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What is This?
Percival White (1887–1970): Marketing Engineer

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Abstract
This paper outlines an intellectual biography of Percival White whose major contributions to marketing thought focused on market research and the application of scientific management to marketing. White published 20 books during his career, 11 of those dealing with marketing, including one of the earliest texts on market research. Like other pioneers in the marketing discipline, White’s legacy also includes major contributions to marketing practice. His company, Market Research Corporation of America, represented some of the best technical practices of the 1930s. Unlike many other pioneers in marketing whose education was in economics, White’s background was in industrial engineering. He considered himself a marketing engineer.

Keywords
biography, history of marketing thought, market research, Percival White, scientific management

Introduction
This paper outlines an intellectual biography of Percival White. White was likely one of the first scholars to articulate what we know today as the marketing concept. He was also a pioneer in market research and in the application of scientific management to marketing. Intellectual biography focuses on the lives and careers of great thinkers in order to provide an account of the development and context of important contributions to a discipline. It fleshes out our understanding of the history of marketing thought by providing insights into a subject’s motives and personality and by tracing the influences on that subject’s ideas and achievements.

One of the themes included in the editorial mission statement of Marketing Theory underscores the value of the history of marketing thought and, by publishing intellectual biography (Brown, 2004; Brown and Schau, 2008; Jones, 2004), Marketing Theory affirms that intellectual biography

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is an important component of this endeavor, which in turn enhances our knowledge of the production and diffusion of marketing theory. More generally, intellectual biography has been a popular method of studying the history of marketing thought for a very long time (Bartels, 1962; Converse, 1959; Tadajewski and Jones, 2008; Wright andDimsdale, 1974). One purpose of this paper is to pay tribute to Percival White, whose achievements in marketing have been footnoted by others, but not celebrated or studied to the extent we believe they merit. Another objective of this paper is to document White’s important conceptual and methodological contributions to the development of the marketing discipline.

Biography uses historical research methods to document the results of open-minded curiosity, exploring with honesty the realities of a human life (Hamilton, 2008). For an intellectual biography such as this, primary source material includes the scholarship, both published and unpublished, of the individual being studied. It might also include unpublished evidence of other work conducted during a person’s career. In addition to White’s published books about marketing, an interesting primary, published source for this study is the periodical, *Marketing Research*, which White edited and published under the auspices of the Market Research Corporation of America from 1934 through to 1938. Nevertheless, most primary source material for historical research is found in archives. University archives are a common source for biographical information about marketing scholars (Jones, 1998). However, while many of his books were targeted at the academic market, Percival White never taught at a university and a thorough search of institutional archives revealed a limited number of documents in archival collections of individuals with whom White had contact (Edward L. Bernays Papers; Edwin Thomas Gibson Papers). Serendipitously, an extensive private collection of family papers was discovered, owned by White’s granddaughter, Lucy Sallick. The *Lucy Sallick Papers* were an invaluable source of material including correspondence, unpublished documents, photographs, and the transcript of a 1995 oral history interview with Percival White’s daughter, Matilda White Riley.1 No other researchers have yet been granted access to this collection.

**Percival White’s residue**

An important criterion for selecting a subject for biography is that the subject must have sufficient residue or impact to be worthy of biographical attention (Hamilton, 2008; Lomask, 1986). Percival White has been cited as one of the earliest scholars to apply scientific management to marketing (LaLonde and Morrison, 1967; Skålen et al., 2008; Usui, 2008) and as a pioneer of market research in America (Converse, 2009; Fullerton, 1994; Lockley, 1950; *New York Times*, 1970).

His (1927b) *Scientific Marketing Management* has been heralded as ‘probably the most direct application of [Frederick W.] Taylor’s principles [of scientific management] to marketing management’ (La Londe and Morrison, 1967: 12). Skålen et al. described it as ‘groundbreaking’ and concluded, 

... although it is unclear whether White’s writings alone were influential on the managerial practices of their time ... in hindsight this seminal book certainly looks almost prophetic. In that sense, it looks as though it was an important general contribution to the existing managerial disciplines. It also seems that this one book made it possible for ideas from scientific management to be applied throughout American capitalism. (Skålen et al., 2008: 74)

White’s obituary lauded him as a ‘leader in market research’ (*New York Times*, 1970). He was the founding President of the Market Research Council in 1927 (Market Research Council, 1957) and
posthumously elected to the Market Research Council Hall of Fame in 1981 (Market Research Council, 1989), one of only 13 individuals so honored to that point in time. Over the course of his career he published 20 books, 11 targeted at the academic and professional markets, another nine for a wider readership. Most of his books dealt with marketing; three were focused on market research.

His (1921) *Market Analysis* was one of the earliest books to specialize in market research (Lockley, 1950; Ward, 2009). Both *Market Analysis* (1921) and *Advertising Research* (1927a) were described as ‘fundamental and groundbreaking’ (Kropff, 1939, quoted in Fullerton, 1994: 55). For historical commentators, his *Marketing Research Technique* (1931) provided one of the most comprehensive accounts of research methods used in market research at that time (Bartels, 1962; Converse, 2009).

Clearly, he was a major contributor to the academic literature, but he also sought to put his ideas into practice. A solo marketing consultant through the 1920s, he later merged his consulting business with Pauline Arnold’s company, ‘Arnold Research Service’, in the late 1920s which, in 1934, became Market Research Corporation of America (MRCA), one of the earliest private market research firms and through the 1930s and 1940s, one of the largest such companies in America (Fullerton, 1994).

In spite of these achievements and accolades, we know very little about Percival White (see Figure 1). What is the full nature and scope of his contributions to marketing theory and practice? What and who influenced his thinking? What were the motives of this pioneer in the marketing discipline? These are some of the questions that will be addressed in this intellectual biography.

We begin by highlighting White’s family influences and early education which provided him with his training as a writer and fueled his interest in engineering. These were important formative influences on his subsequent contributions to marketing thought. As will become obvious, White’s contributions to marketing scholarship were concentrated in the period from 1921 through to 1931, during which time he also cultivated a successful career as a marketing consultant. Beginning in 1934, his consultancy activities focused on market research and led to the formation of the MRCA. In retirement after 1951, he continued to publish books that described important American industries based on his earlier consulting experience.

**Genealogical influences: 1887–1920**

Percival White was born in 1887 in Winchendon, Massachusetts, to parents Percival Wayland White and Edith Frazar (Wheeler) White. Percival Wayland White was a partner in the family business, Nelson D. White and Sons. Winchendon was an early American example of a company town and the firm that built and owned most of it was White and Sons, which generated its income via cotton milling and distribution. Nelson White

was his own architect and mill engineer. He improved the whole village, graded the lawns, set out trees in an artistic manner; in fact, created the village of Winchendon Springs just as it is at the present time [1900]. It is regarded everywhere as a model manufacturing village. (White, 1902: 149–50)

The mills originally manufactured white (no pun intended) goods but later changed to making denims. By the time Percival Wayland White became involved in the business, the Whites owned several mills in Winchendon, White Valley, Glenallan, and East Jaffery, New Hampshire. Percival Wayland White was a full partner in the firm and active in sales management. One of his cousins,
William Walker White, was considered one of the best mechanical engineers in America (White, 1902).

Another cousin on Edith White’s side of the family, Charles Wheeler, earned his living as a teacher, high school principal, author, and master carpenter who in 1907 published a comprehensive manual for woodworking, including many photos of Percival White (Jr) and his brother Richard as children working in Wheeler’s well equipped workshop. Wheeler spent a lot of time with Percival Jr, the two of them at one point inventing an alphabet and language that was part Hawaiian (Sallick, 1993). He was especially influential in teaching Percival to work with his hands and giving him an appreciation for planning and the use of technology. Later, when Percival Jr began writing his books about marketing, Charles Wheeler was frequently acknowledged for his influence.

Percival Wayland White traveled extensively to Europe (not always for business), was a social climber, lived in a grand house, and ‘collected’ maiden voyages of ocean liners (Sallick, 2010a). He frequently took his family with him on his travels, especially to Hawaii. This was another important part of Percival White’s education. Our point is that White grew up in a privileged environment rich with examples of craftsmanship, engineering, and business, and he traveled to

Figure 1. Percival White in 1943.
other parts of the world. He later recalled his early education as having been provided ‘by shop work and extensive travel’ (Cowan, 1927: 460). That education stimulated his interest in engineering and technology as well as his appreciation for literature and music.

In college, White initially pursued his interest in literature and writing, graduating from Harvard in 1909 with an undergraduate degree, followed in 1910 by a masters, both degrees being in English Literature. While completing his graduate studies, White also took courses of instruction in science and technology at the Lawrence Scientific School, then part of Harvard University. After completing his college education in July 1910, White married Mary Este Cliff, his high-school mathematics teacher and started work as a newspaper reporter. Later in life, White observed that he had had three careers – as an author, engineer, and in market research (Advertising Age, 1949).

In fact, he eventually combined those three, but began as a feature writer for the Denver Post followed by the Boston Post from 1910 to 1912 specializing in ‘scientific assignments’. Reporting on the installation of the Taylor system at the Watertown Arsenal and later research work at the Rock Island Arsenal, he became interested in organizational problems and scientific management (Cowan, 1927). While his time as a reporter gave him first-hand knowledge of Taylor’s principles of scientific management, it did not immediately develop into the successful career he later enjoyed as an author: ‘He was saved from being a newspaper man by a hard-boiled Hearst editor who fired him on the grounds that White could not write the brisk journales expected of reporters’ (Advertising Age, 1949: 2).

In 1912 a family tragedy gave Percival White the means to pursue, in a more tangible way, his interest in engineering and product design. His father and younger brother were passengers on the ill-fated maiden voyage of the Titanic and both died in the disaster. White Sr was survived only by his wife Edith and Percival Jr who inherited the bulk of his father’s considerable wealth (Sallick, 2010b). By then, Percival and his wife Mary had given birth to their first daughter, Matilda, who later played an important role in her father’s market research business.

White’s inheritance gave him the resources to pursue his growing passion for automobiles, not buying or racing them like some men of means in those days; rather, White wanted to design, build, and market his own cars. In pursuit of that dream, he and his wife moved to London, where he started the Percival White Engineering Works. The rationale behind this transatlantic move seemed obvious:

... the great car manufacturers were in England. The Rolls Royces, the leaders in the industry were over there, and he traveled a lot as a child. He knew various places; he also told me that the French were doing beautiful work but he wanted to build these. Now, he didn’t just build models. He built finished cars. And they actually ran and they were quite handsome ... Now you can imagine how much it costs to do that because they were all hand done; all hand done. And my grand-mother [Edith White] was very critical. You know, those two they went up and spent up all his [Percival Wayland White’s] money. (Riley, 1995: 15)

Percival White built two complete prototypes of what he called the Projecta (see Figures 2 and 3). It was a monocoque-bodied two-seat cycle car powered by a vee-twin engine with two-speed gearbox and belt drive to the rear wheels (Wise, 2000: 440).

Ironically, the man who later pioneered important ideas in marketing never succeeded in getting his automobile to market. Before White could begin to set up distribution for the Projecta, he either ran out of money or was forced out of the car business by the start of World War I (White, c.1919).
In 1914, the Whites returned to America with just enough funds left for Percival to open a business in Milton, Massachusetts, again under the name Percival White Engineering Works, but with the less ambitious purposes now of ‘a garage business and experimental engineers, also doing tool design and production work for outside concerns’ (White, c.1919). White soon left his wife and four daughters (Sallick, 2010a). His oldest, Matilda, had not accompanied her parents to England, but was raised by her paternal grandmother who later adopted all four children when Percival’s first wife, Mary, died in 1927.

**Figures 2 and 3.** Percival White’s Projecta prototypes.
From 1917 until 1920, White held various jobs in mechanical engineering capacities. He used his brief experience as an automobile manufacturer to find work during World War I as an automotive expert for the Ordnance Department of the US Army at the Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois where the Taylor system was being applied (Cowan, 1927). He followed this with employment as a master mechanic at the US Gas Defense Plant on Long Island, New York. During this time, he joined several engineering related associations including the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Society of Automotive Engineers, Society of Industrial Engineers and the Institution of Automobile Engineers. White maintained a fascination with mechanical devices throughout his life, later designing and inventing a clothes dryer, a hot plate for cooking, surf boards, sail boats, aircraft parts, various pieces of office equipment (see Figure 4), and musical instruments (Sallick, 2010b). In 1919 and 1920 he worked as director of development and foreign representative in Europe for the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA). This led to a crossroads in Percival White’s career.

**Marketing counselor and author: 1921–1931**

Up to this point in time, White seemed to subscribe to what today is termed a production orientation. He was fascinated with the design and manufacturing of products, but had shown little interest or ability in marketing – until he worked for ALCOA:

> [at the conclusion of] World War I he had a job with the Aluminum Company of America and . . . that’s where he got the idea of doing market research and he told me in great detail about his struggles
with what he should do and how he should try to ... earn a living ... [He became] interested in the idea of mapping out markets ... When you start to think about it, what used to happen was that ... somebody would have an idea for manufacturing a product. And they’d make it and then how were they going to sell it? Well, advertising developed. And you know, there were super salesmen, they’d come around with the vacuum cleaners or whatever it was, and the whole idea was after you had the product, you sold it. And his idea was that the thing to do first was to find out ... what the demand was for his product. You should learn all about who bought the products and why they used them and what they thought of them, and how they should be improved. It’s pretty obvious, when you think about it, but nobody had thought about it and so that’s what he had figured out. (Riley, 1995: 134–5)

While astute companies had followed a consumer orientation at least as early as the 18th century (Fullerton, 1988; Jones and Richardson, 2007), White was one of the first to articulate what we know today as the marketing concept. His writing from 1921 through to 1931 repeated the theme that successful marketing depended on adapting products to consumers’ needs (e.g. White, 1921, 1927a, 1927b, 1931).

After leaving ALCOA, White began working as a marketing consultant. An inveterate multi-tasker, he wrote his first book, Market Analysis (1921), at the same time. The inside cover page of Market Analysis lists his occupation as ‘Market Counselor’ and his clients during the 1920s included the Burroughs Adding Machine Company, Warner Brothers, Crowell Publishing, International Magazine Company, McFadden Publishing, Ford Motor Company, General Motors, and 50 other firms (MRCA, 1939). Major research studies by the Chicago Tribune and Milwaukee Journal are also cited in Market Analysis and White borrowed heavily from the extant literature. His bibliography included almost every major name in marketing scholarship at that time (e.g. Arch W. Shaw, Paul Cherington, Paul Nystrom, Melvin Copeland), and the only other market research text then available – C.S. Duncan’s (1919) Commercial Research.

The application of engineering to marketing

White begins Market Analysis by stating that ‘every business is concerned chiefly with two things: first with producing a commodity, and, second, with marketing it. This book aims to describe the latter function’ (White, 1921: 1). Nevertheless, White’s metaphor and methodology for describing marketing and market analysis are drawn from the science of production and scientific management. The methods of solving marketing problems in 1921, he observed, were similar to those of solving production prior to the widespread application of Taylorism. As he explained, ‘the markets of the future are to be won only through the application of the same scientific methods which were so successful in the field of production’ (1921: 2). ‘The “marketing engineer” must follow the example of the “industrial engineer” in building a scientific and rigorous framework for solving problems’ (1921: 11). This comparison reoccurs throughout the book and the scientific method defines his basic approach to market research. And the logic that he adopted mirrors that found in marketing research textbooks today: problem definition, preliminary analysis including bibliographical work (gathering of secondary data), planning the campaign (research design), gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data, presenting the results, and applying the data (taking action).

Market Analysis is organized according to ‘the surveyor’s logical course or procedure’ (White, 1921: vii), that is, according to the process followed in planning, designing, and carrying out market research. However, the essence of White’s research process is explained in the first three chapters. Chapter 1 outlines the key elements of market research. Chapter 2 provides an exposition of data sources, paying attention to questionnaire design, the use of mailing lists and cover letters,
along with the basics of interviewing. Chapter 3 deals with data analysis and clarifies the need for classifying responses, details the use of basic descriptive statistics and documents sources of error and bias. There is recognition of the need to consider sample size, but no explanation of how to actually calculate it:

The question of importance here, as is the case with answers to a questionnaire, is how many replies are necessary to make results authoritative. This number varies with almost every investigation and, in fact, with every questionnaire or group of interviews. It depends first and foremost on the size of the audience… There must be a minimum number of replies to lend authority and accuracy to the results. This minimum number cannot be arbitrarily set, but must be determined by the investigator in accordance with the particular conditions. (White, 1921: 51–2)

Other chapters focus on potential problems or researchable issues related to customers, consumers, the nature and size of markets, and the estimation of market potential. Two related chapters in Market Analysis discuss the latter issue; a topic singled out by Bartels (1962) and Mudgett (1922) as one of the book’s noteworthy contributions (cf. Loth, 1958 [1976]). ‘Markets are measurable’, White began:

A market may be compared to a sponge, which absorbs the output of business. It is necessary to determine how much this sponge will absorb, how fast it will absorb it, and many other facts, before it is possible to understand and reckon intelligently with the possibilities and limitations of that. (White, 1921: 1)

Interestingly, in a reflexive move, White acknowledges the limitations inherent in his application of the scientific method to marketing:

The science of market analysis has not yet developed to the point where definite formulae can be laid down for the solution of marketing equations. So far, every case must be worked out individually and according to the surveyor’s own lights. It is here that knowledge of hard-headed, cold-blooded, old-fashioned business must make up for the sketchy and experimental nature of his analytical data. The most we can expect is that an examination of the results obtained in other researches, and of the methods there employed, will supply him with the necessary ideas for going forward. (White, 1921: 252–3)

Nevertheless, White does enunciate a basic approach for measuring market potential:

Thus, in the ordinary method of computing a market, we must know the life of the product under normal usage, who uses it, how many use it, who can afford to buy it, plus the specific limitations affecting the case in question. Multiplying the number obtained by the average price gives the value of the potential market. (1921: 253)

And therein lay a fundamental contribution of this book. It was prescient, and it launched Percival White’s career as a marketing consultant specializing in market research.

White used the same basic approach when writing Advertising Research (1927a) as he had with Market Analysis. Much of the material from Market Analysis about the research process is retained but he extends the discussions of product policy, consumer analysis, and market analysis. In this later volume, additional emphasis is placed on interviewing, statistical analysis and methods of generalization and verification. And where the earlier book included extensive commentary on consumer characteristics relevant to markets and market groups (segments), White now noted that
advertising research requires an understanding of attention, stimulus, response, memory, and motives. Thus, a ‘psychological approach’ was added.

Recall that a notable feature of Market Analysis was its claim that markets were measurable and included a discussion of how to measure them. In Advertising Research, White also claimed that the value of advertising was measurable where it was the sole means of promotion or where objectives were easily quantifiable (e.g. number of inquiries secured post advertising campaign). Here he called for the accurate recording of costs and responses to advertisements as elemental in the measurement of advertising value. The final chapter of Advertising Research is provocatively titled ‘A Critique of Advertising’ which, not surprisingly given its author’s vested interest in consulting for corporate clients, fails to deliver on the title’s promise except for a passing mention of waste in advertising (see White, 1927b for an extended critique of ‘waste’ and inefficiency).

Rounding out White’s books on market research was Marketing Research Technique (1931). This text is quite different from his two earlier market research books. First, it bears the influence of Pauline Arnold who, in 1926 had founded Arnold Research Service in St Louis and by 1928 had moved headquarters to New York, partnering with White in his consulting practice. Arnold was born in 1894 and earned a bachelor degree in music from Knox College, worked as a professional musician through World War I and as a high-school music director in St Louis until 1926, when she started Arnold Research Service. At the time MRCA was founded in 1934, Arnold was a founding member of the American Marketing Society, and soon thereafter of the American Marketing Association (AMA). She contributed extensively to the AMA through its Committee on Research. The use of a nationwide, local field staff of resident interviewers was pioneered by Arnold (MRCA, 1939). Her company was also the first to offer coincidental radio surveys and conducted the first national diary study for NBC (Beville, 1988).

White and Arnold soon formed two partnerships – one as MRCA, the other in marriage. Converse (2009) applauded Marketing Research Technique, as well as White and Arnold’s consulting business on which the book was based:

White’s 1931 book Marketing Research Technique leaves us the most complete account of market interview training and supervision in this period. His Market Research Corporation of America was a leading organization, and it probably represented some of the best technical practices of the early 1930s. White’s interviewing staff incorporated both resident interviewers, who worked in their own communities across the country, usually on a part-time basis, and traveling interviewers. The latter were attached to headquarters and worked on studies in the vicinity. But they also moved across the country on assignments that required tight coordination or offered special problems. (Converse, 2009: 96)

The introduction to Marketing Research Technique provides a brief history of the development of marketing research (White credits two major influences – scientific management and the economic depression), moving swiftly on to marketing research in a manner consistent with his earlier books (White, 1921; 1927a). But the majority of Marketing Research Technique deals with the recruitment, training, and management of interviewers. Another distinctive feature is a detailed chapter that provides nine case studies illustrating the application of field research. The remainder of the text is indebted to examples obtained from Arnold Research Service.

During the decade following his publication of Market Analysis, White’s consulting business flourished. At the same time, he continued to publish books at a prolific rate, authoring or co-authoring another 11 books. He co-edited another volume, contributed chapters for two books
written by others, and published a handful of articles. Of the 12 books authored by White, seven focused on marketing; five others covered transportation (arguably part of marketing), general business management (which included a chapter on marketing), forecasting and planning (with a chapter on marketing), and gliding (a hobby of his).

White followed *Market Analysis* with the publication of *Chain Stores: Their Management and Operation* (White et al., 1922), a co-authored volume with three others including Walter Hayward, a long-time friend and contributor to several of White’s other books. *Motor Transportation of Merchandise and Passengers* (1923) was obviously a manifestation of White’s fascination with automobiles and written as a ‘practical guide to those engaged in the motor transportation business, to owners and operators of fleets of trucks and buses, to students of transportation, and finally, to automotive engineers interested in the economic phases of this problem’ (1923: v). By contrast to his other books of the period, in *Motor Transportation* he lists himself as a ‘research engineer; formerly manufacturer of Projecta cars, London England’, followed by his several memberships in engineering associations. White knew his audience and how to promote himself.

*The Merchants’ Manual* (White and Hahn, 1924) was co-edited with Lew Hahn, then managing director of the National Retail Dry Goods Association, under whose auspices the volume was produced. The text bears White’s influence from the beginning, when it is stated that it ‘is ... modeled somewhat on the engineering handbook’ (1924: vii). It is just that, a handbook of how-to advice on merchandising and general management topics. Appearing soon after, *Business Management: An Introduction to Business* (1926a) and *Forecasting, Planning and Budgeting in Business Management* (1926b) were college textbooks and covered what the titles suggest. They drew somewhat from the marketing content of White’s other publications. His penultimate marketing book, *Sales Quotas* (1929), combined a discussion of research with the practice of setting quotas to manage a company’s sales force. As such, White positioned it as ‘a logical sequel to the author’s “Market Analysis”...A working knowledge of market analysis is prerequisite to a practical application of any scientific quota system’ (1929: vii). He elucidated his ideas on this front with two chapters each presenting a case study of a company’s quota system.

In addition to those cited above, White penned two books about general marketing. The first was a principles text; the second, more advanced in content, devoting attention to marketing management. *Marketing Practice* (White and Hayward, 1924) was co-authored with Walter Hayward and was chronologically the second of White’s major works on marketing. By that point in time there were many widely distributed books about marketing elements, methods, or principles. Three early schools of marketing thought had by then emerged – functional, institutional and commodity schools (Shaw and Jones, 2005) – and White devoted several chapters to each. At the end of every chapter, he provided an extensive bibliography, an uncommon practice for authors of that era. The most commonly cited sources were Cherington’s (1920) *Elements of Marketing*; Duncan’s (1920) *Marketing: Its Problems and Methods*; Converse’s (1921) *Marketing Methods and Policies*; and Clark’s (1922) *Principles of Marketing*. These authors were trained as economists and wrote about marketing as a field of *applied economics* (Jones and Shaw, 2002). White, of course, was an exception and he went to great lengths in *Marketing Practice* to make that clear, while being careful to justify his approach:

The economic aspect of marketing is treated briefly ... Since practically all courses in marketing follow upon earlier courses in economics, there is no reason to enlarge upon this subject [economics] here. Most instructors in marketing have less difficulty in obtaining teaching material on the economic side of marketing than on its business side ... The limits of this volume are such that the economic
aspect of the subject cannot be given adequate treatment. Nor do the authors [White and Hayward] feel themselves competent to deal with it intensively. (White and Hayward, 1924: v–vi)

Copious examples of actual ‘marketing problems of the individual business’ are provided in several chapters. In what he claimed was the first of its kind, White also included a chapter about the marketing of services.

In *Marketing Practice*, White demonstrated a remarkably sophisticated view of services marketing. He recognized that even

> when the housewife buys a pound of steak or the commuter purchases a cigar, the services of those who produced the steak or cigar are being bought . . . In some cases, services are marketed together with some other utility . . . Services come first of all: they are fundamental. (White and Hayward, 1924: 288)

Categories of services are reviewed, as well as the intangibility of services and the functions they provide.

White had enough self-awareness in writing *Marketing Practice* to know that his forte was not in economics. It was, rather, in the application of engineering to marketing. Like other figures working at the time, such as Gerard Swope at General Electric (Loth, 1958 [1976]), White’s invocation of marketing practice took the axiology of engineering practice, augmenting this with an awareness of customer needs. It was systematic, rigorous and utilized empirical research to formulate carefully structured approaches to the marketplace in order to fulfill customer requirements within certain bounds. Planning and execution of marketing activities was carefully monitored, with a view to further increasing efficiency. His application of an engineering perspective, suitably modified and explained to marketing audiences, may have been his most distinctive contribution to early marketing thought. This worldview was most ably expressed in *Scientific Marketing Management* (White, 1927b).

*Scientific Marketing Management* (1927b) is quite unlike any of White’s other books, yet continues the same scientific theme that reoccurs throughout White’s scholarship. Where some of his previous publishing efforts mentioned the influence of F.W. Taylor and *Scientific Management*, this one adopted those ideas as its central theme. This is not unexpected given the changing economic climate. Commentators in industry were rapidly coming to the conclusion that the economic system was, courtesy of the contribution of Taylor’s (1911 [1998]) ideas to production efficiency, outpacing consumer demand for goods. In short, there needed to be a similar revolution in selling and marketing to the one that had already taken place in production.

Taylor himself realized the importance of the customer. He was quite clear about workers being paid an adequate amount of money for the tasks they undertook, and for management or the owners of capital to be fully compensated for the risk they incurred. But for Taylor (1911 [1998]: 71) the customer was the lynchpin in the capitalist system. White’s work on scientific marketing management can be thought of as an extension of this logic. He stressed the importance of science (i.e. the measurement of the marketplace and determination of different segments of the population), called for careful record keeping, the production and dissemination of relatively standardized sales talks, and told his reader to use psychological, sociological and statistical theory, concepts and practice to scrutinize the data that were collected in empirical study. Those who consulted *Scientific Marketing Management* were impressed with White’s panoramic contribution. Cowan
(1927), for instance, believed it was one of the most important texts available, specifying it as one of the three books that should be present in all business libraries.

In line with his intellectual debt to Taylor, White started *Scientific Marketing Management* with a critique of the inefficiency of marketing practice. He lamented the lack of intra-functional support in most concerns. Different departments, he asserted, often worked against each other, rather than operating like an orchestra, in harmony, with the satisfaction of the ultimate customer in mind. This suggested a role for greater planning and coordination of activities, so that no department was able to negate the valuable work of others. Writing against what today is widely believed to be the intellectual current of his time – that of either a production or sales orientation (Fullerton, 1988; Jones and Richardson, 2007; Hollander, 1986) – White bemoans the use of ‘supersalesmanship’ in marketing practice. This entailed encouraging the customer to buy whatever products the organization was producing irrespective of whether such purchases were in the customers’ best interest (cf. Ewen, 1976).

Understandably, such tactics were not sustainable in the long term. Improvements in communication meant that manufacturers, retailers and other organizations had to register the shifting nature of power relations in the marketplace. Just as later founding publications in the history of corporate social responsibility were to press home (e.g. Bowen, 1952, 1955), there were always multiple stakeholders impacted by business decision making. Firms could not simply discount the opinions of one group or engage in socially criticized actions with abandon. Government, White wrote, was increasingly interested in business activities and this demanded that all organizations register the ‘continued trend towards protective legislation ... In each case, government interference has been motivated by public opinion, aroused by the existing state of affairs’ (White, 1927b: 28). As part of effective marketing practice, firms had to project an image of service to society, supporting this with appropriate corporate activities (cf. Lynd, 1936). One way in which firms could achieve this in theory and practice was for ‘business leaders’ to aver that they were the ‘servants of society’ (Bowen, 1955: 115). For White, it made complete sense on multiple fronts for business to adopt the perspective of the customer in all their business dealings.

Even though White enunciated the view that production should be based upon consumer demand, this is not to say that he argued that all products desired by customers should be manufactured. There were, therefore, boundaries placed on the notion that business acted as if its customers were its ‘boss’ (Ivey, 1926). Instead, White asserted that careful analysis of the market was needed, not only to determine what people wanted and where goods were required. Of equal import, this analysis had to be combined with a realistic financial appraisal of whether it was cost effective to produce and distribute such items at all (see also Alderson, 1934; Carroll, 1933; Cowan, 1924; Livingston, 1925). Production and marketing decisions had to be based on research and realistic cost accounting procedures. Put simply, White’s interpretation of ‘scientific marketing’ practice took account of the fact that production, successful marketing and satisfied customers were all interlinked (e.g. White, 1927b: 31–2, 75, 215, 248; cf. Brown, 1925: 135). Corporate success hinged on careful coordination of the relations between all parties concerned.

Management needed to treat their workers well, compensating them appropriately because they were on the front line representing the organization (Strong and D’Amico, 1991). In this White was no doubt influenced by the fractious labor management relations that marked the early 20th century (Loth, 1958 [1976]). These invariably affected production. They were, furthermore, deleterious to firm–customer relations when experienced directly in the form of disgruntled employees treating customers poorly. Satisfactory levels of payment were consequently essential. But more important from an organizational perspective, White implies, is that salespeople received
forms of compensation that supported the objectives of his ‘scientific marketing system’, pre-dicated as this was on ‘service to the consumer’ (White, 1927b: 105) and long-run customer satisfaction (cf. Cowan, 1940: 77). Compensation packages had to be devised to avoid salespeople pursuing and pushing for every sale, irrespective of the long-term harm this might do to a company’s reputation (see also White, 1929: 198–9; cf. Nadesan, 2008: 66).

Understanding the customer and effectively educating the purchaser about the items available were the foundations of scientific marketing. And White’s argument cuts across marketing and sales orientation in much the same way as was applauded by Borch (1958) and Cowan (1924). As White (1927b: 97, 99, 100) explained:

Marketing centers in all cases around the needs of the consumer. This is an absolute shift from the old practice of making the producer the focus of all business relations . . . Too many manufacturers have followed the tradition of making what pleased them, never dreaming they would not find a market ready and waiting . . . Scientific marketing is based on the theory of finding out what the consumer wants and then giving it to him . . . Consumption is primary, production secondary; yet it is rare to find a business which boldly faces this fact and which produces goods always with a view to the requirements of consumption. In the future, these requirements will have to be met, consciously and effectively, by business men. ‘What does the consumer need?’ This question will stand at the beginning of every business problem.

It is no exaggeration to say that Scientific Marketing Management is a complex and fairly modern interpretation of marketing practice which White continued to refine throughout his later publications (e.g. White and White, 1948). There is much emphasis placed on the central role of the consumer; the research department is focused upon in detail, appropriate training for sales staff demanded and his writing adopts a clear ethical orientation that cautions against treating the customer badly in view of the long-term ramifications of this strategy.

Like contemporary practitioners, White considered good ethics to be good business. It forestalled government intervention into marketplace activities and reassured the public. As many observers of marketing activities in the first four decades of the century acknowledged, the belief that some businesses were selling poor quality products was widespread (Nyström, 1932). Connected to this was public displeasure about the growing impact of billboards on the natural environment and cityscape (Leach, 1994; White, 1923) and concerns about the resource implications of rising levels of consumption. This all demanded some kind of response from marketers and White’s scientifically based, ethically minded approach to business practice registered that business and marketing activities had an impact on society and vice versa (Donham, 1927a, 1927b; Shapiro, 2006). In this context, it made financial sense to focus on customer needs using the variety of interpretive tools then available to better comprehend customer requirements (Clarke, 1996; White, 1926b), and just as importantly to articulate the firm’s ethical values to their target market(s) (Cowan, 1940; Heald, 1961; Marchand, 1998), as well as the government and legal communities (Heald, 1961, 1970).

**Market Research Corporation of America: 1934–51**

The first market research in America was probably conducted by advertising agencies during the 1890s (Converse, 2009; Lockley, 1950). Some companies not specifically in the market research business formed market research departments during the period 1910 to 1920. An early and notable
example was in 1911 when Charles Coolidge Parlin was made director of a research department for the Curtis Publishing Company (Ward, 2009). Total dollar expenditures by private firms on market research during that decade were still relatively small, however, important institutional support developed in the academic community through the formation of the Harvard Business School’s Bureau of Business Research in 1911 and the founding of the National Association of Teachers of Advertising in 1915 (Converse, 2009). The latter published the *National Marketing Review (NMR)* which merged with *The American Marketing Journal (TAMJ)* in 1936 to form the *Journal of Marketing*. A content analysis of the first 137 articles published during the early 1930s in *NMR* and *TAMJ* indicates that market research was a relatively popular topic, the subject of 20 of those articles; and the *NMR* included a regular feature titled ‘Progress in Marketing Research’ (Witkowski, 2010: 380). By the mid-1930s the leading private market research firms in America included Crossley Inc.; Cherington, Roper, and Wood; Ross-Federal Service; Houser Associates; A.C. Neilson; Clark-Hooper; and MRCA (Converse, 2009).

By the end of 1931, at the age of 44, Percival White’s contributions to the marketing literature were largely behind him, but his greatest professional achievement was just unfolding. In 1927 he was elected the founding president of the Market Research Council (MRC) (MRC, 1957). It was a sign of the respect held for him by the growing market research community. As gestured above, in 1928 he met Pauline Arnold and convinced her to move her Arnold Research Service operation from St. Louis to New York:

His secretary told me all about [it], there was this woman named Pauline Arnold that he had met and he was very fascinated by her and she ran a field force and . . . I guess they talked a lot about possibly getting together and they finally did get together . . . he persuaded her to come to New York and they formed a corporation, White and Arnold. (Riley, 1995: 66, 139)

However, the name of the company soon changed, most likely at the suggestion of the well known public relations specialist, Edward Bernays:

Eddie Bernays, who was a great big shakes. He was US publicist number one, very interesting, took a great interest in him [Percival White] and advised him a lot on how . . . he ‘should call it the Market Research Corporation of America, don’t call it White and Arnold’. (Riley, 1995: 133)

Percival White and Pauline Arnold were married in 1931. A merger of their separate consulting firms made sense, not just because they were married, but because their abilities and experiences complemented each other. White was well connected in the New York area and had by then a decade of experience as a marketing consultant. His publication record alone gave him considerable credibility. Arnold had also achieved distinction in the development of coincidental radio surveys and a nationwide field staff. Moreover, economic conditions favored consolidation. Market research must have been viewed as a luxury item for potential clients at the depth of the Great Depression. As such, joining forces reduced the financial risk for both partners. Thus, in March 1934, it was reported in the *New York Times*:

The newly organized Market Research Corporation of America yesterday named Percival White as president and Pauline Arnold as vice president. The corporation, a merger of Percival White Inc. and the Arnold Research Service Inc., is located in the RCA Building, Rockefeller Center. (*New York Times*, 1934: 39)
White and Arnold owned and operated the company until 1951, and although MRCA was not the first private market research firm in America, it was among the vanguard. Unfortunately, it is not possible to measure the size of the firm by its billings, as these are not available. But, by the late 1930s, it probably had the largest field research force in the USA with 3000 part-time employees spread across some 1000 cities and towns nationwide. It is fair to say then, that MRCA was an important company in the history of market research. Its staff and the services offered were key indicators of the nature and scope of its operation.

**Legs and brains**

‘Legs or Brains?’ was the title of a 1934 editorial by Percival White in *Market Research*. It referred to his belief that the field of market research had expanded rapidly by the early 1930s, with the result that there were far too many legs and not enough brains among those doing research:

> We are not at this time advocating state examinations for marketing [research] people. But we are recommending higher standard requirements. So many people using their legs will never be true research; so many tons of completed questionnaires will never be true marketing data; so many doorbells rung will never provide the answer to your sales problems, unless the background, experience, training, and brains, as well as the legs, are on the job. (White, 1934a: 3)

MRCA had both legs and brains. Their interviewers were well trained and supervised by some of the most experienced market researchers in America. A staff of some 30–40 supervisors was based in the New York office, but traveled the country training and supervising the field force:

> Market Research is only as good as the men and women who plan and supervise procedure, who collect and analyze facts, who seek to diagnose the origins of difficulties, and to apply corrective measures. The essence of their work is drawn from vision, training, experience, patience, imagination, and integrity. We believe that the quality of service you receive will be determined by factors such as these. And that you should choose your market research consultants as carefully as you would your doctor or your lawyer. (MRCA, 1939: 11)

As principal executives of the company, White and Arnold were the original brains behind the operation. Later their activities were supported by Dr Raymond Franzen, formerly Professor of Psychological Statistics at the University of California and author of several books and articles about psychology and statistics, and Matilda White, Percival’s oldest daughter, who played a key role in the company and later became one of America’s most notable sociologists.

Matilda White began working part time for her father’s consulting firm in 1928 while she was a freshman at Simmons College and continued to work part time for him during the next several years doing survey research and statistical analysis (MRCA, 1939). She completed her undergraduate degree at Radcliffe and returned there in 1937 for her masters degree in English Literature (taking after her father), then joined MRCA as an account executive and later served as Vice-President and Research Director until 1949. In 1946, Matilda was awarded an AMA prize for research design using probability sampling. While at MRCA, she published articles about the use of contraception based on client research (White and Riley, 1940) as well as articles on research method (White and Zeisel, 1941) and product testing (White, 1946; White and White, 1946a; 1946b; 1948) which seems to have been her specialty at MRCA. After leaving the company, Matilda White Riley carved out a distinguished academic career as Professor of Sociology at...
Rutgers University and Bowdoin College; as Senior Research Associate at the Center for Social Sciences at Columbia University; and as Associate Director and Senior Social Scientist at the National Institute on Aging.

At least one other intriguing name was connected with MRCA. In December 1937, the firm announced the appointment of Paul T. Cherington, noted marketing author and academic, as President (Market Research, 1937e: 3). A month later, Cherington’s name remained on the corporate masthead, alongside White and Arnold (Market Research, 1938: 3). This said, he never actually joined the firm. Cherington was employed as an independent consultant (1937–39) prior to his appointment at McKinsey and Company. The exact circumstances surrounding his near association with MRCA remain a mystery. It is most likely that White was negotiating to hire Cherington as President and the negotiations fell through.

**Offering a complete line of market research and consulting services**

As noted above, by 1934 there were only a handful of companies specializing in market research but other organizations in America offered market research as part of their service to clients. Advertising agencies such as J. Walter Thompson Company, publishing companies such as Curtis Publishing, and even the federal government, all offered market-related information to other firms (Ward, 2009). MRCA’s specialization in market research allowed them to provide a wide range of services. They continued to offer the coincidental radio survey pioneered by Arnold. During a radio broadcast, a telephone survey was conducted ‘coincidentally’ to gather information for audience measurement and opinions about radio advertising. However, questionnaire surveys were still the bread and butter for MRCA, as they had been for White in his initial consulting practice.

MRCA undertook survey research in response to client-specific marketing problems and questions. However, a substantial proportion of their survey research was shared cost or ‘mass research’ based on first gathering market data, and then selling the results to any interested client. Writing in 1934, with the economic depression clearly in mind, White explained the practice of ‘mass research’ as

> the collection and analysis of data on a wide scale, usually so that the results may be beneficial to a number of organizations . . . [T]o some extent the result of four lean years . . . have taught business to take advantage of such economies as mass research affords. (White, 1934b: 4)

For example, the results of a survey of 10,000 women for their opinions about advertising was available in its entirety for $500 or any client could purchase results for a single product category for as little as $35. Another ‘mass research’ study surveyed 2000 visitors to the New York Automobile Show for opinions about new models and buying intentions. The most ambitious of these studies was MRCA’s survey of the home buying, building and repair plans of 5000 families in 700 American cities (Market Research, 1938).

A final example of White’s mass research is important because of the documentation of that study which survives today. In 1936 MRCA conducted a survey of American business leaders for their opinions about the roles and relative importance of economic research, industrial relations, public relations, and market research, to business. The purpose was to ‘make a case for a scientific attitude toward the problems of American industry’ (MRCA, 1937). The final report was titled ‘American Business Leaders Look Ahead’ and results were available free of charge (Market Research, 1937d), probably because of the public relations value to MRCA. In any case, what
makes this study historically significant is the relatively complete documentation that survives in the *Edward L. Bernays Papers* at the Library of Congress. The material includes correspondence between White and Bernays discussing the purpose and design of the study, iterations of the questionnaire design, a detailed description, including flow charts, of the steps and activities used for the survey and follow up activities, all 442 responses, and various tables with the analyses and summaries of results. It is a remarkably complete archive of the paper flow, processes, and actual documents connected with a large-scale survey conducted by one of the leading market research firms of the 1930s.

A specialized version of their mass research was MRCA’s household inventory study. Conducted multiple times during the 1930s, it chronicled product ownership, as well as purchase intentions, for drugs and groceries, automobiles, refrigerators, electrical appliances and various furnishings among thousands of US households. Magazine readership was included in the survey to establish print advertising influence. Results were broken down by demographic categories to generate usable data for clients. This inventory concept was extended by MRCA during the mid-1940s into a service that garnered considerable attention from the research community.

That research service was MRCA’s patented ‘Chronolog’ index. While it took several years to develop, upon its eventual launch in 1947, the industry press reported it as ‘one of the most exciting and important developments in top-grade precision sampling since the research science got out of knee pants’ (*Tide*, 1947: 72). The Chronolog combined a random sample of 5000 American households with an ingenious package of questionnaires designed to eliminate interviewer and respondent fatigue, along with other sources of potential bias (*Tide*, 1948). In effect, it allowed MRCA to measure accurately and reliably market size and product usage, current consumption and past purchases. Since the cost of each survey was met by 20 different consumer goods manufacturers and advertisers, this yielded accurate data without high cost to individual clients.

In addition to market research, MRCA provided other forms of consultancy, sometimes pricing their services in an unorthodox manner. With the caveat that ‘in cases where we believe the situation is promising’, services were valued according to ‘a percentage of increase in sales volume, over a period’ (*Market Research*, 1937a: 3). They were also aggressive promoters. Provided the information was non-proprietary, MRCA offered sample reports and ‘free case studies’ to illustrate how their research had been and could be used. Moreover, their research services were promoted in the company’s periodical, *Market Research*.

*Market Research* was a hybrid trade–academic journal published monthly by MRCA from April 1934 through to July 1938, and edited by Percival White. The content ranged from academic-oriented feature articles by well known authors including Paul Lazarsfeld (numerous times), Paul Cherington (several contributions), Daniel Starch, Rensis Likert, George Gallop, Edward Bernays, Ernest Elmo Calkins, and R.O Eastman, to association news and a help wanted section titled ‘The Research Man Market’. Percival White wrote editorials, but only one other article (1934b) that identified him as the author. Pauline Arnold and Raymond Franzen occasionally wrote feature articles. *Market Research* also included a series of one-page biographical sketches, un-credited but probably written by White, of those working at the cutting edge of market research (including Cherington, Weld, Parlin, Coutant, and Starch). Occasional book reviews appeared, as did case studies of companies and their market research activities. Summaries and partial reports of survey work undertaken by MRCA were popular and from March 1937 through to the final issue in July 1938, *Market Research* included a series about the regulation of marketing, covering ‘Chain Store Taxation’ (*Market Research*, [472 Marketing Theory 11(4) by Jivonna Stewart on October 23, 2012 mtq.sagepub.com Downloaded from mtq.sagepub.com by Jivonna Stewart on October 23, 2012)}
1937a); ‘Fair Trade Acts on Resale Price Maintenance’ (April, 1937b); and ‘The Robinson Patman Act’ (May, 1937c), as well as other related topics.

Appropriately enough, in June 1935 MRCA conducted their own research involving Market Research’s subscribers in an effort to determine their attitudes and preferences concerning the journal. Readers liked the ‘Current Surveys’ section and articles on market research techniques. Book reviews and White’s editorials, which were surprisingly breezy, shallow and preoccupied with drawing attention to the value of market research, were viewed negatively. Not surprisingly, they criticized the journal for being ‘too much of a house organ’ (Market Research, 1935: 31). This, along with the growing number of academic journals (e.g. Journal of Retailing, the National Marketing Review, and eventually the Journal of Marketing), not to mention the continuing financial strictures imposed by the Great Depression, contributed to the demise of Market Research in 1938.

During the late 1940s, Matilda White decided to leave the family firm and MRCA began to unravel. Percival and Pauline tried to bring in a new Vice-President who they expected to purchase a 20 percent interest in the company and presumably oversee its day-to-day running (Arnold, 1948). A memorandum touching upon this anticipated hiring referred to the new Vice-President as ‘PN’. We do not know who ‘PN’ was, but speculate it may have been Paul Nystrom, then a marketing faculty member at Columbia University, well known author and long-time consultant in retailing. In 1951 White and Arnold sold MRCA to Samuel Barton who merged the firm with Industrial Surveys Company under the MRCA name.

**Conclusion**

As we noted in the introduction, biography is an important approach to studying the history of marketing thought. History is to theory what the ocean is to a ship on a voyage of discovery. To understand marketing theory today one must understand it historically (Hunt, 2010). Without history we have no intellectual baseline for evaluating the significance of new theories. As Sheth et al. (1988: 2) wrote, ‘We must understand our roots and foundations of knowledge as we go forward toward generating new and innovative theories in marketing.’ The negative effects of amnesia on marketing theory include ignored contributions such as Percival White’s (Tadajewski and Saren, 2008) as well as ‘reinventing various theoretical, conceptual, and methodological wheels as we move through our academic life cycles’ (Tadajewski, 2008: 469). As Wilkie and Moore (2003) also pointed out, knowledge development over time reflects the orientations and preferences of each era’s prevailing marketing thought leaders. Thus, amnesia can be a convenient way to ignore the views of scholars no longer consistent with the vision of the currently dominant paradigm (Tadajewski and Saren, 2008: 330). The history of marketing thought is not only a vital component of the general field of marketing theory; it is also a sound methodological approach to marketing theory (Witkowski, 2005).

Percival White’s contributions to marketing thought began with the application of the philosophy and basic approach of scientific management to marketing in general and to market research in particular. Like F.W. Taylor, White sought to replace rules of thumb with scientific study to determine the best way to manage marketing. This resulted in White’s writing about marketing efficiency as well as the measurability of markets and market potential. White generously applied the engineering metaphor to marketing and its scientific method to market research. Rossiter (2001) describes marketing engineering as a recent school of thought in marketing, but White was undoubtedly the original marketing engineer. He advanced the concepts of probability sampling
and response bias controls through his ‘Chronolog’ technique in survey research. And while a marketing orientation had been followed by astute practitioners for a very long time, White was certainly one of the first to articulate the marketing concept and to fully spell out its implications for marketing.

The distinguished marketing historian Stanley Hollander often encouraged his students and colleagues to look beyond the marketing academy when studying the history of marketing ideas, noting that ‘practice is not entirely thoughtless and thought is often practice-driven’ (Hollander, 1989: xx). Percival White was a pioneer marketing theorist, translating his ideas into marketing practice. He turned his interest and background in industrial engineering on to marketing and wrote seminal works on market research and the application of scientific management to marketing, as well as several other important books all based on his concept of marketing engineering. During the 1930s, he founded and managed one of the earliest and largest market research firms in America, leading the way in the development of field research techniques, questionnaire design, and the use of random sampling. Despite not being an academic, Percival White made a definite intellectual as well as professional impact on the development of marketing and marketing thought in the early 20th century.

He was also an opportunist. He further developed ideas that were already in circulation during the 1920s, but he did so in a more systematic way than any other writer. He was undoubtedly among the earliest to articulate a consumer orientation as the key to success in marketing. In the chronology of academically targeted periodicals, his *Market Research* (first published in April, 1934) would seem to rank third behind only the *Journal of Retailing* (1925) and *American Marketing Journal* (January, 1934). While Percival White was the brains behind the MRCA, his innovative genius was complemented by the ‘brains and legs’ of Pauline Arnold and Matilda White. Thus, his professional impact was, at least in part, a family affair. He was an inventor, but like many inventors he quickly moved on to the next new idea and left to others the job of maintaining his creations. In her oral history interview, Matilda White Riley repeatedly mentioned her father’s constant boredom and lack of follow through (1995). Is that not a sign of genius?

**Notes**

1. Matilda White married (Riley) in 1931 but continued to use her maiden surname on publications, at least through the 1940s. We have thus cited and referenced her publications in that way. The oral history transcript identifies her by her married name – Matilda White Riley, and is therefore cited and referenced accordingly.

2. Some of the mass research conducted at MRCA had an interesting legacy. In retirement, Percival White and Pauline Arnold co-authored a string of books intended as reference works about major American industries. Three of these are of interest, since they were directly informed by work done at MRCA: *Food: America’s Biggest Business* (1959); *Homes: America’s Building Business* (1960); and *Clothes & Cloth: America’s Apparel Business* (1961). A fourth book, titled *The Automation Age* (1963), presented an historical survey of mechanical inventions and highlighted the influence of automation on society.

**References**


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