A. Firat, "Historiography, Scientific Method, and Exceptional Historical Events," *Advances in Consumer Research* 14 (1987): 435-38; Terrence Nevett, "Historical Investigation and the Practice of Marketing," *Journal of Marketing* 55 (July 1991): 13-23.

Although historians sometimes use theory as a means to specific ends, such as the application of psychology and psychoanalysis to explain the behavior of famous people, relatively few are willing to go very far in drawing implications. Historical research is a cumulative process and every generation builds upon and revises previous work.

Historiography in Marketing: Disciplinary Status

The term “discipline” as used in academia has various connotations, mostly positive.³⁷ It refers both to a bounded body of knowledge and to the specialized training and accepted methodologies necessary for producing that knowledge. Thomas S. Kuhn describes a “disciplinary matrix” consisting of four elements: symbolic generalizations (theories or conventional wisdom); metaphysical paradigms (beliefs in specific models); values (what is considered important); and exemplars (the best examples in texts and in the periodical literature).³⁸ Michel Foucault refers to an academic discipline as “a system of control in the production of discourse” and stresses the important role exercised by gatekeepers.³⁹ Alan Richardson defines an academic discipline as “the organizational and cognitive structure of academic knowledge.”⁴⁰ In his view, disciplines have institutional, cognitive, and psychological components.

As institutions, disciplines create specialist journals, hold regular conferences, and form academic associations. Cognitively, they exist as a bounded body of knowledge, controlled by peer review, within larger systems of knowledge. The psychological component of a discipline comprises a critical mass of scholars who self-identify as members of the discipline. In all of these viewpoints, researchers agree that disciplines are socially produced and that scholarly groups resembling “tribes” resolutely defend and promote them.⁴¹

In 1989, Stan Hollander referred to marketing history (broadly defined) as an “emerging discipline” and then again, in 1993, as a “subdiscipline” of marketing.⁴² He noted that during the 1980s, a new enthusiasm and a new

³⁷ David R. Shumway and Ellen Messer-Davidow, “Disciplinary: An Introduction,” *Poetics Today* 12 (Summer 1991): 201-25.

³⁸ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2d ed. (1962; Chicago, 1970), 182-87.

³⁹ Michel Foucault, “The Discourse on Language,” trans. Rupert Swyer, appendix to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York, 1972), quotation at p. 224.

⁴⁰ Richardson, “Strategies in the Development of Accounting History as an Academic Discipline.”

⁴¹ Tony Becher and Paul R. Trowler, *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines*, 2d ed. (Buckingham, U.K., 2001).

⁴² Stanley C. Hollander, “Introduction,” in *Marketing History: The Emerging Discipline*, ed. Terence Neveitt, Kathleen Whitney and Stanley C. Hollander (Lansing, Mich., 1989), xix-xx, quotation at p. xix; Stanley C. Hollander, “Introduction,” in

approach were emerging within historical research in marketing. More recently, Eric H. Shaw and Brian Jones have suggested that marketing history is one of twelve schools of thought within the broader marketing discipline.⁴³ Does historiography in marketing truly meet a disciplinary test?

Historical research in marketing has developed a literature for an area of knowledge with sufficient scope and depth to support publishing a journal dedicated to work in this area. Scholars address epistemological questions and methodological issues in marketing history from several points of view.⁴⁴ Institutionally, two separate academic associations, CHARM and CHORD, represent the field, each scheduling regular conferences about, or closely related to, marketing history. Panels, sessions, and tracks at meetings of various marketing and consumer research associations and special issues in at least four marketing journals have supported history. The most mainstream and prestigious journals in marketing—*Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, and *Journal of Consumer Research*—occasionally have published history articles. We believe historiography in marketing meets the minimal standards of an academic discipline. It has an institutional infrastructure, a bounded knowledge, and a devoted following of practitioners who self-identify as marketing historians.

Nevertheless, there are many challenges to its future prospects. In general, the marketing field in North America remains a discipline heavily slanted toward theoretically driven, quantitative research, ostensibly relevant to management. The big dog has not held its history pup in especially high regard. Even the Policy Board for the *Journal of Macromarketing*, a publication which has from its very first issue included papers, special sections, and special issues on marketing history, has yet to grant an annual Charles C. Slater Award for best article to a history piece.⁴⁵ In U.S. parlance, the phrase “that’s history” means something is largely irrelevant, of minor import, and perhaps best forgotten. In contrast, there appears to be greater interest in marketing history among European marketing academics for whom “that’s history” usually has a much different, more serious meaning. Thus, CHARM will hold its 2009 meeting for the first time outside North America, at the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom. This is a deliberate strategy by the CHARM Association to broaden the scope of

Marketing, ed. Stanley C. Hollander and Kathleen Rassuli, 2 vols. (Brookfield, Vt., 1993), 1: xv-xxxiii, quotation at p. xvi.

⁴³ Shaw and Jones, “A History of Schools of Marketing Thought.”

⁴⁴ Firat, “Historiography, Scientific Method, and Exceptional Historical Events”; Ronald Fullerton, “Historicism: What It Is, and What It Means for Consumer Research,” in *Advances in Consumer Research XIV*, ed. Melanie Wallendorf and Paul Anderson (Provo, Utah, 1987), 431-34; Savitt, “Historical Research in Marketing”; Ruth Ann Smith and David S. Lux, “Historical Method in Consumer Research: Developing Causal Explanations of Change,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 19 (March 1993): 595-610; Witkowski and Jones, “Qualitative Historical Research in Marketing.”

⁴⁵ Jones and Shaw, “Historical Research in the Journal of Macromarketing.”

historical research in marketing and to build linkages a history interests in Europe and in North America.

Following the example of accounting historians, marketing historians need to do a better job convincing their colleagues to teach more history to undergraduates and, especially, to Ph.D. students who know little of historical research methods.⁴⁶ One problem, however, is that even if a marketing professor wanted to teach a class in history, there is no textbook that covers the entire field of the history of marketing and marketing thought. Book-length treatments exist, but they are incomplete histories, usually written by people outside academic marketing.⁴⁷ Scholars need to create wider interest in marketing history, perhaps through generating controversy. Public criticism of the shallow and frequently misleading history that does occur in introductory textbooks might be a place to begin. Like accounting, marketing has its share of heroes and villains, whose biographies should be widely disseminated. In 2011, the *Journal of Marketing* will celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary, and that may be an opportunity for further proselytizing.

Conclusion

Historiography in marketing has established an intellectual record for more than seventy years, but only during the past twenty-five has it institutionalized itself with regular conferences, formal associations, newsletters, websites, a dedicated section in a respected marketing journal, special issues of other good journals, and a new, sustainable journal of its own. Although allied with research centers in the United States and the United Kingdom, the field is not as developed as cognate areas in business and economics, but arguably has become a true discipline in its own right, with a reasonably distinct structure of inquiry heavily influenced by the training and expectations of the parent academic field. The trend is in the right direction for historiography in marketing, but a successful future is not preordained, and so this generation of marketing history scholars must take further steps to promote and institutionalize their research interests.

⁴⁶ Wilkie and Moore contend that doctoral education in marketing has failed to transmit marketing knowledge properly, and that, consequently, some of it has been lost. A new three-volume set of readings on the history of marketing thought edited by Tadajewski and Jones makes available the most comprehensive set of teaching (and reference) materials since the last edition of Bartels and of Sheth, Gardner, and Garrett; see William L. Wilkie and Elizabeth S. Moore, "Macromarketing as a Pillar of Marketing Thought," *Journal of Macromarketing* 26 (Dec. 2006): 224-32; Mark Tadajewski and D. G. Brian Jones, eds., *The History of Marketing Thought*, 3 vols. (London, 2008); Robert Bartels, *The History of Marketing Thought* (Columbus, Ohio, 1988); Jagdish N. Sheth, David M. Gardner, and Dennis E. Garrett, eds., *Marketing Theory: Evolution and Evaluation* (New York, 1988).

⁴⁷ See, for example, Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (Washington, D.C., 2004).