Simon Litman (1873 – 1965): Pioneer Marketing Scholar

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This paper presents a biographical sketch of Simon Litman whose pioneering academic career in marketing began in 1902 at the University of California – Berkeley and developed over several decades at the University of Illinois. Known only for teaching one of the first university marketing courses, Litman made several other interesting contributions to marketing thought which have gone unnoticed by marketing historians until now.

For those of us whose graduate education included reading Robert Bartels' (1962) The Development of Marketing Thought, one of the most enduring recollections must be his genealogical chart showing lines of personal influence in the development of marketing thought. It includes the names of American universities where marketing is thought to have been first studied as well as the individuals associated with that work. The individuals in that chart are important because they represent scholars who pioneered the academic study of marketing in some way. Some were the first North American professors to study and teach marketing at their respective universities. Others came later and were well known for their contributions to the marketing literature. I've always wondered about the persons behind those names. Who were they? Why and how did they become innovators in university business education by 'inventing' new courses of study in marketing or new marketing ideas about which to write? What and who influenced them to make those contributions? These are questions that can be answered through intellectual biography.

One of the names near the very top of Bartels' genealogical chart - Simon Litman - is associated with the University of Illinois. Missing from the chart is the University of California where Litman taught the first course in marketing in 1902 before moving to Illinois in 1908. While recognized by marketing historians for his pioneering status as a university teacher, Litman's seminal writings about general marketing and, more significantly, international marketing, have gone unrecognized.

Litman spent most of his career at the University of Illinois and it was there that most of the primary, archival data were found for this study. The Simon Litman Papers are extensive and were, of course, essential to this research. Also useful were the collections of David Kinley and Edmund J. James. Some data were also collected from the University of California Archives.

EARLY INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES

Simon Litman was born on October 13, 1873 and raised in Odessa, Russia (in what is now the Ukraine). His father, Jacob, was a successful textile industrialist who owned a wool processing plant near Cherson, Russia. The Litman patriarch purchased raw wool which was then washed and baled at his plant for shipment to international markets which required him to travel extensively. This was an important early influence on Simon who later pursued a lifelong interest in international marketing.

The success of the family business provided the Litmans with a relatively privileged life. As a child, Simon learned to play the piano and his parents often took him to the opera. The family's library numbered a few thousand volumes and as part of his education Simon became fluent in English, French, and German, in addition to his native Russian. Simon attended and graduated in 1892 from the Odessa Commercial College. No doubt this choice was related to an expectation of working in his father's business.

Shortly thereafter, however, the Litman family moved to the United States. According to Simon, this move was in order to avoid persecution from the Bolsheviks (1963). As a Jew and successful businessman in late nineteenth century Russia, Jacob Litman would have had more than his share of discrimination with which to deal. At every level of Russian society there was a traditional and deep-seated contempt towards big business.

"There is no doubt that throughout most of the 19th century a grave opprobrium attached to entrepreneurial activities in Russia. Divorced from the peasantry, the entrepreneur remained despised by the nobility and intelligentsia.... In innumerable adages, fairy tales, and songs, the wisdom of folklore insisted upon the unrighteous origin of wealth" (Gerschenkron, quoted in Aitken 1965, p.343).

More importantly, the anti-Semitic policies of the Russian government at that time added pressure for the Litman's to
leave. In 1891 "the Moscow Jewish colony had been much reduced when most Jews were forced to leave the city by order of the imperial government" (Ruckman 1984, p.23).

The Litman's move was fairly typical of the late nineteenth century migration of eastern European Jews to the United States (Godley, 2001). They settled in New York City and soon started their own retail clothing store. Simon's first job was as cashier and bookkeeper in his father's store. Unfortunately, the business failed after only three years resulting in his parents returning to Russia. Simon and his older brother stayed behind in New York. There followed short stints of employment for Simon, first as a correspondent in the offices of the Botany Worsted Mills making abstractions of Dunn and Bradstreet reports, then as an inspector for the New York State Tenement Committee.

In 1897 Simon's brother, Sasha, was leaving for Paris to work as a correspondent for the New York Herald and the younger Litman decided to go along. His brother and father both encouraged Simon to further his education and he decided to study political economy at the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques. Courses there included political economy taught from the standpoint of "individuals' participation in the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services" (Litman 1963, p.16), commercial geography, and banking, all of which would have reinforced his secondary education in commerce. As Litman later described.

"It was a wonderful experience and I was grateful for the opportunity not only to learn but also to observe how the subjects were handled so as to keep interested a heterogeneous group of students, many of whom, like myself, came from foreign lands" (Litman 1963, p.17).

Two points in the above quote are noteworthy. Simon was beginning to show an interest in teaching, something he had apparently not considered until then. As well, he seemed quite conscious of the multicultural backgrounds of his classmates. We also know that during his study period in Paris he travelled quite extensively throughout Europe. These experiences may have combined to influence his later interest in international marketing.

During Litman's time in Paris, the famed novelist Emile Zola came to the city and began to write articles in a French magazine about the Dreyfus affair, attacking the passions aroused by anti-Semitism. Litman described Zola's writings as

"eloquent and impassioned appeals to France's young men... to redress a social wrong, to remember the sufferings their fathers had undergone to gain liberties they now enjoyed, and to be generous and humane" (Litman 1963, p.20).

Zola was brought to trial and mobs paraded the streets shouting "down with Zola, down with the Jews". In such an atmosphere Litman found it very difficult to focus on his studies, but he did so and in two years earned his diploma.

One of his professors suggested that he study political economy at the University of Munich under the well-known German Historical economist, Lujo Brentano, with the aim of obtaining his doctorate as preparation for a career of teaching. It seems that this was the first time Litman seriously considered an academic career and it appealed to him. Following that professor's advice, he went to Munich and studied under Brentano whom he later considered his mentor and a tremendous intellectual influence. Litman began his dissertation on "The Possibility of a Rise in Wages and the Wage Fund Theories" which criticized classical economic theory. This training placed him in good company with many other German Historical School-educated economists who later pioneered the study of marketing in North America (Jones and Monieson, 1990). However, since Litman had graduated from a School of Commerce instead of a Gymnasium, as was required in the German education system, he could not obtain a German Ph.D. So, at Brentano's suggestion, he transferred to the University of Zurich where he completed his dissertation and earned his doctorate in early 1902.

While in Munich studying for his Ph.D. in 1899, Simon met Rachel (Ray) Frank and the two were married on August 14, 1901. Ray was a native of California, an accomplished journalist, preacher of the Jewish religion, and a co-founder of the National Council of Jewish Women. When Simon finished his doctorate in 1902, the couple moved back to Paris where Simon attempted in vain to "break through the wall of extreme French nationalism in order to find a place on the faculty of some institution of higher learning in France" (Litman 1957, p.151). So, they decided to return to the United States where they believed it would be easier for Simon to begin his career. Since Ray had family and a history in California, that became their new home.

Through Ray's connections, Simon was offered a position at Stanford University in the Department of Philosophy, but felt unqualified to teach outside of economics. His only other option, as he later realized, was to become a pioneer teacher of marketing.

"My next step was to see Professor Adolph C. Miller at the University of California, Berkeley. He was organizing a new department, separate from that of history and kindred disciplines where economics was taught heretofore. Professor Miller was interested in establishing courses in commerce and industry. Could I undertake the work? Here my knowledge was also somewhat deficient, but I realized it was this or nothing. Nothing was out of the question, and so I decided to accept the offer. And so my academic career started in the second semester of 1902-03, when, as I
learned later, I became one of the pioneers in teaching marketing and merchandising in the colleges of the United States” (Litman 1957, p.152).

A PIONEER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Litman taught three different courses during that second semester of the 1902-03 academic year: “Modern Industries”, “Recent European Commercial Policies”, and “Technique of Trade and Commerce.” It was the latter that Bartels later credited as one of the very first university courses in marketing in North America (1962, p.29). At the turn of the 20th century, the term “marketing” was not commonly used as a noun and many of the earliest university courses and texts used “distribution”, “trade”, and “commerce” in a manner synonymous with today’s marketing terminology. It seems that the idea for such a course may have come from the economist Adolph Miller, but in any case it was not Litman’s. Nevertheless, he soon put his own stamp on it.

“When Simon Litman was asked to teach a course called “The Technique of Trade and Commerce,” he had never heard of such a subject. Moreover, he was unfamiliar with American business, for he had lived and been educated in Russia, France, and Germany.... Thus Litman brought to the study of marketing a viewpoint probably unlike that of anyone else at that time” (Bartels 1962, p.30).

In fact, a European education, particularly a German one, was not that unusual for American economists at that time (Jones and Monieson, 1990). Bartels’ observation was more accurate, however, when it came to Litman’s multinational upbringing and experiences. That did give him a rather unique perspective on trade and commerce when compared with the backgrounds of other pioneer marketing scholars.

That first University of California marketing course titled “Technique of Trade and Commerce” was described very briefly in the University Bulletin as “A study of the organization and institutions of commerce; commercial forms and practice” (1902-03). The following year, no doubt benefiting from Litman’s first experience teaching the course, its Bulletin description was expanded to read as follows.

“The system of weights, measures and moneys in different countries; the significance of price quotations and of the terms used in connection with sales in the different markets of the world; the meaning and determination of standards and grades as to quality; the forms and significance of invoices, bills of lading, warehouse receipts, consular certificates and other business documents relating to trade. The organization of trade and the devices used by governments and individuals to promote trade” (University of California Bulletin, 1903-04, p.17).

The references to different countries, different markets of the world, and consular certificates, made it clear that this wasn’t just a course in general marketing, but rather, one which had a distinctive international focus.

The first couple of times he taught the course, Litman used German books on trade to help him outline his lectures. As he later described in the Journal of Marketing, “There were no books, and trade and technical journals as well as governmental publications contained very little information which could be used either in the preparation of lectures or in the giving of reading assignments to the students. The works known to me covering the subject were mostly German treatises by Cohn, Grunzel, and van der Borght” (1950, pp. 220-221).

However, he soon developed his own American examples from which to teach his students.

“I abandoned it [the use of German texts] after two semesters and proceeded to deal directly with the status and characteristics of market distribution as it was organized by sellers of industrial raw materials, of agricultural commodities, and of semifinished and finished goods. In order to gain information as to how the mercantile activities were specifically carried on in the United States, I interviewed wholesalers, retailers, managers of industrial concerns, brokers, advertising agents, exporters and importers. It took some time to make them admit the feasibility and desirability of having marketing courses in universities; their resistance was finally broken down and their rather hostile attitude changed to that of cooperation. The businessmen whom I approached thought that problems of merchandising could not be discussed effectively in the classroom, that this had to be done in the field under the supervision of men of affairs. I pointed out that what they were favoring was a system of apprenticeship prevalent in many lines of endeavor in the past but discarded for more efficient methods with beneficial results to all” (Litman 1963, p.28).

Litman included exporting and importing as an integral part of domestic marketing activities and had a candid attitude about that relationship.
"I acted on the assumption that marketing problems and methods do not differ in essentials from country to country, that fundamentals are the same irrespective of boundaries within which they are being applied... The proximity of the port of San Francisco may have had something to do with the inclusion in my discussions of what has been termed foreign trade. I felt that this trade was not foreign to our national economy; the handling of outgoing and incoming products on docks and in piers, in warehouses and customs houses, in stores where importations were competing with domestic merchandise, seemed to me to present problems of salesmanship, advertising, and financing closely interwoven with national distributive activities. If this be heresy, I plead guilty to it" (Litman 1950, pp.221-22).

The latter comment expressed his surprise that anyone would not consider international marketing an essential part of the study of general marketing, especially for a country like the United States which was so deeply involved in international trade.

In addition to Litman's reflections published in the Journal of Marketing (1950) and recorded in his unpublished autobiography (1963), a remarkable record of the content of "Technique of Trade and Commerce" survives in the University of Illinois Archives. Some time during his tenure at the University of California, between 1902 and 1908, Litman wrote a synopsis for a book he planned to write based on his course "Technique of Trade and Commerce". A 23-page, handwritten manuscript survives, titled "Mechanism and Technique of Commerce" (a condensed outline is provided in Appendix 1). Litman referred to it as a "synopsis of a textbook which could be placed in the hands of students in our Colleges of Commerce", and as such it almost certainly represents the topics he covered in his course. Generally, it addressed a mixture of marketing and finance as well as government regulation of, and support structures for, marketing. Throughout, the notes have a historical perspective and make extensive use of global examples. More specifically, the marketing topics included product testing, advertising and selling, retail pricing and credit, channel intermediaries (both wholesale and retail), shipping, warehousing and storage.

Within a few years the book was published under the shortened title Trade and Commerce (1911) by the LaSalle Extension University, in part as a "course designed to meet the demand for efficient training in Interstate Commerce; to train men for industrial or railroad traffic work; and also to prepare students to pass the Interstate Commerce Commission Examination for Government Service" (Litman 1911, inside cover). This monograph may be the most comprehensive record of content in existence today for what was one of the earliest university courses in marketing.

Litman defined trade and commerce as a "universal type of exchange" carried on by the modern merchant who, "is a necessary auxiliary to the agriculturist and the manufacturer of a country. It is he who... drives the wheels of industry, he who is responsible for the ceaseless activity in mines and in forests, in blast furnaces and in rolling mills; it is he who leads a nation to its position of industrial and commercial supremacy" (1911, p.2).

The content of the book is very consistent with Litman's original synopsis, cited above, with the addition of a section dealing with commercial geography and separate discussions of international trade organized first by different commodities and then by countries as markets. The latter covers a wide selection and includes discussion of market size, consumption patterns, major industries, GNP, exports, and imports. It is clearly an early example of what later became known as the commodity approach to studying marketing.

Oddly enough, the most interesting and concentrated material dealing directly with marketing subjects is presented in a separate chapter titled "Competition in Trade". There Litman described in detail what he called the "final struggle for the market". Every marketing activity is viewed through a lense of competition. Competition, he wrote, begins with the choice of location and the acquisition of goods. The means of retail competition are found in the personal characteristics of the merchant, such as innovativeness, friendliness, aggressiveness, and a precise knowledge of costs. Wholesale competition was described as more specialized than retail in its product range, but more ranging in its geographic coverage and more likely to face international market opportunities. Litman further distinguished between retail and wholesale by describing the former as competition by business unit and the latter as competition by commodity. Techniques of promotion and pricing were described as "methods of competition". He lamented the popularity of "underselling" (cost and price cutting) as a method of competition and blamed it for declining quality in many classes of goods and for an increasing use of bait and switch tactics. Although he didn't call it odd-even pricing, Litman described the practice and suggested (remember, this was in 1911) that it had "lost a great deal of its value as a competitive scheme" (p.425). The use of rebates, trading stamps, and credit, were all discussed as pricing "methods". And both the promotional as well as protective functions of packaging were mentioned, the latter taking on greater importance, of course, when goods were to be shipped to international markets. Litman noted the greater importance of advertising for consumer marketing than for industrial, and remarked on the pros and cons of newspaper versus
magine for various product categories. In addition to brief discussions of personal selling and outdoor advertising, there is a surprisingly detailed discussion of direct mail including the use of sampling and the construction of mailing lists. Indeed, it is remarkable how many of the practices discussed are as relevant today as they were then.

Although published in 1911, *Trade and Commerce* closely reflects the content of his earlier synopsis titled "Mechanism and Technique of Commerce" which was written while teaching the first marketing course at the University of California. And as we will see below, that material served as the basis for a course he taught for almost twenty years.

Litman's research while at the University of California also clearly reflected his interest in foreign trade. In 1906 he published "The Trading Place of Nations" and followed this in 1908 with "San Francisco as a Foreign Shipping Port" in the *University of California Chronicle*, and "Tariff Revision and Foreign Markets" in the *American Economic Association Quarterly*. Despite his productivity, however, he felt that advancement at the University of California would be slow and wanted to be nearer to the industrial and political centers of the country. So, in 1908 when an offer came from the University of Illinois, he accepted.

**CALLED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS**

The University of Illinois was an enthusiastic pioneer in collegiate business education. A program of studies in Commerce was founded in 1902 with David Kinley as its Director. Kinley had studied at Johns Hopkins University with Richard T. Ely and then followed the latter to the University of Wisconsin where, under Ely's mentorship, he received the first Ph.D. in Economics in 1893. Ely's record for spawning students of business and marketing was impressive (Jones and Monieson 1990). Kinley was hired that year as Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois, promoted one year later to Professor, and founded the Department of Economics a year later in 1895.

Leading up to the founding of Commerce at Illinois, Kinley spent a sabbatical during 1900-01 studying commercial education in Europe. Although he thought that European study in general was overestimated and that the prestige of study in Germany in particular was declining, "he was impressed with the extent of her [Germany's] commercial and industrial development and concomitant expansion of commercial education both on the high school and collegiate levels. The movement is in the air wherever I go," he wrote Draper [University of Illinois President], and strongly urged the President to expand in the direction of training for business and for public service. The U.S. consuls and diplomatic agents with whom Kinley talked agreed that such a program would be timely and useful" (Grisso 1980, p.83).

President Draper quickly approved of Kinley's plan and a program of "Courses of Training for Business" was offered the following year within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, but like many collegiate experiments with commercial education at that time it suffered from a lack of financial support from the university's administration. That changed in 1904 with the appointment of a new President, Edmund J. James, formerly Director of the Wharton School of Commerce at the University of Pennsylvania. James had spent 13 years at Wharton and was commissioned by the American Bankers' Association in 1891 to make a study of European institutions of commercial education and report on the feasibility of establishing similar schools in connection with universities and colleges in the United States. His report (1893) focussed on the rising challenge of German commerce to the British Empire and attributed its success to superior preparation available to German students. James' vision for commercial education was based on teaching a science of business and preparing students for management positions. That vision was very consistent with Kinley's.

One of the first professors Kinley hired to teach in the new Commerce program was George M. Fisk, who was also a protege of Richard T. Ely's and who had completed his Ph.D. in Economics at the University of Halle, in Germany. Fisk is another of our pioneer collegiate teachers of marketing, credited by Maynard (1941) for his 1903-04 course titled, "Domestic Commerce and Commercial Politics." However, in 1907 Fisk resigned from the University of Illinois to enter private industry and that led directly to Simon Litman's hiring. Kinley heard of Litman's work at the University of California and persuaded him to join the faculty at Illinois (Kinley to Litman 1908).

**Domestic Versus Foreign Commerce**

Litman was hired to replace Fisk in the fall semester of 1908, literally to take over Fisk's courses. In some ways, the succession likely took place without the school missing a beat. Both men were pioneer teachers of marketing. Each published one major book during his career - dealing primarily with international trade but including considerable marketing content. However, in contrast to Litman's beliefs, cited above, about the essential interweaving of domestic with foreign marketing issues, Fisk taught domestic and foreign marketing as two separate, but related courses of instruction. "Foreign Commerce and Commercial Politics" was described in the Illinois Calendar as follows.

"Problems arising in connection with international trade relations, and various attempts to solve them; changes in theories and policies; economic systems (mercantile, free trade, and protective);
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The seminar for doctoral candidates” (Litman 1963, p.44).

It isn’t too surprising that Litman shifted his teaching interests from undergraduate and extension courses to graduate instruction. That is probably a fairly typical career progression. However, it is somewhat curious that he moved so completely out of teaching marketing. There is no hint in his unpublished autobiography as to why this happened, but we can speculate about several reasons.

In 1918-19 the School’s student enrolment and faculty complement both doubled in size. This was the largest annual increase in bodies since 1902. At the same time new majors were added to the undergraduate program and the number of graduate courses was expanded. A new department, “Business Organization and Operation” was formed under which all marketing courses were listed. Litman, however, was officially part of the “Economics” department within the School of Commerce. As part of the reshuffling and change in the curriculum, 1920-21 was the last year Litman offered his seminal course, “Mechanism and Technique of Commerce”. By then a new introductory course, “Organization and Control of Mercantile Distribution”, had taken its place and several new marketing electives were being offered including “Salesmanship”, “Advertising”, and “Marketing Farm Products”. The influx of new faculty included marketing specialists such as Fred Russell in 1920 and Paul Converse in 1924. Indeed, it was Converse who, in an article in the Journal of Marketing in 1952, observed that Russell joined the faculty “to take over the marketing courses, allowing Litman to specialize in Foreign Trade” (p.65). At the time of his hiring, Russell was already a past President of the National Association of Teachers of Marketing and Advertising (forerunner of the American Marketing Association) and author of two well-known textbooks on salesmanship. Converse later (in 1931) became President of the NATMA and his career and contributions to the marketing discipline are well known to students of marketing history. With such high profile marketing specialists as these now on faculty, Litman was no longer needed to teach marketing courses.

In 1919 Litman was also promoted to Full Professor. Perhaps he viewed this as a sign that his career had reached a stage of maturity requiring a different type of contribution. Thus, by 1920 he had begun to do more scholarly research and writing than he had previously (see Appendix 2). Between 1917 and 1920 he was involved, under the auspices of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in a series of studies on the economic effects of the World War. The opportunity for this work had come at the invitation of David Kinley who had been hired to edit the series and whom Litman obviously admired and respected. That work led directly to Litman’s publication of several articles including “Effects of War on Foreign Trade” (1919), “Prices and Price Control in Great Britain and the United States During the War” (1920), “Foreign Trade of the United States Since
Armistice" (1921), and "Effects of World War on Trade" (1926). The theme of this work had more to do with international, than general marketing, despite Litman's later protestations that the two were intimately connected.

Thus, the combination of new faculty members specializing in marketing and Litman's own desire to specialize in international trade together with his academic seniority seems to have created the opportunity and self-confidence for him to shift his teaching and research focus.

**Essentials of International Trade**

Litman's most significant publication, at least in terms of market acceptance, was *Essentials of International Trade* in 1923 (with a second edition in 1927). The very first sentences of the book read as follows.

"There is fundamentally no difference between international, or what is termed foreign trade, and domestic trade. Both represent a private merchandising activity which is carried on for profit and consists of the purchase and sale of commodities" (1927, p.3).

This statement was consistent with his early (ca 1902) synopsis of "Mechanism and Technique of Commerce" and with his later (1950) statements about the essential interweaving of domestic and foreign marketing. However, it seems inconsistent with his practice during twelve intervening years of teaching separate domestic and foreign marketing courses.

*Essentials of International Trade* is presented in two parts, the second of which deals extensively with marketing topics including market research, merchandising policies, channels of distribution and intermediaries, personal selling, advertising, credits and collections, and transportation. Marketing scholars who think that the marketing concept was invented by Robert Keith in 1960 would be surprised to read Litman's discussion in *Essentials* of the desirability and difficulties of adapting products to market requirements and profitability of such actions, which is a section of the chapter on marketing research (chapter 16); or his discussion of organizing for export marketing wherein he recommends a separate department for export marketing but advises that it be closely connected and coordinated with the other marketing activities in the firm (chapter 19).

One of the failings of *Essentials of International Trade*, given its author's belief that international marketing was a subset of general marketing, was an almost complete lack of reference to the large and growing literature on marketing which existed by that time. Throughout the 15 chapters that deal with the "private aspects of international trade", there are only a few references to works by recognizable marketing scholars - Harry Tosdal, Ralph Breyer, and C.S. Duncan. A cursory examination of Bartels' well-known bibliographical appendix (1962) quickly assures us that by 1923 there was an extensive textbook literature on advertising, credit, selling and salesmanship and sales management, retailing, and even general marketing. Yet this literature was ignored by Litman in his discussions of those topics.

In spite of this, *Essentials of International Trade* was relatively successful. Between 1923 and 1932 approximately 66 different post-secondary institutions in North America adopted the book including two Canadian universities (Eldridge to Litman, 1924; Litman 1924-32). The latter point is interesting because of the obvious American orientation of the text. It was also translated into Japanese in 1929.

**A Life Away From the Academy**

With a successful textbook in publication and a commitment to graduate teaching, one might have expected Litman's scholarly output to grow at this point in his career. However, that did not happen. Instead, he became progressively more involved with his religion. From the beginning of his marriage Simon was influenced by his wife, Ray's, strong religious beliefs and involvement with Jewish causes (Litman 1957). In 1922 and 1923 Simon was elected President of a local chapter of B'nai B'rith, soon became a frequent speaker at the Michigan Menorah Society, and was instrumental in the founding of the first Hillel Foundation in Illinois. He was also very active in fundraising for a Jewish synagogue in Urbana-Champaign, which was eventually built in 1948. That same year he retired from the University as Emeritus Professor and his wife passed away. Although not terribly prolific during his career, he continued to write during his retirement with a memoir of Ray Litman published in 1957 and his own (unpublished) biography completed two years before he died in 1965.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Simon Litman was a pioneer of university instruction in marketing. He published an important early (1911) university textbook which has heretofore gone undiscovered by marketing historians as well as what was probably one of the earliest (1923) textbooks to deal in any comprehensive way with the subject of international marketing. For those accomplishments he deserves our recognition.

It seems likely, however, that his path into marketing was a reluctant one at best. At the University of California, by his own admission that seminal course in "technique of trade and commerce" was not his idea and he struggled with what the subject meant. In order to develop his thinking about marketing, he drew from German books on trade, personal experience and observations of business, and interviews of practicing business people. Based on the literature with which he seemed familiar in the early 1920s and the apparent absence of change in his seminal marketing course, it seems likely that he did not keep up
with developments in the field of marketing between the
time he began his career in 1902 and the time he stopped
teaching and writing about marketing in the early 1920s.

At the University of Illinois he followed the example of
another pioneer marketing teacher whose ideas, for better or
worse, were quite similar to Litman's. Both men were
primarily interested in international trade. This gave him a
uniquely broad (for that time) perspective on marketing
activities. Had he continued to study and write about
marketing, it is possible that the field of international
marketing would have developed much earlier and more
rapidly than it did.

The Call for Papers for this conference staked out a
celebration of "the heroes and scoundrels, thinkers and
innovators... who have made marketing one of history's
most romantic endeavors". Litman's contributions to
research and publication were not distinguished, but they
were seminal. And while he may have been a reluctant
pioneer in marketing education, he was nonetheless a
pioneer and an innovator. For these reasons if none other,
Simon Litman should be recognized as a hero in our
discipline.

APPENDIX 1

Outline of Synopsis for Proposed Book (circa
1902)
"Mechanism & Technique of Commerce" by Simon
Litman, University of California

Preface
Scope & Purpose; an account of the complicated machinery
of modern business; analysis of the different institutions
and organizations that have been established for the
maintenance, protection and promotion of trade.
Reasons for attitude taken: mechanism & technique of
commerce has received little or no attention from English
and American writers, although it offers a very broad field
for investigation and is prime importance to students and
business men.

Part I. Institutions of Commerce

Chapter 1. Caravans, Convoys and Factories
Historical and multinational (examples for Venice,
Hamburg, Italian city republics, German Hausa, and
English merchant adventurers, China, Japan, Africa)
Chapter 2. Consular Service
The judge for convoys and factories (examples - Turkey,
Persia, Siam); organization of the consular service for the
United States.
Chapter 3. Markets, Fairs and Auctions
Gathering places for buyers and sellers; examples of fairs -
Leipzig, Novgorod; modern markets - Les Halls Centrales
Chapter 4. Produce Exchanges

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Origin, nature and significance; Classification; functions;
methods of dealing.
Chapter 5. Stock Exchanges
Chapter 6. Chambers of Commerce
French type adopted by most European countries; chambers
in England and the United States; New York chamber of
commerce.
Chapter 7. Commercial Museums
Advantages in promoting foreign commerce; exhibiting
producing and consuming capacities; testing new products;
intelligence bureaus; example - Philadelphia Commercial
Museum, Imperial Institute of London, Museums of
Brussels and Vienna.
Chapter 8. Ministries of Commerce
The state in its relation to trade; examples - Board of Trade
in England, Department of Commerce and Labor.

Part II. Elements of Commerce

Chapter 9. Labor in Commerce
Chapter 10. Capital in Commerce
Chapter 11. Mercantile Credit
Extent and significance; various kinds of credit.
Chapter 12. The Credit Man
Duties and functions.
Chapter 13. Mercantile Agencies
Origin and growth of mercantile agencies; organization and
management.
Chapter 14. Commercial Competition
Wholesale and retail; advertising mediums and methods,
purpose and significance.

Part III. Organization of Trade

Chapter 15. Single Trader and Partnerships
Suitability of single trader for commerce.
Chapter 16. Corporations
Advantages; economics of corporations
Chapter 17. Agencies
Great value in the commercial life of today; universal,
general and special agents; commission merchants, brokers,
and commercial travellers.
Chapter 18. Wholesale Trade
Differences from retail; organization of wholesale trade in
staple commodities; grain trade in the United States; cotton
trade in England.
Chapter 19. Storage and Warehousing Industry
Significance; methods.
Chapter 20. Retail Trade
Growth and reasons for growth; effects of prices; peddlers
and hucksters.
Chapter 21. Department Stores
Theories as to origins; Business methods of the department
store; advantages and disadvantages.
Chapter 22. Cooperative Distribution
Success in Europe, especially in England; growth in the
United States; principles and methods of a cooperative
* This is an outline of Litman's 23-page, hand-written synopsis of a proposed book on Mechanism and Technique of Commerce. The manuscript is undated, but was written between 1902 and 1908 while Litman was at the University of California.

APPENDIX 2
List of Publications by Simon Litman

1908. San Francisco as a Foreign Shipping Port. University of California Chronicle.
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