World's Fairs and the Department Store 1800s to 1930s

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W\hile world's fairs have existed since before medieval times, the 1851 Crystal Palace can be considered the first fair in the modern age that expanded world trade on a scale never before seen. Such world exhibitions played a major role in 19th c. Europe, America and elsewhere, as disseminators of new technology, new architectural designs, new products and new ways to appeal to both the B2C buyer as well as the B2B one. Owners of department stores saw world's fairs as a source of new product ideas and new ways to seduce and excite would–be city shoppers. The role of retailers at world's fair is not well documented, despite the department store's influence in the making of a mass consumer society in the 19th c. The paper argues for more department store research with an emphasis on retailing and wholesaling activities at world's fairs. Only then will we better understand the role played by distribution in the economy during the golden age of the department store.

The economic and business history literature has focused much of its attention on the manufacturing sector because of the sector's presumed vital importance to the economy for job and wealth creation, growth, productivity gains, and increases in standard of living. Adams (1897) can be credited to have been the first, at least in the U.S., to publish an article using the term 'department store.' More importantly, his article in *Scribner's Magazine* was the first and only one published of a series on "The Conduct of Great Businesses," to counter the emphasis devoted to manufacturing.

Perhaps one reason why the emphasis has been on manufacturing is the ease at which information can be obtained at either end of the economic process. Studying the ultimate consumer is a lot easier than looking at the intricate business operations that go on within the distributive sector. Another reason why the distributive sector is often overlooked as an innovative sector is because patents are not typical in this sector of the economy, unlike the manufacturing one. A rare example of a patent in retailing is the *Keedoozle* store innovation, an automated store concept based on modern supply chain principles, developed by Clarence Saunders. He has been recognized as the first grocery store operator to offer self-service, the forerunner of today's supermarket, under the Piggly Wiggly name (Soper 1983). The Memphis Pink Palace Museum has an exact replica of a 1916 Piggly Wiggly store (Hilliard 2004).

Most of the exhibitors at world's fairs were manufacturing firms or individual or small groups exhibiting their ready-to-sell products, prototypes or their inventions. Firms engaged in distribution such as retailing, wholesaling, warehousing or logistics were not much in evidence, except those permitted to sell food and drinks to fairgoers. Thus, research on world's fairs and the retailing sector, notably the department store, is made that much more difficult due to the low participation rate of retailers at such world events. Irrespective of their low visibility in expositions, they had a marked impact on the world of business and especially in marketing due to their subtle and behind the scene activities to be presented here. The paper is part of an on going research project which is attempting to study the role played by the department store in the development of marketing thought and practice.

THE DEPARTMENT STORE AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Before linking the department store to world's fairs, there is a need to present the essentials of historical research on the department store. The study of the historical development of the department store is an adventure into relatively unknown or unexplored territory, at least in mainstream marketing thought (but not in other disciplines). It is even more demanding when combined with the history of world's fairs. The study of the department store requires a broadened view of marketing, for it forces the researcher to look at this institution of marketing and how it came into existence and why, who were the major players, and how it affected and was affected by society's other social institutions, not only here but across continents as well. Assessing the role played by department stores and other members of the distributive trade in the dissemination of products, among other contributions, is long overdue.

Historical research on the department store is also retail history par excellence. It behooves the retail historian to be aware of a literature that is often eclectic, esoteric, multidisciplinary, spread across continents, and available in many languages (mostly English, French, and German). It is similar to putting together a giant puzzle with tangential and missing pieces that complicate our understanding of the evolution of this important retail institution and its contributions to society.

The history of the department store, from the period 1850 to the mid-1930s, is a fascinating story. It goes hand in hand with the history of marketing practices and the evolution of a mass consumer market on a worldwide scale. The evolution of the department store is intimately related with the processes of urbanization, transportation, and industrialization. The department store was marketing's contribution to the Industrial Revolution. It also marked the beginning of new and/or improved demand stimulation activities with the concomitant birth of a mass consumer society, as well as the reassessment of women's place in society, among numerous other social transformations.

The department store did not invent retailing or shopping and it did not create many retailing practices that have often been attributed to this mid 19th c. innovative institution, such as fixed prices, marked prices, visual display of merchandise, consumer browsing, returned goods, home delivery, among many other retail practices.

The importance of retailing in Europe pre 20th c. cannot be underestimated. The British retail sector was well developed in the 17th, 18th and part of the 19th centuries, more so than in the U.S. For example, Bridenberg (1938, p. 42), stated that the number of retail shops in London in 1686 was nearly 100,000. Notwithstanding the actual size of London's retail sector, the vast majority of such shops were no doubt very small, unlike the department store of the mid to late 19th c. Westerfield (1920, p. 184) says that New York City had 7,000 retailers in 1831. The retail sector's importance in the late 1700s can be seen by London's population of one million people, while the population of 'Colonial America' was just 2.8 million (in 1780), and colonial New York "State," including New York City, was a mere 33,000 people (Chandler and Tedlow 1985).

The vast majority of people lived on a subsistence budget. Wealth was often hereditary and so were property rights, land ownership, or the right to engage in commerce (i.e. to trade). Powerful guilds during the middle ages imposed many legal restrictions on manufacturing operations or selling at retail and wholesale. The myriad of rules and regulations imposed on commerce along with sumptuary laws severely restricted production and distribution activities. As an example, Franklin (1894, p. 33) reported that in the 17th century, Parisian retailers were prohibited by law from selling any products they made. Parisian retailers (then called *merciers* or mercers) were allowed to sell products only made by others and not by them, although they were able to add some value to them (e.g. packaging).

Similar to the department store, world's fairs did not invent price marking or price fixing, as was done at the 1855 Paris Exposition, the first time an exposition posted prices on displayed products. Price marking and price fixing had a much earlier beginning. Prior to the 1855 Exposition, price fixing, which eliminated the need for haggling between a customer and the salesperson, was a popular pricing practice in many Parisian stores, called *magasins de nouveautés.* Alexander Turney Stewart was also known to have a policy of fixing his prices in his small store in New York City in the early 1830s (Elias 1992).

Moreover, the department store and world's fairs did not invent consumers' need to be fashionable. The need to be chic or to acquire or own material goods, to seek comfort, or to gain status and prestige with the ownership of certain goods are fundamental human traits and they have existed since man began to trade many thousands of years ago. With the making of a modern economic society and the creation of a middle class from the 1850s and beyond, people were able to improve their standard of living. The department store and world's fairs contributed to people's material and psyche well-being by exposing them to the existence of goods and entertainment attraction seldom seen before on such a mass level.

HISTORY OF WORLD'S FAIRS

Fairs have existed since before medieval times. They represent but a chapter in the evolution of commerce, international trade and modern capitalism. Histories of fairs from the 12th c. such as those in Champagne in France, Antwerp in Belgium, in Italy or England, among others, have been well documented in the economic history literature (Walford 1883, Addison 1953, Richardson, 1961, Moore 1981). World's fairs similar to the ones that preceded the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition have also been reviewed (Kusamitsu 1980, Mandell 1967). Finally, a vast literature exists on world's fairs starting with the 1851 to modern days (e.g. Curti 1950, Cawelti 1968, Allwood 1977, Rydell 1984, Greenhalgh 1988).

According to Fay (1951, p. 2), the first official exposition of manufacturers was held in Paris in 1798 with subsequent dates until 1849. Almost every European country in the 18th c. and 19th c. had at one time or another held fairs to promote local products with minor attention given to wares of foreign producers. With advances in science and technology, the number of materials and manufactured products increased substantially. Fairs attracted more exhibitors and visitors due to improvements in transportation facilities and accessibility to information circulated faster and reached more people. Eventually, fairs increased their geographical scope and became less regional and more international.

It was not until the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition that world's fairs took on the important role of disseminator of new technology and manufacturing processes vital for a country's economic development and wealth creation. From the 1851 London Exhibition and subsequent ones until the early 1900s, world's fairs had an impact on the retail landscape of most countries, especially in Europe and America. Of course, these world's fairs were not only for the ultimate consumer (B2C, or business to consumer). The B2B (business to business) exhibitors had more of an impact on the diffusion of non-consumer products than on consumer goods. After all, world's fairs of the 18th and 19th centuries were staged more for the benefit of manufacturers than for ultimate consumers. Heads of state wanted the manufacturing sector to play a larger role in the economic development of their countries.

The 1850s marked the beginning of the department store as a new retail institution. Many owners and builders of department stores and other retail merchants visited such fairs, as will be discussed later. No doubt these fairs put on display new consumers goods not seen before. Such goods could now be touched, handled, tasted, smelled and shown how they worked. In a way, in this age of rudimentary marketing research savvy, world's fairs acted as test markets for merchants always on the lookout for new products to be imported and to be sold in their stores or to be distributed to other merchants. Moreover, some astute merchandisers saw opportunities to produce the goods themselves, and in so doing improved the making of such goods, which enabled them to sell them at a lower price in their own stores. Thus, world's fairs affected not only manufacturers and consumers but also retailers and wholesalers who were inspired to new levels of entrepreneurial spirit by such events.

After the 1851 London Exhibition, goods displayed at world's fairs were a source of new market opportunities for retailers and wholesalers (i.e. importers, exporters and distributors) alike. Moreover, given the millions of visitors and the thousand of exhibitors, manufacturers realized that they needed to have attraction–getting displays if they wished to increase traffic to their exhibits.

New ways to seduce and excite would−be shoppers at their exhibits were created. Some of these display management techniques spilled over to exhibits in museums and other art exhibits to make them more appealing to patrons of the arts (Harris 1978, Bennett 1995). However, retailers on both sides of the Atlantic were already familiar with the rudiments of visual merchandising and product display management in their stores. Before the 1851 London Exhibition, retailers had been perfecting the art for decades, if not centuries. With the arrival of world's fairs and the emergence of mass retailing, such as the department store, the need for more professionalism in the art of visual merchandising was necessitated. Department store merchants were quick to build on and improve this art to new heights of creativity. In fact, it will be shown that some retail merchants actually contributed to the organization and management of world's fairs. There was synergy between department store operators and world's fairs.

RETAILING AND WORLD'S FAIRS

The link of the department store to world's fairs is rather simple. Throughout history, whenever there was a gathering of people for whatever event, retailing and wholesaling activities were present. When people are away from home or from their own neighborhoods, they get thirsty and hungry and they need to be entertained and sometimes lodged. Moore (1985, chapter 7) provides vivid examples of retailing and wholesaling activities in medieval English fairs of the 12th to the 14th centuries.

She discusses how during fairs some entrepreneurs sold cooked foods, while others rented cooking paraphernalia for fairgoers to cook their own food. A multitude of bakers and pastry makers sold their goods to the public and live animals were also sold. Beer was a must during such fairs and strict rules were imposed as to who should make and sell it. There was also entertainment (gambling, prostitution, etc.) and lodging. Access to the fair site involved paying tolls at various points to cross certain bridges or to use certain roads, similar to today's parking fees and highway tolls. Exhibitors also needed to pay rental fees.

World's fair historians often forget retail history when they say that the 1855 Paris Exposition was the first exposition to charge an entrance fee. Moreover, at the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition, food and drinks (non alcoholic) were also sold. In fact, Schweppe's, the well-known British firm known for its ginger ale and soda, was awarded the contract to sell Bath buns, soda water, lemonade, ginger beer and ices (Fay 1951, p. 75). According to Fay, such items proved to be so successful and profitable that after the Exhibition, they were introduced in the streets of London, but were not a market success until later. Allwood (1977) mentions that at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, typical American items were available for the visitors to enjoy such as:

> Cigars and popcorn were on sale from specially built kiosks, and soda-water was available from the white or coloured marble stands with silver mountings, which were scattered throughout the main building, but as in 1851, alcoholic beverages were not available (p. 53).

Humans are curious creatures and they need to be stimulated to relieve boredom and stress. Throughout history, people have shown a need for story telling, a need for music and dancing, to be entertained, or to celebrate certain events such as religious ceremonies or to welcome dignitaries in their community. By our very nature, we tend to be fascinated by the unknown or the unfamiliar. Attending fairs in the Middle Ages provided people an opportunity to see what merchants had to offer and what was new or improved. New consumers replaced those who had died or moved away thus providing fairs with sales opportunities, similar to present market conditions. Similar to today's consumers, people had to replenish goods that were worn out, destroyed or stolen. Many goods sold at fairs were not finished ones like today but were basic commodities, such as cloth, raw materials, agricultural products or live animals. After all, ready to wear clothes did not begin before the 19th c. and clothes were either home made or made to order in tailor shops.

World's fairs, in the modern age, really began with the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition in London. The 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition (officially known as 'The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations') can be considered to be the first international fair that expanded world trade on a scale never before seen in the history of mankind. In fact, it would not be incorrect to say that the Crystal Palace was really when the Industrial Revolution began. The Crystal Palace Exhibition showed visitors the wonders of modern science and technology of the mid-19th c., a scenario that was repeated for each subsequent world's fair until the mid-1930s. According to Alles (1973):

> The Crystal Palace exhibition of 1851 initiated the era of great international exhibitions and world fairs, an era that is still with us. The displays of engineering achievements seen at industrial exhibitions have contributed as much as the engineers who created them to changes in our environment, have brought about direct changes in urban developments and have influenced styles and fashion of buildings, of furniture and of articles of everyday use (p. 7).

Throughout their history, world's fairs had the power to influence the marketplace in matters of taste and fashion for consumers. For industrialists, entrepreneurs, innovators, and others, fairs gave them an opportunity to see first hand what was being developed and produced by others, specifically those from other countries. Fairs displayed for all to see the improvements made in manufacturing processes of known products as well the development of never before seen materials or new technologies (Alles 1973).

Prior to the 1850s, diffusion of information was slow but progressing and contacts with distant customers were infrequent. Moreover, it was the time when market capitalism as we know it was not the dominant economic philosophy. In fact, the notion of a market economy was still evolving in Europe as well as in North America. Borders were fluid and not well defined as they are today. Territorial disputes and country definitions were still an on-going process, often leading to wars. The U.S. was still adding states to its territory in the 19th c. and Canada, as a country, did not exist until 1867.

Trade protectionism was very much part of the economic philosophy of the time period more so in France than in England. Mercantilism was still an acceptable economic philosophy that espoused a favorable balance of payment as being essential to the welfare of the state. The only way a country could increase wealth was by exporting while at the same time discouraging imports. High tariffs existed between countries. Adam Smith's doctrine of laissez-faire was not yet an acceptable economic doctrine to many governments. However, Britain in the 19th c. had moved more toward freer trade than most European countries (Fay 1951, p. 5). For some, the Crystal Palace Exhibition was a triumph of freer trade over trade protectionism. Even today, free trade is still being contested. Attacks on outsourcing, the importation of Chinese goods or the manufacturing of goods from developing countries are still hotly debated issues (Witkowski 2005).

One of the objectives of the Crystal Palace was to stimulate demand for British goods. The Crystal Palace, according to Ford (1931) was to show to the world the "the superiority of English machine made goods" (p. 23). It was thought that exports would grow and in the years following the Crystal Palace, British exports did increase, demonstrating its economic benefits. No wonder over one hundred expositions were held over the next 75 years.

The Paris Expositions of 1855 and 1867 were a way for Napoleon III to showcase to the world what Haussmann's public works programs had done to reconstruct and beautify the city and to make Paris the center of fashion and luxury and Europe's premier capital. According to Blum (1990), the 1867 Paris Exposition attracted 200,000 non-French visitors, mostly from the U.K., Germany, Austria, Belgium, and Spain. Greenhalgh (1988, p. 37) stated that the Parisian Expositions attracted more foreign visitors than those held elsewhere due to government policies. Moreover, Napoleon III even offered generous concessions to French citizens to attend the 1867 Exposition, one of which was to offer

> free travel to the peasantry from numerous provinces and free lodging was provided for sixty-seven thousand people on the site. This resulted in a flood of people into the capital who were without previous traveling experience and who would never have conceived of a visit to Paris.

Such generous offers not only boosted attendance figures, which made the 1867 Paris more successful than it really was, but also helped solidify French nationalism and establish Paris as a brand. Subsequent Parisian expositions further contributed to make Paris the leading tourist destination in the world and the Eiffel Tower erected during the 1889 Exposition, the most photographed structure in the world.

World exhibitions played a major role in nineteenth-century Europe and America as disseminators of new technology, new construction methods, new architectural designs, new products, and new ways to appeal to both the B2C buyer and the B2B one. They helped establish a network of buyers for suppliers and linked innovators and entrepreneurs with capitalists who saw market opportunities of prototypes displayed at world's fairs (Rydell 1984).

These world's fairs attracted tens of millions of visitors during the time they were held (Table 1). The 1900 Paris Exhibition, alone, attracted close to 50 million visitors, equivalent to the number who visited the 1967 Montreal Exposition. Table 1 shows the number of visitors for some world's fairs and the number of exhibitors and/or nations that participated.

TABLE 1
WORLD'S FAIRS/EXPOSITIONS UNIVERSELLES

Attendance in millions, # of Exhibitors or Participating Nations

1851	London	6m # 17k
1853	NY	1.5m # 5k
1855	Paris	5m # 24k
1867	Paris	7m # 60k
1873	Vienna	7m # 53k
1876	Philly	10m # 14.5k
1878	Paris	16m # 52.8k
1889	Paris	32m # 61.7k
1893	Chicago	30m # 50k
1900	Paris	48m # 76k
1904	St Louis	20m # 70k
1910	Brussels	13m 26 nations
1915	San Fr	19m # 80k, 24 nations
1933	Chicago	49m ?
1935	Brussels	20m 24 nations
1937	Paris	34m # 9k, 44 nations
1939	New York	45m # 100k, 33 nations
1958	Brussels	41m # 80k, 44 nations
1967	Montreal	50m 60 nations
1970	Osaka	64m 38 nations

(SOURCE: Allwood 1977, Badger 1979, Greenhalgh 1988, Mattie 1998, Auerbach 1999). **The figures vary from one author to another due to definitional issues).**

World's fairs projected an aura of excitement, fun and pleasure, which stimulated the senses, especially the visual one. Every world's fair was seen as one overarching a "theme product." It was similar in concept to a visit to Disney World, or Sea World, or to some other theme park. A fair's "ambiance" as reflected in its location, its architecture, its exotic buildings, and the economic, cultural and entertainment value, provided visitors with a unique experience in an age where foreign travel was a novelty.

With increased frequencies and the demand to outclass previous world's fairs in terms of novelty and extravagance, world's fair soon became a burden on governments that had to invest large sums of resources and money to prepare the site and hold the event for a period of many months. These world's fairs took limited resources away from producers and other participants who were trying to compete not only in more demanding home market conditions but foreign ones as well.

World's fairs became a worrisome distraction for manufacturers and other economic participants because of the need to commit large amounts of resources, such as samples, materials, machinery and equipments, and especially employees for long periods of time. The costs of shipping materials to the site and returning them to the home country proved to be costly, given that sales and profits made during fairs seldom covered all the costs associated with their participation. According to Ford (1931), they were also tariff problems associated with the products displayed at exhibits, awards were not always equitable, and problems of patent infringements and counterfeit goods existed. Such problems have not disappeared and they are still with us.

NUMBER OF SHOPPERS AND THE DEPARTMENT STORE

World's fairs were not the only institutions which attracted large numbers of people in the 19th c. and beyond. It may surprise the reader to learn that from 15,000 to 60,000 shoppers per day entered the A. T. Stewart store (i.e. his second store) in New York in the 1860s (Houghton 1886). In fact, over one thousand people per hour visited Stewart's Marble Palace (his first store) on opening day in October of 1846, with the need to have police control traffic due to the large number of carriages, which converged there (Resseguie 1964). In contrast, the largest number of visitors at the 1851 Crystal Palace in a single day was 109,915 (Fay 1951, p. 75). At the 1876 opening of Wanamaker's new store in Philadelphia (often called the Grand Depot), "over seventy thousand people entered the three-acre bazaar, the largest space in the world devoted to retail selling on a single floor" (Schlereth 1991, p. 147). D'Avenel (1894) estimated that up to 18,000 people entered the Bon Marché store in a typical Parisian day in the 1890s (see Table 2). In the late 1890s, as many as 40,000 customers entered the Wanamaker department store, the leading store in Philadelphia (Madison 1976, p. 102). Also, Ashley (1929, p. 921) reported that the first Macy store located on 14th Street and Broadway in 1902 had up to 25,000 persons entering the store on an average day; while the new store on 34th Street had up to 250,000 persons entering the store per day.

Furthermore, Abelson (1989, p. 256) cited that during the first six days, the new 1902 Marshall Field store in Chicago drew two million visitors. Abelson (1989, p. 249) quoted a Macy's executive who, in 1904, said "you are perfectly safe in making the assertion that about 150,000 persons visit the establishment of R. H. Macy & Co. daily." Lancaster (1995) also supports this large number of customers visiting the department store by stating that the Marshall Field store in Chicago "often saw two hundred thousand customers pass through its doors daily" (p. 68). Eskilson (2000) stated that when the new Englewood Sears store opened in 1934, over 225,000 people showed up the first day. The average daily attendance at the 1851 Great Exhibition was 45,000 people, far less than the number of daily shoppers at well-known U.S. department stores in the early part of the 20th c.

At many leading department stores in the 1920s and beyond, it was common practice to adjust the number of service clerks based on the number of people entering the store at any given hour. The technology used was similar to the counting mechanism invented by Destouches and installed at the 1855 Paris Exposition (Friebe 1985, p. 33). Today, such counter turnstiles are computer-controlled and are in use in many places where people counting is important, such as entries and exits at subway stations or sporting events. The size of the stores also needs to be taken into consideration. The 1902 Macy store had over one million sq. ft. of selling space and so did the Marshall Field. Both stores doubled in size such that Marshall Field had two million square feet of selling space by 1920, similar to Macy's soon after.

TABLE 2
NUMBER OF SHOPPERS IN DEPARTMENT STORES, 1846-1930S

1846	A. T. Stewart 1,000 per hour, NYC
1862	A. T. Stewart 15,000 to 18,000 per day,
1870	A.T Stewart up to 50,000 some days
1876	Wanamaker 70,000 one day, Philadelphia
1890s	Au Bon Marché up to 18,000 per day,
1890s	Wanamaker 40,000 per day, Philadelphia
1902	Marshall Field 2,000,000 in 6 days,
1904	Macy's 150,000 per day, NYC
1906	Marshall Field 225,000 per day, Chicago
1920s	Marshall Field 200,000 per day, Chicago
1920s	Macy's 250,000 per day, NYC
1934	Sears 225,000 opening day, Chicago

(SOURCE: Houghton 1886, D'Avenel 1894, Ashley 1929, Madison 1976, Abelson 1988, Lancaster 1995, Eskilson 2000).

With such huge numbers of daily customers, it is also important to discuss sales and the number of employees who worked for such stores. A. T. Stewart was able to generate more than $7 million in sales in 1853 and $50 million by 1865 (Resseguie 1962, 1964; Elias 1992). By 1876, sales had accumulated "in the two establishments are said to have amounted to $203,000,000 in three years (Lossing 1884, p. 417). Marshall Field had sales of $8 million in 1871 and $35 million in 1891.

A. T. Stewart's 1846 store had 500 male clerks serving customers, not including the hundreds who worked for him in his numerous manufacturing plants, warehouses or as agents in the U.S. and Europe (Chapman 1993). By the late 1860s/early 1870s, Stewart had 2,000 employees serving his customers (Barth 1980). In 1894, Marshall Field of Chicago employed over 7,000 people (Koehn 2001). In 1911, Macy's had 5,207 employees (Carter and Carter 1985, p. 587). In 1920, the Marshall Field department store located in Chicago "employed some 9,000 with another 4,500 hired during the Christmas season." With such numbers, no wonder Murphy (1930, p. 42) stated "that a manufacturer operating all over the land may sell considerably less than a department store operating in a single city."

WORLD'S FAIRS, NEW PRODUCTS AND THE DEPARTMENT STORE

World's fairs, especially those from the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition to the 1900 Paris Exhibition, were extraordinary world events where many new products were first shown to the public for the first time, such as electricity, the telegraph, the motor car, artificial lighting, the electric light bulb, the elevator, the escalator, the telephone, the sewing machine, the bicycle, the cash register, the camera, the typewriter, the phonograph, refrigeration, aluminum, clothing such as bloomers and nylon stocking, television, the rocking chair, and many other consumer and industrial products that were displayed by the thousands of exhibitors. World's fairs were held in such cities as Paris, London, Chicago, New York, St Louis, and many others. Paris became the leading capital of the world in the 19th c. precisely as a result of the various Parisian "Expositions Internationales" of 1855, 1867, 1878, 1889 and 1900.

The growing participation of corporations at world's fairs prompted Marchand (1991, p. 19) to ask pertinent questions regarding the nature and purpose of their exhibits:

> What did it bring?
> Where did it display what it brought?
> How did it display what it brought?
> What expectations about the audience did its method and style of display suggest?

Other questions might even be more pertinent. For example, how much did it cost the corporation to attend the fair? What was the level of sales, if any? How many product samples were given away? How many price sheets, advertising cards or posters were distributed? How many visited the booth? How many sales contacts were made? How many resulted in a sale later on?

Reports on world's fairs are extensive and voluminous, especially those produced by government agencies. However, the information pertaining to department stores or to other retailers having exhibits at such events is almost nonexistent, given their low participation. Marchand (1991) mentions that Sears, Roebucks and A&P erected their own structures for the 1933-1934 Chicago Century Progress Exposition, which lasted two years with an attendance of close to 50 million. The participation of Sears is not surprising, given that its mail order business was headquartered in Chicago, and, according to its slogan, it housed one of the largest commercial buildings in the world, often referred to as the Great Works. More importantly, Sears had recently opened its very first retail store only in 1925 and probably saw the 1933 Chicago Exposition as a means to accelerate its store expansion. Soon after, Sears, Roebuck became the leading department store chain in the U.S. compared to the privately-owned, single-store merchants of the period who dominated the downtown department store business, such as Lazarus of Columbus, Ohio or J.L. Hudson of Detroit.

The link of the department store (i.e. shopping) with world's fairs is no coincidence The International Exhibitions of 1855 and 1867 in Paris made the city a shopper's paradise. Paris was already an established "consumerist" city and these two international events simply furthered that reputation with the vast assortment of new and technologically advanced goods displayed there. Lewis (1983) felt that the 1855 Paris International Exposition marked a departure from previous ones in that consumer goods were more on display than industrial goods. For the first time in history, the means of producing such goods were given less visibility in contrast to consumer goods, which matched Parisian tastes at that time for luxury and exquisite goods that symbolized class, culture and noblesse.

Over time, the dominant theme of a world's fair metamorphosed to include less machinery and manufacturing processes and more entertainment and showcasing goods and wares of local and foreign merchants. In other words, world's fairs promoted less science and technology over time but more fun and pleasure.

This shift no doubt accelerated when corporations began to take a more active role in world's fairs in the late 19th c. Corporations saw them as sales events that needed to be exploited in order to promote the corporation as well as its branded products. World's fairs were seen by corporations as a vehicle to introduce new products to the public and/or to promote and distribute samples of existing brands. What we do not know is the extent to which such fairs were seen as test markets and if feedback from users were routinely collected. We do not know if corporations during world's fairs used any form of questionnaires or other consumer research tools to assess consumer acceptance of their products. Such tools are more recent managerial innovations than is generally assumed.

The latter part of the 19th c. is when the modern corporation was born. The firm became a legal social institution and assumed responsibilities that were unlike those of a person owning private property or those in partnership (Williamson 1981). The corporation, henceforth, had limited liability and such business arrangements have since become the dominant expression of capitalistic enterprises. It was also the time when the power of advertising and promotional activities enabled consumer-goods manufacturers (and others) to influence directly the consumers using pull marketing efforts, thus reducing the hold middlemen (retailers and wholesalers) had on distribution (Porter and Livesay 1971). Up until the late 19th c., wholesalers and retailers dominated the consumer–oriented supply chain in the American economy with their private brands and high consumer acceptance.

With pull marketing (using ads in magazines, newspapers and later radio), consumers began to demand nationally advertised brands (i.e. manufacturers' brands), thus reducing the middlemen's ability to stock and manage their own goods on shelves. For example, Koehn (2001, in a series of illustrations between pages 118 and 119) reported that at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the H. J. Heinz Company had an exhibit:

> The Heinz name and the Keystone and pickle logos were displayed prominently, and the '57 Varieties' meticulously arranged for maximum advantage. The Heinz pavilion was made of polished antique hand-carved oak with a pagoda at each corner, where women of different nationalities offered samples of Heinz products to visitors.

The company also had an exhibit at the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, where it built a conical tower of canned goods that was 57 levels high, in accordance to its marketing slogan of '57 Varieties' (Benedict 1983). Only recently have distributors regained some of the clout they once had over a hundred years ago, thanks in part to giant retailers such as Wal-Mart, now the world's largest corporation in sales volume. The regained strength of distributors also means a rebirth of the private brand (i.e. distributor brand) that a century ago dominated the retail landscape, especially in department stores.

THE 1851 CRYSTAL PALACE WAS NOT A DEPARTMENT STORE

The idea of department stores as tourist attractions is natural because when people travel not only do they want to visit museums, see historical monuments, or be entertained, they also want to shop. Shopping is also a form of entertainment. When Marshall Field promoted his store as a tourist attraction during the 1893 Chicago Exposition, he was imitating what A. T. Stewart had done earlier. For example, Houghton (1886, p. 93) considered the 1862 Stewart store as a tourist attraction when he stated, "few strangers ever go to New York and depart without visiting Stewart's famous store at the corner of Tenth Street and Broadway."

Auerbach (1999) called the Crystal Palace Exhibition the first department store:

> The Crystal Palace was indeed a shopping mall and a department store, dispersing its goods throughout the world…The goods displayed did not just cater to middle-class taste, they helped form that taste, educating people not only about what to consume, but to consume in the first place. The Great Exhibition taught British men and women to want things and to buy things, new things and better things (p. 121).

He added that following the closing ceremony, the Crystal Palace was opened for a few extra days with up to 30,000 to 40,000 patrons entering the building to buy goods, leading us to conclude it was a two-day shopping spree. Closer historical evidence by Gibbs-Smith (1981, p. 27) stated that the closing ceremony was on October 15th, at which time all goods were promptly removed. More specifically "On the Monday and Tuesday following, the exhibitors and their friends were allowed a free private view, and on Wednesday 15th October, the final closing ceremony took place." The attendance figure given by Auerbach seems reasonable, given the more than 17,000 exhibitors who participated at the Great Exhibition. Nevertheless, the two-day private view cannot be interpreted as a consumer shopping trip.

The Crystal Palace was not a department store because it was not a 'fixed-location' retail store, even if goods could be purchased there. It would be like calling a sports center, a music hall or a museum a retail store because goods could be purchased there, even if these buildings are fixed locations. The Crystal Palace, referred to as a department store by Auerbach (1999) may be a result of other exhibitions also being called the Crystal Palace. The original London 1851 Crystal Palace was painstakingly dismantled in 1854 and rebuilt in Sydenham Hill, south of London, as a permanent exhibition pavilion (Beaver 1970). This new structure was much larger than the Hyde Park one and Queen Victoria officially opened it on June 10th 1854. Gurney (2001) provides much information about the ups and downs of this great building before it went up in flames in 1936. He distinguishes between the two by referring to the original Crystal Palace as the Great Exhibition. This new Crystal Palace was commercially exploited right from the start:

> The commercial potential of the Crystal Palace was exploited from the start: it became in part a department store. The Crystal Palace featured a host of new additions. The Court of Inventions, The Department of Building Materials and Architecture, and the Court of Industrial and Domestic Economy, where furniture, food, and culinary utensils were displayed by manufacturers for sale. No goods were ticketed at the Great Exhibition but significantly this had now changed... The Crystal Palace can be interpreted as a prototype for the department store in the nineteenth century, but it simultaneously furnished a model for the amusement park in the twentieth (pp. 127-128).

It seems that some social historians are unfamiliar with this new Crystal Palace, eventually called the "People's Palace" and attribute its modus operandi to the 1851 one. Over two million people visited this Crystal Palace per year over the next 30 years (i.e. for a total of approx. 60 million), a number that far surpasses the attendance at the 1851 Great Exhibition (see Table 1).

WORLD'S FAIRS AND RETAIL MERCHANTS

No doubt world's fairs were a source of inspiration and ideas for owners of department stores and other members of the distributive trade. Many early department stores owners actually traveled to them or had some of their staff visit the fairs. In the first fifty years of world's fairs, more merchants and industrialists went to Europe to attend fairs than to America for the simple reason that America only staged three world's fairs (1876, 1893 and 1904), while Paris alone held five (1855, 1867, 1878, 1889, 1900).

Some retail merchants had exhibits at such world's fairs. For example, during the 1900 Paris International Exposition, the great Parisian department stores of Le Printemps, Le Bon Marché, and Le Louvre had magnificent pavilions and, according to Allwood (1977, p. 99), were the only ones that "displayed the whole range of European Art Nouveau products." These same stores were also present at the 1925 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes. According to Allwood, "the pavilions of the great department stores with their careful groupings of designs from many countries had some of the most interesting exhibits and buildings" (p. 132). Tétart-Vittu (1992) also claimed that certain department stores and other boutiques had a kiosk at the 1867 Paris World's fair. Unfortunately, she did not provide more information that would have enabled a better assessment of their presence.

Similarly, Dupuis-Leman (2001, p. 45) mentioned the five Parisian trips in a three-year interval of Nazaire Dupuis, the founder of the first French-Canadian department store in downtown Montreal. During his trips, he visited retail stores, notably the newly opened 1865 *Le Printemps,* but we were not told if he attended the 1867 Paris Exposition. We do know that shortly after the Paris Exposition, he opened his first store in 1868, which had to be enlarged in 1870. We do not know to what extent his visits to Paris and/or to the 1867 Exposition influenced his merchandising skills or the way he managed his store. More importantly, we do not know if the construction of his new department store had any connection to his visits to Paris.

Initially, *Le Louvre* was a hotel. However, according to des Rotours (1891), part of it was converted into a *grand magasin*, which officially opened on 9th July, while the 1855 Paris Exhibition was in progress. The conclusion to draw from this historical fact is that the store did not have a booth at the Exposition but was easy access for fairgoers to shop at the store. In contrast, Walden (1997, p. 122) claims that the 1851 Crystal Palace "was full of temporary branches of local retail businesses." He did not present any additional information as to the type and nature of these retail businesses. Many were likely to have been small corner shops for food and drink for visitors and not necessarily commercial exhibits.

On the other hand, Chapman (1993, p. 7) reports that some warehouses "were displaying men's and women's vests, drawers, and pantaloons at the Great Exhibition in 1851." The term 'warehouse' is British and can be interpreted to mean an important type of retail shop, perhaps one that sold expensive goods and/or was fashionable (i.e. a *magasin de nouveautés*). Similarly, Penner (2004, p. 13) claimed that New York retailers such as Phalon's Saloon and John Genin's Bazaar had exhibits at the 1853 New York Crystal Palace Exhibition. While these New York City retail shops were not department stores, their presence is a milestone in the history of American retailing because it would make New York the first city to have exhibits manned by retailers at an American world's fair.

Eaton's of Canada, a large department store which became Canada's most important retailer for almost a century (i.e. Canada's Wal Mart a century ago), not only had a number of exhibits in the late 1800s at the Canadian National Exhibition (a world class, yearly event held in Toronto) but was also responsible for the management and visual displays of all the exhibitors in the main building (Walden 1997).

Walden went on to say that the Canadian National Exhibition held in Toronto, which began at the end of the 19th century, had the full participation of the two then leading Canadian department stores. However, Walden (1997) felt that the Exhibition's Main Building lost its purpose when management of the Canadian Exhibition allowed department store retailers the opportunity to apply their merchandising and visual expertise and thus allowing it to resemble more like a vast retail store than an exhibition:

> By the end of the century the extensive presence of Toronto's leading department stores, Eaton's and Simpson's, made the illusion even stronger. Department store buildings tended to draw on architectural and decorative devices developed for exhibition halls, and in Toronto the circle of influence became complete when Eaton's began donating its ample resources to decorate the entire Main Building (p. 122).

Eaton's expertise in visual merchandising and displaying products makes this department store the first retailer in history, here and abroad, to have been directly involved in the management of exhibits during an international fair, other than their own.

Another case history of the participation of department store merchants at world's fairs comes from Europe. Among the six million visitors at the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition was William Whiteley (Fay 1951). He was twenty years old at the time and is now known as one of England's founding fathers of the department store. As Fay (1951) eloquently said about him:

> As a draper apprentice he inspected with peculiar interest the silks, lines, damasks and other textiles so beautifully displayed. Why should not London have great shops of this type, bright and open, through which, and outside which, customers might pass in parade? Gas-light and plate-glass were in abundant supply; and since there was then no restriction on shop assistants' hours of work it would be possible to shop till midnight in well-lit streets with well-lit window fronts. He, therefore migrated to London to master the wholesale side of the business in the employ of Bradbury Greatorex, and after eight years of intense application opened his shop in Westbourne Grove, by Paddington, on 11 March 1863… Whiteley was the father of the department store (p. 91).

Whiteley's many small separate shops under his management helped create the 'village concept' of a department store. Of course, Whiteley might have borrowed some of his ideas from Stewart's 1846 Marble Palace or from Stewart's 1862 Cast Iron Palace to open his village shops. What is interesting is that one hundred years later, the original idea of this 'Universal Provider' led department store merchants into shopping center development in the 1950s.

Marshall Field and A. T. Stewart were also known to have attended these world's fairs (Ditchett 1922). Moreover, Stewart had one of the most extensive foreign buying organizations in the U.S. (if not the world), and was the largest American importers of European dry goods (Resseguie 1962, 1964, 1965). His business network no doubt kept him informed of what was happening at such world events.

Many other U.S. department stores also had foreign buying offices such as Macy's, Marshall Field and Eaton's of Canada. We do not know the extent to which Aristide Boucicaut (or his aides) regularly attended world's fairs, especially those held in Paris (1855, 1867, 1878). Boucicaut died in 1877, the same year Rowland Macy died during a buying trip to France. A. T. Stewart had also died a year earlier in 1876, making this period one of the saddest in department store history.

Despite the lack of travel evidence to world's fairs, these department store gurus were nevertheless the quickest retail merchants to capitalize on the new technology on display in order to make their stores appear to be at the forefront of modern merchandising by offering the latest fashion goods and the modern consumer conveniences that technology provided (Lewis 1983).

In 1867, the President of the U.S. appointed A. T. Stewart, the retail and business guru of the 19th c., as an official representative of the government at the Paris exposition. His title was President of the Honorary Commission, which allowed him to attend the 1867 Paris International Exhibition. He was selected among others because of his acquaintance with the French language and French customs, given that at the time, he was the largest importer in the U.S. and a large share of his imports came from France (*Harper's New Monthly 1867*). Soon after, the President of the United States, Ulysses S. Grant, nominated Stewart in 1869 to be Secretary of the Treasury. Following his nomination, Stewart had to resign as a result of the conflict of interest written in the 1789 Constitution Act, which forbade persons engaged in business or commerce to hold such an office (Resseguie 1966).

John Wanamaker, one of the world's most famous department store pioneers, "was closely involved in the planning of the United States' first Centennial Exhibition, held in Philadelphia in 1876" (Sobel 1974, p. 88).

Additional details of his involvement are lacking and need to be researched. By 1873, John Wanamaker had opened stores in Pittsburgh, NYC, Washington, Richmond and other places, becoming the first chain of men's clothing stores in the nation (Sobel 1974). These were not department stores and Wanamaker was forced to close them mainly for financial reasons.

Wanamaker went to Europe in 1871 and in 1875 to see how other stores operated, notably the *Bon Marché*, *Le Louvre* and Whiteley's in London. As a risk taker, he jumped on the opportunity to convert the train depot built by the Pennsylvania Railroad into a store. This depot was built to handle the traffic coming to Philadelphia for the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition (Pope 1983). He rejected the notion of organizing this store into departments. As a result, he first attempted to bring independent small merchants under one roof but failed given that no merchant was willing to take the risk. He then decided to open the store on his own. The store, called the Grand Depot, a men's clothing store, opened on March 12 1877.

It is unclear if Wanamaker actually named his store as such, at least initially. On opening day, 70,000 customers entered the store. The fact that he only sold men's clothes, the Grand Depot was not a department store. More importantly, it appears that Wanamaker's Grand Depot was not a result of the 1876 Exposition, as is often assumed. He simply capitalized on a market opportunity that presented itself after the Exhibition closed. Wanamaker was more likely to have been influenced by his trips to Europe and by his previous business association with A. T. Stewart than to the 1876 Centennial Exhibition.

We also know that Marshall Field was an important member of a planning committee for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Bertha Honoré Palmer, Potter Palmer's wife and Marshall Field's previous business partner, also played an active role in the organization and planning of a women's pavilion at the 1893 Exposition. This pavilion was similar in concept to the 1876 Women's Pavilion at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. However, details about Marshall Field's direct managerial involvement with the Exhibition are unclear.

Before the Chicago Columbian Exhibition opened, Marshall Field realized his need for more retail space. According to Van Zanten (1980), the Exhibition simply accelerated his business plans:

> By the time the fair was planned, Field's was already the premier retail store in Chicago, but its owner saw the promised influx of visitors in 1893 as an opportunity to clinch the store's position and turn in a tidy profit (p. 34).

He had Daniel Burnham, the then leading U.S. architect of department stores, build a nine-story store called the Marshall Field Annex, which was completed in August, a few months after the 1893 Exposition opened. This new retail store is not to be confused with the 1887 Marshall Field Wholesale Store, designed by Henry Hobson Richardson, a famous U.S. architect (O'Gorman 1978). The Annex store was an exquisite building

> reminiscent not only of the palaces of Italy but also of the monumental public buildings of Paris and the great commercial structures of New York [and] became an advertisement for his store, a concrete public image of his high-class commercial establishment (Van Zanten 1982, pp. 134, 136).

Not only were department stores and other retail store exhibitors at world's fairs they were also large buyers during these events. For example, at the 1893 Chicago Exposition, exhibitors were at first prohibited to let customers take the goods they had purchased with them for fear of depleting the exhibitors' display of goods. After many complaints and reassurance from the exhibitors that ample stocks were on hand, the rule was changed. Some department stores quickly purchased some of the *entire* exhibits of some vendors to sell in their own stores, according to Lewis (1983). Unfortunately, we are not told who the retail merchants were or if such buying was typical at previous world's fairs. Were department store owners the only ones to make such purchases?

Retailers and other businesses no doubt purchased sample goods for further evaluation; and to assess their market potential. As such, they would have been engaged in market research in an age when such research was in its infancy. The actions of some retailers at least in Chicago had an impact on the urban consumer market in terms of taste, fashion, and awareness of new products and new technology (Alles 1973). Nevertheless, more research is needed to know more about the extent to which retailers, notably department store owners, used market information obtained at world's fairs to expand their product lines or to phase out products that were no longer in vogue.

Lewis (1983) went as far as to say that these international expositions and the department store developed simultaneousl*y* in the 19th century:

> Each offered an array of comforts, conveniences and entertainment, and together they defined a new urban ideal based on consumption and each adopted not only by the department store but by others as well (p. 28).

Moreover, during the 1893 Chicago Fair, many department stores promoted themselves as if they were an extension to the event. Lewis (1983, p. 45) reported that the 65-foot French Republic by Daniel Chester French, the golden statue that captured the splendor of the 1893 Chicago Columbian Fair, was duplicated and put on the main floor of Siegel–Cooper, a NYC department store known for its extravagant attention-getting displays. For example, in 1896, this same department store kept an elephant in the animal section of the store for a month until it was purchased by a zoological garden for $2,000 (Abelson 1989, pp. 47-48). Moreover, Schlesinger and Mayer, a famous Chicago department store, had six new store window exhibits each and every Monday during the 1893 Chicago event. No doubt it was to give the store the same sense of excitement and imagery found at the fair.

Moreover, many other Chicago department stores and retailers launched numerous marketing and advertising campaigns during the event, which featured products that were especially made for the Chicago event. In particular, Marshall Field had guides during the Chicago Exposition that could speak French, German, Spanish and Italian to help foreign customers with their purchases. Marshall Field also offered guided tours of his store and its facilities, a customer service par excellence (Lewis 1983). It is not known if other retailers before or after the Chicago Exposition made such elaborate marketing plans not only to promote the event but their stores as well.

A final point to make about retail merchants and world's fairs has to do with logistics. Frederic Le Play, a 19th c. French mining engineer developed the first system to classify the tens of thousands of products displayed at world's fairs (Higgs 1890). His system was then adapted by museums and other exhibitors around the world (Reekie 1964, Harris 1978, Cantor 1974, Bennett 1995). However, it is not known if his system is connected in any way to the one used by department stores (or other retailers or wholesalers) to classify and keep track of the hundreds of thousands of items displayed and sold in such stores.

CONCLUSION

After the mid-1930s, world's fairs lost much of their appeal as disseminators of new products or new technologies. Today, specialized B2B international trade shows and fairs (and not B2C) have replaced the need for B2B to participate in world's fairs. An international convention governing international exhibitions was established in 1928 and since then, all international expositions and their frequencies are sanctioned by the *Bureau International des Expositions*, located in Paris. Also, the dominant theme of world's fairs emphasizing science and technology metamorphosed to include more and more entertainment, even if corporations are still involved. Corporations still participate but their involvement is more as public relations gestures and brand recognition then trying to drum up business per se. Moreover, their purpose is now more educational and as an institution promoting world understanding.

In the late 19th c., notably the 1889 Paris Exhibition and the 1893 Chicago one, fairs soon became entertainment attractions for consumers and have since reached the decline stage in their institutional life cycle. Today, the existence of numerous and permanent entertainment alternatives such as Disney World, Disneyland, Paris-Disney, Japan-Disney, EPCOT Center, and many other world-class centers are preferred destinations than a temporary world's fair. It is doubtful if world's fairs will ever be as popular as they once were. Over the years, world's fairs have attracted a very large proportion of visitors from the host country, while the number of foreign visitor has steadily declined. It is questionable if there is a viable international market for such expositions, given the ease of world travel where one can experience first hand the culture and customs, the food, and the shopping experience of foreign places instead of vicariously experiencing them via an exhibit at a world's fair.

The competitive position of the department store weakened in the 1930s, not only as a consequence of the emergence of new types of retailers such as chain stores and the supermarket, but also because of the changing structure of cities. Many other reasons can be advanced to explain why the downtown department store lost its competitive edge to new forms of specialized urban retailers, such as traffic congestion in downtown areas and the difficulty of finding parking spaces. The department store is still with us but it is not the same breed of store that left its mark on the retail sector, on marketing and business practices, on the consumer, as well as on the economy from the mid–1800s to the 1930s.

Despite the decline of world's fairs and the traditional department store in today's retail landscape, more historical research still needs to be done if we are to better understand the economic and social impact these two institutions had in modernizing our world. More research needs to be done in accessing archival materials and other information sources which will shed more light on the role played by retail and wholesale merchants in the diffusion of products and services exhibited during world's fairs. Such efforts will not only add to our understanding of the making of a mass consumer society but also to marketing thought and practice as well.

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