

# THEODORE N. BECKMAN: PORTRAIT OF A SCHOLAR

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## ABSTRACT

This paper presents a biographical sketch of Theodore N. Beckman (1895 - 1973) whose career as a member of the marketing faculty at Ohio State University spanned one-half century. Beckman contributed significantly to marketing thought with seminal work in the areas of wholesaling, credit, and marketing productivity. Further, over his career, Beckman guided more than 50 doctoral graduates in marketing, many of whom went on to distinguished careers.

## INTRODUCTION

Mark Twain once wrote that "biographies are but the clothes and buttons of the man - the biography of the man himself cannot be written." My original intention was to write a biography of the man himself, or rather a portrait of the life of Theodore N. Beckman. Unfortunately, there are so many gaps in the information available on Beckman that I have, for now anyway, had to settle for the clothes and buttons.

The Ohio State University Archives provided materials pertaining to Beckman's career, and I was fortunate to benefit from some insights by former students<sup>1</sup>. However, there is no public record, published or unpublished, of Beckman's personal life. This is regrettable. Thus, I am presenting here some "external manifestations of the man," a phrase Beckman used to describe his own attempt to sketch the life of his long time colleague, Harold Maynard (1959, p.430).

### Fame and Merit

Who was Theodore N. Beckman and why is he worthy of biographical attention? In The Biographer's Craft (1986) Milton Lomask suggests two important criteria for selecting a subject (chapter 2). First, the biographer must have a strong personal interest in the subject. Second, there must be sufficient "residue" (distance in time, and impact) from the subject to be worthy of biographical attention.

Beckman was a faculty member at Ohio State University (OSU) for some 52 years, from 1921 until his death in 1973 (Emeritus from 1965 to 1973). He liked to use the formal title, "Professor of Business Organization and Consulting Economist", but signed his correspondence simply, "Theo". Students thought of him as their "marketing dad", but in formal settings referred to him as "Mr. Marketing" (Otteson 1965, p.74). In a biographical sketch of Beckman published in the Journal of Marketing "Leaders in Marketing" series, John Wright described "TNB" as a teacher, author, consultant to government and business, and contributor to marketing thought (1965, p.63). More than that, Beckman filled those roles with incredible drive and notable success. He was the consummate scholar.

During his career Beckman published over 200 articles and 7 books including seminal works in the areas of wholesaling (Goelc 1987), credit (Powers 1989), and marketing productivity (Shaw 1987), as well as a Principles text that evolved through 8 editions. He supervised over 50 doctoral students at OSU, many of whom became well known scholars in marketing. He consulted extensively to businesses, trade associations, federal and state government departments, and as a result, came to be in high demand as an expert witness. Indeed, Beckman was so busy working, that he had time for little else. His curriculum vitae dated "1961" lists his hobbies as "my three daughters and general family life, for

I have so little of them" (1961).

Throughout his life Beckman received many awards and honors. He was entered into the Hall of Fame in Distribution at the 1953 Boston Conference on Distribution, received the AMA's Paul D. Converse Award in 1961 for original contributions to the science of marketing, was named Marketing Educator of the Year by Sales & Marketing Executives International in 1962, and was honored by OSU that same year with the Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching. In 1971 Beckman was awarded the Golden Mercury (a symbol of commerce) by the Netherlands Association of Marketing. At the time he was only the second individual to have been so honored in the NAM's 50 year history.

Beckman served as an Associate Editor of the Journal of Marketing from its inception in 1936 to 1938. He was Vice President of the American Marketing Association in 1939 and of the American Statistical Association in 1940. Finally, Beckman was listed in 9 different Who's Who directories, including Who's Who in America, Who's Who in World Jewry, Who's Who in Commerce and Industry, Who's Who in American Education, and Who Knows - and What.

Returning to Lomask's criteria - clearly, Theodore N. Beckman made an impact on the marketing discipline; there is sufficient residue for him to be worthy of biographical attention. As to my personal interest in Beckman, like many others I can trace my own academic roots to him. He was my 'marketing grand-dad' - my thesis supervisor's thesis supervisor. My curiosity about his life and career is as natural as the interest we all have in genealogy.

#### SCHOLARSHIP TAKES ROOT

Theodore N. Beckman was born on September 3, 1895, in Dzigovka, Russia. There he attended the Gymnasium, a high school emphasizing classical training in preparation for university. It is uncertain precisely when Beckman emigrated to the United States, but in 1914, about the time he would have finished high school, he enrolled as a student in the faculty of Arts at OSU in Columbus. During the next three years he attended OSU full time, and since he held no significant scholarships or fellowships during that period, we can assume either that his family financed his education, or that he worked his way through college. Given the intense work ethic he demonstrated throughout his life, the latter is quite likely the case.

From 1917 to 1919, Beckman left university to serve with the U.S. Army in World War I, achieving the rank of Second Lieutenant. Most of that time was spent with the American Expeditionary Forces in France, although he also served in the Medical Corps and Infantry. After the war Beckman returned to OSU to finish his undergraduate degree, but he did so as a student in the College of Commerce and Journalism. That academic year (1919/20) Beckman seems to have found his calling.

#### Studying Marketing at OSU

During 1919/20 there were several marketing courses offered at OSU, but the ones most likely attended by young Beckman were those offered by James Hagerty and Walter Weidler.

Hagerty was the Dean of the College of Commerce, having joined the OSU faculty in 1901 as an instructor in Economics and Sociology. In 1905, Hagerty taught what was then one of the first courses in marketing to be offered at an American university (Bartels 1962, p.29). That course evolved rapidly until, in 1916, it was titled, "Marketing", and covered a full year of study. The 1919/20 calendar description for that course is noteworthy, since it was required of all students majoring in marketing and is likely to have been the first course in marketing taken by Beckman.

The first semester will be devoted to the study of marketing of raw materials, partially

manufactured products and agricultural products. The evolution of methods and institutions of marketing from those of simple industrial communities to those of complex industrial societies. Produce exchanges, their functions and methods. City markets, their functions and the need for regulation and control. A comparison of the cost of the various methods of marketing farm produce and raw materials, and the effect of these methods on the cost of living. The second semester will be devoted chiefly to the study of methods of marketing manufactured products. A study of the functions, methods, and costs of marketing of the retailer, jobber, commission merchant, selling agent, broker, manufacturer's selling organization, traveling salesman, etc. The functions and efficiency of the department store, mail order house, syndicate store, cooperative purchasing organizations, etc. The tendency toward direct selling, a more thorough organization of the market of the producer, price fixing, etc. Mercantile credit and its use by the various distributing factors. (OSU Bulletin 1919/20, p.56)

The assigned reading in this course included Cherington's (1913) Advertising as a Business Force, Weld's (1915) Marketing of Farm Products, Shaw's (1916) An Approach to Business Problems, and Hagerty's own (1913) Mercantile Credit (Hagerty 1936, pp.22-23). Thus, it seems that there would have been elements of all 3 classic schools of marketing thought (functional, institutional, and commodity) in Hagerty's course, as well as an historical perspective, making for a comprehensive introduction to the field of marketing. As well, the second semester of this course provided students a thorough background in retailing and wholesaling.

Hagerty noted that this course was, by necessity, very descriptive. However, there were a few basic principles taught, one of which was adopted by Beckman as the predominant theme for research throughout his career. Hagerty taught that, relative to the costs of production, the costs of marketing were increasing, and that careful measurement of these costs was necessary in order to determine the extent to which "the methods of distribution are wasteful and extravagant and impose a heavy burden on consumers" (1936, p.27). Even as an undergraduate, Beckman disagreed with that hypothesis that distribution cost too much. He "felt that the treatment of the wholesaler was entirely erroneous" (quoted in Bartels 1962, p.221), and later in his academic career followed Hagerty's advice about measuring the costs of wholesale distribution to determine its efficiency.

Two other courses required that year of undergraduates majoring in marketing were "Principles of Salesmanship", and "Exporting and Importing". These were both taught by Walter Weidler who later became Beckman's thesis supervisor for the Masters degree.

Beckman graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 1920 and immediately went on to graduate work in marketing at OSU. Actually, he did take time out to marry Esther Baker on July 27, literally during the summer break between spring convocation and the fall term in which he began his Masters degree!

Two graduate courses which had an important influence on him were "History of Economic Thought", taught by M.B. Hammond, and "Wholesaling and Retailing", taught by Walter Weidler. Throughout his career Beckman maintained a strong belief that economics was the theoretical foundation for the study of marketing problems. In an interview given in 1966 he expressed the following view.

I do not believe that economic theory and marketing theory can be separated, unless it is for the purpose of partial analysis...We cannot have it [marketing theory] without economic theory. We cannot solve any marketing problems without a theoretical mooring. Facts constitute marketing, but the questions of what, how and why must be moored in economic theory (quoted in Kangas 1966, pp.147-148).

In an uncharacteristic instance of crediting another individual's influence, Beckman added that the

economics course which affected him the most was M.B. Hammond's, which he took as a Masters student in 1921. That course, together with the historical perspective evident in Hagerty's undergraduate course in marketing, may also help to explain the strong historical content in all of Beckman's later books.

Another course offered that year which may have influenced the direction if not the substance of Beckman's thinking was "Wholesaling and Retailing", taught by Walter Weidler. Weidler had returned to OSU the year before (1919/20) from Tulane University where he had been Professor of Merchandising. When Beckman chose to write his Masters thesis on wholesaling ("The Wholesale Grocery and Dry Goods Trades of Columbus, Ohio") in 1922, it was Weidler who supervised him.

The choice of wholesaling as a topic for his thesis was an important one, since the study of wholesaling was not yet developed and it maintained Beckman's interest throughout his life. He once wrote,

just as a psychiatrist looks at early experiences of an individual for a possible explanation of later developments, so may the early writings of an author, as in this case, provide a clue to some of his later works and perhaps furnish a better insight into the nature of subsequent contributions (1959, p.430).

Here Beckman was referring to the work of Harold Maynard, specifically to the latter's doctoral thesis, but the notion seems to apply equally well to himself. Beckman's Masters thesis was a careful investigation into the processes involved in handling dry goods from the wholesaler to the retailer. He developed classifications of jobbers and merchandise, looked at the factors influencing location, and examined the operating expenses of wholesale dry goods businesses in Columbus, Ohio. His expressed purpose was "to serve the need for scientific research in marketing....where the lack of a sufficient amount of specific and accurate information is deeply felt" (1922, p.1). Indeed, this 'scientific' study of wholesaling provided the philosophic approach and substantive basis for most of Beckman's later research and writing.

During his Masters degree Beckman also began to do some teaching. In 1920/21 Beckman was listed in the OSU faculty directory as an "Assistant" in Economics and Sociology, teaching economics. In addition, early in 1921 Dean Hagerty asked Beckman to become an instructor for the Columbus chapter of the Institute on Credit of the National Association of Credit Men (Bartels 1962, p.222). The course Beckman was to teach was offered under the joint auspices of the Institute, of which Hagerty was the Director, and the College of Commerce, of which Hagerty was the Dean. Keeping in mind that Hagerty was also the author of a seminal book on the subject of credit (Powers 1989), it should be no surprise that Beckman not only agreed to teach the course, but also wrote his doctoral dissertation on that topic. As Beckman described it,

I hesitated to accept the appointment. The urging, however, persisted and I succumbed to the pressure, largely out of deference to and respect for Dr. Hagerty. My class in credits and collections consisted of businessmen, some of whom had as high as fifteen years of practical experience. It became necessary, therefore, for me to study the subject both intensively and extensively to gain as much practical knowledge as possible. To accomplish the latter purpose, I spent a great deal of my time during the first year in the credit offices of the various concerns in Columbus, Ohio.

When the course was introduced at the University in the summer of 1922, I found the literature inadequate and completely out of date. Our readings, therefore, had to be supplemented with lectures based upon my studies of the practical operations of credit departments. The more familiar I became with credit and collection management problems and techniques and with the underlying theory, the more dissatisfied I was with the existing textbook material and other miscellaneous

readings. It was thus purely a matter of necessity to provide adequate material for my teaching that I started out deliberately in 1922 to prepare a book on credits and collections (quoted in Bartels 1962, p.222).

It seems likely however, that Beckman's motives were somewhat more complex, since that book, Credits and Collections in Theory and Practice, served at the same time as his doctoral dissertation (his was the first Ph.D. awarded in business at OSU). Hagerty's own book, Mercantile Credit (1913), was then only 8 years out of date; it would probably have been easier to update that book than to start a new one unless there were more complex reasons for doing so. In any case, Credits and Collections marked the end of Beckman's formal apprenticeship for life as a scholar... B.Sc. (1920), M.A. (1922), and Ph.D. (1924), all at OSU.

It is curious that Beckman completed all of his university training at one institution, yet rarely if ever acknowledged the influence of his teachers. By contrast, he often cited the contributions of business people. For example, in responding to Bartels' enquiry about "the influences that had contributed to shaping his interest in and outlook upon marketing" (1962, p.220), Beckman responded, "The most important contribution to my experience and training has probably come from the many and varied contacts I have enjoyed over the years with business groups and business individuals" (quoted in Bartels 1962, p.221). In his Masters thesis Beckman includes a lengthy list of acknowledgements (1922, pp.2-3, pp.38-39), all of them industry contacts, but not one word of recognition for his supervisor, Walter Weidler. Furthermore, it is likely that Weidler, who had worked for one of the largest wholesalers in Ohio and had several family members employed in the wholesaling business (Bartels 1962, p.235), introduced Beckman to some of those industry contacts. It is unclear whether Beckman felt that an acknowledgement had not been earned or was simply unnecessary. Given the number of scholars who worked closely with him over the course of his career, it is apparent that praise was not given easily.

## THE CAREER OF A SCHOLAR

### Professor of Business Organization...

Beckman was on a fast track to Full Professor. He was appointed Assistant Professor of Business Organization at OSU in 1924, and by the end of that decade he had risen rapidly through the ranks and established his reputation as a scholar, publishing 4 books in 4 years and supervising the first U.S. Census of Wholesale Distribution.

Credits and Collections (1924) was an early and important contribution to the field of credit management, appearing in 8 editions over a 45-year period. By 1926 Beckman had extended considerably the work from his Masters thesis into a book titled, Wholesaling, a contribution even more seminal than his work on Credit. Goehle described it as the first comprehensive study of the field of wholesaling, marking the emergence of wholesaling as a distinct field within marketing (1987, pp.225 & 234). And in 1927, together with his OSU colleagues Harold Maynard and Walter Weidler, Beckman published Principles of Marketing, a text that eventually appeared in 8 editions and at its peak was in use by over 200 colleges and universities (Beckman 1970). By 1929 Beckman had also published (with F.E. Held) Collection Correspondence and Agency Practice (1925), and numerous articles on wholesaling in various trade journals. These efforts ensured him a promotion to Associate Professor in 1929, a year which also marked the beginning of Beckman's highly successful consulting activities.

In 1929, he was appointed Consulting Expert in Charge of the Census of Wholesale Distribution for the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Census statistics were collected in 1930 and covered wholesale operations for the year 1929. Here was an invaluable opportunity to "serve the need for scientific research in marketing where the lack of a sufficient amount of specific and accurate information is deeply felt", which had been Beckman's objective in his Masters thesis. Here was an

opportunity to measure the costs and efficiency of wholesale distribution, the challenge Hagerty had given him as an undergraduate. Finally, here also was an opportunity to begin defining and classifying the various types of wholesalers and their functions. Beckman described the purpose of the Census in this way.

One aim of this census is to present data on the geographical distribution of specific commodities. A second aim is to present a statistical picture of the marketing mechanism of the Nation and its various subdivisions, showing the marketing facilities which exist in each portion of the country, and their relative importance as measured by volume of trade. A third aim is to supply data bearing on the relative efficiency of the different parts of our distribution system. Classifications are the basis for these latter and perhaps more important phases of the Census of Distribution (1931, p.3).

The first and second aims were fully satisfied. These were the more descriptive results of the Census. The third aim was partially satisfied, to the extent that it developed a set of classifications. However, the "more important phase" on determining the relative efficiency of different parts of the distribution system remained unresolved for Beckman, although he continued throughout his life to be preoccupied with that important issue. His later work on efficiency and productivity in marketing may, in fact, be considered his single most important contribution to marketing thought (Davidson 1965, p.v). There were, however, more immediate contributions arising from the Census work.

The definitions and classifications of wholesaling which the Census yielded were extremely important. Beckman incorporated these into the second edition of Wholesaling in 1937, thus establishing it as a major development in the field.

With the publication of Beckman and Engle's 1937 edition of Wholesaling, a framework for the study of wholesaling appeared. Their attention to definitions further delineated the institutions and functions comprising the field. They clearly identified the necessary distribution functions in the marketing process. By arguing that certain of these cannot be eliminated but must be performed by someone in the channel, they clarified the relationship of wholesaling to marketing in general. Thus, their work provided the basis for understanding a marketing system comprised of interrelated functions and institutions (Goehle 1987, p.237).

Supervising the work on the Census and writing the many resulting reports consumed much of Beckman's non-teaching time during the period from 1929 to 1932, but it seems to have provided the justification for a promotion to Full Professor, which he received in 1932. Beckman's rise through the academic ranks must have seemed swift, even by the standards of that day. So, what does a 37-year-old Full Professor do with his spare time?

### ... And Consulting Economist

Some time after his promotion to Full Professor, Beckman began to use the title "Professor of Business Organization and Consulting Economist". With his academic status and reputation secure, Beckman began to pursue consulting opportunities with government, private businesses and trade associations. At one point he reportedly considered resigning from OSU, believing he could earn much more income from consulting full time. He took a leave of absence for one year to determine if he could earn \$100,000 and, surprisingly, was successful in that regard (a considerable amount of money in that day). However, the Head of the Department of Business Organization at that time (also a colleague and friend), Harold Maynard, told Beckman he wouldn't be in such demand for consulting if it were not for his academic position, and convinced him to stay on.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Beckman consulted for numerous federal and state

government departments. His public sector consulting included work for the Allied Food Commission, Bureau of Census, Bureau of Commerce, Federal Trade Commission, U.S. Department of Labor, State of Florida (involving chain store tax law), National Defense Advisory Commission, War Production Board, Bureau of Internal Revenue, and the State of Ohio (Attorney General's office). His work with the Bureau of Census continued through a second census of wholesale distribution from 1932 to 1935. At about the same time he also acted as an advisor to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Committee on Elimination of Waste in Distribution, an issue which was clearly important to Beckman.

His private sector consulting included the grocery business, optical supplies, botanical industry, tires and rubber products, dry goods, pharmaceuticals, lumber, hardware, electrical equipment, and businesses in the plumbing and heating industry. Ohio State University required faculty members to file a request for permission to engage in consulting for private industry. As an indication of just how busy Beckman was, in one year alone (1949) he filed 19 such requests!

As early as 1933, but with much greater frequency starting in the 1950s, Beckman was in great demand as an expert witness in various court proceedings. Most of these appearances required him to testify about the definition of wholesaling, the distinction between wholesaling and retailing, or the nature of wholesaling functions and transactions. Occasionally, he testified about the nature of competition and comparative efficiencies in different channels of distribution.

Part of Beckman's motivation to work outside the university was derived from his concern with the connection between theory and practice, in this case, between marketing concepts and legal developments. As he stated in a request for permission from OSU to perform outside service,

The testimony will revolve around the questions as to what is manufacturing, what is a retail sale, and what is a retail establishment. My interest in this case is purely academic, as I have been working on these technical questions for years and am anxious to get as many court decisions bearing on these points as possible in order to promote better statistics in the field of marketing and to clarify some important concepts (1954).

Furthermore, Beckman believed that consulting was essential to being an effective teacher. In another request for permission to do outside work, he wrote,

I regard this as the most constructive work any faculty member in commerce can do. In addition, such work gives one a keen insight into the problems of business and its relation to the government. As this has been on the wholesaling level, it fitted into the work I do in teaching the course in Wholesaling and in doing research on the subject. In fact, I know of no better laboratory (1954).

Whatever his motives, financial or pedagogical, he felt a strong need to combine teaching with doing. And if consulting was essential to being an effective teacher, then that may help explain why Beckman was so successful at the latter.

#### Above All Else a Teacher

Of course, the Professor of Business Organization and Consulting Economist was first and foremost a teacher. In 1962, Beckman was doubly honored, by the Sales and Marketing Executives International as Marketing Educator of the Year, and by OSU with the Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching. In his biographical sketch of Beckman, John Wright claimed that, "above all else the fame of 'TNB' is rooted in his proficiency in - and love for - teaching" (1965, p.63).

One former student described him as a "ferocious" and "formidable" teacher who expected

perfect attendance in his classes. If students missed a class they could expect to be called upon the next day with a question on material lectured about in the missed class! His course examinations were very demanding. In one example, extensive memorization of statistics and facts about court decisions was required (Beckman 1965 a).

In 1965 Beckman retired from the classroom, although as Professor Emeritus he continued to work with doctoral students. Of the thousands of students taught by Beckman during his half century in the classroom, perhaps the most profound influence was felt by his Ph.D. students. Between 1930 and 1966 Beckman supervised 53 doctoral students - one quarter of all the non-accounting OSU business Ph.D. graduates! One of these commented that of all the roles Beckman filled during his career (teacher, researcher, consultant), the one which would not have been served the same by anyone else was his teaching of graduate students. Many (Robert Bartels, Robert Buzzell, William Lazer, William R. Davidson, David D. Monieson - to name but a few) went on to very distinguished careers.

As strange as this may sound to Ph.D. students and recent graduates today, Beckman's doctoral seminar was based on his Principles text. Students would analyze that text page by page, taking apart each table and carefully examining the sources of information. One result of this meticulous study was that his graduates were extremely well prepared for teaching. One of them observed that "he gave you an incredible education, a manner in which to evolve course content... at least you knew you were going to interpret Beckman's text in the right way."

#### CONTRIBUTIONS TO MARKETING THOUGHT

Beckman once posed the following exam question to his doctoral students.

Since the inquiring mind of a graduate student is concerned not only with the subject matter, but also with the personalities that have made special contributions to it, you are asked to identify each of the following with reference to affiliation and to indicate the type or character of major contribution for which he is generally known (Beckman 1965a).

There followed the names of several eminent marketing scholars. Of course, Beckman's name was not among them... yet.

Beckman's philosophy of marketing was most strongly expressed and widely disseminated in his Principles of Marketing. Indeed, as an undergraduate text it was unusual because of the close attention given to epistemological issues, especially in the first chapter where careful distinctions were drawn between facts, principles, and theories. His most extensive and seminal work was in the field of wholesaling. And his most important conceptual contribution to marketing thought may have been in the area of marketing productivity. Yet, all of this work was interrelated. Its common theme was the identification, definition, and measurement of the activities carried out in the marketing process. Most of the subjects Beckman was concerned with (wholesaling, credit management, marketing productivity) were significant at the time he was writing, but no longer have the same prominence. His most important work appeared in his textbooks. However, it should be kept in mind that this medium was more important then as a means of publishing original ideas than it is today. There were only a handful of textbooks available at that time and the periodic literature was just beginning to develop. The Journal of Marketing, for example, only began publication in 1936.

Principles of Marketing emphasized the functional approach to the study of marketing. This reflected Beckman's preoccupation with the productive activities in marketing and his belief that the functional approach was distinctly theoretical in nature. However, to supplement "the abstractness which sometimes characterizes the functional method of approach" (1927, p.v), there was considerable application to specific commodities and marketing institutions. Thus, all three classic schools of thought



were presented. There was also considerable use of historical material<sup>2</sup> and, of course, statistics related to the costs of marketing. When *Principles* was first published in 1927, Beckman believed it was time to move on from the earlier qualitative, descriptive treatments of the subject, to a more scientific study of marketing (1952, p.19). This meant an emphasis on principles, which he defined as "explanatory statement[s] of general truth, derived from a study of facts set up in a cause and effect relationship, that always applies under given conditions or assumptions" (1952, p.20). A prerequisite for such analysis was the correct definition of the elements of marketing. In that respect Beckman's contributions to the field of wholesaling are seminal and enduring.

Inspired by the work for his Masters thesis (1922), supported by the extensive data collected for the Census, Beckman developed a comprehensive classification system for the field of wholesaling. His precise definitions of the types and functions of wholesaling were original and have remained substantially unchanged for the past 50 years. Of all Beckman's writing, this work also had the widest appeal. It spanned the academic text and periodic literatures, government and trade publications. However, Beckman had only considered these definitions and classifications as the basis for a more important task, determining the relative efficiency of the different parts of the distribution system. That concern with efficiency or marketing productivity remained with him throughout his life.

Intellectually and professionally, what concerned Beckman most deeply was the apparent misconception that marketing was an unproductive, unnecessary part of the economic system. As a senior during his undergraduate studies he believed that, contrary to what was being written and taught at that time, marketing activities were both productive and necessary. This belief became the theme for most of his life's work. With his earliest major research study (1922) he began to identify the productive functions of wholesaling and to measure their costs. Later (1940) he expanded his attention conceptually to distinguish between costs and results, using the term "efficiency" to represent the ratio of marketing output (results) to input (costs). During the 1950s Beckman focused on the output component and developed the concept and measures of "value added by marketing", which he defined as the economic value of the functions performed in the marketing process (Beckman, Buzzell and Monieson, 1956). Many consider Beckman's work on productivity to be his major contribution to marketing thought. Accordingly, in 1965 a special symposium was held on productivity in marketing to honor his scholarly contributions to the discipline (Heskett 1965).

## EPILOGUE

As the discipline of marketing evolves there is a natural progression from concepts to theories, and then to schools of thought, each with its own history. Indeed, theories and schools of thought have become the most popular topics for historians of marketing thought (Jones and Monieson 1990, p.271). In that progression, however, there is always the danger that ideas may become disembodied spirits.

Yet each new theory is the contribution of a distinctive individual. Each new idea is, to some extent, an expression and reflection of the personality and experience of its innovator. Truly important and original ideas are the product of intricate combinations of conditions and influences, the study of which helps us to understand how and why those ideas emerged. That is one reason why biography is an important form of intellectual history. Just as history adds depth and texture to the study of marketing, biography can add a similar richness to the history of marketing thought.

## ENDNOTES

1. I would like to express my sincere thanks to William R. Davidson and David D. Monieson who were interviewed in connection with this project, thereby allowing me to know Beckman in a manner that documents could not provide.

2. Although he could not be described as a marketing historian, Beckman included historical material in all of his textbooks. In 1956 he wrote a paper entitled, "A Brief History of the Gasoline Service Station - With Special Reference to the Marketing of Tires, Batteries, and Automotive Accessories", which has never been published. In true Beckman style, it is carefully researched and thoroughly supported with statistical data.

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